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PERSIAN COSMOS AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY: PLATO'S ASSOCIATES AND THE ZOROASTRIAN *MAGOI*

PHILLIP SIDNEY HORKY

1. Introduction to the problem

ACCORDING to ancient biographical accounts, when Plato was a very old man and ill with fever, he received Persian *magoi* who had travelled to Athens to meet the eminent sage; apparently, one of these men entertained Plato and delighted him as he was nearing death.¹ In one version of the story, preserved by the Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger (first century CE), upon his death (on his birthday at the age of 81) the *magoi* sacrificed to Plato because he had completed the perfect number of nine times nine.² While individual details vary in each retelling of the story, the originator of

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¹ Philod. *Index Acad. Herc.* 3. 34–43 and col. 5 Gaiser. The corroborating evidence has been collected and analysed by P. Kingsley ('Meetings with Magi: Iranian Themes among the Greeks, from Xanthus of Lydia to Plato's Academy' ['Magi'], *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*³, 5 (1995), 173–209), who has shown that the Greek confusion of 'Chaldaean' and 'Persian' antedates the death of Plato by nearly a century. Generally, I shall use the term 'Persian' to refer to the religion, politics, and cultural traditions of those peoples under the suzerainty of the Achaemenid Empire from the advent of Cyrus the Great (mid-6th cent. BCE) until the conquest of Alexander the Great (late 330s BCE). Of course, to Iranologists this represents a generalization that obscures what are significant distinctions between cultural categories. For the sake of expounding a complex argument concerning Greek philosophy and its interactions with foreign cultural ideas, though, I prefer to err on the side of oversimplification, at least on this occasion.

² Sen. *Ep.* 58. 31.

the general account involving the *magoi* at Plato's death is likely to have been his own student and 'secretary' Philip of Opus, who was responsible for writing the appendix to Plato's final dialogue, the *Laws* (around 347 BCE).³ In this text, called the *Epinomis*, Philip 'orientalizes' the philosophy of Plato: whereas the Athenian Stranger in Plato's *Laws* indirectly advocates worship of the sun, moon, and planets in book 7,⁴ the same figure in the *Epinomis* systematizes the worship of the heavenly bodies, which he considers to be 'either the gods themselves, or images of the gods, like statues, which the gods themselves made'.⁵ Nowhere else in Plato's œuvre do we hear of worship of images or statues of the gods—much less the heavenly bodies themselves as figurations of them—as normative, and the innovation here is significant.⁶ This example is suggestive evidence for the activities that were being undertaken in the early Academy following the death of the sage; it may help to shed light on the account of Favorinus, a philosopher of the generation following Seneca's, who claimed that a Persian named Mithridates dedicated an 'image' (εἰκών) of Plato, made by Silanion, to the Muses in the Academy, presumably upon his death.⁷ It may also help to explain why another anecdote, which appears in the *Anonymous Prolego-*

³ On the authorship of the *Epinomis*, see the authoritative study of L. Tarán, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus, and the Pseudo-Platonic Epinomis* [*Academica*] (Philadelphia, 1975), 3–47. On Philip as 'secretary' or amanuensis (ἀναγραφεὺς) of Plato, see J. Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* [*Heirs*] (Oxford, 2003), 182–3 (with bibliography). Cf. Kingsley, 'Magi', 203.

⁴ Plato, *Laws* 821 c 6–D 4, calling them the 'gods in the region of heaven' (θεῶν τῶν κατ' οὐρανόν).

⁵ Phil. Op. *Epin.* 983 E 5–984 B 1. Cf. Kingsley, 'Magi', 203–5, who notes parallels in the wording and basic cosmologies represented here and in the traditional Mesopotamian *Enûma Anu Enlil* and the *Enûma Eliš*. I prefer to discuss the Greek process of 'orientalizing' its own philosophical theories rather than the 'origins' of Greek philosophical thought, although the latter have a remarkable tradition in scholarship, most notably in the writings of Walter Burkert and M. L. West. Of course, Burkert and West speak of successive waves of 'orientalization' which lead subsequently to proposals of Eastern 'origin' of Greek philosophical thought; and the disjunction between 'origins' and 'orientalization' is not exclusive.

⁶ Tarán, *Academica*, 86–7 with nn. 402–3, identifies the shift that occurs from the *Timaeus* (92 c 7), where the cosmos itself is called the εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεὸς αἰσθητός in a general sense, with specific appeal to statues here. There is a variant reading for νοητοῦ as ποιητοῦ (on which see L. Brisson, *Le Même et l'Autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon: un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon* (Paris, 1974), 155 n. 3), but the sense is relatively clear either way.

⁷ Favorinus F 5 Merschling=D.L. 3, 25. For the links between these strands in the biographical tradition, see Kingsley, 'Magi', 197–8. Note that the name 'Mithridates' signifies 'given to Mithra' in Old Persian (**Miθra-dāta-*). Cf. R. Schmitt, 'Iranische Personennamen bei Aristoteles', in S. Adhami (ed.), *Paitimāna: Essays*

mena to the Philosophy of Plato (datable to the sixth century CE),⁸ implicitly compares the ‘monument’ of Plato with the ‘statues’ of the gods.⁹ While we cannot determine that Philip of Opus was uniquely responsible for publishing an original version from which each of these narratives about the death of Plato is derived, we can safely say that biographical accounts which establish links between Persians and Plato can be traced to the early Academy.¹⁰

Here, then, at the mid-point of the fourth century BCE and with the handing over of the early Academy, we have the origins of a biographical tradition in which is posited a substantial interaction between the ‘last words’ of Plato and Persian thought.¹¹ Significant questions arise as a consequence of this formulation: why would members of the early Academy wish to emphasize the encounter between Plato on his deathbed and visiting ‘barbaric’ practitioners of wisdom from the east?¹² If it is the case that members of the early Academy appealed to Persian wisdom traditions, to what avail? How authentic is their portrayal of Persian thought, and what were the sources of their information? Moreover, what role did this transcultural translation and adaptation of Persian thought play in the establishment and legitimation of philosophical positions in the Greek world during the second half of the fourth century BCE? For that matter, if we can detect explicit and detailed appropriation of

in Iranian, Indo-European, and Indian Studies in Honor of Hamms-Peter Schmidt, 2 vols. (Costa Mesa, Calif., 2003), 275–99 at 287–8.

⁸ Cf. L. G. Westerink, and J. Trouillard, *Prolégomènes à la philosophie de Platon* (Paris, 1990), lxxvi–lxxxix.

⁹ Anon. *Prol. Phil. Plat.* 6.

¹⁰ Cf. P. Vasunia, ‘The Philosopher’s Zarathushtra’ [‘Philosopher’s’], in C. Tuplin (ed.), *Persian Responses: Political and Cultural Interaction with(in) the Achaemenid Empire* (Swansea, 2007), 237–64 at 248–50. According to his entry in the *Suda*, Philip wrote a work on Plato, which may have been a biography; certainly, Hermodorus of Syracuse (on whom see below) wrote a book that covered both his life and his teachings. I shall return to the subject of the Chaldaean Stranger in Philip’s writings in sect. 6 of this article.

¹¹ The evidence in Greek and Roman traditions is collected by P. Vasunia, *Zarathushtra and the Religion of Ancient Iran: The Greek and Latin Sources in Translation [Zarathushtra]* (Mumbai, 2007). I shall refer to sources in Vasunia’s book both by standard author/title/page designation and by Vasunia’s numerical organization (in **bold**): *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, 4 (no. **24**) and 6 (no. **147**); D.L. 3. 6 (no. **148**); Paus. 4. 32. 4 (no. **149**); Olymp. *Vita Platonis* 5 (no. **150**); ps.-Apul. *Plat.* 3 (no. **151**).

¹² The earliest explicit reference to the Greek adaptation of ‘barbaric’ sciences is Philip of Opus’ reference to the perfection of astrology that he supposes will occur under the Greeks (*Epin.* 987 D 9–988 B 1).

Persian thought among the successors of Plato, what can we say about apparent references to Persian concepts in the writings of Plato himself?

In the course of this introduction I have raised many questions that I hope will provide not only the structure for investigation into how Plato and other philosophers might have inherited a complicated and pluralistic discourse concerning the Persian *magoi*, but also the parameters of this study.¹³ Any serious investigation into the cross-cultural interactions between Persian and Greek wisdom traditions will be expansive and have the capacity to cover a plethora of subjects as wide and various as ancient astronomy and astrology, conceptualizations of space and time, metaphysics and ontology, numerology, arithmetic and geometry, poetics and oral transmission, ritual activity, religious order, ethics, law, political theory and theories of rule, civic design, and doubtless others; as a consequence, it is difficult to articulate the characteristics of these interactions properly without synthesizing too abruptly and rushing to cause-and-effect assumptions that cannot be fully assessed owing to a dearth of comparative evidence. Moreover, the histories of these cross-cultural interactions threaten to be riddled with speculation and mirage, as they no doubt were in antiquity. We must thus proceed cautiously and be on our guard against fabrication in order to say something both substantial and legitimate about Persian philosophical thought and the early Academy.

In this article I hope to demonstrate two main points: (1) that the discourse about magism was fully developed by both Greek and Persian sources as early as Herodotus (c.485–c.425 BCE), and that this discourse came to be significantly more advanced when it was appropriated by philosophers in the early Academy and by the his-

¹³ In assessing the usefulness of magism, broadly construed, to philosophical schools around 350 BCE, I shall necessarily be forced to overlook certain aspects of the representation of Persian culture in Greek popular theatre (in e.g. Sophocles, Euripides, or Aristophanes) and in the traditions of medical texts (such as the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease*), although the appearance or reference to *magoi* in theatre and in the Hippocratic traditions certainly influenced the discourse itself of magism that Plato and other philosophers inherited. On this issue, I have little to add to the analyses of J. Bremmer, 'The Birth of the Term "Magic"' ['Birth'], in id., *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden, 2008), 235–48 at 237–8; D. Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World [Magic]* (Malden, Mass., 2008), 54–6; M. Carastro, *La Cité des mages: penser la magie en Grèce ancienne [Cité]* (Grenoble, 2006), 38–43; and M. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World [Magic]* (London, 2001), 35–40.

torian Theopompus of Chios after the death of Plato in 347 BCE;¹⁴ (2) that the associates of Plato, especially Aristotle, Eudoxus of Cnidus, Hermodorus of Syracuse, and Philip of Opus, appealed to characteristics of Persian wisdom traditions in order to differentiate their own individualized philosophical systems from one another. In the course of making these arguments, we shall see several new propositions that will force us to reconsider the issue of Persian thought and its place in the establishment of Greek philosophical institutions in the mid-fourth century BCE: (1a) concerning my first main point, I shall refute the oft-proposed assumption that authentic and nuanced knowledge about the Zoroastrian gods occurs only *after* Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia (330 BCE); (2a) concerning my second main point, I shall highlight the unique regard for Zoroastrianism that the little-known Platonist Hermodorus of Syracuse held by proposing that the Platonized description of Ahuramazda, Angra Mainyu, and Mithra preserved by Plutarch in a famous passage in *On Isis and Osiris* (46–7 = 369 D 5–370 C 4, no. 3) may be attributed to Hermodorus. I shall conclude by returning to the dialogue between the Chaldaean Stranger and Plato, written by Philip of Opus and preserved on a papyrus from Herculaneum, and suggest that the associates of Plato believed that Persian thought anticipated and thereby justified the philosophy of their recently deceased sage.

2. The constitution of a discourse: Heraclitus, and the lie of the *maguš* Gaumāta in the Bisitun Inscription

The scholarly history of the significance of Persian thought to Plato and his successors begins in the mid-nineteenth century and has been recently investigated in a pair of publications by Phiroze Vasunia: his *Zarathushtra* presents a significant revision of Fox and Pemberton's 1929 collection and translation of the Greek and Latin sources into English, and he provides an exegesis of this material in 'Philosopher's'. In general, Vasunia's approach is to contextualize the influential arguments of Peter Kingsley regarding Persian thought and Greek philosophy with theories of Orientalism (Edward Said) and Collective Memory (Maurice Halbwachs and Jan

¹⁴ See A. De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* [Traditions] (Leiden, 1997), and Carastro, *Cité*, chs. 1 and 2.

Assmann) in order to understand 'how this figure [of Zarathuštra] was used and creatively appropriated by Greek elites'.¹⁵ Vasunia's approach may be characterized as more balanced vis-à-vis the textual evidence and less explicitly concerned with 'assessing the truth or authenticity of a particular representation of Zarathuštra' than that of Kingsley, and in this sense Vasunia's work improves upon Kingsley's discoveries while remaining objective from ethical, historical, and political points of view.¹⁶ On the other hand, his conclusions, while valid, are too general with regard to the questions we have posed at the outset of this investigation: 'an intellectual elite . . . used a Persian wise man for its own domestic purposes in the complicated world of the fourth century and . . . remained in thrall to him during a period of shifting allegiances'.¹⁷ Indeed, the evidence regarding the appropriation of Zarathuštra (or, Zoroastrēs, as the Greeks called him)¹⁸ in Greek intellectual culture supports this thesis, although the proposal does not clearly establish why Persian wisdom traditions presented Greek philosophers and historians with a unique point of reference around which to dispute specific allegiances. Or, to put it another way: why did Zarathuštianism generate such interest among the associates of Plato (including those who participated in the early Academy and Aristotle) and, as we shall see, other figures involved in the intellectual culture of Greece before the rise of Alexander the Great?

One of the problems with assessing this question is the challenging nature of the evidence itself. It is well established that the various sources of evidence in Greek that date to the fifth and fourth

¹⁵ Vasunia, 'Philosopher's', 240. The two articles of Kingsley are 'Magi' and 'The Greek Origin of the Sixth-Century Dating of Zoroaster', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 53 (1990), 245–65.

¹⁶ Vasunia, 'Philosopher's', 240. Even so, Vasunia notes that 'the use of Zarathushtra by Greek sources upsets conventional scholarly views about the implacable hostility of the Greeks and Persians in the fifth and fourth centuries', which should be localized in the first quarter of the 5th cent. BCE. Instead, as has been argued by W. Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* [Eastern] (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), and M. C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997), disparate social groups (which espoused various political ideologies) responded differently to the image of Persia following the end of the Persian Wars.

¹⁷ Vasunia, 'Philosopher's', 254.

¹⁸ On the linguistic relationship between the various Greek and Persian formulations of this name, see R. Schmitt, 'Onomastica Iranica Platonica', in C. Mueller-Goldingen and K. Sier (eds.), *Lênaiika: Festschrift für Carl Werner Müller* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1996), 81–102 at 93–8.

centuries BCE offer fragmentary and sometimes conflicting representations of the Persian *magoi*.¹⁹ If a single concept of ‘magism’ is to be posited, we must recognize that it functions for us heuristically in order that we may speak more efficiently about ancient Greek and Persian cultures. In this sense, ‘magism’ must remain a term that refers to a complex of cultural positions informed by so-called ‘exotopic’ narratives, and its semantic range must be flexible enough to account for the variety of positions that inform it.²⁰ One approach that can account for this variety is, broadly speaking, historical, and it accounts for the development of concepts such as ‘magism’ by foreign observers. An effective recent advocate of this approach to studying the Greek reception, interpretation, and appropriation of the *magoi* has been Matthew Dickie, whose analysis of the formation of the Greek concept of ‘magic’ focuses especially on the earliest representation of *magoi* in a fragment attributed to Heraclitus of Ephesus (late sixth century BCE). As Dickie demonstrates, Heraclitus’ attack on the *magoi* and other persons who practised initiations into the mysteries of Dionysus is significant evidence. Here, in the earliest surviving Greek reference to *magoi*, they are associated—though, notably, not simply identified—with peoples who practised the mystic rites of Dionysus: speaking of ‘night-wanderers’ (νυκτιπόλοι), ‘Bacchants’ (Βάκχοι, *Λήναι*), and ‘initiates’ (μύσται), Heraclitus claims that ‘the sacred rites practised among men are celebrated in an unholy manner’ (τὰ νομιζόμενα κατ’ ἀνθρώπους μυστήρια ἀνιερωσὶ μνεῖνται).²¹ In the context of such censure, we should be suspicious that Heraclitus’ association of *magoi* with initiates into the cult of Dionysus may include elisions of type that cannot be carefully assessed because of his critical bias. Still, the association is telling, although this evidence in and of itself does not necessarily warrant Dickie’s claim that the *magoi* and followers of Dionysus

¹⁹ Jan Bremmer acutely notices that, among the Greek sources, we can divide the responses into legitimate and dubious in accordance with genres: positive responses paint a picture of legitimate ‘hereditary technologists of the sacred’ (‘Birth’, 239) in history and philosophy, whereas negative appraisals are more frequent in tragedy, comedy, and medical texts. I would add that these latter genres also tend to represent philosophy and philosophers in a negative light.

²⁰ Compare Vasunia’s discussion of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘creative understanding’ in cultural ideology (*Zarathushtra*, 15–16).

²¹ 22 B 14 DK=Clem. *Protr.* 22 (no. 543), trans. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield. Some scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity and precise wording of this fragment. For a recent listing of the positions taken, see Bremmer, ‘Birth’, 236 with n. 9.

were ‘*offering* initiation into the mysteries’ to other people.²² Importantly, Dickie here assumes that initiation into the mysteries that the *magoi* and followers of Dionysus practised was available to political agents—particularly people who sought private initiations in place of civic cult—whose ethnic or political affiliation was other than their own.²³ In order for this claim to be substantiated, however, we are required to contextualize its contents with later accounts of *magoi* that derive from the end of the fifth century BCE and later, where it appears that *some magoi*, at any rate, were interested in incorporating followers from other groups.²⁴ Moreover, Heraclitus’ fragment raises further concerns: what distinguishes the *magoi* to whom Heraclitus refers from (a) the followers of Dionysus and (b) other kinds of people labelled *magoi* in the sixth and early fifth centuries BCE? For that matter, does any evidence exist—especially evidence from both Greek and Persian sources—that could provide for us a cross-section of information about Persian *magoi* not only as they were represented by Greeks but also as they were portrayed by Persians themselves?

As we have indicated, Heraclitus of Ephesus marks the oldest surviving occurrence of *magoi* in Greek traditions, around the time of the Ionian Revolts (end of the sixth century BCE). This association of *magoi* with other followers of the god Dionysus represents the earliest example of a correlation that would come to be influential over philosophers, especially Plato, in the mid-fourth century BCE, as I shall discuss below. For now, however, it is important to note that the evidence illustrated by Heraclitus’ criticism derives from his experiences in western Asia Minor at the end of the sixth century BCE, and that, based on the fact that Ephesus had been under Persian suzerainty for around forty years (after 547 BCE), it is possible that Heraclitus is referring either to true *magoi* as priests of

²² Dickie, *Magic*, 29 (emphasis added).

²³ Late evidence (Philostratus, *VS* 1. 10. 1, no. 144) exists for the idea that the Persian *magoi* did not give instruction to anyone except Persians, unless the King allowed it.

²⁴ The earliest evidence that suggests that *magoi* attempted to initiate Greeks comes from the Derveni Papyrus (text c.400 BCE), on which see below. The only other direct references to anything involving the public activities of *magoi* in Greece during the 5th cent. BCE, viz. Gorg. *Hel.* 10 (no. 173), Soph. *OT* 395–8 (no. 174), and Eur. *Or.* 1490–9 (no. 175), and perhaps the Hippocratic *DMS* 2 (no. 176), make absolutely no mention of initiations. Instead, the focus is on charlatanism and the acquisition of money by means of deception. For historical accounts of magism in the 5th and 4th cents. BCE (Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, and Dinon), see below.

Zarathuštra or to charlatans who called themselves *magoi*, or even to other legitimate religious practitioners (i.e. non-Persians) who simply called themselves *magoi*.²⁵ Any further discussion of this matter that takes into account the evidence as extracted from Heraclitus' fragment alone would be speculative.

In fact, there remains a variety of different kinds of evidence collected from different media (surviving papyri, inscriptions, ritual objects, and oral poetry) in various languages (Greek, Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, Aramaic, Old and Young Avestan) that allows us to go beyond these safe, if unsatisfying, conclusions.²⁶ The earliest evidence that provides us with comparanda for Heraclitus' fragment actually pre-dates his floruit (504–1 BCE)²⁷ by fifteen years: the Bisitun Inscription, a trilingual inscription (Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian) located in the Zagros Mountains on the road from Babylon to the Median capital Egbatana in modern Iran and inscribed between c.520 and 518 BCE.²⁸ This inscription, which accompanies a relief sculpture that illustrates the conquering of the rebellious peoples who came to be under the control of the Persian King Darius, represents the earliest in a series of inscriptions put up by Darius and his successors that reflects a relatively stable ideological programme of the Persian 'King of Kings' (Old Persian *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām*) for a period of nearly two centuries.²⁹ This programme, which I shall for the sake of convenience call the 'Kingly' ideology, was not simply relegated to the inscribed stones that were found in various sacred or significant spaces throughout the Persian Empire. It is an ideology and a

²⁵ Cf. Dickie, *Magic*, 28. W. Burkert suggests that the hereditary family structure of the esoteric community would have provoked negative valuations of 'craftsmen of the sacred' (*The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. M. E. Pinder and W. Burkert (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 41–5).

²⁶ A useful collection of these textual materials from the Achaemenid period translated into French can be found in P. Lecoq, *Les Inscriptions de la Perse achéménide: traduit du vieux perse, de l'élamite, du babylonien et de l'araméen* [*Inscriptions*] (Paris, 1997).

²⁷ 22 A 1 DK.
²⁸ The best description of the Bisitun Inscription is in R. Schmitt and H. Luschey, 'Bisotūn', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (<http://www.iranica.com/newsite/>) [accessed 7 Mar. 2009]. Scholars of the history of magic (e.g. F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* [*Magic*] (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 21) have glanced in passing at the Persian source material but have not fully explored its significance.

²⁹ All citations and translations (with minor changes) of the Old Persian text of the Bisitun Inscription are from R. Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great: Old Persian Text* (London, 1991).

programme in the fullest senses of these terms. For instance, fragmentary copies of the Bisitun Inscription were not only found in Babylon (inscribed in basalt and translated into Babylonian), but also in Elephantine/Jeb in Egypt (papyrus fragment in Aramaic and datable to c.420 BCE).³⁰ This evidence suggests that the Bisitun Inscription was translated and copied (and recopied)³¹ until the latter part of the fifth century BCE in areas of Persian influence, in keeping with Ahuramazda's express wish that the inscription, 'composed on clay tablets and parchment', would be 'sent off everywhere in the provinces'.³² One of those provinces, of course, would have been Ephesus.³³

It would be impossible to summarize, in a few sentences (or in a single article), the characteristics of the 'Kingly' ideology, a project that has required book-length treatments by both Bruce Lincoln and, in a slightly different tenor, Margaret Cool Root.³⁴ What these studies have demonstrated is the recurrence of, as Root calls them, 'conceptual patterns' that demonstrate the 'official programmatic effort on a grand and universal scale' in Persian written documents and artistic representation.³⁵ I shall attempt to shed light on those

³⁰ Texts of the fragments of the Aramaic copy of the Bisitun Inscription, originally published in A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1923), are also available in J. C. Greenfield and B. Porten, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Aramaic Version* (London, 1982).

³¹ Cf. Schmitt and Luschey, 'Bisotūn'.

³² DB 4. 88–92. I shall discuss the significance of this passage below.

³³ Ever since Cyrus, Persian rulers had wished to maintain a close relationship between the centre and Ephesus, as evidenced by a sanctuary of Apollo in nearby Clarus maintained by the King himself. Diogenes Laertius (9. 13–14, no. 542) preserves a spurious correspondence between Darius and Heraclitus in which the King requests Heraclitus' presence in Persia in order to learn from the σοφός. In the context of the significance of 'Truth/Cosmic Order' (*aša*) to Darius' ideological programme (on which see below), 'Heraclitus' response is worth quoting: 'All men of the earth [*ἐπιχθόνιοι*] hold aloof from truth and justice [*τῆς μὲν ἀληθείας καὶ δικαιοπραγμοσύνης*], and, by reason of base folly, they devote themselves to greed and thirst for popularity. But I, in my ignorance of all wickedness, and in shunning the general insolence which is at home with envy, and on account of my abstinence from splendour, would not come to the land of the Persians, when a little suffices in my judgement.' The spurious response posits, rather obviously, 'Heraclitus' slander of the Persian King by disregarding the King's elevated status and challenging the appeal to 'truth' and 'justice' that recurs in the Achaemenid 'Kingly' ideology. See below.

³⁴ B. Lincoln, *Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia with a Postscript on Abu Gharib [Empire]* (Chicago, 2007); M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire [King and Kingship]* (Leiden, 1979).

³⁵ See Root, *King and Kingship*, 309. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg sees coex-

characteristics of these recurring ‘conceptual patterns’ in Persian ideology that (a) engage in constructing meaning(s) for the term *magos* (Old Persian *maguš*, Elamite *makuš*, Avestan **magavan-*) and (b) could have informed the Greek discourse about Zoroastrianism that the schools of Greek philosophy inherited and consequently appropriated.

The inscription at Bisitun is notable for its representation of the *maguš* Gaumâta, who is located on the losing side of the cosmic battle between ‘Truth/Cosmic Order’ (Avestan *aša*) and ‘the Lie’ (Avestan *druxš*),³⁶ a duality cultivated in Zoroastrian traditions that had been attested in the *Yasna* of Zarathuštra, composed in Avestan some time between 1000 and 600 BCE.³⁷ Indeed, the *maguš* Gaumâta’s activity of ‘lying’, cognate with the activities of rebelling and of disrupting and confiscating the legitimate house (Old Persian *viθ-*, Avestan **vis-*,³⁸ Elamite *ulhi*, Greek *οἶκος*)³⁹ that

tension between Persian wisdom traditions and what she calls ‘royal behaviour’, referring to τὰ βασιλικά as mentioned at Plato, *Alcibiades I* 122 A (no. 282) (‘Political Concepts in Old-Persian Royal Inscriptions’ [‘Political’], in K. Raaflaub (ed.), *Anfänge politischen Denkens in der Antike: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (Munich, 1993), 145–64 at 150–1). I shall discuss this term in sect. 4 of this article. On universality and its significance in the Bisitun Inscription, see C. Herrenschmidt, ‘Aspects universalistes de la religion et de l’idéologie de Darius I^{er}’, in G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti (eds.), *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata* (Rome, 1987), 617–25.

³⁶ For the meaning of *aša* as both ‘Truth’ and ‘Cosmic Order’, see P. O. Skjærvø, ‘Truth and Deception in Ancient Iran’, in C. Cereti and F. Vajifdar (eds.), *Ātaš-e Dorun: The Fire Within* ([1st Book Publishing], 2003), 383–434, who describes the distinction thus: ‘Most importantly, to the Indo-Iranians, as to us, “truth” and “lie” is “truth or lie about something,” and as we have seen, in the Avesta, the Lie is “lie about what *aša* is”—it is not the algebraic “opposite” of “truth,” although it is its cosmic opponent’ (414).

³⁷ See two publications by P. O. Skjærvø, ‘Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions’, in S. Shaked and A. Netzer (eds.), *Irano-Judaica*, iv. *Studies relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem, 1999), 1–64 at 5–10, and ‘The Avesta as Source for the Early History of the Iranians’, in G. Erdosy (ed.), *The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia* (Berlin and New York, 1995), 155–76.

³⁸ These words are not perfect semantic cognates, as Lecoq shows (*Inscriptions*, 170). Old Persian *viθ-* appears to relate to the family lineage (Gk. *οἶκος*), whereas the term *zana* (Gk. *γένος*) marks the clan relationship; in Avestan, *dmān-* refers to family, while *vis-* refers to the clan. It may be, however, that these semantic relationships are somewhat more porous and less delimited.

³⁹ Generally, the term *ulhi* is coextensive with Greek *οἶκος* in the sense of ‘estate’, although there are further semantic implications with the concept of a ‘clan’. Cf. P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. P. T. Daniels [*History*] (Winona Lake, 2002), 103–4 and 445–6.

governs the Persian kingdom (Old Persian *xšaça-*, Avestan *xšaθr-*),⁴⁰ is represented as the false identification of himself as the rightful heir Bardiya:⁴¹

Proclaims Darius, the King: ‘Afterwards, there was one single man, a *maguš*, Gaumāta by name, he rose up from Paišiyāvādā—[there is] a mountain, Arakadri by name—from there; in the month Viyakhna fourteen days had passed, when he rose up. He lied [*adurujiya*] to the people thus: “I am Bardiya, the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses.” Afterwards all the people began to rebel against Cambyses [and] went [over] to him, Persia as well as Media and the other countries, [and] he seized the kingship/kingdom [*xšaçam agarbāyatā*]. In the month of Garmapada nine days had passed, then he seized the kingship/kingdom [*xšaçam agarbāyatā*].’ (DB 1. 35–43)

What is apparent from this passage is that ‘lying’ as it is practised by the *maguš* Gautama refers specifically to the act of impersonating someone else, or, to be more specific, of assuming someone else’s name.⁴² Lying, then, is an activity correlative with false self-identification, and it is expressly associated with a *maguš* here and elsewhere in the fifth-century Greek accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias.⁴³ As Lincoln has recently shown, the *maguš* Gaumāta’s activities of lying and catalysing rebellions throughout the empire are counterposed—in the narrative structure of the inscription—by Darius’ rightful and solemn act of restoring cosmic order by killing the impersonator and assuming control over the kingdom (*xšaça-*) aided by the will of Ahuramazda, the Wise Lord (*vašnā Auramazdāha*).⁴⁴ What is more, the sacred act of publishing the edict itself is represented as an attack on the Lie, its advocates, and

⁴⁰ As Bruce Lincoln correctly points out (*Empire*, 45), this word can mean ‘kingdom’ or ‘kingship’, an ambiguity whose economy is maximized in the Bisitun Inscription.

⁴¹ The accounts of Darius, Herodotus, Ctesias, and Justin vary on several points, which have been discussed by Briant, *History*, 98–106.

⁴² The economy of the Bisitun Inscription is evident: note that even the common phrase ‘by name’ (*nāma*) emphasizes the crime of name-stealing. See also DB 4. 2–31, where, again in a description of Gaumāta, *nāma* recurs with the verb *adurujiya*. This same formula recurs in the case of other people who make claims to be a legitimate ‘king’ of areas under Persian control, such as the Elamite Ācina or the Mede Fravartīš, who claimed to be ‘Khshathrita, of the family of Cyaxares’.

⁴³ See Hdt. 1. 128. 66–7 (no. 128) and Ctesias FGrHist 688 F 13 (no. 130).

⁴⁴ Lincoln, *Empire*, 46–9. Note, in the smaller inscriptions accompanying the reliefs (DBa–j), which mark the identity of each rebellious people, Darius restates that each respective leader ‘lied’ by taking a false name and declaring that he was ‘King’.

its activity of ‘concealing’ (*apagaudayā*).⁴⁵ Indeed, Darius goes so far as to curse those who would ‘conceal’ the record of his accomplishments.⁴⁶ The general effect of these narrative foils produces a juxtaposition in which the *maguš* Gaumāta, who functions in virtual metonymy for the Lie, is the threat that has undermined (for a short time) the cosmic order overseen by the triad of Ahuramazda, the tool that carries forward Ahuramazda’s will (*aša*), and his terrestrial representative, Darius.⁴⁷ Of course, by defeating the imposter, Darius helps to restore order to the cosmos.

Now whether Gaumāta, as *maguš*, was a priest of Ahuramazda or simply a member of the tribe of the Magians from Media cannot be gleaned from this text alone;⁴⁸ if the former, then the extent of his profanation of the ethical codes and rites handed down by Zarathuštra, which emphasized good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, could not be ignored by any adherent of the Mazdaean religion(s).⁴⁹ Regardless, the logic of the inscriptions and relief sculptures compels us to consider Gaumāta as a representative

⁴⁵ Various terms for ‘concealment’ (e.g. *apagaudaya*, *apagaudayāhi*) appear at DB 4. 52–9.

⁴⁶ DB 4. 57–9.

⁴⁷ On Darius’ intermediary position in the relief sculpture at Naqš-e Rostam, see M. L. West, ‘Darius’ Ascent to Paradise’, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 45 (2002), 51–7. It should be noted that in the Bisitun Inscription Darius is explicit about the reconstitution of order within the kingdom: ‘Proclaims Darius, the King: “The kingship/kingdom [*xšaç-*], which had been taken away from our family, that I reinstated; I put it in its proper place. Just as [they were] previously, so I made the places of worship, which Gaumāta the *maguš* had destroyed; I restored to the people the farmsteads, the livestock, the menials, and the houses, of which Gaumāta the *maguš* had despoiled them. I put the people in its proper place, Persia and Media and the other countries. Just as [it was] previously, so I restored what had been taken away. By the favour of Ahuramazda this I did. I strove, until I had put our [royal] house in its proper place, just as [it was] previously. So I strove by the favour of Ahuramazda that Gaumāta the *maguš* did not dispossess our royal house (*viθ-*).”’ For the contrast between ‘Truth’ and ‘the Lie’ in the Bisitun Inscription, see also DB 4. 36–50.

⁴⁸ As P. Briant notes (‘Gaumāta’, in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (<http://www.iranica.com/newsite/>) [accessed 7 Mar. 2009]), the Old Persian and Elamite inscriptions refer to him as a *maguš* and *makuš*, respectively. For Herodotus (1. 101, no. 121), the *magoi* are considered a tribe of the Medes. Ammianus Marcellinus (23. 6. 35–6, no. 127) gives us the fullest account of the development of the *magoi*, from small group of priests employed in Persian governance, to become a ‘real individual people’ (*gens solida*).

⁴⁹ Note, for instance, the contrast with Darius in the Bisitun Inscription (DB 4. 61–4): ‘For that reason Ahuramazda, and the other gods who exist, bore me aid: because I was not disloyal, I was not a follower of the Lie, I was no evil-doer, neither I nor my family, [but] I acted in accordance with righteousness/justice [*rštām upariyāyam*].’

for other *magoi*: after all, each of the other defeated individual figures in the relief sculpture stands in as a representative for his own unique rebellious tribe. It is thus clear that before Heraclitus declared his censure of *magoi* and other mystic practitioners—notably those associated with the worship of Dionysus—the negative appraisal of a certain representative *maguš* from the Persian Empire was being distributed in imperial Persian propaganda that drew centre and periphery into a relationship of unanimity against the Lie and its ‘advocates’. Moreover, the publication and distribution of the account of the coercion, concealment, and deception of the *maguš* Gaumāta were themselves figured as a sacred act, willed by Ahuramazda himself, that provided stability and integration to the region that comprised the peoples of the Persian Empire. It is tempting to see Heraclitus’ criticism of the *magoi* and other initiates—who, by definition, engaged in private rituals whose activities were practised in secret—in the light of the censure of the *maguš* Gaumāta and his tribe in the Bisitun Inscription. After all, the story of the *maguš* Gaumāta influenced the characterization of the *magoi* in the accounts of other fifth-century BCE Greeks, including both Ctesias of Cnidus and Herodotus of Halicarnassus. Ctesias, whose historical information was probably obtained via oral transmission, clearly knew the story of the deception of the *maguš* Gaumata (whom he calls Sphendadates) as well as the subsequent ‘slaughter of the *magoi*’ that took place following Darius’ ascension to the throne.⁵⁰ Moreover, the account of the *magoi* as preserved by Herodotus features such remarkable similarities to the narrative as recounted on the Bisitun Inscription that we can have little, if any, doubt that Herodotus inherited the discourse about magism that had been propagated nearly a century earlier by the King of Kings himself, Darius the Great. It is to this account, and to other accounts of magism that originate in areas influenced by Persian governance, that we now turn.

⁵⁰ Cf. FGrHist 688 F 13 (=Phot. *Bibl.* 72. 37 A–40 A, nos. 130 and 261). Ctesias’ account is interestingly different from those of Herodotus or Justin (who agrees with Herodotus). This is significant because it suggests that Ctesias’ account is not derived from Herodotus, but is probably from another oral tradition. For Ctesias, see Briant, *History*, 6 and 98–9.

3. A discourse inherited: *magoi* in the Derveni Papyrus and Herodotus' *Histories*

The remarkable coupling of *magoi* with mystic followers of Dionysus to which Heraclitus referred is not unparalleled in areas where Persian political influence can be detected in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Evidence from late fifth-century BCE Macedonia, which had had a complicated relationship with Persian politics and culture that dates back at least a century and to Darius himself,⁵¹ suggests that the activities of *magoi* could be figured in a more positive light than has been preserved in the Bisitun Inscription (in Old Persian, Babylonian, Aramaic, and Elamite), in Ctesias' *Persica*, and in Heraclitus' fragment (in Greek). The recent publication of a complete text of the papyrus roll found at Derveni in Thessaloniki (text c.400 BCE)⁵² demonstrates connections between initiates of an Orphic–Dionysiac⁵³ ritual community (*mystai*) and *magoi*, whose duty, we are told, is to deter the 'impeding *daimones*' by singing an 'incantation' (ἐπ[ωιδή])⁵⁴ and rendering gifts to the dead by pouring libations of water and milk:

⁵¹ For a historical account of the establishment of the Persian protectorate in Macedonia, see Briant, *History*, 141–6. Recently, B. Barr-Sharrar has examined the mystic iconography of the so-called Derveni Krater, which was placed in tomb B (adjacent to tomb A, where the papyrus was found), and has hypothesized that the members of tombs A and B were in the same family or *thiasos* (*The Derveni Krater: Masterpiece of Classical Greek Metalwork* (Princeton, 2008), 182–4). At any rate, she claims, the eschatological hope for heroic immortality was 'particularly strong among the late-5th- and 4th-B.C. Macedonians' (181).

⁵² Of course, it is not necessarily the case that the Derveni Papyrus was written by someone from Macedonia. What is significant, however, is that certain Macedonians of the warrior class thought it worth owning and burying such a scroll.

⁵³ This term is an adaptation of W. Burkert's 'Orphic–Bacchic', which, he notes (*Eastern*, 82, 86–7), is as old a correlation as Herodotus (2. 81). For a historical analysis of the issue, see F. Graf and S. I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (New York, 2007), 142–3.

⁵⁴ This is the text as supplemented originally by Tsantsanoglou and accepted by Betegh and Kouromenos, although Tsantsanoglou also proposed ἐν[τομα or 'sacrificial victims', which would alter the meaning of the ceremony significantly. On this term see Collins, *Magic*, 57–8. The term 'incantation' (ἐπ[ωιδή]) is borrowed by the editors from Herodotus (1. 132. 3, no. 1) and assumes a connection between the *magoi* as figured by Herodotus and those of the Derveni Papyrus. Later evidence, especially from Lucian's *Menippus* (see n. 56), lends credence to the second reading, as does independent 5th-cent. BCE evidence from magical spells, on which see R. Kotansky, 'Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets', in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, 1991), 107–37 at 108–10.

... prayers and sacrifices appease the souls, while the incantation [ἐπ[ωιδῆ] of the *magoi* is able to drive away the *daimones* who are hindering; hindering *daimones* are vengeful souls (*or*: hostile to souls). This is why the *magoi* perform the sacrifice, as if they are paying a retribution. And on the offerings they pour water and milk, from which they also make the libations to the dead. Innumerable and many-knobbed are the cakes they sacrifice, because the souls too are innumerable. *Mystai* make the preliminary sacrifice to the Eumenides in the same way the *magoi* do; for the Eumenides are souls. On their account anyone who is going to sacrifice to the gods must first [sacrifice] a bird ... and the ... and they are ... this and as many [*fem.*] as ...⁵⁵

This passage is important for our understanding of the relationship between *magoi*, as they are described here, and initiates within an Orphic–Dionysiac tradition that was practised by the Derveni commentator. Given the fragmentary state of the text, it is difficult to assess clearly how the *magoi* and the Orphic–Dionysiac *mystai* relate to one another,⁵⁶ and scholars have taken various positions on this relationship.⁵⁷ The evidence from Heraclitus discussed above would seem to suggest that these various ritual communities could

⁵⁵ Derveni Papyrus col. vi (no. 531), trans. Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, slightly modified.

⁵⁶ The initiation of Menippus in Lucian's *Menippus* 6–8 (no. 155) provides an excellent point of comparison. In it, a *magos* named Mithrobarzanes initially bathes Menippus in the Euphrates while addressing the sun in a 'long speech' (ῥῆσιν τινα μακρὰν ἐπιλέγων) that was 'mouthed in a voluble and unintelligible fashion' (ἐπίτροχόν τι καὶ ἀσαφές ἐφθέγγετο), which the speaker takes to be an invocation of *daimones*. Subsequently, the *magos* and Menippus eat (fruit, milk, honey, water from the Chaospes) together, and the speaker is taken to the Tigris and cleansed while the *magos* 'mutters an incantation' (τὴν ἐπωδὴν ὑποτονθορύσας), a process which may be similar to his later prayer (at *Menippus* 9) to Hecate and Persephone in which were 'intermingled some barbaric and meaningless words of many syllables' (παραμυγνὺς ἄμα βαρβαρικά τινα καὶ ἄσημα ὀνόματα καὶ πολυσύλλαβα). Once Menippus has been made into a *magos* (καταμαγεύσας) himself, the senior *magos* walks around him to prevent harm from the 'phantoms' (ὑπὸ τῶν φασμάτων) and they travel home. Finally, the speaker receives the proper clothing and is told no longer to say that his name was 'Menippus' but that he was 'Heracles or Odysseus or Orpheus'. In this case, the adoption of a new name signifies the advanced status as hero, but it still marks the taking of a name that was not originally one's own.

⁵⁷ A useful summary of scholars' views on the problem can be found in *The Derveni Papyrus*, ed. and comm. T. Kouremenos, G. M. Parássoglou, and K. Tsantsanoglou [*Derveni*] (Florence, 2006), 166–8. I disagree with their procedure in determining that 'charlatans' is the probable intended meaning here (cf. also pp. 50–1) because I do not think that we ought to privilege either the Hippocratic author of *On the Sacred Disease* or Plato with regard to the information preserved in the Derveni Papyrus. Concerning the former, his understanding of *magoi* derives from the Heraclitean 'negative' tradition, and concerning the latter, Plato inherited the discourse surrounding these issues and did not himself invent it. We should

be associated with one another, although, if the Derveni commentator himself were an initiate of the Orphic–Dionysiac mysteries, it would not be surprising for him to distinguish his own caste from other ritual communities (even though there is no direct or indirect censure of the activities of the *magoi*). Regardless, the emphasis here is on what differentiates *mystai* and *magoi* from one another *in a ritual performance*: as Walter Burkert has noted, the *mystai*, like the *magoi*, participate in the preliminary sacrifice, but their imitation of the *magoi* in the ceremony apparently ends there. There is no mention, for instance, of the *mystai* joining the *magoi* in singing the hymn.⁵⁸ Later evidence, preserved in Lucian's *Menippus* (second century CE), gives us a sense of the roles that the *magos* and the *mystēs* could play in the Orphic–Dionysiac initiation: there, it is clear that the *magos* sings, while the *mystēs* does not, and, moreover, that the *mystēs* cannot understand the 'barbaric' utterances of the songs.⁵⁹ Roles in the Orphic–Dionysiac initiatory performance are, in this case, distinguished both by status and by ethnicity. Since the songs of the *magoi* represent an element that establishes the otherness that magism presents to Greek culture, we might want to examine it also as a locus of cultural difference.⁶⁰ What are we to make of the proposition that the *mystai* do not apparently sing the song with the *magoi* in the Derveni Papyrus?

In order to contextualize the question, we might consider ways in which the evidence presented in the Bisitun Inscription, the fragments of Heraclitus, and the Derveni Papyrus could help to construct a paradigm by which to understand cross-cultural relationships between Orphic–Dionysiac and Persian ritual performers. Tsantsanoglou and Burkert, for instance, have pointed to the correlation between the *magoi* whom the Derveni Author is describing and the Persian *magoi* described by Herodotus, whose *Histories*

therefore be wary of according his opinions—much less those of non-authoritative speakers such as Adeimantus in the *Republic*—too much weight.

⁵⁸ Burkert, *Eastern*, 117–21. Or perhaps, if we accept the supplement ἐν[τομα, the sacrifice itself. If so, we would have to assume that the *mystai* produce the sacrificial offerings of cake (and perhaps poultry), but do not proceed to pour out the wineless χοαί. See *Derveni*, 168–70, and K. Tsantsanoglou, 'The First Columns of the Derveni Papyrus and their Religious Significance' ['Columns'], in A. Laks and G. W. Most (eds.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford, 1997), 93–128 at 111. As De Jong notes (*Traditions*, 111–12), Greek libations prepared and concluded the sacrifice, whereas, for the Persians, libation rituals and sacrifice of animals could be performed separately.

⁵⁹ See n. 56.

⁶⁰ Cf. Bremmer, 'Birth', 246 with n. 61.

display an awareness both of the Gaumāta episode of the Bisitun Inscription (albeit in a modified form) and of the sentiments expressed in the fragments of Heraclitus.⁶¹ If we follow these scholars and assume that the process as it is being described in the Derveni Papyrus is comparable to the Persian ceremony mentioned by Herodotus (1. 131–2), then we can fill in some of the gaps that remain: there, Herodotus explains that a person who wishes to make a sacrifice among the Persians must wear a tiara that has been adorned with a wreath—often of myrtle—and lead an animal to a purified location. The ritual paraphernalia are restricted to the sacrificial victim, the wreath,⁶² the knife or cudgel (we must assume),⁶³ and something within which to boil the victim, except the *barəsmān* that the *magoi* routinely carry (which appears to provide the bundle of grass upon which the boiled meat is placed) and the Persian clothing, including the veil (which corresponds to the Avestan *pādam*) and the Magian tiara.⁶⁴ The rite is performed out in the open, often on top of a mountain. According to Herodotus, it is forbidden to engage in this ritual in a temple.⁶⁵ The initiate must pray for the good of the Persian people and, significantly, the Persian King, for, as Herodotus tells us, '[the initiate] himself is [*or, more likely, comes-to-be*: γίγεται] one among all the Persians'. Subsequently, he is required to cut up the victim 'limb by limb' (κατὰ μέρη) and boil it, and finally lay out some tender grass upon which he places the meat. Finally, the *magos* who stands nearby sings a theogony (θεογονίη), which Herodotus claims is what the Persians call an

⁶¹ Tsantsanoglou, 'Columns', 110–17. Cf. Burkert, *Eastern*, 120–3, where he points out that the sacrifice of the *magoi* in the Derveni Papyrus has more in common with Iranian religious concepts and practices than chthonic worship in mainland Greece.

⁶² On which see De Jong, *Traditions*, 110–12.

⁶³ Cf. Strabo 15. 3. 15 (no. 2), where he distinguishes the activities of Persian and Cappadocian *magoi*: the Persian *magos* is responsible for cutting the meat up with a knife, while the Cappadocian *magos* beats the animal to death with a wooden cudgel. Cf. M. Boyce with F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, iii. *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule [Macedonian]* (Leiden, 1991), 272–3, where the verb μαγύειν, employed in a 1st-cent. BCE bilingual inscription from Faraša (south-east Cappadocia), means 'sacrifice'.

⁶⁴ De Jong, *Traditions*, 118, refers to the *barəsmān*, which indicates both the small bundle of twigs and grass mound in the Younger Avesta. See Hdt. 1. 132. 1 (no. 1). The tiara appears to be worn by the priest and the sacrificer, but the sacrificer is marked by the wreath of flowers on the tiara. Cf. De Jong, *Traditions*, 114.

⁶⁵ This detail recalls the destruction of the temple of the foreign *daevā* and replacement in that location with proper honours to Ahuramazda and Artā in Xerxes' Persepolis inscription (XPh 35–41).

‘incantation’ (ἐπασιδή). The Persians, so claims Herodotus, do not have the ‘custom’ (νόμος) of sacrificing without a *magos* present.

In Herodotus’ account, the role that the *magos* plays is significant, but it appears that the majority of the performative activities (other than singing) are carried out by the layperson himself:⁶⁶ the *magos* is expected to preside over the ceremony and to sing an incantation, but there is no reference to his hand in the sacrificial act. In the light of Herodotus’ description, then, what can we say is the function of the *magos* in the ritual? We can infer from the text that he acts as representative of the Persian community (or, possibly, the Persian King himself, although it is unclear whether there is any difference between these concepts) and regulates the participation of the layperson in the religious ‘customs’ (νόμοι) of the Persians: note, for instance, that the initiate is not allowed to pray for himself but must pray for the health of the entire Persian community.⁶⁷ The focus on the preservation of the Persian *nomos* by appeal to the Persian King echoes the express desire of Darius in the Bisitun Inscription to preserve his own household (*viθ-*) by countering the Lie through publication, the result of which is the promotion of stability within the entire kingdom (*xšaç-*) in accordance with the will of Ahuramazda.⁶⁸

In general, the characterization of *magoi* as presented by Herodotus and the Derveni Papyrus appears to preserve the sociological function of *magoi* to help to maintain order within the cosmos that Ahuramazda had created and Darius had ‘restored’, even if they inherited the discourse of ‘concealment’ that must have been a real concern to Greeks, who probably could not understand the Indo-Iranian language, Avestan, in which the ‘incantations’ were sung.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ De Jong, *Traditions*, 114, highlights the correlation between this ceremony and the *narmanīia* ritual, which is also a lay sacrifice, in the Younger Avesta.

⁶⁷ Note the repetition of terms relating to *nomos*: νόμοισι, ἐνόμισαν, νομίζουσι, νόμος.

⁶⁸ This is also the substance of the prayer, inscribed at Darius’ tomb in Naqš-e Rostam (DNb 52–6), that the truth about Darius’ accomplishments may not ‘seem false’ (*duruxtam θadaya*). This last paragraph, as N. Sims-Williams has noted (‘The Final Paragraph of the Tomb-Inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50–60): The Old Persian Text in Light of an Aramaic Version’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 44 (1981), 1–7 at 1), is remarkable: it differs in subject-matter and is separated from other text by uninscribed space. A version of this text is also preserved in the Aramaic copy of DB, suggesting that later copyists incorporated this ideologically charged section of DNb into the popularizing version of DB disseminated throughout the empire.

⁶⁹ Cf. Eur. *IT* 1337–8 (κατῆδε βάρβαρα | μέλη μαγεύουσ’ ὥς φόνον νίζουσα δῆ), not included in Vasunia’s *Zarathushtra*; Paus. 5. 27. 5–6 (no. 275); Lucian, *Menippus* 9

But the fragmentary representation of the *magoi* in the Derveni Papyrus and the more comprehensive illustration in Herodotus' *Histories* lack some of the fundamental characteristics that are present in the surviving 'incantations' that Persian *magoi* sang in Avestan: there is no mention of the standard duality between Truth/Cosmic Order (*aša*) and the Lie (*druxš*) that underlies the cosmic ideology of both the Bisitun Inscription and the Old Avestan texts of the *Yasna*, or, for that matter, of the cosmological principle of Good Mind (*vohu manah*) and its model representative Ahuramazda (either as Zeus or as the Intelligent Lord).⁷⁰ Herodotus' understanding of the ritual practitioners he called *magoi* is superficial, but it is also unlikely that his Persian sources possessed a knowledge more extensive than his. Regarding the Derveni commentator, the case is less clear-cut: he appears to have had some experience in the ritual performance as presided over by *magoi*, but the fragmentary nature of the text does not allow us to deduce whether those fundamental elements that characterized legitimate magism in Persian traditions were available to the Orphic–Dionysiac exegete.⁷¹

4. Magism and the early Academy: appropriations of Persian wisdom traditions in the dialogues of Plato

The representation of the *magoi* in the Derveni Papyrus is significant to our purposes in no small part because Plato appears to have had knowledge of the Orphic–Dionysiac mysteries, although we can

(cited above in n. 56). For overviews of the song culture of the *magoi* as described in antiquity, see De Jong, *Traditions*, 362–5, and, more recently, Bremmer, 'Birth', 245–7.

⁷⁰ Even if not explicitly correlative, the principle of Good Mind (*vohu manah*) could be highly significant for the interpretation of the cosmological portion of the Derveni Papyrus (roughly cols. XIII–XXI). A full analysis of this matter would require another study, but, for now, the reader interested in Mind in the Derveni Papyrus should consult G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation [Derveni]* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁷¹ J. R. Russell adduces later evidence and anthropological fieldwork in India to suggest that the *magoi* of the Derveni Papyrus are not only Persian, but indeed practitioners of the Zoroastrian Satûm service, in which Zoroastrian priests 'solemnize a meal in honor of the dead' and engage in a prayer called the *satûm no kardo* ('The Magi in the Derveni Papyrus', *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān*, 1/1 (Spring 2001), 49–59 at 54–6). The parallels between ancient and modern descriptions are suggestive but cannot be used as definitive proof of a historical import.

only speculate about the depth of this knowledge.⁷² What is more, the Derveni Papyrus' demonstration of Presocratic hermeneutics, specifically of an 'enigmatic' sort, resonates with experiments in onomatopoeia found in the passages of Plato's dialogues that deal with Orphism, notably in the *Cratylus*.⁷³ Plato, of course, worried about the dangers that the implication of onomatopoeia in ontology presented to his metaphysics. These questions cannot be extricated from a more general concern in the ancient world, as we saw with Darius in the Bisitun Inscription, with the ontological status of names and their referents: for Darius, the cosmos itself was under threat when the *maguš* Gaumāta 'lied' and took a name that was not 'truly' his. Such actions led to popular revolts that threatened the stability of both the Persian aristocratic hierarchy and the kingship that it supported.⁷⁴ For Plato, too, the issues of truth and naming took on remarkable political resonances:⁷⁵ in the *Cratylus*, Socrates claims that the lawgiver is expected to know how to 'embody in sounds and syllables that name which is fitted by nature to each thing',⁷⁶ regardless of the language that is being used, and regardless of whether or not the lawgiver is Greek or 'barbarian'.⁷⁷ Likewise, as Peter Struck has pointed out, Socrates' claim in the *Phaedrus* that truth (*ἀλήθεια*) is at stake in language at both the syntactic and the syllabic registers is a primary hypothesis of

⁷² On this topic see P. S. Horky, 'The Imprint of the Soul: Psychosomatic Affection in Plato, Gorgias, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets' ['Imprint'], *Mouseion*, 3/6 (2006), 383–98 at 390–8; M. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates* (University Park, Penn., 1996), 297–300; and M. L. Morgan, *Platonic Piety: Philosophy and Ritual in Fourth-Century Athens* (New Haven, 1990), 35–47.

⁷³ Cf. P. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers and the Limits of their Texts* [Symbol] (Princeton, 2004), 29–39, 53–9. For a useful analysis of the relationship between the etymologizing of the Derveni Papyrus and that practised by Cratylus in Plato's *Cratylus*, see R. Barney, *Names and Nature in Plato's Cratylus* [Names] (New York, 2001), 52–7.

⁷⁴ Such is the official viewpoint promoted by Darius, but the situation was doubtlessly more complicated. See Briant, *History*, 103–5. The *Cratylus*, to be sure, does away with analysis of personal names in order to pursue the correctness of names. On this topic see D. Sedley, *Plato's Cratylus* [Cratylus] (Cambridge, 2003), 86–9.

⁷⁵ Also emphasized by Barney (*Names*, 10–17), although she suggests, quite rightly, that the implications of the defective and imitative nature of names in the *Cratylus* are not positively manifested for Plato's political thought until the *Statesman*.

⁷⁶ τὸ ἐκάστω φύσει πεφυκὸς ὄνομα τὸν νομοθέτην ἐκεῖνον εἰς τοὺς φθόγγους καὶ τὰς συλλαβὰς δεῖ ἐπίστασθαι τιθέναι (Plato, *Crat.* 389 D 4–6, trans. Struck).

⁷⁷ See Plato, *Crat.* 390 A 2 and 5–9, where he twice refers to the possibility of a 'barbarian' lawgiver.

Plato's metaphysics as it was formulated in the middle and later Platonic dialogues.⁷⁸ As we shall see in Section 5, Zoroastrianism would come to be considered the forerunner of Platonic metaphysical systems among the students of Plato in the early Academy. Still, it is impossible to assess whether Plato himself knew about the basic tenets of Zoroastrian cosmology; as we have them, his writings make no explicit claims to Zoroastrian metaphysics, even though there are interesting parallels yet to be discussed properly by scholars.⁷⁹ There is evidence that Plato's friend and student Heraclides of Pontus, to whom Plato apparently left the leadership of the Academy during his second (c.367 BCE) or (more likely) third voyage to Sicily (c.361 BCE), wrote a fantastical dialogue called *Zoroaster* that may have centred around a Persian *magos* at the court of Gelon, which would place the dramatic date of the dialogue in the first quarter of the fifth century BCE.⁸⁰ Regardless of the historical validity of this information, it is clear that Plato and his associates had access to Greek descriptions of magism in various modes and from various sources.⁸¹

Now, if Plato inherited a pluralistic discourse concerning the *magoi* that was passed down in literary and philosophical circles, e.g. in the writings of Heraclitus, Herodotus, and the Derveni Author, then we might expect to see at least two kinds of *magoi* being represented in Plato's writings. This is precisely what happens, although

⁷⁸ Struck, *Symbol*, 58–9, citing Plato, *Crat.* 385 c and 430 d. Sedley (*Cratylus*, 10–13) speculates that the remarkable passage at 385 B 2–D 1 is from an earlier edition of the *Cratylus* and was later excised by Plato, perhaps when he had revised the text, around the time at which he composed the *Sophist*. This is an intriguing suggestion, but unfortunately it cannot be proven.

⁷⁹ Such a project might pursue an examination of the cosmological and metaphysical orders expressed in *Timaeus* and *Laws* vis-à-vis the *Gathas* of Zarathuštra, although it would be necessary to demonstrate the mode of transmission of such concepts.

⁸⁰ See Heraclides of Pontus F 139 Schütrumpf (=Posidonius F 49 Edelstein-Kidd, no. 76) and F 79 Schütrumpf (=Plut. *Adv. Col.* 14, not included in Vasunia's *Zarathushtra*). The evidence is insufficient to tie these fragments securely together, although Wehrli, in his earlier edition of the fragments of Heraclides of Pontus, thought the *magos* was Zoroaster.

⁸¹ For the anecdotes concerning Plato's visits to the Near East and Egypt, see A. S. Riginos, *Platonica: The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden, 1976), 66–9. The influence of Persian thought on Plato was a popular subject among scholars of the mid-twentieth century, including A.-H. Chroust, 'The Influence of Zoroastrian Teachings on Plato, Aristotle, and Greek Philosophy in General', *New Scholasticism*, 54 (1980), 342–57; W. Spoerri, 'Encore Platon et l'orient', *Revue de philologie*, 31 (1957), 209–33; J. Kerschenshteiner, *Platon und der Orient* (Stuttgart, 1945); and J. Bidez, *Eos ou Platon et l'Orient* (Brussels, 1945).

few critics have attempted to parse the differences between the ‘bad’ and the ‘good’ *magoi* in Plato’s dialogues within a larger context of the discourse concerning magism, which, as we have seen, takes on both political and cosmological valences. Indeed, the discourse of magism as discussed by Plato finds a common ground between politics and cosmology in the concept of universal justice, which is promoted by the ‘good’ *magos* and subverted by the ‘bad’ *magos*. Plato appears to refer twice to such ‘bad’ *magoi*: first, in the *Republic* Socrates speaks of the ‘clever *magoi* and tyrant-makers’ (οἱ δεινοὶ μάγοι τε καὶ τυραννοποιοὶ) who, when a young man is in the process of being reared, appear on the scene and attempt to inculcate an insatiable desire in his soul and lead him to a ‘tyrannical’ way of living.⁸² In this case, the ‘clever *magoi* and tyrant-makers’ as itinerant practitioners of wisdom resemble the ‘mendicant priests and seers’ (ἀγύρται καὶ μάντις) to whom Adeimantus had referred earlier in the dialogue; the association of *magos* with *agurtēs* and *mantis* was known to Sophocles before, and there is no reason to assume that Plato for his part did not countenance some interchangeability between the terms.⁸³ These ‘mendicant priests and seers’ appear at a wealthy family’s house and try to persuade the rich that they have the power to eradicate past wrongs through the employment of their sacrifices and songs (θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπωδαῖς).⁸⁴ Indeed, for a price, these charlatans will produce Orphic texts as a means to purify both individuals and entire cities from injustices:

They produce a hubbub of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, offspring of Selena and the Muses, so they say, according to which they perform their sacrifices, persuading not only private citizens but even cities that there are modes of deliverance and purifications for injustices by means of silly sorts of pleasures both for those who are still alive and even for those who are defunct [τελευτήσασιν], which they call functions [τελετάς]; they deliver us from evils there [in the world of the dead], but terrible things await those who do not sacrifice. (Plato, *Rep.* 364 E 3–365 A 3)⁸⁵

While their activities are not precisely the same, these itinerant practitioners of wisdom share in common the threat that they pose

⁸² Plato, *Rep.* 572 E 4–5. D. Scott documents the similarities and differences between the *erōs* of the future philosopher-king and that of the future tyrant (‘*Erōs*, Philosophy, and Tyranny’, in id. (ed.), *Maieusis: Essays on Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat* (Oxford, 2008), 136–53 at 141–6).

⁸³ Soph. *OT* 387–90 (no. 174): ὅφεις μάγον τοιόνδε μηχανογράφων, | δόλιον ἀγύρτην . . . | . . . | ἐπεὶ φέρ’ εἰπέ, ποῦ σὺ μάντις εἶ σαφής; Cf. Graf, *Magic*, 21–2.

⁸⁴ Plato, *Rep.* 364 B 5–C 5.

⁸⁵ On this passage see Dickie, *Magic*, 62.

to order at the levels of individual and city-state.⁸⁶ Plato's 'bad' *magoi*, as itinerant priests who attach themselves to potential future lawgivers, represent a parody of the true Persian priest, whose duty of preserving the *nomos* of the Persian King has been supplanted by his interest in promoting desire for wealth in future tyrants that will, inevitably, filter down to the *magos* himself. The 'bad' *magos* of the *Republic*, a huckster, is dangerous because of his ability to persuade powerful members of a community that moderate ethics should be replaced with unfettered hedonism; if successful, this enterprise leads inevitably to a corrupt system of justice at the domestic or political level. Plato thus appropriates the negative image of the *magos* in the *Republic* as liar and magician to illustrate the dangers that a compromised educational system poses for the leaders of his ideal city-state and, inevitably, to the system of justice designed to preserve it.⁸⁷

The first reference to 'good' *magoi* in Plato's genuine writings—this time not explicit—occurs in *Alcibiades I*, where once again education and its function in sustaining justice and truth⁸⁸ are attached to the Persian priests.⁸⁹ The representation of the Persian priests

⁸⁶ In the *Laws* (909 A 8–C 4) the Athenian Stranger, in the midst of a discussion about impiety, refers to 'those who, in addition to not recognizing the gods or being uncaring or deprecatory, become wild animals; they look down upon and spellbind many people who are living. And when people have died, they claim that they can conjure them up and promise to influence the gods, compelling them with sacrifices and prayers and songs; by doing these things, they try to destroy completely entire households and cities for the sake of money.' Cf. *Laws* 934 E 2–935 B 8. Do these figures threaten the Platonic cosmos? As Gábor Betegh reminds me, the cosmic order is sufficiently stable not to be endangered by the activities of individuals, or even of groups. But, even if divine justice or retribution will manifest itself, this does not mean that certain individuals do not try to undermine the order of the cosmos (even if, inevitably, they will fail and receive a *krisis*). Indeed, Plato still speaks about forces that are hostile to the cosmos and its higher orders. One especially vivid and familiar example of this is the spherical beings which, in their great ambition, make an attempt against Zeus and the other gods in Aristophanes' speech (*Sym.* 190 B 5–C 1).

⁸⁷ Justice is central to Xenophon's portrayal of Persian pedagogy as well, on which see *Cyr.* 1. 2. 6–7 (no. 278).

⁸⁸ Plato, *Alc. I* 121 C 1–122 B 1 (no. 282). For Xenophon's view of these issues, see De Jong, *Transitions*, 446–8. On the possibility of Persian political philosophy, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Political'.

⁸⁹ N. Denyer, in his edition of *Alcibiades I* (*Plato: Alcibiades* (Cambridge, 2001), 14–26), has argued for the authenticity of the dialogue, a conclusion iterated by J.-F. Pradeau and C. Marbœuf in their French translation as well (*Platon: Alcibiade* (Paris, 1999)). The scholarly consensus appears to be that the *arguments against* authorship have been disproven by Denyer (cf. R. B. Todd, 'Review of Denyer, *Plato: Alcibiades*', *Phoenix*, 53/3–4 (2004), 340–1; D. Konstan, 'Review of *Plato:*

here is more positive than what Plato had illustrated in the *Republic*. Here, Socrates, in discussing many different methods of rearing, tells Alcibiades about the ‘royal tutors’ (βασιλικοί παιδαγωγοί) of the son of the Persian King who undertake the future heir’s education at the age of fourteen. Four tutors are selected from among the best men: the wisest, the most just, the most temperate, and the most courageous.⁹⁰ The wisest man (σοφώτατος) is expected to teach the boy the ‘Magian lore [μαγεία] of Zoroaster, son of Hōromazēs’, which Socrates explains is comprised of two elements: ‘the worship of the gods’ (θεῶν θραπεία) and ‘the royal things’ (τὰ βασιλικά).⁹¹

Alcibiades by Nicholas Denyer’, *Ancient Philosophy*, 24/2 (Fall, 2004), 461–4 at 461; and C. Rowe, ‘Book Notes: Plato and Socrates’, *Phronesis*, 48/3 (2002), 287–308 at 301; contra M. Joyal, ‘Review of Nicholas Denyer (ed.), *Plato: Alcibiades*’, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2003.01.28 (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2003/2003-01-28.html>) [accessed 7 Mar. 2009], although some scholars (e.g. G. Betegh, ‘Review of J.-F. Pradeau (ed.) and C. Marbœuf (tr.), *Platon: Alcibiade* (Paris, 1999) and Denyer, Nicholas (ed.), *Plato: Alcibiades* (Cambridge, 2001)’, *Classical World*, 99/2 (Winter 2006), 185–7) do not take a position on the authenticity of *Alcibiades I*. Interestingly, Denyer prefers a dating nearer to the early 350s BCE, following significant changes in Plato’s political theory and approval of Persian customs. This is not the place to discuss the appearance of the *magos* Gobryēs in the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* (371 A 1–372 A 4; no. 205), which would require a study all to itself. I shall offer only a few comments: (a) even if the *Axiochus* were to be considered spurious, it could still, at least theoretically, derive from the early Academy. But, as M. Joyal has pointed out (‘Socrates as σοφός ἀνὴρ in the *Axiochus*’, in K. Döring, M. Erler, and S. Schorn (eds.), *Pseudoplatonica* (Stuttgart, 2005), 97–118 at 97 n. 3), the *Axiochus* is an ‘eclectic’ dialogue that features Platonic, Epicurean, Stoic, and Cynic elements; as such, it is unlikely to have been composed before the 3rd cent. BCE. Still, it is worth mentioning (b) that the eschatological myth there preserves the theme of universal justice (familiar from the judgement myths of the *Republic* and the *Gorgias*) in a Persianized form: according to the ‘bronze tablets’ that Gobryēs’ father saw during the reign of Xerxes, a person who has died travels through the underworld and arrives at the ‘plain of truth’ (πεδῖον ἀληθείας; cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 248 B 6), where he will be judged by Minos and Rhadymanthus; that person is not allowed to tell lies in the presence of the judges.

⁹⁰ The ‘most temperate’ (σωφρονέστατος) Persian is expected to instruct the boy how to rule over pleasure and to be truly free as a king should. This Persian instructor is antithetical to the ‘crafty *magoi* and tyrant-makers’ to whom Socrates referred in the *Republic*; here, a ‘good’ Persian educator teaches how to become a true king, rather than a corrupt tyrant. Such an interest in preventing the corruption of a future monarch into a tyrant appears in reference to the Spartans and Lycurgus’ reforms in Plato’s *Laws* as well. The ‘tutor’ (παιδαγωγός) is referred to alongside the ‘Orphotelest’ (Ορφειοτελεστός) in Philodemus’ *On Poems* (P. Herc. 1074 F 30; 181. 1 ff. Janko = Bernabé 655).

⁹¹ Plato, *Alc. I* 121 E 4–122 A 8 (no. 282). Cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ‘Political’, 150–1. In their zeal to show the historical inaccuracy of *Alcibiades I*, scholars have unfortunately overlooked the fact that while Zoroaster is not the literal ‘son’ of Hōromazēs, the term ‘father’ (πατήρ) in Greek philosophical circles (especially those

Scholars have focused on the first subject of instruction without investigating its relationship to the second: what precisely does τὰ βασιλικά mean? How is it related to the project of the *magos* in Persia or, for that matter, of Plato's philosophy of education?⁹²

Generally speaking, the term *ta basilika* refers to the duties and tasks of a *basileus* (broadly construed) in the ancient world. It could have been applied to both Greeks and foreigners. The adjectival root βασιλικ- appears eighty-four times in Plato's œuvre (including potentially spurious works such as the *Lovers*, *Minos*, and *Epistles*); forty-seven of those occurrences are in the *Statesman*, where the 'political art' (ἡ πολιτικὴ τέχνη) is declared to be analogous to the 'kingly art' (ἡ βασιλικὴ τέχνη).⁹³ There, the Stranger from Elea, a student of the Eleatic School, is concerned with distinguishing the true king and statesman from the 'chief wizard among all the sophists' (ὁ πάντων τῶν σοφιστῶν μέγιστος γόης), whose primary talent is imitation.⁹⁴ Sophistic interest in the *magoi* and in 'magical' practices was not unheard of in the second half of the fifth century BCE: the persuasive art of Gorgias himself could easily be compared with the 'arts of wizardry and magic' (γοητεία καὶ μαγεία) to which the sophist refers in the *Encomium of Helen*.⁹⁵ If Plato had been in the business of criticizing 'magical' practices, it is probably on account of the identification, among certain sophists such as

that possess contacts with eastern religious and wisdom traditions) referred to a religious and philosophical mentor, and as such *Alcibiades I* presents a nuanced understanding of the lineage and inheritance of Persian wisdom. The Eleatic Stranger, for instance, calls Parmenides his 'father' (Plato, *Soph.* 241 D 5–6), and Aristoxenus (F 18 Wehrli = Iambl. *VP* 250) claims that Epaminondas called the Pythagorean Lysis 'father'. On educational 'parenting' and 'adoption' among the Pythagoreans and Eleatics, see P. Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness, Calif., 1999), 39–45 and 150–62.

⁹² Sancisi-Weerdenburg ('Political', 151) sees the *magoi* as the teachers of the skill of being 'truthful', which is to say loyal to the King, in oral traditions.

⁹³ Or, for that matter, the 'household' art (οἰκονομική) at Plato, *Polit.* 259 C 3–4 (cf. 276 C 9–10). Plato assumes a relationship, though not a simple equivalence, between the 'science' (ἐπιστήμη) of the *basileus* and his 'art' (τέχνη).

⁹⁴ Plato, *Polit.* 291 C 3–7; cf. *Soph.* 235 A 8. On *goēteia*, see especially Graf, *Magic*, 24–6.

⁹⁵ Gorg. *Hel.* 10 (no. 173). Gorgias refers to 'incantations' (ἐπωδαί), a type of 'speech' (λόγος), that can compel a listener to pleasure by means of persuasion. H. Tell discusses the Medized clothing of the sophist Hippias along with other practitioners of wisdom such as Empedocles and Pythagoras ('Sages at the Games: Intellectual Displays and Dissemination of Wisdom in Ancient Greece', *Classical Antiquity*, 26/2 (2007), 249–75 at 254–7). On Orphism and Gorgias, see Horky, 'Imprint'.

Gorgias, of their own arts of persuasion as *mageia*. But Plato saw the arts of the *goēs* and the ‘good’ *magos* not as coextensive, but as antithetical to one another within the personal and political ethical matrices. For as dedicated a political philosopher as Plato was, the greatest threat that the ‘magical art’ of the sophists presented was in politics: just as he distinguished between ‘good’ Persian educational practice (that led to the cultivation of a true king and statesman) and the ‘bad’ (i.e. false) sophistic imitative art of magic in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, so Plato in *Alcibiades I* undertook to offer a counterpoint to the sophists, charlatans, hucksters, wizards, and tyrant-makers who threatened to corrupt future lawmakers, politicians, and (especially) kings of ideal communities by subverting systems of ethics and justice. These ‘good’ Persian priests were also described (probably) by Aristotle, who follows Plato in *Alcibiades I* in claiming that the *magoi* ‘spend their time concerning themselves with the worship of the gods [περί τε θεραπείας θεῶν] both in sacrifices and in prayers [καὶ θυσίας καὶ εὐχάς]’.⁹⁶ What is more, Aristotle is explicit when he identifies one of the functions of the *magoi* as ‘making arguments about justice’ (περὶ δικαιοσύνης λόγους ποιεῖσθαι).⁹⁷

It would not be controversial to say that Aristotle’s understanding of the *magoi* was coloured by his teacher Plato’s views on Persian education. After all, Aristotle himself also adopted the dichotomy between the arts of the ‘good’ *magos* and the ‘deceptive’ *goēs* in one of the five surviving fragments of the so-called *Magikos*, a dialogue from early in his career.⁹⁸ Like their teacher, the students and associates of Plato appropriated the discourse of magism for

⁹⁶ Arist. F 36 Rose = D.L. 1. 6–8 (no. 4).

⁹⁷ Ibid. Elsewhere (F 90 Rose = Cic. *Tusc.* 5. 35; *Fin.* 2. 32. 106) Aristotle is said to have composed a work *On Justice*, in which he describes a Syrian king who was praised for his abstention from pleasures. Aristotle’s *On Kingship* (Περὶ βασιλείας) also dealt specifically with the project of proper political rule as advised to Alexander the Great, on which see I. Ramelli, *Il basileus come nomos empsychos tra diritto naturale e diritto divino: spunti platonici del concetto e sviluppi di età imperiale e tardo-antica* (Naples, 2006), 27–30. Apollonius of Tyana (*Ep.* 16 = Bernabé 818, not included in Vasunia’s *Zarathushtra*) was also concerned to define true *magoi*: he stakes his claim in the notion that *magoi* are not named as such because of their descent from Pythagoras or Orpheus, but from Zeus himself, and it is their descent from Zeus that will allow them to be ‘divine and just’ (θεῖοί τε καὶ δίκαιοι).

⁹⁸ Arist. F 36 Rose = D.L. 1. 6–8 (no. 4). On the *Magikos* generally, see the balanced and considered discussion of J. B. Rives, ‘Aristotle, Antisthenes of Rhodes, and the *Magikos*’ [‘Aristotle’], *Rheinisches Museum*, 147/1 (2004), 35–54.

their own purposes quickly and aggressively, to particular ends. It is to these thinkers that we now turn.

5. Plato's circles: reactions to magism among the associates of Plato

An important discussion of the *magoi* is preserved by Diogenes Laertius (*fl.* third century CE) at the beginning of his *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers*:

Some people say that the study of philosophy took its beginning from the barbarians. For they say that the *magoi* arose among the Persians, Chaldaeans among the Babylonians and Assyrians, Gymnosophists among the Indians, and the so-called Druids and Holy Ones among the Celts and Gauls; so claims Aristotle in his *Magikos* and Sotion in the twenty-third book of his *Succession of the Philosophers*. (D.L. 1. 1, no. 58)⁹⁹

Thus Diogenes begins a historical assessment of the origins of philosophy, in which he disputes the point of view that he attributes to Aristotle and Sotion. For Diogenes, philosophy begins with the Greeks and possesses a twofold origin, in the schools of Pythagoras in Italy and Anaximander in Ionia. The others who hold that philosophy received its origins among barbarians are a remarkable collection of figures: in addition to Aristotle (384–22 BCE) and Sotion of Alexandria (*fl.* c.200–170 BCE), Diogenes refers to 'the Egyptians', the Platonist Hermodorus of Syracuse (fourth century BCE), and the historian Xanthus of Lydia (*fl.* mid-fifth century BCE).¹⁰⁰ As is well known and has been recently investigated by James Rives, the fragments of Aristotle's lost works *Magikos* (if indeed it was by Aristotle) and *On Philosophy* contained information about the *magoi* and about Zoroastrian thought as it related to Aristotle's philosophical systems. Indeed, Diogenes' interest in the 'origins' (*ἀρχαί*) of philosophy as a problem of historiography responds to Aristotle's documentation of 'first principles' (*ἀρχαί*) of the systems of thought of other philosophers and practitioners of wisdom, demonstrated most famously in *Metaphysics A*, but also preserved in the fragmen-

⁹⁹ The attribution to Sotion's twenty-third book is surely a mistake, and it should be corrected to the thirteenth book. Generally, for a useful discussion of the problems involved in using this passage as evidence for Aristotle, see Rives, 'Aristotle', 45–8, and J. Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and his Hellenistic Background* (Wiesbaden, 1978), 41 with n. 84.

¹⁰⁰ For the activities and project of Xanthus, see Kingsley, 'Magi', 173–91.

tary works *On Philosophy* and *Magikos*.¹⁰¹ Of the seven references to *magoi* in the genuine and possibly (but not certainly) spurious works of Aristotle, four refer to ‘origins’ or ‘first principles’ of magism and its unique type of philosophy,¹⁰² most importantly an undisputedly authentic reference in the *Metaphysics*:

The poets of old agree with this view in so far as they assert that it is not the first beings [πρώτους]—e.g. Night and Heaven or Chaos or Ocean—who reign and rule [βασιλεύειν καὶ ἄρχειν], but Zeus. In fact, however, it was due to the changing of rulers of the universe [διὰ τὸ μεταβάλλειν τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν ὄντων] that the poets were led to say these things, since those of them who are not compromised by saying everything mythically—e.g. Pherecydes and some others—posit that which generates first as the best thing. So also for the *magoi* and some of the later sages such as Empedocles, who made Love an element, and Anaxagoras, who made Mind a first principle. (Arist. *Metaph.* 1091^b6–12, no. 533)

Aristotle’s interest here is in describing how the ‘poets of old’ (here Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod),¹⁰³ who spoke, at least sometimes, in scientific ways (as exemplified by Pherecydes of Syrus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras), were led to believe that whatever generates first is the ‘best’ thing.¹⁰⁴ The reason, namely that the ‘changing of rulers of the universe’ led them to posit a non-generated entity, is remarkable for its potent complication of systems of philosophical

¹⁰¹ As suggested by De Jong, *Traditions*, 223–4. L. Zhmud argues that the method of biography practised by Diogenes Laertius does not diverge significantly from that of earlier biographers (*The Origin of the History of Science in Classical Antiquity*, trans. A. Chernoglazov [*Origin*] (Berlin, 2006), 295–6), and, moreover, that even Aristotle intermingles historiography and systematic doxography in the *Politics* and *Metaphysics A* without contradiction (136–42).

¹⁰² The seven fragments that refer explicitly to the *magoi* and are attributed to Aristotle are those collected in Rose’s *Aristotelis fragmenta* under the titles *On Philosophy* (F 6=D.L. 1. 8, no. 4) or *Magikos* (F 32=D.L. 2. 45, no. 145; F 33=*Suda* s.n. Antisthenes, no. 63; F 34=Plin. *NH* 30. 3, no. 60; F 35=D.L. 1. 1, quoted above, no. 58; and F 36=D.L. 1. 6–8, no. 4) and *Metaph.* 1091^b6–12 (no. 533). Of these seven, the four that deal with first principles or historical origins of philosophy are F 6 (δύο ἀρχάς), F 33 (περὶ Ζωροάστρου τινὸς μάγου εὐρόντος τὴν σοφίαν), F 35 (ἀπὸ βαρβάρων ἄρξαι), and *Metaph.* 1091^b6–12. Concerning the tradition of the orientalised ‘first discoverer’ and its appearance in Plato’s works, see Zhmud, *Origin*, 224–7.

¹⁰³ Cf. Zhmud, *Origin*, 131 n. 53.

¹⁰⁴ Apparently, Aristotle shares a common opinion about the ‘poets of old’ with the sophist Hippias of Elis (86 B 6 DK), who, when discussing the ‘writings’ (συγγραφαί) of the ‘Greeks’ and ‘barbarians’, lists Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer. It is notable, however, that Aristotle does not make any reference to ethnic distinctions, as Hippias had done.

first principles and of political rule.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, Aristotle has appropriated the historical certainty of changes in both divine and human rule in order to make more general suggestions about the metaphysical systems espoused by the ‘poets of old’ and the *magoi*. In no way does he share Diogenes Laertius’ concern with barbarian vs. Greek in establishing his own genealogy for the development of philosophical concepts: it simply does not occur to Aristotle to comment on this. If this concern over the ethnic status of the *magoi* arises in Hellenistic historiographies of the philosophers, there is no indication that Aristotle is the culprit; but the priority that is given to the place of the *magoi* in Aristotle’s archaeology of metaphysics suggests that, for Aristotle at least, the *magoi* played a significant role not only in the development of Ionian wisdom traditions, but also in the establishment of the conceptual apparatus by which the Pythagoreans and, ultimately, Plato would derive their ontological hypotheses.¹⁰⁶

From Aristotle we can learn more about the mélange of ideas about *magoi* that were circulating in the mid-fourth century BCE among Greek philosophers. Another fragment, this time from his protreptic dialogue *On Philosophy*—probably composed during the 350s BCE—and preserved by Diogenes Laertius (1. 8 = F 6 Rose, no. 4), suggests that the *magoi* adhered to two first principles (δύο ἀρχάς), ‘the good *daimōn*, whose name is Zeus and Hōromazēs, and the evil *daimōn*, whose name is Hades and Areimanius’.¹⁰⁷ Diogenes Laertius goes on to state that the same claim is made by the biographer Hermippus of Smyrna (fl. late third century BCE), the astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 390–c. 340 BCE), and the historian Theopompus of Chios (378/7–after 320 BCE), apparently quoted from the eighth book of his *Philippica*.¹⁰⁸ Similar descriptions of

¹⁰⁵ The ambiguity is focused on the two verbs used to refer to the systems of rule in the poets’ cosmologies: βασιλεύειν and ἄρχειν. Cf. Zhmud, *Origins*, 136–40.

¹⁰⁶ The sentence that follows upon the description of the ‘poets of old’ refers to ‘those who say that the One itself is the Good itself’, i.e. Plato. Alexander of Aphrodisias and Syrianus (ad loc.) refer to both Plato and Brontinus the Pythagorean, although we cannot justify the reference to Brontinus here. Cf. W. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, trans. R. Robinson, 2nd edn. [Aristotle] (Oxford, 1948), 133–4.

¹⁰⁷ It is possible that Diogenes had a copy of Aristotle’s *On Philosophy* to hand, since he cites this passage from the ‘first book’ of the dialogue. Apparently, this book ‘combined the theory of the origin of culture (as well as its fall as a result of catastrophes) with the history of philosophy, which ends with Plato’ (Zhmud, *Origins*, 113 n. 154, with bibliography).

¹⁰⁸ The eighth book of the *Philippica* was also called, in antiquity, the *Marvels*.

Persian dualism occur in the *History of Theology* by Aristotle's student Eudemus of Rhodes (fl. late fourth century BCE);¹⁰⁹ both Eudemus and Hermippus were inheritors of Aristotle's legacy, respectively in the late fourth and late third centuries BCE, and thus both could have adapted the position of Aristotle vis-à-vis Persian dualism.¹¹⁰ But the association of the names Eudoxus of Cnidus and Theopompus of Chios with this description of Persian dualism requires further investigation, in part because Eudoxus was Aristotle's predecessor and Theopompus his contemporary, and in part because neither was demonstrably attached to Aristotle's school.¹¹¹

As with the descriptions of Aristotle, Theopompus' account of the *magoi* shows no hint of defining them specifically as 'barbarian', which is intriguing since Theopompus is so concerned, at other points in the *Philippica*, to establish the codes of Greek and barbarian ethnic behaviours and then to demonstrate what happens when, for instance, a barbarian is Hellenized, or vice versa. For the latter, he had as a model Philip II of Macedon himself, who, as a 'son of Heracles', was dignified in birth and ought to have cultivated virtue, but instead sought a lifestyle marked by barbaric 'bestiality' and incontinence.¹¹² For the former, Theopompus adduced, interestingly, a philosopher-politician: the Platonist Hermias of Atarnaeus, a remarkable character within the history of the early Academy who,

Its subject-matter may have comprised prophets, priests, and portents (cf. G. S. Shrimpton, *Theopompus the Historian* [*Theopompus*] (Montreal, 1991), 15–21).

¹⁰⁹ F 150 Wehrli (= Damasc. *Princ.* 124, no. 215). It is likely, though, *contra* Wehrli, that the information preserved by Eudemus on the *magoi* did not come from Eudemus' *Physics*, but rather from the *History of Theology*, and, moreover, that Eudemus was following Aristotle in distinguishing between 'theologians' and philosophers. Cf. G. Betegh, 'On Eudemus Fr. 150 (Wehrli)' ['Eudemus'], in I. Bodnár and W. W. Fortenbaugh (eds.), *Eudemus of Rhodes* (New Brunswick and London, 2002), 337–57 at 349–55.

¹¹⁰ Even so, it is important to note, with J. Bollansée (*Hermippus of Smyrna and his Biographical Writings: A Reappraisal* (Leuven, 1999), 16–17), that Hermippus probably had access to works on Zoroastrianism that were not related to Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, but rather had come into the collection of the Alexandrian library. Evidence for this is Pliny the Elder's comment (*NH* 30. 1. 2 = F 57 Wehrli, no. 60) that Hermippus wrote a commentary on the two million lines composed by Zoroastrēs and that he drew up a catalogue of his works.

¹¹¹ For that matter, Theopompus—as a student of Isocrates (although we should not make too much of this)—occupied a position in opposition to both Plato and Aristotle. On this topic see Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 6–7.

¹¹² Cf. M. A. Flower, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century BC* [*Theopompus*] (Oxford, 1994), 95–104, and Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 162–4.

like the *magoi* in other biographical accounts, appears on the scene immediately following the death of Plato.¹¹³ A politician, in the words of Jaeger, ‘full of unresolved contradictions’, he is nevertheless known for having been friends with the Platonists Erastus, Coriscus, and Aristotle himself, to whose name is attached a hymn to Hermias and an inscription on Hermias’ statue in Delphi.¹¹⁴ Didymus in his commentaries on Demosthenes’ *Philippica* preserves a letter from Theopompus (apparently) to Philip in which he claims that Hermias ‘changed his tyranny into a milder rule’, a feat that stands, we should note, in contrast to the abysmal failure of Plato with Dionysius II in Syracuse.¹¹⁵ Appointed to carry out orders by the Achaemenid court, Hermias had shifted allegiances—a shift that is attributed to his interactions with Platonists—and attempted to influence local politics in Ionia through military aggression.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, he revolted from the Persian King Artaxerxes III, who subsequently sent Mentor to subdue Hermias and the others involved in the revolt. Theopompus’ account of him speaks of this issue matter-of-factly, and it does little to flatter, presenting him as a money-grubber and violent opportunist whose impiety (*ἀσεβῆς*) prompted torture and crucifixion at the order of Artaxerxes III himself.¹¹⁷ Again, the charges of impiety and revolution would have

¹¹³ In the account of Philochorus as preserved in the *Index Academicorum philosophorum* (p. 22 Mekler = col. 5 Gaiser).

¹¹⁴ F 674 Rose = D.L. 5. 6. ‘Aristotle’ laments the death of Hermias by the treachery of the ‘King of the Persians’, who had him killed. This description contradicts other historical accounts, which—whether positive or negative in tone—do not narrate so interesting a plot. I disagree with Flower’s attempts to demonstrate that Hermias was not a ‘barbarian’ based on, in great part, the argument that Aristotle believed that ‘barbarians were slaves by nature and inferior to Greeks’ (Flower, *Theopompus*, 206–7, citing *Pol.* 1252^b, 1255^a, 1285^b20–2, and 1327^b27–9). Aristotle’s descriptions in the *Politics* cannot be extricated from the more general polemic involving the description of other forms of political governance against which he is developing his own best form of a constitution: the emphasis, in the *Politics*, is not on ethnic difference (as it is in Theopompus) but rather on mentalities and approaches to life that can lead a human being to a state of ‘enslavement’. Tentatively, I follow instead Shrimpton (*Theopompus*, 108–9, 125–6), with the caveats expressed by Jaeger (*Aristotle*, 112–15). Of course, the probably spurious Platonic *Epistle VI* is addressed to Hermias, Erastus, and Coriscus.

¹¹⁵ Did. *In Dem.* col. 5 Pearson and Stephens. In Philochorus’ account as preserved in the *Index Academicorum philosophorum* (p. 23 Mekler = col. 5 Gaiser), Hermias is said to have changed the government to a ‘monarchy’, presumably from a tyranny.

¹¹⁶ Did. *In Dem.* col. 5 Pearson and Stephens; D.S. 16. 52. 3–4; Callisth. FG^rHist 124 F 2. Cf. Briant, *History*, 688–9.

¹¹⁷ Did. *In Dem.* col. 5 Pearson and Stephens.

echoed both cosmically and politically for anyone involved in the administration of the Persian court.

What becomes clear, then, is that Theopompus did not advocate Persian or ‘barbarian’ ways of living and mentioned them only in the reductive characterization of a pre-civilized state of existence, a rhetorical move reinforced by repeated descriptions of the bucolic simplicity or mindless drunkenness of peoples identified as non-Greek. Even a ‘barbarian’ who studied with the students of Plato would inevitably succumb to lust for money, power, and pleasure despite his attempt to acquire Greek temperance and virtue.¹¹⁸ In the context of this dismissal of ‘barbarian’ ethics, scholars have rightly found Theopompus’ historically accurate and thorough description of the *magoi*—preserved by Plutarch in *On Isis and Osiris* (second century CE)—perplexing:

[A]¹¹⁹ Some believe that there are two gods who are rivals, as it were, in art, the one being the craftsman [δημιουργόν] of good things, the other of bad things; [B] others call the better of these a god and his rival a *daimōn*, as, for example, Zoroaster the *magos*, who lived, so they record, five thousand years before the siege of Troy. He used to call the one Hōromazēs and the other Areimanius, and showed also that the former was similar—especially among objects of perception [μάλιστα τῶν αἰσθητῶν]—to light, and the latter, on the contrary, to darkness and ignorance, while the middle/mean of both [μέσον ἀμφοῖν] was Mithrēs. . . . He also taught that votive and thank-offerings should be made to Hōromazēs, but gloomy offerings to Areimanius, and those apotropaic. . . . And [B] they [*sc. the ‘others’, καὶ κεῖνοι*] also relate many mythical details about the gods, and the following are instances: Hōromazēs is born from the purest light and Areimanius from darkness, and they are at war with one another. The former (Hōromazēs) created six gods, the first being the god of good will [εὐνοία], the second the god of truth [ἀλήθεια], and the third the god of good order [εὐνομία], and the others gods of wisdom [σοφία] and wealth [πλοῦτος], the sixth being the craftsman of pleasures directed towards beautiful things [τῶν ἐπὶ τοῖς καλοῖς ἡδέων δημιουργόν]. The other [Areimanius] created an equal number of rivals to these. Then Hōromazēs, having increased his dimensions

¹¹⁸ Although we should not be too surprised at this, especially in the light of Theopompus’ accusation (FGrHist 115 F 259) that Plato’s dialogues were both plagiarized and ‘worthless and false’ (ἄχρεῖους καὶ ψευδεῖς).

¹¹⁹ Capital letters refer to a shift in the source being employed, in accordance with Plutarch’s practice of marking a new authority with οἱ μὲν/οἱ δέ constructions or the use of a demonstrative adjective. Points of ellipsis indicate the omission of portions of the text that are direct commentary either by Plutarch (marked by a shift in discussion and an explanatory particle such as γάρ) or by ‘Persians’ apparently contemporaneous with Plutarch.

threefold¹²⁰ [τρίς ἐαυτὸν ἀξήσας], removed himself as far from the sun as the sun is distant from the earth, and adorned the heavens with stars; and one star, Sirius, he established above all others as a guardian and watcher. Twenty-four other gods were created by him and put into an egg. Those who were created from Areimanius were of equal number, and they pierced through the egg . . . and so it comes about that good and bad things are mixed. There will come the destined time when Areimanius, the bringer of plague and famine, must needs be utterly destroyed and obliterated by these. The earth will be flat and level and one way of life and one government will arise of all men, who will be happy and speak the same language. [C] Theopompus says that, according to the *magoi*, for three thousand years alternately [ἀνὰ μέρος] the one god will dominate the other and be dominated, and that for another three thousand years they will fight and make war, until one smashes up the domain of the other. In the end Hades will perish and men will be happy; neither will they need sustenance nor will they cast a shadow, while the god who will have brought this about will have quiet and rest, not for a long while indeed for a god, but for such time as would be reasonable for a man who falls asleep. Such is the mythology of the *magoi*.¹²¹

This passage has been the subject of a great many examinations over the past century, and the results have varied,¹²² but there is a consensus that the material presented by Plutarch here is derived primarily from three sources: Theopompus, Hermodorus of Syracuse, and Eudoxus of Cnidus, of whom the latter two were associates of Plato. Concerning the information reported by source [A], namely that the two Persian gods Hōromazēs (Old Persian and Avestan Ahuramazda) and Areimanius (Avestan Angra Mainyu)¹²³ were ‘rivals in art’, we cannot attribute it securely to any of these fourth-century BCE authorities; it probably derives from later sources.

¹²⁰ i.e. having moved from point to line to solid, a common problem among Platonists in the mid-4th cent. BCE. On this subject see W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. E. L. Minar, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 23–8.

¹²¹ Plut. *Is. et Osir.* 46–7 (369 D 5–370 C 4, no. 3), ed. J. G. Griffiths (*Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cambridge, 1970)), trans. Griffiths, modified.

¹²² For a very useful bibliography on this passage, see De Jong, *Traditions*, 163 n. 26.

¹²³ It should be noted that Angra Mainyu (*contra* M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, ii. *Under the Achaemenians* (Leiden, 1982), 123) does not appear in any of the Old Persian inscriptions, where instead we find evil embodied in the Lie (*drug*). But Angra Mainyu does appear as a spirit contrary to the will of Ahuramazda in the Old Avestan *Gathas* of Zarathuštra (43. 15; 44. 12; 45. 2), which were probably composed before 600 BCE.

Regarding the information preserved by sources [B] and [C], to be sure, we find interesting points of comparison in the mid-fourth century BCE. First of all, Theopompus [C] clearly refers to a *cycle* of rulers, which will apparently conclude in the immortalization of human beings. This information is corroborated by another fragment of Theopompus, preserved by Diogenes Laertius, in which the *magoi* are said to claim that ‘humans will be immortal’ and that ‘things in existence will endure through their invocations’.¹²⁴ Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1091^b6–12, no. 533), when discussing the poetry of those who do not speak about all things ‘mythically’, does mention the ‘change of rulers’ (το μεταβάλλειν τοὺς ἄρχοντας) in the cosmological systems of Pherecydes, the *magoi*, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras. An important question arises as a consequence of the ambiguity of this expression: is Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* referring to this ‘change’ as a cycle of rulers, or is it simply a linear succession?¹²⁵ The evidence is not conclusive, as Aristotle himself seems to be either unwilling or at a loss over how to describe this type of ‘change’.¹²⁶ As I mentioned previously, in *On Philosophy* (D.L. 1. 8 = F 6 Rose, no. 4), Aristotle had described the ‘two first principles’ of the *magoi* as ‘good *daimōn* and bad *daimōn*, one called Zeus and Hōromazēs, and the other Hades and Areimanius’. While the information preserved by Theopompus [C] follows Aristotle by associating Zeus with Hōromazēs and Hades with Areimanius,

¹²⁴ FGrHist 115 F 64 (a) (b) (nos. 4, 207).

¹²⁵ As maintained by Betegh, ‘Eudemus’, 351–2.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, in this passage, is seeking to establish that the poets who speak somewhat logically do so by positing a primary generator that is best. He does not go into detail for Pherecydes or the *magoi*, but he does use Empedocles’ Love and Anaxagoras’ Mind as examples. Now, since he never mentions Pherecydes or the *magoi* anywhere else in the *Metaphysics*, we cannot establish intratextual *comparanda* for these figures. But Aristotle often discusses the first principles of Empedocles and Anaxagoras in the *Metaphysics*: in the case of Anaxagoras, Aristotle claims that he posited an infinity of principles, of which, apparently, Mind was the primary generator (cf. *Metaph.* 984^a12 ff., 989^a30 ff.); in the case of Empedocles, there is a strict dualism between Love and Strife, with Love as the primary generator. Moreover, Aristotle does propose how, in his opinion, these principles relate to each other. He adduces Anaxagoras and Empedocles as witnesses to the fact that actuality is prior to potentiality, Anaxagoras ‘since Mind is actuality’ and Empedocles ‘with Love and Strife’. But when describing what this means, i.e. actuality being prior to potentiality, Aristotle is frustratingly ambivalent: ‘therefore Chaos or Night did not exist for an unlimited time, but the same things have always existed *either in a cycle or in some other way* [ἢ περίοδῳ ἢ ἄλλως], if actuality is prior to potentiality’. In the case of Anaxagoras, at any rate, Aristotle himself admits to being confused (cf. *Metaph.* 1075^b8 ff.).

it goes beyond Aristotle's account in *On Philosophy* by clearly, and markedly, positing a cycle of rulers. If Aristotle posited a cycle of rulers in the cosmos of the *magoi* in *On Philosophy*, it unfortunately has not survived, although it would not be impossible to imagine that he had posited such a cycle in lost portions of the dialogue.¹²⁷

But what about the information under the authority of source [B]? If one were to suggest that Theopompus is the source here as well, one would need to explain why Theopompus is named near the end of this section and not earlier.¹²⁸ Some have proposed that the ultimate source for all the information in this passage from *On Isis and Osiris* may have been Eudoxus of Cnidus.¹²⁹ According to this proposal, the explicit reference to Hades in the Theopompus section [C] would indicate that he took Areimanios to be Hades, following Eudoxus, who appears to have composed a work *On Isis* from which both Theopompus and Plutarch could be copying.¹³⁰ There is some value to this proposal. The possibility that Eudoxus could be the authority behind sections [B] and [C] is supported by the biographical traditions: in spite of the fact that Eudoxus studied with both Plato and Archytas,¹³¹ he considered the 'magian' division of wisdom to be the 'most honourable and most useful' ('clarissimam utilissimamque').¹³² What is more, concerning the information given under authority [B] alone, we note several interesting conceptual parallels with Eudoxus' philosophy: the appeals to astronomical orders and to 'pleasures' are both areas of in-

¹²⁷ That is, if we are to trust Diogenes Laertius (1. 9 = Eudemus F 89 Wehrli, no. 4) when he claims that the Peripatetic Eudemus followed Theopompus in asserting that humans would inevitably become immortal. The claim would be that Eudemus also posited a cycle of rulers for the cosmology of the *magoi*, one that he probably adopted from Aristotle. It is in this light that Jaeger (*Aristotle*, 137–9) adduced a passage in Cicero's *De natura deorum* (1. 13 ff. = F 26 Rose) that preserves some semblance of Aristotle's early metaphysics from the third book of *On Philosophy*, in which Aristotle claims that 'all divinity is mind', then 'god is the world itself', then that god becomes aether, and then 'some other thing' which 'rules and watches over the movement of the world with a certain backwards-turning' ('replicatione quadam mundi motum regat atque tueatur').

¹²⁸ Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride*, 480–1.

¹²⁹ Shrimpton suggests that the cosmic eschatology of the Persians is 'mostly, if not totally, derived from Theopompus' (*Theopompus*, 16), although he does not comment on Eudoxus. Jaeger (*Aristotle*, 134) hypothesizes that Eudoxus was Theopompus' source.

¹³⁰ Possibly book 2 of the *Γῆς περίοδος* (F 286–302 Lasserre).

¹³¹ T 7 Lasserre (= D.L. 8. 86 ff.), citing Sotion as the source for Eudoxus as a student of Plato.

¹³² F 342 Lasserre = Plin. *NH* 30. 3 (no. 60).

tense interest for Eudoxus' ethical and metaphysical thought, and the explicit description of Hōromazēs magnifying himself (ἐαυτὸν αὐξήσας) recalls Aristotle's comment in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that, for Eudoxus, 'the Good is magnified by itself' (αὐξεσθαι δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ) in contrast to other 'goods'.¹³³

On the other hand, there are several reasons to doubt the attribution of the information given by authority [B] to Eudoxus. First of all, there is no evidence that Eudoxus would have identified Hōromazēs with the Good; on the contrary, for Eudoxus Pleasure was the Good, and it would be hard to conceive of any direct analogy between Pleasure and Hōromazēs.¹³⁴ What is more, the cosmology as described here is far too 'mythical' for Eudoxus, who was a serious empirical scientist in his own right. Indeed, source [B]'s description of Hōromazēs' adornment of the stars from the periphery recalls the mythical Orphic commentary of the Derveni Papyrus;¹³⁵ the parallel birth of the twenty-four other gods from the 'egg' also resembles the cosmogony of the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, although it is not clear how source [B] fits into fourth-century accounts of the so-called ornitho-theogony.¹³⁶ Thus, source [B] tends to amalgamate various kinds of cosmological and religious concepts with astronomy and metaphysics. Nothing of this sort appears in the fragments of Eudoxus. Finally, the reference to the dating of Zoroaster in source [B] is challenged by another fragment

¹³³ The text is problematic here, and I have adopted Lasserre's interpretation (D 4 = Arist. *NE* 1172^b9–25), but the sense is clear in any case.

¹³⁴ D 4 Lasserre = Arist. *NE* 1172^b9–11: *Εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰγαθὸν ᾧετ' εἶναι.*

¹³⁵ Derveni Papyrus col. xv: 'For when the sun is separated and confined in the middle, [Mind] holds fast, having fixed them, both those above the sun and those below [ἐν μέσῳ πήξας ἵσχει καὶ τᾶνωθε τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τὰ κάτωθεν]. And the next line: "following him in turn was Cronus, and then Zeus the contriver". He means something like "from that time is the beginning [ἀρχή], from which this magistracy rules [βασιλεύει ἥδε ἀρχή]" (trans. Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, slightly modified). On the position of the sun vis-à-vis the earth and periphery in the Derveni Papyrus, see Betegh, *Derveni*, 235–44.

¹³⁶ As suggested by J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés: Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d'après la tradition grecque* (1938; repr. New York, 1975), 76–7. In the theogony of the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, preserved in large part by the Neoplatonist commentators Damascius and Proclus, Chronos gives birth to Aither and places an egg in it (*OF* 121 F Bernabé; cf. *OF* 96 T Bernabé = Damasc. *Princ.* 123, iii. 159. 17 Westerink). Thereafter, Phanes, also considered the first king (*OF* 167 F Bernabé), breaks out (ἐξέθορε) of the egg and creates the heavenly bodies and earth (*OF* 149 F Bernabé). He also establishes the sun as the 'guardian' of the universe (*OF* 158 F Bernabé). For a useful account of the problems involved in the various versions of the Orphic cosmogony, see Betegh, *Derveni*, 140–52 and 158.

of Eudoxus, where he claims that Zoroaster should be dated to *six thousand years before the death of Plato*.¹³⁷ Source [B], to be sure, claims that Zoroaster is to be dated to *five thousand years before the fall of Troy*. Eudoxus' account—which emphasizes the death of Plato—has modified the original chronology that was posited by the fifth-century historian Xanthus of Lydia, appropriating it to instantiate a new world era.¹³⁸ Now, if Eudoxus believed that the fall of Troy and the death of Plato were separated by a thousand years, the dates would correspond; but since we do not have any evidence to support this, it must remain only a possibility.¹³⁹ For these reasons, we should be hesitant to consider Eudoxus as the source for the information reported by [B], although we cannot definitively count him out. Still, the only extant authority in antiquity other than source [B] who claims that Zoroaster lived five thousand years before the fall of Troy is the Platonist Hermodorus of Syracuse, to whom we now turn.

Very little is known about the mysterious figure of Hermodorus: the description in the *Suda* mentions only that he 'became a student [*ἀκροατής*] of Plato' and took the dialogues of Plato to Sicily in order to sell them.¹⁴⁰ If he travelled back to Athens with Plato on his last trip from Sicily, in 361/0 BCE, then he could have spent at least fourteen years with Plato before his death.¹⁴¹ He appears to have written on Plato's life and doctrines, perhaps in the same treatise, which Simplicius calls *On Plato* (*Περὶ Πλάτωνος*). When citing Hermodorus of Syracuse on the *magoi*, Diogenes Laertius names a book *On Sciences* (*Περὶ μαθημάτων*), and, in the light of the subject-matter of the passages quoted by Simplicius regarding Hermodorus (the 'more' and the 'less', 'infinity', 'equality', 'that which has been

¹³⁷ F 342 Lasserre = Plin. *NH* 30. 3 (no. 60). That Eudoxus probably died after Plato (and not before, as was claimed by Jaeger, a view adopted by subsequent scholarship) has been demonstrated by Kingsley, 'Magi', 183 n. 64.

¹³⁸ Cf. Kingsley, 'Magi', 196, although I disagree with his claim that Eudoxus did not alter Xanthus' dating of six thousand years before Xerxes' crossing into Europe to his own of six thousand before the death of Plato. Clearly, Eudoxus would not have invented the number, since, as Kingsley argues, it was a 'Magian system of dating', but that does not mean that Eudoxus would not have changed the end-point of the millenarian cycle, especially if he was interacting with another astronomer in the Academy who was also very interested in the life and death of Plato, namely Philip of Opus.

¹³⁹ I owe this point to Gábor Betegh.

¹⁴⁰ The historian of Plato Dercylides (on whom see below), quoted by Simplicius (*In Phys.* 256. 31 Diels), calls him an 'associate' (*ἐταίρος*) of Plato.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Dillon, *Heirs*, 198–9.

harmonized'),¹⁴² we can posit three scenarios regarding the title of Hermodorus' book(s): (1) the prima facie case, that these two titles refer to two independent treatises by Hermodorus; (2) that a whole work, entitled *On Plato*, dealt with the whole of Plato's life and doctrine and that the section *On Sciences* was derived from that larger work;¹⁴³ (3) that the title was simply *On Sciences* and the book also treated the life of Plato.¹⁴⁴ In order to justify the third option, however, one would need to explain why Diogenes was quoting material about *magoi*—even material that gave an etymology of Zoroaster's name¹⁴⁵—in a treatise dedicated to the sciences.

The subject-matter of the passages quoted in Simplicius' *On Aristotle's Physics*¹⁴⁶ corroborates the hypothesis that the authority behind [B] is more likely to have been Hermodorus of Syracuse than Eudoxus. Concerning Hermodorus, we possess only ten fragments (one, referring to a work on ethics, may be spurious).¹⁴⁷ The two most interesting fragments (F 7–8 Isnardi Parente), which describe Hermodorus' book on Plato, are ultimately on the authority of a certain Dercylides (active first century BCE or CE) in book 11 of his *On the Philosophy of Plato*.¹⁴⁸ The second of these passages quoted by Simplicius is a truncated version of the first version, with very minor changes,¹⁴⁹ and thus it will suffice to quote the first and longer version, which describes Hermodorus' metaphysics:

¹⁴² See below.

¹⁴³ As tentatively hypothesized by Dillon (*Heirs*, 199).

¹⁴⁴ A similar problem is encountered in the transmission of Archytas F 3 Huffman, which deals with proportionate governance (e.g. *πλεονεξία, ἰσότης, τὸ ἴσον, ἀδικεῖν*) in metaphysical and mathematical terms (e.g. *ὁμόνοιαν δὲ αὐξήσεν λογισμὸς εὐπεθεῖς*). It was transmitted under various titles, which have been surveyed by C. Huffman (*Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher, and Mathematician King* [Archytas] (Cambridge, 2005), 817–18), although it most likely comes from a work entitled *On Sciences*.

¹⁴⁵ D.L. 1. 8 (no. 4).

¹⁴⁶ Simplicius. *In Phys.* 247. 30 ff. Diels, commenting on Arist. *Phys.* 192^a3 ff.

¹⁴⁷ The fragments are collected in M. Isnardi Parente, *Senocrate–Ermodoro: frammenti* [Ermodoro] (Naples, 1982), with the exception of D.L. 1. 8, which she overlooks (as noted by Dillon, *Heirs*, 199 n. 54). Isnardi Parente, to be sure, later corrected this oversight ('Supplementum academicum', *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*, 9.6.2 (1995), 135–52).

¹⁴⁸ Through an intermediate source, viz. Porphyry, who quoted Dercylides often. Dercylides appears to have been interested in the 'oriental' parallels in Plato's dialogues, as evidenced by his discussion of Hermodorus and, interestingly, a treatise *On the Spindle and the Whorl*, as *Treated in Plato's Republic*, which may have been part of the larger work on Plato. Cf. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.n. Dercylides.

¹⁴⁹ Noted in the apparatus criticus in Diels's edition.

[Dercylides]¹⁵⁰ says that: ‘Of the things that are [τῶν ὄντων], [Hermodorus] says that some exist according to themselves [καθ’ αὐτά], for example, “man” and “horse”, but some others exist with regard to others; and of these, some exist according to their opposites [πρὸς ἐναντία], such as good to evil, but some others exist relatively [πρὸς τι]; and of these, some are definite, and others indefinite.’ And [Dercylides] adds: ‘and all the things considered to be great in relation to the small possess [ἐχέω] the more and the less; for it is more possible (?)¹⁵¹ that the more and the less are brought to the unlimited [εἰς ἄπειρον φερόμενα]. And likewise, both what is broader and what is narrower, and what is heavier and lighter, and everything described in this way will be brought to the unlimited. But, on the other hand, those which are described as equal [ἴσον] and stable [μένον] and harmonized [ῥημοσμένον] do not possess the more and the less, whereas their opposites do possess [the more and the less]. For it is possible¹⁵² for something to be more unequal than another unequal thing, and for something to be more activated than another activated thing, and for something to be more unharmonized than another unharmonized thing, with the result that—of each of these pairs—all except the element One¹⁵³ are susceptible¹⁵⁴ to the more and the less. The result is that such a thing may be said to be unstable and shapeless and unlimited and non-existent, by virtue of the negation of existence. To such a thing, neither origin [ἀρχή] nor existence [οὐσία] is befitting, but it is brought into a certain indeterminacy [ἐν ἀκρισίᾳ]. For [Hermodorus] shows that in the same way that what creates [τὸ ποιοῦν] is the cause [αἷτιον] in a strict and distinct sense, so too it is an origin [ἀρχή], but matter [ὑλη] is not an origin [ἀρχή].¹⁵⁵ Thus it used to be said also by the followers of Plato that there is [only] one origin.’

¹⁵⁰ I disagree with both Isnardi Parente (*Ermodoro*, 262–3) and Dillon (*Heirs*, 201 with n. 63) on the identity of the speaker. The grammar is inconclusive, and, if anything, the participle that sets off the quotation (εἰπόντων) would most likely refer to Porphyry. On the other hand, the fact that the direct quotation comes from Porphyry’s text of Dercylides—the volume from which it is derived (book 11) is expressly cited—is strong evidence for the proposition that it is Dercylides who is being quoted here. Note too (*contra* Dillon, *Heirs*, 201, who unnecessarily translates τοῖς περὶ Πλάτωνα as ‘it is said by Plato and his followers’) that in the passage which is directly quoted Plato is never explicitly referred to as a speaker. It is possible (however unlikely and unprovable) that Hermodorus is ‘quoting’ Plato in the sense that, if *On Sciences* were a *dialogue*, he could be citing Plato directly in a dramatic representation.

¹⁵¹ The reading ἔστι μάλλον εἶναι here is problematic.

¹⁵² Adopting Dillon’s interpretation of this sentence.

¹⁵³ Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1080^b30 ff.) refers to ‘all who hold that the One is an element and the principle of existing things’ (ὅσοι τὸ ἐν στοιχεῖον καὶ ἀρχὴν φασιν εἶναι τῶν ὄντων) with reference to both the Platonists and the Pythagoreans.

¹⁵⁴ Emending the text from δεδεγμένον to δέδεκται, following Gaiser and Isnardi Parente.

¹⁵⁵ This phrase distinguishes the theories of Hermodorus from another Platonist

Dercylides, in quoting Hermodorus, appears to have preserved the terminology of the Platonist by appealing to concepts that are familiar both from Plato himself and from other influential Academics of the fourth century BCE. The terminology is relatively consistent, but the details of the unique metaphysical systems advocated by, for example, Xenocrates or Speusippus reveal variances that could either be attributed to inter-Academic polemics or, as Dillon would have it, to different emphases.¹⁵⁶ Still, establishing the metaphysics that underlie this passage is crucial as a point of comparison with the passage attributed to source [B] on Hōromazēs and Areimanius in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*: as Cherniss noted, in the later Platonic dialogues and among the early Academics, the structures of metaphysics were applied to both the gods and the mathematical entities.¹⁵⁷ This is explicit in the testimonia that refer to the Orphizer Xenocrates, who drew analogies between, on the one hand, the Monad, Zeus, Odd, and Mind as 'first god', and on the other hand, Rhea, Justice, and the Soul of the Universe as 'mother of the gods'.¹⁵⁸ For Hermodorus, those things in opposition that are not the 'element One' are said to be susceptible to the more and the less, that is to say, to be unstable and, thus, not to exist in an absolute and unchanging sense. In this sense they are phenomena. As scholars have noted, Hermodorus' metaphysics holds something in common with the scheme outlined in the *Philebus* (24 c 2–25 d 3).¹⁵⁹ There, Socrates establishes that the greater and the lesser (μείζον καὶ μικρότερον) and all things that associate with one another comparatively as opposites (e.g. hotter and colder, θερμότερον καὶ ψυχρότερον) advance without stability (προχωρεῖ καὶ οὐ μένει) in relation to one another.¹⁶⁰ A correlation between the metaphysics

competitor, Speusippus, who believed that both the One and the Infinite Dyad (as matter) were ἀρχαί (Iambl. *Comm. math.* 15. 5 ff. Festa = F 72 Isnardi Parente).

¹⁵⁶ Dillon, *Heirs*, 203. I can see no way of understanding the emphatic point being made by Hermodorus about matter not being an origin as anything other than inter-Academic polemics. After all, part of the point of Hermodorus' description is that a passive principle cannot exist since it is acted upon and thus cannot be a principle.

¹⁵⁷ H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* [*Criticism*] (Baltimore, 1944), 287.

¹⁵⁸ On which see Dillon, *Heirs*, 102–7.

¹⁵⁹ See Dillon, *Heirs*, 203; Isnardi Parente, *Ermodoro*, 443; and Cherniss, *Criticism*, 286–7.

¹⁶⁰ Note the correlation between the motion of these intermediary entities and the 'advancements' (προχωρήσεις) of the visible gods (i.e. the stars/planets) in the *Timaeus* (40 c 5). As Dillon notes (*Heirs*, 202), Socrates in the *Philebus* (26 e 6–8)

of the universe as preserved in Dercylides' description of Hermodorus' metaphysics and the gods in the writings of authority [B] as employed by Plutarch could occur only if Hōromazēs and Areimanius were considered to be among sensible objects; amazingly, they are: Hōromazēs and Areimanius are 'especially among objects of perception' (μάλιστα τῶν αἰσθητῶν), a description that fits adequately with Plato's illustration of the astral gods in *Timaeus*, who, among other things, are the 'craftsmen of good and bad things' (καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν δημιουργοί) of a second ontological and causal stratum who work 'with Mind' (μετὰ νοῦ).¹⁶¹ As perceivable beings, then, Hōromazēs and Areimanius as described by authority [B] occupy a position in the cosmos that adapts and expands upon Plato's descriptions of the astral gods in *Timaeus* and the second 'class' of beings in the *Philebus*.

But there is a problem with the hypothesis that Hermodorus is identical with authority [B] in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*. On the one hand, source [B] suggests that Hōromazēs and Areimanius assume two oppositional poles on the indefinite spectrum, and that Mithrēs occupies the middle as the 'mean' (μέσον) between them.¹⁶² On the other hand, in the short fragment of Hermodorus' *On Sciences*, there is no explicit reference to a mediating figure

associates the creator (τὸ ποιοῦν) with the cause (τὸ αἴτιον), although his suggestion that 'despite Plato's distinction in the *Philebus* between Limit itself and the "cause of the mixture", that the creative principle may reasonably be held to do its own "mixing"' cannot be demonstrated in this fragment of Hermodorus. In the passage attributed to authority [B] and preserved by Plutarch, there is reference to the 'mixing of good and bad things', but sadly a lacuna prevents us from knowing what the subject of this sentence was.

¹⁶¹ Plato, *Tim.* 46 E 3–6 and 92 A 5–9, the end of the dialogue, where the cosmos is called the 'image of the Intelligent, a perceptible god' (εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεοῦ αἰσθητός). Note too that the astral gods, like other 'accessory causes' (συναίτια), effect the universe by, among other things, 'cooling and heating' (ψύχοντα καὶ θερμαίνοντα). Cf. Tarán, *Academica*, 82 with n. 86.

¹⁶² This passage shares many features with the cosmology attributed by Eudemos of Rhodes to Epimenides (F 150 Wehrli = Damasc. *Princ.* 124, no. 215), in which Aer and Night, the two first principles, give birth to Tartarus, the 'third principle', which is in turn called 'the intelligent mean' (ἡ νοητὴ μέσότης). Their mingling also apparently produces the egg, from which other offspring come forward. As G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield note, however (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1983), 27), it is difficult to distinguish the passages that refer genuinely to Epimenides' cosmology (pre-414 BCE) from additions that could have been made either by Eudemos or by later Neoplatonist commentators. On the subject of what Damascius borrowed, however, Betegh ('Eudemos', 347–9) has persuasively demonstrated that Damascius tends to let Eudemos' account speak for itself, even if it runs counter to his own purposes.

in the metaphysical stratification. Ontologically, what appears is something closer to a dualism that occurs at the secondary stratum of 'sensible' divinities. In order to investigate this apparent inconsistency, we need to adduce a remarkable passage, attributed to 'children of the Pythagoreans'¹⁶³ by Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 10. 262–70), that demonstrates striking parallels with Dercylides' description of Hermodorus' metaphysics. There, Sextus describes how the 'children of the Pythagoreans' divide the 'things that exist' (τῶν ὄντων) into three categories: those conceived of (a) 'absolutely' (κατὰ διαφοράν), e.g. 'man' and 'horse'; (b) 'according to their opposites' (κατ' ἐναντίωσιν), e.g. 'good' and 'bad'; and (c) 'relatively' (πρὸς τι).¹⁶⁴ Most interestingly, with regard to things that are conceived of (b) according to their opposites, the 'children of the Pythagoreans' posit 'no mean' (οὐδὲν μέσον), on the grounds that there is nothing 'in the middle' (μεταξύ) between opposites.¹⁶⁵ But for the class of (c) relatives, which includes the 'more and the less', there exists a 'middle' state (τι μέσον).¹⁶⁶ While the specific schemata of the passage preserved by Sextus deviate slightly from the description of Hermodorus' metaphysics by Dercylides, as Dillon and Thiel have demonstrated, the description of the ontological groupings of (a) absolutes, (b) things that exist according to their opposites, and (c) relatives is both sufficiently similar and unique within fourth-century BCE philosophy to suggest that the metaphysics of the 'children of the Pythagoreans' and of Hermodorus of Syracuse are related and refer to a doctrine in the early Academy distinguishable from those of Xenocrates and Speusippus.¹⁶⁷ It is also possible, although not certain, that Dercylides and Sextus Empiricus are both describing a single metaphysical system, that of Hermodorus of

¹⁶³ At the beginning of this passage (*M.* 10. 263) Sextus refers to 'the Pythagoreans' (οἱ Πυθαγορικοί), but at the end he closes by calling them the 'children of the Pythagoreans' (Πυθαγορικῶν παῖδες) (10. 270). It is not clear whether Sextus would wish to distinguish between them.

¹⁶⁴ S.E. *M.* 10. 263.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 268.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Dillon, *Heirs*, 204, and D. Thiel, *Die Philosophie des Xenokrates im Kontext der Alten Akademie* (Munich and Leipzig, 2006), 345–6, who provides a useful stratification of the various categorical terms for Hermodorus, the 'children of the Pythagoreans', and Alexander of Aphrodisias (*In Metaph.* 56. 13 ff. Hayduck). He concludes that the accounts of Hermodorus and Sextus both derive from a single early Academic source, while that of Alexander is derived from Aristotle. Isnardi Parente (*Ermodoro*, 147 n. 13) proposes that an earlier theory that we may ascribe to Hermodorus was later modified and developed further by the source of Sextus' information.

Syracuse, which has undergone minimal categorical confusions in the transmission.¹⁶⁸ If we are willing to entertain this speculation, then this significantly clarifies why Plutarch would record that authority [B], who espouses a categorical order very similar to that of Hermodorus, posited a ‘mean’ between the phenomena Hōromazēs and Areimanius, namely Mithrēs. As ‘sensible’ divinities who occupied the secondary stratum, Hōromazēs and Areimanius would be subject to relative measurement. Moreover, this ontological system has parallels in the early Academy, especially in the demonology of Xenocrates, although there are some important differences between the accounts of Xenocrates and source [B].¹⁶⁹ Of course, Mithra was

¹⁶⁸ G. Fine sees a categorical distinction between the systems of ‘children of the Pythagoreans’ and Hermodorus: ‘Hermodorus classifies equal as a determinate relative, whereas the Pythagoreans classify it as a genus of things thought of according to their contrary’ (*On Ideas: Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Theory of Forms* (Oxford, 1993), 181). Close examination of the text, however, reveals that the ‘children of the Pythagoreans’ see ‘equal’ (τὸ ἴσον) as being *both* under the class of relatives (as the ‘middle’; cf. S.E. *M.* 10. 268) *and* under the class of opposites (cf. *ibid.* 271), in which, according to Sextus, they take a ‘ruling’ (ἄρχειν) position. What may be apparently a contradiction can be explained in several ways: first, as Dillon suggests (*Heirs*, 204 with n. 70), the difficulty comes when Sextus tries to make sense of this system, and he reasonably conjectures that Sextus’ source is confused; second, this could be an example of the ontological possibility that, for this particular strand of Platonism, the ‘ruling’ element of a category, called a *genos*, was the element that linked it to another category. After all, ‘middle’ has many possible meanings among the associates of Plato and the Pythagoreans. In the case of ‘equal’, this would not be far-fetched: as a ‘middle’ it belongs to the class of relatives (i.e. it is relative to ‘greater’ and ‘lesser’), but it could also function as the ‘opposite’ of inequality, as the ‘children of the Pythagoreans’ suggest it does.

¹⁶⁹ Both Xenocrates and source [B] posit a tripartite stratification for the universe: gods, *daimones*, and humans. Especially interesting and suggestive for how we can understand early Academic descriptions of the intermediary ontological status is how, for Xenocrates (F 225 Isnardi Parente = Plut. *Is. et Osir.* 360 D), the *daimones* are ‘joined into a unity with the nature of the soul and the perception of the body’, a perception that is ‘susceptible to pleasure and pain and to whatever affections are inherent in changes’. Still, for Xenocrates, the perceptibility of the *daimones* is linked inextricably with their potential for affection (on which see H. S. Schibli, ‘Xenocrates’ Daemons and the Irrational Soul’ [‘Daemons’], *CQ*, NS 43/1 (1993), 143–67 at 147–9), something that is nowhere expressed in the account of source [B]. Moreover, other comparisons reveal problems with integrating the account of source [B] with Xenocrates’ ontology. Xenocrates (F 222 Isnardi Parente = Plut. *Def. orac.* 12, 416 C; F 223 Isnardi Parente = Procl. *In Remp.* ii. 48. 4 Kroll) is interested in how gods, *daimones*, and humans represent various types of two-dimensional triangles: the gods are like equilateral triangles, humans like scalene triangles, and *daimones* like isosceles triangles. For the author of account [B], on the other hand, there is no mention of triangles, but rather the vague suggestion that Hōromazēs increased his dimensions (presumably from point to line to solid). Finally, Xenocrates, unlike Hermodorus, demonstrates no knowledge of Zoroastrianism, but rather as-

already known publicly to the Persian world in the inscriptions at Susa and Egbatana put up by Artaxerxes II (405–359 BCE) in the first half of the fourth century BCE, where Mithra appears alongside Anāhita and Ahuramazda as a protector of the Persian King.¹⁷⁰ Inscriptional evidence from Persepolis demonstrates that the successor Artaxerxes III (r. 359–338 BCE) promoted the celebration of Mithra and Ahuramazda together (without Anāhita) in the period that corresponded with the development of the early Academy.¹⁷¹ Given that Mithra was the god of oaths and contracts, it is not surprising that he would be considered to occupy a mediating position between opposites.¹⁷² All the evidence points in the same direction: the account of authority [B] should be dated to the mid-fourth century BCE, and to someone within the early Academy.

The results of this philological analysis are significant: if this speculative argument is right, then a certain strand of the early Academy not only established analogues between the ontological systems of Zoroastrianism and Platonism, but it also used Zoroastrianism as a means to justify that unique metaphysical scheme at a specific moment when various associates of Plato competed over how to define ‘Platonism’ itself. This unique metaphysical scheme, which deviates from systems ascribed to Speusippus and Xenocrates, may be associated with Hermodorus of Syracuse, a minor Platonist whose proposition of a categorical structure for beings within the universe was later considered to be ‘Pythagorean’ by Sextus Empiricus. In his appeal to Zoroastrianism, Hermodorus appears to have based at least some of his knowledge on a reliable historical source from the fifth century BCE, namely Xanthus of Lydia. Unlike Eudoxus, Aristotle, and Philip of Opus, Hermodorus resisted the impulse to posit the death of Plato as the end-point that establishes a millenarian scheme for the universe. In this sense, Hermodorus occupies a position between the associates of Plato and the contemporary historian Theopompus of Chios, who was

sumes that the intermediary realm is occupied by the Olympian deities (cf. Schibli, ‘Daemons’, 144–6).

¹⁷⁰ A²Sa 5, A²Sd 4, A²Ha 6, A²Hb. On Mithra during the reigns of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III, see Briant, *History*, 998–9 with bibliography.

¹⁷¹ A³Pa 24–5. Plutarch, in his life of Artaxerxes II (which directly claims Ctesias as a source: *Artax.* 1), has the Persian King invoke the name Mithra (*Artax.* 4, no. 403).

¹⁷² On Mithra as god of contracts, see Briant, *History*, 251–3, and I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (Cambridge, 1967), 26–35.

more interested in the ‘wonders’ that the *magoi* could provide as entertainment to his audience than in establishing Plato’s position within a cycle of leading practitioners of wisdom. Neither figure has been associated with Plato in unequivocally positive terms.¹⁷³ Perhaps both were outsiders who lacked an interest in legitimizing other ‘institutions’ of philosophy within the larger political context of the 350s–330s BCE.

What is more—and this is very interesting indeed—Hermodorus of Syracuse was no dilettante historian: he preserves Platonized versions of Persian religious traditions that had an existence independent of the Greek sources, as Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet have noted in detail.¹⁷⁴ Of particular import here is the surprising description of Hōromazēs and Areimanius as being ‘especially among objects of perception’. What could this possibly mean? For Plato and for Philip of Opus, as I have already noted, certain divinities appear as stars and are thus phenomena, so it is entirely possible that Hermodorus would be referring to them as astral gods. But on the other hand, as I have suggested, the Zoroastrian magism that Hermodorus was engaged in Platonizing is verifiably Persian, with sources both contemporaneous and of independent traditional lineage that corroborate his evidence. Most notably, the reference to Mithra as the intermediary force between Hōromazēs and Areimanius demonstrates Hermodorus’ knowledge of apparent changes in royal Persian policy regarding the gods initially under Artaxerxes II, and then under his successor Artaxerxes III. We have some tantalizing evidence for the shape that these changes took: an edict published by Artaxerxes II and preserved by Berossus, a priest of Babylon (*fl.* c.330–320 BCE), cited by Clement of Alexandria:

In the third book *On the Chaldaeans*, Berossus describes [the Persians and Medes and *magoi*],¹⁷⁵ [saying that] later on, after many turnings of the years, they worshipped sculptures in human form [*ἀνθρωποειδῆ ἀγάλματα*], and that Artaxerxes, son of Darius, son of Ochus, introduced this practice.

¹⁷³ Theopompus, of course, in his *Attack on the Teaching of Plato*, wrote that Plato plagiarized from the teachings of Aristippus, Antisthenes, and Bryson of Heraclea (FGrHist 115 F 259). Hermodorus was said to have sold the volumes of Plato in Sicily for money (F 3 Isnardi Parente, from the *Suda*), perhaps a slander that originates with his competitors in the early Academy itself.

¹⁷⁴ Boyce with Grenet, *Macedonian*, 456–60. The authors assume that the information preserved by Plutarch refers to a 4th-cent. BCE understanding of magism.

¹⁷⁵ As the understood subjects from earlier on, but we cannot conclude that Berossus actually mentioned these three groups together.

He was the first to set up the statue of Aphrodite Anaitis in Babylon and ordered such worship from the Susians, Egbatanians, Persians, Bactrians, and those from Damascus and Sardis. (FGrHist 680 F 11=Clem. Al. *Protr.* 5. 65. 2, no. 217)

As Briant has noted, the text here is derived from an official source, which is indicated by the patrimony and the list of peoples who are ordered by Artaxerxes II to worship statues.¹⁷⁶ What this edict of Artaxerxes II tells us is that a new policy of worshiping statues for the gods was in place in Persia since the first or second quarter of the fourth century BCE in the Persian Empire, even as far away as Sardis. Dinon of Colophon, another historian who apparently travelled to Persia with Alexander the Great, confirms that the Persians considered the statues of their gods to be water and fire, although this account raises more questions than it provides answers.¹⁷⁷ Still, it is clear from Greek and Babylonian eyewitness testimonies of the third quarter of the fourth century BCE that the Persians honoured their gods in the form of statues, and if Hermodorus was privy to this sort of knowledge about Zoroastrian customs, we might wish to entertain the possibility that, by referring (in an abstracted philosophical sense) to Hōromazēs and Areimanius as phenomena that could be perceived by the senses, he was referring to the images of the gods in statue form.

6. Conclusions: Plato and the Chaldaean Stranger

At the end of this study, we find ourselves where we began, with the astronomer Philip of Opus, who is the source for the story of the visit of a Persian practitioner of wisdom to Plato in Athens. I cite the papyrus fragment of column 3 from the *Index Academicorum philosophorum* preserved in Herculaneum, one of the most important sources for information about the history of the early Academy:

... [ὁ ἀσ]τρολόγος [ἐ]ξηγεῖτ' αὐτῷ γεγονὼς ἀναχρα|φὲς τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ ἀ|κουστής, ὅτι “γεγρακὼς ἤδη [Πλάτων] ξέν[ο]ν ὑπε|δέξ[ατ]ο Χαλδα[ίων] ἐπ[ὶ] [ωι-
δάς] τινὰς | ἐπύρεξ[ε]”

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Briant, *History*, 676–80.

¹⁷⁷ FGrHist 690 F 28=Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4. 65. 1 ff.

... the astronomer, who became his recorder¹⁷⁸ and a student of Plato, explains that, when Plato had already grown old, he received a Stranger from Chaldaea some [songs?] he had a fever¹⁷⁹

What we should immediately note is the presence of storytelling elements familiar from Plato's own narrative models. When, in his later writings, Plato wished to introduce new ideas into his systems of metaphysics, dialectic, and politics, he would bring in a wise interlocutor who, while being a foreign visitor (*ξένος*) to the location of the dialogue (such as the Eleatic Stranger visiting Athens in the *Sophist* and *Statesman* or the Athenian Stranger visiting Crete in the *Laws*), would nevertheless gain the position of the authoritative figure and, consequently, refute positions that had been put forward in earlier Platonic dialogues.¹⁸⁰ The context of the present passage is difficult to reconstruct, but it is relatively clear that Philip of Opus is being quoted in this section, which is probably preserved by Neanthes.¹⁸¹ We hear first that Plato, who had a fever, received the Chaldaean Stranger. There is a break in the papyrus, and when we pick up the story once again, in the unfortunately lacunose column 5, it is apparent that we are still working with Philip's story of

¹⁷⁸ In the context, 'recorder' or 'secretary' probably refers to Philip of Opus as the amanuensis of Plato.

¹⁷⁹ *Index Acad. Herc.* col. 3 (ed. Mekler, although I accept some emendations and reconstructions made by Gaiser). The most recent attempt to render a text for P. Herc. 1021 is E. Puglia, 'Platone e l'ospite caldeo nella *Storia dell'Academia* di Filodimo' ['Caldeo'], *Studi di egittologia e di papirologia*, 2 (2005), 123–7.

¹⁸⁰ We might note that when Socrates introduces the concept of anamnesis and mathematical proof in the *Meno* (81 A 5–6), he does so by appeal to 'women and men wise concerning divine things' and quotes an Orphic–Dionysiac section from a poem by Pindar (F 127 Bowra). It is possible that a tradition of bringing oriental practitioners of wisdom to Greece had originated with Plato's associate Heraclides of Pontus (F 55, 79, and 139 Schütrumpf), who is known to have composed a dialogue *Zoroaster* which may have involved the story of a *magos* who circumnavigated Africa and arrived at Gelon's court in Syracuse. Of course, this story provides an interesting parallel to Plato's journey to the court of Dionysius II in 361 BCE, although further investigation on these lines would be speculative. Cf. H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus [Heraclides]* (Oxford, 1980), 110–12.

¹⁸¹ Cf. K. Gaiser, *Philodems Academica: Die Berichte über Platon und die Alte Akademie in zwei herkulanensischen Papyri [Berichte]* (Stuttgart, 1988), 108–9, a position that is strengthened by the presence in the margins of a summary of what 'Neanthes' says. Neanthes appears to have been active during the last quarter of the 4th cent. BCE, as recently demonstrated by S. Schorn, "Periegetische Biographie" — "Historische Biographie": Neanthes von Kyzikos (FgrHist 84) als Biograph', in M. Erler and S. Schorn (eds.), *Die griechische Biographie in hellenistischer Zeit: Akten des internationalen Kongresses vom 26.–29. Juli 2006 in Würzburg* (Berlin and New York, 2007), 115–56.

the Chaldaean Stranger,¹⁸² who apparently harmonizes (ἡρ(μ)οττε) a tune with the help of a slave-girl in order to demonstrate a dactylic rhythm, to which Plato responds that the Chaldaean Stranger is out of his mind; the Chaldaean Stranger retorts: ‘you think that in every way the barbarian nature is ignorant because the barbarian land has an ear that is inclined against rhythm and it does not have the power to learn the “motions”’.¹⁸³ A lacuna follows, and although the text lacks an explicit subject, the sense is clear: Plato is pleased and overjoyed with the response of the Chaldaean Stranger, who must have said something witty or convincing, or perhaps appropriated a verse couplet.¹⁸⁴ Then we hear that Plato’s fever returns, and the text becomes lacunose once again.

The passage as it is preserved does not permit us to infer much about the work of Philip of Opus on Plato’s discourse with the Chaldaean Stranger, except to conjecture (as many scholars have) that the Stranger has arrived in order to cure the ailing Plato with music.¹⁸⁵ We are forced to consider its contents in relation to what

¹⁸² Not included in the fragments collected by Tarán, *Academica*, although the clear reference to dramatic discourse (‘he said that “Plato spoke and asked him, saying . . .”’) and the mention of foreign kinds of music suggest that we are still dealing with Philip of Opus’ account. Mekler, Gaiser, Dorandi, and Puglia all follow this annotation.

¹⁸³ I read the text as: Ἐννοεῖς ὡς πάντῃ τὸ βάρβαρον | ἄμα[θ]ές· ἄτε γε παράρρυθμον | οὐ[ς γ]ῆ βάρβαρος φέρουσα | τ[ὰς φο]ρὰς . . . ἀδυνατεῖ μα[θ]εῖν. The article τ[ὰς] is difficult to obtain and the correct reading may be πω[ς], as suggested by Gaiser. Puglia (‘Caldeo’, 125) proposes τ[ὰς χ]είρας, which would render the phrase ‘she [i.e. the Thracian slave-girl] is not able to learn the hands’, but Puglia’s proposed emendation is unconvincing on two counts: first, he cites no comparable usage in ancient music theory, much less in works about music circulating in the mid-4th cent.; second, he confirms this reading only by an admittedly ‘estremamente incerto’ (‘Caldeo’, 125) reading of δακτύλ[ωι] eight lines earlier, which is unlikely given the manuscript readings as aided by multispectral imaging. Without justification for precisely how ‘rhythm’ (i.e. by the finger or by the hand) is kept in 4th-cent. BCE musical practice, Puglia’s readings cannot be confirmed.

¹⁸⁴ Gaiser’s attempt (*Berichte*, 425–6) to render a couplet in iambic trimeters here (παράρρυθμον | οὐ[ς γ]ῆ βάρβαρος φέρουσα | πω[ς] || φο]ρὰς ~ ~ × ἀδυνατεῖ μα[θ]εῖν | × ~) is ingenious but cannot be conclusive.

¹⁸⁵ This approach has led to remarkable reconstructions of the lines between the initial mention of Plato’s fever and the song of the Thracian slave-girl, especially Gaiser’s interesting (but ultimately speculative) ἐπ[ωιδάς] τινὰς [ἐπαίδον]τα, ὅτι ἐπύρεξ[εν]. One should note that Gaiser’s appeal to Plato, *Rep.* 608 A 3–4 (ἐπάδοντες . . . τὴν ἐπωδήν) is not an obvious example of the verb ἐπάδω with the object ἐπωδή since it is mediated, in the passage, by a λόγος, and the logical structure here proceeds ‘singing—a *logos*—which is a song’. Puglia (‘Caldeo’, 124) proposes a convincing reading for the problematic ἐπ[ωιδάς] τινὰς, rendering it instead ἐ[ῖθ’] ἡμέρας τινὰς (i.e. Plato had a fever ‘for a few days’). Regardless of how we read the passage, it has

Plato's interlocutors say about the subject at hand, namely music, in the genuine dialogues. Speaking generally, in the *Republic* and the *Laws* Socrates and the Athenian Stranger, respectively, consider that the musical and ethical modes are coextensive;¹⁸⁶ moreover, as Tarán notes, the Athenian Stranger operates on the assumption that music can be substituted for philosophy or, in certain circumstances, wisdom (*sophia*) itself.¹⁸⁷ It appears that the primary influence on this analogizing between musical mode and ethical comport was Damon, and we have evidence of this type of analogizing elsewhere in the Academy: the association of musical modes with ethnicity and types of virtue (both Greek and barbarian) can be found in the fragments of Plato's associate Heraclides of Pontus, who, like Philip of Opus, wrote a dialogue about a travelling *magos*.¹⁸⁸ Given the importance that the Athenian Stranger in Plato's *Laws* attaches to music in the educational system and to the inculcation of virtue in the second-best city-state, we should not treat this discussion of music in Philip's dialogue lightly.¹⁸⁹

When Philip of Opus has Plato and the Chaldaean Stranger discussing poetic modes in the 'dactylic' rhythm, to what are they referring? For Plato in the *Republic*, the dactylic rhythm stood in metonymy for heroic song, and it represented the quantitative equivalence of the 'up' and 'down' parts of the measure.¹⁹⁰ In this sense, musical rhythm could not be extricated from the physics and ma-

been agreed by Wilamowitz, Mekler, Gaiser, Dorandi, and Puglia that the purpose of the Chaldaean Stranger's visit is (ostensibly) to charm Plato with music.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. A. Barker, *The Science of Harmonics in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, 2007), 250–1.

¹⁸⁷ Tarán, *Academica*, 27 n. 113, referring to, among other places, *Laws* 689 D 6–7: ἡ καλλίστη καὶ μεγίστη τῶν συμφωνιῶν μεγίστη δικαιοτάτ' ἂν λέγοιτο σοφία.

¹⁸⁸ For the dialogue, possibly the one entitled *Zoroaster*, see F 139 Schütrumpf (=Posidonius F 49 Edelstein–Kidd, no. 76). For Heraclides' belief that the music and ethnic virtues were coextensive, see F 114 (=Ath. 14. 19–21, 624 C–626 A), F 115a (=Philod. *Mus.* 4 col. 49. 1–20 Delattre), and F 115b Schütrumpf (=Philod. *Mus.* cols. 137. 27–138. 9 Delattre), on which see Gottschalk, *Heraclides*, 134–9. Of course, Aristotle too thought that the practice of music, as performed by peoples of different ethnic backgrounds, disposes people to virtues (e.g. Arist. *Pol.* 1339^a 11–10).

¹⁸⁹ The Athenian Stranger (*Laws* 669 D 2–5) warns that poets who make music improperly do so 'irrationally' (τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐμπλέκοντες καὶ συγκυκλώντες ἀλόγως), gesturing towards their inability to perform dialectics.

¹⁹⁰ Plato, *Rep.* 400 B 1–C 4, where Socrates cites the music theory of Damon. Aristoxenus of Tarentum (*El. rhythm.* F 30 Pearson), the famous Peripatetic/Pythagorean musicologist and biographer, also understood the dactylic to be the foot with the 'equal ratio' (ἴσῳ λόγῳ). See M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford, 1992), 243–4.

thematics of Plato's philosophy. Specifically, it is worth comparing the appeal to the 'motions' of musical rhythm as described by the astronomer Philip with the 'motions' of music and astronomy in *Republic* 7. There, Socrates attempts to link the sciences of astronomy and harmonics together by using a generalizing concept that functions analogously for both sciences, namely motion (*φορά*):

'Indeed,' I said, 'motion [*ἡ φора*] admits of not one but two forms [*εἴδη*], in my opinion. Some wise person [*σοφός*], I suppose, will be able to say what all of them are; but even I can propose two.'

'What are they?'

'The one we were discussing,' I said, 'and its correlative [*ἀντίστροφον*].'

'What's that?'

'It's possible', I said, 'that just as our eyes are outfitted for astronomy, so our ears are outfitted for enharmonic motion [*ἐναρμόνιον φοράν*], and that these two sciences are sisters to one another, just as the Pythagoreans say.' (Plato, *Rep.* 530 c 8–d 8)¹⁹¹

In referring to the Pythagoreans here, Socrates is most likely recalling the theories of musical motion of the mathematical Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum.¹⁹² What is interesting about the account of the Chaldaean Stranger in the *Index*, then, is that Philip of Opus follows his teacher *and* the Pythagoreans by understanding motion to be a central element in his discussion of music, but, even more interesting, he puts these words in the mouth of a Stranger from 'barbarian' land.¹⁹³ Was the Chaldaean Stranger proposing to emend the Platonic theory of motion—a point of contention between Plato and the mathematical Pythagoreans in the *Republic*—in the larger scheme of Platonic physics? And what are we to do with the apparent interrelationship between Pythagorean and 'barbarian', a topic that has been problematic for scholars of the history of ancient philosophy? While it has been in fashion for some time to take seriously the influence of the Pythagoreans—especially the 'mathematical' group which involved itself in empirical studies of the universe—on the more famous associates of Plato (Speusippus, Xenocrates, Hermodorus, Heraclides, Eudoxus, Aristotle, Philip

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Tim.* 47 d 2–e 2 (*ἡ δὲ ἁρμονία, συγγενεῖς ἔχουσα φορὰς ταῖς ἐν ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς περιόδοις . . .*), 80 a 3–b 8.

¹⁹² Cf. Huffman, *Archytas*, 398–9.

¹⁹³ Contrast Socrates' position when speaking to the Pythagorean students of Philolaus in the *Phaedo* (78 a 1–9), where Socrates half-seriously suggests that one can find people who understand how to sing charms in order to dispel fears among *both* Greeks *and* barbarians.

of Opus), scholars of the past half-century have been less keen to embrace the importance of Persian thought for Plato's philosophy.

Yet it is clear that those associates of Plato who inherited the Academy considered the thought of practitioners of wisdom from the east, especially Zoroastrian *magoi*, to reflect something of the 'truth' of Plato's thought after his death. Placing Plato within a history of oriental practitioners of wisdom not only justified the philosophical concepts that Plato himself had taught in the Academy, but it also legitimized the history of philosophy as it was being formulated for the first time in a schematically diachronic manner after the death of Plato. The associates of Plato responded in various ways to the significance of Persian *magoi* to the project of philosophy, and it should no longer be controversial to say that, immediately after the death of Plato, they undertook the activity of synthesizing the metaphysical systems proposed by their teacher with the cosmological systems of the Persians in order to formulate their own unique positions in their individual bids to capture—and, in the case of Aristotle, to render completed and thus outdated—the doctrine of the great sage Plato. When ancient biography and the history of philosophy came to attain the stability of a focused genre in the writings of Aristoxenus of Tarentum and Eudemus of Rhodes, it would include a discourse concerning magism that was a complicated mixture of royal Persian political propaganda, Greek concerns with identity and otherness as well as exoterism and esoterism, historical fact and fiction, scientific truth and illusion. But it would be a mistake to attribute our own scepticism about the significance of Persian wisdom traditions (generally) and Zoroastrian magism (specifically) for Plato's philosophy to the students of Plato themselves: if we were to adhere to an excessively severe scepticism about the influences of Eastern wisdom traditions on the West, we would share a common mind instead with Diogenes Laertius, who severely criticized Aristotle, Sotion, Hermodorus, and Xanthus for believing that philosophy had had its origins with 'barbarians'. And, as we all know, Diogenes Laertius is not always an authority to be trusted.

Stanford University

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