

THEOLOGY OF THE EARLY STOA

ADAM DROZDEK

Muchos son los nombres de Dios en la teología estoica, que refleja la suprema importancia de Dios no sólo en la Teología, sino también en la Física, e incluso en la Lógica. Esta suprema importancia es denotada por un vigoroso monoteísmo que alcanza el nivel de panteísmo.

God is called by many names in the Stoic theology, which reflects the all-importance of God not only in theology, but also in physics and even in logic. This all-importance is indicated by strong monotheism that reaches the level of pantheism.

Palabras clave: estoicismo, teología, *lógos*, panteísmo.

Keywords: Stoics, theology, logos, pantheism.

In the opening line of his hymn to Zeus, Cleanthes refers to Zeus as πολώνυμος, the one of many names. Although it is a customary denomination in hymns to the gods, the Stoics took this very seriously, and there is no shortage of names given to God in the extant fragments and testimonies. For example, “Zeno names logos the disposer of the things of nature and maker of the universe. He calls it fate, necessity of things, God, and the mind (*animus*) of Zeus” (Lactantius, *De uera sap.* 9 = 1.160)¹, and, in the words of Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics say that “God and mind (*nous*), fate (*heimarmene*) and Zeus are one, but called by many different names” (DL 7.135 = 1.102). A theologically interesting problem is to what extent these names reflect the Stoic conception of divinity and whether these names can be reconciled with one another as descriptions of the Stoic God. In this paper, some of these names are scrutinized and connections between them are established to arrive at the concept of God in the Stoic doctrine.

¹ Numbers after equal sign refer to Hans von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, v. 1-4, Leipzig, 1903-1924 [reprint, Dubuque, 1967].

1 *Logos*

Beginning with Zeno, the Stoics claimed that there are two principles – passive and unqualified substance (οὐσία) or matter (ύλη), and active logos or God – and four elements: fire, water, air, and earth (DL 7.134 = 1.85, 2.299). Both God and matter are eternal (Stobaeus 1.11.5a = 1.87). The result of the conjunction of God and matter is qualified matter. This conjunction has shape and occupies space. The two *archai* are never found in separation from one another². Matter is corporeal³, but at the same time without form and attributes (DL 7.134 = 1.85), which is difficult to reconcile with its corporeality. A true attribute of substrate is its passivity. Logos is an active principle that gives matter form and motion⁴.

To account for multiplicity of things, the Stoics introduce *logoi spermatikoi*. Individual beings develop according to the *logoi spermatikoi*, and particular events develop in an order of necessary succession (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027).

In the development of their system, the Stoics were influenced to a considerable extent by the science of the day, in particular, by medicine and biology. The Stoics were also interested in logic, and their logical analyses, in particular, Chrysippus', mark an emergence of propositional logic. The presence of the two fields – science and logic – is reflected also in their terminology and Heinze is correct in his observation that *logos spermatikos* is the strongest link between the logical and biological aspects of their system⁵. Observing regularities in nature – particularly in the inviolable sequences of phases of developments of various organisms – and establishing rigid logical rules lead to a generalization of cosmic regularities that are individualized in plants, animals, and men. Harmony, and thus reasonableness of the world, is found primarily in observed and established regularities, developments, and sequences of natural events. In this sense, attempts of equating *logoi spermatikoi* with Platonic ideas, as done already by Proclus (*In Parm.* 5.135 = 2.717), are incorrect. Ideas are embodiments of essences of material things. History and development is, in Plato's philosophy, the responsibility

² Cicero, *Acad.* 1.24; Calcidius 294 = 1.87; Proclus, *In Tim.* 81e = 2.307.

³ Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.32 = 2.310; Aetius 1.9.2 = 2.325.

⁴ Simplicius, *In Phys.* 25.15 = 2.312; DL 7.134 = 1.85; Seneca, *Ep.* 65.2 = 2.303.

⁵ Max Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie*, Oldenburg, 1872 [reprint: Aalen, 1961], p. 110.

of the Demiurge, who shapes the world, and of self-moving souls. The Stoics do not really have a counterpart to Platonic ideas. There are no eternal paragons according to which things develop, no model for the development of, for example, a maple tree. Development of each plant begins with a seed and this seed has already implanted in it all the stages of the plant's development. A sequence in which these stages unfold is the responsibility of the *logos spermatikos* of this particular plant. To use a simile of a film reel⁶, a seed is like a collection of frames of the film; the *logos* is the sequence in which the frames are displayed. This sequence is predetermined, unshuttered, and necessary. The reel is there, from the outset, as one entity whose two aspects are the seed and the *logos*: the *logos spermatikos*. In this sense, it is true that the *logos spermatikos* "radically differs from a logical, mathematical necessity which links essences, not events"⁷.

Logoi spermatikoi can be considered particular developmental laws corresponding to particular beings. They are encompassed by the cosmic *logos*, active substance, God. The primary meaning of *logos* is reason, rationality, whose primary manifestation in the world is not only order, harmony, infallibility of natural, but also historical, regularities. No one else but God can be the author of this cosmic harmony and because, as Cleanthes stated, there is nothing more divine than *logos (ratio)*⁸, God is reason. The essence of God is his rationality.

2 Fire

According to Arius Didymus, Zeno stated that there are two kinds of fire: "one is undesigning (*ἄτεχνον*) and converting fuel into itself, the other is designing (*τεχνικόν*), causing growth and preservation" (Stobaeus 1.22.5 = 1.120). There is nothing extraordinary in Zeno's view. Already Plato distinguished several kinds of fire (*Tim.* 58c). Theophrastus mentions two kinds of fire (*De igne* 4). The problem of two kinds of fire is complicated by the fact that, beginning with Zeno, the Stoics claimed that there are, as already mentioned, two inseparable principles: matter and God, and four elements:

⁶ Cicero mentions a simile of an unwinding rope in *De diu.* 1.127 = 2.944. As he also puts it, "all things are, but in respect to time they are absent. As in seeds there is a germ (*uis*) of the things which are produced by them, so in causes are stored future events," 1.128.

⁷ Joseph Moreau, *L'Âme du monde de Platon aux Stoïciens*, Paris, 1939 [reprint: Heidesheim, 1971], p. 169.

⁸ Cicero, *ND* 1.37 = 1.530; Minucius, *Octavius* 19.10 = 1.532.

fire, water, air, and earth (DL 7.134 = 1.85, 2.299). The world is created by God by transforming *ousia* into the four elements (DL 7.136 = 1.102), that is, “when *ousia* changes from fire” into the elements, including fire⁹. To reconcile the existence of two principles, designing fire, and four elements, including fire, it seems that designing fire should be seen as one of the two principles, God¹⁰. This conclusion is reinforced by testimonies in which precisely such identification was made by the Stoics themselves. For Zeno, God is designing fire (Augustine, *Adu. acad.* 3.17.38 = 1.157), for the Stoics, fire is God (Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* 8.5 = 2.423) and God is the designing fire (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027).

Fire has a prominent position in the doctrine of conflagration. “At certain fated times the entire world is the subject of conflagration, and then is reconstructed afresh; but the primary fire is as it were a sperm which possesses the *logoi* of all things and the causes of past, present, and future events”, says Aristocles (Eusebius, *Praep. eu.* 15.14.2 = 1.98). “The whole world is dissolved into fire” (15.18.2) and is then reconstituted thanks to the store of knowledge fire possesses; fire is like a seed from which everything develops in the next cycle (Stobaeus 1.20.1e = 1.107). The only substance that exists at conflagration is designing fire and this is the time when God has “the whole substance,” that is, the whole of designing fire, as his *hegemonikon*; when under the direction of God, the world again unfolds in the next cosmic cycle, “God comes to be in a part of substance” (Origen, *CC* 4.14 = 2.1052). That is, during conflagration, the whole of substance becomes God’s *hegemonikon*; substance becomes endowed only with qualities required by divine *hegemonikon*’s structure, that is, qualities which are necessary for God’s proper functioning. This is the time when God can be identified with *hegemonikon*. After conflagration, substance constituting God’s *hegemonikon* becomes matter out of which the world is reconstructed and after the world is regenerated, God the designing fire becomes only “a part of the substance,” immanent in the world, but not identical to it.

3 *Pneuma*

To Aristotle, the source of motion in the world was coming from the

⁹ DL 7.142 = 2.581; Stobaeus 1.17.3 = 1.102.

¹⁰ Michael Lapidge, «Ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology», *Phronesis* 18, 1973, p. 270.

outside to the sublunar sphere: the unmoved mover caused a circular motion of celestial spheres made out of aethereal substance, and this motion was imparted onto the world of fire, water, air, and earth. But he also considered an immanent force, “a principle and a cause of motion and rest of the thing in which it resides” (*Phys.* 192b20). Strato denied the existence of a transcendent divinity. To him, an ultimate cause of motion was immanent and determined events through blind necessity¹¹. The trend in the Lyceum was to make the transcendent source of motion immanent in nature. Also, the current biological and medical theories attributed life to warmth in the body and breath, the carrier of this warmth. The current philosophical and scientific theories influenced the Stoic view of the world *pneuma*.

First, *pneuma* is self moving and is in constant motion¹². It moves the body (DL 7.157 = 1.135). In that, the Stoics are the heirs of Plato’s doctrine of the source of motion.

Second, *pneuma* permeates the entire universe, as already stated by Cleanthes (Tertullian, *Apol.* 21 = 1.533) and confirmed by Chrysippus (Alexander, *De mixt.* 216.14 = 2.473), and holds it and everything in it together¹³, and thus *pneuma* is a cohesive force in the universe. Its peculiar property is called *τόνος*, tension, which is “the stroke of fire,” sometimes called strength and force (Plutarch, *SR* 1034d = 1.563), and thus *pneuma* is characterized by tensional motion (*τονική κίνησις*, Nemesius 2.12 = 2.451).

Third, as stated by Chrysippus, *pneuma* produces qualities in formless and unmoving matter. Qualities that are *pneumata* and air-like tensions produce forms and shapes (Plutarch, *SR* 1054a = 2.449). In this way, the world *pneuma* can be considered the totality of *pneumata* in the cosmos. The Stoics distinguish between two kinds of *pneuma*: *psychikon pneuma* (Galen, *De usu partium* 3.496 = 2.781) that is drier and warmer than the other kind (Galen, *Def. med.* 19.452 = 2.757, 787). The first kind is found in animals as *psyche* and in men and the whole cosmos as *nous*. The other kinds are *physis* and *hexis*. There are thus four kinds of beings in the universe, depending on the form of *pneuma* present in them. In inanimate objects, *pneuma* exists as *hexis*, in plants as *physis*, in animals as *psyche*, and in rational beings as *nous*. All bodies are sustained by *hexis*, a portion of

¹¹ Plutarch, *Adv. Colot.* 14.3; Cicero, *ND* 1.35; Georges Rodier, *La physique de Straton de Lampsaque*, Paris, 1890, pp. 54-55.

¹² Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.14 = 2.442; Stobaeus 1.17.4 = 2.471.

¹³ Simplicius, *In Phys.* 671.4 = 2.552, Themistius, *In Phys.* 4.8 = 2.553.

the universal *pneuma*, and so each body has its individual *hexis*, each *hexis* being nothing else but (a current of) air. This sustaining *hexis*-air “is responsible for the quality of each of the bodies which are bound together by *hexis*, and they call this quality hardness in iron, density in stone, and whiteness in silver” (Plutarch, *SR* 1053f = 2.449). This *hexis*, a function of *pneuma* that individualizes bodies, is itself individualized in the body and exists in it in the form of air and infuses the body with particular forms. But the forms may evolve during the lifetime of the body. Where are the forms that will be acquired by the body in the future? They may be considered to exist already in the dormant and undeveloped form in the seed. The forms that are in this store evolve according to *logos spermatikos*, the law of development. However, since *logos spermatikos* is a formula of development, it is actualized by the force that stems from the *pneuma*, an air-like tension, specific to a particular body. The seed performs its function properly because *pneuma* uses its resources to bring it to fruition according to *logos spermatikos*¹⁴.

Fourth, beginning with Chrysippus, *pneuma* is viewed as composed of air and fire¹⁵, or the hot and the cold (Galen, *De plac.* 5.447 = 2.841), whereas for Zeno, *pneuma* was one of the two *archai* that are distinguished from the four elements produced by *pneuma*. Chrysippus retains only elements, and *pneuma* is but a mixture of two active elements, air and fire. In this way “Chrysippus arrived at the view more materialistic and from the perspective of spiritualization of the *pneuma* he is clearly in regression in respect to his immediate predecessors”¹⁶.

The world soul was mentioned in the Early Stoa. Zeno is said to have claimed that matter “does not lack eternal *spiritus* and liveliness which will turn it in a rational way” (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). This testimony is not very reliable, and it does not square well with the rest of Zeno’s views¹⁷. It appears that Cleanthes was the first to mention the world *pneuma*¹⁸, although

¹⁴ Properties, that are streams of air, are *logoi spermatikoi* “when they are considered as coming from a seed, as growing and shrinking, as disappearing from a specific material and transferring to another, as developing and moving themselves according to their innermost essence and according to reason,” Heinze, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁵ Alexander, *De anima* 26.13 = 2.786; Alexander, *De mixt.* 225.9 = 2.310.

¹⁶ Gérard Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, Paris, 1945 [reprint: New York, 1987], p. 70.

¹⁷ Lapidge, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

¹⁸ *spiritus*, Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.10; for *spiritus* = *pneuma*, see Cicero, *ND* II 117, 134,

there are opinions that the concept of cosmic *pneuma* was introduced into Stoic philosophy by Chrysippus¹⁹. Priority of Cleanthes in that respect is strengthened by his priority in his introduction of *tonos*²⁰. The importance of *pneuma*, particularly world *pneuma*, lies in its *tonos* through which cohesion of the world and of all individual being in it is assured.

It is important to notice that the Stoics not only mention cosmic *pneuma* but also cosmic *psyche*. For Cleanthes, God is the world *psyche* (Aetius 1.7.17 = 1.532). Chrysippus says that the world is a reasonable, animated (ἔμψυχον), intelligent living being (DL 7.142 = 2.633), that is, it possesses a *psyche*. He also explicitly mentions the cosmic *psyche*²¹. This expression is the consequence of the view – in which the Stoics follow Aristotle – that cosmos is alive. Being alive means being endowed with a soul, and as possessing a soul characterizes animals and humans, so it must also be a feature of the cosmic animal, the cosmic living entity, the entire world. But just like soul is a manifestation of the all-pervading *pneuma*, so is the world soul a manifestation of world *pneuma*, or as already stated by Zeno, “*psyche* is warm *pneuma*” (DL 7.157 = 1.136). This view allows the Stoics to switch between the cosmic *psyche* and the cosmic *pneuma*. It is thus justified for them to say that the human soul is an offshoot (ἀπόσπασμα) of the cosmos as a living creature (DL 7.143 = 2.633) and a portion of the world *psyche* that penetrates and animates everything that exists (Hermias, *Irris. gentil. philos.* 14 = 1.495) because it means at the same time that the human soul is part of the cosmic *pneuma* in one of its tensional forms, that *pneuma* is responsible for conditions of the soul and the status of the individual, and that *pneuma* produces qualifications of individuals; thus man’s individuality cannot be realized in any other place or time. The claim that the human soul is

136, 138; Verbeke, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Heinze, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

¹⁹ Hans Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist*, Leipzig, 1919 [reprint: Stuttgart, 1967], p. 50; Lapidge, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-276; Michael Lapidge, Stoic cosmology, in J.M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics*, Berkeley, 1978, pp. 169-170.

²⁰ Plutarch, *SR* 1034d. Possible Cynic influence is suggested by Ludwig Stein, *Die Psychologie der Stoa*, Berlin, 1886, p. 30 note 37. F. Ogereau, *Essai sur le système philosophique des stoïciens*, Paris, 1885, p. 10, conjectures that the idea of *tonos* was introduced by Zeno, but *tonos* is mentioned only once in a fragment that is considered to discuss Zeno’s philosophy (Philo, *De aet. mundi* 23 = 1.106) and is indicated by a disputed word τεῖνεσθαι in Stobaeus 1.19.4 but the testimonies are far from certain, Alfred C. Pearson, *The fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, London, 1891 [reprint: New York, 1973], pp. 110-111, 123, 254.

²¹ Plutarch, *SR* 1052c = 2.604; Philo, *De aet. mundi* 19 = 2.397.

an offshoot of the cosmos is rendered in Roman Stoicism as a religious statement that human logos is a fragment of God identified as individual man²².

The harmony of the parts of the cosmos “could not happen as they do unless they were bound together by one divine and continuously connected *spiritus*” (Cicero, *ND* 2.19), which can only be done if *pneuma* has a measure of intelligence. And, in fact, the Stoics considered *pneuma* endowed with divine reason (Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.5 = 2.1025). As mentioned, *pneuma* always existed, but world soul is also indestructible (DL 7.156 = 2.774). Thus *pneuma*’s eternity and intelligence by themselves point to its divine status. We can find statements that the Stoics “made God ... *pneuma* pervading the whole world” (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027) and that for them “God is *pneuma* pervading everything and containing everything in itself” (Origen, *CC* 6.71 = 2.1051). God is repeatedly equated in testimonies with *pneuma*.²³ The Stoics defined the substance of God as “an intelligent and fiery *pneuma* which does not have a shape but changes into whatever it wishes and assimilates itself to all things” (Aetius 1.6.1 = 2.1009). Plato’s transcendent Demiurge and world soul are folded by the Stoics into immanent God-*pneuma*, an intelligent and eternal being that designs the order of the universe and determines qualities of each individual entity in it. *Pneuma* is not just the instrument of God²⁴, it is God, although God blended with matter.

God is *pneuma*, and God is the active principle which suggests that *pneuma* and the active principle should be identified. However, the active principle is the same as designing fire, but *pneuma* is a composite of fire and air where – because of the connection with air – undesigning fire is meant. The two accounts can be reconciled by referring to a development of the Stoic doctrine: Zeno’s two principles are abandoned by Chrysippus and only his four elements are retained²⁵. Chrysippus would agree with many of Zeno’s formulations, but he would interpret them differently. In particular, both Zeno and Chrysippus would agree that the active principle is the same as *pneuma*, but Chrysippus abolishes the two principles as entities separate from the four elements and dissolves the former in the latter. In that, the

²² Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.17; Marcus Aurelius 5.27.

²³ Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 1.4 = 2.1033; Clement, *Strom.* 5.14 = 2.1035; SE, *PH* 3.218 = 2.1037; with “intelligent and everlasting *pneuma*,” Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.32 = 2.310.

²⁴ As stated by Harold A.K. Hunt, *A physical interpretation of the universe: the doctrines of Zeno the Stoic*, Melbourne, 1976, p. 41.

²⁵ Lapidge, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

active principle is at best a *modus loquendi* that refers to the *pneuma* which is a mixture of air and fire (destructive fire, that is; creative fire would be just its another name). God-*pneuma* is still an active principle for Chrysippus, but God is not a body distinguished, as for Zeno, from the four elements, but rather a composite of two of the elements²⁶.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the Stoics mention both matter and substance, which has a bearing on the problem of God. It is said that for Zeno and Chrysippus “matter (*silua*) is that which underlies all those things which have qualities; however, the first matter of all things or their primeval foundation is substance (*essentia*) being in itself without qualities and unformed” (Calcidius 290 = 1.86). This testimony is used as the base of the inference that for the Stoics, first matter (πρώτη ὕλη) or first substance “has two aspects, one of which is ὕλη, one θεός”²⁷.

There are plethora of testimonies that use words “matter” and “substance” interchangeably. For example, matter is called by Zeno and Chrysippus substance and matter (DL 7.150 = 1.87, 2.316); Zeno states that first matter is the substance of all things (Stobaeus 1.11.5a = 1.87) and unqualified substance is matter (DL 7.134 = 1.85). Sextus begins his reasoning at one place in this way: “the substance of what exists” is motionless and since we see “the matter of the universe moving, etc.” (SE 9.75 = 2.311), that is, substance is identified with matter. Also, “matter itself is substance” testifies Plotinus (2.4.1 = 2.320). Also, Calcidius, whose testimony is used in favor of the view that matter is an aspect of substance, uses in his exposition of Stoic views the phrase “matter or substance” (Calcidius 293); *essentia*, he says, “is the one common substrate (*substantia*) of everything” (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). He also elaborates on the afore-quoted view by saying that, for example, gold is “matter of those things that are manufactured from them,” but not their substance (Calcidius 290). Substance is what lies at the basis of matter, whether it is gold or anything else. This example allows us to make a terminological distinction between material which is the matter spoken of in the last sentence and the matter which is substrate of all things. Material is a

²⁶ After Diogenes ascribes to both Zeno and Chrysippus the view that God created first the four elements out of matter, he says that “the four elements constitute together the passive substance or matter” (DL 7.137 = 2.580), but it seems that the latter view is Chrysippus’, not Zeno’s.

²⁷ Lapidge, *op. cit.*, pp. 243, 248 seconded by Robert B. Todd, Monism and immanence: the foundations of Stoic physics, in J.M. Rist (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 142.

qualified manifestation of unqualified matter and is the result of the activity of the active principle, God, on matter²⁸. For Zeno then, God and substance are different although inseparable entities; for Chrysippus, God-substance of the conflagration period transforms part of substance, of itself, into material and still permeates it, and thus for Chrysippus it is correct to say that a self-crafting fire, God, uses itself as its own matter to generate the world²⁹.

4 *Aether*

For Aristotle, aether was the fifth element, irreducible to the four elements; one reason being that the natural motion of aether is circular, whereas the natural motion of the four elements is rectilinear³⁰. Zeno, on the other hand, is said to deny special status to aether (Cicero, *De fin.* IV 12 = 1.134).

The uppermost part of the heavens is defined by Zeno as αἰθέρος τὸ ἔσχατον (Achilles Tatius, *Isag.* 5 = 1.115) which may mean that the heavens are the extremity (of the universe) made out of aether (material genitive) or the extremity of aether (partitive genitive). The latter interpretation implies that aether is also in other parts of the universe, whereas the former does not exclude this possibility, but does not stress it. The material make-up of the heavens is confirmed in the testimony that the uppermost sphere of the universe is fire, called aether, which is filled with fixed stars (DL 7.137 = 2.580). Also, Cleanthes discusses “the furthest and highest and outermost, everywhere surrounding everything and encircling [it] and embracing heat which he calls aether” (Cicero, *ND* I 37 = 1.534). To Chrysippus, aether is rarified fire (Plutarch, *SR* 1053a = 2.579), the purest and greatly rarified part of the cosmos (Stobaeus 1.21.5 = 2.527). The world’s *hegemonikon* is the heavens, says Chrysippus (and Posidonius), who also states that “the purest part of the aether, ... the first God,” permeates the universe (DL 7.139). That is, aether is not limited to the heavens, but it is purest in the heavens, and it can be found in all parts of the universe mixed with other elements.

These testimonies make it clear that, to the Stoics, aether was fire in the purest form which is to be found on the boundaries of the world; the space

²⁸ It is said that “*ousia* designates first matter that is formless whereas *hyle* designates concrete matter of a specific being,” Verbeke, *op. cit.*, p. 136 note 365; Verbeke’s pair *ousia-hyle* (= substance-matter) corresponds to the pair substance-material (= matter-material).

²⁹ Todd, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 144; see also Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³⁰ *Gen. an.* 736b30, *Meteor.* 339b25, *De caelo* 270b20.

filled with aether-fire is the repository of fixed stars. Also, in the words of Arius Didimus, *pneuma* is analogous to aether and both words are used synonymously (Stobaeus 1.17.4 = 2.471). However, because *pneuma* (since Chrysippus) is a mixture of fire and air, this synonymy cannot be pressed too far. Most importantly from a theological perspective, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus call aether God³¹ and the Stoics in general considered aether to be the principle of all (Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 19.10 = 1.154).

Aether does not play any particular role in the Stoic system. It seems that the only reason that aether appears in the discussions of the Stoics is that it was a current term of the time and the Stoics wanted to show a connection between their system and other systems, particularly peripatetic physics. By referring to aether and its undistinguished character in respect to the two principles and the four elements, the Stoics stressed the uniformity of the world. By reducing aether to fire, they abolished the division between supra- and sublunar spheres: the world is one, all laws of nature are found in all parts of the world. Furthermore, because God is aether-fire, and fiery *pneuma* permeates the entire universe, the world is a physico-theological unity, the same world for the living and the dead, because there is no ontologically special place for the departed souls. They exist in the same physical world as the living who are able to communicate with them because the nature of the dead does not change, they are just as physical beings as the living.

5 Fate

An important concept in the Stoic system is the concept of fate, or destiny (εἰμαρμένη). Zeno defines fate as “the chainlike cause of existing things of the logos according to which they are ordered” (DL 7.149 = 1.175) and as “the moving power of matter in the same way, which does not differ from providence and nature” (Aetius 1.27.5 = 1.176). Generally, for the Stoics, fate is “a sequence of causes, that is, an inescapable ordering and connection” (Aetius 1.28.4 = 2.917) and “a certain natural order of all things following closely upon one another and moved in succession from eternity, and their interconnection is unalterable” (Gellius VII 2.3 = 2.1000). There is no chance, no randomness in the world, all order of events is determined by an all-embracing system of causal chains. Fate is ubiquitous, fate affects every-

³¹ Cicero, *ND* I 36, 39 = 1.154, 2.1077; *Acad.* II 126 = 1.154; Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 1.5 = 1.534.

thing (DL 7.149 = 1.175) and all things happen according to fate³². There is no room for uncaused cause, as allowed through the concept of swerving in the Epicurean system. This, to be sure, raises the problem of freedom in a rigidly determined world. The Stoics addressed this problem by making a distinction between fate and providence (πρόνοια), that is, God's will. We only know that Cleanthes did not identify fate and providence (Calcidius 144 = 2.933) and this is also reflected in his hymn to Zeus in which the evil "in their folly" attempt to break with the divine law (vv. 15-17). However, for Chrysippus, providence is the same as fate (Calcidius 144)³³.

In the context of theology, it is important that, for Chrysippus, God is fate (Cicero, *ND* 1.39 = 2.1077) and "nothing takes place or moves at the least differently than according to the logos of Zeus, which he [Chrysippus] says is the same as fate" (Plutarch, *SR* 1056c = 2.997). In general, the Stoics are said to state that God is fate and fate is God who "is present in all existing things"³⁴.

These theological statements square well with other definitions of fate. "Fate is the logos of the cosmos"; "the logos of the things organized by providence in the cosmos"; "logos according to which the things which happened, happened, the things which are happening, are happening, and the things which will happen, will happen" (Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913). Moreover, fate and logos of the world are interchangeable terms³⁵. In this identification, probably *logos spermatikos*, the principle of growth, is meant³⁶: "God contains 'seminal principles' according to which each thing comes about by fate" (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027). Also, Chrysippus calls "the substance of fate a

³² Plutarch, *SR* 1056b = 2.997; Cicero, *De div.* 1.125-127 = 2.921, 944.

³³ This identification leads Duprat to the statement that "supreme God has himself no will: he is only reason," G.L. Duprat, «La doctrine stoïcienne du monde, du destin et de la providence d'après Chrysippe», *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 23, 1910, p. 492, but we can easily claim that God wills to follow the dictates of universal logos, his own logos, follow himself and the laws he himself institutes according to his will. As Seneca phrased it, God "having once given a command, he always obeys" (*De prov.* 5.8). Cf. J. Mansfeld, «Providence and the destruction of the universe in Early Stoic thought», in M.J. Vermaseren (ed.) *Studies in Hellenistic religions*, Leiden, 1979, p. 161.

³⁴ Alexander, *De fato* 22 = 2.945, 31 = 2.928.

³⁵ Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913; Lactantius, *De vera sap.* 9 = 1.160; Plutarch, *SR* 1050c, 1056c = 2.937.

³⁶ A.A. Long, «Freedom and determinism in the Stoic theory of human action», in A.A. Long (ed.), *Problems in Stoicism*, London, 1971, p. 178.

power of *pneuma*” (Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913) that is in “eternal motion, continuous and ordered” (Theodoretus 6.14 = 2.916). And because *pneuma* is the source of motion, so fate is *pneuma*. Because *pneuma* and logos are considered divine, it naturally follows that fate and *pneuma* and logos are seen as the same.

6 *Nous*

Nous, the Stoics are reported to say, is a part of *psyche* that manifests itself in rational beings (*logikoi*) only (Stobaeus 1.49.24 = 1.377). As already mentioned, *pneuma* manifests itself in the world as *hexis*, *physis*, *psyche*, and *nous*. *Psyche* is a form of *pneuma* found in animals and *nous* in humans and gods. Because the latter are higher beings than animals, *nous* can be considered a development of a form of *psyche* or – as the testimony just quoted suggests – *nous* is a part of *psyche*; by extending this reasoning, we may state that *psyche* is part of a particular being’s *physis* and the latter a part of the being’s *hexis*. All of them are ultimately manifestations of the all-pervading *pneuma*. Because God is said to be *pneuma*, it is not surprising to encounter Zeno’s statement that *nous* is God (Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.* 3.2.9 = 1.146). Because God is also said to be fire and aether, it is only natural for Zeno to say that God is the fiery *nous* of the world³⁷ and for the Stoics to claim that the *nous* in aether³⁸ is God (Aetius 1.7.33 = 1.1027). Because the world as a whole is rational, as permeated by the divine logos, Chrysippus can say that the world is guided through *nous* and providence because *nous* permeates every part of the world (DL 7.138 = 2.634). But God-*nous-pneuma* endows particular beings with their particular characteristics, which leads to Zeno’s pronouncement that God constantly moves through the substance and in one place he is *nous*, in another *psyche*, in another *physis*, and in yet another *hexis* (Themistius, *De anima* 72b = 1.158).

7 *World*

The world is a living and rational being and its rationality is due to the cosmic logos-*pneuma*, the world soul, pervading it. The saturation level of

³⁷ Aetius 1.7.23 = 1.157. Admittedly, Stobaeus 1.1.29b preserves only the phrase Ζένων ὁ Στωικὸς νοῦν κόσμου πύρινον; the phrase θεὸν ἀπεφύηνατο is added by Krische, cf. Pearson, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³⁸ νοῦς ἐναιθέριος, Wachsmuth, νοῦς ἐν αἰθέρι, von Arnim.

the world with logos is not the same in all its parts and logos is concentrated to the maximum degree in the cosmic *hegemonikon* which is, according to Zeno and Chrysippus, the aethereal sphere of the fixed stars, and the sun, according to Cleanthes (DL 7.138-139 = 2.644). This rational, living world the Stoics considered to be God³⁹: “The whole world along with all its parts they call God” (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.15 = 2.528). Also, Zeno calls the world “a beautiful animal and God” (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). The conclusion of the Stoic pantheism seems to be inescapable. On the other hand, as already indicated, Zeno distinguished between two principles, one of them being God. Also, as Zeno and Chrysippus say, God is “the principle of all things, the purest body, and his providence pervades all things” (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 1.21 = 1.153)⁴⁰. Zeno separated matter from God and saw God as going through matter like honey through the honeycomb (Tertullian, *Ad nat.* 2.4 = 1.155). He made matter equal to God (Tertullian, *De praescr. haer.* 7 = 1.156) and said that “the substance of God is the whole world and the heaven”⁴¹. Cosmos, say the Stoics, is rational (*νερός*, *sapiens*) and as such it is God⁴².

If the world is understood as an organization of the stars, then it is possible that in the pronouncements that the world is God, only astral world is meant, the world of fixed stars⁴³. This is the world’s *hegemonikon*, and as such, the rational and thus most divine part of the entire universe. However, cosmos is also understood as the whole world – the whole of passive matter organized by active logos (DL 7.137-138). As man is his body and soul, at least during his terrestrial peregrinations, so is cosmos one beautiful animal, one entity, one God. This understanding is not only admissible, but inevi-

³⁹ Cicero, *ND* 1.37 = 1.530 (Cleanthes); DL 7.137 = 2.526; Stobaeus 1.21.5 = 2.527 (Chrysippus).

⁴⁰ The fact of divine omnipresence is poetically expressed by Aratus in the opening verses of his *Phaenomena*: “all ways are full of Zeus, and all human gathering places and full [of him] are seas and havens,” which harks back to Thales’ “everything is full of the gods.”

⁴¹ DL 7.148 = 1.163. It is suggested that Diogenes inadvertently changed ὁ κόσμος οὐσία θεοῦ ἐστίν, “the world is (made out of) substance of God”, to οὐσία θεοῦ ὁ ὅλος κόσμος καὶ ὁ οὐρανός (ἐστίν), Eduard Wellmann, *Die Philosophie des Stoikers Zenon*, Leipzig, 1873, p. 37, cf. Pearson, *op. cit.*, p. 121. This would, however, require not only changing the word order but also adding some of them; moreover, Diogenes also finds this statement in Chrysippus and Posidonius and it is difficult to assume that he misreads the statement the same way every time.

⁴² SE 9.95 = 2.1015; Cicero, *ND* 2.39 = 2.641.

⁴³ Verbeke, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

table because to the Stoics, the world is perfect in every respect (Cicero, *ND* 2.37-39, 86-87). Cosmos is not only alive, but also rational and as such the most perfect being⁴⁴. If the world is perfect and God is only one – although indispensable – part of it, so God by himself is not perfect, not, at least, to the extent that the world is. But there cannot be anything more perfect than God. In fact, Cleanthes offers a proof of God's existence from degrees of perfection. There are different levels of perfection, and thus there must be something most perfect since an infinite sequence of perfect beings is impossible, and beings in the world cannot be perfected indefinitely. Among these beings, as man surpasses other beings with respect to beauty and intelligence, there must be a god who surpasses man, so God ("an animal that is best and most excellent") exists⁴⁵. A Stoic philosopher is thus forced to accept pantheism, having accepted that there is the most perfect God immanent in the most perfect world.

The Stoics thus vacillated between (at last) two concepts of God: God is the entire cosmos, or only its rational part: *logos-pneuma*⁴⁶. If the first meaning is stressed, then one cannot seriously doubt the pantheism of the Stoics⁴⁷. If the second meaning is emphasized – the duality of the active and the passive principles – we have what can be termed panentheism: "everything is in God and God penetrates all things"⁴⁸. But even if only the second meaning is retained, the Stoic system can still be considered pantheistic, at least Chrysippus' version. For Zeno and Cleanthes, at the time of conflagration, the world dissolves into matter. There exists only God and matter. For

⁴⁴ Cicero, *ND* 2.21 = 1.111; Seneca, *De benef.* 4.7 = 2.1024.

⁴⁵ SE 9.88-89 = 1.529; Cicero, *ND* 2.33, 35 = 1.529.

⁴⁶ Simon mentions three concepts of God: transcendent God who guides the world, God who pervades the world, and mythical gods, Marie Simon, «Zum Problem der stoischen Theologie», in J. Irmscher, W. Steffen (eds.) *Philologische Vorträge*, Wrocław, 1959, p. 72. However, there is no transcendent God in the Stoics, so the first concept may only mean God the cosmos.

⁴⁷ Heinze, *op. cit.*, p. 105; an attempt to weaken the Stoic pantheism is the statement that "in so far as God is manifested in the world, the world is God," Pearson, *op. cit.*, p. 121, which is not altogether convincing. "The identification of God with the world was a central tenet of Stoicism, a postulate of the Stoic vitalism and in concert with the principles of Stoic physics," Myrto Dragona-Monachou, *The Stoic arguments for the existence and the providence of the gods*, Athens, 1976, p. 69.

⁴⁸ Verbeke, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

Chrysippus, there exists only God-designing fire. At that time the whole of reality is God, and the world is recreated from God himself⁴⁹.

Whether understood pantheistically or panentheistically, God is responsible for everything that is, for all events, for the entire history of the world. God is not only *pneuma-aether*-designing fire, but also fate and providence. God not only knows what is happening in the world, but he also wills it to happen, unless it is assumed that he can act against himself. The same God can be found in all parts of the world. One consequence of this monistic outlook is the Stoic idea of universalism – every person is part of the same logos, including slaves; cosmopolitanism – everyone is a citizen of the same world; and the world-*polis* – the world is a home of men and gods⁵⁰, which is strongly pronounced in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, a former slave and an emperor. Equalizing gods and men is the pinnacle of the Stoic social ethics. By participating in the same logos, men are like gods⁵¹.

Another consequence of this pantheism is strong monotheism. The gods are repeatedly mentioned by the Stoics, but they are clearly subsidiary beings in respect to God. The Stoics did not entirely reject the gods of popular religion and even used the fact of universal agreement⁵² and the fact of building altars (Themistius, *In Anal. post.* 79.1 = 2.1019) in the proof of their existence. However, the gods are God's creations that, unlike the gods of mythology, are not immortal: they are destroyed in the cosmic conflagration and recreated in each cosmic cycle of palingenesis. Immortality, the one attribute of divinity, characterizes "Zeus, who alone of the gods is imperishable" (Plutarch, *CC* 1077e = 2.1064). However, their acceptance of the gods was at best done halfheartedly. Not to compromise their monotheism, they attempted to explain – even explain away – their existence by, primarily, treating them allegorically. The gods of popular religion were simply unacceptable: jealous, squabbling, vindictive Olympian gods are just fables of the poets, a subject of superstition and "idiotic beliefs," and "utterly unpro-

⁴⁹ Émile Bréhier, *Chrysippe et l'ancien Stoïcisme*, Paris, 1951 [1910], p. 147, denies pantheism in Chrysippus, and Verbeke, *op. cit.*, p. 88 writes about Chrysippus' semi-pantheism. Both authors focus only on one, narrower, understanding of God.

⁵⁰ Cicero, *De fin.* 3.67 = 3.371; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.15.3-5 = 2.528; Origen, *CC* 4.74 = 2.1157; Cicero, *ND* 2.78-79 = 2.1127.

⁵¹ Alexander, *De fato* 37 = 3.247; Seneca, *Ep.* 31.9,11 = 3.200a.

⁵² SE 9.61-62, 133; Cicero, *ND* 2.5-6, 12-13. On the argument of universal consent, see Dragona-Monachou, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.

fitable and frivolous” (Cicero, *ND* II 63, 70). Zeno dismissed them by saying that Juno (Hera) was air, Jove (Zeus) the heavens, Neptune (Poseidon) the sea, Vulcan (Hephaestus) fire⁵³; that is, the gods are names of different manifestations of the one God⁵⁴. One way of explaining the gods was by reference to etymology. “With extraordinary patience ... Zeno, and even more his followers, wasted their sagacity” to explain the names of the gods with “hair-raising etymology”⁵⁵. However, they were not at all original in this approach since it was conducted very much in the spirit of Plato’s *Cratylus*.

If the gods are mortal so also are humans or rather their souls after death. Immortality of the soul is abolished in the Stoic eschatology. Souls after death can at best survive until conflagration⁵⁶, during which, as everything else, they are dissolved. Therefore, punishment after death is illusory: true justice is fully realized on earth⁵⁷.

The idea of God-cosmos leads directly to the Stoic ethical doctrine.

8 Nature

Zeno stated that the goal of life, *telos*, is “to live in agreement,” that is, “with a single and harmonious logos”. A longer formula, “living in harmony with nature”, was developed later because Zeno’s formula was considered incomplete (Stobaeus 2.7.6a = 1.179). Chrysippus explains that *telos* is “living according to experience in those things that happen naturally” (DL 7.87 = 1.552), and according to the Stoics, *telos* means “to live in the continuous use of exact knowledge of those things that happen naturally” (Cicero, *De*

⁵³ Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 19.10 = 1.169; see Cicero, *ND* I 36 = 1.167.

⁵⁴ DL 7.147 = 2.1021. Louis Gernet, André Boulanger, *Le génie grec dans la religion*, Paris, 1970 [1932], 406-407; Dorothea Frede, Theodicy and providential care in Stoicism, in D. Frede, A. Laks (eds.), *Traditions in theology*, Leiden, 2002, pp. 104, 112. Bréhier, *op. cit.*, p. 200, suggests that the gods can also be considered spirits emanating from God. Stoic novelty consists in considering the gods as the forces resulting from transformation of the unique force from which they emanate and to which they return by universal conflagration, which is an expression of the rational polytheism.

⁵⁵ Wellmann, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Stoic explanations are sometimes “farfetched word explanations that often touch upon the ridiculous,” Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 74, and their “arbitrariness and puerility seem to us barely tolerable,” Gernet, Boulanger, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

⁵⁶ The difference between Cleanthes’ belief that all souls survive until conflagration, and Chrysippus’ conviction that only the souls of the wise are capable of such survival (because they are stronger, DL 7.157 = 1.522, Aetius 4.7.3 = 2.810) is, eschatologically, minor.

⁵⁷ René Hoven, *Stoicism et stoïciens face au problème de l’au-delà*, Paris, 1971, p. 84.

fin. IV 14 = 3.13). The concept of nature is critical in these definitions. What is nature?

Zeno says that nature is the designing fire advancing on its path toward generation (Cicero, *ND* II 57 = 1.171); the same is stated by all the Stoics (DL 7.156 = 2.774). When we read that according to the Stoics “all things are subject to nature” which “has a share in reason and order” (Cicero, *ND* II 81), we see, basically, the same definition: nature is designing fire whose essence is rationality, logos. Nature is thus the orderly side of the universe, and this orderly side can only be God-logos. Therefore, after Seneca we can pose a rhetorical question, “What else is nature than what God and divine *ratio* present in all the world and all its parts?” (Seneca, *De benef.* IV 7.1 = 2.1024).

Living according to nature means avoiding what the sound logos prohibits, the logos that permeates everything and is the same as Zeus (DL 7.87-88); it is living “in harmony with God’s will”⁵⁸. Each action is according to a divine plan, and as such it is good; an individual can have peace of mind only when his will is in harmony with the divine will.

The Stoics thus begin with the delineation of the structure of the world, with physics, but in their monistic system, theology is the reverse side of physics. Analysis of *pneuma* is the analysis of the physical side of the same entity that metaphysics analyzes as an active principle, logic – as logos, and theology – as God. These branches of knowledge are analyzing rational God-*pneuma* for a very practical reason, to know how to live. As Chrysippus stated, “there is no other or more appropriate way to approach the logos of good and bad things or the virtues or happiness than from common nature and from the administration of the world” (Plutarch, *SR* 1035c = 3.68)⁵⁹.

This physico-theological unity found in the Stoic God as expressed by the Stoic pantheism has as a natural consequence what can be called pantheistic determinism.⁶⁰ On the one hand, this determinism gives a scientific justification for divination and an ethical justification for living according to nature, but, on the other hand, it poses insurmountable problems to the idea of freedom and the existence of evil.

⁵⁸ Edwyn Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, Oxford, 1913, p. 55.

⁵⁹ Gilbert Murray summarizes the Stoic approach by saying that they did not just want to reestablish a traditional code of morals, they wanted to “find a new basic conduct in absolute ‘reason’,” in conversation with Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 52, note 1.

⁶⁰ Gordon H. Clark, *Selections from Hellenistic philosophy*, New York, 1940, p. 59.

Can there be any freedom in the world in which God is fate? This was a troublesome problem for the Stoics, and they never solved it satisfactorily. It was expressed in Zeno's and Chrysippus' metaphor of a dog tied to a cart: the dog may willingly follow the cart, but if it does not want to, it will be dragged by the cart anyhow (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 1.21 = 2.975). Cleanthes expresses this sentiment in his prayer to Zeus (Epictetus, *Ench.* 53 = 1.527):

Lead me, Zeus and destiny,
wherever is your will that I go
since I will follow unhesitatingly; when I don't want to,
having become evil, I will follow, docile, anyway.

This raises a serious, practical problem of responsibility and punishment for one's actions. If everything is preordained, is it just to mete out punishment? To a slave who was about to be flogged for stealing and who said, "it was fated for me to steal," Zeno replied, "and to be flogged" (DL 7.23 = 1.298). Although the answer may appear to be tongue in cheek, it is consistent with the Stoic doctrine. When Chrysippus was asked whether one should call a doctor if it is fated to get well or remain sick, he answered that both calling the doctor and healing are co-fated (Cicero, *De fato* 30 = 2.956).

This strict determinism is more apparent if we also consider the problem of conflagration. As already mentioned, the world is a subject of total destruction in fire and subsequent rebirth. Conflagration is justified by the need of the cosmic catharsis: after conflagration there is only God, who is all goodness, "no evil at all remains, but the whole is then prudent and wise"⁶¹. Afterwards, everything is restored to the same state, so, for example, "there will be again Socrates and Plato and each of the people along with the same friends and citizens; they will do and pursue the same things and every city and corner and hamlet and field will be reestablished the same way" (Nemesius 38 = 2.625). After conflagration, "all things exist again in the world numerically, and thus each individual, the same as in the preceding world, exists again in this world," according to Chrysippus (Alexander, *In Anal. pr.* 180.33-36 = 2.624). Even if the claim is interpreted as stating that in the renewed world each individual will not be literally the same, but "a new individual with the same characteristics and experiences"⁶², very strong determinism still stands.

⁶¹ Plutarch, *CN* 1067a = 2.606. Perhaps we may also say that "total conflagration is a form of apotheosis," Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 180. It is worth noticing that a physical reason for conflagration is that all moisture is used up and only fire remains (Cicero, *ND* 2.118 = 2.593).

⁶² Margaret E. Reesor, *The nature of man in Early Stoic philosophy*, London, 1989, p.

And this cannot be any other way: because, as mentioned, the world is perfect in every respect, the same world has to be recreated each time if this world should remain perfect. Although man is imperfect and may strive for improvement, the world as a whole is created perfectly all at once; it does not evolve⁶³.

This pantheistic determinism also poses the problem of explaining the existence of evil. Where everything is derived from universal, perfect logos, there should be no room for evil. And if there is, no man is responsible for it, but God himself. There were some attempts to explain this situation. Evil was explained as a means of promoting good. In the Malthusian spirit, Chrysippus said that wars are the means of avoiding overpopulation (Plutarch, *SR* 1049a = 2.1177), and predators exist for men to exercise their valiance (Cicero, *ND* 2.161). Also, evil is indispensable for good to be recognizable (Gellius 7.1.1-13 = 2.1169, 1170). It is not entirely unjustified to say that in explaining evil Chrysippus was sometimes exercising “childish rationalism”⁶⁴. It was much more honest of Cleanthes to simply state in his hymn to Zeus that everything in the world happens according to the cosmic logos, except the deeds of evil (vv. 15-17). God can turn evil into good after it happens, but he is not willing that to happen. God’s omniscience⁶⁵ can be reconciled with the independence of the evil, but how to reconcile it with God’s fate, with God’s guiding the course of all things (vv. 10-12), Cleanthes does not explain.

In their theology, the Stoics wanted to restore the position of God in the universe. For Plato, the Demiurge molds the universe from preexisting matter using eternal ideas as models, and then leaves the maintenance of the

9. Some Stoics admitted some “small difference ... between the facts of one period and the preceding phase” (Origen, *CC* 5.20 = 2.626), but it seems that such a claim is “explicitly revisionary” and a strong determinism is the original Stoic statement, A.A. Long, D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, 1987, v. 1, p. 312. If we also agree with the statement that “it was for the faith in Providence above all else that the Stoic stood in the ancient world,” Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 44, then we see that strict determinism is the result of the nature of God and of his will that it should be so.

⁶³ Bréhier, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁶⁴ Wilhelm Capelle, Zur antiken Theodicee, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 20 (1907), p. 188.

⁶⁵ It is clear that God is omniscient because only God can “see with his mind the connection of all causes,” and thus God “necessarily grasps all that will be,” as says Quintus Cicero in defense of the Stoic theory of divination, Cicero, *De div.* I 127 = 2.944.

universe to the divine stars and the world soul. The status of God decreases significantly in peripatetic philosophy. Aristotle's God is not interested in the world; God does not even know the world exists because such a knowledge would undermine divine perfection. The only role God is playing is to serve as a prime mover to the first heaven and consequently to the entire world. Because of this limited role of God, it is not surprising to see criticism concerning the need of God in the peripatetic universe. Importantly, the criticism stemmed from the ranks of the Lyceum itself. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, attempted to restore the role of God in the universe, but Strato rejected any God by explaining naturalistically all physical phenomena. He did not find any use of a transcendent God to deal with the problem of motion. At the same time, a Democritean philosophy, renewed by Epicurus, proposed at best a deistic solution in its theology: the gods live in the realm far away from the earth, not troubled by human affairs. This was unsatisfactory to the Stoics who saw God as clearly interested in human affairs, not as a being detached from the world. In their restoration of theology, they took the current developments of science into account and proposed a scientific solution: God is what science says is the source of life, *pneuma*, and whose intelligence, *logos*, is the best embodiment of the laws of logic. God is the best that science can envision – perfect in execution of physical and logical laws – but nothing more; that is, God's transcendence is abolished in the spirit of their times. God is now interested in human affairs because all the facets of these affairs, and of the entire universe, for that matter, are permeated by God. God *is* these affairs. He not only is to be found in everything, but he also *is* everything, *Deus siue natura* in the most extreme form. God is ubiquitous and omniscient, and thus nothing can escape the divine attention. But, as mentioned, this leads to the problem of freedom and evil, the problem the Early Stoics never solved successfully. To their credit, this is one of the most difficult theological and philosophical problems and centuries long attempts in grappling with the problem of freedom vs. predestination is ample evidence of its complexity – and importance.