

Calcidius, *On Fate*

142. [*Timaeus* 41e] *And he explained the laws of the immutable decree.* At this point he now sets a great and difficult account in motion, one in connection with which the frequent disagreement which obtained among the ancients persists even today. For the moment, then, it is appropriate that a perfunctory treatment be conducted in conformity with Platonic doctrine, since it would take too long to pursue those of others, many of whom think that nothing happens by fate, others that everything does (and nothing because of free choice of the will), and some that there are some things which happen by fate and others which nonetheless happen because of the will.

143. Well then, according to Plato providence precedes, fate follows; for he says [41d-e] that *after the formation of the world god divided the souls equal in number with the stars and provided one soul for each star ... and pointed to the nature of the universe and revealed the universal series of fates.* For the first phrase refers to providence and the second to the laws of fate, and for this reason providence, according to Plato, comes into being first, and thus although we do indeed say that fate is from providence, nevertheless we do not say that providence is from fate. According to Plato, then, fate is understood and predicated in two ways: one, when we gaze mentally upon its substance; the other, when we come to recognize from its effects both its being and the kind of power it has. Plato also in the *Phaedrus* refers to fate as the inevitable decree, and in the *Timaeus* as the *laws* which god proclaimed to the celestial souls *concerning the nature of the universe*, and in the *Republic* as the speech of Lachesis, not in the manner of tragedy but in the tradition of the theologians.

144. Well then, we can indeed interpret the inevitable decree as an immovable *law* originating from an inevitable cause, and the laws which god proclaimed to the souls *concerning the nature of the universe* as the law which is consequent upon the nature of the world and by which all things in the world are ruled, and the speech of Lachesis, i.e., of the daughter of Necessity, as the divine law by which future events are linked with past and likewise present ones. As understood with respect to its substance, however, fate is the world soul divided into its three parts, the sphere of the *aplanês*, the one held to be errant, and, third, the sublunary one, and of these the one raised to the heights he says is called Atropos, the middle one Clotho, the lowest Lachesis: Atropos, because the *aplanês* admits of no deviation; Clotho, because of the varying complexities in its spiraling whorl, by virtue of which the things which the deviant movement of the nature of the other introduces come to pass; and Lachesis, as though having been allotted the task of taking up all of the works and effects of those just mentioned. Some, then, suppose that a difference between providence and fate is presumed, when in fact it is one reality: for providence is the will of god, and his will is a series of causes, and it is called providence because his will *is* foresight [*providentia*] but fate because it is also a series of causes, whence it results that the things which are according to fate are also from providence and likewise that the things which are according to providence are from fate, as Chrysippus supposes. But others, such as Cleanthes, suppose that, although the things which occur from the authority of providence are also fated, those which are fated nevertheless do not occur from providence.

145. But according to Plato things are not wholly from providence, for the nature of things that come under a dispensation is not uniform; thus some things are from providence only, others by decree, some from our will, some also from the variability of fortune, and many by chance and occurring as chance has it. And the divine and intelligible things and those nearest them are according to providence alone, whereas the natural and corporeal ones are according to fate; and those that come under our choice and jurisdiction are according to our will; and those situated beyond our control occur independently of reason and unexpectedly: they are said to be fortuitous if initiated on the basis of what we dispose but to occur by chance if they are independent of what we arrange.

146. He articulates all of these points with greater clarity when in the *Timaeus* he says [42e-43a]: *When the creator of things remained constant in his intention after having ordered these matters thus.* What things, we may ask, had he ordered? There is of course the fact that he had yoked the soul of the universe and the universal body together in fitting harmony. *The sons, he says, understood the father's command; after borrowing elementary capital, to be repaid when necessary, by drawing from the material elements of the world (fire, earth, and water, along with air) as an immortal starting-point for the mortal animal, they cemented together according to the stipulated pattern of formation the elements they had received, although without the indissoluble bonds by virtue of which they themselves had acquired coherence.* For the command of god with which the secondary gods comply is, I suppose, the reason containing the perpetual ordinance called fate, and it derives its origin from providence.

147. What is the purport of his saying [41d-e], *once the fabric of the universe had been constructed, he selected souls equal in number with the stars and provided one soul for each star, and once they had been placed upon suitable vehicles he ordered them to observe the nature of the universe, and he explained the laws of the immutable decree?* Surely, to bring the fabric of the world to completion, to *select souls equal in number with the stars, to place them upon appropriate vehicles, to point to the nature of the universe, to explain the laws of the immutable decree*—all of these are the tasks of providence. Fate, however, is precisely the laws proclaimed, and it is the divine law permeating the world soul, the salubrious guidance of all things. And in this sense, although fate is indeed from providence, nevertheless providence is not from fate.

148. We will now speak about fate as understood with respect to its function and act, since concerning this point the number of disputes, moral, natural, and logical, is considerable. For although taken together the things that come to pass are infinite and emerge out of the infinite through an immense and infinite span of time, nevertheless the fate actually embracing them on all sides is finite and determinate—for neither law, nor reason, nor anything at all endowed with divinity is indeterminate—and this very fact is made manifest by the disposition and configuration of the heaven over the course of the temporal period they call the Perfect Year, about which Plato says the following [39d]: *It is nevertheless easy to understand that the perfect number of time completes the perfect year at the precise point when the completed courses of all eight revolutions will return*

to the origin and head, as it were, of a second revolution, which the ever-uniform movement of the same will measure. For when the whole of this period of time is completed such that its determination is observable within the span of a known cycle, then all of the things that occur in heaven or on Earth necessarily return once again to their past conditions. For example, the current disposition of a constellation will be renewed after a long period of time, and in this sense the disposition that follows is always *this*.

149. And from this it is apparent that, despite the infinite variety of occurrences occurring out of the infinite for an infinite span of time, fate itself, as understood with respect to its act, is nevertheless determinate and characterized by an immutable and constant sameness. For as both circular motion and the period of time that measures it are cycles, so all of the things that are borne round in circular motion necessarily are cycles. Well then, he refers to fate as an *inevitable decree*, thereby meaning an inevitable force or potency, the principal cause of all that occurs in the world, in sequence and continuously. This is the tripartite world soul which we earlier said is fate as understood with respect to its substance, and the *decree* is the law of god which we declared inexorable by virtue of its being an *inevitable* cause.

150. This law, moreover, is both the speech and the sanction that god sanctioned for the world soul for its perpetual governance of all things, for he had ensured not only that the world should be but that it should be eternal and indissoluble. And given that this sanction contains all things within itself, some arise from some premiss and others according to a premiss, sc., as in geometry: the axioms are from a premiss, whereas the theorems are according to a premiss. For once the axioms—e.g., the point, line, and so on for the rest—have been granted as starting points or elements, then the theorems are revealed in accordance with the premiss, as though possessing the consequence of the premiss once granted. In the same way the sanction too, being an ordinance and all-embracing law, has as certain “axioms” the causes premissed on the basis of our merits, and the things that issue forth under the constraint of necessity result in accordance with the premiss and as a consequence of the necessity it enjoins.

151. The “axiom,” then, of the divine law, i.e., of fate, is providence, while fate is what embraces as though by an edict both the compliance of submitting to it and the stubborn defiance of not submitting. Punishments, moreover, or rewards arise in accordance with what is premissed by the merit once posited; but the premiss of the merit as posited one way or the other is a movement of our souls, their judgement, consent, and desire for or against, and these are placed *in* us in the sense that the choice, whether for these possibilities or for those contrary to them, is within our control. Thus under this ordering of realities, this law, all of the most ancient things are said to be from a premiss and are within our power, while those after them are according to a premiss and constrained by necessity. And as the law is one thing and what follows from the law—i.e., the lawful—another, so fate is one thing and the things that of inevitable necessity follow from fate—i.e., the fated—another.

152. The world soul, then, is fate as understood with respect to its substance; it is likewise the instruction given to it, the law of managing everything correctly, which contains fate as understood with respect to its function or act and possesses an interweaving, an entailment, of the following sort: if this is, then that will follow. Of these, then, that which is premissed is within our control, and that which follows is according to fate, which under another name is referred to as the fated and differs widely from fate. There are as a result three things: that which is placed within our control, fate itself, and that which according to the law of fate follows in conformity with our merits. Therefore he lays down the words of the actual law: “The soul which makes itself a companion of god and beholds any of the things that truly are will be unharmed up until the time of the next revolution, and if it always does this, then it will always remain unharmed.” The point, then, is this: the law or edict is what is called fate in the proper sense, whereas Socrates’ having shown himself to be a companion of the god by following the edict of the law is the work proper to Socrates; and the fact that because of his having lived as he did Socrates’ soul continues “unharmed up until the time of the next revolution” results according to the decree of fate: “and if he should always do this”—which is within Socrates’ control—“then he will always be unharmed”—according to fate.

153. In conformity with this reasoning the prediction was given by Apollo to Laius:

Beware of sowing the forbidden furrows of offspring:
that one, if begotten, will slay you impiously,
and the whole court will be spattered with blood.

For with this oracle he showed that it had been within Laius’ power not to sow, which is the premiss; and that which followed was no longer within Laius’ power but instead came under fatal necessity according to the merit associated with the premiss. But if Laius’ incurring that lot were necessary or the disaster had long since been threatening because of an inevitable necessity, then the inquiry would be in vain, as would the prediction. But knowing in advance what would follow, Apollo forbade according to fate that the sowing should occur, knowing that it was placed within Laius’ power to abstain if he wished, whereas Laius, being a man ignorant of the future, inquired of one who knew what he was supposed to do and yet sowed, not because fate induced him, but because he was overcome by intemperance.

154. Thetis had similarly predicted to her son that if he fought at Troy the friendship would bring him death, his end would be premature, accompanied by immense fame, but that if he returned home a long lifespan without glory lay in store. And yet he fought, although no compulsion of fate forced him to, none, that is, in the uncertain choice but rather under the compulsion, we might say, of his bile, out of a preference that leaned toward glory. And the following passage of Plato comports with this: “Blame belongs to one who chooses, god is beyond fault,” and, “virtue free and liable to no necessity,” or when Lachesis addresses the souls, “none of them is by lot to come under the authority of demons, but they will freely choose for themselves the demon whom each one considers it suitable to choose.” And according to Moses, god ordered the first-born people not to

eat the edible fruits of the trees from which the knowledge of good and evil would creep into their souls, for, since the power of abstaining or not abstaining was within their control, in wishing to provide them counsel god showed what was to be cautioned against and would not have issued a pointless prohibition if the event was necessarily to occur.

155. Now we will address the matters that are within human power. All existing things were divided by the ancients into three parts, the possible, the necessary, the contingent: the possible as genus, the necessary and contingent as species; thus every possible thing is either contingent or necessary. Now, that which is constrained by necessity is said to be necessary, and since of possible things most are incapable of being prevented from coming about, while some are prevented and diverted by deliberation, they are outlined by definitions of the following sort: The necessary is the possible the contrary of which is impossible, as in the proposition that all things that have been born die, and that they grow old after reaching maturity; for it is necessary that everything that has been born should die and that that which advances to old age should grow old: there is no room for contrariety, sc., that that which has been born not die. The definition of contingent things, on the other hand, is as follows: The contingent is the possible the contrary of which is possible as well, as in the prospect of there being rain after sunset today; for this is possible, but its contrary, that it does not rain at all after sunset, is equally possible as well.

156. Now, there are several differences between contingent events, for some are frequent, some are equally disposed as to their frequency, as in having a beard, being literate, or pleading cases. And those which are of rare occurrence are opposed to the frequent ones, and those which are not equally disposed to those whose occurrence is equally disposed. The choice, then, between equally disposed uncertainties will be within the control of man, who, being a rational animal, summons all matters back to reason and deliberation. Moreover, reason or deliberation is an inner movement of that which is the ruling principle within the soul; but the latter is self-moving, its movement being assent or impulse. Assent and impulse, then, are self-moving, although not in the absence of imagination, which the Greeks call *phantasia*, the result being that because of the deceptive quality of an image that movement of the ruling power within the soul, its consent, is often corrupted and chooses vice over that which is best. There are many reasons for this: an uncultivated coarseness in deliberating, ignorance, a mind excessively devoted to importune adulation, the prejudice of false opinion, habituation to depravity—at all events, a certain tyrannical domination on the part of one or another vice, that being the reason for our being said to sin owing to compulsion or compulsive allurements rather than our will.

157. Given that these things are so, divination is, I suppose, preserved from having its authority to make predictions impugned. One who possesses foreknowledge can certainly, when so informed by fate, provide advice concerning undertaking something or not, and an astrologer will rightly and reasonably seek out the point at which to undertake an act based on a propitious disposition of the stars and constellations such that, if one thing happens, another occurs. These and the like are the remedies for contingent outcomes, wherein the salutary effect of deliberation serves as the medical knowledge.

The sciences and above all legislation have their place as well, for what is law other than a command that ordains the honorable and forbids its contrary. Given that the choice between these is within our power, the honor of praise and stigma of blame, the gift of reward and censure of punishment, and other inducements of virtue and restraints of vice have rightly been provided for.

158. Since we have pursued the questions of what providence is, what fate is—as understood with respect to its substance and also that which arises with respect to its function or act—, what is within human power, and what happens according to the decree of fate, we will now treat of fortune and the things that happen by chance. He says that the power of fortune resides entirely in human affairs and that chance has a certain other jurisdiction; for events that affect lifeless things or irrational animals independently of nature or art are all said to happen by chance, whereas those that affect human beings are, whether favorable or adverse to their undertakings, considered fortuitous or subject to the arbitration of fortune. And among causes one is primary and the other incidental: the primary cause in making a journey is perhaps a business dealing, whether the inspection of land or some similar cause; an incidental cause would be the sun and heat burning those who have set out on the journey, resulting in the face becoming dark and tanned, for the journey was not undertaken for the sake of the tanning. In general, then, we will say that both fortune and chance are causes incidental to the primary cause, so that the primary cause is in fate and the incidental cause in fortune and chance occurrences. And given that some of the things that happen have their warrant from necessity while others are in accordance with a usual or frequent pattern and others occur rarely, both fortune and chance are found among those that occur rarely; and an occurrence of fortune, being irrational, unanticipated, and occasioning surprise, originates in human intention, whereas a chance occurrence arises outside the scope of human intention, since that which occurs by chance arises in connection with either lifeless things or dumb animals.

159. Briefly, then, when two causes deriving their starting point from our intention come together in such a way that what was intended does not occur, but instead something quite different and independent of what was anticipated, it is the trick of fortune. For example, if someone secretly consigns a treasure to the earth, and a farmer who intends to propagate a vine or other plant thereafter finds that treasure while furrowing, the one who buried the treasure surely toiled with the intention, not that another should find it, but that he himself should retrieve it when there was a need of getting it out, while the farmer toiled, not with the intention of finding treasure, but of furrowing; and yet each one experienced a fortune he had not foreseen. And so fortune too can be correctly defined, as follows: fortune is the concurrence of two simultaneously occurring causes that draw their origin from an intention, from which concurrence something happens that occasions surprise independently of what was hoped for. Suppose a creditor goes to the forum in order to retain advocates because of a long sought after but unrecovered debt, and the debtor goes there in order to make a purchase but on encountering him pays the protracted debt, with the advocates as witnesses: the cause of going there was undoubtedly different for each, and that which had not been intended was done rather than what was then on the point of being done. Chance too, then, will be the concurrence of simultaneously occurring irrational causes affecting lifeless things or mute animals, as

when beasts that have been enclosed within stables escape and of their own accord return to them again, and when we speak of a rock having fallen of its own accord. But enough has been said about fate, things that are within human power, fortune, and chance occurrences.

160. But since there are certain points which have been raised contrary to these, they should be laid out and answered, for only then will Plato's view be set upon a firm foundation. Well then, they say, if god knows all things from the start, prior to their happening, not only the celestial phenomena, which are held in the happy necessity of perpetual beatitude as if by a certain fate, but also those thoughts and acts of will of ours, i.e., if he also knows this contingent nature and holds things past, present, and future—and that from the start—and as god cannot be deceived, then surely all things are disposed and decreed from the start, those which are said to be placed within our power as well as the ones that are fortuitous and subject to chance. And on the grounds that all these things have long since been decreed, they conclude that all that happens happens because of fate, even laws, moral exhortation and reproach, instruction—all such things are held by the stipulations of fate. For if it is decreed that something should happen to someone, then that by means of which or by whose aid it is bound to happen is simultaneously decreed as well. For example, if safety is to result for someone in connection with the act of navigating, then it should result, not with just anyone steering the ship, but with the *pilot* doing it; or if it is to result for some city that it should enjoy good institutions and customs, then, as in the case of Sparta, it should be bound to result through the laws of a Lycurgus; and if someone is destined to be just, as in the case of Aristides, then the education provided by his parents should assist him in obtaining justice and equity.

161. They claim that it is obvious that the arts too fall under the decree of fate: for by fate too it has long since been ordained which patient will become better through whose medical assistance; indeed, it frequently happens that the patient is cured, not by a physician, but by a layman—when the decree so stipulates. Their explanation of praise, blame, punishment, and reward is along the same lines: it frequently happens that, when fate prevents it, deeds rightly done not only fail to bring praise but actually bring censure and punishment. And they claim that divination clearly demonstrates that events have long since been decreed: unless the decree came first, those who have foretold it would not have been able to arrive at an account of it. And that the movements of our minds are nothing other than the ministers of fated decrees, in that it is necessary for them to be done with fate acting *through* us: hence human beings are in the position of those things that come under the description, “in the absence of which it cannot be done,” just as in the absence of place there cannot be motion or rest.

162. What will we say in reply to points established so contentiously, indeed, with more violence than that of fate itself? That god does indeed know all things, but that he knows each and every thing in virtue of its proper nature: as subject to necessity insofar as it is liable to necessity, and as contingent insofar as it is endowed with a nature for which deliberation opens up a path. For god does not know the contingent as something certain and constrained by necessity (for in that case he will be deceived and *not* know) but in

such a way as to know it in virtue of its own nature, as truly contingent. What, then, do we say? That god knows all things, and that his knowledge is confirmed from eternity; moreover, that among the objects of his knowledge some are divine and immortal, others mortal and temporal; that the substance of immortal things is stable and fixed, and that of mortal ones mutable and contingent, being differently disposed through time owing to the inconstancy of its nature. Hence too god's knowledge of divine things, whose good fortune is certain and secured by perpetual necessity, is certain and necessary knowledge both because of the certain comprehension in the knowledge itself and by virtue of the substance of the objects known, whereas, although his knowledge that uncertain things are uncertain and by disposition contingent as to their outcome—for they cannot be other than their nature is—is necessary, they themselves are nevertheless capable of opposite determinations rather than subjugated to necessity.

163. Contingent events, then, are not also rigidly disposed and decreed from the start, except perhaps for the very fact of their having to be uncertain and dependent upon an outcome one way or the other. And so, the fact that the nature of the human soul is such as in one instance to apply itself to virtue but in another to lean toward malice, as with the body's wavering between health and sickness, is obviously fixed and decreed from the beginning as well. Moreover, it is neither decreed nor ordained who is destined to be evil or good; hence our laws, instructions, deliberations, exhortations, warnings, education, steady attention to nourishment, praise, blame, and all such things. For the choice of living rightly is within our control.

164. If, then, among the things that are many are under our jurisdiction and others beyond our power—ours being desire, judgment, will, consent, preparation, choice for and against, and not ours wealth, glory, beauty, strength, and other things that we can hope for but not lay claim to—, then anyone who happens to be determined to presume that things not within our power are under our jurisdiction is rightly said to be foolish, whence it follows that he who presumes that things proper to us are *not* ours is, I suppose, foolish as well. Finally, apart from his being counted blessed, perhaps, no one is praised for acquiring the secondary things that are not within human power, for prosperity is not within his power to choose; but we are justly praised for agreements or undertakings based on justice and temperance and for our observance of the other virtues—for virtue operates freely—and blamed, conversely, when we act such that we are thought to intend to commit sin.

165. They claim, moreover, that our failings are not freely chosen, on the grounds that, although every soul, as participating in divinity, by virtue of its natural desire always pursues the good, it nevertheless errs sometimes in its judgment of goods and evils; for some consider pleasure to be our highest good, others wealth, many glory and anything but the true good. There are numerous reasons for this error, the primary one being that which the Stoics call the double perversion; and this arises both from things in themselves and from the promulgation of what people say. For the moment children separate from the mother's womb, the birth takes place accompanied by a certain amount of pain because of the fact that they move from a warm and moist environment to the cold and dryness of the ambient air. To counteract this pain and cold experienced by

babies the skilled care of midwives is enlisted in place of medicine, such that the newborns are warmed with warm water and changes in condition are applied, i.e., a simulation of the mother's womb through a warmth and heat conducive to the tender body's feeling pleasure and resting relaxedly. Thus from both sensations equally, pain and pleasure, a kind of natural opinion emerges to the effect that everything soothing and pleasurable is good and, conversely, that what causes pain is bad and to be avoided.

166. As they reach a more mature age, a similar, indeed identical, opinion is maintained with respect to need and satiety, their blandishments and rebukes, which is why once confirmed in that age they persist in an opinion formed earlier, thinking that everything pleasing is good, even if it is of no utility, and everything painful bad, even if it is advantageous. Consequently, they are excessively devoted to wealth, wherein they perceive the primary means to pleasure, and embrace glory instead of honor. To be sure, every human being is by nature desirous of praise and honor, for honor is evidence of virtue; but whereas wise men and those skilled in the inquiry into wisdom know which and which kind of virtue they should cultivate, in its ignorance of things the inexperienced mob cultivate glory and popular esteem instead of honor, and pursue a life drowning in pleasures instead of virtue, thinking that the power to do what they want is a kind of regal distinction; for man is by nature a regal animal, and since power always accompanies kingship they suppose that kingship also entails power, although kingship is just oversight on the part of our guardians. At the same time, on the grounds that the happy man necessarily lives according to his pleasure they make the further supposition that those who live according to pleasure are happy. Such, I suppose, is the experience-based error that takes hold of human minds.

167. Conversely, from a promulgation of opinion originating in the hopes cherished by mothers and nurses an intimation concerning wealth, glory, and the other falsely supposed goods takes the place of the aforementioned error, an anxiety in the form of the incipient terrors by which the tender age is intensely disturbed, also in solaces and all such things. But with respect to pleasure and pain, how great an inclination toward that which curries favor do the poetry, capable of bewitching even sturdy minds, and other grand works of writers and authors instill in less experienced minds? What of painters and artists? Do they not seize minds away from hard work, for pleasure? But the greatest stirring up of the vices occurs in connection with the concretion of bodily humors, by the abundance or lack of which we are the more prone to the appetitive or irascible instinct. To these considerations are added the hardships of life itself, and of chance: sickness, servitude, the want of real necessities—in our preoccupation with these we are dragged down from honorable pursuits to the obligations of life as it is and distracted from recognition of the true good.

168. Thus those who would be wise require a liberal education and precepts leading to moral integrity as well as an erudition which is foreign to the mob, and they must see and contemplate all that has been selected to drive them toward wisdom. Above all, they require divine aid for perception of the highest goods, which, although proper to divinity, are nevertheless made common to human beings. Also, the body's obedience to the faculties of the soul must be at a level sufficient for its tolerating the labor entailed by the

exercise. Likewise, good teachers must be available, and the character that each is allotted in the form of his tutelary genius. For Socrates is said to have been “accompanied from childhood by a demon,” an instructor in what was to be done, not one such as to urge him to any particular course of action, but such as to warn against those whose fulfillment would not be beneficial, the reason being that, if the things that are within human power should be enacted through imprudence when it is not beneficial for them to be enacted, they would bring ruin, which the benevolent genius kept away from Socrates.

169. But the divination of things subject to necessity, including the contingent ones whose fated outcome has already been brought to completion, is true and comprehensive, if it is going to be called divination at all—for once having happened the things are unable to be undone; on the other hand, the divination of contingent things whose outcomes depend upon merits not yet premissed is ambiguous and oblique, as in the case of Apollo’s: “In crossing the Halys Croesus will destroy mighty kingdoms.” For unless I am mistaken, there were three contingencies therein: first, whether the kingdom of Cyrus and the Persians would perish; second, whether that of *Croesus*, the Lydian one, would instead; third, whether war would be forestalled on the basis of just conditions for peace. For the latter was possible, there having been numerous precedents of wars that had been forestalled. But the will of each was opposed to the laying down of arms: for Cyrus was by nature vainglorious and, you might say, beastly, and Croesus arrogant and exceedingly hungry for power. The subsequent decree came to be ratified based on the intention of each that there should be no peace between them, leaving as a result one or the other of the remaining possibilities, the issue in doubt being whose kingdom would be extinguished. And a doubtful lot, an oracle of doubtful meaning, came forth so that, no matter which had happened, it would be seen to have been predicted by Apollo.

170. There are other forms of prediction which resemble the weighing of counsels. For although it is within our power to choose one or another from among uncertain courses of action, the divinity propitiously persuades men as to what should be chosen in order to prevent their sinning through a choice based on ignorance, as in the response given the Greeks when they asked the oracle whether war should be taken up against the Persians:

O people, hated by its neighbors, most dear to god,
hold close the defence work of your arms: all danger
to the body will be averted by the mere shadow of the head.

For he knew what should be chosen and that the choice is in the hands of man; but that which follows from the choice is in the hands of fate.

171. Counsel was give by God to the Hebrews, too, with a prediction of future things, as follows: “If you obey my commands, all goods of the earth will be within your control, and so milk and rivers of honey will not be lacking. If you disobey, then the divine pronouncement has explained in advance the series of imminent punishments”—the point being that that which had been placed within human power, the obeying or disobeying of celestial commands, was contingent. But if an inevitable decree were to establish in advance the choice between them and the command were to be disobeyed as a matter of *necessity*, then the prediction would be superfluous, as would promises and threats. There is, then, something within human power, and human beings are not, in the manner

asserted by those who held the opposite view, the means through which the things that are enacted are enacted, but a pre-established cause, which the element extending from fate follows.

172. But they claim that a certain number of things occur beyond expectation. We know, and the class under which they all fall divides in two: one is that of the things that happen very rarely, which either occur fortuitously or are brought about by some element of chance, as in monsters being born from human beings; the other is what occurs with greater frequency but originates in a perversion of human judgment, when matters are judged either by enraged potentates or by one's enemies, as happened to Socrates, or when Aristides, the most just of men, was condemned by a judgment from the same people, or the prophets, when by criminals one was dissected limb from limb, the other buried under rocks. Is the cause of these too really in the hands of fate? They do not understand that in claiming that crimes of this sort are proper to fate they are assigning diverse and contrary powers, i.e., virtue and vices simultaneously, to its decree, which is impossible. Let them determine, finally, what they intend fate to be. A divine power? But it would not be the cause of *evils*. Or if not, then a malign soul? But then no *good* can be wrought by evil, and yet good things too are said to occur in accordance with fate. Perhaps they will claim that it is some kind of blended substance? And yet how is it possible for one and the same thing to be endowed with evil and goodness simultaneously, to breed both intemperance and chasteness and to trigger all manner of contrariety between virtues and vices?

173. And what will their assessment of fate be? That it surely desires all things to be good but is nevertheless incapable? Then it will be something ineffective and powerless. That, although capable, it nevertheless lacks the desire? But then this is a wild and brutal ill-will of some kind. That it neither has the desire nor is capable? But to say this of fate is outrageous in the extreme. That it both is capable and has the desire? Then it will be the cause of all *goods*, and the responsibility for evils will have no bearing on fate.

174. Whence, then, evils? They indict stellar movement. But whence the movement? Does the movement proper occur such that, while it remains the same, both goods and evils issue from it, and if so, then with the stars willing it or not willing it? If with them willing it, then the stars are living beings and move according to purpose; if with them not willing it, then theirs is no capacity for action. To be sure, either all stars are divine, good, and productive of no evil or certain ones are maleficent. But given that all heavenly bodies are full of celestial wisdom, and we know that evil is born from mindlessness, to what extent is it right to speak of the stars, in *that* place, holy and full of goodness, as being maleficent? Unless perhaps we are to imagine, which is unspeakable, that the same stars alternate between being good and malign and therefore bestow benefits and harm indiscriminately. But this is absurd, to suppose, not that the celestial substance endowed with one and the same nature is the same in all stars, but that many of them degenerate, as it were, from their proper nature. —But surely the stars endure this against their will? —And which will be that necessity so great as to compel them to do wrong against their will? And this soul itself, will it be divine or malign?

175. Or is there, as they claim, a kind of reason through which all of the things now being done come about and those yet to be will occur? But surely it borders on monstrosity to say that evils come about through reason—they will far more truly be said to come about through *no* reason: otherwise, it would be iniquitous or even libidinous. But if our merits are not first posited one way or another, whence will that inevitable series of causes derive its starting point? But quite apart from the other blasphemous claims and opinions, who can endure god's providence too being torn down by this assertion of theirs, and all divinity being exterminated along with it? For what will *god* do if all things are to happen in the way these clever men affirm and things are violently tossed about at the instigation of necessity? Yet this vain presumption eases the case for those who do wrong: the door will be open to their complaining about the violence of fate as opposed to condemning the perversion of their own mind; it thwarts the vows of the good to live a praiseworthy life and pursue wisdom. And so we must dismiss this class of men so hardened in their clever vanity, who by their own reckoning have been born with fate against them, who in the end have been fated to hold these and similar opinions.

176. But following the divine law we will repeat from the start and in order what Plato at the instigation of truth itself, as it seems to me anyway, said about fate. In the first instance, all of the things that are, including the world itself, are embraced and ruled principally by the highest god, who is the highest Good, "beyond all being" and all nature, superior to thought and intellection, whom all things seek because of his being in sovereign possession of complete perfection and requiring no fellowship—to say more about whom now would be to digress. In the second instance, they are ruled by providence, which is second in preeminence to that highest god, and which the Greeks call *nous*; and it is intelligible being which imitates goodness by virtue of its tireless conversion toward the highest god, possessing from him the draught of goodness by which both it itself and the things which are ennobled by his authority are adorned. And so men refer to this will of god, this wise guardianship, as it were, of all things, as "*providence*" [*foresight*], so called not, as many suppose, because it is a *precursor* in *seeing* and understanding events to come but because understanding, which is the act *proper* to mind, is a *property* of the divine mind; and the mind of god is eternal, so that the mind of god is the eternal act of understanding.

177. Fate, the divine law promulgated by the wise harmony of intelligence for the governance of all things, follows this providence. That which is called the second mind, i.e., the tripartite world soul, obeys it, as has been explained above; it is as if one should refer to the soul of a skilled legislator as the law. In conformity with this law, i.e., fate, all things are ruled, each according to its proper nature: all celestial beings by virtue of their neighboring on and their contact with providence are so ruled according to a blessed necessity and unchanging constancy; and those occurring in the natural order are so ruled regularly, owing to the fact that all of the things that occur according to the law of nature come into being and pass away, also that art and knowledge imitate nature, and the things produced by the arts are regular and of frequent occurrence. But all of the things that are ruled by this law are ruled by reason, order, and without compulsion—for nothing that lacks reason and order can fail to be violent: that which is of such a nature does not endure for long, being pulled apart, as against its own nature.

178. Well then, things singly follow their proper god, and as Plato says, “legions of celestial and angelic powers, distributed in eleven columns, follow the king and commander of heaven, first among the host, a sublime leader dispensing and controlling all things from his winged chariot.” For he says that “Vesta alone remains in her abode,” sc., that Vesta, the soul of the universal body and the mind of that soul, controls the reins of the starry heaven in conformity with the law sanctioned by providence. And we have said repeatedly that this law, whose sanction is according to a series, as it were, of consequences and ranks, is fate; the winged chariot of the commander god, on the other hand, is to be understood as the *aplanês*, since it is both first in rank and swifter than all other forms of motion, as has been shown. And he enumerates the eleven columns of the army as follows: first, the *aplanês*; thereafter, the abodes of the seven planets; ninth, that of ether, which the ethereal demons inhabit; tenth, that of air; eleventh, that of the moist substance; twelfth, Earth, which remains immobile, outside the circumlulation of the world. But this perhaps goes beyond what was intended, although it is consistent with what was set for discussion, in that fate is administered in an inextricable manner and according to a salvific order, without compulsion or any necessity.

179. From this ordered ranking of realities descend those things that are of rare occurrence. Sometimes fortune has control over them, sometimes they occur unexpectedly and spontaneously, and over all of the latter cases chance is said to dominate. And although they are fated insofar as they are embraced by the edicts of fate, yet they are not under violent necessity. Precisely as in the case of the things done by us: they are of course embraced by our laws, yet they do not *occur* according to the laws that we live by. For example, the law orders that a traitor to the fatherland be killed. Well then, does the law necessarily *make* the one for whom it determines the punishment a traitor by virtue of the fact that it calls him a traitor? I suppose not, for the traitor bursts forth to committing the deed because of his own evil mind—nay rather, because of his *lack* of mind—but is punished in conformity with the law. Conversely, the law is that he who fights bravely should be rewarded; the law orders these things, yet the law does not *make* the victor or victory—and yet the law confers the reward. Thus the law orders generally, for all, what things are to be done, and it prohibits all from unsuitable actions; but not all obey, nor do all do what they are ordered to. This fact shows that, although choice rests with human beings, the *same* one does not rest with all; but the things that follow from it, i.e., the lawful, i.e., punishments and rewards, are sanctioned by the law.

180. Of such a sort too, I suppose, is that celestial law which is called fate, ordaining the honorable for men and forbidding its contrary. And to follow it is our task, one that is free from the yoke of fate; and being praised for acting rightly is in conformity with both the law and common judgment, and so also as concerns the contrary: lying and conducting one’s life in the worst way falls, as in the prior case, under the edict and belongs to human free choice; moreover, to dispose one’s life badly is a human prerogative, and to be punished on that account clearly originates in a fated necessity in that it *follows* from the law. And all of these things are seated within the souls of men, and the soul is free and acts according to its capacity for choice. And the noblest part of the soul is that which Plato described as having a double capacity: one in its

comprehension of divine realities, which is wisdom, the other in its disposition of mortal affairs, which is called prudence.

181. But if in consideration of the bodily humours and the natural temperament associated with them one supposes that it is not without fate that a good many human beings are intemperate and the rest temperate, and that the intemperate suffer from an intemperance in the humors whereas the temperate gain relief from the happy possession of temperament, and that all of this happens by decree, then he is in a sense right. For as concerns the acquisition of moral respectability, it is a natural attribute that the feeble race of humans should either suffer because of an unpropitious temperament or be aided by a temperate one; and thus by the law of providence the sound influence of reason and deliberation has been set in opposition to the corresponding vices, since greed, lust, cruelty and all such pests signify nothing serious in childhood but at an age well confirmed are noxious—at the time, I suppose, when the soundness of deliberation too is confirmed, a process which the distinction of honorable pursuits aids, reprehension from well-wishers benefits, their punishment remedies, and when, by contrast, mental perversion becomes obtuse and insolent in the face of adverse circumstances.

182. And so by virtue of their association with body there is between humans, beasts, and other, lifeless things the fellowship and communion of corporeal experiences, since humans have birth, nourishment, and growth in common with the others, whereas they have sense-perception and appetite in common only with animals that are mute and lack reason. Moreover, the irrational appetite in creatures either wild or tame is cupidity, also irascibility, whereas the rational is in man, whose proper characteristic is the application of mind to reason; but proper to man, who stands at the farthest remove from cupidity and irascibility, is the appetite for reasoning, understanding, and knowing the truth. For the former are discerned also in mute animals, and indeed with much greater intensity, whereas intellect and the perfection of reason are characteristics proper only to god and man.

183. And even between men, in differing degrees; for among the emotional disturbances that afflict human beings cupidity, irascibility, and also reason conflict with one another, by turns gaining the upper hand against one another. Reason, as in Homer, when the son of Laertes:

upon beating his breast castigates his mind bitterly:
“How so intolerant, my mind? For you have endured worse.”

For at that moment reason was subjugating the irascibility within his mind. In Euripides, by contrast, a savage irascibility within the mind of Medea had extinguished the light of reason. For she says:

Nor does it escape me now, how bloody the things I ponder,
but rage conquers the sanity of my heart.

To such an extent had uncontrolled grief over being made the other woman closed the way to salvific counsel.

184. In the mind of the morally continent man, then, deliberation always prevails; the weakness of the intemperate one receives support against reason from the defective parts of the mind. Often these defects themselves even attack one another, as in the case of the young man in Terence who in resisting the most intense flames of love falls back on an honorable form of irascibility, when he says that he will not go to the sight of the courtesan, “who freely summons” in order, after “shutting him out,” to “call him back insultingly” with her pandering and “meretricious” blandishments. Well then, these matters, over which we debate within the hidden chambers of the heart, deliberating in each case whether or not they should be acted upon, and which in the end we decide as though by passing a motion: to what extent are they not proper to us, *ours*? Unless perhaps it is in the sense that in being emotionally disturbed or depraved because of our lust we are unfit as debaters, since an equitable judgement must be free of preconceptions based on either malice or indulgence and pity.

185. But the prediction of future events, they say, is witness to the fact that all things have long since been disposed and ordained, and this disposition and ordaining is called fate. In fact, however, this very prediction in every way belies the dominance of a fated necessity, in that the prediction is a rational assessment of what has been allotted for the future, an assessment whose prevalence concerns, not things that are certain and constrained by necessity, but ones that are uncertain and contingent. For who would consult a soothsayer on the question of whether a new-born son is destined to be mortal or immortal? Rather, the question generally concerns that which is contingent: how long a lifespan he appears to have been allotted, and whether he is destined to be rich or poor, of high or of common and humble station. And all such inferences are drawn on the basis of observation, knowledge, and technical skill; for through the flight of birds, entrails, or oracles human beings are advised in advance, at the prediction of some propitious demon who is knowledgeable of the ordered sequence of all things, exactly as when on the strength of his knowledge of medicine a physician predicts either death or health, or again, when on the basis of a small cloud a helmsman who understands the sky announces in advance the coming of a storm. And all of these come under the grasp, not of fate, but of technical reasoning and practice and experience.

186. So too when a prediction is derived from the movement of constellations: observations of the signs are customarily made, and the risings and settings of the stars and their formations are reduced to a rational calculation on the basis of which fertility or sterility comes to light; and every such rational calculation is nothing other than a conjecture concerning the things that pertain to the body, to those that are proper to the body, or to the soul in its satisfying the demands of the body. Whence I suppose Plato’s saying [41c-d] that the craftsman god oversaw the construction of souls, while the task of or responsibility for the things woven into souls was assigned to divine powers of inferior rank, so that as a result souls pure, unadulterated, thriving, and flourishing in their rational activity were made by god while these powers to whom such a responsibility was

assigned by the craftsman god are held responsible for the parts of the soul which are liable to vice.

187. And the parts of the mind which are liable to vice and woven in, i.e., irascibility and cupidity, are instruments adequately suited to the conduct of life. For many are the things which, owing to a virile emotion within the mind, are rightly done and vindicated in this life, whenever a just irascibility shows itself as reason's companion and supporter; many also those that stem from an honorable or moderate cupidity, one free from sordid lust. As, then, sovereignty over the perpetual movement of the world was granted to the pure world soul, so for these souls that animate human beings there was need of reason's having irascibility and cupidity blended in, so that after its conversion toward reason the whole living creature would also show a concern for, would gaze upon, celestial things, and so that in looking down upon earthly ones the downward glance would at the same time not be otiose, but a concern for earthly affairs would be born out of the same inclination.

188. In order, then, to summarize briefly these many points, we must mentally conceive of the arrangement of this matter as follows: the origin of things, that from which being is administered to all other things that are, is the highest and ineffable god; after whom his providence is the second god, the legislator for both kinds of life, the eternal as well as the temporal; and third is the substance that is called the second mind or intellect, a kind of guardian, as it were, of the eternal law; subject to these are the rational souls that obey the law; and the administering powers are nature, fortune, chance, and the demons who inspect and observe merits. Thus the highest god commands, the second ordains, the third communicates, and souls act according to the law.

189. And the law is fate itself, as we have repeatedly said. And the one who obeys this law and follows in the venerable path of the first god always leads a happy life in conformity with the sanction of the perpetual law, that is, in conformity with fate. But the souls that have neglected god's retinue lead for their part a life in accordance with fate as well, although in a different and, in a sense, contrary pattern, until they repent of their faults and upon expiating their wrongs eventually return to the choruses of the immortal god and eternal divine powers and that rigor of the law permits the transition from a more abject to a happy state to occur, which would certainly could not occur if all things were constrained by a uniform, rigid, and irrevocable necessity of some kind. And from this it is evident that, whereas providence holds all things within its embrace—all, inasmuch as they are administered rightly, in accordance with the same providence—, fate is the decree of providence, and it embraces as premised the things that are within our power and also embraces the positing of merits. Punishment and approbation, the fated elements, follow, and all of the things that happen according to chance or fortune.

190. What, then, has been the point of our indulging the prolixity of this treatment to such an extent? That many out of a concern, not for knowing the truth, but rather for resisting true reasoning are both themselves deceived and implicate others in the trap of an unavoidable error, in that while gazing upon one particular part, as it were, of the world's administration they make pronouncements that appear to concern the dispensation of the

entire universe and asseverate that what they have discovered in connection with one part holds also in connection with *all* parts of the world, the result being that when they make a true claim they are thought to have probability on their side even though their claims conflict with one another, and when in holding a view concerning a part they behave as though it concerned the entire universe they contradict themselves. For that certain things are enacted by fate is true, and that certain things are within our power has also been shown to be true. And so those who claim that all things are brought about by fate are rightly reprehended by those who prove that there is something that is within our power and, finally, those who place all things within our power and leave nothing to fate are exposed as being deceived—for who could ignore the fact that there is something within the control of fate and beyond our jurisdiction? Thus that reasoning alone is true, the opinion fixed and stable, which teaches that certain things are brought about by fate while others proceed from human choice and will.

Draft

142. *Legesque immutabilis decreti docuit.* Hic iam magnam et difficilem rationem commovet, de qua multa disceptatio habita inter veteres perseverat etiam nunc. Perfunctorium ergo tractatum haberi nunc convenit iuxta Platonicum dogma; longum est enim persequi ceterorum, quorum plerique nihil putant fato fieri, alii omnia, nec quicquam arbitrio ac voluntate, quidam alia esse quae fato nihiloque minus alia esse quae voluntate fiant.

143. Igitur iuxta Platonem praecedit providentia, sequitur fatum; ait enim *deum post mundi constitutionem divisisse animas stellarum numero pares singulasque singulis comparasse universique mundi monstrasse naturam atque universam factorum seriem revelasse.* Horum enim quae prima sunt providentiam indicant, secunda leges fatales, proptereaque iuxta Platonem praenascitur providentia; ideoque fatum quidem dicimus ex providentia fore, non tamen providentiam ex fato. Fatum ergo iuxta Platonem dupliciter intellegitur et dicitur, unum, cum substantiam eius animo intuemur, alterum, cum ex his quae agit et esse id et cuius modi vim habeat recognoscimus. Idem fatum in Phaedro quidem *scitum inevitabile*, in Timaeo leges quas deus de *universae rei natura* dixerit caelestibus animis, porro in Politia *Lacheseos* appellat *orationem*, non tragice sed more theologorum.

144. Possumus ergo *inevitabile* quidem *scitum* interpretari legem minime mutabilem ex inevitabili causa, leges vero, quas de universa natura dixit animis deus, legem quae mundi naturam sequitur et qua reguntur mundana omnia, *Lacheseos* vero, hoc est Necessitatis **<filiae>**, *orationem* divinam legem, qua praeteritis et item praesentibus conectuntur futura. At vero in substantia positum fatum mundi anima est, tripertita in aplanem sphaeram inque eam quae putatur erratica et in sublunarem tertiam; quarum elatam quidem ad superna dici Atropon, mediam Clotho, imam Lachesin: Atropon, quod aplanem in nulla sit deflexione, Clotho propter varie perplexam tortuosamque vertiginem, qua proveniunt ea quae diversae naturae devius motus importat, Lachesin vero tamquam sortitam id munus, ut omnia praedictarum opera effectusque suscipiat. Itaque non nulli putant praesumi differentiam providentiae fatique, cum reapse una sit, quippe providentiam dei fore voluntatem, voluntatem porro eius seriem esse causarum, et ex eo quidem, quia voluntas providentia est **<providentiam>**, porro quia eadem series causarum est, fatum cognominatum, ex quo fieri ut quae secundum fatum sunt etiam ex providentia sint, eodemque modo quae secundum providentiam ex fato, ut putat Chrysippus. Alii vero, quae quidem ex providentiae auctoritate fataliter quoque provenire, nec tamen quae fataliter ex providentia, ut Cleanthes.

145. Sed Platoni placet neque omnia ex providentia **fore**, neque enim uniformem naturam esse rerum quae dispensantur; ita quaedam ex providentia tantum, quaedam ex decreto, non nulla ex voluntate nostra, non nulla etiam ex varietate fortunae, pleraque casu, quae ut libet accidunt. Et divina quidem atque intellegibilia quaeque his proxima sunt secundum providentiam solam, naturalia vero et corporea iuxta fatum; ea porro, quae nostri arbitrii nostrique iuris sunt, sponte nostra; porro quae extra nos posita sine ratione atque inopinate accidunt: si quidem ex nostro disposito coepta erunt, fortuita, si sine nostra institutione, casu provenire dicuntur.

fore <neque omnia ex fato> vult suppleri den Boeft

146. Quae cuncta manifestius in Timaeo digere ita dicens: *Quibus ita ordinatis cum in proposito rerum creator maneret. Quaenam ordinaverat? Scilicet quod universae rei animam corpusque omne modulamine apto iugaverat. Intellegentes, inquit, iussionem patris filii iuxta mandatam informationem immortalis sumpto initio mortalis animantis ex mundi materiis igni terraque et aqua cum spiritu faenus elementarium mutuati, quod redderetur cum opus foret, ea quae acceperant conglutinabant non indissolubilibus illis nexibus ex quibus ipsi cohaeserant.* Etenim iussum dei, cui parent dii secundi, ratio est, opinor, continens ordinationem perpetuam, quae fatum vocatur, idque trahit originem ex providentia.

147. Quid cum dicit: *Coagmentataque mox universae rei machina delegit animas stellarum numero pares singulasque singulis comparavit easdemque vehiculis competentibus superimpositas universae rei naturam spectare iussit legesque immutabilis decreti docuit.* Mundi quippe machinam absoluere, deligere animas stellarum numero pares, vehiculis aptis superimponere, universae rei monstrare naturam, leges immutabilis decreti docere, cuncta haec officia providentiae sunt. Ipsae vero leges quae dictae sunt fatum est idque divina lex est mundi animae insinuata, salubre rerum omnium regimen. Sic fatum quidem ex providentia est nec tamen ex fato providentia.

148. Nunc iam de fato, quod in munere atque actu positum est, loquemur, quippe de hoc plurimae disceptationes habentur morales naturales logicae. Nam cum omnia quae fiunt infinita sint et ex infinito per immensum tempus infinitumque proveniant, cuncta undique complectens fatum ipsum tamen finitum est ac determinatum—neque enim lex neque ratio neque quid omnino divinitate praeditum indeterminatum—idque ipsum manifestatur ex statu et conformatione caeli sub id tempus, quod perfectum annum vocant. De quo Plato sic ait: *Est tamen intellectu facile, quod perfectus temporis numerus perfectum annum compleat tunc demum, cum omnium octo circumactionum cursus peracti velut ad originem et caput circumactionis alterius revertentur, quam semper idem atque uniformis motus dimetietur.* Hoc quippe omni tempore finito, ut cuius determinatio certi circuitus spatio consideretur, omnia quae vel in caelo vel in terris proveniunt, rursus de integro ad praeteritas condiciones redeant necesse est, ut puta qui nunc est habitus constellationis post prolixam temporis seriem instaurabitur eodemque modo qui sequitur deinceps est hoc semper.

149. Ex quo apparet in actu positum fatum infinita varietate accidentium et ex infinito in infinitum tempus quae accidunt, ipsum tamen esse determinatum et immutabili semperque eadem proprietate. Ut enim circularis motus et item quod dimetitur eum tempus utraque sunt circuli, sic ea omnia quae in gyros circumferuntur circuli sint necesse est. Ergo *scitum inevitabile* vocat ille fatum, inevitabilem vim potentiamque intellegens principalem causam omnium quae in mundo consequenter continueque fiunt. Haec porro anima est mundi tripertita, quod in substantia positum fatum in superioribus diximus. Scitum porro dei lex est, quam inexcusabilem fore asseruimus ob inevitabilem causam.

150. Haec porro lex et *oratio* est et *sanctio*, quam sanxit deus animae mundi ad perpetuam rerum omnium gubernationem, neque enim ut esset mundus modo, sed ut aeternus et indissolubilis esset, curaverat. Quae sanctio cum cuncta intra se contineat, alia ex aliqua praecessione fiunt, quaedam secundum praecessionem, scilicet ut in geometrica initia ex praecessione sunt, theoremata vero secundum praecessionem; concessis quippe initiis, ut notae et item lineae ceterorumque huius modi velut originibus elementisque, theoremata secundum praecessionem aperiuntur, quasi quae habeant consequentiam concessae praecessionis. Sic etiam *sanctio* ordinatio existens et lex omnia complexa causas praecedentes ex meritis nostris habet ut initia quaedam; quae porro necessitatibus constricta proveniunt, iuxta praecessionem necessitatemque eius consequenter eveniunt.

151. Ergo initium divinae legis, id est fati, providentia, fatum vero, quod et parendi sibi obsequium et non parendi contumaciam velut edicto complectitur. Animadversiones porro vel praemia exoriuntur secundum collocati meriti praecessionem; collocati autem in alterutram partem meriti praecessio animarum nostrarum motus est iudiciumque et consensus earum et appetitus vel declinatio, quae sunt in nobis posita, quoniam tam horum quam eorum quae his contraria sunt optio penes nos est. Igitur in hac rerum ordinatione atque lege antiquissima **quaeque** ex praecessione dicuntur fore et sunt nostrae potestatis, quae vero post illa sunt, secundum praecessionem et necessitate constricta. Atque ut aliud lex, aliud quod legem sequitur, id est legitimum, sic aliud fatum et alia quae fatum sequuntur ex inevitabili necessitate, **<id est>** fatalia.

quaeque : Den Boeft, p. 29; Moreschini, p. 729, n. 354; Bakhouché, p. 753, n. 201
<> suppl. ???

152. Est igitur universae rei anima fatum in substantia positum, est item data huic informatio rem omnem recte gerendi lex, quae in munere atque actu positum fatum continet **<et>** habet textum et consequentiam talem: ‘si hoc erit, sequetur illud’. Ergo quod ex his praecedit, in nobis est, quod sequitur, secundum fatum, quod alio nomine fatale dicitur, a fato plurimum differens, ut sint tria: quod in nobis positum est et ipsum fatum et quod secundum fati legem pro meritis imminet. Deinde ipsius legis verba ponit: *Quae se comitem deo fecerit anima eorumque aliquid viderit quae vere sunt, usque ad alterius circuitus tempus erit incolumis, ac si semper hoc faciet, semper incolumis manebit.* Est igitur totum hoc lex et edictum quod fatum proprie vocatur, secutum vero Socratem legis edictum deo se comitem praebuisse proprium Socratis opus; porro quod, cum ita viveret Socrates, anima eius usque ad alterius circuitus tempus incolumis perseverat, iuxta fatale decretum provenit ac si semper hoc faciat, quod est in Socrate, semper incolumis erit iuxta fatum.

153. Hac ratione Laio praedictum est ab Apolline:

Cave vetatos liberum sulcos seras:

Generatus ille te mactabit impie

Et omnis aula respergetur sanguine.

His quippe oraculis ostendit penes Laium fuisse, ne sereret, quae praecessio est; quod porro insecutum est, iam non in potestate Laii sed potius in necessitate fatali iuxta meritum praecessionis. Quod si necesse esset Laio sortem illam incurrere aut iam dudum

immineret clades illa ex inevitabili necessitate, vacaret sciscitatio, vacaret etiam praedictio. Sed ille quidem, utpote praescius quae sequerentur, sementem iuxta fatum fieri vetabat sciens in potestate eius positum, si abstinere vellet, Larius vero, ut homo nescius futurorum, ab eo qui sciret, quid agendum sibi esset sciscitabatur, sevit autem non fato eliciente sed victus intemperantia.

154. Eodemque modo Thetis praedixerat filio, si bellaret apud Troiam, amicitia sibi paratura necem, maturum exitium cum ingenti fama futurum, si rediret ad patriam, longa vitae spatia portendi sine gloria. Bellavit tamen nulla fati cogente violentia, nulla quippe in optione ancipiti, sed tamquam bilis violentia, sed propenso iuxta gloriam favore. Quibus concinit etiam illud Platonis: *causa penes optantem, deus extra culpam, item liberam esse virtutem nec ulli obnoxiam necessitati* vel cum ait animis Lachesis *nullam earum sortito sub dicionem daemonibus esse venturam, sed ipsas sponte lecturas sibi daemonem quem quaeque putaverit deligendum*. Iuxtaque Moysea deus primigenis interdixit, ne edulibus arborum, ex quibus notitia boni malique animis eorum obreperet, vescerentur, quia, cum et abstinendi et non abstinendi potestas penes eos esset, qui consultum his vellet deus quid cavendum esset ostendit, non prohibiturus frustra, si id fieri esset necesse.

155. Nunc iam de his agemus quae in hominis potestate sunt. Omnia quae sunt in tres partes a veteribus divisa sunt, possibile necessarium ambiguum, possibile ut genus, necessarium et dubium ut species; ergo omne possibile vel dubium vel necessarium est. Necessarium porro dicitur quod necessitate constrictum est, et quia possibilium pleraque obstari, quo minus proveniant, non possunt, quaedam prohibentur declinanturque consiliis, definitionibus adumbrantur huius modi: Necessarium est possibile cuius contrarium est impossibile, ut est omnia orta occidere et aucta senescere; necesse est enim omne quod sit natum emori, et quod usque ad senectutem provectum senescere, nec est contrarietati locus, scilicet, quod ortum sit non occidere. Dubiorum vero definitio talis est: Dubium est possibile cuius etiam contrarium possibile, ut hodie post occasum solis pluviam futuram. Hoc enim possibile, aequè etiam contrarium eius possibile, ut post occasum solis omnino non pluat.

156. Iam vero dubiorum proventuum plures differentiae, quaedam enim frequentia sunt, quaedam peraeque frequentia, ut barbire utque scire litteras vel agere causas. Adversantur porro frequentibus quae quidem rari exempli sunt, his porro quae peraeque proveniunt quae non sunt peraeque. Erit ergo eorum quae peraeque dubia sunt optio penes hominem, qui, utpote rationabile animal, cuncta revocat ad rationem atque consilium. Ratio porro et consilium motus est intimus eius, quod est in anima principale; hoc vero ex se movetur motusque eius assensus est vel appetitus. Igitur assensus et appetitus ex se moventur nec tamen sine imaginatione, quam phantasia Graeci vocant. Ex quo fit, ut persaepe fallente imagine motus ille principalis animae potestatis vel consensus depravetur et eligat vitiosa pro optimis. Cuius rei multiplex causa est, vel agrestis in consultando inelegantia vel ignoratio vel nimium dedita mens importuno favori vel falsae opinionis anticipatio vel consuetudo prava, certe alicuius vitii tyrannica quaedam dominatio; proptereaque vi aut violentis delinimentis potius quam voluntate peccare dicimur.

157. Quae cum ita sint, salva est, opinor, divinatio, ne praesagio derogetur auctoritas; potest quippe praescius tali facta informatione fati consilium dare aggrediendi vel non aggrediendi recteque et rationabiliter mathematicus originem captabit instituendi actus ex prosperitate siderum atque signorum, ut, si hoc factum erit, proveniat illud. Haec porro et huius modi remedia sunt dubiorum proventuum, in quibus consilii salubritas medicina est. Habent etiam disciplinae locum maximeque legum latio; quid est enim lex nisi iussum sciscens honesta, prohibens contraria? Idcirco, quia horum electio in potestate nostra est, laudisque honor et vituperationis nota praemiiique gratia et suppliciorum animaduersio, cetera item exhortamenta virtutis malitiaeque retinacula iure prospecta.

158. Nunc, quoniam quid rerum sit providentia quidve fatum in substantia positum et item quod in munere atque actu invenitur quidve in hominis potestate sit, quid item quod iuxta fati decretum provenit, prosecuti sumus, de fortuna deque his quae casu proveniunt disseremus. Fortunae potestatem omnem in rebus hominum dicit esse, casus aliam quandam iurisdictionem; quae enim vel rebus vita carentibus vel sine ratione viventibus animalibus accidunt non ex natura vel arte, haec omnia casu facta dicuntur, quae vero hominibus accidunt vel faventia negotiis eorum vel adversantia, fortuita et ex fortunae arbitrio putantur. Causarum vero altera principalis est, altera accidens; principalis causa est itineris faciendi vel negotiatio vel rursus inspectatio vel aliqua generis huius, accidens, ut cum iter ingressos sol atque aestus adurunt, quae sequitur infectio vultus et coloratio, quippe non infectionis causa iter fuerat institutum. Communiter ergo tam fortunam quam casum principali causae accidentes causas esse dicemus, ut sit causa quidem principalis in fato, in fortuna vero et casibus causa accidens. Et quia quae fiunt partim ex necessitate habent auctoritatem, partim usitati et frequentis exempli sunt, partim ex raro accidunt, et fortuna et casus in his inveniuntur quae raro accidunt; et fortunae quidem inrationabilis et cum admiratione proventus inopinus ex hominum proposito sumit originem, casus vero citra propositum hominis fit, siquidem quod casu accidit vel in rebus vita carentibus vel in mutis animalibus invenitur.

159. Breviter ergo, cum duae causae initium habentes ex proposito nostro ita concurrunt, ut non quod propositum est, at longe secus praeterque opinionem accidat, fortunae ludus est, ut si quis occulte thesaurum terrae mandet, dehinc agricola propositum habens vitem aliamve quamlibet stirpem propagare thesaurum illum, dum scrobem molitur, inveniatur; certe neque qui condidit, ut alius inveniret, sed ut ipse, cum prolato opus esset, reportaret, nec agricola ut thesaurum inveniret, sed ut scrobem faceret, laboraverat, et tamen uterque usus fortuna est inopina. Quare sic etiam fortuna recte definiri potest: Fortuna est concursus simul cadentium causarum duarum originem ex proposito trahentium, ex quo concursu provenit aliquid praeter spem cum admiratione, ut si creditor ob diu frustra repetitum debitum procedat ad forum instruendorum gratia patronorum, eodem etiam debitor mercandi causa, dehinc conventus debitor arbitris patronis diu tractum debitum depraesentet; diversa quippe causa utrisque procedendi fuit, et est illud potius actum quod propositum non erat quam quod iam paene agebatur. Erit ergo etiam casus concursus simul atque una accidentium sine ratione causarum in vita carentibus vel mutis animalibus, ut cum clausae ferae stabulis evasis rursus ad eadem stabula revertuntur ultro cumque ultro dicimus saxum concidisse. Ac de fato quidem deque his quae in hominis potestate sunt, fortuna quoque et casibus, satis dictum.

160. Sed quia sunt aliquanta quae contra haec e diverso dicuntur, proponenda sunt et diluenda; tunc demum enim firmis erit fundamentis locata Platonis sententia. Aiunt: 'Ergo, si deus cuncta ex initio scit, antequam fiant, nec sola caelestia, quae felici necessitate perpetuae beatitudinis quasi quodam fato tenentur, sed illas etiam nostras cogitationes et voluntates, scit quoque dubiam illam naturam tenetque et praeterita et praesentia et futura, et hoc ex initio, nec potest falli deus, omnia certe ex initio disposita atque decreta sunt, tam ea quae in nostra potestate posita esse dicuntur quam fortuita nec non subiecta casibus'. Porro cum haec omnia iam dudum decreta sint, cuncta quae proveniunt ex fato provenire concludunt, leges etiam et exhortationes et obiurgationes et disciplinas quaeque huius modi sunt omnia teneri fatalibus condicionibus, quando, si cui quid accidere decretum est, una etiam illud decretum sit, cuius ope vel beneficio debeat provenire; ut, si cui salus proventura erit in navigando, proveniat ei non alio quoquam sed illo gubernatore navim regente, vel si cui civitati proventurum erit, ut bonis utatur institutis et moribus, ut Spartaee, Lycurgi legibus hoc debeat provenire, item si quis erit iustus futurus, ut Aristides, huic educatio parentum adiumento sit in iustitiae atque aequitatis obtentu.

161. Artes quoque sub fati decretum cadere manifestum esse aiunt, nam et hinc iam dudum esse ordinatum, quis aeger quo medente revalescat; denique fieri frequenter, ut non a medico sed ab imperito curetur aeger, cum talis erit condicio decreti. Similis ratio est laudum vituperationum animaduersionum praemiorum; fit enim frequenter, ut aduersante fato quae recte gesta sunt non modo nullam laudem, sed contra reprehensionem suppliciaque afferant. At vero divinationem dicunt clare demonstrare proventus iam dudum esse decretos; neque enim, nisi decretum praecederet, ad rationem eius accedere potuisse praesagos. Animorum vero nostrorum motus nihil aliud esse quam ministeria decretorum fatalium, siquidem necesse sit agi per nos agente fato. Ita homines vicem obtinere eorum quae dicuntur "sine quibus agi non potest", sicut sine loco esse non potest motus aut statio.

162. Aduersum quae tam pugnaciter et ipso fato violentius instituta quid respondebimus? Quod deus sciat quidem omnia, sed unumquidque pro natura sua [ipsorum] sciat: necessitati quidem subiugatum, ut necessitati obnoxium, anceps vero, ut quod ea sit natura praeditum, cui consilium viam pandat; neque enim ita scit ambigui naturam deus, ut quod certum et necessitate constrictum (sic enim fallitur et nesciet), sed ita, ut pro natura sua vere dubium sciat. Quid ergo dicimus? Deum scire omnia scientiamque eius ex aeternitate solidari, porro quae sciuntur partim divina esse et immortalia, partim occidua et ad tempus; immortalium rerum substantiam stabilem et fixam fore, mortalium mutabilem et dubiam aliasque aliter se habentem ob naturae inconstantiam. Ergo etiam dei scientia de divinis quidem, quorum est certa et necessitate perpetua munita felicitas, certa et necessaria scientia est, tam propter ipsius scientiae certam comprehensionem quam pro eorum quae sciuntur substantia; at vero incertorum necessaria quidem scientia, quod incerta sint et in eventu ambiguo posita—nec enim possunt aliter esse quam est natura eorum—, ipsa tamen in utramque partem possibilia sunt potius quam necessitatibus subiugata.

[] *ego secl. (ut glossema)*

163. Non ergo etiam dubia ex initio rigide disposita atque decreta sunt, nisi forte id ipsum, quod incerta esse et ex ancipiti eventu pendere debeant. Quare, quod animae quoque hominis natura talis sit, ut interdum ad virtutem se applicet, interdum ad malitiam praeponderet (perinde ut corpus modo sospitati modo aegritudini proximum), fixum plane est et decretum ex origine. Quis porro malus sit futurus aut bonus, neque decretum neque imperatum, proptereaque leges magisteria deliberationes exhortationes revocationes institutiones nutrimentorum certa observatio laus vituperatio quaeque his simulantur, quia recte vivendi optio penes nos est.

164. Si igitur eorum quae sunt pleraque iuris nostri sunt, alia extra nostram potestatem, nostra quidem appetitus iudicium voluntas consensus praeparatio electio declinatio, aliena vero divitiae gloria species fortitudo ceteraque quae potius optare possumus quam vindicare, recte dicitur, si quis forte velit quae non sunt in potestate nostra nostri iuris esse praesumere, nihil sapere; consequenter ergo etiam is qui quae nostra propria sunt praesumit aliena nihil, opinor, sapit. Denique nullus laudatur ob adeptionem secundorum quae in hominis potestate non sunt, nisi forte putatur beatus, prosperitas enim non est in eius arbitrio; at vero in iustitiae contractibus temperantiaeque negotiis et in ceterarum virtutum observantia iure laudamur, siquidem virtus libera est, contraque agentes reprehendimur, quod dare operam ut peccemus existimamur.

165. Dicunt porro non spontanea esse delicta, ideo quod omnis anima particeps divinitatis naturali appetitu bonum quidem semper expetit, errat tamen aliquando in iudicio bonorum et malorum; namque alii nostrum summum bonum voluptatem putant, divitias alii, plerique gloriam et omnia magis quam ipsum verum bonum. Est erroris causa multiplex: prima, quam Stoici duplicem peruersionem vocant; haec autem nascitur tam ex rebus ipsis quam ex divulgatione famae. Quippe mox natis exque materno viscere decidentibus provenit ortus cum aliquanto dolore, propterea quod ex calida atque humida sede ad frigus et siccitatem aeris circumfusi migrent; aduersum quem dolorem frigusque puerorum opposita est medicinae loco artificiosa obstetricum provisio, ut aqua calida confoveantur recens nati adhibeanturque vices et similitudo materni gremii ex calefactione atque fotu, quo laxatum corpus tenerum delectatur et quiescit. Ergo ex utroque sensu tam doloris quam delectationis opinio quaedam naturalis exoritur omne suave ac delectabile bonum, contraque quod dolorem afferat malum esse atque vitandum.

166. Par atque eadem habetur sententia de indigentia quoque et exsaturatione, blanditiis et obiurgationibus, cum aetatis fuerint auctioris, proptereaque confirmata eadem aetate in anticipata sententia permanent omne blandum bonum, etiam si sit inutile, omne etiam laboriosum, etiam si commoditatem afferat, malum existimantes. Consequenter divitias, quod praestantissimum sit in his instrumentum voluptatis, eximie diligunt gloriamque pro honore amplexantur. Natura quippe omnis homo laudis atque honoris est appetens—est enim honor virtutis testimonium—, sed prudentes quidem versatique in sciscitatione sapientiae viri sciunt, quam et cuius modi debeant excolere virtutem, vulgus vero imperitum pro ignoratione rerum pro honore gloriam popularemque existimationem colunt, pro virtute vero vitam consecantur voluptatibus delibutam, potestatem faciendi

quae velint regiam quandam esse eminentiam existimantes; natura siquidem regium animal est homo et quia regnum semper comitatur potestas, potestati quoque regnum obsequi suspicatur, cum regnum iusta sit tutela parentum. Simul quia beatum necesse est libenter vivere, putant etiam eos qui cum voluptate vivant beatos fore. Talis error est, opinor, qui ex rebus ortus hominum animos possidet.

167. Ex divulgatione autem succedit errori supra dicto ex matrum et nutricum votis de divitiis gloriaque et ceteris falso putatis bonis insusurratio, in terriculis etiam, quibus tenera aetas vehementius commovetur, nec non in solaciis et omnibus huius modi perturbatio. Quin etiam corroboratarum mentium delinitrix poetica et cetera scriptorum et auctorum opera magna quantam animis rudibus inuehant iuxta voluptatem laboremque inclinationem favoris? Quid pictores quoque et fectores, nonne rapiunt animos ad suavitatem ab industria? Maxima vero vitiorum excitatio est in corporis [atque] humorum concretionem, quorum abundantia vel indigentia propensiores ad libidinem aut iracundiam sumus. His accedunt vitae ipsius agenda sortisque discrimina, aegritudo seruitium inopia rerum necessariorum, quibus occupati ab studiis honestis ad consentanea vitae institutae officia deducimur atque a cognitione revocamur veri boni.

168. Opus est ergo futuris sapientibus tam educatione liberali praeceptisque ad honestatem ducentibus quam eruditione a vulgo separata videndaque eis et spectanda sunt lecta omnia quae protelent ad sapientiam. Ante omnia divino praesidio opus est ad perceptionem bonorum maximorum quae, cum sint propria divinitatis, cum hominibus tamen communicantur. Corporis quoque obsequium sufficiens animae viribus esse debet ad tolerandum exercitii laborem. Oportet item sufficere praeceptores bonos propositumque id quod sortiti sumus singuli numen. Quippe Socrati dicitur a pueris comes daemon rerum agendarum praeceptor fuisse, non ut hortaretur eum ad aliquem actum, sed ut prohiberet quae fieri non expediret. Propterea quoque quae in hominis potestate sunt, si per imprudentiam agantur, cum agi ea sit inutile, cladem afferant, quod a Socrate arcebat benivolum numen.

169. Divinatio vero necessitati quidem subiectarum rerum, ambiguarum etiam, sed quarum iam fatalis completus sit exitus, vera est et complexibilis, si modo divinatio dicenda est—quippe quae semel acciderunt infecta esse non possunt—, ambiguarum vero, quarum exitus adhuc pendent nondum praecedentibus meritis, ambigua est et obliqua, ut est illa Apollinis:

Perdet Croesus Halyn transgressus maxima regna.

Istic enim tria erant, nisi fallor, ambigua: unum, utrum Cyri et Persarum regnum esset perituum, alterum, an ipsius Croesi potius et Lydium, tertium, utrum condicionibus iustis bellum deponeretur. Hoc quippe fieri poterat, et depositorum bellorum aliquot exempla praecesserant; sed quia voluntas utriusque aduersabatur armorum depositioni, cum et Cyrus fera quadam esset et gloriosa natura, Croesus quoque confidens potentiaeque praecipuus, decretum quod sequebatur ratum erat factum ex utriusque proposito pacem inter eos minime futuram; supererat igitur ex reliquis alterutrum idque erat dubium, cuiusnam regnum extingueretur; proptereaque dubia sors dubique intellectus processit oraculum, ut quodcumque accidisset, id praedictum ab Apolline videretur.

170. Sunt aliae praedictiones consiliorum examini similes, quia, cum sit in nostra potestate deligere ex incertis alterum, ne in delectu peccetur ex ignorance, suadet hominibus quid sit optandum propitia divinitas, ut Argivis per oraculum quaerentibus, an aduersum Persas bellum suscipi conveniret, responsum est:

Vicinis offensa, deo carissima plebes,
Armorum cohibe munimina: corporis omne
Discrimen sola capitis tutabitur umbra.

Sciebat enim, quid esset eligendum, quodque optio penes hominem, id vero, quod sequitur optionem, penes fatum.

171. Hebraeis quoque consilium datum est a deo cum praedictione rerum futurarum in istum modum: *Si praeceptis meis parebitis, bona terrarum omnia penes vos erunt. Lac itaque et melliflui fluctus non deerunt. Si contempseritis, poenarum imminentium seriem divina vox prosecuta est*, quippe quod esset dubium id quod erat positum in hominis potestate, parere vel contemnere iussa caelestia. Quod si optionem eorum praecederet decretum inevitabile necessarioque contemnendum esset, abundaret praedictio, abundarent etiam promissa et minae. Est igitur aliquid in hominis potestate nec sunt homines, ita ut a contra sentientibus asserebatur, materiae rerum earum quae aguntur, per quas aguntur, sed causa praecedens, quam sequitur id quod ex fato est.

172. —Sed praeter spem aiunt aliquanta provenire. —Scimus, et horum omnium duplex genus: unum eorum quae perraro accidunt, quae vel forte proveniunt vel casu aliquo importantur, ut ex hominibus portenta nasci; alterum quod frequentius quidem provenit, sed originem sumit ex humani iudicii depravatione, cum vel a potentibus iratis vel ab inimicis res iudicantur, ut accidit Socrati, eiusdemque populi iudicio cum vir iustissimus condemnatus est Aristides, vel cum prophetae a consceleratis unus membratim sectus, alter obrutus saxis. Numquid etiam horum causa est penes fatum? Nec intellegunt diversas se contrariasque potentias, id est virtutem et item vitia simul, quod fieri non potest, assignare decreto, cum huius modi crimina fati propria esse dicunt. Constituant denique, quid esse fatum velint. Virtutemne divinam? Sed non esset causa malorum. An vero animam malignam? Sed demum a malitia nihil boni fieri potest, et fato dicuntur etiam bona provenire. Dicent fortasse mixtam quandam esse substantiam? Et qui fieri potest, ut unum et idem quid malitia simul et bonitate sit praeditum intemperantiamque et castitatem creet ceteramque virtutum vitiorumque importet contrarietatem?

173. Quae porro erit de fato existimatio? Quod velit certe omnia esse bona nec tamen possit? Erit igitur imbecillum quiddam et sine viribus. An potest quidem nec tamen vult? Haec vero iam fera est quaedam et immanis invidia. An vero neque vult neque potest? At hoc dicere de fato praesertim flagitiosum. An et potest et vult? Erit ergo causa bonorum omnium, nec malorum auctoritas pertinebit ad fatum.

174. Vnde ergo mala? Motum stellarum causantur. Sed ipse motus unde? Et utrum volentibus stellis motus ipse talis fit, ut ex eodem motu et mala proveniant et bona, an invitis? Si volentibus, animalia sunt stellae et iuxta propositum moventur; si invitis, nullus est earum actus. Certe aut omnes stellae divinae sunt et bonae nec quicquam

faciunt mali aut quaedam maleficae. Sed maleficas esse in illo sancto et pleno bonitatis loco quatenus convenit, cumque omnia sidera plena sint caelestis sapientiae, malitiam porro sciamus ex dementia nasci, quatenus convenit maleficas stellas esse dicere? Nisi forte—id quod fas non est—interdum easdem bonas, interdum malignas esse existimandum propterea que promisce beneficia et maleficia praebere; sed hoc absurdum est, putare caelestem substantiam una eademque natura praeditam non in omnibus stellis eandem esse sed plerasque tamquam a propria degenerare natura. —Sed nimirum hoc invitae stellae patiuntur. —Et quaenam erit illa tanta necessitas quae invitae cogat delinquere? Et haec ipsa utrum divina erit anima an maligna?

175. An vero ratio quaedam est, ut aiunt, qua omnia fiunt quae ad praesens aguntur quaeque futura erunt provenient? Sed nimirum monstri simile est dicere ratione fieri mala, quae multo verius dicentur nulla ratione: iniquus **es<se>t** vel etiam libidinosus. Series vero illa causarum inevitabilis unde accipiet exordium nisi prius merita nostra in quamcumque partem locentur? Illud vero quis ferre possit quod praeter cetera quae inreligiose dicuntur atque existimantur, providentia quoque dei tollitur hac eorum assertione simulque omnis divinitas exterminatur? Quid enim faciet deus si omnia secundum hanc versutorum hominum affirmationem fient atque impulsu rapido ferantur pro necessitatis instinctu? Facit tamen haec vana praesumptio faciliorem causam nocentibus, quibus licebit non animi sui perversitatem condemnare, sed de fatali violentia conqueri, facit bonorum vota iuxta vitam laudabilem et impetus prudentiae pigriores; quare missum faciendum est genus hominum ex versutia et vanitate concretum qui, ut ipsi putant, adverso fato nati sunt, quibus haec et talia opinari fato provenerit.

<> *ego suppl.*

176. Nos vero divinam legem sequentes repetemus ab exordio digesto ordine quae de fato Plato veritatis ipsius, ut mihi quidem videtur, instinctu locutus est. Principio cuncta quae sunt et ipsum mundum contineri regique principaliter quidem a summo deo, qui est summum bonum ultra omnem substantiam omnemque naturam, aestimatione intellectuque melior, quem cuncta expetunt, cum ipse sit plenae perfectionis et nullius societatis indignus, de quo plura dici nunc exorbitare est. Deinde a providentia, quae est post illum summum secundae eminentiae, quem noyn Graeci vocant; est autem intellegibilis essentia aemula**[e]** bonitatis propter indefessam ad summum deum conversionem, estque ei ex illo bonitatis haustus, quo tam ipsa ornatur quam cetera quae ipso auctore honestantur. Hanc igitur dei voluntatem, tamquam sapientem tutelam rerum omnium, providentiam homines vocant, non, ut plerique aestimant, ideo dictam, quia praecurrit in videndo atque intellegendo proventus futuros, sed quia proprium divinae mentis intellegere, qui est proprius mentis actus; et est mens dei aeterna; est igitur mens dei intellegendi aeternus actus.

[] *ego secl.*

177. Sequitur hanc providentiam fatum, lex divina promulgata intellegentiae sapienti modulamine ad rerum omnium gubernationem. Huic obsequitur ea quae secunda mens dicitur, id est anima mundi tripartita, ut supra comprehensum est, ut si quis periti legum

litoris animam legem vocet. Iuxta hanc legem, id est fatum, omnia reguntur, secundum propriam quaeque naturam, beata quidem necessitate incommutabilique constantia cuncta caelestia, quippe quae sint providentiae vicina atque contigua, frequenter vero accidentia naturalia, propterea quia oriuntur et occidunt omnia quae naturae lege proveniunt; simul, quia imitatur naturam ars et disciplina, etiam haec quae artibus efficiuntur sunt frequentia proventusque crebri. Quae vero reguntur hac lege, ratione ordine ac sine vi reguntur, nihil enim ratione et ordine carens non violentum; quod vero tale est, non diu perseverat, utpote quod contra naturam suam distrahatur.

178. *Sequuntur ergo deum proprium singula et, ut ait Plato, regem imperatoremque caeli, principem agminis et ducem sublimem volucris curru dispensantem omnia et moderantem, legiones caelestium <et> angelicarum potestatum in undecim partes distributae. Solam siquidem Vestam ait manere in sua sede, Vestam scilicet animam corporis universi mentemque eius animae moderantem caeli stellantis habenas iuxta legem a providentia sanctam. Quam legem saepe diximus esse fatum serie quadam consequentiarum atque ordinum sancientem. Volucris vero currus imperatoris dei aplanes intellegenda est, quia et prima est ordine et agilior ceteris omnibus motibus, sicut ostensum est, undecim vero partes exercitus dinumerat hactenus: primam aplanem, deinde septem, planetum, nonam aetheris sedem, quam incolunt aetherei daemones, decimam aeream, undecimam humectae substantiae, duodecimam terram, quae immobilis ex conuersione mundi manet. Verum hoc fortassis extra propositum, quamvis instituto sermoni concinat, quod fatum sine vi ac sine ulla necessitate inextricabili modo salubri atque ordine administretur.*

179. Ex hoc ordine rerum demanant illa quae rari exempli sunt, quorum partim fortuna potestatem habet, partim improvisa et sua sponte proveniunt, quibus omnibus casus dicitur imperare. Quae fatalia quidem sunt, continentur enim edictis fatalibus, nec tamen sunt necessitate violenta, perinde ut quae a nobis fiunt; continentur quippe legibus nostris, nec tamen secundum leges proveniunt quibus utimur. Vt puta, iubet lex interfici patriae proditorem. Quid ergo? Quia proditorem vocat eum cui poenam statuit, necesse est, ut lex faciat proditorem? Non, opinor, nam proditor quidem sua mala mente, quin potius amentia, prorumpit ad facinus, punitur vero iuxta legem. Rursumque lex est, ut qui fortiter bellaverit praemio afficiatur; haec lex iubet, non tamen victorem aut victoriam lex facit, et tamen praemium lex dat. Proptereaque lex generaliter iubet omnibus quae facienda sint prohibetque omnes ab inconvenientibus; sed non omnes obtemperant nec omnes faciunt quae iubentur. Quae res ostendit optionem quidem esse in hominibus nec eandem in omnibus; ea vero quae sequuntur, id est legitima, id est animadversiones vel praemia, ex lege sancta.

180. Talis est, opinor, etiam lex illa caelestis, quae fatum vocatur, sciscens hominibus honesta, prohibens contraria. Sequi porro nostrum est et a fati iugo liberum, laudari vero bene agentem tam iuxta legem quam iuxta commune iudicium, similiter ergo etiam contraria: mentiri quidem et pessime agere vitam continetur edicto et est in hominis arbitrio ut praecedens; male porro vitam disponere proprium hominis proptereaque puniri plane est ex necessitate fatali, utpote quod legem sequatur. Haec porro omnia sedem habent in animis hominum, quae anima libera est et agit ex arbitrio suo. Optima porro pars animae ea est quam descripsit Plato duplicem habere virtutem, unam in

comprehensione divinarum rerum, quae sapientia est, alteram in dispositione rerum mortalium, quae prudentia nominatur.

181. Quod si quis ad humores corporis naturalemque illam concretionem respiciens plerosque intemperantes, alios porro moderatos homines esse non sine fato putat, et intemperantes quidem ex humorum intemperie laborare, moderatos autem ex felicitate concretionis levare eaque omnia decreto fieri putat, vera sentit quidem—est enim natura tributum, ut imbecilla hominum natio vel labore improspera concretionem vel adiuvetur moderata in obtentu honestatis—ideoque aduersum huius modi vitia rationis consiliique salubritas opposita est providentiae lege, siquidem avaritia libido crudelitas ceteraque huius modi pestes nihil in pueritia grande designent, sed sint confirmata iam aetate noxia, tunc opinor, cum etiam consilii salubritas confirmatur, cui auxiliatur decus studiorum honestiorum, prodest benivolorum reprehensio, medetur animaduersio; contraque aduersis rebus obtunditur pravitas mentis atque insolescit.

182. Ideoque ob consortium corporis est inter homines bestiasque et cetera vita carentia societas communioque corporeorum proventuum, siquidem nasci nutririque crescere commune est hominibus cum ceteris, sentire vero et appetere commune demum hominibus et mutis tantum ac ratione carentibus animalibus. Cupiditas porro atque iracundia vel agrestium vel mansuetorum appetitus inrationabilis est, hominis vero, cuius est proprium rationi mentem applicare, rationabilis. Ratiocinandi tamen atque intellegendi sciendique verum appetitus proprius est hominis, qui a cupiditate atque iracundia plurimum distat; illa quippe etiam in mutis animalibus, et multo quidem acriora, cernuntur, rationis autem perfectio et intellectus propria dei et hominis tantum.

183. Atque inter ipsos homines non peraeque, compugnant quippe se in hominum commotionibus invicem cupiditas iracundiaque et item ratio obtinentque adversum se vicissim: ratio, ut apud Homerum, cum Laertius iuvenis

pectore pulsato mentem castigat acerbe:

‘Quin toleras, mea mens? Etenim graviora tulisti’,

quippe in illius animo ratio tunc iracundiam subiugabat. Apud Euripidem contra in Medae mente saeva iracundia rationis lumen extinxerat, ait enim:

Nec me latet nunc, quam cruenta cogitem,

sed vincit ira sanitatem pectoris;

usque adeo salubri consilio viam clauserat immoderatus dolor pellicatus.

184. Ergo in animo continentis viri semper plus consilium potest, intemperantis imbecillitas aduersum rationem vitiosis animi partibus suffragatur. Saepe etiam haec ipsa vitia se invicem impugnant, ut in adolescente Terentiano, qui aduersum acerrimas amoris flammam resistens honesta iracundia nititur, cum negat iturum se ad conspectum amicae *ultra accersentis*, ut *exclusum* indigne *revocet* lenocinio blanditiisque *meretriciis*. Ergo haec, de quibus intra arcana pectoris disceptamus quaeque utrum facienda necne sint deliberamus et ad postremum tamquam lata sententia decernimus, quatenus non sunt propria nostra? Nisi forte ideo, quia commoti vel depravati libidine disceptatores idonei non sumus, cum aequum iudicium carere tam odii quam gratiae misericordiaeque anticipationibus debeat.

185. —Sed praedictio, inquit, futurorum cuncta iam dudum disposita atque ordinata esse testatur; haec porro dispositio atque ordinatio fatum vocatur. —Immo haec ipsa praedictio fatalem necessitatem dominari negat usque quaque, siquidem praedictio rationabilis sit aestimatio sortis futurae, quae non in rebus certis et necessitate constrictis, sed in incertis atque in ambiguis praevalet. Quis enim consulat praesagum de recens nato, utrum mortalis an immortalis futurus sit? Sed illud potius, quod est dubium, quaeri solet, quam prolixa vitae spatia sortitus esse videatur et utrum dives an pauper elataque an plebeia sit atque humili fortuna futurus. Quae cuncta observatione scientia, artificiosa quoque sollertia colliguntur: aut enim alitum volatu aut extis aut oraculis homines praemonentur praedicente aliquo propitio daemone, qui sit eorum omnium quae deinceps sequuntur scius, perinde ut si medicus iuxta disciplinam medendi praedicat vel exitium vel sanitatem aut etiam gubernator caeli condicionum non ignarus ex aliqua nubecula praenuntiet tempestatem futuram; quae cuncta non fato sed artificiosis rationibus usuque et experientia comprehenduntur.

186. Aequae cum ex motu siderum praedictio habetur, signa observari solent ortusque et obitus stellarum et conformationes ad rationem redactae iuxta quam fertilitas sterilitasque provenit; omnisque huius modi ratio nihil est aliud quam coniectura rerum earum quae vel ad corpus pertinent vel ad ea quae corporis propria sunt vel ad animam satis corpori seruientem. Vnde opinor Platonem animarum quidem exaedificationi deum opificem praefuisse dicere, eorum vero quae animis subtexuntur aliis divinis potestatibus inferioribus munus atque officium esse mandatum, ita ut purae quidem animae sinceraeque et vigentes florentesque rationibus a deo factae sint, vitiosarum vero partium eius auctores habeantur hae potestates quibus ab opifice deo talis cura mandata sit.

187. Vitiosae porro partes animi quae subtexuntur, **<id> est ira** et cupiditas, satis idonea vitae agenda instrumenta. Multa quippe sunt quae per virilem animi commotionem recte in hac vita fiunt et vindicantur, quotiens iusta iracundia comitem se et auxiliatricem rationi praebet, multa etiam ex cupiditate honesta vel mediocri praeter libidinum sordes. Sicut ergo purae mundi animae regnum in perpetua mundi agitatione permissum est, ita his animis quae homines inspirant opus fuit ratione iracundia et cupiditatibus interpolata, ut, cum quidem se ad rationem totum animal convertisset, curaret, intueretur etiam caelestia, cum vero ad terrena despiceret, despectus aequae ne esset otiosus, sed ex eadem inclinatione cura rerum terrestrium nasceretur.

<> ego suppl. || est ira tr. ego : i. e. codd., edd.

188. Vt igitur brevi multa complectar, istius rei dispositio talis mente concipienda est: originem quidem rerum ex qua ceteris omnibus quae sunt substantia ministratur esse summum et ineffabilem deum; post quem providentiam eius secundum deum, latorem legis utriusque vitae tam aeternae quam temporariae; tertiam porro esse substantiam quae secunda mens intellectusque dicitur, quasi quaedam custos legis aeternae; his subiectas fore rationabiles animas legi obsequentes; ministras vero potestates naturam fortunam casum et daemones inspectatores speculatoresque meritorum. Ergo summus deus iubet, secundus ordinat, tertius intimat, animae vero lege agunt.

189. Lex porro ipsum fatum est, ut saepe diximus. Cui legi qui pareat sequaturque principis dei veneranda vestigia, beatam semper vitam agit iuxta legis perpetuae sanctionem, quod est iuxta fatum; at vero quae dei comitatum animae neglexerint, rursus et ipsae alio quodam contrarioque genere secundum fatum vitam exigunt, donec paeniteat eas delictorum suorum expiatisque criminibus deinceps ad immortalis dei et aeternarum divinarum potestatum choros revertantur et ille legis rigor ex deteriore fortuna transitum fieri sinat ad beatam, quod fieri certe non posset, si omnia constricta essent uniformi quadam et rigida atque inrevocabili necessitate. Ex quo apparet providentiam quidem omnia intra se circumplexam tenere, quippe omnia quae secundum eandem recte administrantur; at vero fatum providentiae scitum est, continet autem ea quae sunt in nostra potestate ut praecedentia, continet etiam meritorum collocationem. Sequuntur animaduersio et approbatio, quae sunt fatalia, eaque omnia quae casu fortunave fiunt.

190. Quid igitur sibi voluit tractatus huius tam larga prolixitas? Quia multi nulla cura veri sciendi, sed potius veris rationibus renitendi et ipsi falluntur et ceteros in erroris ineluctabilis implicant lubrico, quippe qui ad unam aliquam partem mundanae administrationis respicientes tamquam de solida atque universa dispensatione pronuntiant, quodque in una parte invenerint, id esse in omnibus quoque mundi partibus asseverant; proptereaque, cum aliquid verum dicunt, veri similes habentur, quamvis compugnancia invicem dicant, cum autem de parte sentientes perinde habent, tamquam de solido universoque sentiant, redarguuntur invicem. Namque fato quaedam agi verum est, et quod quaedam in nostra potestate sint, hoc quoque verum esse monstratum est. Quare qui omnia fato fieri dicunt, merito reprehenduntur ab his qui probant esse aliquid in nostra potestate, demum qui omnia in nostra potestate constituunt nec quicquam fato relinquunt, falli deteguntur; quis enim ignoret esse aliquid in fato et extra nostrum ius? Sola igitur vera illa ratio est fixaque et stabilis sententia, quae docet quaedam fato fieri, alia porro ex hominum arbitrio et voluntate proficisci.

Introduction

Few works of philosophy or literature have enjoyed the enduring prestige of the *Timaeus*, the dialogue in which Plato sets out to provide a rational account, cast in the form of a cosmological “myth,” of the universe and humankind. The first commentary was written by Plato’s student, Crantor (†276/5 BCE),¹ and others followed over the course of the centuries leading up to Porphyry (†301/5 CE) and Iamblichus (†ca. 327), after whom, most likely, Calcidius entered the picture. The influence of the *Timaeus* was not restricted to those working within the Academy, for reactions to the dialogue are immediately evident in Aristotle and Theophrastus, and of the Hellenistic schools the Stoics in particular absorbed and modified its doctrines before handing them back again to Platonists and Peripatetics of the imperial period. The *Timaeus* formally entered Rome with Cicero’s Latin version, which was certainly consulted by Boethius (†523/5) but appears to have been overlooked by or unknown to Calcidius.² Of ancient commentaries, only those of Plutarch (†ca. 125 CE),³ Calcidius, and Proclus (†485) survive; and since Boethius did not live to translate or comment upon any of the Platonic dialogues, it fell to Calcidius to carry the torch in the West until the arrival of Henricus Aristippus in the twelfth century and Marsilio Ficino in the fifteenth. It so happened that Calcidius’ influence spanned the course of a millennium, reaching across virtually the whole of Europe.

And yet Calcidius in many ways remains an enigmatic phantom. Nothing is known of him apart from the little that can be gleaned from his work and its dedicatee.⁴ The spelling of his

¹ Crantor’s work was probably unlike known late antique commentaries, which themselves vary widely in method and principles of organization; it may have been a series of interpretations which were later quoted and (or) compiled by others.

² Boethius, *In Ciceronis topica* 3.5.27, 1092d; Bakhouche, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 120-4.

³ A non-lemmatized essay interpreting *Timaeus* 35a-36b.

⁴ *RE* III.2, 2042-3, VIII.2, 2493; *PLRE* I, pp. 172-3; 1019; II, p. 572; Courcelle, “Ambroise de Milan;” Waszink, ed. *Calcidius*², pp. ix-xvii; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, pp. 401-8; Gersh, *Middle*

name is uncertain, some manuscripts favoring “Chalcidius” over the unaspirated “Calcidius,”⁵ but both suggesting a Greek derivation of some sort (possibly “Chalceus”). The dates of Calcidius’ birth and death are also unknown, and the evidence for his *floruit* essentially boils down to inferences drawn on the basis of his use of earlier sources and later uses of him. Thus an allusion to Origen’s Genesis commentary in c. 276 furnishes a *terminus post quem* of ca. 235,⁶ while a borrowing in Favonius Eulogius’ *Disputatio de Somnio Scipionis* sets the *terminus ante quem* at ca. 410.⁷ It is therefore minimally certain that Calcidius’ translation and commentary were written sometime between ca. 235 and ca. 410, and our Calcidius cannot be the same as the grammarian to whom Fulgentius dedicated his *Expositio sermonum antiquorum* in the late fifth or early sixth century.⁸ For further indications of chronology we must turn first to the question of Calcidius’ dedicatee.

Calcidius translated and commented on Plato’s *Timaeus* at the request of a certain Osius (Hosius, Ossius), the evidence for whom could point to as many as five different individuals.⁹ Most prominent among them was ...

Platonism and Neoplatonism, pp. 421-5; Moreschini, ed. *Calcidio*, pp. xii-xvi; Dutton, “Medieval Approaches,” pp. 184-8; Bakhouche, ed. *Calcidius*, p. 7-13.

⁵ Compare “Chrysippus” (cc. 144, 220, 290) and “Chaldaeorum” (c. 126) with “Acyles” (*Achylés*, c. 276). The Greek orthography of the manuscripts is generally difficult to assess. It seems noteworthy, for example, that *philosophia* (*Timaeus* 20a, 47b, c. 265, etc.), *phantasia* (c. 156), and *phasis*, (c. 239) render the *phi* whereas *pthongi* (*phthongoi*, c. 44) and *Pthia* (*Phthia*, c. 254) do not, presumably because of the *theta*. Was that Calcidius’ decision, or does it stem from a later editor or scribe? At any rate, efforts to preserve the original Greek characters are evidently exceptional, as in the case of the A(I)ΔH(N), c. 134.

⁶ Köckert, *Christliche Kosmologie*, p. 225 (dating the commentary to the early 230s). That Calcidius worked directly from Origen’s commentary has been doubted, but the point is moot insofar as the *terminus post quem*, as we shall see, falls well after Origen’s death in 253/4.

⁷ Dorfbauer, “Favonius Eulogius,” pp. 383, n. 16, 394 (dating the *Disputatio* to ca. 410-420, possibly as early as the 380s); Bakhouche, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 48-53.

⁸ Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, p. 250.

⁹ Assuming Osius was not a fiction contrived by Calcidius (Ratkowitsch, “Die Timaios-Übersetzung,” p. 141).

OSIVS 1. ... the bishop of Córdoba (ca. 257-359) who served as an ecclesiastical adviser to Constantine and participated in, among others, the Council of Nicea (325) and Synod of Sardica (343-4).

After whom there follow possibly four others:

OSIVS 2. An undated funerary inscription from Milan points to the existence of an Osius who was a Christian of patrician rank and served as *comes rerum privatarum* and *comes sacrarum largitionum* (CIL V.6253); if he is the same as ...

OSIVS 3. ... Hosius the *comes sacrarum largitionum* mentioned at *Theodosian Code* 6.30.13, then he was active in Constantinople in November of 395.

OSIVS 4. The *Theodosian Code* also informs us of a Hosius who served as *magister officiorum* in Constantinople between January of 396 and December of 398 (6.26.6; 6.27.7-9; 10.22.4).

OSIVS 5. Claudian speaks of a Hosius who was allied with Eutropius in the suppression of the Tribigild revolt of 399; he was evidently an erstwhile slave and cook of Spanish origin (*In Eutropium* 2.342-53).

The evidence is obviously incohesive, dividing between the earlier (OSIVS 1) and late (OSIVS 2-5) fourth century, and between two attested Christians (OSIVS 1-2) and possibly three individuals whose religious affiliations are unknown (OSIVS 3-5); to complicate matters, scholars have sometimes formed different combinations from the evidence for OSIVS 2-5. OSIVS 1 was for some time rejected on grounds of both Isidore of Seville's silence about Calcidius and stylistic traits thought to indicate a later date of composition; but recently identified echoes in Isidore's *De natura rerum* give the lie to the *argumentum ex silentio*,¹⁰ and Calcidius' Latin is in any case so idiosyncratic that efforts at dating on the basis of stylistic criteria seem destined only to result

¹⁰ Bakhouché, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 54-5.

in question-begging. OSIVS 5, by contrast, has generally been rejected on grounds of the presumed improbability of such a person having the literary, philosophical, and indeed moral credentials required for the commissioning of a work such as Calcidius'; but given the overtly tendentious nature of Claudian's portrait any such assumption seems equally destined to result in question-begging. The attractiveness of OSIVS 1 and 2 has in certain cases depended upon latent assumptions concerning Calcidius' own religious affiliation, a related bias being evident in those medieval scribes who on the basis of a presumed association with OSIVS 1 conferred the rank of (arch-)deacon upon Calcidius himself. Finally, it should be borne in mind that the evidence is probably incomplete, in that there almost certainly existed other Osii for whom no independent testimony has survived. In the event, the sole point of certainty is that our Osius, to judge from the manner in which Calcidius expressly addresses him, was a Christian.

Was then Calcidius a Christian as well?¹¹ He neither proclaims himself one nor professes or appeals to any article of faith such as the Trinity, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, or baptism; and indeed, the term "Christian" is conspicuous only for its complete absence from his work, especially those passages wherein he addresses Osius. To explain the silence on the grounds that his task was to elucidate Platonic cosmology rather than to expound the Christian view of creation is merely to shift the burden of proof over to those who insist on his Christianity. But when Calcidius quotes the story of the Magi at Osius, we can hardly fail to notice the respectful but distancing effect of his transitional phrase ("there is as well another recorded tale, one more holy and venerable") and his setting the Magi alongside an Egyptian Homer and conferring Chaldean citizenship upon them (c. 126). And when he observes that it

¹¹ On this question, see (among others) Ratkowitsch, "Die Timaios-Übersetzung;" Reydam-Schils, "Calcidius Christianus?" [to confirm]; Moreschini, *Calcidio*, pp. xxxi-xxxix; Bakhouche, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 42-4.

should not worry “us” that there are wicked angels, since some, “as you [Osius] know perfectly well, [are] minions of the adverse power” (c. 133), he is no more identifying himself as a Christian than he is laying claim to a linguistic or ethnic identity when he points out that “we” use the Latin term *competens* whereas the Greeks use *analogia* (c. 16): the one is a rhetorical concession to his dedicatee, the other to readers whose access to the *Timaeus* is restricted to his Latin translation and commentary. Moreover, a rigidly literal interpretation of the “we” in c. 16 and other passages that similarly explain points of translation would in principle mean reading an absurd insinuation of Roman identity into Calcidius’ having *Plato* explain at *Timaeus* 36a-b how “the Greeks” refer to certain harmonic proportions and letters of the alphabet. Finally, a possible allusion to the Gospels in c. 219 evidently functions as a kind of *captatio benevolentiae* to undercut a point of “Hebrew” doctrine with which Calcidius disagrees and anticipates that his Christian patron Osius will reject as well; in other words, the passage shows Calcidius seeking common ground between Platonist and Christian in a polemical context.

If Calcidius expresses no bias in favor of Christianity, then it is equally true that he evinces no hostility toward it, and with that observation the interpretative difficulties begin. J.H. Waszink, for example, drew attention to a possible echo of the language of the Nicene Creed in c. 23 but at the same time understood that Calcidius’ thought points in the direction of Aristotle and the Peripatetic tradition. Similarly, although a Christian nuance has been read into the reference in c. 132 to god as the “preserver” (*conservator*) of the world, since Calcidius is there emphasizing a point of universal agreement some allowance has to be made for the ecumenical tone he adopts, especially insofar as the underlying philosophical concern comports with that of a Platonic Demiurge who in his ungrudging and providential ordering of the world guarantees

the conditions upon which its inhabitants must rely for their well-being.¹² Calcidius speaks throughout of the “craftsman god” (*deus opifex*) or Demiurge but avoids the expression “creator god” (“god the creator”), referring only to the “creator of things” (*rerum creator*) at *Timaeus* 42e (c. 146) and to “god, the creator and preserver of all things” in c. 132 (*creator omnium et conservator deus*).¹³ His avoidance of the expression is all the more noteworthy given his ready use of the verb “to create” (*creare*) in the weaker sense of “to give rise to” at *Timaeus* 49c (air giving rise to fire), in c. 79 (an astronomical phenomenon giving rise to divergent interpretations), and so on. In general, Calcidius develops a metaphorical reading of Plato’s dialogue (c. 138), taking the priority of soul over body to be causal rather than temporal (cc. 23, 263), explaining the Demiurge as a literary device to help readers past the apparent contradiction between the concepts of generation and eternity (c. 26), and siding, in response to the “Hebrew” doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (cc. 276-8), with a Demiurge who “sternly persuaded” pre-cosmic matter to submit to “ordering and adornment” (c. 300). Of course, these observations do not amount to proof that Calcidius was not a Christian, but they do underscore the difficulty of extracting the conclusion from the passages most often adduced in support of the claim that he was. His openness to Christianity, insofar as it figures at all in his work, is probably a sign, not of any concern to avoid biting the hand that feeds him (Osius), but of his genuinely viewing it, along with Moses, “the Hebrews,” “Scripture,” and Philo, as forming part of the wisdom tradition that for the most part populates his doxographies with Greek philosophers. In this sense, Calcidius seems a kindred spirit of both the Platonist Numenius (mid-2nd c. CE), who, according to Clement of Alexandria (†ca. 215), famously described Plato as an “Atticizing

¹² *Timaeus* 29e-30b, 33a, 36e, 37d.

¹³ See Reydams-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence*, p. 23.

Moses,” and Clement himself, who took a serious interest in the Pythagorean, Platonic, and related traditions.¹⁴

As mentioned above, Calcidius’ name may be of Greek derivation, and there are scattered throughout his work linguistic peculiarities which suggest that he may actually have been a native speaker of Greek rather than Latin. Signs of possible Greek interference¹⁵ are detectable, for example, in his use of *decem et sex* and *decem et octo* for the numbers 16 and 18 (cc. 42-3, 46),¹⁶ in his epexegetical coupling of the Latin *arx* (“citadel”) with *origo* (“origin,” or Greek *archê*, c. 26), in his translating in an astronomical context the Greek adjective *polloí* (“many”) with the Latin noun *poli* (“poles,” c. 69) rather than *multi*, or the Greek preposition *peri* (“around”) with the Latin *per* (“through,” cc. 85, 93) rather than *circum*, and in his use of a pleonastic *-que et* combination reminiscent of the Greek connectives *te kai*.¹⁷ Calcidius frequently refers to Plato with the lone demonstrative *idem* (“the same”) or *ipse* (“himself”), as though he were reaching for the Greek *autos* in the absence of a Latin definite article;¹⁸ on one occasion he forgets to adjust for that absence, translating the elliptical Greek phrase, “the [planet] of Venus” (*ho de tês Aphroditês ... aphisamenos*), with a genitive that does not construe with a participle in the nominative (*Veneris ... discedens*, c. 70). On another occasion he evidently

¹⁴ Numenius, fr. 8 des Places; Notes to the Translation, c. 126.

¹⁵ The imposition of Greek “morphemes, sounds, or syntactic structures” (Adams, *Bilingualism*, pp. 19-27).

¹⁶ That it, he may be analytically “translating” Greek signs for the numbers 16 (ις´) and 18 (ιη´). There is inscriptional evidence for the transposed additive forms with connecting *et* (LHS I.487, §378), and (*trecentorum*) *decem et octo* (Greek *dekaoktô*) appears in Dionysius Exiguus’ translation of the first Canon of the first Council of Constantinople (381). Calcidius also uses the untransposed additive form for the number 16 (*sedecim*, cc. 16, 49) but never the subtractive form for 18 (*duodeviginti*).

¹⁷ Thus *Timaeus* 40c (*reditusque et anfractus* [Greek *kai*]), c. 151 (*iudiciumque et consensus*), c. 172 (*intemperantiamque et castitatem*), c. 183 (*iracundiaque et item ratio*), etc.; see further LHS II.523-4 (§287).

¹⁸ See Notes to the Translation, c. 31.

writes the Latin *ratio* (“reason”) while thinking the Greek *logos* and so forgets to convert the corresponding adjective (*libidinosus*) to the feminine gender (c. 175). Similarly, he renders Greek genitives of comparison and difference (cc. 68, 286) and an instrumental dative (cc. 130, 204) without converting to the Latin ablative case, employs the conjunction *ut* as though it were a declarative Greek *hōs* (cc. 26, 110, 179, 228), constructs consecutive clauses with verbs in the infinitive mood (cc. 215, 219, 224), and occasionally writes in what appears to be a distinctively Greek idiom (c. 211).

Some of these symptoms appear too deeply rooted in Calcidius’ syntax to be the products of a later editor or scribe. Such would appear to be the case, for example, with the consecutive clauses mentioned above, two of which are tangled syntactic hybrids expressing result in both the subjunctive and infinitive moods (cc. 215, 224). What necessity could there possibly be to the assumption that an editor or scribe forced the infinitives upon perfectly acceptable subjunctives originally penned by Calcidius himself? Similarly, in order to explain as later errors the genitive *Veneris* in c. 70, the genitive of comparison in c. 68, or the genitive of difference in c. 286, it would be necessary to assume that the putative editor or scribe forced a false Greek syntax upon the Latin while following precisely the same Greek sources as those Calcidius had copied from. But this assumption too violates any rational principle of economy: *Graeculi non multiplicentur praeter necessitatem*. Some of the symptoms, it will perhaps be objected, demonstrate that Calcidius’ command of Greek was in fact *weak*. Might not, for example, the genitive of comparison in c. 68 be an indication of his failing to grasp the astronomical phenomenon at issue and mindlessly aping Theon precisely because he had too little Greek to understand Theon? —Perhaps, but no such assumption will explain the genitive of difference in c. 286, wherein Calcidius paraphrases Aristotle in a viable but altered *Greek*

syntax. The latter, along with a multitude of passages in which Calcidius' language threatens to spin out of control independently of any discernible Greek interference, suggests that it was the Latin rather than Greek side of his mind that faltered in c. 68.

If these considerations support the suggestion that Calcidius essentially thought in Greek rather than Latin, they nevertheless fail to specify a geographical point of origin or ethnic identity for him. For although the name "Calcidius" has sometimes been thought to suggest a connection with Chalcis in Euboea, Euboean Chalcidians evidently colonized widely from a very early date, and given especially that there was in any case more than one ancient city of Chalcis, the name in itself seems no more likely to point to Euboea than to Sicily or any number of other regions.¹⁹ In the end, and barring the emergence of new evidence, there appears to be little or no possibility of our knowing where Calcidius was born or raised. The question of where he was educated is equally difficult to address. Homer (cc. 93, 125, 154, 183, 266, 280), Hesiod (cc. 123, 134), Euripides (cc. 153, 183), Alexander Polyhistor (c. 72), Terence (c. 184), and Virgil (cc. 66, 260, 325, 352-3) form the list of poets whom he quotes, paraphrases, or echoes,²⁰ with Isocrates²¹ and Cicero (c. 266)²² putting in cameo appearances on behalf of oratory. The longest poetic quotation is unmistakably derivative, consisting of ten lines²³ of Alexander copied from either Theon of Smyrna or Theon's source, the Peripatetic Adrastus; Homer and Euripides make two back-to-back showings in contexts that may point to Chrysippus as an intermediate source; Terence looks as though he has been brought in as a Roman "school author" to balance the Euripides quoted immediately before him; Virgil, obliquely referred to as "the poet" or "poets,"

¹⁹ The grammarian (Calcidius) mentioned above (p. 000) evidently hailed from North African.

²⁰ A partial hexameter of unknown origin (c. 266) and Empedocles (or "Pythagoras," cc. 51, 136, 197, 218) are left out of consideration here.

²¹ In the Dedicatory Epistle.

²² The comment on Cicero in c. 27 is probably derivative and involves no quotation.

²³ A third of Calcidius' strictly poetic (non-philosophical) quotations.

is quoted only once but generates a number of subtler echoes; and Isocrates launches Calcidius' work with a brief exhortation to virtue, while Cicero is made to cap a brief catalogue of Greeks extending from Homer to the Stoics. The fact that Greeks here outnumber Romans undoubtedly has something to do with the array of sources employed by Calcidius, on which more will be said presently, but it can be stated generally that his patterns of citation suggest some process of grafting limited quantities of Terence, Cicero, and Virgil onto Greek sources which themselves occasionally quoted from poets. This evidence may well be thought to depict a man of rather shallow and narrow literary culture, but it should probably be pointed out that Calcidius at least proves himself capable of composing some decent iambic and dactylic Latin verse for his Greek poets and philosophers.²⁴

Plato's *Timaeus* consists of four parts, an introduction and prelude to Timaeus' cosmological "myth" (17a-29d), Timaeus' discussion of the works of Reason (29d-47e), his account of the works of Necessity (47e-69a), and his explanation of the works of both Reason and Necessity (69a-92c). Calcidius translated but did not comment upon 17a-31c, deliberately restricting attention to those parts of the dialogue that require detailed technical analysis (cc. 3-6). The extant translation and commentary fall into two parts each, with the commentary in turn embracing thirteen thematically defined tracts,²⁵ as itemized by Calcidius in c. 7:

I. *Timaeus* 31c-39e:

1. On the Generation of the World (cc. 8-25)
2. On the Origin of Soul (cc. 26-39)
3. On Harmonic Modulation (cc. 40-5)
4. On Numbers (cc. 46-55)

²⁴ For a broader perspective on the question of Greek literature in the Latin West of the fourth and fifth centuries, see Cameron, *Last Pagans* (ch. 15), and Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers*.

²⁵ Latin *tractatus*, the term used in reference to the indexed titles (cc. 26, 31, 74, 97, 236, 268-9, 273, 337), to introduce a long excursus within no. 5 (c. 59), and to frame a sub-treatise within no. 7 (cc. 142, 190).

5. On the Fixed Stars and Planets (cc. 56-97)
6. On the Heaven (cc. 98-118)

II. *Timaeus* 39e-53c:

7. On the Four Kinds of Living Beings (cc. 119-201)
8. On the Origin of Mankind (cc. 202-7)
9. Why Human Beings are Wise or Unwise (cc. 208-35)
10. On Vision (cc. 236-48)
11. On Images (cc. 249-63)
12. Praise of Vision (cc. 264-7)
13. On Matter (cc. 268-355).

Calcidius goes on to list fourteen others that form no part of our extant text. The fact that both the translation and commentary trail off precisely at *Timaeus* 53c3 (*perspicuo*), along with what appears to be a final echo (c. 355) of the emphasis laid on the mathematical sciences at the beginning of the commentary (c. 2), suggests that the extension of the transmitted text is not the result of chance survival. Whether the remaining portions of translation and commentary perished or were never written cannot be ascertained, although Calcidius' reference, in the Dedicatory Epistle, to his sending Osius a "taste" of the "first parts" (*primas partes*) of the *Timaeus*, which presumably targets the division (*Pars Secunda*) at both *Timaeus* 39e and c. 119 of the commentary, indicates that our text was planned as, and may actually have formed, part of a larger project.²⁶ Some manuscripts favor the disposition that has been adopted for this and other editions, but the majority sequence the associated portions of translation and commentary, as probably in the original disposition.²⁷ Most significant are the implications of the broader architecture of the work, for in setting the divide at *Timaeus* 39e rather than 47e (c. 268) Calcidius shifts the emphasis from Reason and Necessity to the universe (macrocosm) and our place within it (microcosm); at the same time, he structures the first part of the commentary (cc.

²⁶ A citation of *Timaeus* 67c(-e) in c. 244 indicates that Calcidius read beyond 53c.

²⁷ Bakhouché, ed. *Calcidius*, p. 77.

8-118) along the lines of what after Boethius would come to be known as the “quadrivial” arts of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy,²⁸ which in c. 355 are described as the foundations of a liberal education and the first stages in the ascent to Philosophy.

Calcidius’ is thus a lemmatized commentary punctuated by a series of thematically defined tracts.²⁹ Points of articulation within the series remain conjectural insofar the thirteen titles evidently dropped out of the archetype and were first reinstated only by Wrobel in 1876.³⁰ Nos. 5, 7, and 13 together comprise more than 60% of the commentary.³¹ Nos. 2-5 serve in large part as an envelope for extensive borrowing from a single non-Platonic source which cuts a trajectory across the specified themes, whereas No. 7 exhibits just the opposite pattern, serving as an envelope for an excursus on demons (cc. 127-36) followed by a sub-treatise on fate (cc. 142-90), each of which brings a new source into play. The separate patterns displayed by nos. 2-5 and no. 7 demonstrate that the division of the commentary into tracts must, in Calcidius’ mind, have been logically prior to the sources he used, although at different levels one consideration must also have influenced the other.

Although readers encountering Calcidius for the first time are likely to be impressed by his command of the full sweep of Greek philosophy from Thales in the sixth (cc. 280, 325, 332) through Chrysippus in the third (cc. 144, 220, 290) century BCE, repeated readings will eventually give rise to the suspicion that many of the wares it has on offer are not only second-

²⁸ Thus cc. 9 (arithmetical proof), 10 (geometrical proofs), 32 (geometry, arithmetic, harmonic theory), 46 (musical, numerical concordance), 59 (astronomy); see also Notes to the Translation, c. 2.

²⁹ With periodic remarks to signal the shift from general theory to exegesis of the text (cc. 91, 138, 321). Certain chapters alter the approach by blending text and commentary in a manner reminiscent of the Themistian paraphrases (e.g., cc. 263, 334).

³⁰ If Bakhouché’s stemma is correct (see Note on the Text), they may have fallen out at an earlier stage (see Note on the Text).

³¹ And account for 50% of the *Timaeus* actually commented on.

hand but damaged.³² Pythagoras and Pythagoreans dominate the first part of the commentary for the simple reason that they are what Calcidius found mentioned in his main source, Theon or Adrastus.³³ The second part of the commentary displays a more varied array of citations and allusions. In some cases philosophers or schools cluster within a chapter, suggesting a doxographical tradition of some sort,³⁴ whereas in others multiple chapters cluster around a philosopher or school, suggesting either direct access to the relevant material³⁵ or reliance upon some kind of biographical tradition.³⁶ Certain chapters excerpted from Plato and Aristotle appear to have been translated directly from the relevant works,³⁷ but others leave room for doubt. In c. 168, for example, Calcidius paraphrases a passage of the *Theages* which he goes on to quote in c. 255, where, however, he erroneously references the *Euthydemus*. Did he actually check the *Theages* twice and yet mistake its title the second time around or did he merely repeat what he found in a misguided intermediary? In the event, we have to reckon, even in the cases of Plato and Aristotle, with the likelihood of Calcidius' periodic reliance upon school traditions that had pre-packaged material for him.³⁸ The point is underscored by c. 158, which consists of observations based on Aristotle but also echoed by later sources: Calcidius sets the chapter in motion with a "he says" (*dicit*) that has no stated or implied subject, as though he were copying some pre-digested Aristotle from an intermediate source without remembering to fit it to context.

³² For general introductions to the question of Calcidius' sources see Waszink, ed. *Calcidius*², pp. xxxv-cvi, and Bakhouché, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 34-41.

³³ See Notes to the Translation, cc. 35-91.

³⁴ For example, cc. 203, 215, 220, 246, 266, 279-81.

³⁵ So Aristotle (cc. 283-8) and Numenius (cc. 295-9).

³⁶ So the Stoics, including Zeno and Chrysippus (c. 290-4).

³⁷ See cc. 57 (*Phaedrus*), 253 (*Republic*), and 286 (*Physics*).

³⁸ Note in this connection his observations on discordant Platonists (c. 301), the Peripatetics (cc. 223, 238), and earlier and later generations within schools (cc. 243, 246, 252).

To judge from the list of figures actually named by Calcidius, Greek philosophy began with Thales, came to a halt with Chrysippus, then resumed with Numenius (cc. 295-9) in the mid-second century CE. After Numenius, a deafening silence descends upon the commentary, for Calcidius never utters a word about Plotinus, Porphyry, or Iamblichus. Any *argumentum ex silentio* will of course be undercut by his uncredited borrowings from Theon (or Adrastus) and Alcinous, while any attempt to explain his silence on grounds of chronology obviously begs the question; which leaves us in the position of having to weigh probabilities. Plotinian echoes are few and so general as to be indistinguishable from information that might have been drawn instead from a later intermediary.³⁹ Porphyry for some time exerted a magnetic effect within the scholarship, attracting particular attention wherever evidence for known or probable sources left only a vacuum. Thus J.H. Waszink, followed by J. den Boeft and J.C.M. van Winden, championed the view that significant portions of Calcidius' commentary could with good probability be traced back to Porphyry,⁴⁰ the general perspective being brought into sharp relief when A.R. Sodano adopted long stretches as evidence for "uncertain" fragments of Porphyry's lost *Timaeus* commentary.⁴¹ A mood of doubt gradually set in thereafter, however, with the result that many scholars now look upon the question with some caution.⁴²

At least two chapters of Calcidius' commentary contain clearly discernible traces of Porphyrian doctrine (cc. 198, 301), and although neither projects the level of specificity needed

³⁹ See Notes to the Translation, cc. 176, 252, 301.

⁴⁰ Waszink, ed. *Calcidius*², pp. xc-xcv (and throughout); den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate*, pp. 132-7; *Calcidius on Demons*, pp. 57-61; van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter*, pp. 246-7.

⁴¹ Sodano, who worked in the immediate wake of Waszink's original edition (1962), constructs the fragments as follows: cc. 129-36 (fr. 84, on demons); cc. 142-90 (fr. 85, on fate); cc. 227-35 (fr. 86, on *Timaeus* 44d-45b); cc. 244-8 (fr. 87, on 45b-e); cc. 249, 253-6 (fr. 88, on 45e-46a); cc. 257-9 (fr. 89, on 46a-b); cc. 260-3 (fr. 90, on 46c-e); cc. 264-7 (fr. 91, on 46e-47d). A. Smith's edition of the Porphyrian fragments adds only a further piece of evidence from Philoponus.

⁴² For example, Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism*, pp. 431-2; Moreschini, ed. *Calcidio*, pp. xxiv-xxx; Bakhouché, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 38-9.

to motivate the conclusion that Calcidius had direct access to a copy of Porphyry, they nevertheless serve to push the *terminus post quem* for Calcidius' *floruit* up into the early fourth century. The question of Calcidius' knowledge of or access to Iamblichus proves more elusive. It has been suggested that his reference in c. 272 to the *Timaeus* as a treatise of natural philosophy and to the *Parmenides* as an "epoptic" treatise echoes a distinction that may have originated with Iamblichus; but any such echo is at best indistinct, since Iamblichus is reported only to have claimed that the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides* embrace the whole of Plato's doctrine, while Alcinous had already classified the *Timaeus* as a work of natural philosophy and Theon of Smyrna had referenced *epopteia* or religious initiation in connection with the Platonic Ideas just as Calcidius does.⁴³ Thus c. 272 establishes no direct or necessary connection with Iamblichus, but if it in any way reflects his differentiated explanation of the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*, then it also moves Calcidius' *terminus post quem* further ahead, into the second quarter fourth century. In general, however, Calcidius must be said to fall outside the scope of any interpretation based on an organic or developmental account of the history of "Middle-" and "Neoplatonism." His identification of the Platonic Receptacle with Matter obviously reflects a Peripatetic tradition that had significantly altered perspectives on the *Timaeus*, and he carves metaphysical principles up in ways that make it difficult to determine whether his primary points of reference are Numenius, Alcinous, and Apuleius in the second century CE or Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus in the third and fourth.

⁴³ See Waszink, ed. *Calcidius*², pp. xcvi-xcviii; den Boeft, *Calcidius on Demons*, pp. 12-3, n. 4; Bakhouché, ed. *Calcidius*, pp. 835-6, n. 876, also pp. 729-30, n. 51.