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CHAPTER 6

Misleading and Unclear to the Many: Allegory in the Derveni Papyrus and the Orphic Theogony of Hieronymus

Radcliffe G. Edmonds III

1 Introduction

This verse has been made misleading and it is unclear to the many, but to those who understand correctly it is clear that Oceanus is the air and air is Zeus.1

This rather surprising claim is only one of the many allegorical interpretations made by the unknown author of the Derveni Papyrus in his explanation of a poem of Orpheus. The discovery and publication of the Derveni Papyrus has, among other things, fuelled a new interest in the history of allegorical interpretation in the Greek philosophical and religious traditions. When the papyrus was first uncovered, scholars often sneered at the peculiar interpretations provided by the Derveni Author (henceforth DA), but recent studies have taken the DA more seriously as a thinker, trying to understand the context in which these interpretations could be offered. The problem of context is, of course, endemic to the study of the Orphica, since the fragments of poetry attributed to Orpheus are inevitably out of context. Such absence of context is particularly the case for the references in the Neoplatonic philosophers, such as Damascius' references to earlier Orphic theogonies, the Rhapsodies and the ones in the accounts of Eudemus and Hieronymus, which provide only tantalising hints at several removes from the actual poems. It is even true, however, for the most complete Orphic text that survives, the remains of the papyrus burned on a funeral pyre of an aristocratic warrior near Derveni in Thessaly sometime in the late fourth century. The archaeological context provides only a rough date for the tomb; it remains unclear when the papyrus was composed, by whom, for whom, or even why it was included on the pyre.2

Scholars have, for the most part, focused upon the content of the treatise in the Derveni Papyrus, trying to reconstruct the underlying cosmology of the DA, who shows no sign of Platonic influence but a great deal of influence from Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, and other so-called pre-Socratic philosophers.3 Some of the ideas and exegetical techniques have, however, recently prompted some scholars to consider a Stoic context for the treatise. I suggest that an examination of the use of allegory in the Derveni Papyrus can help fill in the missing context for the treatise, showing that the DA is a ritual practitioner in the age of Euripides, rather than a scholar of the Stoic school. By contrast, an examination of the presence of allegory in the Orphic theogony associated with Hieronymus and Hellanicus can contextualise the source of that account, showing it to be a product of Peripatetic systematising of sophistic allegoresis, rather than a much later account deriving from a Stoic allegorical reworking of an earlier Orphic poem. Attention to the ways in which allegory is used in these two texts illuminates the two differing contexts, neither Stoic, that give rise to these accounts. The scholastic way in which allegory is treated in the Peripatetic accounts highlights, through the contrast, the agonistic way in which the DA employs his allegories, and a better understanding of these two contexts sophistic contestation and Peripatetic systematisation—provides a better grasp of the ways allegory was used before the Stoics, as well as a clearer understanding of the way in which Orphic poems were received in the Classical period.

1 PDerV. col. XXIII 1–3: τὸ τοῦ ἐπος παραγωγὸν πεποίηται καὶ τοῖς μὲν, τοῖς δὲ ἀράδους γνώσκομαι, ἕστημεν ὅτι Ωκεανὸς ἦστιν ὁ ἀήρ, ἀθικὸς ἔστιν ὁ Ζεῦς.

2 Cf. the overview of the archaeological context in Kouremenos’ introduction of the KPT edition, 1–19.

2 Why Use Allegory?

Scholars have explained the DA’s striking use of allegory in radically different ways, providing widely varying pictures of the DA and his religious and philosophical background. At one extreme are those who argue that the DA’s explanations of the traditional gods in terms of physical theories mark him as what the ancients labelled an “atheist,” someone who attacks the traditional religious beliefs. According to Janko, the DA is a product of post-Anaxagorean rationalism, using allegory to polemicise against the irrationality of traditional beliefs. The DA’s allegoresis strips away the obfuscating trappings of myth to show that the hidden meaning of the poem is the movements of particles amidst the air and fire, since “he is whole-heartedly committed to what can be called a ‘protoscientific’/naturalistic worldview and has no use for mystery cults with their obscurantist conception of the world.”

Other scholars see the DA’s allegorising as a defense of traditional religion, rather than an attack upon it. Jourdan suggests that the DA is responding to the attack by suggesting that the rationalists’ literal reading of the texts misses the profound meaning hidden within it. This “defensive” allegory draws upon the rationalist philosophers to correct the problems that the traditional myths present with their unclear and even scandalous stories, but with the aim of restoring faith in the tradition, rather than destroying it. As Laks suggests, “The overall intellectual horizon that is at work in the Derveni Papyrus could well be that of a rational Enlightenment turned against the two main forms of religious obscurantism: ethics is to ritual physics is to myth.”

While some scholars thus see the DA as defending the authority of the traditional texts through allegoresis, others suggest that he is borrowing the authority of Orpheus’ poem to support his own ideas, since he could never engage in such outrageous interpretations if Orpheus’ ideas were his primary concern. West imagines the DA as a speculative theologian providing avant-garde theology for a group of Orphic faithful, while Most and Casadio suggest that his views are so divergent from those generally associated with Orphism by modern scholars that he must be some sort of heretical Orphic, preaching his own doctrine. Allegory becomes the tool for this thinker to introduce his own innovative ideas while retaining the sanction of the traditional authorities.

Such a tactic of appropriating through allegoresis the authority of traditional myths for the development of new philosophical ideas prompts other scholars to link the DA with the Stoics, who are notorious from Cicero’s critique for precisely such activities. Plato and Aristotle certainly introduce their own philosophical and cosmological notions, but they both explicitly reject allegoresis as a legitimate means of contesting their predecessors. The Stoics,

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4 For his contemporaries, “the ultimate outrage would have been the allegory itself—the interpretation of the holy poem as a coded version of the latest physics, and the equation of God with the most basic element, Air.” Janko 2002: 3–13. Cf. Janko 2001: 2: “It is my contention that he sets out to criticize most of his contemporaries on the ground that they believed too literally in the rites and holy texts of traditional religion.”

5 Kouremenos in KPT: 52.


7 Laks 1997: 126. Cf. Laks 1997: 138: “He is, in the first place, an up to date believer in divine providence and omnipotence, and an interesting representative of a trend that could be dubbed religious secularization.”

8 Contra Laks 1997: 134–5: “We can probably forget about ‘legitimation’: it would seem somewhat perverse to picture the author of the Derveni papyrus as a natural philosopher looking for warrants in an Orphic theogony, because one would expect such warrants to be universally recognized texts (as Homer is), not marginal productions such as an Orphic theogonic poem. But ‘defence’, although it is more relevant to what the allegorist is doing, is not quite enough, if we assume, as there is every reason to believe, that the author of the Derveni papyrus was committed to the Orphic tradition in a way that one can hardly claim of Homer—unless Homer is the Neoplatonic Theologian. Does not reading Presocratic physics into an Orphic text destroy its Orphic character, which is precisely what it is supposed to defend? It would seem that we are in a quandary.” However, cf. Struck 2004: 12–4 on the problems with the dichotomy of ‘defensive’ and ‘positive’ allegory.

9 West 1997: 84: “The initiates he mentions are those of an Orphic-Bacchic cult society; the theogony is their holy book, perhaps recited in conjunction with their sacrifices. He is their learned exegete ... these cults will always have had a place for the speculative theologican who was ready to explain to the participants that their rites held mystic meanings which only the instructed could grasp (and they only for a fee).” Contrast Most 1997: 122: “He is, or would like to be, the leader of a particular grouping or sect within Orphism which considers itself Orphic and stands in opposition to non-Orphics, but at the same time distinguishes itself by its doctrine from other Orphic groups.” Casadio 1986: 290 comments: “ma un iniziato orfico ben strano e un interprete inetto o eretico doveva essere il nostro commentatore.”

by contrast, seem to have embraced allegoresis as a way of introducing ideas about the nature of the cosmos, some of which, such as the central role of fire and the providence of a single, supreme deity, resemble those put forward by the DA.

All of these scholars start with the assumption that the primary purpose of the allegoresis is to propound a religious doctrine that corresponds with a physical theory of the cosmos, even if the reconstruction of that physical theory depends on the assumptions about the religious doctrine (and vice versa). I argue to the contrary that, while the DA certainly has both religious and physical ideas, the exposition of a systematic doctrine is not the aim of the DA in the text of the papyrus. Rather, the DA is a religious practitioner trying to win clientele, and his practice of allegorical interpretation is a tactic to establish his expertise within the competitive marketplace of his times.

3 The DA as Ritual Practitioner

Since the revelation of the ritual focus in the first few columns of the Derveni Papyrus, the identity of the DA as a ritual practitioner has seemed to many scholars to be of paramount importance in explaining his use of allegorical interpretations, but most have still assumed that his physical ideas must somehow systematically provide the support for his religious practices. Obbink sees the cosmogony in the Orphic poem as part of an initiatory ritual re-establishment of cosmic order, while the DA’s allegorical interpretations become an explanation of that cosmic order that provides the initiates with understanding of their ritual transformation and renewal. Betegh, on the other hand, sees the very process of exegesis as crucial to the salvation offered by the DA in his expertise.

If we find the right way to make the connection between the text and the cosmos, then the two will mirror and interpret each other. The text will help us in understanding the constitution of the world, while our knowledge of the world will further our understanding of Orpheus’ text.

On this view, the DA is concerned to explain the nature of the cosmos to his clients, for only in this way can they live appropriately, but, as Detienne argues, it is the very act of hermeneutical engagement with the text of Orpheus that provides the way to salvation.

I argue that the DA’s allegoresis is not a recherché mode of hermeneutical salvation that depends upon a systematic correspondence between his physical system and his sacred text, but rather a technique that he shows off in his treatise to demonstrate his expertise in his craft as a ritual expert; it is his ability to give a logos, rather than the content of that account, that is his primary focus in the text. Like the wise priests Socrates mentions in the Memo, the DA provides many complex explanations of both myths and rituals in his treatise. When he expresses his scorn and pity for those who go to other practitioners who fail to explain the rites, he emphasizes the distinction between those who do not provide an explanation and his own practices.

But all those who (hope to acquire knowledge?) from someone who makes a craft of the holy rites deserve to be wondered at and pitied. Wondered at because, thinking that they will know before they perform the rites, they go away after having performed them before they have attained knowledge.

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11 As Laks 1997: 127 argues, “Obviously, trying to make out how the Derveni allegory can perform a religious function presupposes that we reconstruct the physics of the Derveni author.”

12 Obbink 1997: 40: “I am concerned first to show how the Derveni author might have seen his elucidation of cosmology as possible instruction for mystic initiates, in which an eschatological myth associated with the mysteries is combined with a dominant concern about relations between elements.” I have argued elsewhere (Edmonds 2013: 105–11) about the problems with this pernicious Eliadean model of cosmogony undergoing ritual misapplied to elements of Greek religion.

13 Betegh 2004: 365; in p. 355 he stresses the DA’s systematic approach, like that of the Hippocratic doctors: “The Derveni text can be seen as an attempt to implement for the orphothelestes’ craft a certain type of professional attitude, methodology and argumentative strategy which we can see most notably in the sphere of the medical art.”

14 Detienne 2003: 135: “The papyrus found at Derveni is a text of philosophical hermeneutics, which refers to the system of Anaxagoras and its ideas of separation and differentiation. Its spirited exegesis sets out to show that what Orpheus thinks and says is always correct and that the meaning of words that Orpheus deliberately uses to express the world has existed ever since the time when things were separated out, giving birth to the world and all its parts. The song of Orpheus generates interpretations, gives rise to exegetic constructions that become or are an integral part of the Orphic discourse.”

15 Pl. Men. 80 a 10–b 2: “The speakers were certain priests and priestesses who have made it a practice to be able to give an account of the things they have in hand.” οἱ μὲν λέγοντες εἰς τῶν ἱερῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ὑστῆρες μεμέληκεν πρό ἄν ἡμέρας εἰς ἐνεργείας λέγον αὐτοῖς τ’ εἶναι βεβεδέναι.

16 Col. xx 3–7· ὅσι θα παρὰ τοῦ τρόπου ποιομένου τὰ ἱερά, ὅστις ἐξήθη δαυματίζονται καὶ ἔχειται] χοιρῶται δαυματίζονται μὲν οἴκον ἵππους | πρότερον ἢ ἔπειτα ἑδήδεσαι, ἀπερίκειται ἐπιτελέσασθε πρὶν εἰδοῦν.
The DA is not here condemning all ritual practices, merely denigrating the inferior practices of his rivals. Understanding the DA’s use of allegory, I argue, requires placing him within the proper context of this competition for authority, the marketplace in which different thinkers advertise their expertise, not so much by a systematic exposition of their theological and philosophical doctrines as by an *epideixis* of their professional abilities as interpreters of rituals and texts. The Derveni Papyrus, with its demonstration of complex allegorical interpretations, is an epideictic advertisement within this competitive marketplace, like the showpieces of Gorgias on Helen or some of the early Hippocratic treatises, rather than the scholastic arguments of the Stoics and Peripatetics that catalogue earlier interpretations in their systematic exposition of alternative theses.

4 The Contest Context

Begging priests and prophets frequent the doors of the rich and persuade them that they possess a god-given power grounded on sacrifices and incantations .... And they present a hubbub of books by Musaeus and Orpheus, offspring as they say of Selene and the Muses, in accordance with which they perform their rituals. And they persuade not only individuals but whole cities that the unjust deeds can be absolved or purified through ritual sacrifices and pleasant games, whether for them still living or when they have died. These initiations, as they call them, free people from punishment hereafter, while a terrible fate awaits those who have not performed the rituals.17

Plato’s famous lines in the *Republic* provide the best illustration of this marketplace, and the DA is doubtless one of those specialists unfairly characterised as immoral charlatans, who try to persuade their clients of their expertise in relations with the gods. The hubbub of books by Orpheus and Musaeus described by Plato is importantly an essentially agonistic discourse; the books are deployed in struggles for discursive authority, in contests where the prize is the reputation for wisdom and all of the influence that comes with it. Plato himself, in his attacks on the sophists, provides the most vivid pictures of such clamour, the disputes back and forth between rival experts professing special knowledge. Aristophanes’ contest between the weaker and stronger argument in the *Clouds* takes such contests to an absurd extreme, but it is worth noting that the function of the contest is to convince the onlookers that Socrates has wisdom worth acquiring. These sophistic contests are the direct descendants of the wisdom contests that provide the performance contests for most of the poetry and prose in the Greek tradition, a competitive tradition that continues in the poetic competitions (of tragedy, comedy, and other forms) of the religious festivals.18 Thus, Plato’s *Ion* boasts that he can outdo his rivals—Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Stesimbrotus of Thasos, or Glaucon—in his skill at the exegesis of Homer.19

An early Hippocratic treatise describes this agonistic milieu, in which various pretenders to medical knowledge dispute with one another over the superiority of their ideas. He draws a vivid picture of the public arena, in which such disputations, like wrestling matches, might be won by whoever knocked down his opponent three times in a row:

One could understand this best, if he were present before the booths. For when the same speakers dispute with one another in front in the same audience, the same man never wins in the discussion three times in a row, but sometimes this one wins, sometimes that one, and sometimes whoever happens to have the most fluent tongue in addressing the mob.20

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17 Pl. R. 364b–365a: ἀγιάστω δὲ καὶ μάντες ἐπὶ πλαύτων θυρών ἰάντες πείθουσιν ὡς ἐστι παρὰ φύσιν δύναμις ἐκ τῶν παράξιμων δυσίτις ταῦτα τε καὶ ἄφωνας ... βίβλων ἀληθῶν παρέχοντας Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφείου, Σελενίως τε καὶ Μουσών ἑγκόμου, ὡς φασι, καὶ’ ὑπομείνωσιν, πείθουσιν οὐ μόνον ἰδίως ἄλλα καὶ πόλις, ὡς ἄρχει ταῦτα τε καὶ καθαρῆς ἀθεσμῶν διὰ δυσίτων καὶ παραξενών θέλουν εἰπεῖ μὲν ήτοι ζώοιν, εἰπεῖ δὲ καὶ τελειύτατον, ὡς ὑπελέγουσιν, αἱ τῶν ἐκεί κακῶν ἄνωτος ἡμᾶς, μὴ δύσαντες δὲ δεινά περιμένειν. Portions of the following argument are adapted from Edmonds 2013: 124–33. They are used with permission of Cambridge University Press.

18 Gagarin 2002: 18–22. For this tradition of contest, see Griffith 1990. This impulse to competition is fundamental to Greek culture, as Hesiod notes in *Op. 20–6*: φθένει καὶ οὐδόδις διδάσαι.

19 Pl. Ion 530cd: ‘And I consider I speak about Homer better than anybody, for neither Metrodorus of Lampsacus, nor Stesimbrotus of Thasos, nor Glaucon, nor any one that the world has ever seen, had so many and such fine comments to offer on Homer as I have.’ καὶ οἷῳ κἄλλῳ ἀνδρῶν λέγειν περὶ ὸμήρου, ὡς οὐθεὶ Μετρόδωρος ὄ ο Στησιμβρότος ὄ ο Θάσιος οὐθεὶ Γλαυκός οὐθεὶ ἀλλος οὐθεὶς τῶν πάπτων γεγονόντων ἔσχεν εἰπεὶ οὖν τούτων πόλισσας καὶ καλὰς βασιῶν περὶ Ομήρου ὄς ἔσας ὑγή.

20 Hr. Nat. Hom. 115–20: Γενὸς δ’ ἂν τις τὰδε μαλακτὰ παραγογόνας αὐτέαυς ἀντιλέγεται πρὸς γὰρ ἄλλης ἀντιλέγετοι οἱ αὐτοὶ ἄνδρες τῶν αὐτέων ἐκείνου ἀκρασίων ὑπότοις τρὶς ἐφεξῆς ἣν αὐτώς περιγίνεται ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, ἀλλὰ ποτὲ τόσον ἀπαρκασαίνετο, ποτὲ δὲ οὕτος, ποτὲ δὲ ὅτι ἐν τούτῳ μάλιστα ἡ γλῶσσα ἀποφεύγεται πρὸς τὸν ἤλεγχον. Joannis 1975: 55–60 attributes this text to Polybus, the son-in-law of Hippocrates, and conjectures that it was written
Many of the Hippocratic treatises begin with such polemical sections, rhetorically denouncing rival practitioners and explaining why the speaker’s own method is the best. For every type of expertise, then, there was a whole spectrum of experts seeking authority and public recognition of their wisdom, from the marginal lunatic fringe to the civicly respected and authorised specialists.

An Athenian decree regulating the offering of first fruits at Eleusis provides a case in which a panel of experts, including the famous mantes Lampon, were selected to provide recommendations on how the city should act. Lampon was notorious for his political involvement, but others must have been constantly vying for influence in the Assembly on the basis of their religious expertise. Hierocles, who appears as the prominent expert in another decree, was at some point, like Lampon, granted the great civic privilege of dining in the Prytaneum for his services to Athens. The Platonic Euthyphro, however, complains that he is often mocked when he speaks in the Assembly, urging various causes on the basis of his expertise in religious matters. We need not imagine Euthyphro a far- fetched crank, however, who was just a joke in the Assembly; he was influential enough to become a target of Plato’s critiques in two dialogues, even if his assertions of special wisdom were not always accepted in public debates.

Even the successful were not immune from mockery. Lampon and Hierocles, for example, despite the official recognition of their wisdom, and to collapse the distinctions between the widely respected and the lunatic fringe is in itself a polemical move, rejecting all rival claims to wisdom. The DA makes a similar move, dismissing the value of the ritual experience both in the city festivals and in the rituals of other private practitioners and claiming that only his own reasoned discourse provides something worthwhile.

Those men who, while performing the rites in the city, have seen the holy things, I wonder less that they do not have knowledge. For it is not possible to hear and at the same time to understand what is being said. But all those who (hope to acquire knowledge?) from someone who makes craft of the holy rites deserve to be wondered at and pitied.

The DA indeed engages in many of the same strategies found in other polemical texts designed to showcase the authority of the author, denigrating the understanding of the non-specialists and disparaging potential rivals. Not only do the two Arguments in Aristophanes’ Clouds never cease to abuse each other, but the Hippocratic author sneers at his rivals in the treatise On the Sacred Disease, calling them mountebanks and charlatans who puff themselves up with ridiculous claims to special knowledge (unlike the author, who, of course, really has special knowledge). The DA frequently draws the


22 IG P 78 = ML 73: peri δι’ άλλας ἄρης  
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The reason for this widespread ignorance is that Orpheus did not want just anyone to understand; he uses allegory intentionally to cloak his meanings, although he also carefully and systematically chooses his words so that someone as wise as the DA can uncover the important meanings hidden in the poem. The DA proves his own understanding and expertise through the epideixis of his exegesis, by explaining confusing passages and revealing the hidden meanings, just as Ion shows off his own prowess through exegesis, or the sophists display their expertise in their handling of the poets.

Indeed, the competition described in Plato’s Protagoras over the interpretation of a poem by Simonides provides the most detailed account of such a wisdom contest in 5th century Athens, showing how the exegesis of an authoritative text could provide the opportunity for someone claiming extra-ordinary wisdom to demonstrate the validity of his claim, and his superiority over his rivals. Plato’s scene is set with an all-star cast of sophists, the better to display the prowess of his champion, Socrates. Not only does Protagoras, the man famous for introducing the teaching of disputation for profit in Athens, take the role as Socrates’ chief adversary, but many of the other leading intellectuals of the day (especially Hippias and Prodicus) just happen to be present to pitch in and be defeated in their turn. Of course, in his typical fashion, Plato has Socrates eventually change the rules of the game and invent his own kind of contest, more suited to Platonic philosophical inquiry, but, before the Socratic shift, he makes it clear that Socrates can compete in the traditional kind of wisdom contest, and win against the greatest possible opponents.

Protagoras sets up the contest by claiming that “The most important part of education is being clever concerning poetry (περὶ ἔπων δεινῶν); that is, to understand what is said by the poets, both rightly and not, and to be able to tell the difference and to give an account when challenged.” Like the contests of oracle explanations or the DA’s interpretations, the Simonides contest involves the exegesis of an existing text, rather than the creation of a new one, as in the case of the sophistic long speeches or the medical treatises. At stake in each contest is the reputation of the participants as wise men in the face of the audience that observes them, a reputation that not only determines who and how many will choose to employ their services (as healers, teachers, or advisors), but also how those who take their wisdom seriously will choose to live. Plato’s Socrates may belittle the whole contest as the sort of thing that boorish folk do at the symposium when they have drunk too much, but the choice of a Protagorean or Socratic view of the world could have a substantial impact on an Athenian’s way of life, just as the choice of wisdom contest, and win against the greatest possible opponents.

As Ford 2014:19 puts it: “If Plato were writing the Protagoras for our time, he might set it in the 1970’s, with young Hippocrates teaching of disputation for profit in Athens, take the role as Socrates’ chief adversary, but many of the other leading intellectuals of the day (especially Hippias and Prodicus) just happen to be present to pitch in and be defeated in their turn. Of course, in his typical fashion, Plato has Socrates eventually change the rules of the game and invent his own kind of contest, more suited to Platonic philosophical inquiry, but, before the Socratic shift, he makes it clear that Socrates can compete in the traditional kind of wisdom contest, and win against the greatest possible opponents.”

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between following the medical regime of a Hippocratic doctor or some other, not to mention the choice between Themistocles’ (or Cleon’s) interpretation of an oracle or someone else’s. Neither Socrates’ nor the sophists’ interpretations nor even the chresmologues’ oracle readings should be taken as a meaningless joke, since each interpreter sees an important meaning in the text he is explaining, however bizarre the twists of reasoning may seem to other observers.

Indeed, the similarity of his interpretative strategies to those of the oracle-mongers mocked by Aristophanes or of the sophists criticised by Plato have led some modern scholars to doubt either the intelligence or the sincerity of the DA. “Our preposterous commentator,” as West refers to him, seems to go out of his way to avoid the obvious meaning of the text, with the result that “his interpretations are uniformly false. Not once does he come near to giving a correct explanation of anything in his text.” However, giving an explanation finely and correctly (καλῶς τε καὶ δρῆς) is the aim in the Simonides contest too, and we should assess the DA’s expertise in the context of this sort of contest, rather than by the standards of nineteenth and twentieth century philology. The DA, like the contestants in the Protagoras, seeks to make an explanation that demonstrates his own sophia, his acuity and cleverness in explicating the details as well as his understanding of the significance of the text as a whole.

The DA insists, in one of the most controversial passages, that every word of Orpheus must be treated carefully. “Since in his whole work he speaks about matters enigmatically, one has to speak about each word in turn.” In this case, the DA is speaking about the word αἰθίοιον, and he takes the word not as an epithet meaning ‘venerable’, but rather as a substantive meaning ‘phallus’. Uranos the venerable first-born god, he explains, must be understood as the sun, since both the phallus and the sun are generative of new life. The DA shows how an event within the poetic context. Following his policy of word by word exegesis, the DA insists, in one of the most controversial passages, that every word of Orpheus must be treated carefully. “Since in his whole work he speaks about matters enigmatically, one has to speak about each word in turn.”

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Some of his techniques are fairly sophisticated, displaying his ability to situate the Orphic poem within a wider poetic context. Following his policy of word by word exegesis, he tackles the potentially problematic line in which Zeus desires to sleep with his own mother (μητρὸς ἑαυτοῦ). ‘Mother’ he explains as Mind, but he makes a more complex argument about ἑαυτῶς. Just as Socrates makes a point about the Lesbian dialect of Simonides’ address to Pittacus, so too the DA points out that in epic language the word ἑαυτὸς can mean ‘good’, rather than ‘his own’. He cites two other verses in which ἑαυτῶς is used in the sense of ‘good things’ and argues that Orpheus could have used ἑαυτός had he wanted to convey the sense of ἑαυτῶς. Such an argument may seem ludicrous to a modern philologist, but, within the context of these wisdom contests, it should be taken seriously as a display of the DA’s facility with his hermeneutic tools and of his ability to make satisfactory sense out of a troublesome text.

Even more strikingly, the DA, like Socrates in the Protagoras, uses the concept of hyperbaton to provide an explanation of verses, the two earliest uses extant of this word as a technical term. Socrates claims that the adverb ‘truly’ is transposed from modifying the whole concept of it being difficult to become good to the word ‘good’.

had αἰθίοιον as phallos, but Santamaria 2016 has convincingly shown that the DA construes the adjective αἰθίοιον, which in the text describes Protagonos as worthy of veneration, as the genital organ because both Protagonos and the genitals are, like the sun, generative of life.

Pl. Prt. 346e 1: ἐπαίνημι—there he has used a Mytilenaean word, since he is speaking to Pittacus. ἐπαίνημι—καὶ τῇ φωνῇ ἐνταῦθα ἔχεται τῇ τῶν Μυτιληναίων, ὡς πρὸς Πιττακόν λέγων. Col. xxxvii 8–13. The lines he cites to bolster his argument are equivalent to Od. 8.335 and Il. 24.527–8, but it is not clear whether the DA cites them as lines of Orpheus or of Homer. KPT: 272 (ad loc.) take θηλας as impersonal and reject the idea that the DA might have considered the lines Orphic. Noting the suggestion of Obbink 1997: 41 n. 4, however, Betegh 2004: 110 points out that all the other uses of θηλας in the text are personal, and suggests that the question must be left open. The question makes little difference to the strategy of the DA, however, especially if these lines are considered part of a common stock of hexameters utilised by epic poets, Orphic as well as Homeric, in their compositions.

Pl. Prt. 343c–344a: “Now let us all combine in considering whether my account is really true. The opening of the ode must at once appear crazy if, while intending to say that it is hard for a man to become good, he inserted “indeed.” There is no sort of sense, I imagine, in this insertion, unless we suppose that Simonides is
The DA argues that Orpheus uses hyperbaton in verses describing Zeus taking over the rulership of the cosmos.

“And when Zeus took from his father the prophesied rule / and the strength in his hands and the glorious daimon.” They fail to notice that these words are transposed (ὑπερβοτά). They are to be taken as follows: “Zeus when he took the strength from his father and the glorious daimon.”

In both cases, the interpreter is arguing that one must look beyond the obvious ordering of the words in the verse to see the true meaning of the poet's lines, and this true meaning discovered by the interpreter is substantially different from the obvious one. Not only is the new meaning preferable to the old one because of its correspondence with the ideas and values of the interpreter, but the very act of uncovering this meaning shows the interpreter's wisdom and hermeneutic expertise.

Many of the allegorical interpretations explicate things in the poem according to the cosmic vision of the

addressing himself to the saying of Pittacus as a disputation: Pittacus says—It is hard to be good; and the poet controverts this by observing—No, but to become good, indeed, is hard for a man, Pittacus, truly—not truly good; he does not mention truth in this connexion, or imply that some things are truly good, while others are good but not truly so: this would seem silly and unlike Simondes. We must rather take the "truly" as a poetic transposition (hyperbaton), and first quote the saying of Pittacus in some such way as this: let us suppose Pittacus himself to be speaking and Simondes replying, as thus—Good people, he says, it is hard to be good; and the poet answers—Pittacus, what you say is not true, for it is not being but becoming good, indeed—in hands and feet and mind foursquare, fashioned without reproach—that is truly hard.” (Brisson 1997 provides the most detailed study of this passage. 42 Orpheus has composed enigmas that only someone as skilled as the DA can explain, and the interpreter backs up his exegesis not only with reference to his general cosmological framework, but also with specific reference to details of the text, in this case the epithets 'broad-flowing' applied to Oceanus. 43 At another point, he makes an even more subtle argument with epithets, arguing that ‘Olympus’ must mean ‘time’, since Orpheus never uses the epithet ‘broad’ of Olympus, whereas he does use that term of ‘heaven’ (Uranus).

Olympus and time are the same. Those who think that Olympus and the heaven are the same are entirely mistaken, for they do not know that the heaven cannot be longer rather than wider; but if someone were to call time long, he would not be wrong at all. And whenever he (sc. Orpheus) wanted to speak about heaven, he added the epithet ‘wide’, whereas whenever (he wanted to talk) about Olympus, on the contrary, he never (added the epithet) ‘wide’, but ‘long’. 44

Here the DA shows not only that he has an understanding of the lines superior to those who think that Olympus, the celestial home of the gods, is the same as the heaven, the celestial realm in which the gods make their home, but also that he has such a broad knowledge of the poetry of Orpheus that he can claim that Orpheus never used that

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epithet for that noun in any of his work. The DA’s interpretations put the emphasis on exhibiting his own wisdom in understanding the hidden cosmological ideas and his own skill at uncovering them in the enigmatic poem of Orpheus. The text is not set out as a systematic treatise expounding a systematic cosmology to his audience that explains his doctrine to his (potential) converts; rather, whatever systematic ideas the DA may have remain implicit, much as Socrates’ philosophical ideas remain implicit in his contest with Protagoras, while the focus remains on his ability to out-perform his rivals in exegesis.

His expertise is not merely in textual matters, but also in ritual. The DA’s concern with ritual practice has been evident ever since the first columns of the Derveni Papyrus were published, revealing that the text was not merely a commentary on the poem. The DA discusses making several kinds of offering to divine powers: libations in cols. II and VI, sacrifices of many-knobbed cakes and (possibly) of birds in col. VI.

The powers to whom these offerings are directed may be the Erinyes or Eumenides or the souls of the dead, but the DA is providing not so much instructions for what sort of offerings are made, as explanations for why such offerings are appropriate: “They sacrifice innumerable and many-knobbed cakes, because the souls, too, are innumerable.”45 Again, the author is providing, not doctrinal or ritual instructions, but exegesis, demonstrating his understanding of the procedures rather than telling his readers what to do or to believe.

The DA is not just expert in sacrificial procedures, but also refers to his mantic expertise. In col. V, he refers to clients who want to consult an oracle, wondering if a certain thing (unfortunately lost in a lacuna) is right (δέμιος) or not: a standard oracular question. “For them we go into the oracular shrine to inquire for oracular answers.”46

addition to oracular shrines, the DA also mentions oracular dreams, complaining that some people fail to understand the significance of dreams and, indeed, of other kinds of omens as well (τῶν ἁλῶν προγιμάτων), all of which can serve as παραδείγματα—as warning signs of the will of the gods.47 In the same way that Plato condemns those who fail to heed the correct path of philosophy, the DA passes a moral judgement on those who disregard such omens; they are overcome by error and by pleasures, and so they fail to learn and to understand.48 The DA, then, is not only expert at bringing back a meaningful response from an oracular shrine for a client with a question; perhaps like Antiphon, he could also provide interpretations of dreams and other omens.49

Perhaps the closest parallel to the DA’s hermeneutics is the sort of explanation provided by Tiresias in Euripides’ Bacchae, a character who is neither a simple parody nor the object of a rival’s critique, but, as diviners always are in tragedy, someone with special access to the truth.50 As


46 Col. IV 3–5: χρυσῆς τῇ τρίγλυκη οἰνῷ | ... | αὐτοῖς πάρμου [εἰς τὸ μαί | γενεῖν ἐπερέτας] ἡ ἐκκεντρεῖς τῶν μαντευόμενων. (Although πάρμου is future, the word often has a present sense of regular actions, as in orators who regularly come forward to speak, e.g. Aeschin. 3.71, And. 2.1, D. 13.14, etc.) Because the following lines contain [τὰ] ἐν Ἀιδών ἑόρατο after the lacuna, Janko attempts to make the whole consideration an inquiry of whether it is right not to believe in the terrors of Hades, and compares the later argument of Sextus Empiricus (M. 9.96) about the implausibility of the gods based on the implausibility of the terrors of Hades. Janko 1997: 68 (and now also Janko 2016: 19), imagines that Protagoras’ treatise “on the terrors in Hades” (mentioned in D. L. 9.55) must have had a similar argument, and served as a source for the DA. Piano 2016: 13 reads ἐν δὴ ξανθίαν ἐκστάσει | ἐν Ἀιδών ἑόρατο, shifting the meaning to the more plausible scenario of asking whether one should expect terrible things in Hades as retributions for unexpiated crimes (crimes that might then be ritually expiated if the client should avail himself of the services of the DA).


48 Col. V 8–10: ὡς (τε γὰρ) ἁμαρτοποιεῖ | καὶ [τὴν ἀλλήν θεοῦ |] ἱερασίας [καὶ] πολλαπλὰς ἀμείβεται | [ἰσχύος] πιστεύσουσα. [ὅτι] ἐπειδὴ δὲ κάρας [θί το αὐτὸ.] In Pl. Prt. 357b, for example, Socrates reaches the conclusion that ‘being overcome by pleasure is ignorance in the highest degree’. τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἔτσι ἐναντίον ἄγαθος ἡ μεγαρία.

49 As Tsantsanoglou 1997: 98–9, rightly argues, although he misses the general purpose of the treatise as being “to divulge his professional secrets to the faithful.” Cic. Div. 51.16: hic magna quaedam exoritur neque ea naturalis, sed artificialis somniorum Antiphanis interpretatio eodemque modo et oratorum et vaticinationum. sunt enim exoratorum, ut grammatici poetarum.

50 E. Bca. 272–97: “For two things, young man, are first among men: the goddess Demeter—she is the earth, but call her whatever name you wish; she nourishes mortals with dry food; but he who came afterwards, the offspring of Semele, discovered a match to it, the liquid drink of the grape, and introduced it to mortals. It releases wretched mortals from grief, whenever they are filled with the stream of the vine, and gives them sleep, a means of forgetting their daily troubles, nor is there another cure for hardships. He who is a god is poured out in offerings to the gods, so that by his means men may have good things. And do you laugh at him, because he was sewn up in Zeus’ thigh? I will teach you that...”
Roth has pointed out, Tiresias' identification of the gods Dionysos and Demeter with the elements of wet and dry resembles Empedokles' penchant for connecting the traditional gods with his elemental theory, while his praise of them as benefactors of mankind through their gifts of wine and grain resembles Prodicus. Tiresias calls Demeter the Earth, just as the DA does, and his syncretistic praises of Dionysus, with the functions of Ares, Apollo, and Aphrodite, recall the ways in which the DA seems to elide the differences between gods. Like the DA, Tiresias uses etymologies and word plays to draw out hidden meanings, the differences between gods. Like the DA, Tiresias uses etymologies and word plays to draw out hidden meanings, such as the connection between μαντηκή and Dionysiac μανία (299), or the elaborate retelling of Dionysus' birth story with the plays on μήρος, δύνα, and μέρος (286–97).

Roth argues that Euripides' Tiresias is similar, not only to figures like Plato's Euthyphro, with his interest in etymology and extraordinary versions of traditional myths, but also to other diviners such as Lampion, Dion's seer Miltas, or even Antiphon in his work as a dream-interpreter.

this is well: when Zeus snatched him out of the lighting-flame, and led the child as a god to Olympus, Hera wished to banish this is well: when Zeus snatched him out of the lighting-flame, and led the child as a god to Olympus, Hera wished to banish the Earth, just as the DA does, and his syncretistic wine and grain resembles Prodicus. Tiresias calls Dem-}

5 Stoic Allegory in the Derveni Papyrus?

The DA's assertion of his own exegetical expertise, both ritual and textual, along with his denigration of common misunderstanding, and disparagement of his rivals, thus serve to bolster his claims to authority in a competitive context like that described by Plato or the Hippocratic authors. His allegorical techniques, which illustrate context like that described by Plato or the Hippocratic authors. His allegorical techniques, which illustrate
of the text, however, have prompted some scholars to link the DA's methods to the Stoics, since the Stoics have been infamous ever since Cicero for their allegorical interpretations.\textsuperscript{55} The critique of Stoic allegoresis in his treatise \textit{On the Nature of the Gods} has cemented the association of allegoresis and Stoicism in modern scholarship, but, as recent scholarship has shown, the Stoics were merely continuing the practices developed by earlier thinkers.\textsuperscript{56}

Casadesús, however, argues that the similarities between the DA and the Stoics go beyond merely using etymologies and allegories, suggesting that the choice of examining poetic texts for cosmological allegories and even some of the specific allegories point to a closer relationship. While the Stoics certainly did break with Aristotle in lumping together the poets and the \textit{physikoi} as sources for wisdom about the nature of the cosmos, Aristotle's predecessors, including Plato, likewise examined the poets for physical ideas, and Aristotle's distinction is more important in modern scholarship than it was in antiquity.\textsuperscript{57} When the Stoics drew cosmological ideas from the poets, they were following in a long tradition of such activity, one of the most important sources for which appears to be the "sophist" Hippias. Hippias, as Clement tells us, boasts that he has compiled the important ideas from the greatest of poets:

\textit{ποιητῶν τόν καινὸν ὁμόφυλα συνθεὶς ἐκ πάντων τοὺς} \textit{ποιητῶν τὰ δὲ εὔρηκα τὰ μὲν ᾨδεως, τὰ δὲ Μεσαλιῶν ἄρρεν ἔλεγχος, τὰ δὲ Ἡξίων, τὰ δὲ Ομηρίων, τὰ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν συγγραφέας, τὰ μὲν ἴδαν, τὰ δὲ οἰκεῖα ἐν γίγαντι και δεμφύλια συνθήκες τοῦτον καὶ πολυβηθὸν τὸν λόγον ποιήσων.}

As recent scholars have pointed out, Hippias' catalogue lies in the background of doxographical accounts in Plato, Aristotle, and Peripatetics such as Eudemus.\textsuperscript{58} Betegh argues that the Stoics too are making use of Hippias' classification of poetic accounts of gods understood as physical elements.\textsuperscript{60} Hippias, it can be inferred from Plato, included Heraclitus, so the DA's quotations of this obscure philosopher—and, no doubt, the Heraclitean interest in fire as a fundamental element—stand in this Hippian tradition, rather than being another proto-Stoic trait.\textsuperscript{51}

While a concentration on certain scandalous episodes, such as the castration of Uranus or Zeus' incestuous

\textit{κατὰ βραβαίαν εἴγον δὲ ἐκ πάντων τοὺς τὰ μέγατα καὶ δεμφύλια συνθήκες τοῦτον καὶ πολυβηθὸν τὸν λόγον ποιήσων.}

58 Hippias \textit{FGrHist} 6 F 4 = fr. 6 DK (ap. Clem. Al. \textit{Strom.} 6.15.2) (= OF 1146); τῶν ἱστορίων κατὰ ἠρρέν, τὰ μὲν Ἱδεως, τὰ δὲ Μεσαλιῶν κατὰ ἠρρέν ἔλεγχος, τὰ δὲ Ἡξίων, τὰ δὲ Ομηρίων, τὰ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν συγγραφέας, τὰ μὲν ἴδαν, τὰ δὲ οἰκεῖα ἐν γίγαντι και δεμφύλια συνθήκες τοῦτον καὶ πολυβηθὸν τὸν λόγον ποιήσων.

59 Betegh 2007: 140: "In the wake of Bruno Snell’s original paper, Joachim Classen, Andreas Patzer and Jaap Mansfeld have shown that Hippias in this work presented fairly extensive doxographical material, together with an interpretation that identified the different gods of the poets with different elements. On the basis of this exegesis, he then claimed that groups of authors professed the same doctrine. Hippias’ doxographical material, together with the interpretation he offered of the poetical and prose texts, became the starting-point for the allegorizing theological and philosophical interpretation of these authors. Hippias’ material pops up in Plato’s \textit{Cratylos} and \textit{Theaetetus} and Aristotle’s doxographical surveys." Cf. esp. Snell 1966 and Mansfeld 1983 (1990): see also Betegh 2002.

60 Betegh 2007: 146: "It seems to me that there is nothing in Philodemus’ text to indicate that Chrysippus in his \textit{On the Gods} presented an original exegesis of the early poets. It seems to me rather that Chrysippus did what Philodemus himself did in the relevant doxographical section of the \textit{De Pietate}; he used the material available in Eudemus’ survey of early ‘theologians’ going back to Hippias."

61 Mansfeld 1983 (1990): 53: “Hippias, not Plato, is our earliest source for statements about and quotations of Heraclitus. The date of our earliest evidence concerning Heraclitus has to be pushed up ca. 70 years, for we are no longer dealing with what Plato wrote in the mid-fourth cent., but with what Hippias compiled and said in the late fifth.” \textit{Contra Casadesús} 2010: 237, who cites “el papel cósmico que desempeña el fuego y la quercencia de su autor de citar a Heráclito como testimonio” as a proto-Stoic trait.
relations, is hardly surprising, given that these tales are the ones most in need of alternative explanations, some of the specific allegories in the Derveni Papyrus have prompted scholars to try to link them with the Stoics. In his collection of Stoic traits of the Derveni Papyrus, Casadesús has claimed as Stoic the DA’s tendency to explain various gods and elements such as air as all as ways of referring to Zeus. Such an identification appears far earlier, however, in the tragedians Aeschylus and Euripides, for example. Aeschylus sings “Zeus is Aither, Zeus is earth, and Zeus is heaven; Zeus is all, and all above,” while Euripides proclaims, “Do you see this lofty, boundless Aither, which holds the earth around in moist embraces? This reckon Zeus, and this consider God.” Even if they are rejected by Aristotle, many in the Classical period looked to the tragedians for theological, cosmological, and ethical ideas, and the DA’s ideas about Zeus, air, and even πνεῦμα do not need Stoic sources for their formulation.

Some of the DA’s allegories reveal his similarities to other thinkers of the Classical period, in contrast to later thinkers. Casadesús has recently argued that the way that the DA explains the castration of Uranus resembles the explanation through physical etymology attributed to the Stoics in Cicero, but the passage actually shows the differences between the Stoic cosmology supported by the Stoic allegoresis and that of the DA. For Cicero’s Stoics, the separation of Uranus from his phallos signifies that the highest power needs no other partner to generate all things. For they wish the highest element of celestial aither (that is, the fiery), which by itself generates all things, to be devoid of that bodily part which requires union with another for the work of procreation.

For the DA, by contrast, the act of castration signifies the limitation of the fiery action of Uranus, which keeps all things in motion and separated from one another. The phallois is identified with the sun, which sits at a proper distance from the earth and thus keeps things in motion, sufficient for new generation but not too much. The etymology of Cronus’ name from κροάω, to strike, indicates that he is the one responsible for striking off the phallois of Uranus, but also for allowing the particles of matter to strike against one another. Rather than signifying the omnipotence of the highest power in the Stoic cosmos, the castration marks the shift of power from one generation in the cosmogony to another, as well as a change in the order of the cosmos; a transition more akin to the patterns of the so-called pre-Socratic cosmologies.

Bradson (2011) has recently argued that the DA’s identification of Oceanus with air does require a Stoic or at least post-Aristotelian interpreter, adducing Aristotle’s discussion of the cycle of evaporation in his Meteorology as a stream of water flowing vertically from earth to heaven and back around.

When the sun is near, the stream of vapour flows upwards; when it recedes, the stream of water flows down: and the order of sequence, at all events, in this process always remains the same. So if the earlier writers allegorized ‘Oceanus,’ they could perhaps have meant this river that flows in a circle about the earth.

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62 In Pl. R. 377e–378d, Socrates argues that stories such as what Cronus did to Uranus are not appropriate for children being educated (or anyone else, for that matter), whether they have an allegorical meaning or not, thus indicating a tradition of allegorical interpretations of these stories. Such critiques appear at least as early as Xenophanes.

63 Casadesús 2010: 237 lists “la equiparación del destino con el πνεῦμα y la inteligencia de Zeus; la teoría de la ύπατος y la visión pantéista; la coincidencia en la identificación del aire con Zeus; la tendencia a unificar las divinidades en una sola, incluyendo la equiparación de divinidades femeninas muy semejantes.”


65 Betegh 2007: 146–9 argues that the identification of Moira, Zeus, πνεῦμα, and φύσις in columns 18 and 19 of the Derveni Papyrus owes nothing to the technical definition of πνεῦμα as developed by Chrysippus, but is more closely linked to the ideas in Anaximenes fr. 2 DK and Diogenes of Apollonia fr. 5 DK.

Brison takes the imperfect in the protasis of the conditional clause to indicate that earlier writers did not in fact make such an allegory, but, as he notes, the optative in the apodosis makes the sentence very difficult to translate.\textsuperscript{72} However, even if Aristotle is not citing some specific, significant predecessor, he indicates that such an allegory is plausible to expect from his predecessors. As Brison notes, Aristotle’s discussion of the movement of the sun in this context cites Heraclitus, and the DA is just such a thinker who might combine an interpretation of Heraclitus with an allegorisation of the primal source of water, Oceanus, to show off his cleverness. Of course, the DA’s identification of Oceanus and air seems to derive from other methods, but, as Brison admits, the closest parallels in Stoic thought do not make the same allegorisation, either.\textsuperscript{73} As the DA claims, the identity of Oceanus and air is made confusing and unclear to the many, and the loss of portions of his exegesis unfortunately ensures that modern scholars remain among the confused many.

6 Contextualising the DA

Previous explanations of the DA’s methods have been unsatisfactory because they have seen as his principal aim the exposition of some doctrine, whether it be Orphic eschatology, pre-Socratic cosmology, or even the correspondence between the two. If the purpose of the text is rather to demonstrate the author’s skill at his craft, the peculiar exegeses become more comprehensible. He is not incompetently expounding a system; he is selecting examples to display his expertise.\textsuperscript{74} The DA is advertising his skill at his craft, that of a religious specialist; the type parodied by Aristophanes, denounced as charlatans by the Hippocrates, and scorned by Plato.\textsuperscript{75} Like Antiphon’s \textit{Tetralogies} or Gorgias’ \textit{Defense of Helen}, the treatise in the Derveni Papyrus illustrates the cleverness of the author; it is a textual example of the kind of sophistic debate portrayed in the Hippocratic treatise and Plato’s \textit{Protagoras}.\textsuperscript{76} It is worth noting that Plato mentions Hippias among the contenders in that scene, although he never gets the chance for the long-winded speech he keeps trying to give. Hippias prides himself on his understanding of the underlying ideas embedded within the texts of the ancient wise men, but his exposition is too lengthy and systematic for the market-place contests.\textsuperscript{77} The DA’s treatise takes the Orphic poem line by line, but he never seems to make a systematic exposition of either his cosmological theories or his religious ideas.

The DA’s boasts of superior knowledge, along with his demonstrations of exegetical cleverness, show that his treatise is aimed at winning clients in the public marketplace, not at showing a select group of sectarians the secret of salvation. The references to the secrets known only to a few are thus best understood as a rhetorical device that enhances the value of the speaker’s expertise, not an atheist’s public revelation of the sacred mysteries, or even

\textsuperscript{72} Brison 2011: 388, with n. 5: “Mais Aristote est très clair là-dessus: ses prédécesseurs n’ont pas développé cette interprétation allégorique; il est donc le premier à le suggérer, sans que l’on puisse savoir s’il n’est inspiré de l’un de ses contemporains.” Such mixed conditions are attested, however, where the optative in the apodosis renders the protasis not a contrary to fact condition. Cf., e.g., X. \textit{Mem.} 1.2.28: εἰ μὲν αὐτής ἔστω τι φαύλον, εἰς ἄλλον τόπον πορθῆς εἶναι: εἰ δὲ αὐτὴς συμφρονίν διεξάγει, πότε ἄν βοηθής τῆς σώματος κακίας κακίας αὕτης ἔχοι; The first of two conditions has the imperfect protasis followed by the imperfect apodosis in a contrary to fact condition (Socrates did not in fact live a base life), but the second has an imperfect protasis that Xenophon considers true (Socrates did live wisely), followed by an apodosis with an optative verb (cf. also Thuc. 6.92, And. 2.12, etc.).

\textsuperscript{73} Brison 2011: 391: “Qui plus est, même si, dans les passages relatifs au Stoïcisme que nous avons cités, on ne retrouve pas explicitement l’interprétation allégorique, évoquées par Aristote et présentant Okéanos comme un fleuve d’air humide ou d’eau vaporisée, il est évident que c’est ainsi que les Stoïciens se représentaient le processus d’évaporation et de condensation de l’eau.”

\textsuperscript{74} As Betegh 2004: 182 notes, the text is not organised to set out the underlying system: “Apart from the lacunose nature of the papyrus, what makes the reconstruction so difficult is that the DA does not explain his theory in a linear way, but distributes the elements of it in his exegetical remarks. In other words, the exposition is not governed by the internal logic of the theory.” This is not, however, to deny that the theory has some sort of internal logic or that the DA had coherent ideas about the cosmos, but rather to claim that this text is not set up to display it.

\textsuperscript{75} All the same, the evidence for public honours and successful careers for such figures should not be forgotten—Lampon, Hierocles, and Diopeithes in the fifth century, as well as later figures like Philochoros or Kleidemos, who seem to have served as \textit{exegetai} as well as have written treatises on the ancient religious customs of Attica.

\textsuperscript{76} Some of the earliest prose treatises attested seem to have been exhibitions of their authors’ particular crafts. The \textit{Tetralogies} of Antiphon, like Gorgias’ \textit{Helen} and \textit{Palamedes}, were surely meant to demonstrate their composers’ skill with words. Antiphon is also credited with a book on dream interpretation, in which he likewise displays his ability to provide interpretations that surpass those of other experts, and his \textit{Truth} may have been, like Gorgias’ \textit{On Not-Being}, a demonstration that he could win an argument on any point, regardless of its truth.

\textsuperscript{77} Cf. Thomas 2003 on the prose epideixis and its serious purposes for the sophists.
an indication of the limited circle of initiates who might understand his sermons.\textsuperscript{78} The Derveni Papyrus is thus part of Plato's hubbub of books, competing for clientele in the marketplace of the 5th century amid the swirling controversies of the sophists of all types, rather than the work of a systematic Hellenistic scholar, whether Stoic or otherwise.\textsuperscript{79}

7 Allegory and the Theogony of Hieronymus

This agonistic context of sophistic competition appears all the more clearly when the use of allegory in the Derveni Papyrus is contrasted with the treatment of allegory in another Orphic poem, the account we have of the Orphic Theogony associated with Hieronymus. This text, by contrast, does come from a scholastic, rather than agonistic, context, and the way the allegories are incorporated into the account shows the systematising practices of Peripatetic philosophers rather than the agonistic strategies of a sophistic ritualist. The account of an Orphic theogonic poem, which the 5th century AD Neoplatonist Damascius attributes to Hieronymus or Hellanicus, seems to involve allegorical interpretations of several elements within the story, including the first principles of water and mud, personified Time identified as Heracles, and a syncretised supreme Zeus. While scholars have also tried to argue that these allegories must be Stoic, a careful examination shows that, just like the allegories in the Derveni Papyrus, these allegories could all arise from the earlier philosophical debates of the Classical period, even if Damascius' report derives from a systematising account by the pupils of Aristotle.

Damascius provides the evidence for the existence of several different Orphic theogonies, but the question remains of how long before Damascius' own time each of these accounts was composed. The account of Aristotle's pupil Eudemus must date to the early Hellenistic period, while the story he derives from the Orphic \textit{Rhapsodies}, which he describes as the 'usual' version familiar to his contemporaries, was probably composed much later.\textsuperscript{80}

The account of Hieronymus or Hellanicus is hardest to date, since the identities of these figures remains disputed, and Damascius' uncertainty as to whether they are 'the same' further confuses the issue—especially because it remains unclear whether Damascius thinks that Hieronymus and Hellanicus might be the same person or whether he thinks their accounts are of the same tale.

But the theology delivered by Hieronymus and Hellanicus (if indeed he is not even the same)\textsuperscript{81} is as follows:—He says that water was from the beginning, and Matter, from which the Earth was produced, so that he supposes that the two first principles were Water and Earth; the latter of which is of a nature liable to separation, but the former a substance serving to conglutinate and connect it: but he passes over as ineffable the one principle prior to these two, for its recondite nature is evinced, in that there is no manifestation appertaining to it. The third principle after these two, which is generated from them, that is from the Water and Earth, is a Dragon having the heads of a Bull and Lion naturally produced, and in the middle, between these, is the countenance of the God: he has, moreover, wings upon his shoulders, and is denominated incorruptible Chronos.

\textsuperscript{78} Contra Brisson 2010: 24–5: "Le secret souhaité par Orphée est néanmoins préservé. Si le commentaire offre l'accès au texte à un public plus large, ses destinataires sont cependant les seuls lecteurs susceptibles de comprendre l'exégèse. La désignation constante de la foule ignorante est le repoussoir qui fait d'eux un cercle restreint et choisi."

\textsuperscript{79} Contra Calame 1997: 76, who compares Crates of Athens, Philochorus, and Melanthius: "This distanced voice of the scholar who collects and describes his city's cultic customs is much like the Derveni exegete's voice."

\textsuperscript{80} Dam. Pr. 319.7–13: "But the cosmogony which is delivered by the Peripatetic Eudemus as being the theology of Orpheus, passes the whole Intelligible order in silence, as altogether ineffable and unknown, and incapable of discussion or explanation. He commences from Night, which Homer also constitutes as his first principle, if we would render his genealogy consistent. Therefore, we must not put confidence in the assertion of Eudemus, that Homer makes it commence from Oceanus and Tethys; for it is manifest that he regards Night as the greatest divinity."

\textsuperscript{81} Dam. Pr. 317.14: Ἡ δὲ παρὰ τῶν περιπατητικῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἀναγεγραμμένη ὡς τοῦ Ὀρφέου ὀρφικὴ θεολογία πάν τὸ νοητὸν ἐσιώπησεν, ἀφ' ἕνι καὶ ἐκ Ὀμηροῦ, καὶ καὶ μὴ συνεχῆ πεποίηται τὴν γενεαλογίαν. Ἡ τοιχία ὡς γὰρ ἀπεδεικτὸν Ἑλληνικὸς λέγουσιν ὅτι ἀπὸ Ἡθασοῦ καὶ Θησείου ἔρχεται φαίνεται γὰρ εἰδικός καὶ τὴν Νύκτα μεγίστην τις θεοῦ ὃς. Dam. Pr. 316.16, 317.13.

In the \textit{Rhapsodies} which pass under the name of Orphic, the theology ... such is the common Orphic theology. Et si vn tenuo\textsuperscript{n} tae\textsuperscript{s} sacr\textsuperscript{e}m\textsuperscript{s} ra\textsuperscript{e}m\textsuperscript{s} \textit{rhapsod\textsuperscript{e}es ...} omne\textsuperscript{n} in\textsuperscript{vb} \textit{the\textsuperscript{o}log\textsuperscript{e} ...} I have argued elsewhere (Edmonds 2013: 148–59) that the \textit{Rhapsodies} were a collection of varied Orphic poetry compiled probably in the second to third century AD as Hellenic philosophers sought to systematise the authoritative poetry of their tradition in the face of the challenges from Christianity and other cults, but the date does not directly affect my argument here.
The similarities with the Orphic theogony related by the second century AD Christian apologist Athenagoras suggest that it must in any case predate that era. Athenagoras claims that the pagan authorities all agree that the gods were not eternal but came into existence, quoting the Oceanus passage from Homer and comparing it with a cosmogony by Orpheus.

The gods, as they affirm, were not from the beginning full, was, by the powerful friction of its

(Time) and Heracles. Fate also, which is the same as Nature, is connected with him, and Adata, which is incorporeally co-extensive with the universe, and connects its boundaries in harmony. I am of opinion that this third principle is regarded as subsisting according to essence, inasmuch as it is supposed to exist in the nature of male and female, as a type of the generating principle of all things.82

Most scholars have accepted the arguments of West and Brisson that Stoic elements within this cosmogony indicate that it must have been composed by an Orphicist working after the advent of Stoicism, but I argue that none of these elements require a Stoic background. Rather than identifying Hieronymus and Hellanicus with obsolete late figures, I propose to take up the suggestion of Lobeck identifying these figures with the Peripatetic Hieronymus of Rhodes, and the even earlier Hellanicus of Lesbos.84 As
the analysis of the context of the DA has shown, the kind of allegorical interpretations embedded in the account could easily have been produced by an Orphicist working in the time of Euripides. However, they might also have been built into the account through the systematisation of the Peripatetic philosopher, Hieronymus, who, like his colleague Eudemus, collected and analysed accounts of the beginnings of the cosmos. Just as examining the use of allegory in the Derveni Papyrus illuminates the agonistic and sophistic context in which it was composed, an analysis of the allegories in Hieronymus’ account of the theogony shows that it could be a product of Peripatetic systematising in the 3rd century BC rather than of late Stoic theology.

8 Stoic Allegory in the Hieronyman Theogony?

Both Damascius and Athenagoras tell us that this Orphic cosmogony begins with water and a muddy substance (λύς or οὐλ). Many scholars have assumed that the presence of mud and water in the first generation of this cosmogony comes from Stoic allegorisation, citing a scholiast on Apollonius who relates that the founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium, understood Hesiod’s Chaos as water, since the production of Earth from Chaos resembles the settling of mud out of water.85 Zeno, however, may well have derived this image from earlier cosmologists such as Thales or Pherekydes, who were reworking Hesiod’s cosmogony for their own purposes.86 Nothing in the image is

Lobech 1829: 340. West 1983: 176–8 suggests Sandon, son of Helianicus, mentioned by the Suda as having written on Orpheus, whose Cilician name might be rendered as Hieronymus, but ultimately prefers to identify Hieronymus with Hieronymus the Egyptian mentioned by Josephus, about whom “we know next to nothing.”

85 Sch. A. R. 1.496–8b (= SVF 1 104). Zeno also says that Hesiod’s Chaos is water, from the settlement of which mud comes into being, and when that solidifies, the earth is established. καὶ Ἵμηρος δὲ τὸ παρ’ Ἵθησιν χῶρον ἔδραμεν ϕιλογόρῳ οὖσα οὐλὴν γίνεσθαι, ἢς παραγόμενος ἡ γῆ σταρομοιοῦται. As West 1983: 183 notes: “It is odd that physical elements should exist before Un-being, and when that solidifies, the earth is established. καὶ Ἵμηρος δὲ τὸ παρ’ Ἵθησιν χῶρον ἔδραμεν ϕιλογόρῳ οὖσα οὐλὴν γίνεσθαι, ἢς παραγόμενος ἡ γῆ σταρομοιοῦται.” As West 1983: 183 notes: “It is odd that physical elements should exist before Un-Being, and odder still that they should appear at all in a poetic theogony which goes on to talk about winged serpents and a cosmic egg.” Algra 2004: 567–9 provides more context for Zeno’s treatment of Hesiod here.

86 Cf. Ach. Tat. Astron. Isagoga excerpta 3.48–31 (Maass): θαλάσσης δὲ ἡ Λυκίος καὶ Φαρεκυδῆς τὸ νῦμος τῶν ἐνθοῦ τὸ ώμον ύπολογίζονται, δ’ ἐν καὶ Χάος καὶ Φαρεκυδῆς τὸ δεῖ παρὰ τοῦ Ἱησοῦ ἐνθοῦς φησίν ἢτοι μὲν πρώτα Χάος γένετο.” (Th. 116). Baxter 1992: 121 and n. 54 suggests that Pherecydes’ etymologisation of δῆ (his own name for Đê) from ἐκβάλλων indicates that he is deliberately reworking the epic traditions in this way: “While the exact details of Pherecydes’ account cannot be recovered, what we can assert is that he supported his reworking of his tradition by means of allegory and etymology, arriving at a rather watery and fluxy cosmogony.”

87 Aét. Placit. 1.50 321.4–5: οὐκέτα οὐκέτα οὐκέτα ἡ αἰγών τῶν κύκλων. West 1983: 195. Adrasteia’s role in Pl. Phdr. 248c resembles the later Chrysipp. SVF 11 292.15, but this similarity would again indicate that the later Stoic took the idea from earlier thinkers. Cf. also [Arist.] Mu. 406b 13.

88 West 1983: 195. Adrasteia’s role in Pl. Phdr. 248c resembles the later Chrysipp. SVF 11 292.15, but this similarity would again indicate that the later Stoic took the idea from earlier thinkers. Cf. also [Arist.] Mu. 406b 13.

89 Brissin 1985 (1995): 51: “Mais en Grèce ancienne, tandis qu’en philosophie le problème est clairement posé, sinon dans le Temps du moins dans les commentaires de ce dialogue, les mythes ne font pratiquement aucune allusion à Chronos (= le Temps). Il faudra attendre les débuts de l’ère chrétienne pour que Chronos soit enfin évoqué, dans le cadre d’un Orphisme très influencé par le Mithriaïsme, nouvelle religion à mystères trouvant son origine en Iran.” West 1983: 226, by contrast, dates it earlier, between the second half of the third century BC and 100 BC.

90 Brissin 1997: 153–61, cf. Schibli 1990: 17 n. 9, D. L. 1.119 (fr. 14 Schibli = 7 A1, B 1 DK): “There is also preserved of the man from Syros a book he wrote, the beginning of which states: » Zas and Chronos always were and Chthonie; and Chthonie became named Gaia
Other sources, however, provide ample evidence that early Greek poetic thinkers were personifying Chronos as a fundamental power in the cosmos. References in Solon, Simonides, and Sophocles should not be dismissed as mere metaphor; even if the personification of Time is not involved in cosmogonic activities, he is still a god who affects the lives of mortals.91

Pindar, of course, is noted for his personifications of Time as the ‘father of all’ and even the ‘best saviour of just men,’ and one of his Olympian odes shows that the word play on the names of Chronos and Cronus, which Plutarch claims is common among the Greeks, goes back to Pindar’s time.92 Brisson quite rightly points out that these personifications have a role within their poems that does not need to be explained by reference to an Orphic cosmology or even ‘Orphic influence’ creeping in upon Pindar, but his words nevertheless show that Chronos was an active deity in the Archaic period whom poets could work into their accounts.

Chronos in a cosmological role appears clearly in a fragment of the tragic Peirithoos, attributed to Euripides (and to Critias): “Unwearying Time circles full around in ever-flowing flux, itself begetting itself. And the twin Bears with the swift-wandering motions of their wings, keep watch upon the Atlantean pole.”93 This image of Time as the cosmic rotating around the celestial pole recalls the description of Time attributed to Pythagoras, against which Aristotle seems to be arguing in his Physics.94 Chronos as an originary, cosmological principle was thus part of poetic discourse before the time of Aristotle, even if the multiple monstrous heads of the Orphic poem’s Chronos are absent from the evidence, and the wings that sprout from his shoulders are given by Euripides to the Bear constellations who circle around the celestial pole.

By the time of Aristotle’s pupil, Eudemus, of course, cosmogonic Chronos was familiar from a number of sources, as Damascius’ summary of Eudemus’ catalogue of cosmogenies shows. The magoi, as Eudemus relates, posits Chronos as the predecessor of the fundamental powers of good and evil in the cosmos, Oromasdes and Arimanios, while the Sidonians have Chronos, along with Cloudy Darkness (Omiclès), as the primordial trio.95

West argues, however, that the identification of the cosmic Chronos with Heracles in the theogony reported when Zas gave her the earth as a gift of honour:”ց ἐν τούτῳ ἐξελέγχετο χρόνος δὲ πᾶσα νόμος, ἐξ οὗ ἐξήρθεν ἥλιος, ἕπειτα αὐτὴν Ζάσ γένος γέρας Βιοδό. Dam. Pr. 124b (1 321 R. = Eudem. fr. 150 Wehrli = Pherecyd. Syr. fr. 60 Schibli = 7 A 8 DK): “Pherecydes of Syros says that Zas always existed and Chronos and Chthonie, the first three principles.”96

Pherecydes also agrees but cites different elements: Zen, he says, and Chthon and Cronus, along with Love and the swift-wandering motions of their wings, keep watch upon the Atlantean pole. As Brisson 1997: 156 points out, this definition of time is very similar to that Aristotle dismisses as silly in Physics 4.10, 218a 32-8.

Eudem. fr. 150 Wehrli (ap. Dam. Pr. 322.7–323.2): “But of the Magoi and all the Areion race, according to the relation of Eudemus, some denominate the Intelligible Universe and the United, Place, while others call it Time (Chronos): from whom separately proceed a Good Divinity and an Evil Daemon; or, as some assert, prior to these, Light and Darkness. Both the one, therefore, and the other, after an undivided nature, hold the twofold co-ordination of the superior natures as separated and distinct, over one of which they place Oromasdes as the ruler, and over the other Arimanios. The Sidonians, according to the same writer, before all things place Chronos, and Pothis, and Omichlès (Cloudy Darkness):” Mάγοι δὲ καὶ πάντα τὸ δρόμον γένος, ὡς καὶ τούτῳ γράφει ὁ Εὐριπίδης, ὁ μὲν Τάτιον, ὁ δὲ Χρόνον καλεῖ σακράτως τὸ νοστῆρα ὡς καὶ τὸ ἑξωμοῦνα, ἐξ ὧν διαδραμίζει ἡ δὲν ἀφαίρεσθαι καὶ βαινοῦσα κακῶς, ἡ δὲ καὶ σκέτος τοῖς τούτοις, ὡς ἐν δεύον γένεσι. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ μετὰ τὴν ἄδικοτρόνιον φύσιν διακομισθεῖσα ποιεῖν τὴν διήνυστον συστάσσειν τῶν κρατήτων, τῆς μὲν ἡγεῖσθαι τὸν Προμέθεα, τῆς δὲ τὸν Ἀρισμάδον. Σιδώνιοι δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν συγγραφέα πρὸ πάντων Χρόνων, ὑποτίθενται καὶ Παθὸν καὶ Οἰρόχλην.”
by Hieronymus could only result from a Stoic allegorical interpretation that identifies Heracles’ twelve labors with the cycles of the Great Year, and his death upon a pyre with the cosmic ecpyrosis. Yet, as Lobeck points out, the identification of Heracles with the temporal cycle derives from his connection with the sun, only part of which stems from the identification of his twelve labors with the signs of the zodiac through which the sun moves. Porphyry preserves an allegorisation that links the sun, as the power that wards off evils on the earth, with Heracles’ cult title of Alexiakakos, the ‘avter of evils.’ The solar Heracles, and even his journey through the year as the passage of time, are thus independent of any Stoic allegorisation, although Stoic thinkers clearly picked up the identification and adapted it to their ideas of a cosmic ecpyrosis, fitting the mythic end of of Heracles’ life neatly into their image of the end of a cosmic cycle. The serpent form of this Heracles links him again with the circle of the sun, as well as ‘unaging Chronos’ symbolised by the snake that sheds its skin to renew itself.

In the theogony, this serpentine deity produces and splits open an egg, which divides into the heaven and the earth, giving birth to a god known as Protogonos, the first born. The final factor added by West and others who argue for a post-Stoic date for the theogony is the identification of these two divine figures is the point of this Heracles links him again with the circle of the sun, this Heracles links him again with the circle of the sun, only part of which stems from the identification of his twelve labors with the signs of the zodiac through which the sun moves. Porphyry preserves an allegorisation that links the sun, as the power that wards off evils on the earth, with Heracles’ cult title of Alexiakakos, the ‘avter of evils.’ The solar Heracles, and even his journey through the year as the passage of time, are thus independent of any Stoic allegorisation, although Stoic thinkers clearly picked up the identification and adapted it to their ideas of a cosmic ecpyrosis, fitting the mythic end of of Heracles’ life neatly into their image of the end of a cosmic cycle. The serpent form of this Heracles links him again with the circle of the sun, as well as ‘unaging Chronos’ symbolised by the snake that sheds its skin to renew itself.

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West argues that the collapse of Protogonos and Zeus into the same figure must, however, be a late stage of development, after the Stoic theory of Zeus’ cyclical absorption and regeneration of the world. But Zeus’ swallowing of Protogonos and the entire cosmos is designed to make the last born god, Zeus, the first to the pánca kúto tánvhe [το]ν ἕπερτερον. E. fr. 941 Kannicht (ap. Clem. Al. Strom. 5.14.141): “Do you see this lofty, boundless Asher, which holds the earth around in moist embraces? This reckon Zeus, and this consider God.” Ὁραίς τὸν ὑψὸ τοῦ ἅπερον αὐθέρα, καὶ γὰν περὶ ἡγημὸν ὑγρὰς ἐν ἄργαλίς; / τοῦτον νόμιζε Ζήνα, τοῦτος ἥγη σεβ. See n. 22 above.

9 Contextualising the Hieronymian Theogony

None of the elements, then, that scholars have argued must be Stoic are without precedent in the time of of the generations previous to him. The syncretism of Zeus with all of the other deities is, to be sure, an idea that the Stoics developed fully, but, as noted above, it appears already in the tragedians and other classical thinkers. Clement also quotes from Euripides’ Perithoos an image of this supreme god, whirling around the celestial sphere like the unaging, primordial Chronos of the Hieronymian Theogony: “You, self-generated, who on Aither’s wheel twirls the nature of all things, around whom light and shadowy spangled Night, and the innumerable host of stars dance ceaselessly.” Again, this image of the cosmic deity resembles most the figure from tragedy, rather than a later Stoic creation.

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Euripides, and indeed the poetic images from the tragedians and the allegorical interpretations practised by their contemporaries (whom Plato attacks in the Cratylus) provide the closest parallels to the theogony Damascius records from the account of Hieronymus and Hellanicus. Damascius also relates that Eudemus, a Peripatetic contemporary with Hieronymus of Rhodes, catalogued a variety of theogonic accounts, so it is worth considering if Hieronymus might have done likewise. Of Eudemus' catalogue we know little beyond the evidence of Damascius, but Betegh has recently argued that Eudemus, like Plato and Aristotle, draws upon Hippias' previous systematising of accounts of poets and physiskoi. As the Platonic references show, Hippias grouped together the accounts he interpreted as signifying the same idea, so Heraclitus and Thales were linked with Homer and Orpheus, since they all traced the beginning of the cosmos back to some sort of flux. In an account of one of the poems with theogonic material attributed to Orpheus circulating at that time, Hieronymus might likewise have made use of Hippias, or he could have drawn an account with allegorical explanations from other such thinkers of Hippias' generation. Epigenes, for example, seems to have written on the poems of Orpheus, and he may even have interpreted Orphica allegorically, explaining that the parts of a loom represent the process of ploughing and sowing seeds.

Hieronymus might also have drawn from the work of Hellanicus of Lesbos, which could explain Damascius' confusion of their accounts. Although Hellanicus is better known as the inventor of chronographic history in his account of the priestesses of Argive Hera, the fragments of his work attest to his interest in mythological tales and his use of allegorical etymologies. The fragmentary remains of both Hellanicus and Hieronymus make it difficult to ascertain in what work, out of those whose names have survived, an account such as Damascius' might appear, but the nature of the allegorical material in the theogony makes the attribution plausible, even if certainty can never be achieved on the basis of the surviving evidence.

Such a Peripatetic systematisation of allegorical accounts that appeared in earlier texts, whether mediated by a late sophistic author such as Hellanicus or not, could produce the kind of account found in Damascius, while Athenagoras could then be drawing his account of the Orphic theogony from Orphic texts that circulated in the Classical period—or from later reworkings of such texts, since the pseudepigraphic tradition of Orphic poems often operated by reworking older material rather than composing entirely anew.

10 Ramifications of Peripatetic Work on the Orphica

The conclusion that the account of the Orphic theogony that Damascius draws upon could have been produced in a Peripatetic context could prompt a re-examination of other works that have been placed in Stoic contexts on the basis of the use of allegory. The treatise, On the World,
attributed to Aristotle, has been dated to the first centuries AD because of the similarities with Stoic ideas, especially of Posidonius, but the realisation that Peripatetics such as Eudemus and Hieronymus were dealing with the Orphica in their systematic accounts of cosmologies suggests that a Peripatetic context for this work might after all be plausible.\footnote{Maguire 1993: 116 criticises earlier attempts to link the treatise with Posidonius, preferring to see it as drawing upon neo-Pythagorean sources, but he also points out that many ideas are very commonplace: “I wish to insist on the utter triteness of all the ideas.” Cf. Reale – Bos 1995, who argue for a Peripatetic origin. Bos 1991: 312 notes that, although few are willing to accept that the treatise is actually by Aristotle, more have accepted that it may come from a Peripatetic context and that Stoics may have drawn on the ideas in it, rather than vice versa.}

Again, certain kinds of allegory have prompted scholars to push the date of the *On the World* to the time of the Stoics, despite the Peripatetic elements in the text. In particular, the section on the names of the supreme god, which includes a variety of etymological allegories, has seemed out of keeping with the Aristotelian rejection of allegory, while the quotation from an Orphic “Hymn to Zeus” has been read as a later Stoic expansion of the section in the Derveni Papyrus.

God being one yet has many names, being called after all the various conditions which he himself inaugurates. We call him Zen and Zeus, using the two names in the same sense, as though we should say ‘him through whom we live.’ He is called the son of Cronus and of Time, for he endures from eternal age to age. He is God of Lightning and Thunder, God of the Clear Sky and of Ether, God of the Thunderbolt and of Rain, so called after the rain and the thunderbolts and other physical phenomena. Moreover, after the fruits he is called the Fruitful God, after cities the City-God; he is God of Birth, God of the House-court, God of Kindred and God of our Fathers from his participation in such things. He is God of Comradeship and Friendship and Hospitality, God of Armies and of Trophies, God of Purification and of Vengeance and of Supplication and of Propitiation, as the poets name him, and in very truth the Saviour and God of Freedom, and to complete the tale of his titles, God of Heaven and of the World Below, deriving his names from all natural phenomena and conditions, inasmuch as he is himself the cause of all things. Wherefore it is not badly said in the Orphica,

Zeus of the flashing bolt was the first to be born and the latest; Zeus is the head and the middle; of Zeus were all things created; Zeus is the stay of the earth and the stay of the star-spangled heaven; Zeus is male and female of sex, the bride everlasting; Zeus is the breath of all and the rush of unwearying fire; Zeus is the root of the sea, and the sun and the moon in the heavens; Zeus of the flashing bolt is the king and the ruler of all men, Hiding them all away, and again to the glad light of heaven Bringing them back at his will, performing terrible marvels.\footnote{[Arist.] \textit{Mu.} 7 (401a 12–401b 7): Ἐὰ σὲ ὁ νόμων ὡς ἐκτελεσθείς τὰς πάθεις πάντων ἄνευ τοῦτος νοοῖς. Καταλύμειν γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ Ζήνα καὶ Δία, παραλληλά χρώμιεν τὸς ἁγίασιν, ως καὶ εἰ λειψάμενε βενὶ ἑμὲν. Κρόνου δὲ παῖς καὶ θρόνον λέγεται, δηκάον ἐς αἰῶνας ἀνέμονος εἰς ἐτέραν αἰώναν ἀστραπήσοντες τε καὶ βροντοῦσίν καὶ αἰθρίος καὶ αἰθρίος καρανός τε καὶ ἔστεσα πάντων τῶν ὑπότων καὶ καρανών καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καλείται. Καὶ μὴν ἐπικάρπησα μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν, πολιτεῖς δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων ἀνομάζεται, γενέθλιας τε καὶ ἀρχαῖας καὶ ἀρχαίας καὶ πατριώτικος ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς ταῦτα καινομίας, ἐπαφείας τε καὶ φιλίας καὶ ἔνειμος καὶ στράτευσι καὶ τροποποίησις καθαρότατος τε καὶ παλαιομασίας καὶ ἱκάτους καὶ μελέτους, ἐπεὶ αἱ ποιητα λέγουσι, σωτῆρ χερσωπός τε καὶ ἐλευθεροτόπος οὐκ ὡς τὸ τέλος εἰπέν, ὁμοφόρος τε καὶ ἱρικός, πάσης ἐπώνυμος φάσις ἔως ἄνευ τοῦτος ἄρτος Διὸ καὶ μὴν τῆς Ὀρφικος αὐτῶν ἀκούσα λέγεται, ζείς πρῶτος γένεται, ζείς ὑστέται ἄρχονταρμόνες ἕως καὶ συνετείναται: ζείς πυθηνή γενής τε καὶ σύμφωνον ἀστερόστος: ζείς ἄρον γένεται, ζείς ἄμφοτερον ἐπέλευσεν ἕως πτω ἄνεων, ζείς ἀκαίματον πύρα ἀρχή: ζείς πάντων μία, ζείς ἄνωτος ἐξελίγην: ζείς βασιλεύς, ζείς ἄρχοντα ἄρχονταρμόνες πάντος γὰρ κραφώς αὕτης φασὶ ἔς πολυγηνάται: εἰ καθαρής κράδης ἀνενέκατο, μέρεμα ἡμέρων.} While such a study is beyond the scope of this essay, in light of the Peripatetic interest in cataloguing Orphica, in Eudemus and perhaps in Hieronymus, as well as the evidence that the wide-spread use of allegory in the age of Euripides helped to shape those catalogues, it is worth reconsidering the dating of this treatise and questioning which of its ideas may indeed have been developed among the pupils of Aristotle.
11 Conclusion

The examination of the use of allegory in the Derveni Papyrus and in the Orphic theogony that Damascius associates with Hieronymus reveals the contrasting contexts of the two works. The DA uses allegory to show off his expertise in the exegesis of sacred rites and authoritative texts. The very complexity and apparent scandal of the text serves to emphasise the cleverness of the interpreter who expounds its hidden meanings to his audience, and the treatise thus serves as an advertisement for his expert services in the marketplace, where, in Plato's memorable image, a hubbub of books compete. Embroiled in this agonistic context and deploying his rhetoric to extoll his own expertise, the DA is no scholastic theologian, setting out his cosmology in a systematic treatise like the Stoic or later Peripatetic or Platonic philosophers, but an active ritual practitioner using his allegorical interpretations to show potential clients how clever he can be at unravelling the riddles of life. By contrast, the theogony associated with Hieronymus and Hellanicus seems to derive from a systematic exposition of a poetic cosmogony, possibly a part of a series, like that of Eudemus, and perhaps even deriving from the first systematising efforts of fifth-century thinkers like Hippias and Hellanicus that built allegories into their interpretations. The allegories of the DA prompt us to look beyond the rejection of allegory in Plato and Aristotle to the background of allegorical hermeneutics against which these two great philosophers were arguing. All the allegories found in the Derveni Papyrus and the Hieronyman Theogony find their closest parallels not in Stoic allegoresis, but in the allegories of thinkers in the age of Euripides. As an increasing number of recent studies have shown, allegoresis was hardly the exclusive province of the Stoics or even a marker of the decay of the Hellenic religious spirit, as it was once considered, but rather it was a product of the sophistic revolution that animated theological and philosophical thinking for centuries. Orphic poetry, so often characterised by obscure or scandalous tales, provided generations of thinkers, from the DA through to Damascius, the opportunity to explain through allegorical exegesis all of those things which seem misleading and unclear to the many.

References


