

# Plato's Timaeus vs. On Nature, Book 14

Post by “Don” of January 24, 2025 at 3:34 AM

FWIW... Here's my VERY clunky translation of the French (primarily Google Translate but some other methods and notes) directly from *Les Epicuriens*.

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ON NATURE, BOOK XIV

[DCLP/Trismegistos 59752 = LDAB 856](#)

[Pher. 1148: (29) Arrighetti in part]

[a: p. 46 Leone: (29.1)]...circumferences [lac. 2 lines] or rapid [ou rapides] [lac. 1 word] those who meet [lac. 1 line] undergo interlacing...

[2:p. 47 Leone] ... [what is] seen [lac. 1 word] seems to have the same [lac. 1 word] [and] larger size deviations than [lac. 2 words] for the senses...

[3 : p. 47 Leone)... insofar as we conceive through reason the transferences in it. But depending on whether [lac. 2 words] some kind [lac. 1 line] what is similar [lac. 2 columns].

[6:p. 48 Leone] [le pensée] the thought. [We affirm it,] the [lac. 1 line] is made up of the [elements] of which the associations are made up [lac. of 5 columns].

[12: p. 50 Leone: (29.7)] ... to each of the conclusions [lac. 1 word], and which cause trouble [lac. 10 columns].

[23 p. 16 Leone] ... of this therapy [lac. 2 words] which intensifies [lac. 2 words]. Therefore, not even for ... possesses [lac. 1 word]... prosperity.

Epicurus

[24 : p. 56 Leone: (29.3)] ...we must count ourselves fortunate in this, too - that all who are engaged in such trivialities may have some sort of remedy by which it is possible, simply to attain at times calmness in the contemplation of nature, to get rid of their inborn ([σ]υμφύτου; French: connaturel) [trouble; παραχ]ής, which even later [missing 1 column].

[ἀ-]

γαπητ[όν] καὶ τοῦτ[ο], τὸ

δὴ πάντα τὸν συνε[χό]με-

νον [ταῖς] τοιαύταις περι-  
εργ[ε]ίαις ἔχειν οἰονὶ φάρ-  
μακον δι' οὗ καταστάσεις  
ἀπλ[ᾶς ἔστι]ν ἐν τῇι περὶ φύ-  
σε[ως θεωρί]αι ἀπαλλαγῆ-  
σε[σθαι τῆς σ]υμφύτου ἑαυ-  
τα[ῖς ταραχ]ῆς ἢ καὶ ὕστε-  
10ρογ [..]..... ηπο.. σιτ..  
γε [..]..... ὥστε... υ.  
[...]...... τοιοῦ[τοι]ς..  
[.....]...... ογ [..]....  
[□ -ca.?- □]

[26:p 17 Leone (29:14)]...would present [lac. 1 or 2 words] an aporia\*\*, and [lat. 3 words] relief, it seems, [to] men... [hommes]

\*\*Note from Les Epicuriens: Perhaps: a needlessly disturbing aporia, which Epicurean physics would allow "to dissipate" (or "to relieve"; on κουφιζειν, see Philodemus, [L'Arrogance], 10, p 620). The two preceding fragments explicitly recall the therapeutic function of this physics (see Capital Maxims, XI and XII)

[DB: aporia: "an irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunction in a text, argument, or theory."]

[27: p. 57 Leone: (29.16)] In reply to those who say that the substance of water is produced by the condensation of clouds, and who think that this too is a sign that all things come from a single substance which changes its character by condensation and rarefaction...[28: p.57 Leone (29.17)] ...water is composed...of the [lac. 1 word] of the forms which are taken (lac. 1 line) from which this ... water [lac. 2 words] some water [lac. 1 line] be produced.. [29: p. 58 Leone] ... similar impressions they commit a paralogism [lac. 2 lines] sensation [lac. 3 words] attests...

[30:p. 18 Leone: (29.18) ... men do it, but also some of those who are called "philosophers" (and to whom I am charmed, by Zeus, to give this name, if Democritus also must have it): would we oppose all their notions of celestial phenomena and [others of the same species]?

[31 : p. 18 Leone: (29.19)]... which will receive many particles, and from the other associations [lac. 2 lines] of the sky [lac. 2 lines] by rarefaction [lac. 1 line] principle [lac. 2 words] would conclude [lac. 8 lines] from the air... [32: p. 19 Leone: (29.21)] in nature [lac. 3 lines] vaporize [lac. 2 words] water... [ 33: p.19 Leone: (29.20)] [It is not] according to the condensation or the rarefaction [of the air] that things are generated, but it is according to the differences of forms that the power of deviations manifests [lac. 4 lines] depending on the condensation [lac. 2 lines] is not powerful ...

[34 : p. 19 Leone: (29.22)]. [those] who specify a particular form belonging to fire, earth, water or air, are more ridiculous than those who, without specifying any, according to the juxtapositions, willy-nilly, that certain particular species of forms arise, which correspond to each of the associations which one could call substantial (for some are mistaken on the subject of the elements); but in speaking thus, they would say something that is more in line with these. And generally also they [introduce ?] differences in mixtures, and...

[35: p. 60 Leone: (29.23)] [The Platonists do not explain how one could] conceive of water, air or fire [as solid and indissoluble], since one could not even conceive of the Earth as solid and indissoluble ; even less do they divide them, by making these assertions. For, if none of these bodies has the possibility of being conceived as a solid, it is a great diversity of impressions of forms that [the elements] will deliver, when the cuts are made, and not triangles, pyramids, cubes or any other specific shape. For [the Platonists] would have no plausible way to explain why we should believe that we can find these four forms visible, when the cuts are made, rather than all kinds of forms. [36: p. 60 Leone: (29.24)]... These sorts of forms, in accordance with their appearances, [are sometimes found in] the remaining elements. But it is not only - even supposing that it is - in the case of fire that an impression of form as he indicates would never appear to arise, and that form would not always arise [in fire], nor as belonging to any kind of fire, but as belonging to that part of the fire which is the flame, and belonging to the latter only in particular environmental conditions. When he approaches these kinds [of fire], he sometimes seems to indicate a different form for fire (in its various forms) ....

[37: p. 61 Leone: (29.25)] [the fire] escapes the pressure exerted by the air, being itself composed of extremely fine particles, and incapable of being captured by the air into a reassemblable aggregate. For neither the compactness nor the fineness of the particles, in certain quantities, admits the pressure but it is a certain proportionality which, in certain quantities, is able to accomplish just this sort of thing. But this, too, is a ridiculous form of analogical reasoning from impression, which manifests an ignorance of the means of deducing what is not apparent from what is. Furthermore, neither can the Earth in the same way as... [38:p.61 Leone: (29.26)] [Regarding the] triangles, from which [Plato] also constructs the remaining forms, if he believed them to be atomic, why didn't he offer some proof that they are atomic bodies? Or, if he didn't believe they were atomic, why would anyone think that all the other things that you cobble together yourself out of whatever materials are made from these? But there will be another opportunity to extend this discussion. For now, suffice it to say that it turned out, ridiculously, that this man said, in a sense, that punishing [French: punir] was like [lac. 2 words] of forms [lac. 1 line], exactly at the same time he... [39: p. 62 Leone:

(29.27)]...the form he specifies is [appropriate in each case] to the affects produced by these four elements - ideally and primarily each of the two, but failing that the one which is homeomeric with the phenomenon. But let's end this discussion here.

I wish to discuss a few points of detail against those who think that it is by spirit of rivalry, when one names a substance, that those who use these words act; and also against those who, when a certain disposition of style has been made necessary, launch sophistical arguments on the basis of these questions. For they say that those who change their minds... [40: p. 63 Leone: (29.28)] ... [is proper] to him who has bound into a set of mutually consonant and consequent materials, who has mixed with doctrines which are not proper to it such and such a correct doctrine, even if he happens to have attacked it before. Indeed, a compiler is not someone who assembles a doctrine scattered at random with other doctrines foreign to himself, but someone who juxtaposes mutually incompatible doctrines, whether they come from himself or from others. And if someone says something intelligent that comes from Empedocles, but happens to add something unintelligent...

[41: p. 63 Leone: (29.29)]. For it is not the case that [the sage] suddenly praises someone, and then goes on to praise someone else who holds the opposite opinion to that of the first, nor that he praises some particular thing said by someone, and goes on to praise the opposite of that opinion, as stated by someone else. But, when he praises the kind of correct conclusion reached by so-and-so, and goes on to praise that of someone else, what he is praising is not the opposite of the conclusion of the first, but any conclusion consonant with it. And that's how he behaves in any case: first, as I said, he doesn't even think it's fair to opine on some [statements] of those: wherefore he does not cite the poets, sophists, and orators who lack [the understanding of] any [reasoning] whose conclusion is correct.

[42 p. 64 Leone: (29.30)] ... [compilers] who utter clamours in the form of enthymemes<sup>23</sup> and apophthegms<sup>24</sup>. And of someone who fails to put together anything of consequence, [one can justly say] that he is committing complete doctrinal solecism [DB - see note below]; and, similarly, the one who for his part has undertaken to proceed by following another: a single guide for a single subject! But this is not the case with someone who does not pledge himself entirely to adopt the thesis of such and such, but only imitates it up to a certain point [lac. 1 line] and restores clean... [43: p.64 Leone: (29.31)] For it is fair to say that they are committing a solecism or that, by compiling a correct form of conclusion, they precisely ruin the chance part of their own nature [French: ils ruinent précisément la part de hasard de leur propre nature]. As for those to whom the common usage, due both to reason and to chance, of a name or an undifferentiated expression no longer allows them to perceive the difference, let them be absolutely silent! [παντελῶ[ς] ἡσυχίαν [ἐ]χέτωσαν]

[Final title: p. 64 Leone]

Epicurus

On Nature

Book XIV

3,800 Stiques\*\*\*

written under the archonship of Clearchus\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*The stique is a line of hexametric type, serving as a conventional unit of length, and containing between 34 and 36 letters. The total for Book XIV would therefore be about 136,800 letters, or just over 20,000 words.

\*\*\*\*Either 301/300 BCE

Per Merriam Webster:

solecism

1: an ungrammatical combination of words in a sentence

also : a minor blunder in speech

2: something deviating from the proper, normal, or accepted order

3: a breach of etiquette or decorum

Did you know?

The city of Soloi had a reputation for bad grammar. Located in Cilicia, an ancient coastal nation in Asia Minor, it was populated by Athenian colonists called soloikoi (literally "inhabitants of Soloi"). According to historians, the colonists of Soloi allowed their native Athenian Greek to be corrupted and started using words incorrectly. As a result, soloikos gained a new meaning: "speaking incorrectly." The Greeks used that sense as the basis of soloikismos, meaning "an ungrammatical combination of words." That root, in turn, gave rise to the Latin soloecismus, the direct ancestor of the English word solecism. Nowadays, solecism can refer to social blunders as well as sloppy syntax.