

Episode Fourteen - Atoms Are Solid And Indestructible, and Constitute the Seeds of All Things.

Post by "Don" of April 28, 2020 at 11:24 AM

Here are the sections translated as "seeds" in the Letter to Herodotus (numbers are to sections in Diogenes Laertius). [Perseus Digital Library uses the "Lives of Eminent Philosophers." Diogenes Laertius. R.D. Hicks. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1972 \(First published 1925\).](#)

Section 38 in that translation has "germs" but uses the same Greek word: **σπέρμα (sperma)** and each of the sections just uses a different declension. It literally means "**seed**." Below are the sections for context. [Here is a link to the Perseus Digital Library's Greek Word Study Tool that has links to LSJ, Middle Liddell, Slater, and Autenrieth.](#) I *love* that Greek Word Study Tool! [Also like Wiktionary for the declensions.](#)

[38] ... For in that case anything would have arisen out of anything, standing as it would in no need of its proper **germs**.

πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος. πᾶν γὰρ ἐκ παντὸς ἐγίνετ' ἂν **σπερμά** των γε οὐθὲν προσδεόμενον

This section uses **σπέρματα** (another declension)

[74] "And further, we must not suppose that the worlds have necessarily one and the same shape. [On the contrary, in the twelfth book "On Nature" he himself says that the shapes of the worlds differ, some being spherical, some oval, others again of shapes different from these. They do not, however, admit of every shape. Nor are they living beings which have been separated from the infinite.] For nobody can prove that in one sort of world there might not be contained, whereas in another sort of world there could not possibly be, the **seeds** out of which animals and plants arise and all the rest of the things we see. [And the same holds good for their nurture in a world after they have arisen. And so too we must think it happens upon the earth also.]

[74] "Ἔτι δὲ καὶ τοὺς κόσμους οὔτε ἐξ ἀνάγκης δεῖ νομίζειν ἓνα σχηματισμὸν ἔχοντας : : [ἀλλὰ καὶ διαφόρους αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἰβ' Περὶ φύσεως αὐτός φησιν: οὓς μὲν γὰρ σφαιροειδεῖς, καὶ ὠοειδεῖς ἄλλους, καὶ ἀλλοιοσχήμονας ἑτέρους: οὐ μὲντοι πᾶν σχῆμα ἔχειν. οὐδὲ ζῶα εἶναι ἀποκριθέντα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου.] οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἀποδείξειεν οὐδεὶς, ὥς <ἐν> μὲν τῷ τοιούτῳ καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐμπεριελήφθη τὰ τοιαῦτα **σπέρματα**, ἐξ ὧν ζῶά τε καὶ φυτὰ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα <τὰ> θεωρούμενα συνίσταται, ἐν δὲ τῷ τοιούτῳ οὐκ ἂν ἐδυνήθη. [ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐντραφήναι. τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς νομιστέον.]

In the *Letter to Pythocles*, we find **σπερμάτων**:

[89] "That there is an infinite number of such worlds can be perceived, and that such a world may arise in a world or in one of the intermundia (by which term we mean the spaces between worlds) in a tolerably empty space and not, as some maintain, in a vast space perfectly clear and void.¹¹⁶ It arises when certain suitable **seeds** rush in from a single world or intermundium, or from several, and undergo gradual additions or articulations or changes of place, it may be, and waterings from appropriate sources, until they are matured and firmly settled in so far as the foundations laid can receive them.

[89] "Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τοιοῦτοι κόσμοι εἰσὶν ἄπειροι τὸ πλῆθος ἔστι καταλαβεῖν, καὶ ὅτι καὶ ὁ τοιοῦτος δύναται κόσμος γίνεσθαι καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ μετακοσμίῳ, ὃ λέγομεν μεταξὺ κόσμων διάστημα, ἐν πολυκένῳ τόπῳ καὶ οὐκ ἐν μεγάλῳ εἰλικρινεῖ καὶ κενῷ, καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν, ἐπιτηδείων τινῶν **σπερμάτων** ῥυέντων ἀφ' ἐνὸς κόσμου ἢ μετακοσμίου ἢ καὶ ἀπὸ πλειόνων κατὰ μικρὸν προσθέσεις τε καὶ διαρθρώσεις καὶ μεταστάσεις ποιούντων ἐπ' ἄλλον τόπον, ἐὰν οὕτω τύχη, καὶ ἐπαρδεύσεις ἐκ τῶν ἐχόντων ἐπιτηδείως ἕως τελειώσεως καὶ διαμονῆς ἐφ' ὅσον τὰ ὑποβληθέντα θεμέλια τὴν προσδοχὴν δύναται ποιεῖσθαι.

This section uses the same word, different declension: σπερμάτων