Appendix: Structural Overview of M IX.13-194

13: Introduction – the stakes in the discussion for dogmatists and for sceptics

A. 14-48: On the origins of our conception of god

I. 14-28: Dogmatic philosophers’ views on the subject

14-16: Unnamed exponents – gods as a fiction designed to keep order in society
17: Euhemerus – divinity ascribed to themselves by leaders
18: Prodicus – divinity ascribed to major beneficial aspects of the natural world
19: Democritus – divinity ascribed to outsize (presumably anthropomorphic) images
20-2: Aristotle – the conception of gods due to perception of
a) the soul’s prophetic power in sleep and at the point of death (21) and
b) the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies (22)
23: Unnamed exponents – the conception of god due to reflection on the human intellect and ascription of something similar, but greater, to the universe
24: Democritus (and others unnamed) – the conception of god due to perception of meteorological and astronomical anomalies
25: Epicurus – divinity ascribed to outsize anthropomorphic images in sleep
26-7: Unnamed exponents – the conception of gods due to perception of the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies
28: (some recent) Stoics – the conception of god arrived at by superlatively intelligent early humans

II. 29-48: Objections to these views

29: The variety of these views itself puts each of them into doubt
30-3: Objections to the view sketched in 14-16
a) The process described presupposes, rather than explains, a conception of god (30-1)
b) The conception of god varies between cultures (32)
c) The process would require, *per impossibile*, a congress of all early humans (32)
d) Response to b) and c): perhaps each culture had a separate such process (which would also explain the differences in the resulting conceptions) (33)
e) Objection to the response: there is a core conception of god shared by all humans (33)
34-8: Objections to Euhemerus (cf. 17)
a) Again the conception of god is presupposed rather than explained (34)

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Further notes on certain points of detail (in this section and in the entirety of *Against the Physicists*) may be found in Bett (forthcoming). This also includes an outline of the argument, but a far less detailed one than I have provided here.
b) Leaders’ self-promotional activities tend not to outlive them (35)
c) The only way they could achieve a divine reputation would be by assuming the identity of an already recognized divinity (35) (examples from mythology, 36-7)
d) Conclusion (38)

39-41: Objections to Prodicus (cf. 18)
a) The things thus ascribed divinity are obviously perishable, which is absurd (39)
b) This view would lead to an absurd proliferation of the things ascribed divinity (including some humans) (40-1)

42: Objection to Democritus (cf. 19) – the explanans is more implausible than the explanandum

43: Objections to Epicurus (cf. 25)
a) The same applies as to Democritus (cf. on 42)
b) This does not explain why we came to a conception of god (including blessedness and imperishability), rather than of a giant human

44: Generalization of the last point to apply to all the proposed explanations

45-6: Response to the last objection – perhaps the notions of divine blessedness and imperishability originated by extrapolation from the notion of a happy human being

47: Objection to the response – this is circular reasoning, since the notion of a happy (eudaimon) human being is parasitic on a conception of the divine

48: Conclusion and transition to the question of the gods’ existence

B. 49-193: On the existence or non-existence of gods

49: Introduction – the need to inquire into the existence of god in addition to the conception; the sceptic’s greater “safety” on this subject

I. 50-9: Survey of opposing positions

50: God does exist – “Most of the dogmatists and the common preconception of ordinary life”

51-8: God does not exist
a) Initial list of adherents (51)
b) Euhemerus (51, cf. 17)
c) Prodicus (52, cf. 18)
d) Diagoras of Melos: his atheism the result of seeing his malefactor escape unharmed (53)
e) Critias, including an extensive quotation usually thought to be from the play Sisyphus (54; cf. 14-16 for the same line of thought)
f) Theodorus (no detail given) (55)
g) Protagoras “according to some”: agnostic quotation; his condemnation, escape and death; Timon’s verses on the subject (55-7)
h) Epicurus “according to some” an atheist in private (58)

59: Suspension of judgement on the question – the sceptics (59)

59: Transition to arguments for the positive and negative positions
II. 60-136: Arguments for the existence of gods

60: Introduction – four main types of argument listed

61-74: Argument “from the agreement among all humans”
   a) The universality of religious practice as testament to the universality, and the
      truth, of a conception of the divine (despite differences in specifics) (61)
   b) By contrast, the short duration of worship of (merely human) kings (62)
   c) The views of the wise: poets (63), philosophers (64-5)
   d) Objection: a universal conception does not establish truth – the counter-example
      of Hades (66); generalization (with further examples) concerning the internal
      inconsistencies in myth (67-70)
   e) Response to the objection: the conception of god’s existence has no such
      inconsistency (71); the beliefs about Hades are refutable on additional scientific or
      philosophical grounds, but the existence of the gods is supported on those same
      grounds (71-4)

74-5: Transition to argument from design

75-122: Argument from design
   a) The motion and design of the universe must ultimately be caused by some self-
      moving divine power (75-6)
   b) What produces rational beings (i.e., humans) must itself be rational (77)
   c) The world is unified (78-80), and its unifying principle must, given the character
      of the world’s changes and the presence in it of rational beings, be of the highest
      character (i.e., the highest recognized in Stoic theory) (81-5)
   d) Since there are ensouled animals on the land and in the sea, it is all the more
      likely that there are ensouled animals in the air (86), and therefore also likely that
      there are ensouled animals, of far greater powers (i.e., gods), in the heavens (87)
   e) Cleanthes’ argument: animals can be ordered in terms of superiority; but, though
      ranking higher than all other observable animals, we could hardly be the highest-
      ranked animal of all, given our manifest imperfections; so there must be a being
      superior to us, i.e., god (88-91)
   f) Xenophon’s argument (allegedly, but in fact not always, quoting him): i) the
      structure of a live human being excites much greater admiration than the design of
      human artworks, and thus belief in the existence of a far superior designing
      intelligence (92-4); ii) in addition, by analogy with the physical elements, the
      presence of mind in the universe must extend beyond just human beings (94)
   g) Explication of the force of Xenophon’s argument, concentrating solely on its
      second part (95)
   h) Objection: an unfriendly parallel case (96)
   i) Response to the objection: dismissal of the parallel (97)
   j) Reformulation of the second part of Xenophon’s argument (98)
   k) Reformulation of the first part of Xenophon’s argument (though presented as
      equivalent to j) (99-100)
l) Zeno’s argument, drawing on Xenophon: “What puts forth seed of a rational thing is itself rational” (101)
m) Elaboration and support of Zeno’s argument (102-3)
n) Another argument of Zeno: “The rational is superior to the non-rational; but nothing is superior to the world; therefore the world is rational” (104)
o) Quotations from Plato, *Timaeus* 29d, 30b, presented as equivalent to this argument of Zeno (105-7)
p) Objection from Alexinus: an unfriendly parallel case (108)
q) Response to the objection: dismissal of the parallel (109-10)
r) A further Stoic argument from the orderly motion of the universe (111-14)
s) Argument from the idea that the cause of something admirable is more admirable than the thing itself (115-18)
t) Argument from the idea that any multi-part natural object (which would include the world as a whole) has a “controller” (119-20)
u) Objection: by this argument the earth and the air would qualify as gods (121)
v) Response to the objection: this misunderstands the force of the term “controller” (122)

122-3: Transition to argument “from the absurdities that follow for those who do away with the divine”

123-32: Argument “from the absurdities that follow for those who do away with the divine”
a) If there are no gods, piety, holiness, wisdom and justice (which cannot be understood except by reference to gods) do not exist – but they do (123-6)
b) A Pythagorean conception of justice as extending to non-rational animals – couched, however, in terms of the Stoic notion of all-pervading “breath” (*pneuma*) (127-9)
c) Rejection of the Pythagorean picture: if correct, it would extend justice, absurdly, to plants and stones (130)
d) Vindication of the original argument a) (now ascribed to Stoics): it is the common rational nature of gods and humans that creates relations of justice between them (and therefore requires justice to be conceived in terms of a reference to gods) (131)
e) If there are no gods, prophecy and other activities having to do with the reading of divine signs do not exist – but they do (132)

133-6: Argument fitting the description of the fourth and last type introduced in 60 – “from the refutation of the opposing arguments” – but not announced as such
a) Zeno’s argument: “One would reasonably honor the gods; but one would not reasonably honor non-beings; therefore there are gods” (133)
b) Objection: an unfriendly parallel case – this argument would establish the actual existence of the wise, which the Stoics denied (133)
c) Response to the objection by Diogenes of Babylon: dismissal of the parallel through a subtler understanding of the original argument’s second premise (134-5)
d) Another way of dismissing the parallel, through an ambiguity in the term “honor” (136)

137: Transition to arguments against the existence of gods (with a suggestion that they will prove to be of “equal strength” (isostheneia) to the preceding ones)

III. 138-90: Arguments against the existence of gods
a) Any god would have to be an animal (by Stoic reasoning); but an animal has senses, and a divine animal would have to have at least our five senses; but a being with senses experiences pleasure and displeasure; and a being subject to displeasure is perishable (which is contrary to the conception of god) (138-41)
b) A being with senses is subject to sense-perceptions that are distressing, which again entails perishability (142-3)
c) Having the sense of sight makes one subject to “separation and commingling”, which again entails perishability (144-5)
d) Sense-perception is a kind of alteration, which again entails perishability (146-7)
e) The divine cannot be either unlimited (because that would entail absence of motion or soul) or limited (because that would entail something superior to god) – but there is no third possibility (148-50)
f) The divine cannot be either incorporeal (which would entail inactivity) or corporeal (which would entail perishability) (151)
g) A divine being would have to have all the virtues; but it does not have the virtues of continence and endurance, which would involve abstaining from and withstanding certain things with difficulty; if god does not have these virtues, he has the corresponding vices, which is absurd; yet if he does have them, that entails perishability (152-7)
h) An entirely virtuous being would have the virtue of bravery; but this would mean that some things were fearsome to god, which would again entail perishability (158-60)
i) An entirely virtuous being would have the virtue of greatness of soul; but this would involve rising above circumstances – and a being that has to rise above circumstances is subject to distress and so perishable (161)
j) An entirely virtuous being would have practical wisdom (phronēsis), which is knowledge of what is good and bad and indifferent; but this would include knowledge of hardship, which presupposes experience of hardship (162-4); it will not help to suggest that hardship can be conceived by contrast with the experience of pleasure – pleasure itself presupposes experience of hardship (165); but susceptibility to hardship entails perishability (166)
k) An entirely virtuous being would have the virtue of good deliberation; but deliberation has to do with things about which one is unclear; and if there are things unclear to god, then he is subject to fear, which entails perishability (167-70)
l) If, on the contrary, nothing is unclear to god, he does not have skill (technē), which applies to circumstances of less than full clarity; but if he does not have skill, he will not have virtue, which (on the Stoic view) is or includes “skill relating to life” (171-2); rehash of previous points, applied to the issue of god having or not having skill (172-3)
m) If god does not have practical wisdom (cf. j), he does not have moderation, which is defined in terms of it; besides, moderation would imply that god is subject to desires (which is assumed not to be the case); but the absence of these virtues implies the absence of virtue in general – and a being without virtue is no god (174-5)

n) The divine neither lacks virtue (which would entail defectiveness) nor has it (which would entail something superior to god) – but there is no third possibility (176-7)

o) The divine neither has speech (which would presuppose bodily organs, as well as the arbitrary choice of some particular language or dialect), nor lacks it (which would be contrary to common conceptions) (178-9)

p) The divine is either incorporeal or corporeal; on the first, see on f) above; on the second, this would entail that it is either a compound (which would be perishable) or a simple body (which would be soulless and non-rational) – and there is no third possibility (180-1)

q) Sorites arguments from Carneades: if we agree that the generally accepted gods exist, we must, absurdly, admit as gods i) every instance of natural running water, no matter how small (182-3), ii) lengths of time (184), iii) beings with ridiculously trivial functions (185), iv) emotions (186-8), v) stones (189); closing reference to other such arguments not mentioned (190)

191: Conclusion to arguments for and against the existence of god

IV. 191-3: The sceptical outcome

a) Sceptical suspension of judgement as the result of this face-off between opposing arguments (191)

b) This reinforced by the conflicting views about the character of the gods in ordinary life (191-2)

c) And also by the immorality of the gods as depicted in poetry and myth (and the consequent impiety of those depictions) (192-3)

194: Conclusion to the section on god and transition to the section on cause.