

The *topos* of the Great King

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Declaration

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Abstract

In multiple ancient Greek texts, the phrase ‘the Great King’ (ὁ μέγας ὁ βασιλεύς) makes a frequent appearance. This phrase, when it was introduced to the ancient Greek world, referred to the ancient Persian kings such as Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Artaxerxes. In addition, it also referred to the leaders of hierarchically organised governances. However, Pseudo-Aristotle (*De mundo* 398a.30), Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 11.12), Aelius Aristides (*Orationes* 26.27) and Philo of Alexandria (*De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71, *De somniis* 140-1) adopted this phrase in a distinctive way. This phrase entails an image of the monarchical system of governance, in which the Great King, who stays hidden in his palace, rules over his empire through his satraps, his eyes and ears and the beacon-signals. These four authors utilised this image of the phrase ‘the Great King’, which consists of the Great King, his subjects and the beacon-signals. These elements imply the main components of a Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos: 1) the prime god who is transcendent from the cosmos, 2) his divine mediators who are immanent in the cosmos and 3) the hierarchical order, according to which all existential beings are arranged. Consequently, it becomes clear that these four authors utilised this image to develop their own arguments on the basis of the Middle Platonic understanding of the cosmos prevalent in their time. Because of the function and implication of this image, this thesis labels the image as a *topos*, which indicates a conventional way of dealing with a traditional moral-philosophical topic. The main concern of this thesis is indeed to demonstrate that the image of the Great King as used by these authors is a moral-philosophical *topos* and to show how this *topos* is used in the respective texts.

Opsomming

In verskeie antieke Griekse tekste maak die frase ‘die Groot Koning’ (ὁ μέγας ὁ βασιλεύς) ’n gereelde verskyning. Hierdie frase, toe dit aan die antieke Griekse wêreld bekendgestel is, het na Persiese konings soos Kuros, Kambuses, Darius en Artaxerxes verwys. Daarby het dit ook na die leiers van hiërargies georganiseerde regerings verwys. Nietemin het Pseudo-Aristoteles (*De mundo* 398a.30), Maximus van Tirus (*Dissertationes* 11.12), Aelius Aristides (*Orationes* 26.27) en Filo van Alexandrië (*De decalogo* 61, *De opificio mundi* 71, *De somniis* 141) hierdie frase op ’n kenmerkende manier aangeneem. Hierdie frase behels ’n beeld van die monargiese regeringstelsel, waarin die Groot Koning, wat verborge in sy paleis bly, oor sy ryk regeer deur sy satrape, sy oë en ore en die bakenseine. Hierdie vier outeurs maak gebruik van hierdie beeld van die frase ‘die Groot Koning’, wat uit die Groot Koning, sy onderdane en die bakenseine bestaan. Hierdie elemente impliseer die hoofkomponente van ’n Middel-Platoniese raamwerk van die kosmos: 1) die hoofgod wat vanuit die kosmos transendeer, 2) sy goddelike bemiddelaars wat inherent in die kosmos is en 3) die hiërargiese orde, waarvolgens alle eksistensiële wesens georden is. Gevolglik word dit duidelik dat hierdie vier outeurs hierdie beeld benut het om hul eie argumente te ontwikkel op grond van die Middel-Platoniese begrip van die kosmos wat algemeen in hul tyd was. Vanweë die funksie en implikasie van hierdie beeld, klassifiseer hierdie tesis die beeld as ’n *topos*, wat dui op ’n konvensionele hanteringswyse van ’n tradisionele moreel-filosofiese onderwerp. Die hoofsaak van hierdie tesis is inderdaad om te bewys dat die beeld van die Groot Koning soos deur hierdie outeurs gebruik, ’n moreel-filosofiese *topos* is en om te toon hoe hierdie *topos* in die onderskeie tekste gebruik word.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In multiple ancient Greek writings, the phrase ‘the Great King’ (ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας or parallels) is often adopted by different authors. This phrase finds its origin in the ancient Eastern tradition from 2000 BCE to the time of the Achaemenids (Wiesehöfer 2004:999) and was introduced to the Greek world in the context of the Persian wars in 5th century BCE. After having been introduced to the Greek world, this phrase made its frequent appearance in various genres of literature. This phrase was usually meant in a literal sense but due to later historical events its meaning and use were extended.

Multiple Greek authors such as Herodotus (*Historiae* 1.188.4), Plato (*Alcibiades* 120a.3) and Isocrates (*Evagoras* 20.7) adopted this phrase, which was the official title of the ancient Persian kings (Wiesehöfer 2001:29). These authors belong to the generation which experienced the Persian wars and the dreadful power of ‘the Great King’. They utilised this phrase in order to refer to the Persian kings when they were describing their experience of the violent clash of the two different cultures. To them, the Great King was an existing threat that caused fear to the Greeks.

Since the conquest of Alexander the Great, even though there were neither the Persian Empire nor its kings, the phrase ‘the Great King’ was still being adopted by multiple Greek authors (e.g. Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 30.3.6; *Aristeae epistula ad Philocratem* 290.2; *Oracula Sybillina* 11.141). They utilised the phrase ‘the Great King’ on the basis of a well-known fact that this phrase had been the official title of the ancient Persian kings; the legacy of the historical war so powerfully impacted the Greek world that it was handed down to the descendants through this phrase. This made it possible for the use of ‘the Great King’ to become a cultural and conventional phenomenon to the Greek authors when they were giving historical, philosophical, and religious instructions to their readers. To them, the Great King became a common title for the leaders of the monarchic system of governance. Therefore, the phrase, which basically indicated the Persian kings, was also adopted by Hellenistic rulers such as Seleucids, Antiochus III, Antiochus IV and by paltry princes (Wiesehöfer 2004:999). It sometimes even referred to God due to its metaphorically extended implication (*Matt.* 5:35, *Didache* 11.3.2, etc.).

This thesis, however, will focus on only four authors who lived during the time of Middle Platonism (80 BCE-220 CE),¹ namely, Pseudo-Aristotle (*De mundo* 398a.11-398b.7), Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 11.12), Aelius Aristides (*Orationes* 26.27) and Philo of Alexandria (*De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71, *De somniis* 1.140-1) as they seem to use the phrase ‘the Great King’ in a definite way for a specific purpose. The period they belong to means that these authors share Middle Platonic views or, at least, that they are influenced by Middle Platonism. Especially the imperial background of this phrase makes it a reasonable assumption that the image behind the phrase could be closely connected to the hierarchical system of governance. For example, Pseudo-Aristotle utilises this phrase when depicting the hierarchical rule of the Persian Empire in detail. Maximus adopts the phrase along with the description of the hierarchical order of a great number of the Great King’s servants. Aristides makes use of the phrase to describe the chaos that arose among the Macedonians after the death of Alexander the Great as leader of a hierarchical government. Philo uses the phrase to explain his Jewish understanding of the hierarchical relationship between God and the universe. These four authors do not use the phrase ‘the Great King’ in its literal sense but for the image of the Great King constructed on the basis of the well-known historical facts about the Great King, in order to draw the readers to their philosophical arguments on the hierarchical cosmos ruled by the primary god. In short, they adopted the image of the Great King to explain philosophical ideas which are difficult to understand because the former is much easier for the readers to approach than the latter. By only reading the phrase literally, therefore, the point the authors aim to make will become lost.

I will now briefly introduce the different contexts in each authors in which the image of the Great King appears. One can find the clearest picture of the image of the Great King in *De mundo* (398a.11-398b.7) because it has the most detailed description of the Great King and the system of his empire: the Great King, sitting in a concentric multi-walled palace, rules the empire through his satraps and is constantly informed by both his eyes and ears and the beacon-signals. These features are adopted to explain how the transcendent god immanently influences

¹ I follow Dillon’s (1996) periodisation of Middle Platonism. The beginning and the end of its influence ranges from Antiochus of Ascalon (68 BCE-130 CE) to Plotinus (204/5-270) (Gerson 2013:179).

the universe (398a.1-11). Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 11.12) has a relatively shorter description of the Great King than that of *De mundo*: he does not have descriptions of the Great King's eyes and ears and the beacon-signals. This abbreviated description of the Great King reflects his own purpose to emphasise the cosmic hierarchical order by focusing on a great number of δαίμονες between god and human beings. Aelius Aristides has a unique form of utilising the phrase. Aristides describes a chaos which resulted from the death of Alexander the Great: Aristides compares this chaos to the satraps without the Great King. This system of satraps without the Great King highlights the Great King's part in maintaining the order of imperial system of governance. By doing so, Aristides attempts to praise the Roman regime, which was controlled and preserved by the Roman emperor, who should be justified as a divine ruler (Van Nuffelen 2011:139). The sole Jewish author of these four, Philo has three references to the Great King in arguing for the ontological difference between God and other deities as his creatures (*De decalogo* 61, 177-8) and describing the journey of the mind towards God (*De opificio mundi* 71) and the role of the angels compared to the Great King's eyes and ears (*De somniis* 1.140-1).

However, it should be noted that, in spite of these contextual differences, all the authors utilise the image of the Great King to describe the relation between god and the universe as common ground on which they develop their own arguments on a philosophical, especially, cosmo-theological topic. It is also important to point out that they use the image of the Great King as comparison because they compare the relation between god and the universe to the relation between the Great King and his empire. Nevertheless, this thesis will argue that this image does not function as just a comparison because it conveys traditional cosmo-theological notions in order to deal with a cosmo-theological topic. Therefore, considering the fact that the four different authors utilise this same image in developing their own cosmo-theological arguments, the image of the Great King seems to be taken by these authors as a conventional approach to deal with a traditional cosmo-theological theme.

Then, how should this phenomenon among these four authors be defined and explained if it is something more than a mere comparison? A means to answer this question can perhaps be accomplished through the term *topos*. *Topos* is a concept which is not strange to the Western

mind (Hadot 1995:66) to the extent that scholars had not felt any serious need to explain this concept for a long time. Since 1953, however, after Curtius defined *topos*, many scholars have attempted to define and explicate *topos*. Among those scholars, Malherbe (1986:144) had a significant impact on the research on *topos* with his definition “a stock treatment”. This means that when a method of dealing with a topic is repeated among different authors and appears to be conventional, it can be labelled a *topos* (Thom 2003:567). In short, *topos* is a conventional approach to certain traditional topics and by applying this understanding to the use of the image of the Great King, the authors could connect this image to their philosophical ideas in order to deal with an abstruse cosmo-theological topic.

Throughout the thesis, the cosmo-theological ideas implied by the image of the Great King will be clarified. For, should the image of the Great King be taken as a conventional approach to a traditional topic, the first thing to be conducted is to prove that the image of the Great King is not only an acceptable but also effective way of dealing with this cosmo-theological topic. This process of proving the validity of *topos* will be called *topos* analysis throughout this thesis. Owing to the phrase’s historical origin, research on the historical facts about the Great King will assist the reader in understanding the philosophical implication of this image. Subsequently, the texts of the four authors will be read within its appropriate philosophical context.

This thesis consists of six chapters: chapter one functions as an introduction and background to the topic and in chapter two, the concept of *topos* will be discussed. The purpose of chapter two is to provide a definition of *topos*, which covers the wide range of its applications. In chapter three, the thesis will provide the historical background of the specific elements in the image of the Great King and in chapter four the philosophical background of the ancient notion of the hierarchical cosmos underlying this image will be discussed by tracing the ancient philosophical arguments on $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$.

Chapter five is devoted to the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King, which is adopted by the four authors, Pseudo-Aristotle, Maximus of Tyre, Aelius Aristides and Philo of Alexandria. These four authors’ uses of this image will be analysed in an order, which will assist in grasping the philosophical implications conveyed through the image of the Great King.

Firstly, this essay will analyse Pseudo-Aristotle's *De mundo* because this treatise clearly articulates its purpose in using the image of the Great King and describes the Great King in the most detailed manner. The analysis of *De mundo* 398a.11-35 will provide the reader with a secure foundation for further analyses of the other texts. Secondly, Maximus' *Dissertationes* 11.12 will be analysed as it is easier to compare Maximus' description of the Great King with that of *De mundo* than with the other authors' descriptions. This is due to the fact that Maximus has the most similar description of the Great King to that of *De mundo*. Thirdly, a contemporary of Maximus, Aristides' *Orationes* 26.27 will be analysed because he adopted this image for his political purpose in a distinctive way: his aim is to justify the Roman regime by showing the similarity between the Roman governing system and the divine cosmic hierarchical order. This thesis will further examine how the image of the Great King serves his political purpose. Philo's *De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71 and *De somniis* 1.141 will be discussed at the end of chapter four because the chronological relationship between Pseudo-Aristotle and Philo is still uncertain and the Jewish background of Philo distinguishes him from the other three authors. Through this chapter, it will be made clear how the elements of the image of the Great King describe the frame of the Middle Platonic cosmology as the basis of the cosmo-theological arguments.

Chapter six will confirm that the image of the Great King is a *topos* by explicating the cosmo-theological notions which construct the hierarchical frame of the cosmos. Finally, chapter seven will present the conclusion of this thesis.

The goal of the *topos* analysis is to contribute to mapping out the Greco-Roman moral-philosophical world. As part of achieving this goal, the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King will assist readers in mapping a part of the ancient cosmo-theological world by deciphering the cosmo-theological notions implied through the image of the Great King.

Furthermore, one may ask such questions as where the *topos* of the Great King came from and which of the four authors was the first to adopt this image from which the others could have drawn significance. Through the process of dating these texts, possible clues to answering these two questions can perhaps be found, even though it is unlikely that any definite answer can be

given. The main reason why it is difficult to answer these questions is that it is impossible to clearly define the relationship between these four authors owing to the fact that the date of *De mundo*, which has the most detailed description of the Great King, is still under dispute. This difficulty in dating *De mundo* indicates that even the relation between the two authors, who have similar descriptions of the Great King, namely Pseudo-Aristotle and Maximus of Tyre, cannot be clearly defined (Thom 2014a:4).

Thus far the rationale for further discussions over the *topos* analysis of the image of Great King has been provided. However, before going further, it also should be noted that despite the frequent appearance of the phrase ‘the Great King’, only the four authors utilised its image to develop their own philosophical arguments on god and the cosmos. This thesis therefore should depend on the other expressions, which convey the philosophical ideas corresponding to those implied through the image of the Great King, when conducting the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King.

Chapter Two: The concept of *topos*

As already indicated in the previous chapter, there are six texts by four different authors, who, under the influence of Middle Platonism, adopt the image of the Great King to describe a traditional cosmo-theological topic concerning the relationship between god and the universe (Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo* 398a.11-35; Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.12; Aelius Aristides, *Orationes* 26.27.20; Philo of Alexandria, *De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71 and *De somniis* 1.140-1). The author of *De mundo* provides the most detailed descriptions of the Great King, his palace, and his system of governance and so forth. Maximus of Tyre focuses on the relationship between the Great King and a great number of people around him to explain the relationship between god and countless δαίμονες. Aelius Aristides describes the chaos that occurred among the Macedonians as a result of Alexander the Great's death and compares this chaos to the satraps without the Great King. Philo of Alexandria, as a Hellenised Jew, seems to have a different way of using the image of the Great King due to his Jewish monotheistic understanding of God. These four authors utilise this image to develop their own arguments, starting from a common basis.

However, it is noteworthy that all these four authors adopt the image of the Great King based on the comparison between the image of the Great King and the notion of the universe ruled by the supreme god. In other words, the phrase 'the Great King' functions as a simile (*De mundo*, Maximus and Aristides) and a metaphor (Philo) for god. Both similes and metaphors are formulated based on the similarity of two different objects. A metaphor can be described as "the application to one thing of the name that belongs to another" (Hill 2003:116) and a simile is "the comparison of one figure with another" (Murphy 2003:148). A simile can thus be understood as "a metaphor introduced by specific words of comparison" (Hill 2003:116).² In the context of moral-philosophical teaching, the effective conveyance of instruction depends on whether the similarity between the two different objects in comparison is approved by culture and convention. Bizzell and Herzberg (1990:542) provide an example of how elements

² The crucial differences between the concepts of simile and metaphor is whether the substitution occurs or not. For more information, see Innes (2003:7-27).

of two different objects in comparison have connections with each other and make the comparison effective in a moral–philosophical teaching:

St. Jerome imitated the first of these parallels used by Cicero³ in one of his letters to Heliodorus: “In giving you this advice I am not like a man whose ship and cargo are unharmed, an inexperienced sailor who knows nothing about currents. I am more like a man just cast up on the shore from a shipwreck, in a frightened voice warning those about to set a sail. In that tide race the Charybdis of self-indulgence engulfs a man’s health of soul; on the other side lust smiling like Scylla with fair face entices the ship of modesty onto the rocks. Here is the shore beset with barbarian foes; here is that pirate, the devil, with all his crew, ready with chains for those he hopes to seize. Do not trust it, do not feel at ease. The sea may smile, smooth as a millpond, the surface of the motionless element may hardly be ruffled by a breath of wind, yet this flat plain contains great mountains. Under the surface is danger; under the surface is the enemy. Ready the ropes, take in the sails. Let the yard-arm be the sign of the Cross before you. That calm is storm.”

This could be greatly extended if the speaker took all the separate dangers which threaten virtue because of sin or wicked men or any other cause and collated them with the various things that endanger the lives of sailors, and then brought in comparisons using situations that were greater, or less, or different, or contrasting, and finally ornamented the passage where appropriate with neat sayings and striking remarks in conclusion.

As this extract clearly shows, in moral-philosophical teachings, a comparison is understood and adopted on the basis of the similarity between two different objects, which is validated by custom and culture. In the context of philosophical arguments, the comparison functions as a means to introduce an abstruse topic to audiences due to its two effects: 1) “in argumentation, the movement is constantly towards something more impressive; a comparison gets its effect by starting from something less striking” and 2) “the comparison shows the fresh example as something smaller or greater or equal” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1990:527, 540). Likewise, the

³ This indicates the first quotation from Cicero’s *Pro Murena*. The second parallel is of Greek musicians and orators, and the first one is of the sailors as follows, “Those just sailing into harbor after long sea-voyage eagerly give information to those setting out about likelihood of storms and the pirate situation and what the different places are like, because it is natural of feel kindly towards those who are about to face the dangers which we have just escaped. What then should be my feelings, who am just coming into sight of land after a terrible tossing, towards this man who, as I can see, must go out to face dreadful storms?” (Bizzell and Herzorg 1990: 542).

phrase ‘Great King’ does not play the role by itself but only with its image, which was built up on the well-known historical facts about the Great King.

It is, however, not surprising that modern scholars have different interpretations of this image as they do not share the same cultural convention as the four authors, who used this image through comparison. For example, Thom (2014c:107) asserts that the image of the Great King implies the notion of the tension between god’s transcendence and immanence while Van Nuffelen (2011:122-146) argues that this image concerns the ideas of the cosmic hierarchy, which sustains the universe. Van Nuffelen’s suggestion, however, too narrowly restricts the scope of this image because this cosmic hierarchy is merely an aspect of its implication. This is a natural consequence because he develops his argument from the analysis of the text of Aelius Aristides, who aimed to justify the Roman regime by demonstrating that its hierarchical governing system imitates the heavenly cosmic hierarchy. In spite of these two scholars’ points being somewhat different from each other’s, they agree that this image should be examined by the *topos* analysis (Van Nuffelen 2011:125).⁴

Before proceeding with the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King, the concept of *topos* should be first defined. The Greek word *topos* basically means “a place” (LSJ, s.v. τόπος) and its equivalent is *locus* in Latin. The word is usually translated as “topic” or “common place” in the books and articles on classical rhetoric. In the classical rhetoric, the argument has five divisions: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronuntiatio*. According to Corbett and Connors (1999:17-23), *inventio* is a systematised way of generating ideas on a certain subject, *dispositio* is the division to arrange the parts of the written or spoken discourse in an effective and ordered manner, *elocutio* is the style to deliver the argument more vividly, *memoria* is the memory of speeches, and *pronuntiatio* is the delivery of speech through the proper management of voice and gesture.

Since *inventio*’s main purpose is to formulate arguments with an appropriate rhetorical system

⁴ Thom (2014c:116) does not articulate that the image is a *topos* but alludes to it by saying that “we find this comparison in other contemporary philosophers as well”.

or method (Corbett & Connors 1999:19), *inventio* should not be conducted by any other means than the practice of discerning the rhetorical system or method, which is appropriate for the present topic, in the depository of ideas.⁵ As is well known, *inventio*, which is often misunderstood due to its literal meaning, requires creativity not in devising but in properly selecting and effectively utilising the rhetorical system or method. In other words, *inventio* is the division of the argument to find methods proven to be effective in discussing particular topics.⁶ In doing so, authors cannot but have recourse to conventional treatments of traditional topics in order to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods because they were constructed and approved by culture and convention.

Given that these selected systems or methods can be regarded as *topoi*, it becomes clear that *inventio* functions on the basis of *topoi* because in the division of *inventio*, *topoi* provide the storages of ideas, of which authors make choices of appropriate rhetorical systems or methods for the topics to be discussed. The appropriateness of the ideas chosen for these topics is, of course, secured by convention and culture. The properness in selecting the ideas for the topics, then, is required for the authors to be successful in communicating with his/her readers. This relation between *inventio* and *topoi* therefore means that *topoi* are not invented by certain writers or orators, but found by them in the depository of ideas, upon which it is agreed by convention and culture that they are effective in persuading audiences with regard to certain topics.

However, it is so difficult to grasp the concept of *topos* that multiple scholars defined *topos* with different concepts. These definitions of *topos* should be discussed in order that one may

⁵ Lausberg (1998:119) clues us in on the relation between *inventio* and *topoi*: “*Inventio* ... is the ‘discovery’ of ideas ... Discovery is a natural gift of good fortune ... Even someone endowed with fortune’s natural gift must search in order to find. The practice of searching (cf. §2) has produced familiar ‘places’ that have often proved their worth, where it is evidently advised to look ... These ‘places’ (*topoi, loci*) consist in basic ‘search’ formulas which can lead to the discovery of a fitting idea”.

⁶ Corbett & Connors (1999:19) state that “the method that the classical rhetoricians devised to aid the speaker in discovering matter for three modes of appeal are topics”. But we should rethink the expression “devised” because the rhetoricians do not invent or devise the method but only select and adopt them: *topoi* can merely be found and be collected because they cannot be created by some experts but be formulated by a common conventional consensus.

synthetically comprehend the concept of *topos* from diverse viewpoints. It is a well-known fact that Aristotle never defined the concept of *topos* but only utilised the term with distinction between common and special *topoi*. This is because the concept did not need to be explained to the people of his time. This fact implies that the concept of *topos* can be inferred by studying the conventional uses of the term *topos*.

Pernot (1986:254-55) provides the traditional Greek and Latin understandings of *topos*. He observes that the ancient rhetoricians adopted two metaphors to explain *topoi*: *ἀφορμὴ* and *locus*. The Greek tradition understands it as a starting point of attack in argumentations while the Latin tradition regards it as a depository of ideas. Greek and Latin authors emphasise different aspects of *topoi*'s function, but these two facets inseparably work together. In addition, the fact that these two metaphors are evolved from the literal sense of *topos* (Pernot 1986:255) indicates that both the Greek and Latin authors regarded *topos* as a certain space in mind.

Modern scholars tend to follow the Latin tradition when they define *topos*. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:83)'s description of *topos* reflects the Latin understanding of it:

As used by classical writers, *loci* are headings under which arguments can be classified. They are associated with a concern to help a speaker's inventive efforts and involve the grouping of relevant material, so that it can be easily found again when required. *Loci* have accordingly been defined as storehouse for arguments.⁷ Aristotle made a distinction between the *loci communes*, or "common places," which can be used indiscriminately for any science and do not depend on any, and the special topics, which belong either to a particular science or a particular type of oratory.

With reference to the twofold categorisation of the common and special *topoi*, which Aristotle introduced and the subsequent rhetoric authors have been following so far, it should be noted that the standard of this division theoretically is the applicability of *topoi*. The common *topoi* can be applied to all discourses, regardless of the genres of writings and the fields of sciences. Corbett and Connors (1999:87) provide a list of the common *topoi* and their sub-*topoi*, which

⁷ Lausberg (1998:171) also points out that *topos* is a storage of thoughts.

implies that *topoi* are formulated by similarity, which combines certain ideas under the same categorical headings.

How then should the special *topoi* be explained? There can be special situations of arguments, such as deliberate, juridical and ceremonial speeches (Corbett & Connors 1999:120), in which speakers need more specialised methods of speaking. In the process of selecting methods, certain *topoi* are regarded as effective and appropriate only for specific genres of speech. In other words, the special *topoi* are the *topoi*, which are available only for particular topics. Theoretically, the scope of the special *topoi* can be extended as far as the fields of science are varied. The following are general characteristics of *topoi* that have been discussed thus far:

- 1) Basically, *topoi* are the methods of dealing with certain traditional topics proved to be effective in persuading audiences.
- 2) *Topoi* function as the starting points to developing arguments and the reservoirs of ideas on these topics.
- 3) Special *topoi* are the *topoi* with limited ranges of application.
- 4) Theoretically, the special *topoi* which can be called “special” are as diverse as the areas of science.

With regard to 4) above, Robert Curtius is the first modern scholar who applied this extensibility of *topos*’ scope to literary interpretation. The most famous part of his contribution is that he defined *topos* as cliché (Curtius 1953:70). His definition drew the attention of modern scholars to defining the concept of *topos* and applying the *topos* analysis to literary studies. Although his term “cliché” is considered as “too wide and too vague” (Wankel 1983:131; Pernot 1986:253),⁸ there is no room for any doubt that he understood the concept very well. Indeed, Curtius’ contribution to literature must not be regarded as useless because he began a new era of literary criticism by introducing the *topos* analysis (Wankel 1983:130).

The one who more clearly explained the concept is Wankel. He (1983:132) expands on Curtius’

⁸ Because of this misunderstanding of Curtius’ definition, a group of scholars such as Bradley (1953) and Mullins (1972), etc., oversimplified the concept by defining it as certain fixed forms of argument.

definition by providing a detailed explanation of the concept:

„Topos“ wäre zu gebrauchen – und so gebrauche ich den Begriff – wenn häufig bzw. in bestimmten Zusammenhängen wiederkehrende Wendungen, Bilder, Vergleiche, Metaphern, Denkinhalte, Argumentationen und deren sprachliche Ausformungen allgemein bezeichnet werden sollen, dagegen „Klischee“ oder „Formel“ oder „Gemeinplatz“, wenn man erstarrte oder stark schmatisierte oder sententiös verfestigte Formel jener Topoi oder die platte Imitation benennen will ... Man kann sich aber, meine ich, dabei beruhigen, wenn man sich über den übergreiflichen Inhalt einigermaßen verständigt hat.

Also, he paves a way of understanding *topos* with his significant insight:

Auf mein Thema übertragen heißt das: einen „Topos“ nicht nur den weiten Bezugsreich *a natura hominum* zu nennen, sondern auch das spezielle Argument mit der Sterblichkeit des Menschen, also einen Einzelaspekt der *natura hominum*.

Wankel explains the concept of *topos* by linking *topoi* to human nature that penetrates all human life experiences. Considering that *topoi* basically are the methods of dealing with certain traditional topics proved to be effective by cultural convention, they have to be grounded in human nature to be effective because human nature is the most common and conventional to humanity. Due to the fact that the universality of human nature ties up all various aspects of life, one can sympathise with other individuals in different situations, in spite of the diversity of individual experiences. In other words, Wankel secures the validity of the *topos* analysis by bringing in the common experience of humanity, which can be understood as convention and culture.

When Pernot (1986:260) explains *topoi* as rhetorical strategies, he argues that *topoi* interconnect an orator and reality:

Τόπος suppose à la fois réduction du multiple à l'unité et transformation de la réalité en objet de discours. Puis, une fois que les τόποι ont été définis, l'orateur les utilise comme instruments de recherche. Comme tout instrument, le τόπος est une médiation, médiation entre l'orateur et la réalité.

This connection of the orator and reality can be formulated because *topoi* are formed on the

basis of universality, which combines all the different experiences of individuals. In terms of the rhetorical strategies, this universality of experience can be secured by rhetorical tradition. In literary studies, this universality will be obtained by convention and culture. Pernot (1986:283) supports this point by clarifying how *topoi* generalise common experiences of life in spite of individual differences:

Cette ambivalence de *τόπος* et de *locus* est le signe d'une parenté entre les sources des arguments et les développements généraux. Par les lieux de l'argumentation, la rhétorique réduit la multiplicité des données à un petit nombre de rubriques; par les lieux communs, elle ramène une cause précise à une question générale. Dans les deux cas, il s'agit d'une remontée du particulier au général: tout lieu est dans une certaine mesure 'commun'.

This universality of experience ensures the validity of *topoi* as both rhetorical strategies and literary topics. Moreover, this should be accentuated when one explores ancient moral-philosophical writings as well because the moral-philosophical world of antiquity is structured on the basis of moral convention and cultural norm.

Abraham J. Malherbe is one of the most outstanding scholars who applied the *topos* analysis to ancient moral-philosophical writings. He (1996:124) defines *topos* as “a fairly systematic treatment of a topic of moral instruction which uses clichés, maxims, short definitions, etc., rather than the latter themselves”.⁹ Malherbe's more comprehensible definition of *topos* should then substitute for Curtius' definition which is still being misunderstood by New Testament scholars (Thom 2003:556).

It should be pointed out that Malherbe's definition of *topos* consists of three different parts: 1) *topos*, 2) moral-philosophical topics, and 3) clichés, maxims, short definitions, etc. as ways of expressions. From these divisions one can infer that 3) are a means to express 2) and that some of 2) are regarded as 1). Especially, from the relationship between the divisions 2) and 3), it can be deduced that not all the moral-philosophical topics are regarded as *topoi*.

⁹ Malherbe (1986:144; 1992:320) had defined the concept of *topos* that “*topos* is the stock treatment of subjects of interest of the moralist”. He changed the term ‘stock’ into ‘fairly systematic’ since he tried to establish a more tangible explanation.

In order to obtain a more concrete understanding of *topos*, two questions must be answered:

- 1) What differentiates *topoi* from other moral-philosophical topics?
- 2) What does Malherbe exactly mean by his expression “fairly systematic”?

The answers to the questions are found in the following discussion in which Thom (2003:567) explains the difference between *topoi* and other topics:

A *topos* may be distinguished from another topic by its traditional subject matter, evidenced by the fact that it recurs in the writings of different authors, and by the conventional treatment it receives.

There are then two conditions to be qualified for *topoi* can be distinguished from other topics:

1) whether a topic repeatedly appears in different authors and 2) whether a conventional way of dealing with the topic is established. In order to discern whether a topic is *topos* or not one must examine the repetition of certain topics; there is no better way than looking at as many ancient texts as possible. However, in examining conventionality of the treatment of a certain topic, one can also find some substantive solutions.

In many cases, certain words or expressions related to particular conventional topics are regarded as *topoi*. For instance, in the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, a series of *topoi* are found. This series of *topoi* begins with the *topos* of *εὐσεβεία* (‘piety’ in English; Thom 1995:104):

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεούς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται,
τίμα καὶ σέβου ὄρκον. ἔπειθ' ἥρωας ἀγαυούς
τούς τε καταχθονίους σέβε δαίμονας ἔννομα ῥέζων
σοὺς τε γονεῖς τίμα τούς τ' ἄγχι στ' ἐγγεγαῶτας·

Honor the immortal gods first, in the order appointed by custom,
And revere your oath. Pay reverence next to the noble heroes
and the Spirits of the dead by performing the prescribed rites.

Honor your parents as well as their closest relatives (GV 1-4; transl. Thom 1995:95).

These lines are connected by the *topos* of *εὐσεβεία*. The theme of *εὐσεβεία* is made clear by the

two key words placed in the chiasmic arrangement of *τίμα-σέβου-σέβε-τίμα* and by selecting the terms related to this traditional topic (Thom 1995:103). By presenting pairs of elements relevant to the topic of *εὐσεβεία* such as gods-oaths, heroes-demons, parents-relatives, the author instructs his readers on life according to *εὐσεβεία*. The readers can understand the purpose in selecting these elements because the elements remind them of the conventional topic of *εὐσεβεία* which is closely connected to the cosmic hierarchy. By naming these elements of the topic, the author calls upon the readers to attribute appropriate honour to the members of every different rank in the cosmic hierarchy (cf. Thom 1995:102-119). The *topos* of *εὐσεβεία* plays the leading role in this extract.

Sometimes, one encounters *topoi*, which are more difficult to discern than the type of *topos* mentioned above. Malherbe (1996:135) ascertains that the *topos* of *πλεονεξία* formulates the main argument in Luke 12:13-34. In this passage, however, readers only read the story of a farmer, who considers expanding his barn for a fruitful year. They cannot grasp the main point of the story without recognising the main theme. This story does not clearly speak out any key word or expression directly related to the topic of *πλεονεξία* but merely describes a situation, which might happen as a result of *πλεονεξία*. Only such a skillful scholar as Malherbe can read the theme of *πλεονεξία* dealt with throughout the story of the farmer. Likewise, just describing an accompanying situation of a traditional topic can be a conventional way of dealing with the traditional topic.

There are, however, still other types of *topoi* which are easier to detect. Treatises usually have certain forms of titles such as Plutarch's *De virtute et vitio* and Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*. These titles are given in the form of *περί* + genitive noun in Greek and the form of *de* + ablative noun in Latin. This is a typical form of *topos* because a title indicates the topic, which the authors are about to discuss. This form of titles was so typical that it was widely applied to the titles of books, treatises and chapters of books and so forth in antiquity (Malherbe 1992:320-21).

Also, different forms of questions can be regarded as a type of *topos* (Thom 2003:568-9). Questions have the same function as the titles have because by asking questions concerning

their topics, authors attract the attention of audiences to what is about to be discussed in a paragraph, a chapter, and a book. For example, some of Plutarch's writings have such titles as *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* and *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus*. These questions introduce the main topics of the texts.

In addition, it should be noted that *topoi* can have sub-*topoi*. For example, friendship is one of the most famous *topoi* and a number of topics relevant to friendship often make appearances within ancient texts. *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* and *De animorum mutitudine* by Plutarch deal with such topics pertinent to friendship, including how to practice true friendship in various life situations. Also, through the form of its title, Philodemus' *Περὶ παρρησίας* (*On Frankness*) indicates a way of dealing with the theme of *παρρησία* which is a sub-*topos* of the *topos* of friendship because "as a private virtue, *παρρησία* denotes the personal candor that was prized between true friends" (Konstan, Clay, Glad, Thom and Ware 1998:3-4).¹⁰ This relation between a *topos* and its sub-*topoi* can again be extended to the relation between a sub-*topos* and its sub-*topoi*. Accordingly, the *topos* of frankness itself, being a sub-*topos* of the *topos* of friendship, can also have its own sub-*topoi*.¹¹

Philodemus' *On frankness* is a good example of the diverse types of and the relations between *topoi* discussed thus far. This treatise has the form of *περί* + genitive for its main title and different forms of questions as the titles of its sub-topics. In the case of *On frankness*, the relationship between the main title and its subtitles denotes the relationship between a *topos* and its sub-*topoi*. Konstan et al. (1998:8-9) present a list of fragments with titles under the main title *Περὶ παρρησίας* as follows:

- 1) Fr. 53: "Whether they will declare things of their own and of one another to their fellow-students."
- 2) Fr. 57: "[Whether it seems to us that one will slip up in accord with] the [perfection] of reason [by means of what is preconceived.]"

¹⁰ For more information, see Fitzgerald (1997:23).

¹¹ Besides, one should regard *λόγος* as a form of *topoi* because it sometimes denotes a subject of arguments or discussions (Thom 2003:564).

- 3) Fr. 67: “Whether he will also speak frankly to those who do not endure frank criticism, and to one who is [irascible] ...”
- 4) Fr. 70: “How will he handle those who have become angry toward him because of his frank criticism?”
- 5) Fr. 74: “Whether he is well-disposed toward us; whether he is intense in his goodwill; whether he has jettisoned some of the things charged against him, even if not perfected in everything; whether toward us and toward [others] [he will be] thankful ...”
- 6) Fr. 81 (=83 N): “Whether a wise man will communicate his own {errors} to his friends with frankness.”
- 7) Fr. 88 (=94 N): “How will we recognize the one who has endured frank criticism graciously and the one who is pretending {to do so}?”
- 8) Col. Ia: “... [to distinguish] one who is frank from a polite disposition and one who is so from a vulgar one.”
- 9) Col. XXa: “... how, [when they recognize] that some of their number are more intelligent, and in particular that some of them are teachers, do they not abide frank criticism?”
- 10) Col. XXIb: “[Why does womankind not accept frank criticism with pleasure?]”
- 11) Col. XXIIb: “Why is it that, when other things are equal, those who are illustrious both in resources and reputations abide {frank criticism} less well {than others}?”
- 12) Col. XXIVa: “Why is it that old men are more annoyed {by frankness}?”

From the types of *topoi* mentioned above, a dim glimpse of the meaning of “fairly systematic” can be obtained. This phrase still functions as a vague description of the concept of *topos* because one may ask, “how systematic should a treatment be to be regarded as a ‘fairly systematic’ treatment?”. Furthermore, the term ‘fairly’ cannot be easily defined with accuracy. It may thus be suggested that the term “traditional” or “conventional” should substitute for the vague phrase “fairly systematic” as the term “conventional” basically means “formed by agreement” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, s. v. conventional). This term “conventional” is therefore understood as “agreed by convention and culture” in the previous discussion over the universality of experience, which validates the use of *topoi*. Consequently, *topos* is defined as a conventional treatment of a traditional topic.

Thom (2003: 566) also emphasises its conventionality when he defines *topos* as “an ordered cognitive space that is culturally determined”. With this definition, he suggests three types of

topoi: 1) logical-rhetorical *topoi*¹², 2) literary *topoi*, and 3) moral-philosophical *topoi*. As the image of the Great King deals with the traditional ideas concerning the tension between god's transcendent existence and immanent influence in god's relationship with the cosmos (Thom 2014c:107), this thesis will be confined to mapping out the part of the ancient moral-philosophical world, especially the cosmo-theological notions conveyed through the image of the Great King.

What then are the traditional topics, which were regarded as *topoi* in the ancient moral-philosophical world? For a clearer answer to this question, one should refer to Everette Ferguson's (2003:323) description of *topos*:

Certain themes recur among the philosophical moralists with enough frequency to show what were matters of interest – marriage and sexual conduct, consolation, covetousness, and anger – and what the ideals were – virtue, friendship, civil concord and responsibility for the welfare of the state.

This brief description provides a list of the themes, which recur with enough frequency among the ancient philosophical moralists to be labelled *topoi*.¹³ Ferguson's list is not complete, but it does assist readers in discerning the type of themes, which can be regarded as moral-philosophical *topoi*.¹⁴ This point also opens a door to the connection between the moral-philosophical *topoi* and popular philosophy because the latter also deals with moral and ethical issues as its main concern.¹⁵ For this reason, the *topos* analysis can contribute to research on

¹² For a further understanding of this type of *topoi*, see Dyck (2002).

¹³ Brouwer (2014:7) suggests that wisdom is a *topos* as follows: "I will start with the best-known definition of wisdom as knowledge of human and divine matters. In fact, *it became so well known that it has often been designated a common place*, with its Stoic character thus played down" (my emphasis). One should discuss his appropriateness in using the term 'common place' but still acknowledge that he at least shows his understanding of how a *topos* can be distinguished from other topics.

¹⁴ For more detailed list, see Malherbe (1986:144-61) and Thom (2003:567-8).

¹⁵ Thom (2012:281-285) identifies four commonalities of popular philosophy as follows: "1) one of the most obvious features is that philosophy has either an ethical-pragmatic or an exegetical focus ... 2) A second characteristic is the fact that philosophers frequently selected and combined elements from more than one philosophical tradition when formulating their own position ... 3) A further noted characteristic of philosophy in this period is its tendency towards individualism ... 4) A fourth common thread is the emphasis on psychagogy or moral-spiritual guidance" (numbering is mine). Ferguson (2003:323-326) agrees with Thom in describing the

popular philosophy due to its main purpose to map out the ancient moral-philosophical world.

Once main *topoi* are defined, the framework is ready for one to build up the whole edifice of the ancient moral-philosophical mind-map.¹⁶ When this mind-map is completed, it will be able to grasp the ancient moral-philosophical world in the same way ancient people would have done, through the window of the ancient texts. Moreover, the understanding of the wider network of *topoi* allows readers to have the deeper insight into the ancient moral-philosophical world.¹⁷ To conclude, the benefits of *topos* analysis suggested by Thom (2003:569-73) will be introduced as follows:

- 1) A good understanding of the *topos* thus helps to identify the issues involved and to locate the text within the broader moral discourse ...
- 2) ... A *topos* may also help us to understand connections within the text between apparently unrelated materials ...
- 3) ... A better understanding of the *topoi* involved may in the same way provide insight into the compositional integrity of NT texts such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) ...
- 4) ... The point of a passage may lie in its manipulation or adaptation of a *topos* that is assumed.

An extract from Tacitus' *Historiae* provides readers with a good example of these benefits of *topos* analysis:

Nec minus praemia delatorum invisum quam scelera, cum alii sacerdotia et consulatus ut spolia adepti, procurationes alii et interiorem potentiam, agerent verterent cuncta odio et terrore,

characteristics of popular philosophy.

¹⁶ This is the ultimate purpose of applying the *topos* analysis, which Thom (2003:569) clarifies, saying “the moral universe in the Greco-Roman world is thus divided into regions or *topoi*, each with its own internal structure, based on the questions it is meant to answer ... Once the moral world has been mapped out in terms of *topoi*, an author can use these *topoi* as points of reference: he does not have to describe the topic in detail; a few reminders are sufficient.”

¹⁷ In his conclusion, Thom (2003:573) says: “In the words of Milton, ‘the mind is its own place’ and has the ability to order and make sense of everyday experience by creating its own world of meaning. *Topoi* form part of this process of mental and cultural construction. By gaining insight into ancient *topoi*, we also enter the world views of ancient authors” (emphasis is mine). This resounds Wankel and Pernot’s emphasis on reality that has been previously mentioned.

corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus per amicos oppressi.

The rewards of the informers were no less hateful than their crimes; for some, gaining priesthoods and consulships as spoils, others, obtaining positions as imperial agents and secret influence at court, made havoc and turmoil everywhere, inspiring hatred and terror. Slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those who had no enemy were crushed by their friends (Tacitus, *Historiae* 1. 2; transl. Moore 1968:7).

The whole passage describes the virtue of justice distorted by the vices prevalent in Roman society. This paragraph consists of two parts arranged in chiasmus: heading-example-example-heading. The first part begins with a heading, which denounces the situation in which corruption is preferred to justice. The details are provided to support this heading, such as simonia, the bargain of government offices and the twisted judgments by aggravating hostility and chaos behind the curtain. The second part is reversed in order. Tacitus provides examples such as the disloyalty of the slaves and freedmen to their masters and patrons before presenting the second heading, which reproves the fall of friendship. In terms of the *topos* analysis, the latter part should especially be noted.

Through these illustrations, Tacitus conveys the typical ills within the Roman society. In fact, the connection between the heading and its examples in the first part is understandable because its logical sequence is quite clear even to modern readers. As for the second part, however, the connection between the heading and its examples seems absurd to modern readers. One may then wonder how he/she should understand the relationship between the disloyalty of slaves and freedmen and the fall of friendship since the slaves and freedmen are not friends of their masters and patrons at all. In such cases, as Thom indicates, the *topos* analysis can assist in defining the relations between elements appearing to be irrelevant by providing a map of the ancient conventional ideas on friendship. This is because Tacitus adopted the *topos* of friendship to formulate his argument.

In essence, friendship was the ideal of social relationships in Greco-Roman society (Ferguson 2003:68). The value of friendship was so important to ancient people that numerous ancient authors provided diverse definitions of friendship. Fitzgerald (1997:17-20) thus points out that

friendship of a specific period of time should first be defined before exploring its practice because the meaning of friendship altered with the changes of time.¹⁸

In the Homeric era, the most important sign of true friendship was “oneness of mind” which was demonstrated through three major issues concerning friendship: the abuse of guest-friend relationships, the deaths of friends and the alienation of friends from one another (Fitzgerald 1997:21-25). True friendship was measured mainly by the way one behaves in these three situations.

However, in the time of pan-Hellenic crisis, “trustworthiness” became a prominent value of friendship. This shift of prominence from “oneness of mind” to “trustworthiness” resulted from the Greek wars waged against the great empire of Persia (Fitzgerald 1997:31). When the Greek world was facing the gigantic army of the Persian empire, the Greek cities had no other option than fighting as allies. In the situation of this fatal crisis, against which a united front of all the Greek cities was desperately required, “trustworthiness” became a priority in relationships.

Afterwards, Aristotle put forward a new value of friendship “altruism” by categorising friendship into three divisions: friendship grounded in virtue, friendship grounded in pleasure, and friendship grounded in utility (in Schroeder 1997:37-8). From the meaning of altruism, it can be deduced that one should fundamentally seek benefit and interest for others in his/her relationship with friends.

Multiple authors of political upheavals discussed how to distinguish true friends from false ones. During early Roman times, for example, Cicero described in what way the traditional ideal of friendship was practiced and by doing so, the institution of friendship continuously served the Roman society (Fiore 1997:76). Among attempts to define friendship, the Stoic notion of friendship was regarded as the most appropriate one by Cicero because friendship

¹⁸ Fitzgerald (1997:17-20) delineates the notion of the term φίλος in the ancient world: “φίλος, regardless of the etymological details, literally expresses not an emotional attachment, but belonging to a social group, and this usage is linked to the use of the word as a possessive in Homer, φίλος as ‘one’s own’ is thus an antonym of ξένος (ξείνος), ‘the stranger who does not belong to one’s group’ and thus is ‘not one’s own.’ Accordingly, the use of φίλος to indicate ‘friend’ or ‘loved one’ is a later development, as is the notion of the guest-friend.... the practice of friendship thus precedes its precise definition.”

was identified with a universal good in Stoicism (Schroeder 1997:47). Arius Didymus made use of this Stoic notion of friendship to further his own definition when he classified friendship into four categories: of comradeship, of kinship, of hospitality and of sexual desire (Schroeder 1997:49). Also, friendship was applied to the fields of relationship such as the relationships between parents and children, husband and wife, as well as human beings and gods by ancient moral philosophers. These categorisations define the dimensions of friendship on the basis of the Stoic notion of friendship: “universal amity and universal harmony” (cf. Schroeder 1997:56).

Neopythagorean writings also provide more evidence that friendship was a main concern across philosophical schools. The Neopythagorean ideal of friendship was “harmonious equality” and it was repeatedly expressed in phrases such as “friends have everything in common,” “friendship is equality,” and “a friend is another I” (Thom 1997:77). Philodemus and Plutarch wrote on the same topic with different titles, *Περὶ παρρησίας* and *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*. Philodemus focused on practicing this ideal in Epicurean communal life (cf. Dorandi 1999:59) and Plutarch, a well-known Platonist (Russell 2012b:1165) wrote on practicing this ideal in broader political life situations (cf. O’Neil 1997:109).

Moreover, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek critic and historian (Russell 2012a:460), was of the opinion that “patriotism” was a priority among friendly relationships during Roman times (Balch 1997:123-144). This indicates another field of the ideal friendship: the relationship between the Empire and its people.

There were also multiple models to encourage people to practise this “ideal relationship”. For example, since Homeric time, the famous friendship of Achilles with Patroclus had become a typical model of true friendship (Hock 1997:147). Following the Homeric model, Polycharmus and Chaereas practised the ideal of friendship in Chariton’s novel. Polycharmus’ devotion to saving his friend from every mishap and sharing Chaereas’ every hardship, including death, became a model of true friendship (Hock 1997:155). Lucian’s Agathocles also supported his friend Deinias by choosing to share his fate when Deinias was expelled from the country (Pervo

1997:167). From these fictional or legendary characters, it becomes evident how highly the ideal of friendship was esteemed and encouraged among ancient people through the ages. True and ideal friendship was thus confirmed by the devotion to share every single moment of fate with friends.

The fact that the emphases on friendship prevailed in the Greco-Roman world indicates that Tacitus was so accustomed to the conventional treatment of friendship that he readily adopted the *topos* of friendship to formulate his argument. In short, friendship was the ideal of every relationship which points to the universal fellowship and a high regard for the practice of friendship. Consequently, it was acceptable, even natural to ancient readers that Tacitus adopted the relationships between slaves and masters, freedmen and patrons in order for his readers to sympathise with his lament over the fall of friendship.

Based on this understanding of friendship, the implication of the extract from Tacitus' *Historiae* should be explored. As has already been observed, the first part describes selling out justice for money; friendship should therefore be connected to justice in order to secure the logical consistency of the paragraph. It is likely that friendship has a strong connection with the *topos* of *pietas* (piety; the Greek equivalent is εὐσεβεία). As previously discussed, *pietas* plays an important role in the relationships between siblings, parents, heroes, and even gods: friendship also is discussed with a premise of these relationships. Since εὐσεβεία was usually understood as 'duty' and as a substantive aspect of justice in relationships (Greene & Sheld 2012:1148),¹⁹ *pietas* was regarded as an important measure of justice, which was one of the cardinal virtues. Likewise, friendship was a substantialised form of *pietas* in relationships. Consequently, it becomes clear that friendship referred to the primary Roman virtues. In this sense, damaging friendship in such a way as striking down any friend must have been regarded as a serious transgression of the most important social convention of the Graeco-Roman world. Arius

¹⁹ "‘Justice’/‘right’ is a relational term which identifies the fairness or reasonableness between two parameters. ... In the period following, i.e. via Stoa to Cicero, and, following him, Ulpian (around AD 200), the word ... *iustitia* designates the social virtue of human beings and is identified with distributive justice" (Neschke 2005:1224-1225).

Didymus provides clue to the subordinate relationship between these virtues:

Τῶν δ' ἀρετῶν τὰς μὲν εἶναι πρώτας, τὰς δὲ ταῖς πρώταις ὑποτεταγμένας.
 Πρώτας δὲ τέτταρας εἶναι, φρόνησιν, σωφροσύνην, ἀνδρείαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ...
 ... τῇ δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ εὐσέβειαν, χρηστότητα, εὐκοινωνησίαν, εὐσυναλλαξίαν ...
 ... Εὐσέβειαν δὲ ἐπιστήμην θεῶν θεραπείας.

Of the virtues, some are primary, while others are subordinate to the primary virtues.
 These are four which are primary: intelligence, self-restraint, bravery, and *justice* ...
 ... To *justice* are subordinated *piety*, kindness, good fellowship, and fair dealing ...
 ... *Piety* is a knowledge of *the service of the gods* (*Liber de philosophorum sectis* 64. 2. 2-4, 16-18; 65. 1. 7-8; transl. Pomeroy 1999:15-17; my emphases).

The crooked value of friendship described by Tacitus cannot find any room for itself in its relationship with superordinate values of *pietas* and justice. Moreover, such a fall of friendship was an extreme menace to the Roman society. Indeed, the collapse of friendship by the freedmen and servants who were corrupted “against” their patrons and masters must have been regarded as signs of the subversion of the social system.

Through the conventional way of dealing with friendship, the description of the Roman ills by Tacitus has come to be comprehended in the Roman moral-philosophical context. As the ideal of all the relationships, it was accepted by ancient people as a very important value to be preserved. However, considering its relationship with its super-virtues, which are piety and justice, the damage to friendship could be accepted even as the overturn of the social value and system. Therefore, by utilising the *topos* of friendship, Tacitus intended to maximise his readers' contempt for the horrible downfall of the early Roman society.

In conclusion, Van Nuffelen's (2011:125) suggestion of the premises and the benefits of the *topos* analysis will be presented. Van Nuffelen here argues for the validity of the *topos* analysis:

Without grasp of the traditional *topoi* associated with the comparison, we shall not be able to see how Aristides subtly plays with his readers' expectations. They will also help us to understand the malleable nature of that image: the Persian Great King can be made to fit Platonist and

Aristotelian concepts of the divine, thus illustrating that it is rather a cipher for the perfect hierarchy than the translation of a specific philosophical position.

Van Nuffelen is almost the first scholar to propose the application of the *topos* analysis to interpretation of the image of the Great King.²⁰ Furthermore, his comment assists one in understanding the way the *topos* analysis contributes to interpreting ancient texts.

This thesis will analyse a complex image in which the various descriptive elements imply different philosophical concepts that together construct a Middle Platonic cosmic framework. To analyse the image of the Great King in this way is not simply a matter of clarifying the Middle Platonic cosmic system behind this image. Instead, the thesis will first specify the philosophical concepts to which each element of the image refers, based on the historical accounts of these elements and the cosmological notions behind the arguments on νοῦς. Next, the concepts will be confirmed by analysing the terms relevant to them. Finally, by demonstrating that the image of the Great King, on the one hand, implies the Middle Platonic cosmic frame and, on the other hand, functions as a conventional way of discussing a traditional topic, I will propose that this image be regarded a *topos*.

Before commencing in the interpretation of the image of the Great King through the *topos* analysis, brief research on historical references to the Great King, his palace, the system of satraps, his eyes and ears, and the beacon-signals should be conducted, so that one may establish the boundaries and scope of the image of the Great King. Therefore, the next chapter will look into historical sources on the ancient Persian empire with relevance to the descriptive elements of the Great King in order to discuss the philosophical notions implied through the image of the Great King.

²⁰ Nevertheless, the title of the chapter which includes the extract, “the Great King of Persia and his Satraps” is too narrow to include the whole scope of the arguments behind the description of the Great King.

Chapter Three: Historical backgrounds of the image of the Great King

There was a traditional philosophical topic concerning the relationship between god and the universe. In dealing with this topic, the tension between god's transcendent existence and immanent influence on the earth was an abstruse dilemma to be solved by ancient philosophers throughout the ages. The image of the Great King was adopted to explain sophisticated philosophical notions based on the well-known historical facts included in this image. This means that the research on historical facts, which constitute this image, assists one in deciphering the philosophical implications of the image. The image of the Great King includes multiple elements, which represent certain cosmo-theological notions: the Great King secluded in a gigantic palace, his satraps, his eyes and ears, and the beacon-signals. Once the historical facts about these elements are outlined, the plausible connecting points between them and the philosophical notions, which are represented by the image of the Great King, will be defined.

Accordingly, the main concern of this chapter will be to clarify historical facts on which the image of the Great King is formed. In doing so, the scope of this chapter should be narrowed down to the aforementioned elements: the Great King's palace, the Persian governing system represented by his satraps, and the empire's communication systems such as the Great King's eyes and ears and the beacon-signals. Fortunately, multiple modern historians conducted research on these elements.

It is well known that the Great King was hidden in his palace so that even the closest people to the Great King were able to approach him only when they obtained permission (Brosius 2007:22). Cook (1983:135), Huart (1972:73) and other scholars also agree that the Great King enjoyed absolute exaltedness and seclusion due to the fact that his subjects were hardly able to see him.²¹ Although none of the Persian kings had ever been proclaimed to be god (Kuhrt 2010:475), it is very clear that there was no one equal to these kings on earth. The Great King's majesty and awesomeness were demonstrated in multiple ways such as the Great King's palace

²¹ Herodotus (*Historiae* 1.99.2) indicates Deioeces as the first king who established a rule to assure the security and to awe the people into subordination. This story provides us with the basic purpose and function of the gigantic palace of the emperors.

and the system of governance, including his uncountable subjects.

The palace functioned as a means to reinforce the greatness of the Great King. In Herodotus' *Historiae*, a similar description of the massive palace to that of the Great King in Pseudo-Aristotle' *De mundo* is found. Herodotus here described the palace of the Median king, Deioces. This similarity between the descriptions of the Persian and the Median royal palaces is confirmed by the historical connection between these two empires. First, the city named Ecbatana or Agbatana where the palace was built brackets the similarity between the Median and the Persian palaces because the city was the capital of the Median Empire and a capital of the latter as well. Secondly, the fact that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire finds his origin in the Medians is a possible cause of the similarity between the two empires in social systems and cultural styles. Therefore, it is clear that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire modeled his own palace after the Median palace. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007:150) also support this connection between these two empires by indicating another point, which is that Achaemenids utilized the same regional place (Ecbatana/Agbatana) for the kings to summer. The description of the palace of Deioces as follows:

And when all was built, it was Deioces first who established the rule that no one should be dealt with by the means of messengers; that the king should be seen by no man; and moreover that it should be in particular a disgrace for any to laugh or to spit in his presence. He was careful to hedge himself with all this state in order that the men of his own age (who had been bred up with him and were as nobly born as he and his equals in manly excellence), instead of seeing him and being thereby vexed and haply moved to plot against him, might by reason of not seeing him deem him to be changed from what he had been So he built the great and mighty circles of walls within walls which are now called Agbatana. This fortress is so planned that each circle of wall is higher than the next outer circle by no more than the height of its battlements; to which end the site itself, being on a hill in the plain, somewhat helps, but chiefly it was accomplished by art. There are seven circles in all; within the innermost circle are the king's dwellings and the treasuries; and the longest wall is about the length of the wall that surrounds the city of Athens. The battlements of the first circle are white, the second black, of the third circle purple, of the fourth blue, and of the fifth orange: thus the battlements of five circles are painted with colours; and the battlements of the last two circles are coated, these with silver and those with gold

(Herodotus, *Historiae* 1.98.2; transl. Godley 1966:131).

Albeit its grandiloquent style, this description of the king Deioces' palace has significance in understanding the function of the palace-description in ancient writings. In particular, it should be noted here that the palace was surrounded by seven walls with different colours. According to historical surveys, the emphasis on the seven colours is a means to imply that the palace is the center of the universe:

It is generally held that the Babylonians, and later the Medes and the Persians, used seven colours to paint royal palaces and temples, seven being a sacred colours These seven colours – as also metals, precious stones, flavours, etc. – corresponded in Chaldean astrology to the seven Mesopotamian divine planets (Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella 2007:150).

Observations on the Great King's palace so far are summarised as follows:

- 1) The Great King himself was secluded in his huge palace.
- 2) His palace was placed in the center of the fortress.
- 3) The Great King was surrounded by multi-walled palace with his bodyguards and servants.

These three points describe the Great King as being perfectly hidden from all the others. The Great King's thorough separateness from the world, however, was not the only point, which was intended to be made by the hugeness of his palace. The power of the Great King, which was swayed through his subjects reinforced his majestic image even though he stayed out of the sight of his people.²²

This way of demonstrating the Great King's majesty through the combination of his huge palace and his system of governance was highlighted through the seasonal marching of the Great King. This royal marching was seasonally conducted from one capital to another, in order

²² Doubtlessly, the main purpose of the palace was to secure the king's safety and convenience, but at the same time one should not ignore its symbolically important function as the center of the empire. From the anecdote of Deioces (Herodotus, *Historiae*, 1. 98) that he ordered people who brought him forward as a king to build houses worthy of his royal power, we can ascertain this main symbolic function of the palace.

to display the Great King's greatness by demonstrating how orderly and powerfully he controlled his uncountable subjects. There were five capitals of the Persian Empire: Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, Pasargade and Persepolis as residences and places for the Great King's subjects and the royal court (Allen 2005:59). Brosius (2006:37) explains how spectacular the Great King's seasonal marching was and what message it conveyed to the people of the Great King:

To visit his royal cities the king travelled with his court which formed a large entourage in the king's train. It included the royal bodyguard, the 10,000 Immortals, courtiers and court officials and their families, the king's family, including the king's mother, the royal wives and the women of the king, the children, members of the Persian nobility and their families, attendants, cooks, bakers, wine-bearers, etc. The entourage would travel on foot, on horseback, and in carriages along the Royal Road to their destination. Passing through villages and towns along the route the royal entourage provided a most spectacular sight. The sheer size of the king's entourage must have been overwhelming, but it was further enhanced by the opulence and splendour of the court. The message conveyed in this spectacle was, however, more than just the display of royalty; it demonstrated the king's presence in the empire, and showed him as the surveyor of his realm and as a king in control.

Especially, Brosius' conclusion, "the message conveyed in this spectacle was, however, more than just the display of royalty; it demonstrated the king's presence in the empire, and showed him as the surveyor of his realm and as a king in control" means that the people of the ancient empire of Persia must have seen the Great King's greatness not by seeing the Great King himself in person, but by watching the splendor of his power and majesty, which were exaggeratedly demonstrated through the spectacular parade.

Furthermore, the court society, where the Great King exercised his power to the closest subjects, should be discussed in detail. It is reasonable to assume that a monarch of such a spacious territory as the Persian Empire must have needed a great number of trustworthy subjects around him so that he might maintain his power and efficiently rule over the whole empire.²³ Curtis

²³ Brosius (2007:19) finds the origin of the hierarchical court society from the natural ranking of the heads of families.

and Razmjou (2005:54) supports this assumption by giving an account of the capacity of the palace as the core place of the Persian royal court:

The reliefs on the Apadana at Persepolis show delegations from twenty-three countries under Persian control bringing gifts to a meeting that was also attended by nobles or important officials. The Apadana could hold up to 10,000 guests at ground level alone, not including other levels in the building. Some palaces such as the Hall of 100 Columns were used for a similar purpose but for receiving different types of guest. This palace was perhaps a meeting place for military officials after it was completed in the time of Artaxerxes I.

A well-defined concept of the court will assist the reader in properly understanding the characteristics of the Persian governing system. The governing body of the Persian Empire was the royal court, which consisted of these faithful people around the Great King. Spawforth (2012:389-90) defines the Persian royal court as follows:

Courts are best understood as ‘universal social configurations’ (G. Herman) which arise in societies where power becomes the monopoly of a monarch ... Anthropological emphasis on the ‘theatre of power’ underscores the importance of ‘trappings’ in sustaining monarchy: ceremonies and spectacle, dress, palaces and the arts, the main fields of ‘court culture’ ... The elaborate and hierarchical court of the Persian Achaemenids made a great impression on the ancient Greeks (Herodotus; Ctesias; Dinon).

Brosius (2007:18) also defines the Persian royal court by explaining its components and function:

Thus, ‘court’ describes on the one hand the people surrounding the king, and on the other hand the institutional context within which the king operates, that is, the centre of his political administrative, judicial and military power.

From these two definitions, the following points can be confirmed: 1) the court society was the core of the Persian governing system, 2) the Great King’s palace is the center of the court society, and 3) the Persian court was very impressive to the Greek people because they had never had such an elaborate hierarchical system of governance. This hierarchical system of the Persian governance is represented by the system of satraps.

The Persian system of satraps was an extended version of this royal court and the satraps were the most important figures of this extended court society (Brosius 2007:35). The satraps were local kings and they had their own court societies in their fiefs. This system was an effective method to govern the massive territory in peace according as Cyrus held a basic policy that he left the present systems of the conquered nations as they had been and merely implanted his authority and will into their systems by appointing the satraps (Brosius 2006:47). This extended application of the hierarchical court system is thus the Persian political innovation.²⁴ In other words, the satraps were representatives of the Great King himself, who enjoyed lesser privileges than those of the Great King (Briant 2002:345-348). Through the system of satraps, the hierarchical order of the empire, along with the Great King's power, was able to reach the end of the territory.

Brosius (2006:40) pointed out that meritocracy placed each member of the court society in their hierarchical ranks. Through this meritocracy, which functions based on the important value of *pistis*, the Great King encouraged his subjects to compete in loyalty towards him, so that he could effectively administer the vast territory of the empire (Briant 2002:324-326).

However, the Great King had to keep watch his satraps and to communicate with his subjects in order to hold his authority and influence over his empire. He thus appointed spies called the Great King's eyes and ears to achieve this purpose. Cook (1983:143) provides a brief survey of ancient authors' references to the eyes and ears of the Great King:

The Greeks found a source of amusement in the official they called the King's eye. Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* expressly stated that this was not a unique office, and he claimed that the King had many 'eyes' and 'ears' who kept him informed. As regards the 'ears' he has the support of a fifth-century papyrus from Elephantine which speaks of 'listeners' (a word corresponding to Old Persian 'gaushaka') in Achaemenids Egypt. So we can accept that the raj had such informers;

²⁴ Olmstead (1948:59) provides the reader with a historical survey on the system of the satraps for a more balanced understanding of the government of this wide-extending territory: "he adopted in principle the organization first devised by the Assyrians, who replaced the states they had conquered by formal provinces. ... the chief difference between these Assyrian provinces and the twenty satrapies established by Cyrus lay in the fact that the satrapies took the place of far larger independent monarchies." Allen (2005:29) also indicates the well-known fact that it was Cyrus who introduced this system to his empire.

indeed, Herodotus traces secret informers back to the beginning of the Median kingdom under Deiokes. But according to Plutarch (probably following Ctesias) there was an official with the title of the King's Eye who brought Artaxerxes II the news that his brother Cyrus was dead on the battlefield; and the three fifth-century Greek writers, Aeschylus, Herodotus, and Aristophanes, all speak as though the King had a trusty servant who was called his Eye.

Frye (1984:108-9) distinguishes the eyes from the ears of the Great King. According to him, the Great King's eyes were his chief overseers and his ears were spies. However, whatever they were, it is clear that they held a very important position in operating the whole system by transferring messages and information between the Great King and his subjects. In other words, the Great King's eyes and ears functioned as an invisible network between the Great King, who was sitting in the center of the empire, and his satraps, who were representatives of the Great King in the sub-regions of his empire.

However, without well-developed systems of the road, the post stations, and so forth, the Persian governing system was never able to function properly because they accelerated the communication between the Great King and his satraps through his eyes and ears (Kuhrt 2010:730-762). The Persian Empire also had beacon signals as an effective system of communication, which transmits information from the farthest distance to the Great King.

The beacon-signals were the fastest and most effective communication device in the Persian empire. These beacon-signals enabled the Great King to be instantly informed from the farthest distance. Herodotus (*Historiae* 9.3.1) provides an anecdote in which the beacon-signals instantly informed the Great King even across islands:

A great yearning had seized him (Mardonius) to take Athens a second time. Partly this was arrogance, partly he wanted to show the king in Sardis by beacons across the islands that he held Athens (transl. Kuhrt 2010:756).

In this chapter, multiple historical facts that refer to the elaborate hierarchical government of Persia have briefly been introduced. These will assist in defining the philosophical discussions implied through the image of the Great King:

- 1) The gigantic palace where the Great King enjoyed the perfect seclusion from all the others.
- 2) The satraps who transmitted the Great King's power and will to every corner of his massive empire.
- 3) The Great King's eyes and ears which effectively connected the Great King with his subjects outside the palace, including his satraps.
- 4) The beacon-signals which assisted the Great King in being informed instantly from the farthest part of his empire.

On the basis of these facts, in the next chapter the thesis will identify the ancient notion of the hierarchical frame of the *cosmos* by looking at the ancient arguments on *νοῦς*. This is because, in ancient philosophy, *νοῦς* is connected to the cosmic order and it is sometimes even identified with diverse cosmo-theological elements such as god and divine intermediaries. These elements are essential constituents of the cosmic hierarchy. Accordingly, by tracing the arguments on these topics, chapter 4 will provide a philosophically proper background for analyzing the *topos* of the image of the Great King.

Chapter Four: Philosophical background of the notion of the hierarchical cosmos

The notion of the hierarchical cosmos makes its appearance in the writings of the pre-Socratic philosophers. However, it is not explicitly articulated by these philosophers but only implied through their arguments on νοῦς. Through these arguments, three essential elements of the hierarchical cosmic frame are revealed: the prime god, his intermediaries and the hierarchical system represented by the cosmic order. Due to the dates of the texts which this thesis will analyse, this chapter will discuss only the arguments on νοῦς by the philosophers before Plotinus who inaugurated the era of Neoplatonism.

Νοῦς is usually translated as ‘mind’ or ‘sense’ in English (LSJ, s.v. νόος). In ancient Greek philosophy, however, it means intellectual faculty and is translated as ‘intellect’ and conveys the two main meanings: a) divine substance; and b) human cognition (Szlezák 2005:842). For the present discussion, only the former will be discussed in this chapter.

Only νοῦς as divine substance concerns the purpose of this chapter because it implies the notion of the prime god and his divine intermediary together with the cosmic hierarchy, of which νοῦς is the cause.²⁵ This is categorised in two parts: 1) νοῦς as divine intermediary and 2) νοῦς as god. The latter is again divided into two: 1) the subtle identification of νοῦς with god and 2) the direct identification of νοῦς with god.

1) Νοῦς as divine intermediary

From the pre-Socratic era, the notion of divine intermediary appeared through the notion of νοῦς. Νοῦς is especially identified with divine power by Ecphantus, a Pythagorean of the 4th century BCE:

κινεῖσθαι δὲ τὰ σώματα μήτε ὑπὸ βάρους μήτε πλιγῆς, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ θείας δυνάμεως, ἣν νοῦν καὶ ψυχὴν προσαγορεύει.

²⁵ To conduct research on the pre-Socratic argument on νοῦς, Diels and Kranz’s (1952c:296-8) word index was used.

The bodies, however, are moved neither by weight nor by impact, but by divine power, which he calls Mind and Soul (Ecphantus, DK 51.1.11-13, p. 442; my translation).

Ecphantus held that the world is governed by the divine providence (O'Meara 2012:486) and the concept of νοῦς as divine power in his cosmology reminds the reader of the Pseudo-Aristotelian divine power in *De mundo* 398a. The relation between the Ecphantian and Pseudo-Aristotelian divine powers is unclear, but νοῦς is identified with the divine power, which is an intermediary between the bodies moved by the power and the ultimate mover of these bodies, the holder of the power.

Examples of νοῦς as the divine intermediary are very scarce. This scarcity does not seem to be irrelevant to the fact that a philosophical tradition in which νοῦς was identified with the prime god was prevalent in antiquity (Opsomer 2005:61). This identification of νοῦς with god appears in two ways: 1) by imposing the same role on νοῦς and god to hold the cosmos in order, 2) by directly identifying one with the other. Anaxagoras provides the reader with examples of the first way of identifying νοῦς with god.

2) Νοῦς as the cause of the movement and order of the universe

καὶ νοῦν μὲν ἀρχὴν κινήσεως.

And Mind is the source of motion (Anaxagoras, DK 59.A.1, p. 5.30-31; transl. Graham 2010:295).

πάντα διεκόσμηγε νοῦς.

All these did mind set in order (Anaxagoras, DK 59.B.12, p. 11-12; transl. Graham 2010:291).

τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν αἴτιον νοῦν τὸν πάντα διαταξάμενον.

die Wirkursache jedoch der Geist, der alles ordnend gestalte (Anaxagoras, DK 59.A.46, p. 19.3-4; transl. Mansfeld and Primavessi 2011:619).

Not as a creator God but as a Greek artisan (Cleve 1973:80), the Anaxagorean νοῦς can be

regarded as the proto-type of the Platonic δημιουργός which occupies a high rank in the presupposed cosmic hierarchical order.²⁶ From Fr. 12, which includes a series of his arguments on νοῦς, Leshner (1995:126) summarises the attributes of the Anaxagorean νοῦς:

- (1) Mind is unlimited, self-controlling, and unmixed with anything else, while all other things have a portion of everything (lines 1-3 and 25-26);
- (2) Mind is the finest and purest of all things (9-10);
- (3) Mind has every discerning judgement (πᾶσαν γνώμην) about everything (10);
- (4) Mind is the greatest strength (10-11);
- (5) Mind controls all things that possess soul (11-12);
- (6) Mind controlled the whole revolution so that it began to rotate (12-13);
- (7) Mind knew (ἔγνω) all things, the things being mixed together and the things being separated off and distinguished (16-17);
- (8) Mind ordered (διεκόσμησε) all things (17-19); and
- (9) Mind is all alike in things both great and small (27-28).

The Anaxagorean notion of νοῦς is based on its intellectuality and this pure intellect is involved in the movement and order of all things. The creation which is not *creatio ex nihilo* (Cleve 1973:77) is carried out through νοῦς by setting all things in order. This notion is also introduced by Pseudo-Aristotle when the etymology of the word ‘cosmos’ is provided (*De mundo* 397a.5-8). This order implies the notion of cosmic hierarchy that distinguishes all existential beings from each other according to their ontological ranks. This concept of νοῦς as the cause of order thus indicates that νοῦς is regarded as the first principle as the creator of the cosmos.

Van Riel (2013:27-8) specifically adopts the Anaxagorean notion of νοῦς to represent the notion of νοῦς in the ancient philosophical tradition:

The same can be said of the term ‘intellect’ (νοῦς), which contains in a nutshell the evolution of

²⁶ Cleve’s (1973:80) explanation of the Anaxagorean νοῦς should be introduced because it supports this assumption: “The Anaxagorean Nous, however, is not the Jewish God, not a Creator absolutely omnipotent, who out of nothingness conjures up the world to be subservient to His ends, the ends of the Lord. The Nous of Anaxagoras is a Hellenistic artist, the architect of the world, a mathematical and physical intelligence of the highest rank, but of a might only relatively highest. A skillful mechanician, knowing all that can be made of the world, but performing as well all the conditions in dispensable for accomplishing the chosen possibilities.”

Greek religious attitudes. In Homeric times, the word ‘νοῦς’ was used to indicate the ‘leadership’ of the gods, but also their whims. In philosophical explanations, the term was used to indicate the intellect that governs the order of the universe (as in Anaxagoras), while at some time being used to indicate ‘wisdom’ and ‘thoughtfulness’ of the morally good person.

This notion of νοῦς, namely that it is the source of cosmic order, was shared by the ancient Greek philosophers such as the Platonists and the Stoics when they explained divine providence of the universe (Sharples 2010a:143). With regard to divine providence, god and νοῦς are interchangeably described as the generator of cosmic order. The thesis will now look into multiple authors who directly identify νοῦς with god.

3) Νοῦς as god

As the first philosopher who, against the anthropomorphic description of god, inaugurated the systematic concept of theology, Xenophanes influenced Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics (Kahn 2012b:1580).²⁷ This notion of god as the everlasting mind is a very important concept in the Aristotelian notion of god as Unmoved Mover.²⁸ As indicated, this excessive emphasis on divine intellectuality must be closely connected to god’s preservation of the world through order:

οὐσίαν θεοῦ σφαιροειδῆ, μηδὲν ὁμοιον ἔχουσαν ἀνθρώποι· ὅλον δὲ ὄραν καὶ ὅλον ἀκούειν, μὴ μέντοι ἀναπνεῖν· σύμπαντά τε εἶναι νοῦν καὶ φρόνησιν καὶ αἰδίων.

The being of God is spherical, not at all like that of man. All of him sees and all of him hears, but he does not breathe. He is all mind and thought and is everlasting (Xenophanes, DK

²⁷ Thales states, “God is the mind of the world (νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου τὸν θεόν; DK 11.A.23; transl. Graham 2010:35)”. This reflects Thales’ pantheism (Kahn 2012a) which was revived and developed by the hands of the Stoics. Aristotle comments on Thales, saying, “some say the soul is mixed in with the whole universe, and perhaps this is why Thales supposed that all things are full of gods” (*De anima* 1.5.411.a.7–8; transl. Cohen, Curd and Reeve 2011:12). In Pythagorean tradition as well, this direct identification of νοῦς with god can be found: ὅπερ ἐστὶ νοῦς ὁ θεός (Pythagorean School, DK 58.B.15, p. 454.39-40). These are, however, too fragmental to ascertain a definite understanding of the notion of νοῦς.

²⁸ To see how these arguments were inherited by Plato and Aristotle, see Kenny (2006:289-302). From this, it can be construed that their successors would inherit these arguments on god and νοῦς.

21.A.1.25-27, p. 113; transl. Graham 2010:99).

However, an attempt to keep god away from being involved in the toil of creation is also found in the pre-Socratic identification of νοῦς with god:

ἀέρα καὶ νοῦν τὸν θεὸν, οὐ μέντοι κοσμοποιὸν τὸν νοῦν.

God is air and mind, yet the mind is not the creator of the universe (Archelaus, DK 60.A.12; my translation).

Logically, this statement is read to mean that god is not the creator of the world because if $A=B$ and $B \neq C$, then $A \neq C$. As a pupil of Anaxagoras, Archelaus followed his teacher in the notion that νοῦς is the cause of movement but denied that νοῦς is pure, “cosmopoeic” and the source of order (Guthrie 1965:339-41). This detachment of the cosmopoeic task from god was repeated by Platonists at the beginning of the first millennium CE in order to secure the prime god’s dignity.²⁹

Plato made use of the term νοῦς 421 times throughout his oeuvre and 89 of them are found in one dialogue: *Leges*. Among those 89 references to νοῦς in *Leges*, only two need to be discussed at this point as they include this comparison of νοῦς to the law:

ὅπως ἡ νομοθετουμένη πόλις ἐλευθέρα τε ἔσται καὶ φίλη ἑαυτῇ καὶ νοῦν ἔξει. (*Leges* 701d).

First, that the city for which he legislates should be free; and secondly, be at unity with herself; and thirdly, should have understanding (transl. Jowett 1892:84).

This statement connects the law with νοῦς by designating the latter as one of the characteristics of the city ruled by the law. Jowett’s translation of νοῦς as ‘understanding’ reflects here the difficulty of describing the intricate notion of νοῦς in one word. His translation of this word is too general and simplistic idea to emphasise the subtle connotation of νοῦς. One may ask, for

²⁹ This identification of νοῦς with god concerning their role to preserve the universe through order is most effectively conveyed through the metaphor of the law (Opsomer 2005:60). In this sense, it is noteworthy that νοῦς is frequently identified with the law by post-Socratic philosophers.

example, how one should understand the expression ‘the city has understanding’. In view of the fact that νοῦς qualifies a city in his statement, νοῦς should rather be translated as ‘orderliness’. Even though ‘orderliness’ is not the direct translation of the term νοῦς, it implies the most important role of νοῦς. The meaning of νοῦς therefore changes with the specific context in which it appears, for example, the governance of a city. The next instance clearly designates the order generated by νοῦς as the law:

τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον (*Leges* 714a).

Giving the reason’s ordering the name of “law” (transl. Bury 1967:287).

Likewise, νοῦς is frequently described by Plato as the cause of order (*Phaedo* 97c.1, 3; 98a.7; *Cratylus* 400a.9; *Philebus* 28e.3, 30c.6; *Leges* 966e.4, 967b.5) and at other times identified with god (*Philebus* 28c.7). These descriptions indicate that Plato had in mind the pre-Socratic notion that νοῦς is god (cf. Opsomer 2005:53-57).³⁰

In Aristotle, there are multiple references to νοῦς which are similar to those in Plato. Aristotle has only one direct reference to νοῦς which is identified with god (*Protrepticus* Fr. 110. 1). Furthermore, he often implied that νοῦς is god by denoting it as the cause of the universe (*De anima* 404b.2; 405a.15; 407a.6; 411b.18; *Metaphysica* 1065b.4; *Physica* 196a.30; 198a.6; 265b.22; *Protrepticus* Fr. 27.3). It should therefore be noted that Aristotle also regarded νοῦς as god which is the preserver of the universe. Moreover, the clear identification of νοῦς with the law is found in Aristotle:

διόπερ ἄνευ ὀρέξεως νοῦς ὁ νόμος ἐστίν (Aristotle, *Politica* 1287a.32).

The law is reason unaffected by desire (transl. Jowett 1921).

Considering the Aristotelian notion of Unmoved Mover, which is described as pure thought, Aristotle implicitly acknowledges that νοῦς is identified with god. This identification of νοῦς

³⁰ Opsomer (2005:61) clearly indicates: “there was a strong tradition (the “*nous* theology”) that considered (the supreme) god to be an intellect”.

with god indicates that Aristotle held that god, as the immobile νοῦς, preserves the universe through order. This understanding is reflected by Pseudo-Aristotle in his identification of god with the law:

ἐν ἀκινήτῳ γὰρ ἰδρυμένος δυνάμει πάντα κινεῖ καὶ περιάγει, ὅπου βούλεται καὶ ὅπως, ἐν διαφοροῖς ἰδέαις τε καὶ φύσεσιν, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει καὶ ὁ τῆς πόλεως νόμος ἀκίνητος ὢν ἐν ταῖς τῶν χρωμένων ψυχαῖς πάντα οἰκονομεῖ τὰ κατὰ τὴν πολιτείαν·

For he, established in the immobile, moves all things with power and leads them around, where and how he wills, in different forms and natures, just as, for instance, the law of the city, being immovable in the souls of those who use it, administers all things in public life (*De mundo* 400b. 11-15; transl. Thom 2014b:53).

These two aspects of divine νοῦς and the presupposed notion of cosmic hierarchy were inherited and gathered together by the Middle Platonists to formulate their cosmological frame: 1) The prime god who is not involved in the creation; this can be understood as his transcendence, 2) the divine intermediary and 3) the cosmic hierarchy which is the passageway of god's preserving influence.

Two philosophers, who lived in the interim of Middle and Neoplatonism, provide comments on the Stoic and Aristotelian notion of νοῦς which evince that the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos had already become a fixed basis for the cosmo-theological discussions of their time. Bénatouïl (2009:33, 34-35) assists the reader in further understanding νοῦς by presenting its Stoic notion as perceived by Diogenes Laertius:³¹

To understand it (sc. gradation as the way in which the Stoic νοῦς penetrates the cosmos), let us follow the various uses of the term νοῦς in Diogenes (sc. Diogenes Laertius)' testimony.³² (1)

³¹ It is conjecturable that he lived during the first half of the third century from Diogenes' omission of Neoplatonists and philosophers after Saturnius (Long & Sharples 2012:457).

³² Diogenes Laertius' testimony is as follows: Τὸν δὴ κόσμον διοικεῖσθαι κατὰ νοῦν καὶ πρόνοιαν, καθά φησι Χρῦσιππός τ' ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ Περὶ προνοίας καὶ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ Περὶ θεῶν, εἰς ἅπαν αὐτοῦ μέρος διήκοντος τοῦ νοῦ, καθάπερ ἐφ' ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς· ἀλλ' ἤδη δι' ὧν μὲν μᾶλλον, δι' ὧν δὲ ἦττον. δι' ὧν μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἕξις κεχώρηκεν, ὡς διὰ τῶν ὀστέων καὶ τῶν νεύρων· δι' ὧν δὲ ὡς νοῦς, ὡς διὰ τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ. οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον ζῶον ὄντα καὶ ἔμψυχον καὶ λογικόν, ἔχειν ἡγεμονικὸν μὲν τὸν αἰθέρα, καθά φησιν

The world is ruled κατὰ νοῦν: νοῦς is the norm according to which the world is organized. (2) Νοῦς pervades every part of the world: νοῦς is the ubiquitous agent administering the world. (3) (a) God passes through the aether or the heaven ὡς νοῦς: there is a part of the world where νοῦς is present *as itself*, and (b) this part dominates and administers the rest of the world as its ‘commanding’ or ‘ruling part’ (ἡγεμονικόν).

From Diogenes Laertius’ testimony, one can deduce the important features of the Stoic notion of νοῦς: 1) νοῦς is the ruling principle of the universe; 2) as god, νοῦς penetrates the universe; and 3) it is the cause of the cosmic order. This description of the Stoic νοῦς by Diogenes Laertius is clothed in the Middle Platonic framework of the cosmos of his time.

The Peripatetic notion of νοῦς also assists the reader in understanding the ancient idea of νοῦς handed down to the imperial era. Alexander Aphrodisias (CE 200), while his aim was “explaining Aristotle in Aristotelian terms” (Sharples 2012:59), had a different concept of νοῦς from that of Aristotle. The former identified νοῦς with the Unmoved Mover, while the latter did not as far as *Metaphysica* 12.7 is concerned (in Gabriel 2009:398). This difference is a result of Alexander’s adaptation of the Stoic notion of νοῦς, which dictates that νοῦς penetrates the universe (Sharples 2007:619):

εὐθὺς μὲν γὰρ τῇ πρώτῃ καταβολῇ τοῦ σπέρματός ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργεῖα νοῦς διὰ πάντων γε κεχωρηκῶς καὶ ὦν ἐνεργεῖα, ὡς καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ σώματι τῶν τυχόντων. ἐπειδὴν δὲ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας δυνάμεως ἐνεργήσῃ, τότε ἡμέτερος νοῦς οὗτος λέγεται καὶ ἡμεῖς νοοῦμεν, ὥσπερ εἴ τις τεχνίτην ἐννοήσῃ τοτὲ μὲν ἄνευ ὀργάνων ἐνεργοῦντα κατὰ τὴν τέχνην, τοτὲ δὲ καὶ μετ’ ὀργάνων, ὅτε καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐνεργεῖα αὐτῷ περὶ τὴν ὕλην γίνεται. τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ὁ θεῖος νοῦς αἰεὶ μὲν ἐνεργεῖ διὸ καὶ ἔστιν ἐνεργεῖα, καὶ δι’ ὀργάνου δέ, ὅταν ἐκ τῆς συγκρίσεως τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τῆς εὐκρασίας γένηται ὄργανον τοιοῦτον. ὑλικὴν γὰρ ἤδη τινὰ τότε ἐνεργεῖαν ἐνεργεῖ καὶ ἔστιν οὗτος ἡμέτερος νοῦς.

(5) For straight away, at the first depositing of the seed, the intellect which is in actuality is there,

Ἀντίπατρος ὁ Τύριος ἐν τῷ ὀγδόῳ Περὶ κόσμου. Χρῦσιππος δ’ ἐν πατρὸς ὁ Τύριος ἐν τῷ ὀγδόῳ Περὶ κόσμου. Χρῦσιππος δ’ ἐν ᾧ πρώτῳ Περὶ προνοίας καὶ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ Περὶ θεῶν τὸν οὐρανόν φασι τὸ ἡγεμονικόν τοῦ κόσμου, Κλεάνθης δὲ τὸν ἥλιον. ὁ μὲντοι Χρῦσιππος διαφορώτερον πάλιν τὸ καθαρώτατον τοῦ αἰθέρος ἐν ταῦτῳ, ὃ καὶ πρῶτον θεὸν λέγουσιν αἰσθητικῶς ὥσπερ κεχωρηκῆναι διὰ τῶν ἐν ἀέρι καὶ διὰ τῶν ζώων ἀπάντων καὶ φυτῶν· διὰ δὲ τῆς γῆς αὐτῆς καθ’ ἕξιν (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 7.138-39).

going through all things and being [there] in actuality, as also in any other body whatsoever. But when it is also active through our potentiality, then this is said to be our intellect and we think; just as if someone thought of a craftsman who sometimes is active in accordance with his craft without instruments, and sometimes with instruments when his activity in accordance with the craft is in relation to the matter. (6) In the same way the divine intellect, too, is always active - which is why it is in actuality - and it [is also active] through an instrument when, from the combination of bodies and their satisfactory blending, an instrument of this sort comes to be. For then [the divine intellect] is active with a certain activity involving matter, and this is our intellect (Alexander Aphrodisias, *Mantissa* 112.21-30; transl. Sharples 2010b:269).

It should be noted that Alexander wrote his philosophy under the philosophical influence of his time, Middle Platonism. His main purpose in discussing divine providence was to harmonise the two extremes: the Epicurean transcendent god and the Stoic immanent god (Sharples 1982:198). This was also the catalyst of the Middle Platonic division of the prime god and his intermediary δαίμονες which fulfill the demiurgic role.

Thus far, the chapter has discussed the elements which constitute the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos. This philosophical notion of god as the cause of cosmic order has more importance in the Middle Platonic notion of the cosmos. The Middle Platonists bring back νοῦς to the centre of their cosmology. Plutarch (*De animae procreatione in Timaeo* 1015D.11-E.6; transl. Cherniss 1976:195-197) attributes the orderly preserved cosmos to νοῦς:

Ὁ γὰρ Πλάτων μητέρα μὲν καὶ τιθήνην καλεῖ τὴν ὕλην αἰτίαν δὲ κακοῦ τὴν κινητικὴν τῆς ὕλης καὶ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένην μεριστὴν ἄτακτον καὶ ἄλογον οὐκ ἄψυχον δὲ κίνησιν, ἣν ἐν Νόμοις ὡσπερ εἴρηται ψυχὴν ἐναντίαν καὶ ἀντίπαλον τῇ ἀγαθουργῷ προσεῖπε ψυχὴ γὰρ αἰτία κινήσεως καὶ ἀρχή, νοῦς δὲ τάξεως καὶ συμφωνίας περὶ κίνησιν.

In fact, while Plato calls matter mother and nurse, what he calls the cause of evil is the motion that moves matter and becomes divisible in the case of bodies, the disorderly and irrational but not inanimate motion, which in the *Laws*, as has been said, he called soul contrary and adverse to the one that is beneficent. For soul is cause and principle of motion, but intelligence of order and consonance in motion.

In the extract, νοῦς is described as the cause and principle of order and harmony. According to Gerson (2013:193), by identifying demiurge with νοῦς, Plutarch attempts to introduce demiurge as the first principle of all: Plutarch's demiurge is the highest god (Opsomer 2005:81).

Furthermore, a clearer description of the way in which the Middle Platonic νοῦς influences the universe is provided by Alcinous:

Ἐπει δὲ ψυχῆς νοῦς ἀμείνων, νοῦ δὲ τοῦ ἐν δυνάμει ὁ κατ' ἐνέργειαν πάντα νοῶν καὶ ἅμα καὶ ἀεὶ, τούτου δὲ καλλίων ὁ αἴτιος τούτου καὶ ὅπερ ἂν ἔτι ἀνωτέρω τούτων ὑφέστηκεν, οὗτος ἂν εἴη ὁ πρῶτος θεός, αἴτιος ὑπάρχων τοῦ ἀεὶ ἐνεργεῖν τῷ νῷ τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ. Ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἀκίνητος, αὐτὸς ὢν εἰς τοῦτον, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἥλιος εἰς τὴν ὄρασιν, ὅταν αὐτῷ προσβλέπη, καὶ ὡς τὸ ὄρεκτὸν κινεῖ τὴν ὄρεξιν ἀκίνητον ὑπάρχον· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ οὗτος ὁ νοῦς κινήσει τὸν νοῦν τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ.

Since intellect is superior to soul, and superior to potential intellect there is actualized intellect, *which cognizes everything simultaneously and eternally*, and finer than this again is the cause of this and whatever it is that has an existence still prior to these, this it is that would be the primal God, *being the cause of the eternal activity of the intellect of the whole heaven*. It acts on this while remaining itself unmoved, as does the sun on vision, when this is directed towards it, and as the object of desire moves desire,³³ while remaining motionless itself. In just this way will this intellect move the intellect of the whole heaven (*The Handbook of Platonism* 10.2; transl. Dillon 1993:17).

As one can easily discern from the extract, νοῦς is identified with the prime god because the role of νοῦς to cause the eternal activity of the intellect of the whole heaven is traditionally attributed to god. Opsomer (2005:80) summarises Alcinous' notion of νοῦς as follows:

His (sc. Alcinous') highest god (1) is then identified as the cause of the activity of intellect, but is nonetheless itself an intellect. The cosmic intellect has two aspects or two states (2 (sc. the active intellect) and 3 (sc. the potentially thinking intellect of the world)). Due to the influence of the first god cosmic intellect it is in a perpetual state of actuality and never in a state of mere

³³ This reminds the reader of the Aristotelian answer of ὄρεξις to the question of how the cosmos is properly governed according to the universal hierarchical order.

potentiality. The distinction between (2) and (3) is therefore not one between two logically distinguishable states or aspects of one single entity.

This obvious identification of *voũs* with the prime god was not strange to ancient philosophies (Opsomer 2005:62) and Middle Platonism is not an exception. As discussed in multiple extracts by Middle Platonic writers, it becomes clear that this role of god to hold the universe by providing order and harmony is attributed to *voũs* in Middle Platonism.

In this sense, the metaphor of the law in *De mundo* 398 400b.28 and *Dissertationes* 11.12.17 should be noted for its significant role in describing the way god rules over the cosmos. Van Nuffelen (2011:129) comments that for Maximus, the law is identical with providence (*Dissertationes* 5. 4-5). This supports the implication of *voũç* in the law because this providential role of god is conducted by order, and this order is produced by the divine *voũs* in ancient philosophy. Consequently, when Maximus, a well-known Middle Platonist describes god as the law, *voũç*, which is identified with god in being the source of order, is implied through the image of the Great King (Opsomer 2005:74, 77). In *De mundo* (400b.28) as well, this identification of *voũç* with the law is found as the most proper metaphor to explain the the transcendent prime god's monarchic governance of the cosmos (Opsomer 2005:60).

In conclusion, under Middle Platonism, the notion of the hierarchical cosmos, which had been scattered through the arguments on *voũç*, was systematised in order to explain god's preservation of the cosmos without damaging his dignity. This Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos includes the prime god, the divine intermediaries and the cosmic hierarchical system which holds everything together. This cosmological frame is implied through the image of the Great King and it provides the four authors with the common ground on which they develop their own cosmo-theological arguments. In the next chapter, how the image of the Great King functions for these four authors' cosmo-theological arguments will be clarified through the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King.

Chapter Five: The *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King

The main concern of this chapter is to demonstrate that the image of the Great King implies the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos. The historical information outlined in chapter three will be utilised as the foundation to explicate the adaptation of this image for philosophical arguments by Pseudo-Aristotle, Maximus of Tyre, Aelius Aristides and Philo of Alexandria. These authors are not chronologically arranged because two points need to be emphasised: 1) the uncertainty of chronological order between Philo and *De mundo* and 2) Judaism which distinguishes Philo from the other three. These four authors, however, can be grouped together by their philosophical propensity to the Middle Platonism. Their tendency towards Middle Platonism allows the reader to predict their similarity in applying this image to their own philosophy.

5.1. *De mundo*

The authenticity of this treatise transmitted under the name of Aristotle has been one of the most violently disputed points in scholarship. In spite of the fact that many influential scholars, such as G. Reale and A. P. Bos (Reale & Bos 1995:15), still argue for Aristotle's authorship, it has been generally accepted amongst academics since the 19th century that Aristotle was not the author of this treatise (Thom 2014a:5-8) and multiple evidence from diverse fields of studies indicate that *De mundo* could not have been written by Aristotle himself.³⁴ For example, geographically, the reference to the island of Taprobane, which had not been known by the time of Aristotle, indicates that this treatise must have been written after the time of Aristotle (Burri 2014:90). Also, philosophically, *De mundo*'s Middle Platonic propensity presents itself as written after the time of Aristotle (Thom 2014a:7). The plausible date of this treatise may thus be the middle of the 1st century BCE and Gerson's (2013:179) periodisation of the Middle

³⁴ Gottschalk (1987:1135-1139) convincingly disputes Reale's opinion that this treatise should be dated between 342-336 BCE because Reale's conclusion does not harmonise with his evidence. To Gottschalk, he seems biased for asserting Aristotelian authorship. Gottschalk thus argues for dating it between the middle of the 1st century BCE and 2nd century CE. For the historical survey of debates on authenticity, see Krayer (2014:181-187).

Platonism supports this date.³⁵

The period of time during which this treatise could have been written is extended to the early 2nd century CE due to Apuleius' (ca. 125 CE) Latin translation of *De mundo* (Harrison 2012:128) and the extract from Maximus (*Orationes* 11.12; 2nd century CE) which is generally regarded as having a similarity with Pseudo-Aristotle's *De mundo* (398a.11-35) in adopting the image of the Great King and the metaphor of the law in a city (Thom 2014a:3-4).³⁶ Accordingly, it is safe to say that this treatise should be dated between 50 BCE - 150 CE.

Thom (2014a:14-15) and Chandler (2014:73-78) agree that this treatise has a didactic purpose because it focuses on persuading the reader to study philosophy by demonstrating the excellence of philosophy through theologising the universal phenomena (391a.1-391b.8). Due to the fact that there is no need for persuading philosophers to study philosophy, this treatise should be regarded as written not for qualified philosophers but for those who are educated enough to have a general understanding of somewhat sophisticated philosophical arguments. This assumption concerning the target readers represents the popular-philosophical disposition of *De mundo*.

In theologising the universal phenomena, the main purpose is to emphasise god's majesty by showing how harmoniously and orderly he maintains the universe, which consists of opposite elements. In order to develop his argument, the author of *De mundo* adopted diverse sources by writers with different philosophical backgrounds.³⁷ In other words, he wrote this treatise

³⁵ According to Schenkenveld, linguistically, it is not impossible to date this treatise during the time of Aristotle or the time which is not far from his death (in Chandler 2014:72-73). However, one may doubt as to whether it is proper to adopt a linguistic evidence to determine the *terminus post quem* of any ancient text because the linguistic experience is inherently accumulative so that no one has any experience of language which has not been exposed to him/her. In other words, one can never adopt any expression of the time which is later than his own but only of the time earlier. Therefore, an analysis of the oldest linguistic evidence is not convincing when one uses it to decide the date of any ancient text. Instead, only an analysis of the latest linguistic evidence should be adopted to support any argument for the date of ancient texts.

³⁶ Bos (1991:312), one of the most famous advocates for Aristotelian authorship, suggests that the *terminus ante quem* must be 250 BCE on the basis of his assumption that the Stoic Chrysippus (280-207 BCE) depended on *De mundo*. However, it is questionable if one can be convinced of his assumption which is based on another indefinable assumption.

³⁷ The diverse philosophical notions included in this short treatise may have come from Posidonius (Capelle

under the tradition of eclecticism (Thom 2012:293). Eclecticism also is one of the important characteristics which indicate *De mundo*'s propensity to popular philosophy.

In *De mundo* 6, the author gives an account of his theology on a great scale. Before continuing the discussion on the theology of *De mundo*, one should first understand the Pseudo-Aristotelian design of the cosmos. It has the earth-centered view of the cosmos which is bound to heaven, the home of gods:

Ταύτης δὲ τὸ μὲν μέσον, ἀκίνητόν τε καὶ ἐδραῖον ὄν, ἢ φερέσβιος εἴληχε γῆ, παντοδαπῶν ζώων ἐστία τε οὕσα καὶ μήτηρ. Τὸ δὲ ὑπερθεῖν αὐτῆς, πᾶν τε καὶ πάντη πεπερατωμένον εἰς τὸ ἀνωτάτω, θεῶν οἰκητήριον, οὐρανὸς ὠνόμασται. Πλήρης δὲ ὢν σωμάτων θείων, ἃ δὴ καλεῖν ἄστρα εἰώθαμεν, κινούμενος κίνησιν αἰδίων, μιᾷ περιαγωγῇ καὶ κύκλῳ συναναγορεύει πᾶσι τούτοις ἀπαύστως δι' αἰῶνος.

The centre of this orderly arrangement, being unmoved and fixed, is allotted to “life-bearing earth”, as the hearth and mother of all kind of living things. The uppermost part of it, on the other hand, which is completely and on all sides bounded towards its highest region, the home of the gods, is called heaven. Being full of divine bodies (which we usually call stars) [and] moving with an eternal movement, it dances in a chorus with all of them without pause throughout eternity in a single revolution and orbit (391b.12-19; transl. Thom 2014:23).

This notion of the earth that it is the centre of the universe is very Peripatetic (Bos 1988:77). However, this dichotomy of the heaven and the earth was generally accepted by ancient philosophers. This is the basis of the concept of multi-layered cosmos, which would have surely been familiar to Pseudo-Aristotle as well. To him, the heaven is also divided by the concentric seven cycles:

Τὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἀπλανῶν πλῆθος ἀνεξεύρετόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις, καίπερ ἐπὶ μιᾷς κινουμένων ἐπιφανείας τῆς τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ· τὸ δὲ τῶν πλανήτων, εἰς ἑπτὰ μέρη κεφαλαιούμενον, ἐν τοσοῦτοις ἐστὶ κύκλοις ἐφεξῆς κειμένοις, ὥστε ἀεὶ τὸν ἀνωτέρω μείζω τοῦ ὑποκάτω εἶναι,

1905). According to Maguire (1939:111, 166), however, this treatise came from Neopythagorean sources. Strohm (1970:267) attempted to show that this was written under Platonic influence. Reale and Bos's (1995:15) concern was to attribute this treatise to Aristotle.

τούς τε ἑπτὰ ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐμπεριέχεσθαι, πάντας γε μὴν ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀπλανῶν σφαίρας περιελήφθαι.

The multitude of planets, on the other hand, grouped into seven parts, is [placed] in just as many circles located next to one another, so that the higher circle is always larger than the one below it, and so that the seven circles are contained within one another, but all [seven] are again surrounded by the sphere of fixed stars (392a.16-23; transl. Thom 2014b:23).

These divine bodies are fixed and distanced by the groups of different ranks between ether and the circuit of the moon (392a.23-31). This concept of multi-layeredness can also be applied to the elements of the cosmos.:

Πέντε δὴ στοιχεῖα ταῦτα ἐν πέντε χώραις σφαιρικῶς ἐγκείμενα, περιεχομένης ἀεὶ τῆς ἐλάττονος τῆ μείζονι—λέγω δὲ γῆς μὲν ἐν ὕδατι, ὕδατος δὲ ἐν ἀέρι, ἀέρος δὲ ἐν πυρί, πυρὸς δὲ ἐν αἰθέρι— τὸν ὅλον κόσμον συνεστήσατο, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄνω πᾶν θεῶν ἀπέδειξεν οἰκητήριον, τὸ κάτω δὲ ἐφημέρων ζώων.

These five elements, then, situated in spheres in five regions, the smaller always being encompassed by the larger – I mean, earth within water, water within air, air within fire, and fire within ether – make up the whole upper part into a dwelling for the gods and the lower part into one for short-lived creatures (392b.35-393a.5; transl. Thom 2014b:27).

The whole universe is divided into five levels according to Aristotle. Being the centre of the universe, the earth is designated as the lowest part of it. The levels of the cosmos are gradationally arranged by the principle in which the larger and higher part encompasses the smaller and lower part.

Also, in chapter five, Pseudo-Aristotle draws attention to the question ‘how has the cosmos which constitutes opposite principles been preserved up to now?’ (396a.33-396b.4). As the answer to this question, the author suggests a single harmony (396b.23-397a.1) and order when he etymologically explains the meaning of the word cosmos:

Τίς γὰρ ἂν εἶη φύσις τοῦδε κρείττων; ἦν γὰρ ἂν εἶπη τις, μέρος ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ. Τό τε καλὸν πᾶν ἐπώνυμόν ἐστι τοῦτου καὶ τὸ τεταγμένον, ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου λεγόμενον κεκοσμηθῆναι.

For what being could be better than this [sc. the cosmos]? Whatever one may mention, is a part of it. Everything beautiful and well-arranged is named after it, because it is said ‘to be ordered’ from the word ‘cosmos’ (397a.5-8; transl. Thom 2014b:41).

The author paves the way for the next discussion by providing his understanding of the gradationally structured cosmos and implying harmony and order as his own answers to the question ‘how god preserves this universe’. Pseudo-Aristotle further develops his discussion on god and the cosmos based on these premises.

Subsequently, chapter six deals with the cause which holds the universe together (397b.9-10). The author begins with a reference to the ancient wisdom that all existential beings depend on god’s preserving influence (397b.13-16). He again appeals to the ancient notion that the universe is not the essence of god but the manifestation of his divine power (397b.13-20). On the basis of these conventional notions, the author attempts to answer the question, ‘how does the transcendent god immanently preserve this universe?’ by adapting the divine power, which is distinguished from god’s essence and untiringly penetrates the universe (397b.20-27).³⁸ This thorough differentiation of god’s power from his essence is a particular characteristic of *De mundo* (Smith 2014:124). The divine power which is situated in heaven is the cause of all things preserved (398a.3-4) and the influence of this divine power is gradated as it passes through the layers of the cosmos:

μάλιστα δέ πως αὐτοῦ τῆς δυνάμεως ἀπολαύει τὸ πλησίον αὐτοῦ σῶμα, καὶ ἔπειτα τὸ μετ’ ἐκεῖνο, καὶ ἐφεξῆς οὕτως ἄχρι τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς τόπων. Διὸ γῆ τε καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ἔοικεν, ἐν ἀποστάσει πλείστη τῆς ἐκ θεοῦ ὄντα ὠφελείας, ἀσθενῆ καὶ ἀκατάλληλα πλείστη τῆς ἐκ θεοῦ ὄντα ὠφελείας, ἀσθενῆ καὶ ἀκατάλληλα εἶναι καὶ πολλῆς μεστὰ ταραχῆς· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καθ’ ὅσον ἐπὶ πᾶν διικνεῖσθαι πέφυκε τὸ θεῖον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ὁμοίως συμβαίνει τὰ τε ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, κατὰ τὸ ἔγγιον τε καὶ πορρωτέρω θεοῦ εἶναι μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἧττον ὠφελείας μεταλαμβάνοντα.

The body closest to him has most benefit of his power, and then the body next to it, and so in sequence until the regions where we are. So the earth and the things on the earth, being at the

³⁸ This penetration of the divine power is reminiscent of the penetration of the Stoic *logos* (Opsomer 2005:61).

greatest distance from the assistance of god, seem to be weak and incongruous and full of much confusion; but nevertheless, in as far as the divine naturally penetrates to everything, it happens to the things in our region in the same way as to the things above us: they share to a greater or lesser extent in god's assistance according to whether they are closer or further from him (397b.27-398a.1; transl. Thom 2014b:43)

God, however, assures cosmic order and harmony in the universe through the medium: the divine power. By adapting the divine power, which penetrates the universe through the cosmic hierarchical system and is thus reminiscent of the Stoic logos (Opsomer 2005:61),³⁹ the author of *De mundo* preserves both the transcendental essence and the immanent influence of god, who is referred to as the cause of the universe held together (397b.9), the preserver (397b.20), and so forth. Therefore, his adaptation of the divine power enables chapter seven of *De mundo* (401a. 12-29) to introduce god with many names according to the diverse phenomena caused by the divine power. Through the divine power, god can be recognised as the cause to produce different movements and the cause to harmonise all differences.

The way in which the divine power transmits its influence throughout the universe is compared to the following diverse images: the images of an engineer (398b.14-5), a puppeteer (398b.16-7), a key-note (398b.26) and a man who throws different shapes and animals (398b.27-399a.1). These images describe the principle of succession in which one movement incurred by the divine power causes diverse movements. These images do not explain 'how' but merely state 'it is so' by citing instances of the successive transmission of movements.

Subsequently, after referring to cosmic harmony and order given by god (399a.12), the author

³⁹ If the author of *De mundo* attempted to harmonise the Stoic notion that god is industrious in preserving the universe and the Epicurean doctrine that god is transcendent from this world, the divine power would be the most plausible answer for the dilemma which these two philosophical notions result in (Sharples 2010a:154-55, Van Riel 2013:70-81; Elders 1972:16). Tzvetkova-Glaser (2014:135) listed the divine power's characteristics in *De mundo*: 1) δύνναμις is clearly different from οὐσία, since the one is immanent and the other is transcendent; 2) God's power is the source of all movement and of all things living; 3) God's power is responsible for sustaining the world. The author thus adapted the divine power to his theology to secure its consistency. It should especially be noted that the last two characteristics of δύνναμις suggested by Tzvetkova-Glaser can also be applied to god who is the cause of movement and harmony throughout *De mundo* 6. The differentiation between god's essence and his power is thus added by Pseudo-Aristotle to both to keep god in his transcendence and acknowledge his immanent influence.

gives examples for this harmony which holds different members together. From the previous statement that cosmic harmony and order are essential for god's preserving action (397b.20), one may discern that this single harmony ensures the preservation of the cosmos through the divine power. The image of the leader of chorus (399a.14) who issues the key-note to lead all the members with different roles into harmony (399a.19) recalls the leader who is referred to as the principle (ἀρχή) of the chorus in Aristotle, *Metaphysica* Δ1018b.25-29. This describes the cosmos which is sustained by the single harmony in spite of its different elements. Likewise, the soldiers with different roles are to be prepared as one army for a battle when the trumpet signals them (399b.1-10). It should be noted that there is no explicit answer to the question 'how can the authority or power of one leader harmonise multiple members?'. However, one may conjecture that it would indeed be possible for the authority of a leader to place every member in order due to the cosmic hierarchy which arranges every member according to their lots.⁴⁰ The reason why these images are not concerned with how it is possible may be because this hierarchical order was unquestionably clear to people of antiquity.

Pseudo-Aristotle concludes the section by presenting the images of a helmsman, a charioteer, a chorus leader and the law in a city (400b.6-11) as a means to demonstrate the manner in which god preserves the universe through his power. Each of the four images takes steps which increase in profundity in order to explain the principle of the divine power penetrating the cosmos. The first two images function as an introduction, explaining how a small part influences the big whole. Then, the image of the chorus leader alludes to the way in which the different preassigned roles are played by the members at the fixed signals by the leader. In the three images, the helmsman, the charioteer and the chorus leader represent triggering of the most harmonious movement of all.

However, when the author comes to the law, he moves to a more recondite implication than that of the other images. At this point, he subtly answers the question of 'how' by means of the

⁴⁰ Aristotle's ὄρεξις may be another answer to the question, 'how god becomes the cause of movements?' (*Metaphysica* Δ1076a. 3-4), because it makes god himself the ultimate and final purpose of all things. Then, all things cannot but pursue god's perfection in every aspect by nature. For a brief discussion, see Elders (1972:35-43). However, Pseudo-Aristotle does not adopt this to answer the question of god's providence.

law. Particularly, when referring to the law, the author seems to paraphrase the Aristotelian comparison between νοῦς and the law (διόπερ ἄνευ ὀρέξεως νοῦς ὁ νόμος ἐστίν; *Politica* 1287a.32):⁴¹

νόμος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἰσοκλινῆς ὁ θεός (400b.28).

For god is an evenly balanced law to us (transl. Thom 2014b:53).

The law is described as being immobile in the soul and controlling all things (400b.14). As the law, all god should do to preserve the universe is to exist. However, this ontic influence requires a deliberate system which inherently passes through every existence. The way the law governs the city implies the Homeric Golden Chain as its passageway. From Homeric time, this notion of the cosmic hierarchy was implied through the golden scale or the golden chain which indicates the extended hierarchical order through the cosmos (Hunter 1986:27). A valuable example of this is the description of Achilles and Meno being weighed against each other on the golden scale (*Illiad* 22.209-13; West 2003:2), which represents that every being in the cosmos, from the prime god to the humankind, has different ontic value. Due to this difference between existential beings in ontological value, they by nature obey those in higher ranks.

This cosmic hierarchical order ensures that all the members of the city obey the law (400b.15-20) which ordains all the festivals (400b.21-3) and controls the city with an approved authority (400b.24). God must be the perfect law, because he is infallible, the strongest and clearest (400b.28-31). Like the law, god thus motionlessly preserves the universe in harmony (400b.31) only through his existence (Opsomer 2005:60).

In discussing the concept of god, Pseudo-Aristotle follows both Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of god because he insists that god is one (*De mundo* 401a.12) and admits the existence of many other gods (*De mundo* 391b.14-16) as well. As to the Platonic concept of god which *De mundo* follows, we may mention Mason's (2014:229) comment on the *Timaeus*:

⁴¹ This is one of the cases in which Aristotle identifies the first principle with νοῦς (cf. Menn 1992:546).

The last section (69a-92c) deals with the construction of the human body, together with the lower elements of the soul (which, here as in the Republic, includes spirited and appetitive elements as well as the rational one). In order to fulfill the plan of creation, these must be mortal, so they are not constructed by the supreme God, but by his servants, the lesser gods, since we are told (41a) that everything made by the supreme God is necessarily immortal.

The combination of the Aristotelian concept of one transcendent god and the concept of his subject deities may also be found in Bos's (1998:70) explanation of the way Aristotle assisted Philo in overcoming the limit of the Platonist demiurgy when describing Judaism only with the Platonic theology:

He was also the one who had provided Philo with the means of overcoming Plato's anthropomorphic concept of the divine Demiurge of the world by distinguishing between the pure intuitive activity of the theoretical intellect and the practically oriented activity of discursive reason, which formed the basis of Aristotle's double theology of the transcendent Unmoved mover and the plurality of cosmic gods.

It is not important for the reader to choose between the two at this moment because *De mundo's* concept of god cannot be explained by any single philosophical position. Pseudo-Aristotle disposed of the image of the Platonic demiurge as the personalised creator and imposed the image of the impersonal initiator of every movement and harmony on god who is transcendent. This combination of the one transcendental god (Aristotelian) and his subordinate deities (Platonic) should rather be regarded as the Middle Platonic modification, both to secure the prime god's dignity and to admit his immanent providential influence (Opsomer 2005: 55).

Based on these notions of god and the cosmos, Pseudo-Aristotle begins his explanation of the way the divine power functions as an intermediary between god and the whole universe by adopting the image of the Great King (398a.11-35). This image is the gateway to the cosmology of *De mundo*, which provides the reader with a guideline to interpreting those images which were previously dealt with.

The image of the Great King has two main parts. The first part describes the Great King and his servants inside of the palace (398a.11-23) and the second part describes his servants outside

of the palace (398a.23-35). The author gives account of the image of the Great King in *De mundo* 398a.11-35 as follows:

Τὸ γὰρ Καμβύσου Ξέρξου τε καὶ Δαρείου πρόσχημα εἰς σεμνότητος καὶ ὑπεροχῆς ὕψος μεγαλοπρεπῶς διεκεκόσμητο· αὐτὸς μὲν γάρ, ὡς λόγος, ἴδρυτο ἐν Σούσοις ἢ Ἐκβατάνοις, παντὶ ἀόρατος, θαυμαστὸν ἐπέχων βασιλείον οἶκον καὶ περίβολον χρυσοῦ καὶ ἠλέκτρῳ καὶ ἐλέφαντι ἀστράπτοντα· πυλῶνες δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ συνεχεῖς πρόθυρά τε σύχνοις εἰργόμενα σταδίοις ἀπ' ἀλλήλων θύραις τε χαλκαῖς καὶ τείχεσι μεγάλοις ὠχύρωτο· ἔξω δὲ τούτων ἄνδρες οἱ πρῶτοι καὶ δοκιμώτατοι διεκεκόσμητο, οἱ μὲν ἀμφ' αὐτὸν τὸν βασιλέα δορυφόροι τε καὶ θεράποντες, οἱ δὲ ἐκάστου περιβόλου φύλακες, πυλωροὶ τε καὶ ὠτακουσταὶ λεγόμενοι, ὡς ἂν ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτός, δεσπότης καὶ θεὸς ὀνομαζόμενος, πάντα μὲν βλέποι, πάντα δὲ ἀκούει. Χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ἄλλοι καθειστήκεσαν προσόδων ταμίαι καὶ στρατηγοὶ πολέμων καὶ κνηγεσίων δώρων τε ἀποδεκτῆρες τῶν τε λοιπῶν ἔργων ἕκαστοι κατὰ τὰς χρείας ἐπιμεληταί. Τὴν δὲ σύμπασαν ἀρχὴν τῆς Ἀσίας, περατουμένην Ἑλλησπόντῳ μὲν ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἐσπέραν μερῶν, Ἰνδοῦ δὲ ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἔσω, διειλήφεσαν κατὰ ἔθνη στρατηγοὶ καὶ σατράπαι καὶ βασιλεῖς, δοῦλοι τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, ἡμεροδρόμοι τε καὶ σκοποὶ καὶ ἀγγελιαφόροι φρυκτωριῶν τε ἐποπτῆρες. Τοσοῦτος δὲ ἦν ὁ κόσμος, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν φρυκτωριῶν, κατὰ διαδοχὰς πυρσευόντων ἀλλήλοις ἐκ περάτων τῆς ἀρχῆς μέχρι Σούσων καὶ Ἐκβατάνων, ὥστε τὸν βασιλέα γινώσκειν αὐθημερὸν πάντα τὰ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ καινουργούμενα.

For the pomp of Cambyses, Xerxes, and Darius was ordered in a magnificent manner to the height of dignity and authority. The King himself, they say, was based in Susa or Ecbatana, invisible to everyone, occupying a marvellous palace and an enclosure flashing with gold, electrum, and ivory. The many gate-towers and entrances in succession, separated from one another by many stades, were fortified with bronze doors and huge walls. Outside these the first and most esteemed men were set up in order, some as bodyguards and attendants around the King himself, others as guards of each outer wall, called Gatekeepers and Listeners, so that the King himself, named Master and God, might see everything and hear everything. Apart from these others were appointed as controllers of revenue, commanders of war and of the hunt, receivers of gifts, and curators of the remaining tasks, each appointed according to need. The whole empire of Asia, limited by the Hellespont on the western side and by the Indus on the eastern side, was divided according to nations among generals and satraps and kings, slaves of the Great King, as well as among couriers and scouts and messengers and overseers of the

production of beacon-signals. So comprehensive was the arrangement, and especially of the system of signal-beacons, signaling to one another in succession from the ends of the Empire to Susa and Ecbatana, that the King knew the same day all new developments in Asia (transl. Thom 2014b:45).

The image of the Great King has elements which assist the reader in further understanding its implied philosophical notion: the Great King's palace, the Great King's eyes and ears (listeners in the text), the satraps and the beacon-signals. These elements will be individually discussed so that the reader may ascertain the way these elements represent the author's philosophical understandings of god and the cosmos.

Before commencing analysis, it should first be noted that *De mundo* 398b. 1-16 warns readers to be careful lest they apply the list of the Great King's helpers directly to god himself:

Νομιστέον δὴ τὴν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως ὑπεροχὴν πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐπέχοντος θεοῦ τοσοῦτον καταδεστέραν ὅσον τῆς ἐκείνου τὴν τοῦ φαυλοτάτου τε καὶ ἀσθενεστάτου ζώου, ὥστε, εἴπερ ἄσεμνον ἦν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ δοκεῖν Ξέρξην αὐτουργεῖν ἅπαντα καὶ ἐπιτελεῖν ἃ βούλοιο καὶ ἐφιστάμενον ἐκασταχοῦ διοικεῖν, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀπρεπὲς ἂν εἴη θεῷ. Σεμνότερον δὲ καὶ πρὸς πωδέστερον αὐτὸν μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνωτάτω χώρας ἰδρῦσθαι, τὴν | δὲ δύναμιν διὰ τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου διήκουσαν ἥλιόν τε κινεῖν καὶ σελήνην καὶ τὸν πάντα οὐρανὸν περιάγειν αἰτίον τε γίνεσθαι τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς σωτηρίας. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐπιτεχνήσεως δεῖ καὶ ὑπηρεσίας τῆς παρ' ἐτέρων, ὥσπερ τοῖς παρ' ἡμῶν ἄρχουσι τῆς πολυχειρίας διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἦν τὸ θειότατον, τὸ μετὰ ῥαστώνης καὶ ἀπλῆς κινήσεως παντοδαπὰς ἀποτελεῖν ἰδέας, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει δρῶσιν οἱ μηχανοτέχνηται, διὰ μιᾶς ὀργάνου σχαστηρίας πολλὰς καὶ ποικίλας ἐνεργείας ἀποτελοῦντες.

Now the authority of the Great King compared to that of god who has power over the cosmos must be considered just as much weaker as the authority of the most inferior and weakest creature compared to that of the King, so that, if it would be undignified for Xerxes to appear to do all things himself and to complete what he wanted to be done and to oversee and administer all things <everywhere>, it would be much more unbecoming for god. It is more dignified and becoming for him based in the highest region and for his power, penetrating through the whole cosmos, to move the sun and moon and to cause the whole heaven to revolve and to be the cause of preservation for the things on earth. For he has no need of the contrivance and service from others, as the rulers with us need the help of many hands because of their weakness; on the

contrary, the most divine characteristic would be this: to produce all kinds of forms with ease and a simple movement, just as indeed the engineers do, producing by means of the single release mechanism of an engine of war many varied activities. (transl. Thom 2014b:45-47)

The author of *De mundo* requires of the reader to follow an important rule when deciphering the image of the Great King. *De mundo* 398b. 1-16 develops the argument based on the *topos* of *a minore ad maiorem*, which is one of the logical strategies to compare anything inferior to the superior. Due to the undeniable difference in quality between god and the Great King, the author warns the reader not to regard those elements as divinities inferior to god, the helpers of god. Instead, the reader should keep in mind that the divine power is part of god's inherent attribute.

The image of the Great King describes the palace as the innermost part of the fortress which was surrounded by multiple walls and watch towers with guards and servants. In comparison with the palace mentioned in Herodotus' *Historiae* 1.98.2, the meaning of the description of the palace in *De mundo* becomes clearer. The emphasis laid on the magnitude of the palace represents the Great King's majesty and his perfect seclusion. The author of *De mundo* used a lesser number of colours to portray the palace than that of Herodotus. The former mentioned only three colours of the palace, although the symbolism of the seven colors is clearly consistent with the Pseudo-Aristotelian understanding of the heavenly sphere which is divided by seven planets (Reale and Bos 1995:326-7). However, his selection of three colours would be acceptable if the literary function of the reference to the gigantic palace was clear to his readers.⁴² As such, the main concern of the author was not to provide his readers with a piece of historically correct information, but rather to convince them of his cosmo-theological opinion by means of a literary allusion which was familiar to them. Therefore, by referring to only three colors of the palace, the author could have achieved his aim to daub the Great King with the royal and exotic mystique in order to render him completely alien to the world outside.

When the notion of seclusion is applied to god, it means transcendence. In order to introduce

⁴² For a more detailed argument of this description's literary allusion, see Regen (1972:206-214).

this concept of divine transcendence, the author of *De mundo* alienated the Great King even from his closest subjects. This perfect seclusion of the Great King is *De mundo*'s exclusive feature (Bos 1989:152) and it reminds the reader of the Aristotelian Unmoved Mover (ὁ οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ; *Metaphysica* Λ.1072a.25), which is absolutely transcendent.⁴³

There are two means to reinforce the Great King's majesty: 1) the mystical hiddenness of the Great King which lies in the gigantic size of his palace and 2) the elaborate system of governance by which the secluded Great King ruled the vast empire as if he did it with his own hands. He needed a means to transmit his power and will to every single corner of his empire without either touching his people or being touched by them.

According to *De mundo* 398a, the royal court consisted of the Great King, the bodyguards and attendants around him, gatekeepers, listeners, controllers of revenues, commanders, gift-receivers, curators, generals, satraps, and kings. Modern historians also provide the reader with the lists of the Great King's subjects which are quite similar to that of *De mundo*.⁴⁴ These are arranged by the distance from the Great King and this list denotes the multi-layered cosmos in gradational order when applied to the philosophical notion of the cosmos.

However, it is not necessary to decipher the meaning of every member of the royal court as the emphasis lies in that these elements arranged by distance from the Great King depict the concept of the cosmos in gradation. Still, certain elements are still important to define the philosophical notion prevalent in the image of the Great King: the Great King's eyes and ears, his satraps and the beacon-signals.

⁴³ This notion of god's transcendence was also shared by Platonists, Academics, Peripatetics and even Epicureans (Bénatouil 2009:23-4). However, the immobility of the first principle is peculiar to Aristotle (Menn 1992:543).

⁴⁴ Brosius (2006:32-43; 2007:27) offers a list of members of the court and indicates, "there were six vassals of merit who helped Darius I to take the throne back; those who called 'king's friends and benefactors' by their loyalty, royal women, the king's spear-bearer, his bow- and axe-bearer, the heads of the king's bodyguard, palace administration and royal treasury, the chief scribe, the keeper of the gate, and the priest(s), along with the Persian nobles serving as the king's councilors, as royal judges, and as the king's eye." This shows us a list that scholars usually agree upon, even though there may be some arguments concerning some contents. e. g. Frye (1984:108) expresses doubt about the historical existence of such a formal cabinet like the six vassals of merit.

These essential elements can be categorised under two headings: 1) the system of government and 2) the system of communication. The author adopted the elements of these two categories to explicate how the power of god penetrates the universe. These two parts have their own roles in *De mundo*'s theology. God is introduced as the cause of motion and the cause of order and harmony. It is, however, his power which carries out these roles of god as the preserver of the universe. Nevertheless, the fact that god is the possessor of this power, presents god as the ultimate cause of the cosmic order and harmony. This relationship of god and his power is described through the story of the sculptor Phidias:

Φασὶ δὲ καὶ τὸν ἀγαματοποιὸν Φειδίαν κατασκευάζοντα τὴν ἐν ἀκροπόλει Ἀθηνᾶν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ ταύτης ἀσπίδι τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πρόσωπον ἐντυπώσασθαι, καὶ συνδῆσαι τῷ ἀγάλματι διὰ τινος ἀφανοῦς δημιουργίας, ὥστε ἐξ ἀνάγκης, εἴ τις βούλοιο αὐτὸ περιαιρεῖν, τὸ σύμπαν ἄγαλμα λύειν τε καὶ συγγεῖν.

They say that the sculptor Phidias, when he was making the Athena on the Acropolis, also carved his own face in the middle of her shield and attached it to the statue by means of a secret form of workmanship, so that, if someone would wish to remove it, he would inevitably break up and demolish the whole statue (399b.33-400a.3; transl. Thom 2014b:45).

God is the creator of the world⁴⁵ in the same way Phidias became the maker of the statue of Athena but it is divine power which makes it possible for god, only by being the center of the universe, to preserve it in such a mysterious way, just as the carved face of Phidias preserves the entire statue. Likewise, the Persian system of government and communication assist the Great King in preserving his empire only through his existence. These two systems represent the manner in which the divine power functions, penetrating throughout the universe.

The Persian system of government is represented by the system of the satraps, through which

⁴⁵ Pseudo-Aristotle also indicates god as the begetter of the universe (*De mundo* 397b.21) but one should not misunderstand its concept because the author means by the term “begetter” that god is the cause of every harmony and movement. God did not give birth to the universe. Unlike the Platonic demiurge, the Aristotelian god namely preserves it (*De mundo* 397b.20) and he does not make it but begins its existence by the first action. The Aristotelian god is thus called Unmoved Mover (Bos 1998:76). Accordingly, this expression seems Platonic but its implication is clearly Aristotelian (Bos 2003:319). The term ‘creator’ which I adopt here should be understood in this way.

the influence of the Great King reaches every post of his empire. This enables the Great King to sway his power to the borders of his empire. This way of governance can be applied to god's power as follows: as the system of satraps, so does the power of god penetrate and take care of the universe. The divine power proves god's essence because people can recognise god's existence only through the visible effect of his power. The satraps act as mediators by exercising the Great King's power under his authority. In this way, the satraps also become the channel of the Great King's power and authority. It is thus clear that the system of satraps describes the divine power and its passageway (397b.24). The author explains the relationship between god's essence and power through the relationship between the Great King and his satraps. Van Nuffelen (2011:131) defines the concept of the cosmic hierarchy as a normative category which was rooted in an assumption that all things are different in ontological quality. This notion of cosmic hierarchy is represented by the imperial elements which are listed by the distance from the Great King. According to Bos (1989:150-1), the reference to the Persian royal court itself refers to the cosmic hierarchy which connects all in order.

In *De mundo*, therefore, the system of satraps implies the immanence of god through his power which is gradationally transmitted throughout the whole universe.⁴⁶ This function of the satraps as the passageway of the divine power overlaps the main function of the system of communication which implies the gradational system of the cosmos through which god is informed from its lowest division.⁴⁷

As described in the previous chapter, the listeners, who were usually called the Great King's

⁴⁶ Sometimes, as in Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus (vv. 11-13), one can also see separation of λόγος from god in Stoic literature, which leads the readers to assume that even though Stoic theology shared this common notion of god's intermediary being, this sharing of the intermediary may not have come from their joining in the argument on the tension between god's immanence and transcendence because it is also well-known that in the Stoic notion of god usually not his deputies like power, but god himself penetrates the whole universe and every creature. The Greek text of Cleanthes and its translation are as follows: τοῦ γὰρ ὑπὸ πληγῆς φύσεως πάντ' ἔργα βέβηκεν, ἧ σὺ κα τευθύνεις κοινὸν λόγον, ὃς διὰ πάντων φοιτᾷ μιν γινόμενος μεγάλῳ μικροῖς τε φάεσσιν... "For by its strokes all works of nature <are guided>. With it you direct the universal reason, which permeates everything, mingling with the great and the small lights" (transl. Thom 2001:482).

⁴⁷ For an interesting connection between this hierarchy and the Homeric golden chain, see Reale and Bos (1995:319-20).

eyes and ears, were spies and their most important role was to transfer information between the Great King and his satraps. The clearest point which can be made from this role of the Great King's eye and ears, is that the Great King, staying secluded, is still in contact with the universe and informed. The listeners were the connecting point between the Great King and his subjects outside of the palace. This represents the notion of the bisected cosmos shared among ancient philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics (Bénatouïl 2009:32).⁴⁸

When the author of *De mundo* presents the description of the beacon-signals to the reader, the idea of god, who is continuously in contact with the universe, is extended to the sublunary world. The beacon-signals were the most effective device for the Great King to be informed from the farthest distance of his empire. Despite the physically impassible distance, nothing was able to hinder him from obtaining information. From this, it can be easily discerned by the reader that god, who is transcendent, is in contact with the universe much more easily and perfectly than the Great King is.

It is important to note that the author of *De mundo* particularly articulates the manner in which the beacon-signals successively send signals to each other toward the Great King. This is due to the fact that this is an unobtainable description from any other ancient writings but that of *De mundo*:

So comprehensive was the arrangement, and especially of the system of signal-beacons, signaling to one another in succession from the ends of the Empire to Susa and Ecbatana, that the King knew the same day all new developments in Asia (398a.32-3; transl. Thom 2014b:45)

When Reale and Bos (1995:319-20) and Bos (1989:144-7) comment on 397b.26, they assert that Homer's mythic Golden Chain is embedded in the theology of *De mundo*. This Golden Chain symbolises an invisible cosmic bond which connects all kinds of beings in the universe. This notion of the Golden Chain is the implied premise of the image of the Great King. Thus, one can rather confidently conclude that not only the beacon-signals but also the multi-walled palace and the gradational arrangement of the Great King's subjects collaborate to depict this

⁴⁸ Bos (1991:329) suggests that the multi-walled palace of the Great King indicates this distinction.

archaic notion of Golden Chain.

The implication of the image of the Great King is summarised by Thom (2014c:116) as follows:

- (a) Like the King, god's dignity requires that he be separated from the cosmos.
- (b) For the same reason, he is not directly responsible for the execution of mundane and menial tasks.
- (c) Despite his separation from the cosmos, he nevertheless maintains contact with the whole cosmos, just like the Persian king by means of his signal-beacons.
- (d) Unlike the King, god acts on the cosmos without help of other beings.⁴⁹

This list indicates three elements which specify the Middle Platonic understanding of the cosmos: 1) The prime god, enjoying his eminence in transcendence, holds the cosmos and takes care of it 2) through the intermediary divine power which penetrates the whole universe 3) according to the cosmic hierarchy.

At the beginning of the common era, the Platonists began to regard the demiurge as the prime god. They thus needed to detach the demiurgic role from god because it was not decent of the prime god to be involved in menial tasks (Opsomer 2005:55). As time went by, the Middle Platonists consequently came to have three principles which particularise their cosmology: the prime god, the intermediary deity (Opsomer 2005:55) and the cosmic hierarchy (Van Nuffelen 2011:129). To secure the prime god's dignity, the Middle Platonists divided the first principle into the prime god and his intermediaries. It should thus be asserted that the image of the Great King reflects the Middle Platonic understanding of the relationship between god and the universe while *De mundo* does not entirely follow the Platonic tradition (Opsomer 2005:59). It

⁴⁹ It was customary to compare god to a king (Strohm 1952:163). The image of the Great King does, however, specifically describe god not as just a king, but as a monarchic ruler (Runia 2001:232) which includes the elaborate system of government laid on the hierarchical order. Therefore, the image of the Great King was adopted by the author in order to explain his monotheistic theology that a supreme god who is transcendent preserves the universe by means of his power which penetrates the universe through the cosmic hierarchy. In other words, the divine power is the answer of the author of *De mundo* to the dilemma between god's transcendent existence and immanent influence.

should then be acknowledged that Pseudo-Aristotle adapted the divine power⁵⁰ for the role of divine intermediary in the Middle Platonist cosmological setting.

With Pseudo-Aristotle's *De mundo* fully discussed, this thesis will now analyse the use of the image of the Great King by three Platonists, namely Maximus of Tyre, Aelius Aristides and Philo of Alexandria on the basis of the similar implications of the image of the Great King. The aim is to confirm the Middle Platonic cosmic principles that are shared by the three Platonists as well as Pseudo-Aristotle, through the analyses.

5.2. Maximus of Tyre

There is not much information about Maximus of Tyre. He lived during the second century CE and 41 lectures are transmitted under his name (Koniaris 1982:87). Three sources, namely the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, the *Suda* and the *Dissertationes* of Maximus describe him as Tyrian and Platonist (Trapp 1997:xii). However, it is important to note, then, that this author's philosophical tendencies are a mixture of multiple philosophies (Trapp 1997:xvi-xxx; cf. Trapp 2012:915-916; Van Nuffelen 2011:125).

Maximus deals with the notion of god in full scale in *Dissertationes* 11 which is titled 'Plato on the identity of God' (Trapp 1997:xiv). When analysing his *Dissertationes* 11, therefore, one can easily observe that he inclines to Platonism, specifically Middle Platonism (Van Nuffelen 2011:125). Although he did not contribute to Platonism, he provides an important source of the Platonism of his time (Trapp 2007:467).

In his bisected cosmology (*Dissertationes* 9.6.15-20), Maximus wrote that, as the sinews of the body does, so do δαίμονες have a central role to connect god and human beings (*Dissertationes*

⁵⁰ Dillon (1996:161) opines that the concept of Aristotelian *Energeia* was adopted by Middle Platonism for this purpose of keeping god in his dignity and the divine power of *De mundo* is influenced by this Middle Platonic adoption. The philosophical propensity of *De mundo* to Middle Platonism reinforces his opinion. However, this should not be regarded as anything more than a possible conjecture because the relation between Aristotelian *Energeia* and the divine power in *De mundo* still needs to be examined.

9.6.3-8). One must understand Maximus' concept of δαίμονες in order to grasp his cosmology:

Θεὸς μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς κατὰ χώραν ἰδρυμένος οἰκονομεῖ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ τάξιν· εἰσὶ δ' αὐτῷ φύσεις ἀθάνατοι δεύτεραι, οἱ καλούμενοι δαίμονες, ἐν μεθορία γῆς καὶ οὐρανοῦ τεταγμένοι· θεοῦ μὲν ἀσθενέστεροι, ἀνθρώπου δ' ἰσχυρότεροι· θεῶν μὲν ὑπηρεταί, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιστάται· θεῶν μὲν πλησιαίτατοι, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιμελέστατοι. ἦ γὰρ ἂν τῷ διὰ μέσου πολλῷ τὸ θνητὸν πρὸς τὸ ἀθάνατον διετειχίσθη τῆς οὐρανοῦ ἐπόψεώς τε καὶ ὁμιλίας, ὅτι μὴ τῆς δαιμονίου ταύτης φύσεως, οἷον ἁρμονίας, κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἑκάτερον συγγένειαν καταλαβούσης δεσμῷ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κάλλος.

God himself, settled and immobile, administers the heavens and maintenance their ordered hierarchy. But he has a race of secondary immortal beings, the so-called *daimones*, which have their station in the space between earth and heaven. These *daimones* are inferior in power to God, but superior to men; they are the gods' servants and men's overseers, more closely related than men to the gods, but more closely concerned than the gods with men. The mortal realm would indeed be separated from the immortal and from any sight or dealings with the heavens by a great intervening gulf, were it not for the harmonizing effect of these *daimones*, who bind and connect human beings to divine beauty in virtue of their kinship with both (*Dissertationes* 8.8.1-11; transl. Trapp 1997:76).

Maximus also explains the intermediate role of δαίμονες between god and human beings in detail. They serve god in ruling over the cosmos through patrolling the good and the evil and involve themselves in men through helping the good and punishing the evil (*Dissertationes* 9.6.33-37). Their dual involvement in divine and human affairs becomes inevitable to preserve the universe due to the difference in quality between the three, namely, god, δαίμονες and human beings:

ἐπεὶ δὲ τῆς δαιμονίων φύσεως περὶ σκοπούμεθα, ἦν φαμὲν μεσότητα εἶναι πρὸς ἄνθρωπον καὶ θεόν, ἴδωμεν εἴ πῃ δυνατὸν ἐξελέσθαι αὐτὴν καὶ διασῶσαι τὰ ἄκρα. ἄρ' οὖν ὁ θεὸς ἀθάνατον μὲν γάρ, ἐμπαθὲς δέ; οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ ἀθάνατον μὲν, ἀπαθὲς δέ· τί δὲ ἄνθρωπος; θνητὸν μὲν, ἀπαθὲς δέ; οὐδὲ τοῦτο· ἀλλὰ θνητὸν μὲν, οὐ μὴν ἀπαθὲς. ποῦ τοίνυν ἡμῖν οἰχίσηται τὸ ἀθάνατον ὁμοῦ καὶ ἐμπαθές; δεῖ γὰρ συστήναι ἐξ ἀμφοῖν οὐσίαν κοινήν, κρείττονα μὲν ἀνθρώπου, θεοῦ δὲ ἐλάττονα, εἰ μέλλει ἔσσεσθαι τῶν ἄκρων πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀναλογία· δύο γὰρ πραγμάτων

κεχωρισμένων τῇ φύσει χωρισθήσεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιμιξία παντάπασιν, ἐὰν μὴ τις κοινὸς ὅρος ἀμφοτέρω ὑποδέξῃται ... λείπεται δὴ τὴν δαιμόνων φύσιν ἐμπαθῆ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατον, ἵνα τοῦ μὲν ἀθανάτου κοινωνῇ τῷ θεῷ, τοῦ δὲ ἐμπαθοῦς τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ.

But since we are considering the nature of *daimones*, whom we have said constitute a middle term between man and God, we must ask whether it is possible to remove them from the system, while still preserving the terms to either side. Is God immortal but emotional? No, he is immortal and free from emotion. What about man? Is he mortal but free from emotion? No again, he is mortal and emotional. What then will become of the combination of immortality with susceptibility to emotion? There has to exist a being that combines the two, superior to man but inferior to God, if there is going to be any relationship between the two extremes. If two things are separate in their natures, then all association between them is precluded, unless there is some common term that is receptive to both ... we must therefore conclude that *daimones* are being susceptible to emotion and immortal, sharing their immortality with God and their susceptibility with men (*Dissertationes* 9.2.7-19, 9.4.14-16; transl. Trapp 1997:78-9, 80).

Δαίμονες can reach god in heaven and human beings on earth because of their characteristics which are partly shared with god and partly with human beings. The explanation that the human souls shed their bodies when they change from men to δαίμονες, implies that the latter are both immortal and emotional (*Dissertationes* 9.6.21-33). Δαίμονες are the cosmic hierarchy itself which connects heaven and earth. Maximus holds both that there is one god who is the father and the king of all and that the intermediate existence and the diverse roles of the uncountable δαίμονες are essential to the maintenance of the whole cosmos (*Dissertationes* 11.5.1-4, 9.7.1-2).

With these basic notions, Maximus explains his Middle Platonic understanding of god's influence on this world by adopting the image of the Great King (Trapp 1997:94):

Εἰ δὲ ἐξασθενεῖς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ δημιουργοῦ θεάν, ἀρκεῖ σοι τὰ ἔργα ἐν τῷ παρόντι ὄρᾳ καὶ προσκυνεῖν τὰ ἔγωνα, πολλὰ καὶ παντοδαπὰ ὄντα, οὐχ ὅσα Βοιώτιος ποιητὴς λέγει· οὐ γὰρ τρισμῦριοι μόνον θεοί, θεοῦ παῖδες καὶ φίλοι, ἀλλ' ἄληπτοι ἀριθμῷ· τοῦτο μὲν κατ' οὐρανὸν αἰ ἀστέρων φύσεις· τοῦτο δ' αὖ κατ' αἰθέρα αἰ δαιμόνων οὐσίαι. βούλομαι δὲ σοι δεῖξαι τὸ λεγόμενον σαφεστέρᾳ εἰκόνι. ἐννόει μοι μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καὶ βασιλείαν ἐρρωμένην, πρὸς μίαν

ψυχὴν βασιλέως τοῦ ἀρίστου καὶ πρεσβυτάτου συμπάντων νενευκότων ἐκόντων· ὄρον δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς οὐχ Ἄλυν ποταμὸν οὐδὲ Ἑλλήσποντον οὐδὲ τὴν Μαιῶτιν οὐδὲ τὰς ἐπὶ τῷ Ὠκεανῷ ἠτίονας· ἀλλὰ οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν, τὸν μὲν ὑψοῦ, τὴν δ' ἔνερθεν· οὐρανὸν μὲν οἶον τεῖχος τι ἐληλαμένον ἐν κύκλῳ ἄρρηκτον, πάντα χρήματα ἐν ἑαυτῷ στέγον, γῆν δὲ οἶον φρουρὰν καὶ δεσμοὺς ἀλιτρῶν σωμάτων, βασιλέα δὲ αὐτὸν δὴ τὸν μέγαν ἀτρεμοῦντα ὥσπερ νόμον, παρέχοντα τοῖς πειθομένοις σωτηρίαν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ κοινωνοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς πολλοὺς μὲν ὁρατοὺς θεοὺς, πολλοὺς δὲ ἀφανεῖς, τοὺς μὲν περὶ τὰ πρόθυρα αὐτὰ εἰλουμένους, οἶον εἰσαγγελέας τινὰς καὶ βασιλεῖ συγγενεστάτους, ὁμοτραπέζους αὐτοῦ καὶ συνεστίους, τοὺς δὲ τούτων ὑπηρέτας, τοὺς δὲ ἔτι τούτων καταδεεστέρους. διαδοχὴν ὀρθῶς καὶ τάξιν ἀρχῆς καταβαίνουσιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ μέχρι γῆς.

But if you are not strong enough to see the Father and Creator, then it must suffice for the moment to contemplate his works and to worship his offspring, who are many and varied, far more numerous than the Boeotian poet says. God's divine children and relatives are not a mere thirty thousand in number, but countless: the stars and planets in the heavens, and the *daimones* in the ether too.

In order to explain to you what I am saying, I should like to invoke a still more lucid image. Think of a great empire and a mighty kingdom, in which all bow willingly to one soul, that of the best and most revered of kings. The boundary of this empire is not the River Halys or the Hellespont or Lake Maeotis or the shores of Ocean, but the heavens above and earth below: the heavens like the circuit of an impenetrable wall, completely enclosing the universe and shielding all within itself; the earth like a watch-house and a prison for sinful bodies. The Great King himself sits motionless, like the law, bestowing on his subjects the security that resides in him. As his partners in power, he has a whole host of visible and invisible deities, some gathered close round the vestibule of his throne-room, like a king's viziers and close relatives, sharing his table and his hearth, others subordinate to these, and yet others further subordinate to them. Here is a succession, a hierarchy for you to behold, from God above to the earth below (*Dissertationes* 11.12; transl. Trapp 1997:105-106).

The image of the Great King consists of two parts (*Dissertationes* 11.12). The first part concerns the Great King's exaltedness (*Dissertationes* 11.12.7-18) and the second describes how many subject deities he has so that he can rule over his vast territory (*Dissertationes* 11.12.18-24). These two sections serve one purpose, which is to instruct the reader on the

cosmic order and hierarchy as perceived by Maximus.

The description of the heavens as impassible walls between god and the earthly world, the prison of the sinful bodies (*Dissertationes* 11.12.15-16), is very Platonic in nature. God the perfect Intellect (*Dissertationes* 11.8) is secluded not from the whole universe, but only from the earthly part of it. Maximus holds that god directly influences the heavenly sphere. The notion that god must maintain his dignity by not touching the ground is maintained by this concept of the barrier of heaven between ether and earth.

Moreover, the account that this barrier is filled with divine children and relatives, who differ in distance from god, describes the notion of the cosmic hierarchy which links god to human beings. This emphasis on the cosmic hierarchy as the passageway of god's preserving influence is characteristically Middle Platonic (Van Nuffelen 2011:128). This cosmic hierarchy is very important for Maximus' cosmology, seeing that Maximus articulates 'succession' and 'hierarchy' in the conclusion of this dissertation (*Dissertationes* 11.12.23-4). As such, Maximus has the notion of god as motionless and hidden, but still in charge of the preservation of the universe through granting order and harmony to the hierarchy of δαίμονες.⁵¹ The function of referring to a great number of inferior deities is therefore to describe the sinews of this cosmic hierarchy which put the god's preserving influence in action (*Dissertationes* 9.6.3-9).

One should take notice of the fact that the first part of the description of the Great King ends and the second part begins with the comparison of god to the law (*Dissertationes* 11.12.17). In the middle of the excerpt, Maximus again emphasises the cosmic order and hierarchy through this comparison. According to Van Nuffelen (2011:128-29), through this comparison, the author implies that god functions as the divine law which ensures security for this cosmic hierarchy. Like the law, god stays immobile and grants order to the cosmic system. In other words, he preserves the universe by doing nothing but being present.

In order to perfectly transmit god's preserving influence throughout the universe, it is necessary

⁵¹ If Dillon's (1996:91) opinion of the strong possibility that Antiochus brought Platonic δαίμονες back into Platonism, this could be regarded as a Middle Platonic device to elaborate its cosmic frame.

for inferior deities like δαίμονες to be scattered through every layer of the universe. God's dignity is thus not harmed at all because he takes care of the universe by making use of his subjects, namely the δαίμονες, thus not touching the earth himself (Thom 2014c:116). The conclusion may thus be drawn that Maximus adopted the image of the Great King to represent the Middle Platonic understanding of the cosmos which consists of 1) the prime god, 2) his intermediary δαίμονες and 3) the cosmic hierarchy as the passageway of the preserving influence of god.

This thesis will now move on to analyse Aelius Aristides' use of the image of the Great King in his *Orationes* 26.27. Aristides utilised this image to praise the Roman regime and ultimately the Roman emperors. The aim of this section is also to look into how Aristides adapted the image of the Great King for his political purpose.

5.3. Aelius Aristides

Aelius Aristides shared the same era with Maximus and his panegyric *On Rome* (*Orationes* 26) is one of the most famous orations among 53 orations which are transmitted under his name (Ewen 2002:1096). In this oration, according to its epideictic purpose,⁵² Aristides praises the Roman governance, which he perceives as the best empire in history (Fontanella 2008:203). He compares the Roman empire to the heavenly system of governance in order to justify the Roman regime by demonstrating the similarity of the two (*Orationes* 26.103-105; Van Nuffelen 2011:122-23). According to Oliver (1953:874), this is conducted by the collaboration of two indissoluble themes: the praise for the ideal state and the creation of Rome which is parallel to the creation of the universe. This encomium thus includes a cosmological notion, which is very Platonic, even though Aristides could not be free from the Stoic influence of his time (Oliver 1953:874-878). Also, it should be noted that *Orationes* 26 is quite political in purpose and this becomes clear through his praise of the Roman emperors and the Roman empire (Pernot 2008:175, 188).⁵³ In doing so, he adopted the image of the Great King as a means to assist his

⁵² For the characteristics of panegyric, see Aune (2003:162, 328).

⁵³ Throughout his article, Pernot (2008) warns the reader to read this encomium *Orationes* 26 with the understanding of the rhetorical device of figured speech and to divulge its implicit meanings under the surface.

praise of the Roman governance through his philosophical notions.

Among the negative critiques against the Macedonians throughout *Orationes* 26.24-27, one should not overlook 26.27 which describes the result of the death of Alexander the Great:

ἐπεὶ γε μὴν ἐκεῖνος ἐτελεύτησεν, εὐθὺς μὲν ἐσχίσθησαν εἰς μυρία οἱ Μακεδόνες, ἔργῳ δεῖξαντες ὑπὲρ αὐτοὺς εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν, κατέχειν τε οὐδὲ τὴν αὐτῶν ἔτι ἠδύναντο, ἀλλ' εἰς τοῦτο τύχης ἀφίκοντο ὥστε ἠναγκάσθησαν τὴν σφετέραν αὐτῶν ἐκλιπεῖν, ἵνα τῆς ἀλλοτρίας σθησαν τὴν σφετέραν αὐτῶν ἐκλιπεῖν, ἵνα τῆς ἀλλοτρίας ἄρχωσιν, ὥσπερ ἐξφικισμένοι μᾶλλον ἢ κρατεῖν δυνάμενοι, καὶ ἦν ὥσπερ αἰνιγμα, Μακεδόνες οὐκ ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ, ἀλλ' οὗ δύναιτο βασιλεύοντες ἕκαστοι, ὥσπερ φρουροὶ μᾶλλον τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν χωρίων ὄντες ἢ ἄρχοντες, ἀνάστατοί τινες βασιλεῖς, οὐχ ὑπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, ἀλλ' ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν αὐτοὶ γεγενημένοι, εἰ δὲ οἷόν τ' εἰπεῖν, εὐκοτότεσ σατράπαις ἐρήμοις βασιλέως. καίτοι τὴν τοιαύτην κατάστασιν πότερον ληστεία μᾶλλον ἢ βασιλείᾳ προσεοικέναι φήσομεν;

When he [sc. Alexander] died, the Macedonians were immediately split into innumerable parts, proving in fact that empire was beyond them. They were no longer even able to keep possession of their own country, but they sank to so low a fortune that they were forced to leave their own country, in order to rule another's, more like men had been expelled from their homeland than men able to rule. And it was like a riddle, Macedonians not in Macedonia, but each ruling where they could, as if they were garrisons for these cities and lands rather than rulers, having become in a way uprooted kings, not through the Great King, but through themselves, and if it can be said, like satraps without a king. Shall we say that such a state is more like brigandage or kingship? (transl. Behr 1981:78-9)

The extract above describes the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death. To explain the chaos, which resulted from his death, Aristides adopted the image of the Great King. This chaos is effectively depicted by the image of the Great King's satraps without the Great King. Without the Great King, any empire or country should rather be regarded as being under brigandage than kingship (*Orationes* 26.27.12-3) because there is no centripetal power which holds all the

However, one should keep in mind that this reading does not cancel out the explicit meaning of this oration. Furthermore, Oliver (1953:876-877) emphasises that the deep influence of *Timaeus* on *Orationes* 26, e.g. the repetition of the word ἀρχή, which Aristides might have adopted from Plato.

components of the universe together. If his absence incurs chaos within the system of governance, one can logically deduce that the Great King ensures the preservation of the empire through his existence. By introducing the situation of the satraps without the Great King, Aristides made the monarch of the system the main concern of his argument.

As Pernot (2008:175) indicates, Aristides repeatedly expressed his greatest respect for the Roman emperors; he celebrated the advantages of the Roman regime and asked the gods to keep the imperial family in their favor. This explains why he aimed to emphasise the Great King himself rather than the system when he was utilising the image of the Great King. In doing so, his main purpose was to justify the Roman regime by validating the divine rightfulness of the Roman emperors.

There are multiple other elements which support this point of justification. The first is Aristides' inordinate criticism against the Persian kings. Their failure in fulfilling the ideal of the rightful ruler (Van Nuffelen 2011:138) is one of the most important themes to emphasise the exaltedness of the Roman emperors (*Orationes* 26.15-23). Even their seasonal marching from one capital to another is described as an indication of their dullness and inability to rule over the vast empire (*Orationes* 26.18). Among the historians, however, it has been generally accepted that this seasonal marching effectively demonstrated the Persian kings' greatness and pomp. Aristides' point of inordinate criticism is mainly to exaggerate the Persian kings' stupidity and incompetence as the rulers of the great empire. By doing so, he paves the way for the justification of the Roman regime controlled by the Roman emperors who will be justified as the divine rulers at last.

Aristides adopts the image of the Great King as a means to compare the Roman emperor, who provides the order to the Roman system of governance, with god, who is the preserver of the universe through providing the order and harmony to the cosmic hierarchy. Without god, the cosmic hierarchy itself cannot be preserved because it cannot maintain the order to sustain itself:

ἀτεχνῶς δὲ, ὥσπερ οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγουσι, πρὸ τῆς Διὸς ἀρχῆς ἅπαντα στάσεως καὶ θορύβου καὶ ἀταξίας εἶναι μεστὰ, ἐλθόντος δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν Διὸς πάντα δὴ καταστῆναι, καὶ τοὺς Τιτᾶνας εἰς τοὺς κατωτάτω μυχοὺς τῆς γῆς ἀπελθεῖν, συνωσθέντας ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ θεῶν,

οὕτως ἄν τις καὶ περὶ τῶν πρὸ ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐφ' ὑμῶν πραγμάτων λογιζόμενος ὑπολάβοι, ὡς πρὸ μὲν τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀρχῆς ἄνω καὶ κάτω συνετετάρακτο καὶ εἰκῆ ἐφέρετο, ἐπιστάντων δὲ ὑμῶν ταραχαὶ καὶ στάσεις ἔληξαν, τάξις δὲ πάντων καὶ φῶς λαμπρὸν εἰσηλθε βίου καὶ πολιτείας, νόμοι τε ἐξεφάνησαν καὶ θεῶν βωμοὶ πίστιν ἔλαβον.

Indeed, the poets say that before the rule of Zeus everything was filled with faction, uproar, and disorder, but that when Zeus came to rule, everything was put in order and the Titans were banished to the deepest corners of the earth, driven there by him and the gods who aided him. So too, in view of the situation before you and under you, one would suppose that before your empire everything was in confusion, topsy-turvy, and completely disorganised, but that when you took charge, the confusion and faction ceased and there entered in universal order and a glorious light in life and government and the laws came to the fore and the altars of the gods were believed in (*Orationes* 26.103; transl. Behr 1981:96).

The three principles which constitute the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos are ascertained from the extract above:

- 1) The Great King represents Zeus as the prime god.
- 2) The satraps represent the divine assistants to Zeus, who arranges the universe in order.
- 3) The relationship between the Great King and his satraps represents the hierarchy between Zeus and the subordinate gods.

In the next section, this thesis will go back to the early part of the 1st century CE and look at the three texts by Philo of Alexandria. The use of the image of the Great King by this well-known Middle Platonist will function as a means to investigate the way in which the cosmology of the time reflects on the Jewish understanding of God and the universe.

5.4. Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria (15 BCE – CE 50), also called *Judaeus*, is the most valuable author in understanding Hellenistic Judaism (Runia 2007:55). This author clearly presented his loyalty to the Jewish tradition: Mosaic Law had absolute authority over him. However, he was also very familiar with Hellenistic philosophy, especially Platonism, and his life was devoted to

explaining his Jewish tradition through Hellenistic philosophy (Runia 2001:31-2; Tzvetkova-Glazer 2014:137). With his propensity to Platonism, it should be noted that his philosophy was written under the eclecticism of his time (Colson & Whitaker 1991:xvii). However, he was distinguished from his contemporaries by his polemical purpose in utilising the Hellenistic philosophies of his time to demonstrate the superiority of Judaism (Van Nuffelen 2011:206).

Among his extensive oeuvre, three writings will be analysed in this thesis because they contain the image of the Great King: *De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71 and *De somniis* 1.140-1. The first treatise allegorises the reasons why the ten commandments were given in the desert and that it was given by God Himself as ten in number (Colson 1937:3). The second is the most famous and important exegetical work which deals with the first three chapters of Genesis to found the basis for his allegorical exegesis on the entire Genesis and the last forms part of a series of allegorical commentaries on Genesis (Runia 2007:56-7).

The image of the Great King concerns Philo's notion of God and the cosmos in these three writings. Philo argues for the praise-worthiness and the prominence of God through the image of the Great King (*De decalogo* 61, 177-8). This shows his monotheistic zeal for God even though he seems to acknowledge the divine hierarchy of his time, which is based on polytheism. His understanding of the cosmos is partly revealed through the notions of God who is sitting on the highest place (*De opificio mundi* 71) and the angels as the Great King's eyes and ears (*De somniis* 1.140-1). It is important to note how Philo harmonises his Jewish religion and the Hellenistic philosophy in the image of the Great King.

5.4.1. *De decalogo*

Philo is one of the most well-known Platonists, but his fundamental loyalty to Judaism warns that the reader should not naively consider every philosophical idea in Philo's work as Platonic. As an apologist (Runia 1990:5), Philo's aim was to reveal Judaism to be the most prominent and prime philosophy. In doing this, Philo adopted Platonism supplemented by Aristotle's criticism in order to explicate his Judaism (Bos 1998:71).⁵⁴ Philo topped the Platonic created

⁵⁴ Runia (1986:4-5) recognises Philo's great fondness for Plato's dialogues so that he sets the aim of his study in 1986 "to make a comprehensive examination of the way in which Philo understands and utilises *Timaeus* by Plato

cosmos with Aristotelian transcendental intelligence to distinguish eternal God from the transient cosmos (Runia 1986:149). As the Platonic demiurge cannot represent the concept of God due to its createdness and involvement in menial tasks, Philo's concept of God as the creating father of the universe should inevitably be supplemented with Aristotle's concept of transcendent intellect to maintain God's exaltedness (Bos 1998:73). This combination indicates that he could not be free from the propensity of his time towards Middle Platonism.

In allegorising the reasons why God granted his commandments as ten in number, as well as in the desert, Philo made his monotheism clear, which dictates that only God is praiseworthy and should be worshiped through the image of the Great King. This is not the first use of this image by Philo but provides the reader with a clearer understanding of it:

(61) καθάπερ οὖν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως τὰς τιμὰς εἴ τις τοῖς ὑπάρχοις σατράπαις ἀπένειμεν, ἔδοξεν ἂν οὐκ ἀγνωμονέστατος μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥησοκινδυνότατος εἶναι χαριζόμενος τὰ δεσπότητος δούλοις, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἂν τοῖς αὐτοῖς εἴ τις γεραίρει τὸν πεποιηκότα τοῖς γεγονόσιν, ἴστω πάντων ἀβουλότατος ὢν καὶ ἀδικώτατος, ἴσα διδοὺς ἀνίστοις οὐκ ἐπὶ τιμῇ τῶν ταπεινότερων ἀλλ' ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τοῦ κρείττονος.

So just as anyone who rendered to the subordinate satraps the honours due to the Great King would have seemed to reach the height not only of unwisdom but of foolhardiness, by bestowing on servants what belonged to their master, in the same way anyone who pays the same tribute to the creatures as to their Maker may be assured that he is the most senseless and unjust of men in that he gives equal measure to those who are not equal, though he does not thereby honour the meaner many but deposes the one superior (*De decalogo* 61; transl. Colson 1937:37)

In this extract, Philo seems to have been accustomed to the implication of the image of the Great King: the cosmic hierarchy which is established on the Middle Platonic polytheistic understanding of the cosmos. Therefore, although Philo was of a monotheistic disposition, he, like his contemporaries, also made use of the notion of the divine hierarchy (Van Nuffelen

in his entire oeuvre.' Bos (2003:315) also observes that Philo is thoroughly acquainted with Plato's oeuvre, and that Plato's *Timaeus* was his source of inspiration. On crucial points, Philo differs from typically Platonic dogmas, however, because he considered Aristotle's criticism of them to be convincing.

2011:205, 210).

As recognised from the excerpt, however, Philo rejects the polytheistic notion of this image and emphasises only God sitting at the top of the system by sharply differentiating Him, the maker, from his products. Van Nuffelen (2011:210) explicates the purpose of Philo in utilising this image:

Whereas in Post-Hellenistic philosophy the comparison is normally used to visualise the correct understanding of the pantheon, Philo uses it to question the validity of the way in which his Greco-Roman counterparts conceive of the pantheon.

The purpose of this Hellenised Jewish writer in adopting this image is to affirm the validity of the Jewish monotheism to the world under the polytheistic cosmology. However, as indicated above, what Philo rejected was not the divine hierarchy of his time but the polytheistic notion which dictates that all the deities should be worshiped. For Philo, other beings than God are merely his creatures that do not deserve divine praise. Even if there could be inferior deities to God, they should not be regarded as praiseworthy because they are simply creatures of His design.

The second use of this image in this treatise occurs in the end of it. Here, Philo tries to secure the dignity of God by keeping Him away from violence conducted in order to preserve the cosmos, such as the punishment of sinners. God should stay in peace and purity:

οικειότατον οὖν ὑπολαβὼν αὐτοῦ τῇ φύσει τὰ σωτήρια κελεύειν ἀμιγῆ καὶ ἀμέτοχα τιμωρίας, ἵνα μή πως φόβῳ τις ἄφροني συμβούλῳ χρησάμενος ἄκων ἀλλ' ἔμφροني λογισμῷ καθ' ἐκούσιον γνώμην αἰρήται τὰ βέλτιστα, μετὰ κολάσεως οὐκ ἠξίωσε θεσπίζειν, οὐκ ἀσυλίαν τοῖς ἀδικοπραγοῦσι διδούς, ἀλλ' εἰδὼς τὴν παρέδρον αὐτῷ δίκην καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἔφορον πραγμάτων οὐκ ἠρεμήσουσαν ἄτε φύσει μισοπόνηρον καὶ ὡσπερ τι συγγενὲς ἔργον (178) ἐκδεξομένην τὴν κατὰ τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων ἄμυναν. ἐμπρεπὲς γὰρ ὑπηρεταῖς μὲν καὶ ὑπάρχοις θεοῦ καθάπερ τοῖς πολέμου στρατηγοῖς ἐπὶ λιποτάκταις οἱ λείπουσι τὴν τοῦ δικαίου τάξιν ἀμυντηρίοις χρῆσθαι, τῷ δὲ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ τὴν κοινὴν ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιγεγράφθαι τοῦ παντός, εἰρηνοφυλακοῦντι καὶ τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγαθὰ πάντα τοῖς πανταχοῦ πᾶσιν ἀεὶ πλουσίως καὶ ἀφθόνως χορηγοῦντι· τῷ γὰρ ὄντι ὁ μὲν θεὸς πρῦτανις εἰρήνης, οἱ δ' ὑποδιάκονοι πολέμων

ἡγεμόνες εἰσίν.

So then He judged that it was most in accordance with His being to issue His saving commandments free from any admixture of punishment, that men might choose the best, not involuntarily, but of deliberate purpose, not taking senseless fear but the good sense of reason for their counsellor. He therefore thought right not to couple punishment with His utterances though He did not thereby grant immunity to evil-doers, but knew that justice His assessor, the surveyor of human affairs, in virtue of her inborn hatred of evil, will not rest, but take upon herself as her congenital task the punishment of sinners. For it befits the servants and lieutenants of God, that like generals in war-time they should bring vengeance to bear upon deserters who leave the ranks of justice. But it befits the Great King that the general safety of the universe should be ascribed to Him, that He should be the guardian of peace and supply richly and abundantly the good things of peace, all of them to all persons in every place and at every time. For indeed God is the Prince of Peace while His subalterns are the leaders in war (*De decalogo* 177-8; transl. Colson 1937:93-95).

The Middle Platonic division of the first principle into the prime god and his intermediary deities and the consequential emphasis of the cosmic hierarchy meets his purpose to preserve God's dignity. Philo imposes any task, which may stain God's dignity, on Justice, the assessor of God, because the punishment for evil does not befit God, the Prince of Peace, to be involved.

Here again, Philo does not show any abhorrence or rejection of the cosmic hierarchy and its constituent subordinate deities, but utilises this notion behind the image of the Great King to describe God's sole exaltedness. Then, it should be acknowledged that Philo fully understood the implication of the image of the Great King, that is "a hierarchy of divine beings with a single God at the top (Van Nuffelen 2011:210)". This is very much a Middle Platonist understanding of the cosmos but the only difference that separates Philo from his contemporaries, is his polemical stance against attributing glory, which should be ascribed only to God, to his subjects: 1) God who is distinguished and transcendent from all the creatures, needs 2) intermediaries to carry out the tasks to preserve the universe and 3) the cosmic hierarchy as the relationship of God and his intermediaries. With this foundation, this thesis will go on to analyse Philo's two other treatises, *De opificio mundi* and *De somniis*.

5.4.2. *De opificio mundi*

This treatise, written in 30-40 CE, has been regarded as a commentary and one of its most important themes is the distinction between the transcendent god and all the other creatures in the universe (Runia 2001:4-5, 22). This understanding of god, who is above and beyond all the creatures, is presented by the image of the Great King in *De opificio mundi*. Following is the image of the Great King in *De opificio mundi* 71:

καὶ ὧν εἶδεν ἐνταῦθα αἰσθητῶν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τὰ παραδείγματα καὶ τὰς ιδέας θεασάμενος, ὑπερβάλλοντα κάλλη, μέθη νηφαλίῳ κατασχεθεὶς ὥσπερ οἱ κορυβαντιῶντες ἐνθουσιᾷ, ἑτέρου γεμισθεὶς ἡμέρου καὶ πόθου βελτίονος, ὑφ' οὗ πρὸς τὴν ἄκραν ἀψίδα παραπεμφθεὶς τῶν νοητῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἰέναι δοκεῖ τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα· γλιχομένου δ' ἰδεῖν, ἀθρόου φωτὸς ἄκρατοι καὶ ἀμιγεῖς ἀγγαὶ χειμάρρου τρόπον ἐκχέονται, ὡς ταῖς μαρμαρυγαῖς τὸ τῆς διανοίας ὄμμα σκοτοδιναῖν.

And when the intellect has observed in that realm the models and forms of the sense-perceptible things which it had seen here, objects of overwhelming beauty, it then, possessed by a sober drunkenness, becomes enthused like the Corybants. Filled with another longing and a higher form of desire, which has propelled it to the utmost vault of the intelligibles, it thinks it is heading towards the Great King himself. But as it strains to see, pure and unmixed beams of concentrated light pour forth like a torrent, so that the eye of the mind, overwhelmed by the brightness, suffers from vertigo (transl. Runia 2001:64).

The author took the soul flying through these two realms, a famous *topos* which is found also in *De mundo* 391a.11-16, which presupposes the concept of the multi-layered universe (Runia 2001:231). Philo incorporated the image of the Great King into the journey of the soul in order to reinforce God's transcendence. Runia (2001:232) rightly points out that the Great King was the fixed term for the ancient Persian kings and indicates that the application of the phrase 'the Great King' to God himself by Philo is focused on the monarchic way of God to rule over the universe. This can be derived from Philo's exaggerated description that even the soul finds itself unable to see God because of the torrential light of extreme brightness.

When Philo described God as the Great King, he put God on the topmost seat of the presupposed hierarchy through the leveled comic structure. The image of the Great King was

adopted by Philo to describe God as the monarchic ruler who is absolutely hidden in the highest place of the multi-layered universe: God's transcendence is reinforced by the inaccessibility to him even by the soul.

Philo emphasises God's transcendence from the universe by adopting the image of the Great King. His transcendental God, who must not be involved in menial tasks, is the first principle in the Middle Platonic cosmology. This thesis now moves on to Philo's other treatise, *De somniis*, where Philo utilises the image of the Great King with a different point of emphasis.

5.4.3. *De somniis*

As stated above, this treatise by Philo belongs to the series of allegorical commentaries on *Genesis*. This is, in fact, the second book of *De somniis*, which follows the lost first book (Colson & Whitaker 2001:285). When expounding the story of Jacob's ladder, Philo made another use of the image of the Great King:

ἄλλαι δ' εἰσὶ καθαρώταται καὶ ἄρισταί, μαιζόνων φρονημάτων καὶ θειοτέρων ἐπιλαχοῦσαι, μηδενὸς μὲν τῶν περιγεῖων ποτὲ ὀρεχθεῖσαι τὸ παράπαν, ὕπαρχοι δὲ τοῦ πανηγεμόνου, ὥσπερ μεγάλου βασιλέως ἀκοαὶ καὶ ὄψεις, ἐφορῶσαι πάντα καὶ ἀκούουσαι. ταύτας δαίμονας μὲν οἱ ἄλλοι φιλόσοφοι, ὁ δὲ ἱερὸς λόγος ἀγγέλους εἶωθε καλεῖν προσφυστέρῳ χρώμενος ὀνόματι· καὶ γὰρ τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπικελεύσεις τοῖς ἐγγόνοις καὶ τὰς τῶν ἐγγόνων χρείας τῷ πατρί.

Others there are of perfect purity and excellence, gifted with a higher and diviner temper, that have never felt any craving after the things of earth, but are viceroys of the Ruler of the universe, ears and eyes, so to speak, of the great king, beholding and hearing all things. These are called "demons" by the other philosophers, but the sacred record is wont to call them "angels" or messengers, employing an apter title, for they both convey the biddings of the Father to His children and report the children's need to their Father (*De somniis* 1. 140-1; transl. Colson & Whitaker 2001:371-73).

This section describes spiritual beings as mediators between God and men, namely the angels of God (Colson & Whitaker 2001:289). After indicating that they have excellent dispositions, which are closer to that of God than men, Philo introduced them as viceroys, eyes and ears of

the Great King, and δαίμονας. The title ‘the ears and eyes of the Great King’ signifies a specific role of this special kind of beings. As discussed in the previous chapter, the main role of the Great King’s eyes and ears was to spy on the satraps, which keeps the Great King informed in spite of his seclusion. Then, one can acknowledge that the Aristotelian Unmoved Mover and the Platonic δαίμονες are combined in the image of the Great King because God in transcendence is described as keeping informed by his angels which are introduced as δαίμονες.⁵⁵ This combination, as indicated in previous sections, is the Middle Platonist cosmic setting meant to secure the eminence of God.

In this extract, especially, Philo designates God as the source of dreams. In doing so, however, he does not damage God’s dignity by implying that God does not directly touch the earthly bodies of men to infuse dreams. Philo thus took the angels of God for this job of messengers. In order to access God, the angels should be pure, excellent, higher and diviner than humans and in order to access the earthly bodies, they should be distinguished from God himself. This explanation of the divine intermediary is very Middle Platonic, as seen in Maximus (*Dissertationes* 8.8.1-11). These aforementioned characteristics are required for the angels going up and down the ladder laid on the ground to connect Jacob and God (*Gen.* 28.11-15). Hence, God often reveals his plan and will to human beings through dreams but it is the angels who transmit the messages from God to men.

In Philo’s use of the image of the Great King as well, the three elements that the Middle Platonist cosmic setting are imbedded to secure the prime god’s dignity. As can be noted in his works, Philo develops his arguments based on these three elements: 1) God who is sitting at the top of 2) the hierarchical order and 3) the intermediary divine beings for menial tasks to take care of the universe. This is similar to the other three writers.

5.5. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, it has become clear that all the authors utilised the image of the Great

⁵⁵ This notion sounds Middle Platonic because god has a great number of intermediaries, which were split from the Platonic demiurge (Thom 2014c:115).

King to introduce their cosmo-theological arguments to readers, particularly with the Middle Platonic cosmological elements to secure the prime god's dignity: 1) the transcendental prime god, 2) divine intermediaries and 3) the cosmic hierarchical order which passes through the universe. Accordingly, this image should be regarded as a means to convey the Middle Platonic cosmological frame which forms the common ground for further discussions.

In other words, the image of the Great King represents the Middle Platonic synthesis of traditional cosmo-theological issues which had been sporadically and fragmentarily transmitted through the arguments on $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$ from the pre-Socratic era. The image of the Great King was the effective conveyer of the Middle Platonist cosmology. In the next chapter, this thesis will thus explore the ancient discussions on $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$ to demonstrate how these discussions were combined by the Middle Platonists when they attempted to solve the problem which the demiurgic theology of their time faced through their cosmology.

Chapter Six: The *topos* of the Great King

In the previous chapter, it becomes clear that the image of the Great King implies the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos. The four authors differ in details such as identifying the intermediary beings but share arguments on the Middle Platonic setting of the cosmos which is implied by the image of the Great King. Therefore, the image of the Great King should be regarded as a *topos* because it functions both as the reservoir of a conventionally discussed topic and as the starting point of philosophical arguments. Now, this chapter will discuss the main points which constitute the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos, so that the conventionality of the philosophical notions implied through the image of the Great King can be validated.

1) The prime god who is transcendental from the universe

The Middle Platonic notion that the prime god should be separated from the universe is reflected in the use of the image of the Great King. In the previous chapter, it was clarified that the transcendence of god is described through the Great King's seclusion. In *De mundo*, the depictions of the multi-walled palace, the number of the Great King's subjects, including the satraps, and the description that the Great King himself was staying in Susa or Ecbatana, hidden from everyone (398a. 13-14; transl. Thom 2014b:45) clearly emphasise the Great King's invisibility (ἀόρατος). This seclusion functions as a means to prevent the Great King from losing his dignity as it means that he stays untouchable even though he rules over the empire (398b.1-6). There are a few references to god as unchangeable and utterly secluded, of which Bos' (1977:324) interpretation of the analogy of the beacon-signals is a valuable example:

In his palace the Persian king receives intelligence concerning everything that occurs within the realm via the central nervous system of his signal-beacon service. Similarly, the divinity has no direct knowledge of all that passes in *Physis*; he knows indirectly and generally. In that sense this god, as in *De philosophia* fr. 12 (Ross), may be called ἐπιστημονικώτατος.

This passive intellectuality of god functions as a means to maximise the transcendence of god by extending the distance between god and the universe.

In Maximus, another reference to the Great King's seclusion makes an appearance. He sits motionless like the law (*Dissertationes* 11.12.16-7). The word 'motionless' (ἀτρεμοῦντα) alludes to Aristotle's Unmoved (ἀκίνητος) Mover. If the phrase 'like law' indicates the state of sitting unmoved as in *De mundo* (400b.13-15), it can be discerned that the Great King is sitting motionless and invisible as the law does. If this immobility can be understood as the nature of god's existence, which is not affected by anything, the two terms 'immobility' and 'invisibility' can be taken as representing the same notion, namely god's transcendence.⁵⁶ Again in Maximus, a great number of the Great King's subjects (*Dissertationes* 11. 12. 19-24) assist him in staying invisible and motionless by functioning as his hands and feet.

Philo also stresses God's invisibility when calling God the Great King (*De opificio mundi* 71.5-8). In particular, the fact that even the soul (διάνοια) cannot see God indicates God's extreme hiddenness from the world. This is because, if even the soul cannot see god, there is nothing which can see God. Moreover, it should be noted at this point that Philo emphasises the incomparable ontic difference between God and other inferior deities (*De decalogo* 61).

To Aristides, the satraps without the Great King are mere brigands because they cannot rule over the vast empire through order and harmony (*Orationes* 26.27). By this distinction of the Great King from his satraps, Aristides reinforces the Great King's absolute superiority over his subjects. The Great King is the organiser and preserver of the system which consists of his satraps.

This idea of god's transcendence was also a traditionally discussed topic among ancient philosophers. As Bénatouïl (2009:23-24) indicates, the Epicureans were exclusively emphasising the transcendence of god. Mansfeld (1999:463) explains the primary role of the god-argument in the Epicurean natural philosophy as follows:

⁵⁶ Regarding Plato's contribution to the ancient theology, Kenny (2006:296) comments: "Plato's argument for the priority of soul over the body was the progenitor of a long series of arguments for the existence of God based on an analysis of motion and change." Aristotle also introduces his god as Unmoved Mover. These descriptions of god in terms of motion and change imply that motion and change were accepted as a result from an external influence. Therefore, god's immobility and immutability of god indicates that god is absolutely transcendent without being influenced from outside of himself.

[T]heir role in the context of Epicurean natural philosophy is entirely different from that attributed to them by other philosophers. Epicurus' primary aim is to establish that the gods cannot, consistently with their blessed state, be in any way involved in what happens in nature, let alone in what happens to humans.

The Epicurean stress on the extreme separation of god from the universe does not allow the Epicurean god to care about the universe at all. This transcendence of god was often implied through his 'invisibility' and 'immobility' through the ages.

A Pythagorean of the late 5th century BCE, Philolaus (Freeman 1959:220) lists the characteristics of god who is the leader and ruler of the universe: oneness, eternity, stability, immobility, uniqueness and otherness:

ἔστι γὰρ ἡγεμῶν καὶ ἄρχων ἀπάντων, θεός, εἶς, ἀεὶ ὢν, μόνιμος, ἀκίνητος, αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ὅμοιος, ἕτερος τῶν ἄλλων (Fr. 20.16).

With these traits, god achieves his absolute independence from the whole universe. Aristotle (*De Xenophane, de Zenone, de Gorgia* 977b.9-10) also held fast to god's immobility and Plutarch (*Amatorius* 756d.5-6) mentioned that this immobility of god was well-known among the people of antiquity. Furthermore, Philo (*De opificio mundi* 100.10) quoted this statement of Philolaus to clarify his theology under eclectic tradition.⁵⁷ In Middle Platonism, this idea of god in transcendence could be seen as a development to keep the prime god away from the mortal. Instead, they evoked the Platonic innovation, δαίμονες, which fill the gap between god and men (Baltes 2004:276).

2) The divine intermediary which is immanent

The Stoics were the most faithful heirs of this divine immanence. It is a well-known fact that

⁵⁷ For more examples, see Onatas (Fr. 139.9; 140. 20), Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium* 318.4; *Quaestiones in Exodum* Fr. 3.6, 2. Fr. 37.1; *De cherubim* 101.2; *De somniis* 1.72.3; *De specialibus legibus* 4.31.6), Musonius Rufus (*Dissertationum a Lucio digestarum reliquiae* 16.95-6), Plutarch (*Aetia Romana et Graeca* 282c), Aspasius (*In ethica Nichomachea commentaria* 157.15), Celsus (*Ἀληθῆς λόγος* 6.64.3-4), Porphyry (*De abstinentia* 2.37.1), Iamblichus (*De mysteriis* 8.2.2-4) and Proclus (*In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* 3.88.30-1, 3.195.19).

Stoicism held the notion that god is immanent in the universe and due to this belief, the Stoic theology is represented by pantheism (Bénatouïl 2009:23-24). Kenny (2006:307) summarises this pantheistic feature of the Stoic theology by referring to Cicero's comment on Chrysippus:

God can be identified with the elements of earth, water, air, and fire, and in these forms he can be called by the names of the traditional gods of Olympus. As earth, he is Demeter; as water and air, Poseidon; as fire or ether, he is Zeus, who is also identified with the everlasting law that is the guide of our life and the governess of our duties (ND 1.40). As described by Cicero, Chrysippus' religion is neither monotheism nor polytheism: it is polymorphous pantheism.

Algra (2003:170) also outlines the Stoic theology with two words: fate and nature. This also points out the pantheistic features of the Stoic theology, which is on the other extreme in opposition to the Epicurean transcendental theology, because fate and nature pass through all beings. Whether it is god himself or his influence which penetrates the universe, the important point to note is that discussions on god's immanence are connected to the theme of god's providential care (Bénatouïl 2009:23-24).

However, Pseudo-Aristotle, Maximus of Tyre, Aelius Aristides and Philo of Alexandria did not adopt the Stoic notion of an extremely immanent god because it damages the supreme god's dignity. Instead, they introduced different kinds of divine mediators. In *De mundo*, it was the divine power which penetrates the universe. The Great King's servants in the hierarchical system represent the way in which the divine power passes through the universe. Due to divine power, god can preserve the universe despite his existential transcendence. This seems very Middle Platonic because the Middle Platonists discharged god of the demiurgic task and imposed it on δαίμονες to preserve the dignity of the demiurge raised to the rank of the supreme god.

In Maximus (*Dissertationes* 11.12.4-5), a great number of inferior deities are the intermediaries between god and the universe. Maximus did, in fact, not need to adapt a certain concept like divine power to his theological notion because in his Platonic theology, it is natural to assume

the existence of multiple deities.⁵⁸ As such, Maximus follows the Middle Platonic way of distinguishing the prime god and his subjects.

Although Aristides refers to the satraps of the Great King, he does not describe them in detail (*Orationes* 26.27). This is because of two reasons: 1) The roles of satraps were very well-known to his readers, and 2) Aristides effectively utilised the implication of the metaphor of law, which was discussed in the previous section, through adapting the image of the Great King to his political purpose. Aristides, by confining the role of the Great King to maintaining the order within the system of the satraps, drives the reader to deduce that the satraps were in charge of various matters concerning the governance of the empire.

Philo also illustrates a similar idea of the cosmos to that of Aristides when he referred to angels as the Great King's eyes and ears (*De somniis* 1.140). These angels transfer god's bidding to the universe and the universe's need to god (*De somniis* 1.141). The fact that Philo not only assumes the existence of intermediary divine beings but also introduces angels as δαίμονες (*De somniis* 1.140-1; cf. *De decalogo* 61) indicates his Platonic understanding of god and the universe. The existence of intermediary deities between god and men is particularly Platonic.⁵⁹

This concept of the divine intermediaries was developed by Plato when he introduced two terms to his cosmology: δημιουργός and δαίμων. Δημιουργός referred to public workers such as independent craftsmen in ancient Greece (Walbank & Rhodes 2012:434). With this connotation, δημιουργός indicates the faculty of creation as the constructor of the cosmos (*Timaeus* 29.a.6)⁶⁰ and the generator of the self-sufficient and perfect god (*Timaeus* 68.e.2).

⁵⁸ Opsomer (2005:52) points out: "at the turn of the Millennium, most Platonists appear to have considered the demiurge as the first god. This ordinal number 'the first' requires many of other gods to give order among them".

⁵⁹ For more detailed study, see Opsomer (2005:51-99). The arguments on the divine intermediary seem to be dealt with mainly by Platonic tradition. Opsomer attempts to provide us with a survey of the arguments by authors. In my opinion, Aristotelians and Stoics may not have dared to openly participate in the argument on god's intermediary divinities or beings due to their concept of god, which was either extremely transcendent or immanent.

⁶⁰ Dillon (1997:30) supports this interpretation: "Plato's claim is that there really are guard-god-like natures in society, and that they should be properly harnessed. Similarly, here, it may be true that when the δημιουργός is originally introduced he is just an image, but Plato's claim is that there really is a demiurgic figure in the universe, and that he does the sort of things, on a cosmic scale, that a craftsman does in society."

Δημιουργός is also identified with Zeus the prime god (*Timaeus* 41.a.7). In Plato, δημιουργός is not a clearly defined figure but the easiest vehicle to describe the role of the prime principle to create the cosmos. Plato distributed the status of νοῦς as the creator to δημιουργός by implicitly identifying νοῦς with δημιουργός (Dillon 1997:32), and the immanently caring tasks of νοῦς to δαίμονες.

However, this “demiurgic element” (Dillon 1997:30) assigns the executions on the structure of the mortal things to his engendered sons:

καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίγνεται δημιουργός, τῶν δὲ θνητῶν τὴν γένεσιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ γεννήμασιν δημιουργεῖν προσέταξεν.

And He Himself acts as the Constructor of things divine, but the structure of the mortal things He commanded His own engendered sons to execute (*Timaeus* 69.c.3-5; transl. Bury 1961:179).

These engendered sons of δημιουργός refer to δαίμονες and this imposition of the intermediary role of δαίμονες between god and men is a particularly Platonic innovation (Versnel 2012:410). Plato explains the origin of δαίμονες as honourable men becoming δαίμονες after death (*Cratylus* 398.c.1). As divine mediators, δαίμονες are involved in human affairs. They, for example, supervise humankind (*Leges* 818.c.1), lead the dead to a certain place (*Phaedo* 107.d.6, 113.d.2) and mix the temporary pleasure with evil (*Phaedrus* 240.a.9). This supervising role of δαίμονες was accepted by Stoicism and Middle or Neoplatonism to adjust their cosmology to the emergence of monotheistic prevalence in theology and to answer the questions of the theodicy (Versnel 2012:410). In this sense, the remarkable feature of Middle Platonism is that they charged δαίμονες with the labour of creation because they regarded δημιουργός as the prime god who must not be profaned by contact with mortals (Opsomer 2005:55).

Among the Middle Platonists, Plutarch provides the most abundant source to delineate the Middle Platonic notion of δαίμονες (cf. Dillon 2012:1158). In his corpus, they, as divine beings distinguished from god (e.g. *De defectu oraculorum* 423E.7), are involved in various human affairs. There are good and evil δαίμονες (e.g. *Romulus* 28.3.4; *Septem sapientium convivium*

153A.11) who, as guardians (e.g. *Antonius* 33.3.2; *Cato Minor* 54.10.2), maneuver the decisions of men (e.g. *Brutus* 14.3.3) to lead them into good luck (e.g. *Agis et Cleomenes* 43.8.1) or towards destruction (e.g. *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 68F.7). They are also designers of things (e.g. *Demosthenes* 3.3.3) and concerned with the generation and birth of mortal beings (e.g. *Aetia Romana et Graeca* 277A.10).

By putting δαίμονες in charge of the affairs of the mortal beings, Plutarch places δαίμονες between the prime god and mortal beings. Plutarch's intermediary δαίμονες are very Middle Platonic. Moreover, the relation between the three, namely the prime god, δαίμονες and mortal beings, represents the cosmic hierarchical order, which is also one of the main element of the Middle Platonic cosmic setting. The cosmic hierarchical order, however, was also a traditional theme, which was discussed by different philosophers since the pre-Socratic era. This thesis will now discuss the cosmic system which conjoin the prime god, δαίμονες and the human beings in the world.

3) The cosmic hierarchical system which penetrates and holds the cosmos together:

Ancient philosophers shared this notion of the cosmic order which had already existed in the time of Pythagoras and was shared by Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and others.⁶¹ The body of all things is called the cosmos due to its order (Pythagoras, *Testimonia* Fr. 21.2-3). This cosmic order is eternal (Aristotle, *De caelo* 296a.33)⁶² and all parts of the universe inherently has the noblest arrangement and the most harmonious order (Philo, *De aeternitate mundi* 32.4-5).

Pseudo-Aristotle emphasises the cosmic hierarchical order which implies the Homeric Golden Chain through his exclusively detailed description of the beacon-signals. It is not only the beacon-signals but also the other descriptive elements of the image of the Great King in gradational arrangement, which collaborate to convey this traditional notion of cosmic

⁶¹ For more examples, see Aristotle (*Metaphysica* 984b.16; *Ethica eudemia* 1216a.14), Philo (*De specialibus legibus* 4.210.4; *Quaestiones in Genesim (fragmenta)* 1.64.2), Cornutus (*De natura deorum* 12.18), Plutarch (*Septem sapientium convivium* 153d.2-3), Hierocles (*In aureum carmen* 11.27.1-2), Numenius (*Fragmenta* 1. Fr. 15.9-10), Alexander (*Απορίαι και λύσεις* 45.15-6, 63.8).

⁶² This 'eternity' should be noted because it seems to allude to the conventional notion of Golden Chain.

hierarchical order. The author, therefore, elaborately arranges the subjects of the Great King in a successive order.

In Maximus as well, the main point of argument is the cosmic hierarchy which consists of the uncountable δαίμονες (*Dissertationes* 11.12.23-4). The multiple layers of the universe recall the cosmic hierarchical order between δαίμονες of different ontic ranks. Maximus emphasises that god, the preserver of the universe, is holding the universe by bestowing security to his subjects (*Dissertationes* 11.12.17-8). This security is transferred from god through his subjects in succession to the earth (*Dissertationes* 11.12.24). Uncountable deities which hold different ranks constitute this cosmic succession. The cosmic hierarchy connects god, who is the source of security, to the heavenly sphere and this heavenly sphere, which is full of souls and *daimones*, to this earth (Van Nuffelen 2011:128).

Furthermore, Aristides' purpose in depreciating the kings of the empires before Rome is to justify the Roman regime by comparing the Roman system of governance with the Olympian governance. In doing so, the hierarchical order of the two governances is the pivotal point and this is conveyed through the relationship between the Great King and his satraps (*Orationes* 26.27).

In Philo as well, the thorough distinction between the inferior and the superior is embedded in his image of the Great King, which indicates the cosmic hierarchical relationship between God and all the other creatures (*De decalogo* 61). This hierarchical order includes the angels as the intermediary δαίμονες and the men on the earth (*De somniis* 140). In this hierarchical order, God as the prime principle cannot be reached even by the soul (*De opificio mundi* 71).

Particularly Maximus adopted two terms to emphasise the cosmic hierarchical order:

διαδοχὴν ὁρᾶς καὶ τάξιν ἀρχῆς καταβαίνουσιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ μέχρι γῆς.

Here is a succession, a hierarchy for you to behold, from God above to the earth below (*Dissertationes* 11.12.23-24; transl. Trapp 1997:106).

Διαδοχή, as Trapp translates, means 'succession' and τάξις means 'arrangement' and 'order'.

The former indicates the succession of the royal pedigree and the throne in Plutarch (*Vita Romuli* 3.2.3; *Vita Arati* 54.8.3; *Vita Demetrii* 4.5.2; *Vita Lycurgi* 31.5.1; *Mulierum virtutes* 258D.3; *De garrulitate* 508A.6 and so forth) and the latter often means the cosmic order. Plutarch provides a proverbial explanation on nature and order:

τὸ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν τέτακται καὶ διώρισται, τάξις γὰρ ἢ τάξεως ἔργον ἢ φύσις· ἢ δ' ἀταξία καθάπερ ἢ Πινδαρική ψάμμος 'ἀριθμὸν περιπέφευγεν', καὶ τὸ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν εὐθὺς ἀόριστον καὶ ἄπειρόν ἐστιν.

That which is according to nature is ordered and delimited, for nature is, precisely, order or else the handiwork of order, while disorder, like Pindar's sand, 'has eluded number,' and what is contrary to nature is simply what is unbound and unlimited (*Quaestiones convivales* 732E.4-8; transl. Minar, Sandbach & Helmbold 1961:195).

"That what is according to nature is ordered" sounds very Stoic. From the identification of nature with order Plutarch reminds the reader of the etymology of κόσμος by Pseudo-Aristotle (*De mundo* 397a.5-8). This metaphor emphasises the importance of order for the preservation of nature because without order, nature will not be sustained. This concept of cosmic order becomes clearer in the following definition of the *politeia*:

Παρὰ πάντα ταῦτα λέγεται πολιτεία τάξις καὶ κατάστασις πόλεως διοικοῦσα τὰς πράξεις·

Besides all these, *politeia* is defined as an order and construction of a State, which directs its affairs (*De unius in republica dominatione, populari statu, et paucorum imperio* 826D.12-E.1; transl. Fowler 1949:307).

This definition, by which Plutarch suggests that order is the essence of governance, was implied through Aristides' use of the image of the Great King as well. With the notion of the prime god, who maintains the cosmos through order, Plutarch's statement that nature is order should be understood as order also being the essence of nature governed by god, which hierarchically conjoins the components of the universe.

In conclusion, the implication and use of the image of the Great King indicate that it should be

accepted as a *topos*. It becomes clear that the image of the Great King is a conventional way of describing the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos which consist of three main principles: 1) the transcendent prime god, 2) the divine intermediary and 3) the cosmic hierarchy. These three principles were implicitly discussed by ancient philosophers through their arguments on $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$ and the Middle Platonists evoked these main elements of so-called ‘ $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$ theology’ to formulate their cosmological frame in order to answer the cosmo-theological questions of their time. The Great King’s seclusion, the hierarchical system of the Persian governance and his subjects with various duties made this image of the Great King the most appropriate to convey the Middle Platonic cosmic frame as the common ground for further discussions on cosmo-theological topics. In other words, Pseudo-Aristotle, Maximus of Tyre, Aelius Aristides and Philo of Alexandria, despite their allegiances to different philosophies and religions, adopt this *topos* as the foundation of their cosmo-theological arguments. The *topos* of the Great King also secures the common ground between the authors and their readers by means of conveying the stock arguments on the conventional cosmo-theological themes through the image which is constructed on well-known historical facts.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The phrase ‘the Great King’ (ὁ μέγας βασιλεύς), which was originally ascribed to the ancient Persian kings, is often adopted to evoke the traditional image of the Persian system of governance and its kings. The image of the Great King was formed by the Greeks’ perception of the Persian kings and their governing systems. In the contexts of philosophical discussion, especially, this image is utilised to imply a conventionally accepted philosophical notion.

This use of the image of the Great King is not prevalent in ancient philosophical writings but in four Greek authors who shared the propensity towards the Middle Platonic frame of cosmology: Pseudo-Aristotle (*De mundo* 398a.11-35), Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 11.12), Aelius Aristides (*Orationes* 26.27) and Philo of Alexandria (*De decalogo* 61, 177-8, *De opificio mundi* 71, *De somniis* 1.141).

These four authors develop their arguments on the same basis of the cosmological frame: 1) the prime god, who stays away from the cosmos, immanently influences it through 2) his mediate deities and 3) the cosmic hierarchical order, which penetrates all existential beings. These three elements respectively have different philosophical backgrounds but together, they represent the Middle Platonic cosmic setting.

The Epicureans are famous for the emphasis they place on the transcendence of god. This concept began to be systematically developed from Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover. In opposition to them, the Stoics elaborated the concept of god’s immanence, which was developed from Plato’s δημιουργός and δαίμονες. These concepts of god were sporadically embedded in the pre-Socratic notion of νοῦς. However, the notion of the cosmic hierarchy, which was traditionally represented by the Golden Chain, was presented as the presupposition of ancient cosmology from the time of Homer. The Middle Platonists adapted these traditional concepts and framed their cosmic setting in order to address the cosmological questions of their time: 1) they had to reformulate the relationship between divine elements as δημιουργός occupied the place of the prime god and 2) they had to explain theodicy with their cosmological system.

Based on the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos implied through the image of the Great King,

these four authors, despite different philosophical backgrounds, developed their own cosmological arguments. Pseudo-Aristotle adopts this image to describe the way in which the transcendent god preserves the cosmos through his power. This divine power, which is distinguished from god, penetrates the cosmos, holding it together in harmony according to the cosmic hierarchical order. The image of the Great King, in fact, depicts the divine power's influence throughout the universe. Maximus of Tyre utilises this image to discuss the cosmic hierarchy which consists of the prime god, the intermediary deities and men. Based on this cosmic hierarchical order, Aelius Aristides justifies the excellence of the Roman regime by comparing it to the heavenly system of governance. Philo, on the other hand, polemically makes use of this image to highlight the exclusiveness of God in godhood and praise-worthiness.

These four authors acknowledged the cosmic frame which consists of the prime god, his mediators and the cosmic hierarchical order. This Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos forms the common ground on which these four authors developed their cosmological arguments. This can be deduced from the fact that these authors merely make a reference to the Great King as an introduction when they want to invite their audience to participate in their philosophically serious arguments on god and the cosmos.

Therefore, according to the definition of *topos* introduced in chapter two, the *topos* of the Great King includes a philosophical notion which was formed out of traditional arguments on god and the cosmos and is accepted by different authors as a conventional way of conveying the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos.

Before closing this thesis, the benefits of the *topos* analysis suggested by Thom (2003:570-573) should be reaffirmed:

- 1) A good understanding of the *topoi* present in a text helps to identify the issues involved and to locate the text within the cultural and moral discourse of the time.
- 2) A *topos* may also help us to understand connections within the text between apparently unrelated materials.
- 3) A better understanding of the *topoi* involved may in the same way provide insight into the

compositional integrity.

- 4) The point of a passage may lie in its manipulation or adaptation of a *topos* that is assumed.

Throughout this thesis, these benefits of the *topos* analysis can be validated. First of all, the philosophical issue, which is implied through the image of the Great King, is identified as the Middle Platonic frame of the cosmos and the meaning of this image is thus understood in its philosophical discourse of the time. Second, through the *topos* analysis of this image, its function as the introduction to the main cosmological discourses is defined. Third, the main points of the arguments, which the four authors attempt to make, are clarified.

These advantages can influence other problems such as the problem of dating *De mundo*. By confirming the philosophical propensity of this image towards Middle Platonism, the *topos* analysis of the image of the Great King can be seen to contribute to confining the date of *De mundo* to the time after 80 BCE. Furthermore, the prominence of the Middle Platonic cosmology during the imperial era becomes clearer through the *topos* analysis of this image.

The *topos* analysis therefore has an invaluable impact upon understanding ancient writings in the appropriate moral and philosophical contexts of the time and this will provide this field with the revaluation of ancient texts, which are often regarded as old-fashioned and insignificant, by redefining the relationships between the ideas and thoughts prevalent in these texts. Subsequently, this will revitalise the studies of ancient texts and lead to a deeper and wider moral-philosophical world of antiquity.

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