

THE STOIC COSMOS

Stoic cosmology held that our cosmos is periodically destroyed and restored. In this, it is unique compared to earlier cosmologies. Ricardo Salles offers a detailed reconstruction of the philosophical ideas behind this thesis, which explains its uniqueness and how it competes with earlier cosmologies. The reconstruction is based on a rigorous analysis of the evidence, made accessible to nonspecialists who are familiar with the history of ancient philosophy but do not specialize in Stoicism. Furthermore, the book reveals how the Stoics combined their meteorology, their cosmology, their physics, and their metaphysics to explain natural phenomena, thereby illustrating how different disciplines can interact in ancient philosophy. It also refers to central questions in the interpretation of Stoicism, such as the role of the Stoic god in cosmology and the Stoic theory of events.

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THE STOIC COSMOS

Conflagration, Cosmogony, and Recurrence in Early Stoicism

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A dedé, chosim e teresa

Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging unto skies of fire
E. A. Poe, *Dream-Land*, vv. 15–16

This life as you live it at present and have lived it, you must live once more and also innumerable times; and there shall be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or large in your life must return to you, and everything in the same series and sequence – and likewise this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and similarly this moment and I myself.

F. Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom* 4.341

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Preface and Acknowledgments

I started writing this book in March 2020, when the Covid pandemic began. My original plan was to offer a synthesis of what I had published on the subject up to that moment. The task ahead was supposed to be easy and expeditious. But I soon realized that many views I had defended in the past were incomplete, confused, or simply mistaken. It became necessary to change them entirely or at least reformulate and complete them. Thus, some ideas I now hold are inconsistent with those I had in the past, and very few are exactly the same.

The main changes are the following: the account of the conflagration is much fuller and I hope clearer in Section 2.2 than in Salles 2005; the analysis of Stoic elemental theory and the process of combustion in Sections 2.3–2.4 differs significantly from the one in Salles 2015b, 2015c, and 2016; the account of the Stoic theory of cosmogony in Chapter 4 is also substantially different from the one I offer in Salles 2015a; my presentation of the Stoic theory of events and of Chrysippus' theory of the present in Chapter 5 departs in some vital respects from the one I give in Salles 2018b; my reconstruction of the Argument for Identity in Sections 6.3–6.4 is new but complements the one I develop in Salles 2003; and the conclusions I reach concerning the Stoic god's motivation for destroying the cosmos and restoring a type-identical one in Sections 7.1–7.4 are at variance with those in Salles 2005 and 2017b.

The general framework of this book is the classic work on Stoic cosmology published in the past fifty years by Jonathan Barnes, John Cooper, David Hahm, Anthony Long, Jaap Mansfeld, David Sedley, R. W. Sharples, and Richard Sorabji. Recent discussions with individual colleagues, students, and friends, to whom I am grateful, helped me to refine and correct my ideas. I want to mention Nazyheli Aguirre, James Allen, Peter Adamson, Rachel Barney, Gábor Betegh, Marcelo Boeri, Victor Caston, Rocío Cázares, Vanessa de Harven, Marion Durand,

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While writing the book, I had the opportunity to present my work at various workshops, seminars, conferences, and congresses. I am obliged to the audiences for their searching questions and helpful comments and to the organizers for their kind invitation. I wish to thank, in particular, the Classical Dialogues Seminar at Columbia University in New York; the Workshop in Ancient Philosophy at Oxford, England; the London Ancient Science Conference at Birkbeck College in London; the History of Philosophy Seminar at the Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; the Symposium Hellenisticum ‘The Philosophy of Chrysippus’ at the Fondation Hardt in Genève; the Ancient Philosophy Seminar at the Institute of Classical Studies in London; the Durham Centre for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy; the VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Filosofía at the Universidade do Porto in Portugal; the Royal Holloway Stoic Physics Workshop in London; the Classics Seminar at Corpus Christi College Oxford; the Dipartimento di Filosofia e Scienze dell’Educazione at the Università di Torino; the Oberseminar at the Munich School of Ancient Philosophy; the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences at the University of Edinburgh; the Unidad Académica de Filosofía at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas; the Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas at the Universidade de São Paulo; and the Instituto de Filosofía at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

The penultimate version was completed at the University of Oxford. I am indebted to the Faculty of Philosophy for an academic visitorship in the academic year 2022–2023, to Corpus Christi College for a visiting fellowship and scholarship during the same year, and to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México for a sabbatical leave. I benefited from the generous financial support provided by the program PASPA-UNAM and

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Translations and Texts

Text Numbering and Translations

I often cite ancient texts in the form of numbered passages in bold. For instance, Chapter 3 includes a **T1a**, a **T2b**, and a **T4c**. In this system, the number stands for the chapter section to which the passage belongs and the letter for its place within the section. For example, **T4c** in Chapter 3 is the third passage of Section 3.4 of that chapter. The numbering is repeated in each chapter. Thus, Chapter 3 has a **T4c** and so do Chapters 4 and 7 (but Chapter 8, for instance, does not have a **T4c** because it does not have a Section 8.4). Unless otherwise stated, all the translations are my own. Most of the translations, however, are based on or borrowed from previously existing translations (e.g., Long-Sedley 1987). I indicate when I borrow a translation, and I frequently modify or complement it.

Appendices to Ancient Texts

The texts quoted in the book proceed from standard critical editions listed in the Works Cited. These editions often cite in their critical apparatus textual variants. Some of these variants may alter the overall philosophical meaning of the texts. Appended to the texts, I usually mention the variants that I consider especially significant for meaning (which are very few). Although in some cases I do discuss them, the chief purpose of these appendices is merely to signal that the variants exist and to invite the readers to bear them in mind when they interpret the passages. In this respect, I follow the spirit of the textual notes in volume 2 of *The Hellenistic Philosophers* by Long and Sedley: ‘We do not attempt to supply exhaustive information on the textual tradition, but we have tried to give full information at least in all cases where a philosophical interpretation might depend on the reading chosen’ (Long-Sedley 1987: 2.ix).

Abbreviations

<i>Adv. Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus Haereses</i>
<i>Anth.</i>	Stobaeus, <i>Anthologium</i> (including the <i>Eclogae Physicae et Ethicae</i>)
<i>BS</i>	Boeri-Salles 2014
<i>Cael.</i>	Cleomedes, <i>Caelestia</i> - Aristotle, <i>De Caelo</i>
<i>Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>CGTT</i>	Cornutus, <i>Compendium de Graecae Theologiae Traditionibus</i>
<i>Civ.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Civita Dei</i>
<i>CN</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Communibus Notitiis</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	Augustine, <i>Confessiones</i>
<i>Contra Man.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Genesi contra Manichaeos</i>
<i>DA</i>	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i>
<i>DAM</i>	Philo of Alexandria, <i>De Aeternitate Mundi</i>
<i>De Gen.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Genesi ad Litteram</i>
<i>De Nat. Deor.</i>	Cornutus, <i>De Natura Deorum</i>
<i>De Tremore</i>	Galen, <i>De Tremore, Palpitatione, Convulsione et Rigore Liber</i>
<i>DG</i>	Diels 1879
<i>DI</i>	Theophrastus, <i>De Igne</i>
<i>Diss.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Dissertationes ab Arriano Digestae</i>
<i>Div.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Divinatione</i>
<i>DK</i>	Diels-Kranz 1903 (1951–1952)
<i>DL</i>	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae Philosophorum</i>
<i>DP</i>	Origen, <i>De Principiis</i>
<i>EK</i>	Edelstein-Kidd 1989
<i>Etymol. Magum.</i>	<i>Etymologicum magnum</i>
<i>Enn.</i>	Plotinus, <i>Enneades</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium</i>
<i>Fat.</i>	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>De Fato ad Imperatores</i>

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List of Abbreviations

GC	Aristotle, <i>De Generatione et Corruptione</i>
HA	Aristotle, <i>De Historia Animalium</i>
Haer.	Hippolytus, <i>Refutatio Omnium Haeresium</i>
In Cael.	Simplicius, <i>In Aristotelis quattuor libros de Caelo Commentaria</i>
In Cat.	Simplicius, <i>In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium</i> / Dexippus, <i>In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium</i>
In Evang. Ionn.	Origen, <i>Commentarii in Evangelium Ioannis</i>
In GC	Philoponus, <i>In Aristotelis libros de generatione et corruptione commentaria</i>
In Evang. Ionn.	Origen, <i>Commentarii in Evangelium Ioannis</i>
In Hipp. De Hum.	Ps. Galen, <i>In Hippocratis De humoribus</i>
In Met.	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria</i>
In Meteor.	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>In Aristotelis Meteorologicorum Libros Commentaria</i>
In Phys.	Simplicius, <i>In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria</i>
In Pr. An.	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>In Aristotelis Analyticorum Priorum Librum i commentarium</i>
In Top.	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>In Aristotelis Topicorum Libros Octo Commentaria</i>
LM	Laks-Most 2016
LS	Long-Sedley 1987
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie 1940
M	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Adversus Mathematicos</i>
MA	Marcus Aurelius, <i>Ad se ipsum</i>
Man.	Alexander Lycopolis, <i>Alexandri Lycopolitani contra Manichaei Opinionones Disputatio</i>
Met.	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysica</i>
Meteor.	Aristotle, <i>Meteorologica</i>
Mixt.	Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>De Mixtione</i>
ND	Cicero, <i>De Natura Deorum</i>
NH	Nemesius, <i>De Natura Hominis</i>
NQ	Seneca, <i>Naturales Quaestiones</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
Off.	Cicero, <i>De Officiis</i>
Or.	Dio Chrysostom, <i>Orationes</i>
PE	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>

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<i>PH</i>	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De Philosophia</i>
<i>PHP</i>	Galen, <i>De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis</i>
<i>Phys.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Physica</i>
<i>Plen.</i>	Galen, <i>De Plenitudine</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	[Aristotle], <i>Problemata</i>
<i>SR</i>	Plutarch, <i>De Stoicorum Repugnantiiis</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
<i>SVF</i>	von Arnim 1903
<i>Th.</i>	Hesiod, <i>Theogonia</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i>