

XENOPHANES ON DIVINE DISCLOSURE AND MORTAL INQUIRY

Xenophanes of Colophon wrote his verses in the late sixth and early fifth centuries BCE. By his own account (DK21 B8, B45), Xenophanes spent most of his adult life travelling all around Greece, moving from city to city, performing his works and offering his wide-ranging reflections. Our own focus in this chapter will be his thoughts on the question of divine disclosure. We will ultimately see, though, how Xenophanes aims to locate the mortal as an epistemic as well as moral agent within a holistic and coherently conceived world order.

Cicero speaks of Xenophanes as the only one among the most ancient philosophers who, while asserting the existence of the gods, ‘did away with divination from its very foundation’ (*divinationem funditus sustulit*). With the further exception of Epicurus, divination has been otherwise accepted universally (*Div.* 1.3.5 = A52). Aëtius similarly writes: ‘Xenophanes and Epicurus did away with divination’ (Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐπίκουρος ἀναιροῦσι τὴν μαντικὴν, 5.1.1 = A52). Leshner (1992), who affirms his acceptance of these reports of Xenophanes, cites favourably Dodds’ evaluation of the implications of such acceptance: ‘If this is true, it means that, almost alone among classical Greek thinkers, he [Xenophanes] swept aside not only the pseudo-science of reading omens but the whole deep-seated complex of ideas about inspiration.’¹ Both earlier and later commentators on Xenophanes’ relation to traditional theology similarly echo Cicero’s talk of a *traceless* rejection.²

¹ Dodds (1951) 181 (cf. Dodds (1973) 6), cited at Leshner (1992) 141, cf. 96, 114, 118, 123, 154.

² ‘A *clean sweep* of all the elements of popular belief which were hostile to his higher standard’ (Gomperz (1906) 163), ‘Xenophanes *schaltet* die Götter im Einklang mit seiner Theologie *völlig aus*’ (Kleingünther (1933) 41), ‘the *entire framework* . . . is here *swept away*’ (Hussey (1990) 19), cf. Schrödinger (1954) 68 (‘clear away’); on divination: ‘par

We may assume that Cicero and Aëtius are drawing on a common source. Cicero's *diuinitio* translates the Greek *mantikê* (*Div.* I.1.1), the two doxographers use parallel verbs (*sustulit* and ἀναποῦσι), and the association of Xenophanes and Epicurus recurs in both.³ The extant fragments, however, contain no cognate of *mantikê* and we cannot be certain that Xenophanes himself used this vocabulary of divination. If not, the reports would most probably derive from a reading of B18 (quoted and translated in Chapter 3.2) as expressing a wholesale denial of divine disclosure. And if our common source pounced on B18 in doxographic eagerness to identify an exception to the otherwise near-universal acceptance of divination,⁴ most modern scholars were all too happy to inherit from antiquity a Xenophanes who champions independent mortal inquiry against divine interferences.⁵ The minority of scholars who object to this reading of B18 do not ask what the role of divine disclosure in mortal inquiry might be, or consider the implications of this role for our understanding of Xenophanes' reaction to divination.

Cicero's and Aëtius' reports invite a wholesale reconsideration of the relation between mortal and divine in Xenophanes' epistemology. We will engage with these reports most fruitfully by analysing Xenophanes' reactions to the theological and epistemological suppositions that underlie the concept of *mantikê*. Xenophanes, we will see, indeed rejected divination along with other traditional models of divine disclosure such as poetic inspiration. But he was profoundly influenced by what he rejected.

la base' (Bouché-Leclercq (1879–1882) 33); 'altogether' (Flower (2008) 8) (my emphases).

³ The two passages give parallel accounts also of the Stoic and Peripatetic views. On the Stoics: τὰ πλεῖστα μέρη τῆς μαντικῆς ἐγκρίνουσι (5.1.1); *omnia fere illa defenderent* (*Div.* 1.3.6); on Aristotle and Dicaearchus or 'Dicaearchus the Peripatetic': τὸ κατ' ἐνθουσιασμόν . . . τοὺς ὄνειρους (5.1.4); *somniorum et furoris reliquit* (*Div.* 1.3.5).

⁴ Ancient doxographers are generally eager to oppose antithetical views, cf. Mansfeld (1999b) 27, 30–1; Betegh (2010) 36–7. In both Cicero and ps.-Plutarch, the rejection of divination by Xenophanes and Epicurus is juxtaposed to its (variously qualified) acceptance by Plato, the Stoics, Aristotle and Dicaearchus (*Div.* 1.3.5–6; *DG* 5.1.1.4).

⁵ Tellingly, Loenen (1956) 136 styles Xenophanes an 'enlightened critic' when defending the traditional reading of B18 (cf. Gomperz (1906) 163; Dodds (1973) 4–5), while Shorey (1911) 89, arguing against it, speculates that scholars have been 'misled by . . . partiality for the pre-Socratics'; more recently, cf. Curd (2002) 120–9; Leshner (2008) 468–9; Gregory (2013) 104.

What does it mean to say that Xenophanes did away with *mantikē*? What is the ‘whole deep-seated complex of ideas’ against which the doxographers’ judgement is to be evaluated? We must not overlook the possibility of a conceptual gap between Xenophanes and his doxographers.⁶ In Chapter 3.1, I delineate the central, pertinent suppositions underlying divination. While taking account of later and ‘historical’ evidence, we will focus primarily on the closest conceptual relatives of the later term *mantikē* in the epic tradition, a tradition against which Xenophanes situated himself so explicitly.⁷ This analysis undermines the anachronistic and misleading misconception, pervasive in the literature on Xenophanes, that Greek disclosure and divination typically involved the direct transmission of truths and knowledge to passive mortal recipients. To understand Xenophanes’ reactions to it, we must appreciate the role of active mortal agency and reasoning in the Greek discourse of disclosure and divination.

In the first instance, this chapter offers a new interpretation of the logic of Xenophanes’ remarks about divine disclosure in B18.1. In Chapter 3.2, I argue that Xenophanes neither denies categorically the reality of divine disclosure nor acquiesces in traditional attitudes towards it. Rather, Xenophanes categorically rejects the traditional notions of disclosure and expressly supplants them with a novel alternative. In Chapter 3.3, I develop Lesher’s (1983) convincing and neglected argument that Xenophanes arrives at his scepticism, i.e. the negative aspects of his epistemology, by rejecting traditional divinatory assumptions (B34). But Lesher tells only half the story. In Chapter 3.4, I argue that Xenophanes’ alternative notion of disclosure underlies his positive reflections regarding what *does* lie within the scope of mortal epistemology. More speculatively, I develop two alternative interpretations of the precise notion of purposiveness underlying Xenophanean disclosure. Xenophanes most probably

⁶ Not least given Cicero’s preoccupation with narrowly Stoic definitions of divination (*Div.* 1.1.1, 1.5.9), and because the doxographic tradition which Cicero and Aëtius reproduce and instantiate is notoriously prone to reduce earlier thought to later categories.

⁷ See especially the criticisms of Homer and Hesiod in B10–12; see also B1.21–3; B14–16; B26; B32; D.L. 9.18.20 = A1; D.L. 2.46 = A19; Timon *apud* D.L. 9.19.14 = A1; Sextus *PH* 1.224 = A35; Plut. *Reg. Apophth.* 175c = A11.

reconceptualises the notion of divine disclosure radically as the view that the divine purposively facilitates all mortal experience and belief-formation as part of its intelligent direction of the cosmos and its inhabitants. It remains possible, though less likely, however, that he maintains less idiosyncratically that the divine guides particular mortals in particular circumstances.

Finally, in Chapter 3.5 we will ask how these conclusions about Xenophanes can lend further nuance to our understanding of the complexity of his engagement with the culturally and theologically dominant models of divine disclosure manifested in divination and poetic inspiration.⁸ Xenophanes reacts to divinatory models of sagehood in a polemical but also appropriative manner. This reaction casts light on Xenophanes' own conception and representation of himself as a sage and on the theological, epistemological and social world view that he champions against his rivals.⁹

For Xenophanes too, as with Hesiod, understanding epistemology means understanding the nature of, and the relations between, mortal and divine. At the heart of this enterprise lies the question of disclosure. At the outset, we must not let the fact that divination inhabits the religious and intellectual margins of modern Western culture blind us to its prominence in archaic and classical Greek beliefs and practices.¹⁰ At the end, we should resist our temptation to extend Xenophanes' iconoclastic criticisms of what might strike us as unpalatable superstitions to a wholesale denial that the divine exerts an active influence on the epistemological equation. Xenophanes' polemic against theologically dominant models of divine disclosure has indeed exercised a formative influence on his epistemological thinking. But his response to 'the whole deep-seated complex of ideas' surrounding disclosure is not a complete 'sweeping-aside' from the very foundation (*funditus*) but, in some important respects, a radical and subversive transformation.

⁸ We will discuss further Xenophanes' responses to Hesiod in Ch. 6.1.

⁹ In her interesting analysis of Xenophanes' opponents and addressees, Gemelli Marciano (2002) 92, n.19 surprisingly dismisses offhand the possibility of an engagement with diviners.

¹⁰ See Flower (2008) 1–103; Johnston (2008) 1–17; cf. Burkert (2005) 29–30; Flacelière (1976) 4. For some ancient testimonies to the universality and centrality of divination in the Graeco-Roman world, see X. *Apol.* 13; Cic. *Div.* 1.1.1–1.3.5, 1.6.11–12; S.E. *M* 9.132; Oenomaus *apud* Eus. *PE* 5.27.5.

3.1 Divination

A few key points will preoccupy us here. (i) Divination presupposes the pervasive contrast between divine epistemic superiority (often, omniscience) and mortal epistemic limitations. More precisely, communication between mortal and divine presupposes an epistemological world view in which the epistemic abilities and limitations of mortals are conceived *by contrast with* and *in reference to* the superior epistemic capacities of the gods. (ii)^a Diviners most typically form propositions concerning non-experienced states of affairs on the basis of experienced events or objects intentionally disclosed by a divinity for that purpose (omens, oracles, dreams). (ii)^b Since mortals can attain knowledge or insight concerning these non-experienced states only on the basis of omens (or oracles or dreams), those who have the ability and the expertise to infer from them appropriately are taken to transcend the epistemic limitations of all other mortals and to approximate the epistemic state of the gods in particular and momentary respects. (iii) Such epistemic approximation to the divine is associated with a more general approximation to the divine.

Mantic disclosure typically consists in the following: the gods, knowing *p*, cause the mortal agent to perceive an object or event with the intention that an ideal observer will interpret that object or event to mean, and therefore come to believe, *p*. The gods thus *communicate p*. In Gricean terms, omens have ‘non-natural meaning’. To cite Denyer, ‘they mean the facts they signify, not in the way clouds mean rain, but in the way that a road sign means a bridge ahead.’¹¹ Underlying divine communication is the view that the gods not only facilitate human existence by maintaining our world order (e.g. celestial and seasonal processes), but are also aware of and concern themselves with particular dilemmas haunting particular mortals.¹² We may distinguish at least three senses in which the objects of divination may be non-experienced. *P* could refer to (I) an event in the past or future (‘Who will win the Trojan war?’, ‘Were Agis’ blankets and pillows stolen?’),

¹¹ Denyer (1985) 5.

¹² Xenophon formulates the principle explicitly: *Mem.* 1.4.15–18; *Cyr.* 1.6.46; *Symp.* 4.47–9; cf. Flower (2008) 105–6.

3.1 Divination

(2) current facts inscrutable due to various practical limitations ('How many figs are in this fig tree?', 'Is Lysanias not the father of Annyla's unborn child?'), (3) questions entirely not amenable to autopsy ('What does Zeus will?', 'What actions incurred divine wrath and which would allay it?', 'Was the first-fruit offering to Apollo satisfactory?').¹³

Already in Homer we find the indispensability of mantic consultations 'in both public and private' (Cicero, *Div.* 1.2.3). For Achilles, divination is required to discover what course of action would end the pestilence (*Il.* 1.62–3), while Circe sends Odysseus to Teiresias, the seer (*mantis*), to learn what path he must follow to reach Ithaca (*Od.* 10.538–40). The goddess Circe uses the same words to describe the inquiry about his journey which Odysseus must put to the seer Teiresias as those which the goddess Eidothea uses to describe the inquiry about his own journey which Menelaus must put to the god Proteus.¹⁴ The fact that the mortal Teiresias fulfils a parallel role to that of the god Proteus perhaps brings out the particularly liminal status of the dead yet fully cognitive Teiresias (*Od.* 10.490–5). But it also gestures at a similar and more general liminality, characteristic of the diviner as such. Achilles begins a reply to his omniscient mother by noting its redundancy: 'You know. Why, then, should I recount these things to you when you know all?' (*Il.* 1.365). Menelaus addresses Eidothea (the Knowing Goddess) in similar terms: 'but the gods know all things' (*Od.* 4.379). While he reserves omniscience for the divine, however, Achilles accords Calchas sure knowledge (*μάντις εὔειδώς*, *Il.* 1.384–5) and so a certain approximation and access to this privileged state. The poet similarly ascribes to Calchas, *qua* augur, knowledge of 'the things that are and the things that will be and were before' (*Il.* 1.69–70). Later sources retain the notion that knowledgeable or omniscient gods willingly provide signs only on the basis of which mortals can gain an

¹³ (1) *Il.* 2.303–30; Parke 272 no.27 (Dodona); (2) Hes. fr. 278 M-W; Parke 266 no.11 (Dodona); (3) *h.Hom.* 3.131–2; *Il.* 1.92–100; Hdt. 8.122. Chaerephon could ask the Delphic oracle: 'is any man wiser than Socrates?' (Pl. *Apol.* 21a; cf. later in Philostratus' biography of Apollonius of Tyana: 'which is the most perfect philosophy?', *VA* 8.19.40–4).

¹⁴ ὄς . . . ἐλεύσεαι, *Od.* 10.539–40; *Od.* 4.389–90.

insight into non-experienced states for which there is otherwise no evidence.¹⁵ Hence, Sophocles' chorus speaks of Teiresias as 'the *mantis* in whom alone of mortals truth is implanted' (*OT* 298–9).

Side by side with the vocabulary of knowledge, however, the role of mortal agency in the extrapolation of propositions from omens precluded the construal of divination as an infallible transmission of truths. Calchas infers from the portent of a serpent devouring eight young sparrows and then their mother that the Greeks shall war for as many years and in the tenth take Troy (*Il.* 2.303–30). Odysseus stresses to the Greeks that they all witnessed the omen in question (301–2) and urges them to stay in Troy to discover *whether or not* Calchas divined (i.e. interpreted it) correctly (ὄφρα δαῶμεν | ἢ ἔτεσον Κάλχας μαντεύεται ἦε καὶ οὐκί, 299–300). Here Calchas' own consultants and supporters represent his divination as a *conjecture*, to be verified only if and when the state of affairs in question comes within the scope of their collective experience. Hence, the same chorus in Sophocles can say of Teiresias, 'the wise augur', that, while *Zeus* and *Apollo* are knowledgeable, no sure criterion (κρίσις . . . ἀληθής) can determine whether a *mantis* carries more weight than any other mortal (*OT* 484, 496–501).

We cannot determine to what extent divinations were deduced from systematic exegetic rules. It appears that interpretations of divine messages typically started from basic semiotic principles (e.g. lightning on the right is a favourable sign (*Il.* 2.353; cf. Arat. *Phain.* 1.5–6), a lobeless liver unfavourable) and were further elaborated in the light of the nature of the inquiry or circumstances.¹⁶ In this respect, divination was practicable by any informed mortal who recognised an omen as such. In Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus' father imparts to him a working knowledge of omen-divination, so that he would not be entirely dependent on potentially deceitful *manteis*, or at a complete loss if he should ever find himself without one (1.6.2). Xenophon himself

¹⁵ X. *Hipp.* 9.9; *Cyr.* 1.6.46. Xenophon's Socrates warns against putting to the oracle questions that can be ascertained by mortal means (*Mem.* 1.1.9; cf. *Mem.* 1.4.18: περὶ τῶν ἀδῆλων ἀνθρώποις); cf. Oenomaus *apud* Eus. *PE* 5.28.2 (οὐ δίχα θεοῦ . . . εὐρίσκεται).

¹⁶ Flower (2008) 117: 'context informs interpretation'; cf. Trampedach (2008) 223.

3.1 Divination

learned much from observing professionals at work, and speaks once of a liver-omen so clearly unfavourable that any layman would have recognised that the gods objected to the proposed plan.¹⁷ As Flower writes: ‘Xenophon clearly believes that divination is a teachable craft, and that any intelligent person can learn it.’¹⁸ We need not be surprised, then, that, when asked to define the art of divination, the sophist, and probably diviner, Antiphon replied: ‘the conjecture of an intelligent person’.¹⁹

Polydamas infers from an eagle flying on the left, and carrying a snake which it fails to deliver to its nest, that the Trojans shall likewise make some military advances but fail to finish the task. Though not a diviner, he avers that he interpreted as a diviner would have (ὤδέ χ’ ὑποκρίναιτο θεοπρόπος, *Il.* 12.211–29).²⁰ In lieu of a *mantis*, Helen similarly volunteers her own augury (μαντεύσομαι), premising that the right-hand position of the eagle calls for a favourable interpretation (*Od.* 15.160–78). Perhaps less surprisingly, we find lay practitioners also in the interpretation of oracles. Themistocles argues correctly against the expert chresmologues’ exegesis of the Wooden Walls oracle that, had Apollo indicated a coming defeat at Salamis, he would not have styled the island ‘divine’ (*Hdt.* 7.142.3–143.1).²¹ Lysander similarly accuses the chresmologue Diopieithes of misinterpreting an oracle (οὐκ ὀρθῶς . . . ὑπολαμβάνειν, *Plutarch, Lys.* 22.5–6), and argues for an alternative reading.²² Such passages presuppose the distinction between experienced professionals, well-versed in oracle exegesis or the semiotic principles underlying mantic interpretation, and typically less able lay practitioners.

¹⁷ *Anab.* 5.6.29; 6.1.31; cf. 6.4.15. The lay Aegisthus recognises an unfavourable liver sign at *Eur. El.* 826–32.

¹⁸ Flower (2008) 129.

¹⁹ ἀνθρώπου φρονίμου εἰκασμός, DK87 A9; cf. Pendrick (2002) 243. For Antiphon as a diviner and dream-interpreter, see e.g. *Cic. Div.* 2.70.144; *Diog. Oen. fr.* 24 Smith, with Pendrick (2002) 49–53; Flower (2008) 125–6; but see contra Gagarin (2002) 99–101; cf. Woodruff (2004) 330–1. The seer Ophioneus practised a method of divination which emphasised learning all the facts relevant to each case (*Paus.* 4.10.6).

²⁰ *Il.* 13.730–733 notwithstanding, see Flower (2008) 120, n.30 against Dillery (2005) 172–3.

²¹ See Dillery (2005) 210–12; Johnston (2005a) 17; Harrison (2006) 140.

²² *X. Hell.* 3.3.3; *Plut. Lys.* 22.5–6; *Ages.* 3.3–5.

In stressing mortal agency, I do not claim that divination always or even usually involved the picturesque exegetical reasoning instantiated by Calchas, Helen and Polydamas.²³ Indeed, Homeric divination is not *invariably* inferential.²⁴ Nor do I follow those scholars who exclude entirely the elusive notion of inspiration from Greek omen-divination or the extent to which the gods may not only disclose omens but also somehow guide certain favoured individuals in the act of interpreting them.²⁵ We should neither ignore Plato's and Cicero's influential dichotomy between uninspired technical divination (e.g. augury, extispicy) and inspired natural divination (dreams, ecstasy) nor mistake it for a straightforward exposition of the general view.²⁶ To contract work in omen-divination, Deiphonus claimed to be the son of Euenius of Apollonia, who 'acquired instantaneously an innate capacity for divination' (ἐμφυτον αὐτικά μαντικήν εἶχε, Herodotus, 9.92–4). Quite generally, the continual prominence of certain mantic families going back to a (mythical) eponymous ancestor who acquired his mantic capacities as a divine gift or by other supernatural means, and the widespread practice among itinerant diviners of advertising themselves by claiming descent from those families, suggest the notion that, through divine favour, some mortals are more capable mantic interpreters.²⁷ Compared with ecstatic possession, the decoding of divine communication primarily on the basis of observed semiotic principles is less reliant on the notion of inspiration, but does not exclude it.²⁸

²³ Though note Plutarch, who, citing Theopompus (fourth century), records five such examples preceding a single confrontation (*Dion.* 24; cf. *Timol.* 8).

²⁴ At *Il.* 7.44–53, the seer Helenus (cf. *Il.* 6.76) somehow 'overhears' divine deliberations; cf. the seer Theoclymenus' vision at *Od.* 20.351–62. Both events are otherwise unparalleled in Homer. Theoclymenus augurs standardly at *Od.* 15.525–34.

²⁵ Bremmer (2008) 150 styles Greek seers 'technicians'.

²⁶ Pl. *Phdr.* 244b6–d5; Cic. *Div.* 1.6.11. Plato's terminology, dictated by his particular agenda, is certainly idiosyncratic: he restricts *mantikē* to 'natural' divination. Olympiodorus expounds the Platonic classification, indicating that it was not readily recognisable (διπλή ἐστὶν ἡ μαντική παρὰ Πλάτωνι, in *Alc.* 69.21–70.4). Cicero too presents the classification as a position undertaken by *some* theorists of divination (*qui duo genera diuinationum esse dixerunt*, 1.18.34), perhaps thinking especially of the *Phaedrus*. For Cicero's interest in the *Phaedrus*, see Yunis (2011) 27.

²⁷ On mantic families, see Flower (2008) 37–50, 130; Dillery (2005) 174, 192; Burkert (1992) 43–6; Bremmer (2008) 134.

²⁸ I broadly agree with the qualified reactions to the Platonic-Ciceronian classification in Dillery (2005) 171–2 and Flower (2008) 26, 84–90. Manetti (1993) 22 adopts the classification wholesale.

3.1 Divination

Exegetical reasoning, however, reflects a broader point. Far from an infallible transmission of truths to passively recipient mortals, our sources, as early as Homer, often present divination as involving or even requiring the application of human interpretative judgement and reasoning to encoded evidence communicated by the gods.²⁹ The gods do not restrict their communications to a few chosen individuals. Both mantic reasoning and auxiliary inspiration, working in tandem, could extend to any lay mortal sufficiently informed of the basic semiotic principles. Helen introduces the argument for her augury as an inspired conjecture: ‘I will divine, as the immortals cast it in my heart and as I think it will come to pass’ (μαντεύσομαι, ὡς ἐνὶ θυμῷ | ἄθάνατοὶ βάλλουσι καὶ ὡς τελέεσθαι οἶω, *Od.* 15.172–3). She reasons about the omen as the gods inspire her to reason. Like any discipline such as poetry, medicine or masonry (listed alongside divination as ‘public-crafts’ at *Od.* 17.383–4), divination could be performed badly or by amateurs. The very fact that texts from Homer to Sophocles are anxious to represent dismissals of particular instances of divinations (rather than of divination as such) as impious and deleterious demonstrates that such dismissals were hardly inconceivable *within* the divinatory belief system.³⁰

Cicero’s character Quintus rightly replies to the objection that mantic predictions do not invariably come true that the same can be said of any conjectural discipline (*Div.* 1.14.24), reflecting Odysseus’ construal of Calchas’ divinations as conjectural. Although he speaks of ‘technical’ omen-divination, Quintus’ insight can be extended also to the reception of oracles through fallible, interpretative reasoning, a principle analysed by Plato (*Tim.* 72a1ff) and dramatised by Euripides (*Ion* 532ff). Greek tradition abounds with the didactic tragedies of consultants who mistook oracular responses for self-evident, self-sufficient answers, assuming naively an unreflective reading. Most famously, Herodotus relates how the Lydian king, Croesus, was told by Delphic Apollo that if he marched he would destroy a great

²⁹ See along similar lines Vernant (1991b) 308; Harrison (2000) 245; Flower (2008) 13–14; Hollmann (2011) 111, n.145; Kindt (2015) 40.

³⁰ E.g. *Od.* 2.178–80; *Od.* 20.351ff (ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἡδὺ γέλασσαν, 358); see further Griffith (1993) 101; Flower (2008) 17, 119–22.

kingdom and mistakenly inferred that he would destroy the Persians' kingdom rather than his own (I.53). Tisamenus of Elis began his illustrious mantic career by *misinterpreting* a Delphic oracle that he would 'win the five greatest contests' as referring to athletic competitions (ἀμαρτῶν τοῦ χρηστηρίου); the Spartans correctly interpreted 'contests of war' and employed his services (Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ μαθόντες, Hdt. 9.33).³¹ As Robert Parker observes, the Wooden Walls oracle reshaped rather than resolved public debate: 'discussion resumed, though in appearance at a different level: no longer a problem of tactics or politics, but of philology.'³² The integral and fallible role of mortal interpretation in the derivation of beliefs from oracles informs Heraclitus' assertion that 'the lord whose oracle is the one in Delphi neither says nor conceals but gives a sign' (DK22 B93). The god does not articulate the answers to our queries, but provides a starting point from which we can work towards answers.³³ *Mutatis mutandis*, Heraclitus' insight can be generalised to all forms of divination.³⁴

Self-representations and representations of the diviner as knowledgeable probably derive from the supposition that the omen itself encodes a divinely held and thus a true proposition, coupled with avowed professional confidence or confidence in the profession. A diviner certain of the correctness of his analysis of an omen or oracle, and also perhaps of divine favour or inspiration, will be certain of the truth of the derived proposition. The phenomenon of favoured mantic individuals and families illustrates the association between epistemic and a more general approximation to the divine. The epistemic superiority of Teiresias (traditionally the father of Manto, mother of Mopsus) extended to a uniquely substantial survival in the afterlife. Sophocles' chorus,

³¹ For other such Delphic traditions in Herodotus, see I.55 (with I.91); I.165–7; 4.163–4; 5.43–5; 6.76–80; see further Kindt (2006); Barker (2006); Maurizio (2013) 111–13; Tor (2016).

³² Parker (2000) 80. Fontenrose (1978) portrays the *historical* Delphic oracle as essentially a Yes/No answering service (see 233–5). Parker (2000) 80 n.14–15 counters effectively. Cultural representations of divination are anyway at least as (if not more) pertinent for our investigation.

³³ See further Tor (2016).

³⁴ Even lot and dice divination, see *Div.* I.18.34; Graf (2005) 62. Cf. dream-interpretation (ὄνειροπόλον, *Il.* I.63), practised amateurly (*Od.* 19.535ff), and fallibly (Hdt. I.209–10); see also *Od.* 19.559ff; Aesch. *Pr.* 485–6.

3.1 Divination

when styling Teiresias the only mortal in possession of truth, describes the diviner as himself divine (τὸν θεῖον . . . μάντιν, *OT* 298). The mythical diviner Amphiaraus of the Melampodidae later became a god and was worshipped as such throughout Greece (Paus. 1.34.4). Eperastus, a historical *mantis* of the Melampodidae, described his clan in an inscription as ‘equal to the divine’ (ἰσοθέων, Paus. 6.17.6). The Homeric lineage of Theoclymenus illustrates the point. Mantios sired Cleitus and Polyphoides. Dawn snatched away the former to live among the immortals (ἴν’ ἀθανάτοισι μετείη, *Od.* 15.251), while Apollo made the latter, Theoclymenus’ father, far the best *mantis* (*Od.* 15.252–3).³⁵ Like Teiresias, Theoclymenus’ father and paternal uncle combine to express the affinity between the seer’s transcendence of mortal epistemic limitations and a more general transcendence.

Cicero’s formal definition of *divination* as foreknowledge of future events (*Div.* 1.1.1; cf. 1.5.9) betrays the narrow focus of certain Hellenistic debates. But Cicero at once reveals the broader significance of the term when he describes divination as ‘a thing . . . by which human nature can most nearly approach the power of the gods’ (*res . . . quaque proxime ad deorum vim natura mortalis possit accedere*, 1.1.1).³⁶

There is no question that Xenophanes expresses a contrast between divine epistemic superiority and mortal epistemic limitations, and he clearly conceives of the latter by reference to the former. In B34 (quoted and translated in Chapter 3.3), he almost certainly identifies mortal epistemic limitations by an implicit contrast with the divine, as suggested by the specification that we mortals cannot have knowledge ‘about gods’, and as the ancient and modern readers of the fragment agree.³⁷ Xenophanes’ views on the cognitive dissimilarity between mortal and divine (B23) coexist

³⁵ On Theoclymenus’ lineage, see Dillery (2005) 173–4; Flower (2008) 42.

³⁶ Cf. Quintus: *interpretes . . . proxime ad eorum, quos interpretantur, divinationem uidentur accedere* (1.18.34).

³⁷ So Varro and Arius Didymus: *hominis est enim haec opinari, dei scire* (*apud* Aug. *Civ. Dei* 7.17); ὡς ἄρα θεὸς μὲν οἶδε τὴν ἀλήθειαν (*apud* Stob. 2.1.17 = A24); cf. Fränkel (1974) 128; Leshner (1992) 164; Barnes (1982) 139. Alcmaeon opened his treatise with a contrast between divine knowledge and human conjecture concerning (at least) non-evident matters (σαφήνειαν μὲν θεοὶ ἔχοντι, ὡς δὲ ἀνθρώποις τεκμαίρεσθαι, DK24 B1).

with the notion that the latter is cognitively superior to the former.³⁸ In the remainder of this chapter, I will evaluate Xenophanes' reactions to the other facets of divination – (ii)^a, (ii)^b and (iii)³⁹ – which we analysed here.

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

Xenophanes writes (B18):

οὔτοι ἄπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖσ' ὑπέδειξαν,
ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον.

*Indeed gods did not from the beginning intimate⁴⁰ all things to mortals,
But as they search in time they discover better.*

The first line of this fragment negates a claim about divine disclosure. Most scholars take it that Xenophanes categorically rejects disclosure: at no point have the gods revealed anything to mortals. Call this the 'majority' interpretation. Others think that, through the expressions 'from the beginning' and 'all things', Xenophanes allows that at *some* times the gods did reveal *some* things (at least once something). This is the 'minority' interpretation. Scholars agree, then, that the negation in B18.1 displays two markers which *could* be seen to restrict an otherwise unrestricted remark about divine disclosure, one concerning the temporal dynamic of disclosure ('from the beginning') and another concerning the quantity of disclosure ('all things'). The majority interpreters insist that these qualifiers do not, in fact, restrict the remark about divine disclosure.⁴¹

³⁸ Cognitive superiority seems to be the focus of B24, see Drozdek (2004) 146; Granger (2013a) 248. B25 perhaps implies omniscience (god's mind engages with 'all things'); Simplicius cites the fragment to this effect (A31.9); cf. McCoy (1989) 237–8; Curd (2013a) 230. See also McCoy (1989) 236 and Barnes (1982) 139 on B18 and KRS (1983) 180 on B38.

³⁹ For the statements which correspond to these numerals, see the opening paragraph of this section.

⁴⁰ Adopting the rendering in Leshner (1992) *ad loc.* We will presently discuss ὑπέδειξαν in detail.

⁴¹ See the exposition in Leshner (1991) 230 of the positions that have been *and can be* taken. Majority interpreters: Gomperz (1906) 162; Kleingünther (1933) 41; Loenen (1956); Dodds (1973) 4; Leshner (1983; 1991; 1992; for further details, see Tor (2013a) 259 with n.41); McKirahan (1994) 68–9; Curd (2002) 129; Mogyoródi (2006) 126–7; Bryan (2012) 52–5; Granger (2013a) 262. Minority interpreters: Shorey (1911); Verdenius (1955); Barnes (1982) 140; Tulin (1993) 133–5; Robinson (2008) 489.

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

This set-up is misleading in failing to recognise that, in addition to those temporal and extensional qualifiers, Xenophanes also qualifies the *manner* in which, according to the view he rejects, the gods disclose things. The verb which Xenophanes uses – ‘intimate’ (*hypodeiknymi*) – is not a simple and bland term for disclosure. The *three* qualifications in B18.1, I will argue, do not restrict a rejection of divine disclosure as such. Rather, they combine to express a particular, traditional and theologically faulty notion of the nature of divine disclosure, which Xenophanes rejects. That is, I argue, the gods never disclosed anything *in the manner in which the view negated in B18.1 conceives of disclosure*. Contrary to the minority interpretation, then, Xenophanes does not allow that the gods did ‘intimate’ (*hypodeixan*) some things at some time. Contrary to the majority interpretation, he does not deny divine disclosure categorically. Rather, Xenophanes supplants the traditional understanding of disclosure with his own, alternative notion of it.

In epic poetry, the verb *deiknymi* (‘show’) can signify divine disclosure, but never with the prefix *hypo*.⁴² In archaic and classical Greek, *hypodeiknymi* only very rarely describes divine actions towards mortals. Xenophanes’ use of the verb to signify divine disclosure is, to my knowledge, unique in these periods. We should, therefore, heed the prefix in *hypodeixan*, which indicates disclosure in an indirect, cryptic and even underhand manner.⁴³ Xenophon (*Mem.* 4.3.13) says that the gods indirectly imply (*hypodeiknyousin*) a certain precept about proper worship (that mortals should honour them even though they cannot see them) through the discreet ways in which they quite generally benefit mortals without revealing themselves openly. Herodotus writes that god gives many mortals a glimpse (*hypodexas*) of blessedness, before ruining them utterly (1.32). The ‘showing’ in question here consists simply in the mortal’s happiness prior to

⁴² *Il.* 13.243–4; *Od.* 3.173–4; cf. *Op.* 448–51; Pind. fr. 131b M; also, Hdt. 1.209; 7.37 (προ-).

⁴³ On these connotations of the prefix, cf. Leshner (1991) 237, n.19; (1992) 153. Leshner himself, however, downplays the pointedness of Xenophanes’ terminology, listing purported parallels. But, other than *Mem.* 4.3.13 (addressed presently), none of the other texts listed contain the verb *hypodeiknymi*; see further Tor (2013a) 251–2 with n.12.

calamity. Neither passage uses the verb in reference to divine communication. Xenophon, however, supports the identification of a notion of indirectness in *hypedeixan*, while Herodotus demonstrates the sinister undertones of the verb and shows that it can be naturally used to convey suspicion or even criticism in descriptions of divine behaviour.⁴⁴ Though not invariably, such connotations, as well as those of cryptic secretiveness, often characterise the prefix and other occurrences of the compound.⁴⁵ More generally, both Herodotus and Xenophon use *hypodeiknymi* in a *pointed* way in their descriptions of divine behaviour. They do not use the verb as a mere synonym for *deiknymi*.

Crucially, his terminological novelty notwithstanding, Xenophanes does employ this exceptional vocabulary to signify a notion of divine disclosure. The issue at stake is how mortals come to discover what they discover. Xenophanes regards the kind of divine intimation that he rejects as *mutually exclusive* with his prescription of temporally protracted inquiries (B18.2). Whatever else, such inquiries clearly extend for Xenophanes to the business of forming and assessing beliefs. Thus, for example, Xenophanes' observations (whether first-hand or not) about marine fossils found inland support his novel theory of the earth's past submerision (A32–3). Correspondingly, B18.1 must articulate a notion of disclosure which, whatever else, purports to offer an instant access to truths, which conflicts with the call to search for them through such temporally protracted inquiries.

The negated view conceives of disclosure as an indirect, secretive and cryptic affair. Furthermore, in this manner the gods disclosed everything (*panta*) from the beginning (*ap' archês*). Given Xenophanes' qualification of the manner of disclosure (*hypedeixan*), the markers 'from the beginning' and 'all things' do not restrict a rejection of disclosure *simpliciter*, but further qualify the particular notion of indirect, cryptic disclosure, which

⁴⁴ Cf. 'feigning virtue', Thuc. 4.86.5.

⁴⁵ LSJ, sv. ὑπό, F, III; Smyth (1972), no.1698.4; cf. e.g. *Il.* 21.44. In a scholion on Lycophron (Σ 344 Scheer), φρυκτὸν ὑποδείξας signifies Sinon's secret disclosure of a signal to the Greeks (cf. Leshner (1992) 153). In literary criticism, *hypodeiknymi* came to signify that an inexplicit poetic text indirectly implies distinctions or insights (Plut. *Mor.* 23e1; 645a5) or even elaborate philosophical doctrines (e.g. ps.-Plut. *de Hom.* 2. 1063–74, 1298–308 Kindstrand).

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

Xenophanes rejects. That is, Xenophanes does not severally reject the isolated claims that the gods disclosed (i) from the beginning, (ii) everything and (iii) cryptically. Rather, the qualifications (i)–(iii) combine to express a unified view of how disclosure works, i.e. the view that from the beginning gods cryptically disclosed everything, which Xenophanes rejects.

What is the target of Xenophanes' attack? Leshner suggests that Xenophanes particularly targets omen-divination.⁴⁶ We need not restrict the notion of divine disclosure negated in B18.1 to omen-divination or even to divination generally. Yet, elsewhere too Xenophanes' theological criticisms confront pervasive and authoritative traditional suppositions (B10–14) and it is very likely that B18.1 conveys – among other things – a polemical attitude to divination, the most dominant form of divine disclosure.⁴⁷ Indeed, we saw that divination involves the signification of propositions indirectly through their encryption in diverse objects or events (or, for oracles, in enigmatic pronouncements). The verb 'intimate' (*hypedeixan*), signalling a cryptic, enigmatic signification, is therefore highly apposite as a critical representation of mantic communication.

Xenophanes' cosmology coheres with a polemic against divination in his remarks about divine disclosure in B18.1. In the epic tradition, Iris the messenger (*Il.* 15.158–9; *Th.* 780–1) is standardly represented as an omen sent by Zeus (*Il.* 11.27–8; *Il.* 17.547–8). Xenophanes' assertion, 'she whom they call Iris, this thing too is by nature a cloud' (B32), is thus plausibly read as a deflationary reduction of what is commonly regarded as a portentous deity to the fleeting phenomenon of exhalation.⁴⁸ In the light of this, similar reductions of a variety of atmospheric phenomena, several related to omen-divination, could also relate to a denial that such phenomena constitute encoded divine communications.⁴⁹ There are also our

⁴⁶ Leshner (1991) 237–40.

⁴⁷ Xenophanes' use of mantic terminology in his denial of knowledge-claims in B34 (see Ch. 3.3) fits with a preoccupation with divination in B18.1.

⁴⁸ Dodds (1951) 196, n.7; Leshner (1991) 241; (1992) 139–4.

⁴⁹ Clouds in the ordinary sense (A46, B30), lightning (A45), comets, shooting stars (A44), the moon (A43), the stars (A38), St. Elmo's fire ('also those whom some call the Dioskouroi are clouds', A39); See Leshner, *loc. cit.*; KRS (1983) 174; Hussey (1990) 24; Mourelatos (1989) 282–5; (2008b) 135–7, 149–50; Gregory (2013) 103–4.

express reports that Xenophanes rejected divination (A52), unless they themselves derive from B18.1.

The open-ended ‘all things’ (*panta*, B18.1) is also instructive. The force of ‘all things’ or ‘everything’ in Xenophanes is elsewhere context-sensitive. At different junctures, ‘*panta*’ may refer to all things (B27, if authentic) or all members of a subset of things (B29) which undergo natural processes, to everything (or perhaps every *sort* of thing) censured among mortals (B11.1⁵⁰) and to every item in a foregoing catalogue of public honours (B2.10).⁵¹ The gods’ disclosure of ‘everything’ to mortals could certainly encompass divinely inspired accounts of the world which are universal in scope, such as Hesiod’s *Theogony*.⁵² But the indirect, cryptic disclosure of ‘everything’, and especially the emphatic contrast with inquiries *over time*, again point also to a preoccupation with divination. For Xenophanes, mortals must conduct *protracted* inquiries in the hope only for gradual, hard-won advances. The notion of disclosure negated in B18.1 competes with Xenophanes’ call for such inquiries in B18.2 because, on this notion, gods made *everything instantly available* to humans, and so every object of human inquiry which was not already independently available to them.⁵³ ‘All things’ aptly conveys the essentially open-ended range of questions – encompassing any truth – concerning which, traditionally, the gods always communicated to mortals.

It is an important point here that the Greek phrase ‘*ap’ archês*’ signifies, not ‘(once) at the outset’, but ‘from the outset *onwards*’.⁵⁴ The symmetry of the contrast between this phrase

⁵⁰ Xenophanes’ catalogue of blameworthy actions is certainly not exhaustive; Leshner (1992) *ad loc* renders ‘all sorts of things’.

⁵¹ On *περὶ πάντων* in B34.2, see Ch. 3.3. ⁵² Koning (2010) 204.

⁵³ After all, even if the Greeks could often emphasise the effort and fallibility of interpretation involved in divination, it remains the case (i) that the response to one’s inquiries is attained promptly (certainly by contrast with the types of prolonged, even decades-long (cf. B8) inquiries which Xenophanes prescribes in B18.2) and (ii) that individual diviners readily advanced or were ascribed confident knowledge-claims on the basis of such swift disclosures (as we saw in the previous section and will see again in the next one). In B18, Xenophanes legitimately picks up on these aspects of received notions of disclosure.

⁵⁴ As Leshner (1991) 232–3 shows; see LSJ. sv. ἀρό II; cf. Hes. *Th.* 425; Hdt. 2.50, 104, 113; Gorg. B11a.29. Classen (1996) demonstrates that Homer and Hesiod consistently use ἀρχή, especially with the prepositions ἐξ or ἀρό, in this same sense.

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

and Xenophanes' assertion that mortals discover better by inquiring 'over time' (χρόνῳ, B18.2) suggests that (as widely assumed) the phrase 'from the beginning onwards' qualifies the verb, 'intimate': the gods did not always ('from the beginning') intimate everything to mortals (*ap' archês . . . hypedeixan*). Conceivably, though, we could instead – or also – take 'from the beginning' to qualify 'all things'. On this reading, B18.1 says that the gods did not intimate to mortals every truth about the world from its very beginnings onwards (*ap' archês panta*). Nonetheless, the entirely open-ended and universalising phrase 'everything from the beginning onwards' would still suggest that gods still now intimate to mortals everything, up to and including present-day and, indeed, future truths.

On either reading, the aorist tense of 'intimate' (*hypedeixan*) does not necessitate the strange view that, on some single, unique occasion, gods just *once* made a *one-off* revelation of everything to mortals, but then *ceased* making such revelations to mortals.⁵⁵ Rather, gods rendered and still render instantly available to mortals 'everything', including any truth that they wish to attain. The specification 'from the beginning onwards' most likely stresses that the gods *always* did so. Alternatively, it stresses that the scope of divine disclosure encompasses comprehensively any matter from the beginnings of cosmic history and onwards continually. Either way, the negated view, that gods intimated everything to mortals (B18.1), conflicts with Xenophanes' call for temporally protracted inquiries (B18.2) because, on this view, gods *still now* render instantly available to mortals any object of inquiry which is not independently instantly available to them.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Even if one did (implausibly, to my mind, and in a manner that would be difficult to square with the attested meaning of the phrase ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) maintain such a view of B18.1, this would require us only to modulate some details in my argument that, in this fragment, Xenophanes articulates and rejects a highly qualified and very particular conception of divine disclosure, which he supplants with his own alternative conception. The further point, that Xenophanes bore a critical attitude towards traditional, divinatory notions of divine disclosure, is, moreover, reflected independently also elsewhere in our evidence, as discussed in this section and the next one.

⁵⁶ We may usefully compare Xenophanes' use of the aorist in B38 (for the text, see Ch. 3.4). It would be implausible to read into this statement an elaborate and confusingly compressed deist thesis that, on some single, primordial occasion, god established mechanisms which now cause the generation of yellow honey without any further divine ministrations. The fragment much more naturally conveys the view that, for as

In the light of these considerations, we may perhaps best think about Xenophanes' use of the aorist in B18.1 (and B38) as having something of a gnomic flavour. The gnomic aorist (usually translated with a present tense) expresses a general truth, on the understanding that a past occurrence can stand in for a universal and recurrent pattern, as in the following examples: 'He who reveres the daughters of Zeus who issue their voice, him they benefit (ὠνησαν) greatly and hear (ἐκλυον) as he prays' (*Il.* 9.508–9); 'but the fool realises (ἔγνω) once he has suffered' (Hesiod, *Op.* 218), 'just as a noble horse, even if he is old, does not lose heart (θυμὸν οὐκ ἀπώλεσεν) amidst dangers ...' (Sophocles, *El.* 25–6).⁵⁷ We may similarly find a gnomic nuance in Xenophanes B38: 'Had it not been the case that god makes (ἔφυσε) yellow honey, they would say that figs are much sweeter.'⁵⁸ In B18.1, Xenophanes also puts in his sights a general claim (which is most likely emphasised to have obtained always: *ap' archês*): 'gods intimate everything to mortals'. He subjects this claim to a denial: 'it is not the case that ...' (οὔτοι). A close parallel to Xenophanes' language, which also suggests the aorist's gnomic potential, demonstrates that the claim which Xenophanes negates can naturally represent a general purported truth. A poet of the *Hymns* speaks of 'the race of semi-divine heroes whose deeds gods showed [or: show] to mortals' (θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ἔδειξαν, *h.Hom.* 31.19). The poet puts forward the general truth, that gods disclose the subject matter of heroic poetry to mortals, with an almost verbatim parallel to Xenophanes' phrase 'gods intimated [or: intimate] to mortals' (θεοὶ θνητοῖσ' ὑπέδειξαν, B18.1).

This close echo also reminds us, however, that we need not delimit the target of Xenophanes' criticism in B18.1 to mantic

long as there had been yellow honey, god caused the generation of yellow honey, and still now causes it. Confirmation of this (independently more plausible) interpretation is found in B25, which shows that god's intelligent and purposeful ministration of all things is an *on-going* affair (Ch. 3.4). In Hdt. 1.32, the aorist participle ὑποδέξας conveys that god gave a show of blessedness to doomed mortals, not simply once, but right up to destroying them.

⁵⁷ For the gnomic aorist, see further Smyth (1972) noo.1931–2; Goodwin (1889) noo. 154–9.

⁵⁸ Cf. n.56 above.

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

communication. The Homeric poet uses the usually mantic *deiknymai* to express a notion of poetic inspiration. Xenophanes, in employing the very same phrase, with the conspicuous addition of the prefix *hypo*, may thus be reacting critically also to the elusive notion of poetic inspiration, itself, as here and as we saw in Chapter 2.2, often closely associated with divination. We may conclude that, however wide a net Xenophanes casts in B18.1, the line's language, its opposition to the alternative of temporally protracted inquiries and Xenophanes' polemical cosmology and reported rejection of divination all indicate that his invective against a notion of divine disclosure here conveys a polemic against traditional, authoritative paradigms of disclosure, which prominently included mantic communication and poetic inspiration.⁵⁹

Let us take stock. Xenophanes is thinking in B18.1 of a particular manner of divine disclosure. The line evokes traditional paradigms of disclosure to which (as we shall see further in the next section) Xenophanes bore a polemical attitude. We may thus follow the majority interpretation to an extent. Xenophanes is unlikely to have allowed that the gods do disclose cryptically and indirectly (*hypedeixan*) some things at some points in their interaction with mortals, agreeing with the negated view about the manner of disclosure, while disagreeing only about its temporal and quantitative scope. Equally, however, the central insight of the minority interpretation has been vindicated. Xenophanes carefully formulates a highly qualified view and it is implausible to return to him the same view divested of those qualifications. Rather than following standard terminology (say, θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ἔδειξαν), Xenophanes instead chose a pointedly exceptional term for disclosure, which highlights the notions of indirect, cryptic and secretive communication. Furthermore, 'from the beginning' and 'all things' are indeed emphatic qualifications. Rejecting the view that gods disclosed everything from the beginning onwards in an indirect and cryptic manner, while a pointed critical representation

⁵⁹ Indeed, Xenophanes could conceivably also be implying that the gods did not instantly bestow whatever cultural and material prosperity we have (B18.1) and that we progress culturally and materially over time (B18.2). Leshner rejects these connotations plausibly but not conclusively, see Ch. 3.5.

of traditional conceptions of disclosure, would be a remarkably peculiar way of saying that the gods never and in no way disclosed anything to mortals. Fortunately, we have evidence, I believe, that Xenophanes did in fact formulate an alternative (B36):

ὄππ'όσα δὴ θνητοῖσι πεφήνασιν εἰσοράασθαι . . .⁶⁰

It is in fact difficult to determine whether we should translate the verb here transitively – ‘however many things they have disclosed for mortals to look upon’⁶¹ – or intransitively: ‘however many things have appeared for mortals to look upon’.⁶² I submit that, on either grammatical construal, these words convey the alternative notion of divine disclosure which B18.1 *independently* leads us to expect. Xenophanes’ critique there calls for an alternative, which is not tainted by the characteristics of the highly qualified notion of disclosure that he rejects. The account of mortal experiences in B36 fits the bill especially because (as we shall see momentarily) it precisely *inverts* the account rejected in B18.1. With this last consideration in mind, we would still plausibly maintain that

⁶⁰ Herodian cites B36 for its instantiation of a linguistic peculiarity: shortened penultimate syllables in -σι verbs (περὶ Διχρόνων 3.2 16.17–29; *de Pros. Cathol.* 3.1 535.28–35 Lentz). Although editions of Xenophanes do not reflect this fact, B36 is also cited by the much later Georgius Choeroboscus (*in Theod.* 4.2 88.27–33 Hilgard). Georgius’ examples and discussion of the same phenomenon are, however, clearly reliant on and closely echo Herodian’s (or an intermediary or common source). The slightly corrupted reading πεφήνασθ’ in Ms. O of Georgius leaves no question whatever that he too wrote πεφήνασιν. Mss. CV carry πεφύκασιν. The banalisation of πέφηνεν to πέφυκεν can be paralleled, see *Soph. El.* 646 and, possibly, *Eur. Phoen.* 916 (with Mastronarde (1994) 411–12). In this case, the banalisation was perhaps specifically occasioned. Georgius retains (but reorders chronologically) all of Herodian’s examples, *except Od.* 7.114: ἄμφι δὲ δένδρεα μακρὰ πεφύκασι. A scribe ultimately responsible for the CV reading and familiar with the original discussion in Herodian – or simply highly habituated to Homer (in whom πεφήνασιν never occurs) – may, then, have reintroduced πεφύκασι under the influence of the omitted Homeric line.

⁶¹ Similarly, Leshner (1992) 39; Barnes (1982) 140; Benitez and Tarrant (2015) 215.

⁶² Similarly, DK *ad loc.*; Burnet (1930) 121; Edmonds (1931) *ad loc.*; Guthrie (1962) 397. Although we would otherwise expect the second perfect of φαίνω to carry an intransitive sense, this is at least balanced by the consideration that such a reading of B36 would leave us with ὄππ'όσα as a neuter nominative taking a plural verb, a very peculiar usage of ὄππ(ι)όσα for which there is, to my knowledge, no parallel in extant archaic and classical Greek. A *TLG* search of all occurrences of ὄππ(ι)όσα in texts up to and including Aristotle indicates that the word is far more often used in the accusative (as in *Il.* 24.7; *Od.* 14.47) and, when nominative, *invariably* takes, as one would expect, a singular verb (e.g. *h.Hom.* 2.365; *Hes. fr.* 204.113 M-W). In B18.1, moreover, θηητοῖσ’ ὑπέδειξαν is transitive, which perhaps suggests a correspondingly transitive sense for the structurally parallel θνητοῖσι πεφήνασιν.

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

Xenophanes is referring implicitly to the agency which underlies mortal experiences even if we followed the intransitive translation. Herodotus (9.120) offers an instructive parallel.⁶³ We could read the statement about Protesilaus here intransitively – ‘Athenian stranger, do not fear this portent, for [sc. it] has not appeared to you (πέφηνε), but it is to me that Protesilaus of Elaeus signifies that . . .’ – or transitively: ‘. . . for Protesilaus of Elaeus has not shown [sc. it] to you (πέφηνε), but it is to me that he signifies that . . .’. On either construal, the passage would still demonstrate how naturally this terminology can signify that certain appearances (ὀππύσσα, B36; τὸ τέρας τοῦτο, Hdt. 9.120) have appeared to their recipients (θνητοῖσι, B36; ἐμοί, Hdt. 9.120) at the instigation of a divine power.

If we follow the transitive translation, then ‘gods’ is the only candidate for the missing subject. Who else could make things evident to ‘mortals’ (θεοὶ θνητοῖσ’, B18.1)?⁶⁴ We may further support the impression that this text expresses a notion of disclosure even on the intransitive translation by raising and addressing the following question: should we read B36 as a whole as the fragment of a statement made *in propria persona*? First, we have no reason not to take B36 in this way. The polytheistic language (on the transitive translation) is certainly no obstacle, since Xenophanes undeniably uses such language positively and, anyway, our evidence does not support ascriptions of a strict monotheism to him.⁶⁵ Second, and more importantly, we do have reason to read B36 positively, for, I argue, the positive account of mortal

⁶³ ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, μηδὲν φοβέο τὸ τέρας τοῦτο· οὐ γὰρ σοὶ πέφηνε, ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ σημαίνει ὁ ἐν Ἐλαιούνῃσι Πρωτεσίλαος ὅτι κτλ.

⁶⁴ Cf. Leshner (1992) 176–7.

⁶⁵ Monotheistic construals of B23 are highly improbable syntactically, see Stokes (1971) 76–8. I take no issue with the suggestion that Xenophanes’ theology is *incipiently* monotheistic insofar as it may imply a tendency towards reconceptualising the divine in the image of the ‘greatest god’ (B23–6, see Schofield (1997) 72–3). But – and this is the important point for us – Xenophanes uses both polytheistic and monotheistic language when speaking positively about the divine (esp. B1.24; cf. B34.2 and, more contentiously, B18, B11–12, B14–16, B23). This fact alone problematises ascriptions of full-fledged monotheism, and this is especially true of B23 itself: if Xenophanes wanted to convey strict monotheism there, then his simultaneous talk of ‘gods’ in the same line will have all but guaranteed that his point would be lost on an audience for whom strict monotheism was hardly already a familiar and easily identifiable concept. Xenophanes himself most probably remained vague on the numerical question. See further Tor (2013a) 258 n.36; Granger (2013a) 237–8.

experiences in B36 is a reversal of the view negated in the polemical B18.1. The verb which Xenophanes uses here (*phainô*) is a standard, bland term for divine disclosure and conveys none of the pointed undertones of the language of B18.1 (*hypedeixan*).⁶⁶ The denial that the gods intimated everything (*panta . . . thnêtoisi*) is fittingly balanced by a statement concerning the limited scope of what the gods *have* disclosed (*hopposa dê thnêtoisi*). Finally, if in B18.1 Xenophanes rejects the view that the gods have always already made instantly available any and all truths about the world (*ap' archês*), his talk in B36 of *however many* things the gods have disclosed allows that the current set of disclosed things may vary. We shall see the significance of this last point when we consider Xenophanes' engagement with the possibility that our available body of evidence may change and that counter-evidence to our beliefs may be discovered (Chapter 3.4).

In B18.1, Xenophanes rejects only a very particular notion of divine disclosure with carefully qualified characteristics. In B36, he articulates a reversal of this notion of disclosure. This latter fragment, then, most likely either implies (on the intransitive translation) or refers to (on the transitive translation) an alternative notion of disclosure, which is precisely innocent of the characteristics of the rejected one. The notion of disclosure advanced in B36 (*thnêtoisi pephênasin*) supplants the one rejected in B18.1 (*thnêtoisi hypedeixan*). These fragments illuminate one another. Xenophanes not only admitted divine influence over mortal inquiry but also explicitly represented that influence as a form of divine disclosure.⁶⁷ We must, then, employ more nuanced vocabulary. We cannot speak of Xenophanes' position on disclosure *simpliciter*. Rather, Xenophanes *replaces* what he takes to be the traditional view with his own, alternative conception.

⁶⁶ E.g. *Il.* 2.308, 318, 324, 353; *Il.* 4.381; *Od.* 3.173–4; *Od.* 21.413; cf. *Hdt.* 9.120 (πέφηνε).

⁶⁷ Scholars have disregarded B36 when discussing B18 and Xenophanes' views on divine disclosure. A stimulating exception: Barnes (1982) 140 observes, without further comment, that B18 is complemented by B36. The presumption that disclosure 'is not the sort of thing Xenophanes' god . . . does' (McKirahan (1994) 68–9) perhaps discouraged recognition that B36 may express an alternative, novel notion of disclosure. See further Tor (2013*a*) 259 with n.41 on Leshner (1983; 1991; 1992).

3.2 Against a Notion of Disclosure

B18.1 is not ‘a firmly negative comment . . . on the question of divine agency’.⁶⁸ It is a firm rejection of one particular conception of divine agency. It has been claimed that Xenophanes’ talk of inquiries (*zêtountes*, B18.2) ‘explicitly contrasts . . . with divine revelation’.⁶⁹ The false assumption that divine disclosure must conflict with mortal agency is instructively belied by the subsequent history of this very terminology of inquiry. The term *zêtêsis* and its cognates can express the instigation and facilitation of mortal inquiry through divination, sometimes signifying the consultation itself.⁷⁰ Indeed, the cognate reduplicated form of the verb (*dizêmai*) – the verb which Parmenides employs to describe his own philosophical inquiry (which involves divine disclosure prominently) – is a standard technical term in Delphic oracular responses, expressing the act of consulting Apollo.⁷¹ Since *zêtêsis* can signify both specifically philosophical inquiry and divination,⁷² it is not surprising that divine disclosure was sometimes thought to instigate and guide philosophical *zêtêsis*, as with Socrates’ inquiries following Apollo’s response to Chaerephon.⁷³

Finally, the later grammarians offer an insight which harmonises profoundly with our earliest testimonies to Greek conceptions of divine disclosure. An etymology of *mantis* popular among them traces it to *matô* or *mô*, a verb which, they explain, is synonymous with ‘to inquire’ (*zêtein*). For the diviner is inquisitive (*zêtêtikos*): he is ‘one who inquires into unseen and

⁶⁸ Leshner (1991) 233.

⁶⁹ Mogyoródi (2006) 126–7, 151; cf. Gomperz (1906) 162; Kleingünther (1933) 41; Dodds (1973) 4; McKirahan (1994) 68; Wardle (2006) 107; Bryan (2012) 53–4; Leshner (2013) 86–7. Shorey (1911) 89 observes that glosses of ζητοῦντες as ‘searching by themselves’ supply an αὐτοί Xenophanes never used.

⁷⁰ Note the chorus’ expectation at Soph. *OT* 277–9; cf. Aesch. *Pr.* 775–6; for omen-divination: Di. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.70.3; Plut. *Mor.* 340c7; Paus. 3.22.12; signifying consultations: Di. Sic. *Lib.* 17.51; Di. Hal. *Ars Rhet.* 9.7.49–50; *Ant. Rom.* 12.9.1; cf. the late *Oracula Tiburtina* 58 Alexander.

⁷¹ See Ch. 5.3, n.113.

⁷² E.g. Pl. *Phd.* 66d (philosophical inquiry, cf. *Lg.* 1.631a); *Phdr.* 244c (divination).

⁷³ Pl. *Apol.* 22a (ζητοῦντι κατὰ τὸν θεόν), 23b, 29c9–d4; cf. *Crat.* 406a; *Ti.* 47a. Socrates’ sign (μοι μαντική, *Apol.* 40a4–7; cf. X. *Mem.* 1.1.2–4; Pl. *Phdr.* 242c3–4) informs his argument at *Apol.* 40b3–c3; cf. X. *Apol.* 8. Plutarch (channelling Ammonius) traces philosophy to inquiry (τὸ ζητεῖν), inquiry to puzzlement, and puzzlement to Delphic Apollo (*Mor.* 385c); cf. Iambl. *apud Stob. Anth.* 2.2.5.11–16.

non-evident things’ (ὁ τὰ ἀφανῆ καὶ ἄδηλα ζητῶν).⁷⁴ Not for nothing, ancient doxographers employ identical vocabulary to describe the domains concerning which, according to Xenophanes, we cannot have knowledge: ‘of unseen things’ (τῶν ἀφανέων), ‘in non-evident matters’ (ἐν τοῖς ἀδήλοις).⁷⁵ Before addressing the role of divine disclosure in Xenophanes’ own inquiries into unseen and non-evident matters, we must first see how he arrives at the view, that we cannot have knowledge about such things, by criticising traditional notions of disclosure.

3.3 Setting the Limits

What will Xenophanean disclosure *not* be? Divine disclosure will not render ‘everything’ instantly available to mortals. It will not amount to mantic communication or poetic inspiration. Since, furthermore, Xenophanes maintains that, concerning certain matters, mortals cannot attain clear and certain knowledge, Xenophanean disclosure will not guarantee such knowledge (B34):

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφές οὐτὶς ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται	1
εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·	
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπῶν,	
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.	4

*And that which is clear and certain no man has seen nor will there be anyone
Who knows about gods and what I say about all things;
For even if, in the best case, someone succeeded in speaking what has been
fulfilled
Still he himself does not know; but belief is fashioned for all.*

‘That which is clear and certain’ (*to saphes*) indicates veracity, clarity and certitude.⁷⁶ Numerous, generically heterogeneous texts associate this terminology with the knowledge, pronouncements or, once, person of the *mantis*.⁷⁷ Xenophanes’ term for the object

⁷⁴ *Etymol. Mag.* 574.69–75 Gaisford; Geor. Choer. in *Theod.* 4.1 200.3–5 Hilgard; cf. Hesychius’ entry for ἐρέων: μαντευσόμενος. ἐρωτήσων. ζητήσων, sv. ε.5770 Latte; also Olymp. in *Alc.* 70.1. For μαντεύομαι as ‘hunt down’ or ‘trace out’, cf. Theoc. 21.45.

⁷⁵ Epiphanius and Sextus: below, n.83.

⁷⁶ See Leshner (1992) 156–7; Tor (2013b) 10 with n.23; S.E. *M* 7.50; cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1369–71.

⁷⁷ Leshner (1983) 31 cites *Il.* 12.228–9 (σάφα θυμῷ εἰδείη); *Od.* 1.202 (μάντις . . . οἰωνῶν σάφα εἰδώς) and 17.153 (οὐ σάφα οἶδεν, Theoclymenus contrasting his own divinatory

3.3 Setting the Limits

of true statements and beliefs, ‘*tetelesmenon*’, conveys the sense ‘what has come to completion’ or ‘fulfilment’ and has its provenance in Homeric divination.⁷⁸ Diviners inquire above all into the disposition and will of the gods (e.g. *h.Hom.* 3.131–2, 539a), the fruition of whose designs is standardly expressed as their arrival at their fulfilment (*telos*).⁷⁹ The same terminology is used formulaically for the formation and fulfilment of mantic predictions.⁸⁰ In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ‘what has been fulfilled’ is invariably associated with statements about future states-of-affairs.⁸¹ It can have the sense ‘what is *to be* fulfilled’.⁸² The formula ‘ah, stranger, would that this word of yours might be fulfilled (τετελεσμένον εἴη)’ expresses the desire to see a prediction come to pass. It is addressed twice to the seer Theoclymenus (*Od.* 15.536; *Od.* 17.163, where Theoclymenus just claimed sure, mantic knowledge (σάφα): 153–4) and once to Odysseus upon his ‘prediction’ of his own imminent arrival (*Od.* 19.309). In *Odyssey* 19.547, the eagle-Odysseus, undertaking the role of dream-diviner, employs the term when divining from Penelope’s dream of the slaughtered geese (ὄ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται). Xenophanes appropriates and employs this Homeric notion of ‘what has been fulfilled’ more broadly as the object of all unknowledgeable true statements and beliefs ‘about the gods and what I say about all things’.

This last phrase specifies the scope of the matters concerning which Xenophanes denies us knowledge. At this juncture, then, when formulating the essential limitations of mortal epistemology,

knowledge with Telemachus’ ignorance). See further Soph. *Philoc.* 1338; *OT* 285–6, 390 (of the diviner himself); Eur. *Hipp.* 346; *TrGF* 5.483; Hdt. 7.228; playfully at Pl. *Phdr.* 242c3–6; *Rep.* 7.523a8 (cf. also *Phd.* 69d4–6; *Ti.* 72b7–c1). The rejection of divinatory knowledge-claims ‘about gods’ in Eur. *TrGF* 5.795 is especially reminiscent of B34 (θάκοις μαντικοῖς ἐνήμενοι | σαφῶς διόμυσθ’ εἰδέναι τὰ δαιμόνων ... θεῶν ἐπίστασθαι πῆρι).

⁷⁸ As convincingly argued by Leshner (1983) 29–30; (1992) 158.

⁷⁹ Διὸς δ’ ἐτελείετο βουλή, *Il.* 1.5; cf. *Th.* 402–3; *Op.* 83; *h.Hom.* 4.10; *h.Hom.* 2.323.

⁸⁰ μαντεύσομαι ... ὡς τελέεσθαι ὄϊω (*Od.* 1.200–2; *Od.* 15.172–3); τὰ δὴ νῦν πάντα τελέϊται (*Il.* 2.330; *Od.* 2.176; *Od.* 5.302; *Od.* 13.178; cf. *Il.* 14.48; *Od.* 18.271); cf. Zeus’ portentous eagle (τελειότατον πετεηνῶν, *Il.* 8.247; *Il.* 24.315); note τετελεσμένον as divinely ‘appointed’, *h.Hom.* 4.572; cf. *Op.* 799.

⁸¹ The most common formula (14 occurrences) is ἐρέω, τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται (*vel sim.*), used especially for threats and promises, e.g. *Il.* 1.212; *Il.* 8.401; *Od.* 2.187; cf. *Il.* 9.310.

⁸² As in the formula τελέσαι δέ με θυμὸς ἄνωγεν, εἰ δύναμαι τελέσαι γε καὶ εἰ τετελεσμένον ἔστίην, *Il.* 14.195–6; *Il.* 18.426–7; *Od.* 5.89–90.

Xenophanes is concerned in particular with mortal statements about non-everyday, non-pedestrian, *non-experienced* matters.⁸³ The phrase ‘about gods’ reflects this emphasis in itself. Furthermore, ‘what I say about all things’ is unlikely to signify *all* of Xenophanes’ statements unqualifiedly, since, if ‘all things’ (πάντων) *includes* the gods, their separate mention becomes curious. The phrase thus more likely signifies cosmological universal generalisations⁸⁴ or, since ‘all things’ can refer to more than just cosmic processes (as we noted in Chapter 3.2), perhaps universal generalisations as such. Xenophanes’ insistence that no mortal has ‘seen’ the clear and certain truth, and that even the one who possesses true belief does not himself know (αὐτός), suggests a concern with the unavailability of personal experience and cognition. Our inability to speak knowledgeably about such matters is related to our inability, in these cases, to consider directly and fully the objects of our statements or the entire body of evidence which bears on them.⁸⁵

Mantic disclosure was a, if not *the*, culturally dominant paradigm of attaining knowledge concerning non-experienced matters⁸⁶ and, in particular, about matters involving the gods.⁸⁷ When he points out that even the hypothetical best-case-scenario of a true statement does not imply sure, personal knowledge, Xenophanes undermines what could seem the strongest case for

⁸³ Cf. Leshner (1991) 236; (2013) 85. Both Epiphanius and Sextus observe this emphasis: μάλιστα τῶν ἀφανέων (*Advers. Haeres.* 2.2.9 = *DG* 590); τό γε ἐν τοῖς ἀδήλοισι (*M* 7.51). Alcmaeon DK24 B1 and the Hippocratic *On Ancient Medicine* (1) emphasise in terms that recall B34 our inability to have knowledge concerning non-evident things; see Sassi (2013) 297–8; Tor (2013*b*) 5, n.11.

⁸⁴ Gomperz (1906) 164; Barnes (1982) 139; Leshner (1992) 167–8; Mogyoródi (2006) 132–3; cf. B29 and (if authentic) B27.

⁸⁵ It does not follow that ἴδεν, εἰδώς and οὐκ οἶδε are expressions of knowledge restricted specifically to *perceptual* cognition, see further Tor (2013*a*) 262 n.53. Since τὸ σαφές expresses not an instance of truth but a generic concept of ‘the truth’, it is difficult to minimise the non-sensory connotations of ἴδεν, see Leshner (1983) 37; Yonezawa (1989) 433; cf. Classen (1989) 100. We need not determine whether the elliptical οἶδε refers back to τὸ σαφές (alongside ἴδεν and εἰδώς) or, less likely, introduces a second-order clause, because knowing the truth about *x* and knowing that one spoke or believes truly about *x* imply each other, as Hussey (1990) 18, n.21 observes.

⁸⁶ Interestingly, when Anytus claims to know what sort of people sophists are despite having no experience of them (ἄπειρος αὐτῶν), Socrates jokingly identifies mantic means as the only possible explanation, *Pl. Men.* 92c4–7.

⁸⁷ As in Eur. *TrGF* 5.795, n.77 above.

3.3 Setting the Limits

mantic knowledge-claims, namely divination's purported track record (cf. Plato, *Euth.* 3c (περὶ τῶν θεῶν); Cicero, *Div.* I.13.23).⁸⁸ Xenophanes' criticism is further supported by the tension, inherent in the discourse of divination itself, between mantic knowledge-claims and the widespread recognition of the conjectural status of individual mantic statements (Chapter 3.1). Nonetheless, and despite Xenophanes' pointed adoption of mantic terminology in B34, here too poetic inspiration is likely also high on his agenda. Homer famously invokes Muses who *witnessed*, and are thus knowledgeable, to guide the narrative of the ignorant poet (*Il.* 2.485–6). Again, Hesiod's Muses facilitate his disquisition on seafaring precisely despite his own inexperience (*Op.* 660–2).

In B18, Xenophanes moves directly from rejecting traditional, optimistic and naive notions of disclosure (B18.1) to describing the actual epistemic predicament of mortals (B18.2). The two couplets constituting B34 display, I believe, the same structure. Xenophanes highlights matters external to mortal experience as those concerning which mortals lack knowledge, and employs mantic terminology for the objects of knowledge (*to saphes*) and true beliefs (*tetelesmenon*). These considerations (along with the parallel structure of B18) suggest that, in B34 too, Xenophanes progresses from denying a traditional and overly optimistic conception of disclosure (B34.1–2) to describing the actual predicament of mortals (B34.3–4). Xenophanes derives the essential epistemic limitations of mortals, their inability to attain knowledge concerning non-experienced matters, from his rejection of the notions of disclosure and mantic communication traditionally thought to facilitate such knowledge and to enable mortals to transcend such limitations.

The statement that no man will ever have knowledge about gods, etc. (B34.1–2) indicates a modal thesis regarding what is *possible* and *impossible* for mortals. Leshner (1983) himself recognises that

⁸⁸ Following Leshner (1983) 33. τὰ μάλιστα marks a hypothetical best-case-scenario whatever its syntax, see Leshner (1992) 158. τύχοι could suggest an element of chance (contra Yonezawa (1989) 433) but does not exclude volition pursued methodically (Fränkel (1974) 126). Cf. *h.Hom.* 4.566, describing a successful mantic consultation (αἶ κε τύχησι).

his interpretation of Xenophanes' scepticism leaves him with an apparently invalid inference: why should the argument that mortals cannot attain knowledge *through divine disclosure* merit the conclusion that they cannot attain it *simpliciter*? Lesher offers two explanations. First, diviners enjoyed the status of paradigm cases. Since the conditions of knowledge cannot be met in the most promising cases, they cannot be met. Second, though he denies divine disclosure categorically, Xenophanes retains the traditional premise that only through divine disclosure could mortals attain knowledge.⁸⁹ Xenophanes is, I think, unlikely to have continued to consider diviners the most promising candidates for knowledge after systematically exposing their divination as an empty illusion. Lesher's second explanation initially looks more promising. Here too, however, it is difficult to accept that Xenophanes uncritically and unreflectively took on the assumptions operative in divination concerning the conditions for the possibility of knowledge while disagreeing only about the possibility of fulfilling those conditions. Was Xenophanes unable to approach the question of knowledge except through a conceptual-theological framework of divine disclosure, which, according to Lesher, he himself repudiated categorically as fundamentally ill-conceived? These unpalatable ramifications stem from the oversimplifying assumption that Xenophanes discards disclosure altogether. Xenophanes, I submit, identifies what mortals can or cannot know through divine disclosure with what they can or cannot know *simpliciter* because he shares with those he criticises the fundamental premise that *the nature* of divine disclosure determines the manner in which, and certainty with which, mortals form propositions concerning non-experienced matters. Although he indeed arrives at his view of mortal limitations by rejecting traditional notions of disclosure, it is no accident that Xenophanes *positively* employs divinatory terminology (*to saphes, tetelesmenon*). The thrust of B34 is that, contrary to traditional theological beliefs, divine disclosure is not *such* as to make knowledge about non-experienced matters possible.

Disabused of the illusion that divine disclosure consists in the indirect intimation of everything from the beginning (B18.1), and

⁸⁹ Lesher (1983) 32–4.

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

is such as to bring sure and clear knowledge within mortal grasp (B34.1–2), we can now address the role of disclosure in the facilitation of mortal inquiry (B18.2) and the formation of conjectural beliefs (B34.3–4).

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

In itself, B36 only speaks of a set of things which mortals experience: ‘however many things they have disclosed [or: have appeared] for mortals to look upon’. In all likelihood, however, Xenophanes is interested in these objects of experience as objects which the gods disclosed *as evidence* and which mortals employed as such when forming beliefs and conjectures.⁹⁰ B18.1 rejects a misguided conception of disclosure and B18.2 advocates in its stead temporally protracted inquiries: ‘but searching in time they discover better’. Since, then, Xenophanes advances in B36 his own conception of disclosure as a reversal of and an alternative to the one rejected in B18.1, his conception of disclosure most probably relates to the inquiries advocated in B18.2 and, therefore, to the way in which mortals form judgements and beliefs through such inquiries.⁹¹ Xenophanes, furthermore, advances *some* notion of mortal-oriented divine action (*thnêtoisi pephênasin*, B36) to replace the one he rejects (*thnêtoisi hypedeixan*, B18.1). The echo between the two phrases suggests that, in Xenophanean disclosure, the gods still in some sense act *purposively* towards mortals. Xenophanes’ use of the final infinitive ‘to look upon’ (εἰσοράσθαι) corroborates this impression and goes some way towards sharpening the purpose in question. Standardly, such final infinitives, not only imply volition in the performance of the action signified by the finite verb, but also clarify the purpose for which that action was performed. Regularly, *x* does something to or for *y* so that *y* performs another action signified by the infinitive. Consider *Odyssey* 5.196–7: ‘the nymph laid out before

⁹⁰ Scholars often see in B36 a connection between perception and judgement-formation, e.g. Eisenstadt (1974) 149; Lesher (1992) 178–9.

⁹¹ Note, moreover, that φαίνω is a standard term for divine disclosure influencing mortal belief-formation; see the passages listed above, n.42.

him all kinds of nourishment to eat and drink (ἔσθειν καὶ πίνειν).⁹² As the nymph lays out food before her guest *in order that* he will eat and drink it, so too in B36 the gods show things or (if we translate intransitively) things appear (through divine agency) for mortals *to look upon*, i.e. *in order that* they will look upon them.

The final infinitive ‘to look upon’ thus also supports further the impression that Xenophanean disclosure concerns belief-formation. Elsewhere in the extant fragments, we find Xenophanes employing verbs of perception to express the import of the perception in question for the formation, retention or revision of a belief or judgement: ‘purple, red and greenish-yellow to behold’ (ἰδέσθαι, B32), concerning the nature of the rainbow as cloud; ‘the upper limit of the earth is seen (ὄραται) here at our feet’ (B28), concerning the finitude of the earth on this end; and, less literally, ‘he would be more glorious to look upon (προσορᾶν) for his townsmen’ (B2.6), concerning the perceived status of a victorious athlete. Retaining also the perceptual connotations of εἰσορᾶσθαι we may gloss B36 as ‘however many perceptible things the gods disclosed for mortals *to consider*’.

As a thinker who is preoccupied with our inability to consider directly all the evidence which bears on matters which exceed our experience, Xenophanes is naturally concerned with the ways in which our repertoire of experiences, so to speak, influences our formation of beliefs. B38 instructively reflects this concern and offers independent evidence for divine influence on mortal perceptual experience and belief-formation:

εἰ μὴ χλωρὸν ἔφουσε θεὸς μέλι, πολλὸν ἔφασκον
γλύσσονα σῦκα πέλεσθαι.

*If god had not made yellow honey, they would say
That figs are much sweeter.*

Xenophanes’ counter-factual thought-experiment shows that, if honey had not been part of the evidence available for us to consider, we would have judged differently concerning figs. In the first instance, B38 seems to caution that even some statements that

⁹² Cf. e.g. *Il.* 5.775–7; *Th.* 218–19; see further Smyth (1972) noo.2008–11.

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

concern what we experience (say, ‘honey is the sweetest food’ or ‘honey is very sweet’), and that appear to be grounded in a direct inspection of the entire relevant body of evidence and not to involve implications concerning what we cannot experience, do in fact involve such implications, and are therefore corrigible given the possibility of currently unknown counter-evidence.⁹³ Unless mortals can exclude the existence of unknown members of a class whose discovery would require a revision of current judgements concerning other members of that class (as, for example, the discovery of a substance sweeter than honey would require us to revise our current judgements concerning the relative sweetness of honey), those judgements can be asserted only conjecturally.⁹⁴ Many of our beliefs thus commit us to more than what is empirically guaranteed by our experience.⁹⁵ In this respect, B38 implies further, I think, an *a fortiori* argument: the same corrigibility would of course characterise statements about non-experienced matters, such as the statement that all growing things consist of earth and water (B29) on the basis of our observation of growing things within our experiential repertoire.

The central point for us is the following: to express a scenario in which yellow honey was never available to us as evidence, Xenophanes constructs a scenario in which *god* has never made yellow honey available to us as evidence. Xenophanes’ point is that if god had not enabled *us* to taste honey, we would have formed different beliefs concerning figs and concerning sweetness: his contention is not that we might have judged differently had god not made honey in such times and places that we could not *taste* it even if he had made it. Some scholars suggest that we can ignore the theological language of B38 and that ‘if god had not made yellow honey’ is merely a conventional way of saying ‘if honey had never existed’.⁹⁶ But they offer no parallels for this

⁹³ Some, not all: we can say with certainty that all the figs we have tasted thus far were less sweet than all the honey we have tasted. Still, B38 excludes the possibility that knowledge is secured for mortals concerning everything they perceive directly. Aëtius reports that Xenophanes traced the common but mistaken belief in the sun’s circular orbit to misleading perceptual appearances (A41a); cf. Guthrie (1962) 397–8.

⁹⁴ Cf. Mogyoródi (2006) 139.

⁹⁵ Following McCoy (1989) 237; Mogyoródi (2006) 138.

⁹⁶ Guthrie (1962) 376; Granger (2013a) 266; (2013b) 172, n.13; Curd (2013a) 231, n.32.

purportedly conventional way of speaking. The assertion that god caused the growth (ἔφουσε) of honey seems, on the contrary, rather distinctive. At any rate, our discussions of other reflections in Xenophanes (B18, B36, B34) indicate that we should take the theological language of this fragment seriously. In B38, Xenophanes is not simply observing that judgements are constrained by the available evidence. The fragment reflects a broader point concerning the relation between the range of experiences with which the divine presents us and the beliefs and conjectures we form on the basis of those experiences. Had god not facilitated for any mortal the particular experiences he did, or had he facilitated different experiences in addition, that mortal's judgements might have turned out otherwise. B38 and B36 thus illuminate one another. B38 demonstrates the same preoccupation as B36 with divine facilitation of mortal perceptual experience, but, unlike the truncated B36, explicitly connects this facilitation with the formation of judgement. Again, taken in isolation, B38 shows only the influence of divine action on mortal perceptual experience and so belief-formation. B36 demonstrates that Xenophanes could conceive of this sort of divine influence as, in some sense, purposive (θνητοῖσι πεφήνασι εἰσοράασθαι).

Any attempt to determine more precisely what *kind* of volition the gods display towards us would be necessarily speculative. I would like to outline two possible alternatives. On the first alternative, which I tentatively favour, Xenophanes radically reconceptualises the notion of divine disclosure as the notion that the gods have purposively enabled us to perceive and consider *everything* that we perceive and consider (call this 'universal disclosure'). On the second, only *some* of the things that we experience and consider have been brought to our attention and disclosed for our consideration by the gods ('particular disclosures'). In other words, when Xenophanes speaks of 'however many things' (ὅππόσα) have been disclosed to us, is he referring to the *totality* (universal disclosure) or only to a subset (particular disclosures) of the perceptual experiences of mortals?

Let me first clarify what I mean by 'universal disclosure'. Since, as mortal agents, we are essentially limited both spatially and temporally, the range of things we can perceive and consider is

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

also necessarily limited. Furthermore, it is on the basis of this limited range of things that we form beliefs and conjectures about any matter, whether internal or external to our experience. According to universal disclosure, the divine determines the scope and content of the experiences included within the necessarily limited experiential repertoire of any mortal agent, intending (among whatever other purposes it has, of course) to facilitate the general discursive engagement of mortals with their surroundings and so their formation of beliefs on the basis of their experiences (πεφήνασιν εισοράσθαι). B25 is pertinent here:

ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.

But without toil he shakes all things by the thought⁹⁷ of his mind.

Xenophanes' specification that his supreme god possesses the psychic organs 'thought' (*phrên*) and 'mind' (*noos*), and exerts his cosmic influence *through* them, strongly indicates a notion of intelligent and purposeful cosmic governance.⁹⁸ The verb *noein* signifies the cognition of a situation, analogous in its non-inferential operation to sense-perception, as with Xenophanes' god at B24: 'Whole he sees, whole he cognises (*noei*), whole he hears.'⁹⁹ Already in our earliest sources, however, *noein* designates further a volitional reaction to the situation cognised, wherefore both the verbal and substantive forms came to signify the activity or product of planning and, from similar volitional reactions to similar situations, the disposition and character of the cognising and planning agent.¹⁰⁰ The ever-observant mind of

⁹⁷ Or: 'by the volition'.

⁹⁸ Cf. Drozdek (2004) 147–8; von Fritz (1974) 33–4; Warden (1971) 10; Leshner (1992) 104, 107–9. I cannot see how the issue is influenced either way by Xenophanes' image of cosmic 'shaking', from which some scholars infer that divine influence falls short of intelligent direction, e.g. Hussey (1990) 27, n.44; Granger (2013a) 257, 266–7. Attempts to emend κραδαίνει are arbitrary and unnecessary, see Palmer (1998) 10–11 with n.17; cf. Leshner (1992) 107. The precise relation between god's *phrên* and *noos* is unclear. φρενὶ is most plausibly an instrumental-locative dative, signifying the psychic organ with and in which god's mind operates; see Darcus (1978) 26; Tor (2013a) 267 n.66. We could conceivably relate νόου also back to πόνοιο ('without toil of mind'), but the juxtaposition of the two psychic terms would still strongly encourage us to take νόου together with φρενὶ as well. There is certainly no scope for divorcing somehow god's *phrên* from his *noos*. Both terms convey the same connotations of intelligence, will and purpose. In B24, οὔλος δὲ νοεῖ encapsulates god's unified mental life quite generally.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Il.* 3.396ff; *Od.* 16.160.

¹⁰⁰ Plan: *Il.* 4.308–9; *Od.* 2.122; disposition: *Il.* 16.34–5; *Od.* 1.3; *Od.* 9.175–6.

Zeus (*Il.* 15.461) is frequently his will or plan.¹⁰¹ In this respect, Zeus' superior mind not only comprehends but also moulds and fashions the pattern of events, sometimes directly affecting or determining mortal actions.¹⁰² The *phrên* of Zeus can similarly signify his volition.¹⁰³ In a close parallel to B25, Aeschylus describes how god, remaining motionless (cf. B26), realises without toil his 'will' or 'purpose' (*phronêma*, *Supp.* 100–3). Most often, *phrên* is the location or instrument of cognition, emotion, deliberation and planning.¹⁰⁴

Xenophanes posits a perfect correspondence between god's intelligent volition and its effortless realisation in states of affairs. Notably, Zeus' Olympus-shaking nod to Thetis in the *Iliad* (1.528–30), an oft-cited parallel to B25, indicates his considered adoption of a course of action, which will now progress to its inexorable conclusion.¹⁰⁵ As we saw, the fruition of divine plans is standardly expressed as their arrival at their *telos*.¹⁰⁶ In the light of B25, Xenophanes' talk of the object of true statements as 'what has been fulfilled' (*tetelesmenon*, B34.3) stems from a theological world-view that construes states-of-affairs as the fulfilment of divine volition. Our evidence belies Leshner's (1983) assimilation of Xenophanes' implicit view to the explicit Epicurean one, that celestial events take place without the ministration of an immortal being.¹⁰⁷ His statement (1992) that Xenophanes' cosmology banishes the traditional gods 'to the explanatory sidelines' is misleading.¹⁰⁸ Xenophanes forgoes entirely rather than sidelines the traditional, anthropomorphic gods, but *his* conception of divinity retains cosmological explanatory prominence. Nor can

¹⁰¹ *Il.* 8.143; *Th.* 1002; *h.Hom.* 4.10.

¹⁰² *Il.* 15.242; *Il.* 16.103; *Od.* 24.164; cf. Pind. *P* 5.122–3. For these features of *noos* and its cognates, and for further parallels, see von Fritz (1974) esp. 23–4, 33; Warden (1971) 3–9; Darcus (1978) 26; (1994) 107–8, 119ff; (1995) 37, 44ff.

¹⁰³ *Il.* 10.45–6; *Il.* 12.173; *Il.* 15.194; of agents other than Zeus: *Soph. Ant.* 993 (φρενός); *OC* 1182 (φρενί); cf. von Fritz (1974) 34.

¹⁰⁴ Zeus' deliberation and planning: *Il.* 2.3; *Il.* 16.435; of other agents: *Il.* 5.671, *Il.* 10.4, *Il.* 16.83; *Il.* 21.19; *Od.* 11.146, 204, 474; *h.Hom.* 4.66; *h.Hom.* 3.257. See further Darcus (1978) 26; (1994) 109–11; (1995) 39.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Mogyoródi (2002) 283, n.140.

¹⁰⁶ Ch. 3.3. Note *Th.* 1002; *h.Hom.* 4.10 (μεγάλοιο Διὸς νόος ἐξετελείτο); *h.Hom.* 23.2; *h.Hom.* 2.323; *Thgn.* 142 (θεοὶ δὲ κατὰ σφέτερον πάντα τελοῦσι νόον).

¹⁰⁷ Leshner (1983) 28; cf. Barnes (1982) 96; Granger (2013a) 267.

¹⁰⁸ Leshner (1992) 137; also Classen (1989) 96.

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

I agree with Mogyoródi that Xenophanes maintains ‘a categorical distinction between nature and the divine’.¹⁰⁹ First, god’s dissimilarity cannot be categorical. For one thing, if god’s physical dissimilarity (οὐτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίος) meant that he *lacked* a physical body, by parity of reasoning he would also be left without a mind (οὐδὲ νόημα, B23.2).¹¹⁰ Second, whatever the spatial relation between god and the natural world (if Xenophanes ever addressed this question), B38 guarantees that god facilitates directly even minute processes occurring in that world, while B25 indicates that such facilitation is exercised intelligently, purposively and universally.

God’s ‘growing’ of honey (to render ἔφυσε, B38) is, then, one instance of the causal facilitation of such ‘growing’ in general. Furthermore, the class of things that ‘become and grow’ (ὄσα γίνοντ’ ἠδὲ φύονται) consist of earth and water (B29), and we mortals too ‘come into being from earth and water’ (ἐκγενόμεσθα, B33). Thus, the continual emergence and preservation of particular mortal lives are also themselves part of god’s intelligent cosmic governance of all things. In disclosing things for mortals to consider, the divine could display towards them the same sort of cosmic, intelligent volition which it displays in directing all natural processes, however large-scale or minute. Making possible and realising (i) the scope and content of any mortal’s experiential repertoire, (ii) mortals themselves as perceptive and cognitive agents and (iii) the discursive engagement of mortals with the world around them (εἰσοράασθαι, B36) would thus be part of the divine’s cosmic plan. On this interpretation, ‘however many things’ (ὅππόσα, B36) signifies the totality of mortal experiences. God’s making of honey represents a genuine *instance* of disclosure, while mortal belief-formation and conjectural reasoning are indeed informed and constrained by the evidence which the divine resolved to disclose (B38). Xenophanes, on the universal interpretation, discards the mantic idea that a *subset* of our experiences was occasioned by the divine to encourage the formation of particular judgements. Rather, he counters, *everything* we see,

¹⁰⁹ Mogyoródi (2002) 264; (2006) 144–5, 150.

¹¹⁰ Cleve (1965) 10; Broadie (1999) 211; cf. KRS (1983) 172; Leshner (1992) 94.

everything we experience has appeared to us (in part) for us to look upon and consider.

Importantly, it does *not* follow from this interpretation that the divine is especially concerned with mortals. B36 reflects rather that *Xenophanes* is especially concerned with this particular aspect of intelligent and purposeful divine actions, namely, the sense in which some of them purposively facilitate, among innumerable other things of course, mortal experience, perception and belief-formation (θηητοῖσι πεφήνασιν εἰσοράασθαι). By maintaining that the divine enables us to experience, and to engage with our experiences discursively, Xenophanes would of course not be suggesting that it runs the cosmos simply or especially so that mortals will have something to think about.¹¹¹

Also pertinent here is Xenophanes' statement that 'belief is fashioned (τέτυκται) for all' (B34.4^b). In Homer, the term 'fashioned' commonly signifies things fashioned for mortals by gods.¹¹² Indeed, it can indicate the lot of mortals (and also immortals) as determined by their place within a world order regulated by divine agency only through which things are (made to be) what they are. For example, Achilles must, *qua* mortal and as even Heracles did, accept his death whenever Zeus and the other immortals fulfil it (τέλεισαι), if such a lot is 'fashioned' for him (τέτυκται, *Il.* 18.115–21).¹¹³ 'From Zeus all things are fashioned' (Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται), an oft-cited Orphic slogan as old as the Derveni theogony, occurs in the context of hymns celebrating Zeus as the ruler and preserver of both cosmic events and specifically mortal existence.¹¹⁴ Universal disclosure specifies a meaningful sense in which the divine indeed *fashions* opinion or opining (*dokos*) to all.

According to the alternative, 'particular disclosures' interpretation, when Xenophanes speaks of 'however many things' have

¹¹¹ I thank Patricia Curd for pressing me to clarify this point.

¹¹² As Leshner (1992) 159 observes.

¹¹³ Cf. *Il.* 3.101; *h.Hom.* 5.29–32; *h.Hom.* 2.269; *Il.* 4.84 = *Il.* 19.224; *Il.* 14.246; *Il.* 21.191; Hes. *Op.* 744–5, 752. Cf. the foundation of our world-order by Zeus, Poseidon and Hades: *h.Hom.* 2.86 (ἐτύχθη).

¹¹⁴ *PDerv.* col.17.12 (cf. col.19.10); *Pl. Lg.* 4.715e8–716a1 with the scholiast; ps.-Ar. *Mu.* 401a25ff (ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων); Porph. *apud* Eus. *PE* 3.9.2 (μέγας ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων); for these passages, cf. Palmer (1998) 26–31 (not discussing B34.4). Classen (1989) 100 mentions the parallel.

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

been disclosed to us, he is referring only to a subset of our perceptual experiences. On this reading, the divine brings particular things to the consideration of some mortals (εἰσοράσθαι) in some circumstances. This will not mean that the gods communicate messages. Rather, they guide those mortals in their formation of inquisitive (ζητοῦντες, B18.2) beliefs, and perhaps also everyday ones.¹¹⁵ Xenophanes could have been concerned to insist that, given the essential spatio-temporal limitations of mortals, even if *some* conjectures are based on such disclosures, they cannot support knowledge-claims (B34). We should not exclude offhand the possibility that Xenophanean deities could show such concern for individual mortals. Xenophanes asks us to *pray* for the capacity to act justly (B1.13–16), possibly signalling that the divine may aid those whose prayers it heeds to do so. His criticisms of imputations of moral transgressions to the gods (B11–12) could imply that such predications constitute category errors, but could equally suggest rather an insistence on the moral goodness of the gods for whom we should always have regard (B1.24) and to whom we should pray for the capacity to act justly.¹¹⁶ The latter alternative is perhaps supported by Xenophanes' denunciations of some false theological views as *impious* and *unseemly*: it is not immediately intelligible why predications of attributes to categorically amoral and impersonal things should occasion this sense of religious offence.¹¹⁷ Again, Xenophanes reportedly observed that an oath is not an equal challenge for pious and impious men, plausibly because the latter do not fear divine retribution.¹¹⁸

Nonetheless, Xenophanes emphasises the radical cognitive dissimilarity of the greatest god (B23) and questions in general

¹¹⁵ God's making of honey in B38 would reflect a preoccupation with divine influence on mortal beliefs without necessarily constituting an *instance* of the disclosure spoken of in B36.

¹¹⁶ Category mistake: Mogyoródi (2002) 273–4; Reiche (1971) 97–8. Moral goodness: Heidel (1943) 258; Barnes (1982) 93–4; Granger (2013a) 241.

¹¹⁷ οὐδέ . . . ἐπιπρέπει (B26, with Leshner (1992) 112); ἀσεβοῦσιν (Ar. *Rhet.* 1399^b6–9 = A12); οὐ γὰρ ὄσιον (ps.-Plut. A32).

¹¹⁸ Ar. *Rhet.* 1377^a19 = A14. See the analysis of this report in Leshner (1992) 201, n.15. Particular disclosures would still be embedded within a broader system of intelligent and purposive cosmic governance through which things are generated and preserved (as discussed above). Xenophon interestingly reflects on providence on both the particular and universal levels, *Mem.* 1.4.2–18; 4.3.11–13.

the beliefs that gods are like us in their nature, conduct and appearance (B10–16). One could reasonably insist that, Xenophanes' talk of prayers for a moral disposition notwithstanding, the cognitive dissimilarity of divinity should involve a lack of particular awareness of, or concern for, particular mortal affairs, and that the sort of god Xenophanes is comfortable postulating is consequently a more removed being than particular disclosures require. When he affirms that it is not proper for god 'to travel to different places at different times' (μετέρχεσθαι, B26), Xenophanes uses a verb of motion which connotes direct divine interference in particular mortal affairs.¹¹⁹ Indeed, if Xenophanes held that gods disclose particular things to particular mortals in particular circumstances, it becomes more difficult to see what he found so objectionable about mantic communication in the first place.

Arguably, then, universal disclosure is the more probable interpretation of the notion of divine, mortal-oriented intentionality operative in Xenophanes' conception of divine disclosure.

Universal disclosure would, and particular disclosures could, influence the formation of mortal beliefs, not just concerning the natural world, but whenever a discursive engagement with observed experience plays a formative role. Xenophanes' critically digested experience of the fall of Colophon, for example, supports his contention that luxury is socially deleterious (B3). But this raises an interesting albeit irremediably speculative question: does Xenophanean disclosure influence the formation of beliefs about gods? Our evidence for Xenophanes' theological methodology is scarce. Some scholars ascribe to Xenophanes aprioristic theological reasoning and even deny that conjectures based on sense-experience play any part whatsoever.¹²⁰ Xenophanes comments that Ethiopians and Thracians fashion gods in their own divergent images (B16) and that, if horses, oxen or lions could draw, they would draw gods looking like horses, oxen or lions (B15). These

¹¹⁹ E.g. *Il.* 5.456, 461.

¹²⁰ Barnes (1982) 82–99; Mogyoródi (2002) 265; (2006) 145–6. For theological reasoning in Xenophanes, cf. also McKirahan (1994) 61–2; Warren (2007) 46, 54; Granger (2013a) 235–6. Others suggest divine inspiration (Cleve (1965) 28–30) or mystic intuition (Jaeger (1947) 49; Nietzsche (1974) 120–1).

3.4 Divine Disclosure and Mortal Inquiry

remarks arguably suggest suspicion towards naïve, uncritical derivations of beliefs about gods from our parochial experience of ourselves as other sentient beings. In B26, moreover, Xenophanes appears to draw inferences from some criterion of theological propriety: it is not ‘proper’ for god to travel (οὐδέ . . . ἐπιπρέπει). But we may wish to soften the assertion that theology proceeds without recourse to observed experience. First, positive cosmological propositions can constitute negative theological propositions. She whom they call Iris is in fact a cloud, ‘purple, red and greenish-yellow to behold’ (ἰδέσθαι, B32; cf. εἰσοράασθαι, B36; see also A38, A43).¹²¹ Again, Xenophanes’ use of an ethnographic insight concerning the divergent representations of the gods among the Ethiopians and Thracians (B16) shows that such empirical observations can inform his critique of anthropomorphism. Second, I see no Xenophanean reason to exclude the possibility that (purported) observed experience may positively influence our conjectures about unseen gods. For example, Xenophanes maintained that suns are generated and quenched anew each day (A33, A41). Such cosmic regularities can plausibly be taken to corroborate the belief that a divine intelligence directs those processes (B25).¹²² Finally, since many of Xenophanes’ theological propositions take the *via negativa* (emphasising what the gods are *not* like), the conceptual framework of his theology is intelligible only in reference to those attributes whose ascription to the gods he rejects. The gods, for example, do not wear clothing (B14) or commit adultery (B11–12). In this weak but important sense, observed experience is the basic condition of all discursive inquiry.¹²³

¹²¹ Broadie (1999) 209 argues similarly.

¹²² Aristotle writes that Xenophanes formed the view that ‘the One is the god’ (or that ‘the god is the One’) ‘having looked towards the whole heaven’ (εἰς τὸν ὅλον οὐρανὸν ἀποβλέψας, *Metaph.* A.5 986^b21–7 = A30). Although the view itself could hardly be Xenophanes’, Aristotle may be reflecting the fact that empirical observation played a role in his theology. Palmer (1998) 5–7 persuasively argues that ‘heaven’ signifies here, not what Xenophanes referred to when he stated that ‘the One is the god’, but what he considered before arriving at that view. Cf. Aristotle *apud* S.E. M 9.22, tracing the belief in divine cosmic regulation to observations of well-ordered celestial motions; see also Cic. *ND* 2.37.

¹²³ Gábor Betegh suggests to me yet another possible interpretation of the logic of B18.1, which would also take Xenophanes to reject traditional notions of divine disclosure and to supplant them with his own alternative notion of disclosure, as I have reconstructed it

3.5 A52 Revisited: A Clean Sweep?

What can we say, then, about Xenophanes' engagements with culturally and theologically dominant models of divine disclosure? As we saw in Chapter 3.1:

(ii)^a diviners form propositions concerning non-experienced states of affairs on the basis of experienced events or objects intentionally disclosed by a divinity for that purpose.

Diviners form fallible, conjectural beliefs by interpreting propositions that gods encode in a subset of the objects of mortal perception (omens, oracles). Not generally restricted to chosen individuals, mantic interpretation is open to any mortal informed of the fundamental semiotic or exegetical principles and capable of interpretative reasoning. Xenophanes rejected the view that the gods cryptically communicate any and every truth. He retained, however, the core principle that, by disclosing objects of experience to them, the divine purposefully enables mortals to reason out conjectures about states of affairs external to their experience, the world around them and their place within it. Xenophanes most probably reconceptualised disclosure as the purposive facilitation of mortal judgement through the facilitation of mortal experience as a whole ('universal disclosure'). If so, then divine disclosure

in Ch. 3.2–4. Perhaps with the prefix *hypo* in the exceptional and pointed term 'intimate' (*hypedeixan*) Xenophanes reflects his *own* notion of divine disclosure as opposed to traditional notions and not, as I argued in Ch. 3.2, *vice versa*. Might *hypedeixan* reflect the indirectness which arguably characterises divine disclosure on Xenophanes' own view? After all, for Xenophanes, as I reconstructed his position, the divine does not communicate truths to mortals, but, rather, purposively renders mortals able to form true beliefs about matters external to their experience by facilitating their discursive engagement with their surroundings. In B18.1, Xenophanes could be stipulating that not even in this indirect manner did the gods disclose to mortals *everything from the beginning*. This interpretation is equally and similarly non-identical with the 'minority' interpretation because it takes Xenophanes not simply to restrict the temporal and quantitative scope of divine disclosure but also to qualify the *manner* of disclosure (*hypedeixan*). Now, many of the observations in Ch. 3.2–4 concerning the language and rhetoric of B18.1, and concerning its apparent relation to other extant fragments and to certain prominent contemporary theological and epistemological attitudes, favour the particular analysis of the line's logic which I advanced above and according to which the term *hypedeixan*, in the context of B18.1, gestures towards traditional models of divine disclosure. This remains my preferred reading. But I can see nothing to exclude conclusively Betegh's ingenious alternative suggestion, which would amount to the same overall view of Xenophanes' epistemology and theology as the one I have defended in this chapter.

3.5 A Clean Sweep?

becomes the essential condition of all mortal belief-formation and inquiry. Less likely, the gods disclose to mortals a subset of the perceptual objects which they experience in order to guide the formation of particular beliefs in life and inquiry ('particular disclosures').

A case in point: on the basis of marine fossils found inland, Xenophanes conjectured that the earth was submerged in the distant past and will be again in the future (A32–3).¹²⁴ Herodotus shows that even here Xenophanes advances on what would fall naturally within the epistemic reach of mantic communication. Onomacritus, he writes, would have succeeded in falsely ascribing to the ancient Musaeus an oracle stating that the islands lying off Lemnos would disappear under the sea had he not been caught red-handed in the act of interpolation (7.6). Within the framework of his theology, Xenophanes' conjectures about the earth are in effect propositions about the content of divine volition, which will later be realised in states-of-affairs ('by the thought of his mind', B25; 'what has been fulfilled', B34). If in B36 Xenophanes was gesturing at the more familiar idea that the gods may guide certain mortal inquirers, then the discovery of marine fossils would be a prime candidate for an instance of such disclosure. More probably, however, it is in the sense that a purposive divine intelligence enabled and governed his existence as a perceptive and discursive agent, and determined the scope and content of his experiential repertoire, that Xenophanes would maintain that the fossils he observed, like the honey he tasted, were disclosed for his consideration by the gods.

Xenophanes does not endorse some modified form of the art of deciphering divine messages. Rather than messages, the gods disclose evidence. Xenophanes advances his conception of divine disclosure *against* the traditional one and we should not downplay the differences between the two. Although divination never marginalised mortal agency and reasoning, Xenophanes lays revolutionary emphasis on our role in expanding the available body of

¹²⁴ For a rigorous and sympathetic account of Xenophanes as a serious natural philosopher, see Mourelatos (2008*d*).

evidence by pursuing temporally protracted inquiries, rather than by decoding entrails or birds.

(ii)^b Since mortals can attain knowledge or insight concerning these non-experienced states only on the basis of omens, expert and able diviners are taken to transcend the epistemic limitations of all other mortals and to approximate the epistemic state of the gods in particular and momentary respects.

Like his opponents, Xenophanes takes it that the nature of divine disclosure determines the epistemic potential of mortals. But, whereas divination and poetic inspiration enable those individuals who experience them to transcend the limitations of other mortals, Xenophanes most probably rendered disclosure the fundamental condition of all mortal discursive activity (universal disclosure). On any interpretation, Xenophanes recognises that like any man (ἄνθρωπος), past or future, divine disclosure does not place him in a position to claim knowledge (B34).¹²⁵ B35 appears to offer us an insight into Xenophanes' reflections on his own epistemic predicament:

ταῦτα δεδόξασθαι μὲν εἰκότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι . . .

Let these things be believed as like the truths . . .

Since Plutarch (*Mor.* 746b) cites the fragment when exhorting a bashful companion to state his opinions outright, adding that Ammonius habitually cited it to the same effect, 'these things' (ταῦτα) is best read as referring to views which Xenophanes himself endorses as instances of belief (*dokos*, B34.4).¹²⁶ The subject matter of these views is presumably coextensive with the range of things about which mortals are restricted to opining ('about gods etc', B34.2).¹²⁷ The crux lies in assessing the further sense in which Xenophanes qualifies his endorsement of his views with the loaded phrase 'as like the truths' (εἰκότα τοῖς

¹²⁵ We certainly cannot take B34 to identify the limitations of every mortal, past or future (!), except Xenophanes, *pace* Snell (1953) 140–5; Cleve (1965) 27–30; Yonezawa (1989) 433; Wiesner (1997) 22; Drozdek (2004) 152; Gemelli Marciano (2002) 93–4. Xenophanes traces the epistemic limitations of mortals to their essential spatio-temporal limitations (Ch. 3.3). He indicates no exceptions to the principle that 'belief' is allotted to *all* (ἐπι πανσιν, B34.4); see further Leshner (1992) 167; Mogyoródi (2006) 150, n.88.

¹²⁶ Cf. Bryan (2012) 16–17.

¹²⁷ Barnes (1982) 140; Leshner (1992) 175; Bryan (2012) 17.

3.5 A Clean Sweep?

ἐτύμοισι). Most persuasively, Bryan argues that Xenophanes is endorsing his beliefs as apparently similar to truths, where this apparent similarity could mean that his beliefs *are* true,¹²⁸ but qualifies his endorsement with the warning that this similarity could also be specious.¹²⁹ After all, Xenophanes allows that mortal beliefs can be completely true (B34.3). In B35, then, he should accommodate the possibility that his views are true. Excluding this possibility, and determining in advance that his views can only ever merely resemble the truth but fall short of it, would be to imply equally unwarranted conviction about their truth-value as making a knowledge-claim. But Xenophanes offers a *qualified* endorsement. His views are an instance of corrigible belief. It was precisely its qualified nature that rendered the phrase so appealing for Ammonius as an encouragement to one's bashful interlocutors to do all a mortal can, that is, to recommend one's speculative views forthrightly as fallible candidates for truth.

Side-by-side with this epistemological self-awareness, however, Xenophanes is not bashful about contrasting himself favourably with his peers. Xenophanes questions beliefs which mortals hold quite generally: 'but the mortals (οἱ βροτοὶ) believe that gods are born etc' (B14). The definite article creates the impression that this belief is held universally among mortals, excepting Xenophanes himself.¹³⁰ Xenophanes decries how 'all (πάντες) have learned according to Homer' (B10), again suggesting his unique exclusion from a universal consensus. Quite generally, the Xenophanes who emerges from our sources is one urgently aware of the preferability of his own views to the deeply and disastrously misguided authorities, beliefs and values of his contemporaries. In the surviving evidence alone, his invectives cover anthropomorphism, divination, knowledge-claims, poetic myths ('the fabrications of older generations', B1.22), the social veneration of athletes (B2), luxury (B3), stinginess (B21) and metempsychosis (B7); his targets include

¹²⁸ Cf. *Il.* 3.170: Agamemnon looks like a king (ἔοικε).

¹²⁹ Cf. *Il.* 3.219: Odysseus looks like a fool (ἔοικώς). See further Bryan (2012) 6–57. For the translation 'truths', see Bryan (2012) 25–6. We could, *mutatis mutandis*, interpret similarly the programmatic thrust of B35 while glossing ἐτύμοισι as 'realities'. On the term *etymos*, see Ch. 2.1.

¹³⁰ Yonezawa (1989) 435–6; cf. also Aikin (2016) 173–4.

mortals quite generally (B14; cf. B16 on Ethiopians, Thracians and (implicitly) Greeks), Homer and Hesiod (B11–12), Olympic victors (B2), Colophonians (B3), Simonides (B21), Pythagoras (B7) and Epimenides (A1).¹³¹ Xenophanes is hardly coy about advertising his intellectual services and highlighting his subversive iconoclasm: ‘Our wisdom is better than the strength of men and horses; but these customs are quite arbitrary; nor is it just to prefer strength to this good wisdom’ (B2.11–14).

Xenophanes’ sense of superiority most probably derives at least in part from his revolutionary recognition of the epistemological limitations all mortals share and from a lifetime of inquiry informed by this recognition. Disabused of theological fantasies and informed of the pitfalls haunting mortal belief-formation, Xenophanes developed his cosmological, theological and socio-moral world view through a lifetime of intellectual inquiry to which he himself bears witness: ‘already there are seven and sixty years tossing about my thought throughout the land of Greece’ (B8). The *Odyssey* features prominently the idea that learning and wisdom are expanded through wandering. This idea became a central methodological tenet among proponents of Ionian ‘inquiry’ (*historiê*).¹³² Xenophanes’ principle ‘as they search in time they discover better’ (B18.2) is instantiated most dramatically by his observations of marine fossils found inland, which support his novel conjectures about the earth’s past and future submersions (A32–3) and, perhaps, the preferability of these conjectures to Anaximander’s theory of the earth’s desiccation (DK12 A27).¹³³ The critical expansion of our experiential repertoire may conclusively falsify a previously held belief (e.g. ‘figs are the sweetest substance’) or inconclusively justify the formation or retention of conjectures by assessing them against

¹³¹ We should possibly include also Bacchanals (B17) and Thales (D.L. 9.18.11 = A1), cf. Yonezawa (1989) 434–5; Gemelli Marciano (2002) 90–6.

¹³² Esp. *Od.* 1.1–4. Ionian inquiry: e.g. Hdt. 1.30 (... φιλοσοφῶν γῆν πολλήν); 4.76 (... γῆν πολλήν ... σοφίην πολλήν); Hecataeus is styled ‘a well-travelled man’ (άνηρ πολυπλανής, *BNJ* 1 T12a); cf. Democ. DK68 B299.6–8; B68; D.L. 1.43–4; see further Montiglio (2000) 88–90; (2005) 100–1, 123–46.

¹³³ For the contrast with Anaximander, cf. Mogyoródi (2006) 134, n.40; cf. KRS (1983) 177–8.

3.5 A Clean Sweep?

an ever-growing body of evidence.¹³⁴ Mortals who reason from divinely encoded messages which are not there, who acquiesce in delusions of poetic inspiration, or who form beliefs on the basis of their parochial experiential repertoire blithely and uncritically, are much more liable to go astray.

It is sometimes thought that, by saying that mortals discover better as they search in time, Xenophanes indicates (in part) an idea of gradual social and cultural progress. Leshner argues plausibly, though not conclusively, against this interpretation (he observes that Xenophanes is acutely aware of socially destructive practices, developments and authorities: B1–3; B10–12).¹³⁵ Be that as it may, Xenophanes does claim the skill (*sophiê*) to engender lawfulness (*eunomiê*) and economic prosperity in the city (B2), i.e. to effect socio-political improvement. This claim does not rest on one isolated branch of his teaching. Xenophanes' ethical reflections on Colophon's fall, for example, support his contention that luxury is socially deleterious (B3). In turn, his cosmological and theological world view exposes well-heeded authorities, from Homer and Hesiod to diviners and other self-styled religious experts, as charlatans who advocate often deleterious counsel backed by ill-conceived notions of divine disclosure. Xenophanes' critiques of poetic representations of divinities as creatures liable to stasis (B1.21–3) and lawlessness (B12) are one reflection of his encouragement of civic lawfulness.¹³⁶ Conceptions of the gods as human-like and, therefore, lawless are apt to engender lawlessness in the mortal sphere.¹³⁷ We are left with Xenophanes as a holistic reformer, who engenders civic lawfulness and prosperity by spreading a particular world view,

¹³⁴ Cf. Reiche (1971) 88; Darcus (1978) 39, n.58; Warren (2007) 53. Leshner's reading of *ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἀμεινον* as a better *method* of discovering (i.e. Ionian *historiê*: Leshner (1991) 244–6; (1992) 153) highlights a likely connotation, but it is implausible to exclude a corresponding notion of improved *results*.

¹³⁵ Leshner (1991) 231–7; (1992) 151–2; cf. Schäfer (1996) 124–7.

¹³⁶ Note B1.23: 'in these [sc. narratives] there is nothing beneficial (*χρηστόν*)'. See further Leshner (1992) 61; cf. Bowra (1953a) 10–11. Aristotle reports that Xenophanes criticised (unidentified) poetic narratives as neither true nor beneficial, *Poet.* 1460^b10–11, 1460^b35–1461^a1 (οὐτε βέλτιον οὕτω λέγειν οὐτ' ἀληθῆ).

¹³⁷ See Warren (2013) on Xenophanes' attitude to the ethical consequences of pious and impious beliefs about gods; cf. also Broadie (1999) 209–10; Mogyoródi (2002) 277–8; Hedrick (2007) 286; Aikin (2014) 7.

which spans theology, epistemology, cosmology and socio-moral reflection, and which locates the mortal as a moral and discursive agent within a divinely governed and disclosed world order.

The diviner transcends mortal epistemic limitations. Xenophanes' self-conscious intellectual superiority favours the conclusion that, for him, the gulf between mortal belief and divine knowledge is qualitatively unbridgeable but quantitatively fluid. Our conjectural beliefs about the world around us and our place within it are forever corrigible. Still, continual empirical inquiry, informed by a recognition of the true nature of divine disclosure, allows mortals to evaluate increasingly grounded conjectures against an ever-growing body of evidence. God is epistemically superior to us at least in part because he cognises all things directly and synoptically (B25, B34; cf. B24). Mortal inquiries, then, bring us ever closer (but never close) to divine knowledge. In Xenophanes' own prosaic example, the more sweet substances we experience, the closer our conjectures approach a true judgment which is informed by the direct cognition of all sweet substances.

Philo carelessly assimilates Xenophanes to Parmenides and Empedocles as mortals who claimed to be 'divine men' (*diuini uiri*). Rather, says Philo, by devoting their lives to the contemplation of nature and pious praise of the gods, these three philosophers attained the height of mortal excellence, but nothing higher (*optimi quidem uiri*, A26). Philo, I conclude, prescribes for Xenophanes the very conception of his intellectual superiority that Xenophanes himself in fact developed. Philo's false ascription to Xenophanes of a claim for divine status brings us to one last feature of divination:

(iii) Such epistemic approximation to the divine is associated with a more general approximation to the divine.

Xenophanes' insistence on an irreducible dissimilarity between mortal and divine (B23) implies a categorical rejection of ideas of deification and god-like men, as exemplified in Teiresias' substantial survival in the afterlife or the seer Theoclymenus' family-tree (Chapter 3.1). In all four versions of a floating anecdote, Xenophanes urges people who consult him about a question of

3.5 A Clean Sweep?

cult practice to decide whether they believe that a liminal figure (Leucothea, Osiris) is mortal or divine, and to regulate their ritual accordingly: they should either mourn for or sacrifice to this figure, but not both (A13). Whatever the historicity of this tradition, it reflects something of the thinker with whom it became associated. Xenophanes rejects the malleability which characterises the boundary between mortal and divine in Greek religious thought.¹³⁸

There is, I believe, some evidence that Xenophanes explicitly reacted to this phenomenon. Greek tradition accorded extraordinary longevity to Epimenides, an itinerant religious expert who, as a divine man, performed mantic services for cities.¹³⁹ Diogenes remarks that Xenophanes mentioned the rumour that Epimenides lived to be 154 years old (I.111 = B20). Elsewhere, Diogenes writes that Xenophanes criticised Epimenides, and then *immediately* proceeds to speak of Xenophanes' own, less fantastic longevity (καθάψασθαι δὲ καὶ Ἐπιμενίδου, μακροβιώτατός τε γέγονεν), citing the philosopher's own estimation of his age at 92 (9.18–19 = B8). The order of Diogenes' exposition suggests that Xenophanes' remark about Epimenides' reported longevity was incredulous, and, indeed, may indicate that Xenophanes presented his own careful estimation of his age ('if indeed I know how to speak truly concerning these things', B8.4) as a reaction against the hyperbolic traditions surrounding Epimenides. Empedocles speaks of a sage who can recall ten and twenty lifetimes (DK31 B129). Porphyry, citing the fragment, identifies the anonymous sage as Pythagoras (*VP* 30). Whether or not we accept this identification, it is plausible that Xenophanes' derision of Pythagorean metempsychosis (B7) reflects a critical reaction to the same conception of sagehood, which Empedocles later adopts and develops, and which associated wisdom with the ability to transcend the limits of a solitary, observed mortal life.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ See also Broadie (1999) 211; Warren (2013): 310–11.

¹³⁹ For the label ἀνὴρ θεῖος, see Pl. *Lg.* 1.642d5. Epimenides' purifications (ps.-Ar. *Ath.* 1; Plut. *Sol.* 12; D.L. 1.110) fall squarely within traditional mantic expertise, see Flower (2008) 27; Dillery (2005) 181–2; Burkert (1992) 42–3. Epimenides is ascribed prognostications (D.L. 1.114–15), verse oracles (Paul *Ep. Tit.* 1.12) and the label 'chresmologue' (Σ Luc. 25.6.1 Rabe).

¹⁴⁰ Later tradition has Epimenides too recall his many incarnations (D.L. 1.114). On Empedocles, see Ch. 6.2.

Xenophanes had excellent epistemological reasons to retain the basic and ubiquitous association of sagehood with longevity, as exemplified most iconically by the old and wise Nestor and as reflected in the formula ‘I was born earlier and I know more.’¹⁴¹ Xenophanes’ preoccupation with his longevity is reflected also in the ancient testimonia.¹⁴² Unsurprisingly, then, Xenophanes (a) comments on his own advanced old age (B8), (b) reflects on the physical weakness of old men (B9, B1.17–18) and (c) criticises the conventional preference of physical strength to his wisdom (B2.14). Most importantly, Xenophanes embeds his representation of himself as an itinerant sage in a calculation of his longevity, setting the number at 92, with 67 years of active inquiry. Both the relatively sober number (in comparison, at any rate, with the tradition about Epimenides to which he may be reacting), and Xenophanes’ careful qualification of his estimation (‘if indeed I know how to speak truly concerning these things’), are not emphasised *despite* his claims for sagehood. Rather, Xenophanes illustrates the disillusioned nature of his sagehood – a sagehood to which he lays claim not least on the basis of his disillusioned rethinking of divine disclosure and mortal epistemology.

As Lloyd has argued, the emergence of the *polis* was accompanied by an explosion of diverse ‘wise men’ figures in the seventh and sixth centuries, answering a growing need for ‘both what we should call political, and religious and intellectual, leadership’.¹⁴³ It is against this background that we should evaluate Xenophanes’ conception and representation of his own sagehood. The elegy which contained his satirical derision of Pythagorean metempsychosis began with the words: ‘Now I will come to yet another account, and I will show the way’ (νῦν αὖτ’ ἄλλον ἔπειμι λόγον, δεῖξω δὲ κέλευθον, Diogenes Laertius, 8.36 = B7). This magisterial and, indeed, divinatory programmatic statement may be parodying

¹⁴¹ πρότερος γενόμην καὶ πλείονα οἶδα (*vel sim.*), *Il.* 21.440; *Il.* 13.355; *Il.* 19.219; also, *Il.* 3.108–10; cf. Haubold (2010) 16, n.18.

¹⁴² In addition to Diogenes Laertius (9.18–19), Phalerum in his *On Old Age* and Panaetius both recorded a tradition that Xenophanes, like Anaxagoras, outlived his sons (*apud* D.L. 9.20.9). Ps.-Lucian, perhaps miscalculating B8, puts his death at 91 (A6), Censorinus at more than 100 (A7). Timon traces Xenophanes’ failure to achieve full-fledged scepticism to his senility (πρεσβυγενῆς ἔτ’ ἐών, A35).

¹⁴³ Lloyd (1979) 249; cf. Dillery (2005) 183.

3.5 A Clean Sweep?

the rhetoric of the thinkers and doctrines subsequently criticised.¹⁴⁴ But, however satirically, Xenophanes appropriates the authority of those claimants for sagehood whom he lampoons and with whom he must vie for the same social and intellectual territory.

The most familiar incarnation of divination for Xenophanes would undoubtedly have been those itinerant diviners, ‘migrant charismatic specialists’ as Burkert styles them, who travelled the Greek world from South Italy to Asia Minor.¹⁴⁵ Never simply relieving academic curiosity about the future, they invariably furnished counsel about any matter public and private.¹⁴⁶ Moving from city to city, providing an autonomous authority external to local civic institutions, they forever remained outsiders for the communities they counselled.¹⁴⁷ The influence of these practitioners, representing ‘the intellectual elite of the time’,¹⁴⁸ extended, as Plato later complained, from individual consultants to ‘entire households and cities’ (ὅλας οἰκίας καὶ πόλεις, *Lg.* 10.909b; *Rep.* 2.364e). As Dillery puts it, ‘[t]he independent religious expert . . . was always precisely that, independent . . . he seems always positioned outside the political structure of the state, essential to but also separate from the governance of the *polis*’.¹⁴⁹ Xenophanes spent a lifetime ‘tossing about’ his thoughts, counsels and authority (φροντίς) throughout Greece (B8). His journeys, he emphasises, take him ‘from city to city’ (B45) and his wisdom benefits the community of the *polis* as a whole (πόλις . . . πόλει . . . πόλιος, B2.19–22). Xenophanes was an itinerant sage counselling cities on anything from the use of perfume (B3) or wine (B5), to the nature of the gods and divine

¹⁴⁴ φράζεο δ' ἀνέρα μάντιν ὑφηγητήρα κελεύθου, *Anth. Graec.* 14.114.7 Beckby; for diviners or the divine showing the ‘way’ see also *Od.* 10.538–9; *Od.* 4.389–90; PW 218.5; PW 374.9; Ennius *apud* Cic. *Div.* 1.58.132; cf. also *Op.* 648; Parm. DK28 B2. 1–2; *Anth. Graec.* 9.80 Beckby; PW 380.3; PW 517.2; *Od.* 5.237–41.

¹⁴⁵ Burkert (1992) 42; Flower (2008) 29–37.

¹⁴⁶ Halliday (1913) 42; Parker (2000) 77; Flower (2008) 75–6. Greek terminology for divination exemplifies its purported usefulness: χράω, χρῆσις, χρῆμα (Emp. DK31 B115.1), χρηστήριος, χρήστης κτλ. Cf. X. *Mem.* 4.3.12 (τὰ συμφέροντα . . . ἢ ἂν ἄριστα γίγνοιτο); *h.Hom.* 3.287–93 (νημερτέα βουλήν . . . χρέων).

¹⁴⁷ Eumaeus includes the diviner (*mantis*) in a list of ‘public workers’ whom one would invite to one’s house though a complete stranger, *Od.* 17.382–5; cf. *Od.* 1.415–16; *Od.* 9.508–10; Aesch. *Ch.* 32. See further Dillery (2005) esp. 176–8, 223; Vernant (1991b) 305.

¹⁴⁸ Burkert (1992) 42. ¹⁴⁹ Dillery (2005) 184, 224–5; Flower (2008) 58–9.

disclosure, attempting to engender prosperity and lawfulness (B2.19–22).¹⁵⁰ Less immediate factors too made a social and intellectual confrontation with divination and its models of sagehood inevitable. The various types of divination practised in Greece were rather recent Eastern importations.¹⁵¹ Xenophanes was haunted by the fall of his Ionian city to ‘the Mede’ (B22), and associated it with the corrupting cultural influence of the East (B3 with Theopompus *apud* Athenaeus 12.526c). By appropriating and radically transforming the discourse of divination, Xenophanes instantiates a broad phenomenon in Greek interactions with Eastern paradigms, practices, crafts and ideas.¹⁵² Furthermore, Greek tradition, consistently and as early as the sixth century, located the archetypal mantic contest between Mopsus and Teiresias at Xenophanes’ native Colophon.¹⁵³ Indeed, local traditions considered Mopsus a founding figure.¹⁵⁴ We can only wonder whether and how Xenophanes treated these traditions in a poem about the founding of Colophon (Diogenes Laertius, 9.20 = A1). We may conclude, however, that the socio-political context of his philosophical activity all but constrained this subversive iconoclast to form his conception of mortal epistemology in general, and of his own sagehood in particular, in response to such divine men and their divination. Whatever else, Xenophanes’ response was not a clean sweep from the very foundation.

¹⁵⁰ Engendering lawfulness (*eunomiē*): later Greek tradition has Delphic Apollo impart this skill to Lycurgus, PW 216.

¹⁵¹ Burkert (1992) 41–87 (dating the ‘orientalising period’ to 750–650); Flower (2008) 24–5 (between the eighth and sixth centuries); cf. West (1997) 46–51.

¹⁵² Burkert (1992) *passim*; R. Osborne (1997) 11–16.

¹⁵³ See ps.-Proclus’ *argumentum* to the *Nostoi*, Chr. 277ff; cf. Hes. fr. 278 M-W (note Strabo: *de Colophone disserens*); Lycoph. 424–30 with Σ Lycoph. 424–7 Scheer (ἐπιζόντα περὶ τῆς μαντικῆς); Callisthenes (or Callinos) *apud* Strab. 14.4.3; Apollod. *Ep.* 6.2–4 (περὶ μαντικῆς ἥρισε); Σ Dion. Perieg. 850 Müller (μαντικῆ νικηθεῖς). The tradition and the evidence are discussed by Bremmer (2006) 140, with n.37.

¹⁵⁴ Paus. 7.3.2.