

ON HERACLITUS' ANTHROPOLOGY

By

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ABSTRACT: For Heraclitus, immortal life is possible if physical (fiery) integrity of the soul can be maintained during its life in the body. However, although he stated, "I investigated myself", investigating oneself was to Heraclitus only a means to the goal which is the knowledge of Logos. Self-knowledge has a positive character if man concentrates not on knowing himself but on investigating himself.

Heraclitus' anthropology is only infrequently discussed by historians of philosophy who usually concentrate on his ontology although "Heraclitus was the first to give serious thought to human soul and had a great deal to tell about it"¹. He is often considered to be a philosopher of change, thereby becoming an opposite pole to Eleatic philosophy, which is summarized in the saying attributed to him, "everything flows" (Simpl. *in Phys.* 1313, 11; all translations are mine). He is considered to continue Milesian philosophy since he claimed fire to be the *arche*. He was also considered an heir of Xenophanes because of his critique of religion, and finally, the precursor of the Stoics because of his discussion of Logos. But very seldom is his anthropology mentioned, although in the extant fragments his statements about philosophy of man are not at all the smallest in volume.

1. THE DELPHIC MAXIM

Heraclitus stated, "I investigated myself" (DK 22, B101). What is the meaning of investigating oneself if truth can be found in Logos? "Not after listening to me but to the Logos one does wisely in agreeing that everything is one" (B50)².

¹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931: vol. I, 375.

² Sometimes the essence of Heraclitus' philosophy is seen in the statement, "everything is one", Held 1980: 180; Hammer 1991: 41; Wesoły 1989: 37.