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Axiological Confusion and Its Causes
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Axiological Confusion and Its Causes.
Introduction

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Reading our daily news, many of us may experience a sense of bafflement. Bafflement that patent lies can become a matter of serious debate and fervent protestations; that so many of us are willing to forsake their health and sanity as followers of zany conspiracy theories. One might even wonder at the miraculous inertia of humankind as a whole in view of global danger and destruction. What is our problem?

Similar questions occupied the two great schools of Hellenistic 'dogmatic' philosophy, the Stoics and the Epicureans. Rejecting a psychological dualism according to which humans are driven off course by their innate irrationality, they had to explain why beings endowed with rationality could turn out so unable to look after themselves. Both Epicureans and Stoics regarded all relevant knowledge as evident by nature and as accessible to everyone. They posit innate or naturally acquired and uniform true preconceptions and a cognitive mechanism by which occurrent facts can be known with evident certainty, in particular facts concerning the well-being of a human agent. Why, then, would people not take what was best for them and make so many bad choices? Although gifted with such unfailing sensors for what is good and what not, almost all humans develop into beings incapable of discerning apparent from actual values reliably. Whence this axiological confusion?

The papers in this volume present answers to this conundrum from a range of perspectives that together combine an up-to-date overview of the *status quaestionis* with new proposals concerning the range of our sources, their interpretation - both literary and philosophical - and the historical contexts of the debate.

The first three papers unfold Epicurean accounts. DAVID KONSTAN discusses the cognitive processes that lead human reason to produce errors of which other animals are incapable. Adducing a new edition of fragments from Epicurus' *Peri phuseôs* and recent interpretations of Aristotle's conception of *phantasia* as both always based on sense perception and as motivating through pleasure, he suggests a new interpretation of the role of *phantasia* and the 'projection of *phantasia*' (*phantastikê epibolê*).

Contrary to the current consensus of scholars, he argues that according to Epicurus, too, *phantasiai* in the mind do not require direct new input but can also be «received from memory (or stored up images)». The process of *epibolê*, then, is not a directing of attentional focus but literally a projection of the *phantasia* the mind has received from its own memory back to the sensory organ for testing it against the patterns (*tupoi*) stored there from prior perceptions.

After this appraisal of Epicurean epistemology, Luciana Repici closes in on the key question of this volume, why people instructed with such reliable criteria guiding them to perfect happiness still would choose to be dissatisfied and insecure. In a manner well suited to Epicurean atomistic, that is, mechanistic physics, she frames the question as a problem of variation, why - given the same circumstances - one individual would prefer self-harm and another would not. She identifies and discusses two basic approaches: (i) accounting for voluntary choice by positing free volition and spontaneous atomic motion and (ii) identifying involuntary drivers of bad choice, such as bodily condition or emotional tension. Repici stresses the intensity of the debate both within and outside the schools and the importance of genres of communication, not least of all in form of maxims. The paper ends with a synopsis, «quasi una sorta di decalogo» (20), of solutions, which illustrates the close connection between theoretical analysis and practical advice, and thus the cognitive sophistication of Epicurean therapy.

Julie Giovacchini widens the scope to the political sphere. She provides a close reading of Hermarchus' fragmentary account of the formation of communities, which elucidates the brief remarks of his friend and teacher Epicurus on the topic available to us in the *Maxims.* The paper thus enhances our understanding of the function Epicureans saw for education and legislation as a remedy to axiological confusion on the social scale. While they hoped to guide and heal everyone with their insights, they also thought that not everyone was equally capable to receive the message. Accordingly, Giovacchini shows, there is a role for the legislator, different from that of an educator, to support those unable to understand what justice is and how it furthers their own interests. Laws serve to complement what is lacking in citizen's mental capacities, if need be, by force and deterrence.

With the rest of the contributions we follow the debate in and around the Stoic school from its beginnings to second-century Imperial Rome. The first of these is René Brouwer's magisterial overview of the Early Stoics' accounts of *diastrophē*, a theory of 'double perversion', which is that school's ontogenetic explanation for axiological confusion. At the same time, Brouwer contextualizes this theory within the contemporary debates about human nature and, most notably, the controversy between Stoics and Epicureans concerning the value of pleasure. It was against

Epicurean hedonism, Brouwer argues, that Stoics posited «persuasiveness of things» as one of the causes disturbing a healthy human development.

The next two contributions take us to the Roman era. CHRISTELLE VEILLARD, an expert on Middle Stoics, draws on insights from her recent edition of the fragments of Hecato (who lived around 100 BCE) to assess this philosopher's contribution to Cicero's *De officiis* and point out evidence for a new role for love, both of self and of other, and thus emotionality in Hecato's thought. A pioneer of casuistry, he seems to have focused on the question of how abstract principles can be lived in everyday contexts without crushing practical parameters under the weight of an absolute value, virtue. His solution, Veillard suggests, is mutual beneficence, loving cooperation to spread the good throughout the world.

Continuing his work on the sources for Posidonius' thought on the origin of human civilization, GIOVANNI ZAGO re-examines, emends and enriches our frustratingly short array of sources for Posidonius' views on *diastrophē*, by expertly connecting this ontogenetic question (treated in the field of ethics and theory of the emotions) with the philosopher's account of human phylogenesis and history. Zago claims that Posidonius explained the decline of humankind from an original Golden Age under the leadership of sages with the *diastrophē* of those sages' successors and the communities they ruled. Conversely, Zago argues, Posidonius seems to have thought it possible that Golden Ages could occur any time and anywhere, provided there is a leader of virtue in the full sense and a population at least capable to realize the goodness of their leader and thus willing to follow him. Envisaging such changes in both directions requires not only a theory of moral corruption but also a conviction that moral progress is real and, with it, virtue too, and this is exactly what Posidonius believed, according to Zago's reinterpretation of the relevant fragments and a hitherto overlooked testimony in Seneca's *Epistulae morales.*

While Seneca appeared as an important source for Posidonius in Zago's paper, FRANCESCA ROMANA BERNO reads Seneca's *Epistula moralis* 50 as a testimony for the Roman philosopher's views in their own right. In a subtle intra- and inter-textual exploration, she greatly enriches our understanding of the example of Harpaste, a mentally disabled slave of Seneca's who is unable to recognize her own blindness, as an allegory for every person's lack of self-knowledge. Like Posidonius, Seneca believed in moral progress and repeatedly wonders why such progress appears to be so difficult. Berno's reading and commentary on this letter underscores one of the causes he identified: the inability to acknowledge one's owns limits. The fool Harpaste, it turns out, is wiser than the highly educated men making fun of her. She is at least willing to ask for help.

With the last two papers we move on from the first to the second century CE, and to perspectives on Stoicism and philosophy from outside the school. MARCELO D. BOERI revisits the critique the famous physician Galen levelled against Stoic accounts of human development and thus also the causes of *diastrophē*. Embracing psychological dualism and a Platonist tripartite model of the soul, Galen rejected the idea that children are born fundamentally good, i.e. by nature disposed positively toward what is good directly from birth. Boeri argues that Galen, too, acknowledges some such fundamental goodness when he admits that with the growth of rationality children acquire a concept and an attraction toward what is good. In order to make his argument, Boeri elucidates the importance of the Stoic theory of *oikeiōsis* («familiarization») for explaining both axiological confusion and the possibility of having the right values in the first place. In agreement with recent discussions of how exactly to understand the development of reason and concept formation, Boeri provides evidence for a familiarization with the good in two stages, a pre-rational stage and a later stage of rational concept building. It is at the latter stage that moral reasoning and, together with it, error can occur.

The final paper, by CATALINA BALMACEDA, illustrates how the philosophical discourse on axiological confusion may be reflected in the analysis of human motivations by a historian like Tacitus. In the account of the *Histories* she identifies a vicious circle of fear breading distrust and disloyalty, which again exacerbate fear and distrust in both collectives and individuals, with the result that everyone, from emperor to soldiers, became unable to recognize their own good. It is against this backdrop of all-pervasive disorientation, Balmaceda argues, that Tacitus highlights a few examples of unwavering moral judgment, whose consistency could serve as models for overcoming the self-defeating tendencies that did not only harm morally confused individuals themselves but also Rome as a whole.

With this collection of papers, we hope to have provided valuable impulses for thinking about issues of more than antiquarian concern. To support this discussion and to complement the mosaic of single contributions, there is a bibliography of essential readings at the end of this volume compiled from recommendations by all authors.

Epicurean Phantasia

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine the role of *phantasia* in the Epicurean theory of perception and thought. Making use of newly edited fragments of Epicurus' *Peri phuseôs*, and recent interpretations of the role of *phantasia* in Aristotle, along with received texts of Epicurus and Lucretius, I consider such vexed questions as how *eidôla* or *simulacra* are reduced in size so as to enter the eye, and the channels by which they are transmitted from the eye to the mind. I discuss further the nature of *phantastikê epibolê*, that is, "the projection of *phantasia*", and its function in processes of thinking and remembering.

Keywords: *eidôla*, error, *phantasia*, *phantastikê epibolê*, *prolepsis*, *tupos*

Resumen

En este artículo, examino el papel de la *phantasia* en la teoría epicúrea de la percepción y el pensamiento. Aprovechando de los fragmentos, recién editados, de la *Peri phuseôs* de Epicuro, y de nuevas interpretaciones de la función de *phantasia* según Aristóteles, además de textos transmitidos de Epicuro y de Lucrecio, considero problemas altamente discutidos tales como la manera en que los *eidôla* o *simulacra* se reducen de tamaño para que puedan entrar en el ojo, y los canales por los cuales se transmiten desde el ojo a la mente. Trato también de la naturaleza de la *phantastikê epibolê*, es decir, "la proyección de la *phantasia*", y su función en las actividades de pensar y recordar.

Palabras clave: *eidôla*, error, *phantasia*, *phantastikê epibolê*, *prolepsis*, *tupos*

In this paper[1], I take up the vexed question of the nature of *phantasia* in Epicureanism, and more particularly what Epicurus dubs *phantastikê epibolê*, that is, "the projection of *phantasia*". The core text is Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus* (*Ep.* [2]), 49-52, which is examined in detail below. I begin, however, with a discussion of

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[1] An earlier and much different version of this paper was delivered at a Journée d'Études on "La Connaissance de Causes", on 8 June 2017, sponsored by the GDRI AITIA/AΙΤΙΑΙ and Le Centre Léon Robin. That version was composed during the period of my fellowship at the Paris Institute for Advanced Studies (France), with the financial support of the French State managed by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche, programme "Investissements d'avenir" (ANR-11-LABX-0027-01 Labex RFIEA+), during the period 1 February to 30 June 2017; I am pleased to acknowledge my deep gratitude for that opportunity. I am indebted to Enrico Piergiacomi for astute comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to the reports by two anonymous readers.

the Epicurean theory of sense perception, since perception is closely related to the mechanisms involving *phantasia*. In interpreting Epicurus' conception of *phantasia*, moreover, I make reference both to Democritus and to Aristotle, whose views, I believe, lie behind and stand to illuminate Epicurus' treatment. Of course, in contrast to Aristotle, Epicurus' account will have been strictly materialist, and any interpretation of his conception of *phantasia* must be compatible with the Epicurean physics of atomic motion in a void.

1. *Perception*

Explaining mental processes poses a special challenge to materialist theories of nature, and all the more so for one with the limited resources of ancient atomism. Perception is hard enough. Since the Epicureans appear to have rejected, or at least not exploited, geometrical optics, which assumed the transmission of visual phenomena by way of rays (cf. *aktines*, Epicur. *Ep.* [2], 49), they were left to work out the mechanics of vision and other senses solely through interactions among the atoms themselves. They postulated that objects continually emit atoms in more or less coherent formations, which in the case of sight, hearing, and smell are transmitted through the atmosphere and picked up by the sensory organ suited to receive that particular form of emission (*Ep.* [2], 48-53). These emanations must be very fine, so that they do not materially reduce the size of the original object even though they are continually being ejected (there is some evidence as well that a constant influx of atoms replenishes lost material; cf. *Ep.* [2], 48, οὐκ ἐπίδηλος τῇ μειώσει διὰ τὴν ἀνταναπλήρωσιν), and they must contain all the information needed to account for what we actually perceive, for example, in the case of vision, shape, size, color, and depth. The simplest account of how the effluences that enable vision convey the shape of an object is that they conform to its surface; thus the laminas, that is, *eidôla* or *simulacra*, were imagined as very thin films, curved in accord with the form of the object, that travel rapidly and in closely packed sequence from the object to the eye of the beholder.

This account gave rise to a well-known puzzle: if the *simulacra* indeed accurately reproduce both the shape and size of the emitting entity, how is it that images of something as large as a person or a mountain can enter the tiny aperture that is the pupil of the eye? There are various possible solutions. For example, the simulacra might shrink as they travel; alternatively, the eye might admit parts of the incoming films and then reassemble or process them, as Alexander of Aphrodisias suggested (*On Aristotle on Sense Perception* 58, 3-12; 60, 3-7; *Mantissa* 135, 6-18)[2]. It now seems clear that the simulacra are in fact capable of being compressed, thanks to the splendid new edition of the second book of Epicurus' *Peri phuseôs* by Giuliana Leone[3]. We learn here, as Francesca Guadalupe Masi has recently argued in detail, that Epicurus

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[2] See AVOTINS (1980); BARNES (1989); RUDOLPH (2011), 67-83.
[3] LEONE (2012).

outlined the means by which images, once inside the eye, are communicated along internal pores or passageways to the sensorium, located in the chest. There is a process that Epicurus calls *sunizêsis*, "compression" or "contraction", to which simulacra are subject; it serves to reduce their size without compromising the information concerning the original shape of the object from which they emerged, and it seems to be initiated when the simulacra encounter a substance insufficiently porous to pass through it without major alteration. This mechanism operates in tandem with a binding force or *allêloukhia*, which keeps the effluences together despite the collisions they undergo while passing through the air. This latter notion we know only from Book 2 of the *Peri phuseôs* or *On Nature*, and it suggests how much we may be missing when we depend exclusively on summaries, whether by Epicurus himself or in the doxographical tradition, for his doctrines. As Francesca Masi observes, «These concepts, ἀλληλουχία and συνίζησις, which Leone has the merit of having recovered, clarified, and submitted vigorously to the attention of critics, constitute the most relevant contribution of the second book of the work, *On Nature*, to our knowledge of the Epicurean doctrine of εἴδωλα»[4]. These same processes can, I think, be invoked to explain as well how the idols emitted by an object can diminish in size sufficiently to enter the eye, at a stage prior to the subsequent contraction that allows the impressions created within the eye to circulate through the tiny pores by which they reach the mind.

If this explanation is valid, then we may infer that Epicurus maintained that perception is a two-stage process, except in the case of those effluences that impinge directly on the mind or *animus* (e.g., the simulacra of the gods, who are perceived *non sensu sed mente*, Cic. *ND* I 19, 49). That is, the *simulacra* undergo a double transformation, as they are shrunk upon entering the sense organ (the paradigm case being vision) and again when they are transmitted through still smaller pores or vessels to the mind. At the site of the sensory organs themselves, the simulacra presumably stimulate or interact with what Lucretius calls the *anima*, consisting of fine soul atoms that are distributed throughout the body; this is the direct locus of sensation. As Francesco Verde observes, «sensation is the result of the convergence and coexistence of the soul and the body; on the one hand, the soul contains the greatest cause of sensation; on the other hand, if it were not for the 'participation' of the body, the organism would not be able to perceive anything. Thus, it is only the close conjunction

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[4] MASI (2015, 119): «Questi concetti, ἀλληλουχία e συνίζησις, che Leone ha avuto il merito di recuperare, chiarire e proporre con forza all'attenzione della critica, costituiscono l'arricchimento più rilevante apportato dal secondo libro dell'opera *Sulla natura* alla nostra conoscenza della dottrina epicurea degli εἴδωλα». Masi notes that «Epicurus makes explicit reference to something that penetrates the mental aggregate as well, similar in shape to that which penetrates the sense organs. The term τὰ αἰσθητήρια is also used by Epicurus in the *Letter to Herodotus* very particularly to indicate the eyes. We know, then, that the mind is in a condition to receive the same kind of stimuli as those that penetrate the eyes» (114, citing Epicur. *Ep.* [2], 50, 5).

of the soul and the body that allows sensation»[5]; I add only that this juxtaposition must involve in the first instance those soul atoms that intermingle with the corporeal corpuscles at the site of perception. In the next operation, the simulacra are transmitted to the part of the soul that is concentrated in the chest, which Lucretius refers to indifferently as the *animus* or the *mens* (he employs the compound expression *mens animusque*, III 139)[6].

There remain some questions about the process of perception, above all the role of the so-called *tupoi* or "impressions". Repeated impacts of streams of simulacra entering the sense organs convey an impression or *tupos* of an object or kind of object. Pierre-Marie Morel summarizes the process as follows: «vision results from the reception of replicas (τύποι) or images *(simulacra;* εἴδωλα) that are naturally emitted by the object that is seen. Since they are directly transmitted by effluences which, in ideal conditions, preserve the structure and properties of the aggregate from which they come, these replicas allow us to form a representation or impression (φαντασία) which remains in 'sympathy' (συμπάθεια) with the object»[7]. The *tupoi*, however, are effects of the simulacra and not reducible to them. According to Democritus, at all events, as Kelli Rudolph has shown, «An object's εἴδωλον flows toward the eye [...]. The air through which it moves [...] is condensed, i.e. ready for imprinting [...]. Eye effluences (i.e. visual rays) supply a simultaneous compression. The action of these two effluences moulds the air and results in an impression», which for Democritus takes place in the air. This impression contracts as it approaches the eye, where it is now «small enough to be 'imaged in' (ἐμφαίνεται) the pupil as an ἔμφασις»[8]. How long the air imprints endured, according to Democritus, is unclear; if they persist, then, as Theophrastus (*De sensu* 53) objected, one ought to be able to see them even when the object itself is not present. Although Rudolph deems it «more likely [...] that air imprints dissipate», she observes that «it may be in response to challenges of this sort that the Epicureans abandoned the theory of air imprints» (p. 81). But if this is the case, where did the *tupoi* form? The most reasonable hypothesis, it seems to me, is that they form at or in the sensory organ, prior to the transmission by way of internal

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[5] VERDE (2015b, 54): «da sensazione è il risultato della convergenza e della coesistenza dell'anima e del corpo; per un verso, l'anima possiede la causa maggiore della sensazione; per un altro, se non vi fosse la 'partecipazione' del corpo, l'organismo non potrebbe percepire alcunché. È, dunque, solo la stretta congiunzione dell'anima e del corpo che permette la sensazione».

[6] There is some question about how and whether the distinction between *animus* (or *mens*) and *anima* corresponds to that which Epicurus seems to have drawn between the rational and irrational parts of the soul. Diogenes Laertius (X 66 = fr. 311 Usener) cites a scholium to the *Letter to Herodotus*, according to which Epicurus «says elsewhere that it [the soul] is made up of very smooth and round atoms, which differ greatly from those of fire; and one part of it is non-rational [*alogon*], and dispersed throughout the rest of the body; but the rational part [*to logikon*] is in the chest [*thôrax*], as is evident from fears [*phoboi*] and from joy [*khara*]». One might have supposed that rationality pertains to human beings only, but Lucretius uses both *animus* and *mens* of other animals (e.g., of a horse, II 265), and indeed they have to have had a central soul that processes sensations and transmit an intention (*voluntas*) to the rest of the body (II 261-94).

[7] MOREL (2007), 30 summarizing Epicur. *Ep.* [2], 50.

[8] RUDOLPH (2011), 76-77.

vessels to the *mens* or *animus*. It is only in the *animus*, located, as I have indicated, in the chest (and perhaps synonymous with the *logikon* part of the soul), that the *tupos* takes the form of a *phantasia* or idea proper.

2. Idea

The idea of idea, however, is itself complex. As Pierre-Marie Morel observes, «Epicureanism, like any empiricist philosophy, must confront the problem of the status of 'ideas,' whether these are understood as general notions, abstract representations, or simple thoughts. Since we grasp not only individuals (this cat, this tree here or that one there), but also classes or species (cats, of which that cat is an instance, trees in general), or again abstract notions (such as values), we necessarily grasp also 'ideas,' in the very broad sense that I am employing» (MOREL 2007, 25). Morel goes on to explain that «the Epicureans have available a very rich arsenal of terms, often difficult to distinguish clearly from one another, to designate the various kinds of ideas or general notions». Among these is *prolêpsis*, "preconception" or "presumption", which, according to Cicero, was Epicurus' own coinage (it was later adopted by the Stoics). *Prolêpsis* plays a special role in Epicurean epistemology. As Diogenes Laertius explains, «Preconception [*prolêpsis*], they [the Epicureans] say, is as it were a perception (*katalêpsis*), or correct opinion (*doxa orthê*), or conception (*ennoia*), or universal 'store notion' (*katholikê noêsis enapokeimenê*), i.e. memory of that which has frequently become evident externally: e.g. 'such and such a kind of thing is a man'»[9]. We may have a *prolêpsis* not only of a human being but also of gods, and still more generally, of justice. Animals, presumably, do not have preconceptions of these latter two (Epicurus states that «those animals which are incapable of making binding agreements with one another not to inflict nor suffer harm are without either justice or injustice», *Principal Saying* 32), but I assume they do have more concrete *prolêpseis*, inasmuch as cows and dogs can recognize other members of their species (it is possible, however, that this ability is due to memory alone). *Phantasiai*, however, are not concepts of this sort but rather something more like mental images that result when the *tupoi* that enter the senses reach the mind, and that may also be generated in the mind itself, whether by the impingement of rarefied simulacra that directly penetrate the *animus* or by an internal movement stimulated in some fashion by the *prolêpseis* that are the result of repeated sensations or by more transient deposits of sensory material.

3. Phantasia

In a recent paper, Andree Hahmann notes that «*phantasia* plays a crucial role in the Epicurean theory of perception», and he adds: «This is particularly remarkable if one takes the [...] similarities to the Aristotelian position into account, since Aristotle

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[9] D.L. X 33, trans. LONG-SEDLEY; quoted by MOREL (2007), 27.

sharply differentiates *phantasia* from perception»[10]. In fact, Epicurus too distinguishes between *aisthêsis*, which takes place in the first instance in the *anima* (to employ Lucretius' handy terminology), and *phantasia*, which is located in the *animus* or *mens*. Nor is Aristotle himself entirely consistent in discriminating between *phantasia* and perception. In the *De anima*, he seems to allow for two types of *phantasia*, one that is rational (λογιστική), the other based on sense perception (αἰσθητική, *de An.* III 11, 433b 29); non-rational animals only have the second kind[11]. Despite its central importance in Aristotle's psychology, in which, as Krisanna Scheiter observes, *phantasia* «is necessary for dreaming, remembering, recollecting and even thinking», Aristotle's analysis in *de An.* III 3, his «most extensive discussion on *phantasia*, is extremely unclear»[12].

Nevertheless, some points in Aristotle's treatment of *phantasia* stand out as reasonably certain. First of all, as Jessica Moss observes, «*phantasia* always arises from perception - that is, every episode of *phantasia* is based in some way on an episode of perception»[13]. Perception leaves traces in the soul in the form of *phantasmata*, which derive in turn from *aisthêmata* (*Insomn.* 461a 19; cf. *Mem.* 451a 3-4); thus, every *phantasma* «is a remnant [*hupoleimma*] of an actual sense-impression (*Insomn.* 461b 21-22)»[14]. Aristotle further affirms that the «passages of all the sense organs [...] run to the heart, or to its analogue in creatures that have no heart»[15], from which it is plausible to infer that this is the pathway by which *aisthêta* are transmitted[16]. The

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[10] HAHMANN (2015), 167.

[11] SORABJI (1993), 35, goes so far as to suggest that animals may even make certain kinds of judgments, according to Aristotle; he points specifically to the statement in *de An.* (II 6, 418a 21-22; III 6, 430b 29-30) that a lion perceives *that* (ὅτι) an ox is nearby, and affirms that this claim implies a kind of predication. So too, in *De anima* Aristotle affirms that it is by virtue of *phantasia* that we perceive that (ὅτι) a white thing is round or that it is a man. Conceivably, non-rational animals, although they are deprived of reason and thus of beliefs (*de An.* III 3, 428a 19-24), nevertheless do possess *phantasia* of a quasi-rational sort and hence can make something like perceptual predications.

[12] SCHEITER (2012), 25. SCHOFIELD (1992), 253, wittily observes of Aristotle that «it would be a triumph of generosity over justice to pretend that he manages to combine his different approaches to *phantasia* with an absolutely clear head»; cited in VOGT-SPIRA (2007), 29, an article valuable for the broader connection between *phantasia* and literary imagination.

[13] MOSS (2012), 52.

[14] MOSS, (2012), 52. Cf. VERDE (2016b), 50, who argues that, «secondo Aristotele, l'ὑπόλειμμα di per sé *non è* l'oggetto esterno di cui esso è, per l'appunto, la traccia residuale: come si vedrà, proprio in ciò sembra risiedere la divergenza concettuale tra l'ὑπόλειμμα di Aristotele e lo ἐγκατάλειμμα di Epicuro». Verde conclude che «se secondo Aristotele l'ὑπόλειμμα (di Corisco) è tale quale Corisco ma *non è* Corisco, per Epicuro l'ἐγκατάλειμμα (di Corisco) *è* Corisco, in diretta conformità con la sua dottrina dei simulacri che fonda la veridicità/realtà della sensazione. Più chiaramente: per Aristotele il residuo/traccia è *diverso* dall'oggetto esterno, mentre per Epicuro esso è *proprio* l'oggetto» (60-61). I am not entirely convinced that Epicurus identified the residue with the object itself, but I reserve that discussion for another occasion.

[15] *De gen. an.* V 1, 781a 20-23; cited by SCHEITER (2012), 256.

[16] On the physiology behind Aristotle's account of *phantasmata* and *aisthêta*, see BUBB (2019), 311: «Sensation is instantaneous, faithfully representative, and directly dependent on external objects»; *phantasia*, in contrast, «is directly dependent on sensation, but a step removed from external objects». At a more basic level, «sensation consists of movements imprinted on the connate pneuma, which reverberate through the pneuma that exists in both the sense organs and the blood and arrive at the

mechanism is reminiscent of Epicurus' conception of the way in which impressions that result from the impact of simulacra are communicated to the *animus*, located in the chest, by way of small pores or vessels. *Phantasia*, however, «is independent of perceptible objects in a way that perception is not, for one can have a *phantasia* of something not present to perception»[17]; it is «a capacity for making present to the mind something one has perceived before»[18]. As Krisanna Scheiter observes, «perception requires the presence of a physical object, whereas *phantasia* does not», and so «the essential difference between perception and *phantasia* lies in their immediate cause»[19]. Something other than a perceptible object may give rise to the image represented by the term *phantasia*[20]. As Scheiter notes, «Aristotle describes *phantasia* as that which 'produces something before the eye, just like the image-making (*eidōlopoiountes*) that occurs in memory'» (*de An.* III 3, 427b 18-20, cited on p. 269, Scheiter's translation). *Phantasia* is active, and generates an image derived from the storehouse of memory.

In her penetrating study of *phantasia* in Aristotle, Jessica Moss argues further that *phantasia* serves principally to motivate locomotion in animals: «Through bare perception we can become aware of an object, but only through *phantasia* can we apprehend it as something we might want to pursue or avoid» (MOSS 2012, 54). As a representation of an object of perception, it retains all the qualities of the object itself, including its affective nature as something desirable or the reverse. As she explains, «*phantasia* motivates by being *itself* pleasurable or painful, just like perception [...]. If the actual tasting of water was pleasurable, then so too will be the memory of tasting it, or the anticipation of tasting some more» (57-58; cf. Arist. *Rh.* I 11, 1370a 27-35). This function of *phantasia* is apparently retained in Epicureanism, to judge by a crucial passage in Lucretius that is worth citing *in extenso* (IV 877-896)

> Nunc qui fiat uti passus proferre queamus,
> cum volumus, quareque datum sit membra movere
> et quae res tantum hoc oneris protrudere nostri
> corporis insuerit, dicam: tu percipe dicta.   880
> dico animo nostro primum simulacra meandi
> accidere atque animum pulsare, ut diximus ante.
> inde voluntas fit; neque enim facere incipit ullam
> rem quisquam, [quam] mens providit quid velit ante.

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common sensorium in the heart, which processes them» (292). As for *phantasmata*, «blood is in fact their very substrate» (295); what is more, «*phantasmata* are so at home in the blood because they are a part of the same digestive enterprise that blood is», though in this case it is external sense-objects rather than food that is processed (296).

[17] MOSS (2012), 52, citing *Insomn.* 459a 24-28; «even when the external object of perception (*aisthēton*) has departed, the impressions (*aisthēmata*) it has made persist, and are themselves objects of perception (*aisthēta*)» (460b 2-3).

[18] MOSS (2012), 53.

[19] SCHEITER (2012), 259-260.

[20] It is interesting that Aristotle sometimes resorts to the word *eidôlon* to signify "image", as at *de An.* III 3, 427b 20, *Insomn.* 462a 11-17.

id quod providet, illius rei constat imago,   885
ergo animus cum sese ita commovet ut velit ire
inque gredi, ferit extemplo quae in corpore toto
per membra atque artus animai dissita vis est;
et facilest factu, quoniam coniuncta tenetur.
inde ea proporro corpus ferit, atque ita tota   890
paulatim moles protruditur atque movetur.
praeterea tum rarescit quoque corpus et aër,
scilicet ut debet qui semper mobilis extat,
per patefacta venit penetratque foramina largus,
et dispargitur ad partis ita quasque minutas   895
corporis.

«Next I will say how it comes about that we can carry onwards our steps when we please, how it has been given to us to move our limbs in different ways, what has caused the habit of pushing onwards this great bodily weight: do you attend to my sayings. I say that in the first place images of movement come in contact with our mind, and strike the mind, as I said before. After this comes wish; for no one ever begins anything until the intelligence has first foreseen what it wishes to do. (What it foresees, the image of that thing is present in the mind). Therefore when the mind so bestirs itself that it wishes to go and to step forwards, at once it strikes all the mass of spirit that is distributed abroad through limbs and frame in all the body. And this is easy to do, since the spirit is held in close combination with it. The spirit in its turn strikes the body, and so the whole mass is gradually pushed on and moves. Besides, at that moment the body also expands its pores, and the air (as you might expect with something always so sensitive to movement) passes and penetrates through the opened passages in abundance, and so is distributed abroad into the very smallest parts of the body»[21].

Lucretius begins by affirming that, when we wish to walk, simulacra that represent the act of walking occur to the mind and impel or thrust it forward (881-882; for the sense of *pulso* see *OLD* s.v., def. 8). Exactly what the source of these simulacra may be is unclear, but we must be cautious about assuming that they are external, as the Loeb translation suggests by the rendering «strike the mind»[22]. This is how wish (*voluntas*) arises, for the mind undertakes no action before it has seen what it may wish (883-884). These verses may give the impression that one must foresee an action by sheer imagination before embarking on it (so the Loeb translation). But it is important to note that *providit* is perfect in tense, and that *provideo* in this context may mean "see in advance" (*OLD* s.v., def. 1), in which case the sense will be that we can only wish to do something if we have previously perceived such an act, a perfectly natural assumption that accords with Aristotle's view that we only know what we have received through the senses, or in Moss's words, «every episode of *phantasia* is based in some way on an episode of perception». This is indeed what Lucretius affirms when he states that «an image [*imago* = *phantasia*] arises of what the mind sees in advance»

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[21] Rouse-Smith (1982); but I have rendered *voluntas* as "wish" rather than "will," and *velit* as "wishes" rather than "wills".

[22] Taken this way, *pulsare* is pleonastic, repeating the idea in *accidere*. The *simulacra meandi* may derive from stored up memories of walking, as indicated below.

(885). The mind or *animus* then communicates its wish, conceived as an image, to the *anima*, which is distributed throughout the body and so strikes it in turn. Air, which, as I understand it, is somehow the vehicle for the image, passes through the opened cavities of the body and reaches to its smallest parts. The entire process looks like perception in reverse: instead of the *tupos* or impression produced by incoming simulacra that is transmitted by vessels from the *anima* to the *animus*, where it takes the form of a *phantasia* or *phantasma*, the *imago* or *phantasia* is passed back through the pores or cavities via the *anima* to the remotest limbs, which it then sets in motion. There is a strong resemblance to Aristotle's conception, translated into the medium of atomic materialism[23].

4. Phantasia *and Misperception*

There is a further wrinkle in the role of *phantasia*, both in Aristotle's conception and in that of Epicurus, and that is its association with false perceptions. As Jessica Moss observes, «In the passages where he [i.e., Aristotle] offers definitions of *phantasia*, he characterizes it as a close relative of perception (αἴσθησις), and emphasizes its role in nonstandard perception and perceptual error» (MOSS 2012, 51). Thus, Aristotle writes:

> «the sun appears [*phainetai*] a foot wide, though we are convinced that it is larger than the inhabited part of the earth. Thus either while the fact has not changed and the observer has neither forgotten nor lost conviction in the true belief which he had, that belief has disappeared, or if he retains it then his belief is at once true and false» (*De an.* III 3, 428a 24-b 8, cit. SCHEITER [2012], 272).

Krisanna Scheiter explains: «In order for an object to *appear* to be a foot wide the perception we are having must be similar to other perceptions we have had in the past that proved to be a foot wide. When we look at the sun, the impression the sun makes on the eye sets into motion and combines with other *foot-wide* images that are stored in the primary sense organ» (p. 274). Thus, according to Aristotle, «our beliefs are not constrained by our current perceptual experiences. We see the sun *as* a foot wide, but we know that the sun is a great distance from the earth and we also know that as things move further away from us they take up less space in our visual field and therefore look smaller» (275).

It is remarkable that Aristotle here offers as an example of a mistaken *phantasia* a problem that will prove to be crucial for Epicurus, who defended precisely the accuracy of our perception of the sun as being a foot wide, or thereabout[24]. For both Epicurus and Aristotle, the sun is perceived as a small disk. Epicurus reasons that the *simulacra* of the sun do not shrink vastly in the course of their transmission to the eye,

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[23] As one of the anonymous referees reminds me, Aristotle uses the word *phantasia* in some contexts to designate something like a faculty, whereas in Epicurus the term is restricted to the sense of mental image or the like.

[24] See VERDE (2015b); also VERDE (2016b), 46 with n. 8; cf. ROMEO (1979).

since fires, unlike other distant objects, are observed not to diminish much in brightness or size over distances. Thus there is no contradiction between beliefs acquired through experience and what appears to perception. If we were convinced that the sun was very remote, then we would have a false notion of its size. The cause of such an erroneous conception is not the perception itself but a belief (*doxa* or, in Latin, *opinio*) that we have added to the perception, in this case that the appearance of a fiery object like the sun diminishes in the same proportion as other objects, or that the sun is much further away than (according to Epicurus) it really is[25]. Conceivably, the *phantasia* of the sun is itself corrupted by the false opinion, and thus differs in some fashion from the *aisthêton*, which is always valid. Alternatively, the mental image retains its integrity, and beliefs or opinions function in some other way to create a false inference concerning the sun's magnitude (the phrase "addition of opinion" would seem to distinguish the belief from the *phantasia*).

But what happens when the impression of something available to the senses is absent, as in the case of the image produced when we remember something that we previously saw or heard or smelled, whether in a waking state or while dreaming, or when we deliberately call something to mind? Does the difference between a *phantasia* and a sense impression lie, as Scheiter put it, not in the object - we see or remember the same thing - but in the source or cause?

5. Epibolê Phantastikê

On the usual view of Epicurean epistemology, the object of *phantasia* is never absent: thinking or imagining is simply another sense, attuned to a mental object, which is to say, a flow of simulacra of the finer sort that directly penetrate the *animus*. Take the following abbreviated account, which is, I think, broadly representative of the current *communis opinio*:

«As far as the ideational content of thinking - that is, the thought of something - is concerned, Epicurus proposed a radically reductive hypothesis: just as sensations occur as a result of thin films emitted by objects that enter the appropriate sense organ, so too some of these simulacra are fine enough to penetrate directly to the mind (located in the chest), and that is how we imagine such objects (e.g., gods). This process is invoked to explain not only dream images, but many kinds of mental impression, including impressions constituting voluntary thought: the latter occur when we attend to one or another of the exiguous physical films that are continuously floating through the air [...]. Imagining a thing is thus nothing more than picking out the simulacra that have been emitted by it, and which may endure beyond the life of the thing itself (hence we can imagine the dead). These mental images [...] do not differ from the information provided by the senses. Mistakes occur here too when the wrong beliefs are associated with such impressions, for example, that because we have a mental image of a dead

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[25] For a possible reason why Epicurus insisted that the sun was both small and near the earth, see Furley (1996).

person it follows that he or she still exists in a ghostly form. Epicurean physics proves that this is impossible»[26].

I wish to take issue with this description, of which I happen to be the author. I propose that *phantasiai* can indeed arise in the mind by way of memory, although they are not entirely without reference to external objects. The process involved is the mysterious *epibolê tês dianoias* or *epibolê phantastikê*.

As Andree Hahmann observes, «It is well known that Epicurus ascribed to *epibole* a fundamental function in his epistemology. He even considered it as one of the criteria of truth (D.L. X 31, 3-5)»; actually, Diogenes Laertius says that "Epicureans" - presumably later members of the school - so classified it, but there is evidence that the doctrine in fact goes back to Epicurus himself. Hahmann notes that «there is wide disagreement about the exact nature of *epibole*», but, he argues, «the determination of the type of activity that is involved in perception depends on a correct interpretation of the Epicurean conception of *epibole*». I would say rather that *epibolê* is central not just to perception but also, and primarily, to ideas or *phantasiai*. Hahmann indeed notes that «there are two different kinds of *epibole* that are employed by Epicurus. He distinguishes between an *epibole* of the mind and an *epibole* of the sense organs (*Ad Her.* 50, 5-6: καὶ ἣν ἂν λάβωμεν φαντασίαν ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις)». At this point, Hahmann reaffirms the conventional view of mental activity according to Epicurus: «With regard to their functions, it seems reasonable to assume that both are responsible for the selection of particular visual images from the vast number of images that affect the mind and the sense organs. According to a passage in Lucretius, this happens through an effort or focusing of the mind or the organs»[27]. There is, however, room for doubt as to whether Epicurus is distinguishing in this passage between two sorts of *epibolê*, one pertaining to the senses, the other to the mind[28]. In the phrase, καὶ ἣν ἂν λάβωμεν φαντασίαν ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις (50, 5-6), quoted above, it is possible to take ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ

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[26] KONSTAN (2018).

[27] HAHMANN (2015), 164. Cf. VERDE (2016a), 345: «È certo che le ἐπιβολαὶ τῆς διανοίας compaiono, però, più volte nell'*Epistola a Erodoto* (35, 36, 38, 50, 51, 69, 70, 83) e nella RS XXIV, Lucrezio (II 740) sembra rendere ἐπιβολὴ τῆς διανοίας con *animi iniectus*, laddove la probabile traduzione fornita da Cicerone, *iniciens animus et intendens*, come già nel caso delle *notitiae*, non è lontana da quella di Lucrezio».

[28] Contra VERDE (2016b), 56: «Tale φαντασία, aggiunge Epicuro, dovrebbe essere afferrata ἐπιβλητικῶς, ossia ricorrendo con ogni probabilità a quella φανταστικὴ ἐπιβολή che, stando a Diogene Laerzio (X 31), gli Epicurei seriori considerarono un canone epistemologico a tutti gli effetti. Tale 'atto di applicazione,' con cui si identifica l'ἐπιβολή, è relativo tanto al pensiero quanto agli organi di senso (ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις). Evidentemente non è possibile che, quanto all'attività dell'ἐπιβολή, la διάνοια e gli organi sensoriali si comportino allo stesso modo: secondo Epicuro, in ogni caso, la φαντασία può essere 'afferrata,' compresa (λάβωμεν) tramite l'ἐπιβολή del pensiero e quella dei sensi. L'esito di questo processo sarà che la φαντασία compresa coincida *esattamente* con la forma (esteriore) dell'oggetto solido (μορφή ἐστιν αὕτη τοῦ στερεμνίου) da cui i simulacri sono partiti. Ma in che modo si forma tale μορφή? O meglio: in che modo si forma la φαντασία di tale μορφή? Epicuro risponde che essa si genera κατὰ τὸ ἑξῆς πύκνωμα ἢ ἐγκατάλειμμα τοῦ εἰδώλου». This last phrase is discussed below.

διανοίᾳ with φαντασίαν alone and not also with τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις; on this reading, Epicurus states that we receive a *phantasia* either by way of an *epibolê* of thought or else by the *aisthêtêria*, without the element of projection in the latter case[29]. *Phantasiai* received via the senses would involve a two-stage process: first, simulacra will have struck the sense organ in question and transmitted to it a *tupos* or impression; the sensory information would then be forwarded, in compressed form but losing no relevant information, to the *animus*. As we have seen, Aristotle too seems to have allowed for both perceptual and mental *phantasiai*[30].

What is the function, then, of *epibolê* in the reception of mental *phantasiai*? In accord with the prevailing view of Epicurean epistemology, *epibolê* has been associated with attention or focus, as a way of selecting among the innumerable simulacra floating in the ambient atmosphere. As Hahmann writes, «Today we are tempted to say that *epibole* draws the attention of the perceiver to certain visual images. As a result, a *phantasia* emerges in the soul». Hahmann immediately adds, however, that «it is problematic to connect *epibole* with attention taken in an unqualified sense. As some interpreters note, *epibole* occurs in dreams as well. Therefore, it is impossible to interpret *epibole* in line with just any form of deliberate conscious attention»[31]. But if *epibolê* does not represent an act of attention, what does it do? As a projection, if that is the right translation, it would appear to operate in the opposite direction to the reception of a *phantasia*, indicated by the term *lambanô*. Literally, the phrase ἣν ἂν λάβωμεν φαντασίαν ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ should mean: "whatever *phantasia* we receive in the mind by projection (or by projection of the mind)". To unpack this condensed expression, it is necessary to examine the entire passage in detail; for convenience, I divide it into two sections, which I discuss in turn.

I. [49] Δεῖ δὲ καὶ νομίζειν ἐπεισιόντος τινὸς ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν τὰς μορφὰς ὁρᾶν ἡμᾶς καὶ διανοεῖσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐναποσφραγίσαιτο τὰ ἔξω τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν τοῦ τε χρώματος καὶ τῆς μορφῆς διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος τοῦ μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε κἀκείνων, οὐδὲ διὰ τῶν ἀκτίνων ἢ ὧν δήποτε ῥευμάτων ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν πρὸς ἐκεῖνα παραγινομένων, οὕτως ὡς τύπων τινῶν ἐπεισιόντων ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν

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[29] *Aisthêtêria* presumably refers to the sense organs such as the eye and ear, though it may conceivably represent the seat where sensory information is processed, located in the mind.

[30] RUNIA (2018) argues that the *Placita* had sources other than those recorded in Diogenes Laertius; *Placita* IV 9 runs: Ἐπίκουρος πᾶσαν αἴσθησιν καὶ πᾶσαν φαντασίαν ἀληθῆ, τῶν δὲ δοξῶν τὰς μὲν ἀληθεῖς τὰς δὲ ψευδεῖς. καὶ ἡ μὲν αἴσθησις μοναχῶς ψευδοποιεῖται τὰ κατὰ τὰ νοητά, ἡ δὲ φαντασία διχῶς· καὶ γὰρ αἰσθητῶν ἐστι φαντασία καὶ νοητῶν («Epicurus (says that) every sensation and every impression is true, but of the opinions some are true and some false; and the sensation gives us a false picture in one respect only, namely with regard to objects of thought; but the impression does so in two respects, for there is impression of both sense objects and objects of thought», trans. Runia 429-430). A fragment from one of the lost books of Epicurus (fr. 38 Arrighetti) may suggest an association between *phantasia* and the *logikon* part of the soul, but the condition of the text renders any interpretation insecure:

[ ]ν[..]σε[..]α[.]ε[.]ως οὐδὲ κα[τὰ] φα[ν]τα- (10)
σιαν, οὐδὲ [γ᾽ ἂ]ν ἐπὶ λο[γ]ικ[ὴ]ν, κ[αθ]ὼς
πολλάκις [ποι]οῦντα[ι]. οἱ δέ γ[ε] — — προ

[31] HAHMANN (2015), 164; cf. Lucretius IV 962-1029.

πραγμάτων ὁμοχρόων τε καὶ ὁμοιομόρφων κατὰ τὸ ἐναρμόττον μέγεθος εἰς τὴν ὄψιν ἢ τὴν διάνοιαν, ὠκέως ταῖς φοραῖς χρωμένων, [50] εἶτα διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ συνεχοῦς τὴν φαντασίαν ἀποδιδόντων καὶ τὴν συμπάθειαν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου σωζόντων κατὰ τὸν ἐκεῖθεν σύμμετρον ἐπερεισμὸν ἐκ τῆς κατὰ βάθος ἐν τῷ στερεμνίῳ τῶν ἀτόμων πάλσεως. καὶ ἣν ἂν λάβωμεν φαντασίαν ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις εἴτε μορφῆς εἴτε συμβεβηκότων, μορφή ἐστιν αὕτη τοῦ στερεμνίου, γινομένη κατὰ τὸ ἑξῆς πύκνωμα ἢ ἐγκατάλειμμα τοῦ εἰδώλου.

I. [49] «Now we must suppose too that it is when something enters us from external objects that we see and think of their shapes. For external objects could not stamp on us [ἐναποσφραγίσαιτο] the nature of their own color and shape by means of the air which lies between us and them, nor again by means of the rays [τῶν ἀκτίνων] or effluences of any sort which pass from us to them - nearly so well as if certain impressions [τύπων], similar in color and shape, coming from the objects enter our sight or mind in a suitable size, maintaining their swift motions, [50] and then, in this way, yielding [ἀποδιδόντων] an image [φαντασίαν] of a single continuous thing and preserving an affinity [συμπάθειαν] with the object in accord with the proportional impact from there, [that is,] from the vibration of the atoms according to their depth within the solid body. Every image [φαντασίαν] that we receive by the mind in a projective way [ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ] or by the sense-organs, whether of shape or of properties, is the shape of the solid body, generated by the continual pressure [πύκνωμα] or residue [ἐγκατάλειμμα] of the simulacrum»[32].

Epicurus begins by distinguishing his theory of perception from two others. First is the notion that external objects leave a seal in the air between themselves and the observer - clearly an allusion to Democritus' view of the way in which the *tupos* is produced at the intersection of the εἴδωλον of the object that flows toward the eye and the eye's own effluences. Second is the idea that vision results from rays that travel from the eye to the object: this is the so-called extramission account, as opposed to intromission, by which the motion is from the object to the eye - a view associated principally with Empedocles and Plato (*Ti.* 45b-46a). Epicurus might easily have incorporated extramission in his atomic system, since simulacra are constantly emitted from the eye as well as from other objects, and if impressions or *tupoi* are lodged in the sensory organs, this information too might be carried by the effluences. But Epicurus does not apply the terminology of projection to *tupoi* but rather to *phantasiai*, and more specifically those received by the mind. Mental images would thus appear to involve a two-way process, both afferent (*lambanein*) and efferent (*ekballein*): we receive images mentally in a way that involves a kind of projection. But how does this work - what is projected, and to what destination? I will suggest that *phantasiai* in the mind are received from memory (or stored up images) and projected or emitted in turn to the sensory organ, by the same vessels along which the *tupoi* were originally transmitted to the *animus*. Before proceeding further with the demonstration, we may turn to the second half of the passage under consideration

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[32] My translation; text as in DORANDI (2013), except where noted.

(words in square brackets and smaller type are not translated; the reader is forewarned that the text is in some places highly insecure; see below):

II. τὸ δὲ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ διημαρτημένον ἐν τῷ προσδοξαζομένῳ ἀεί ἐστιν <ἐπὶ τοῦ προσμένοντος> ἐπιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι, εἶτ' οὐκ ἐπιμαρτυρουμένου <ἢ ἀντιμαρτυρουμένου> [κατά τινα κίνησιν ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς συνημμένην τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ, διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν, καθ' ἣν τὸ ψεῦδος γίνεται.]³³ [51] Ἥ τε γὰρ ὁμοιότης τῶν φαντασμῶν οἰονεὶ ἐν εἰκόνι λαμβανομένων ἢ καθ' ὕπνους γινομένων ἢ κατ' ἄλλας τινὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας ἢ τῶν λοιπῶν κριτηρίων οὐκ ἄν ποτε ὑπῆρχε τοῖς οὖσί τε καὶ ἀληθέσι προσαγορευομένοις εἰ μὴ ἦν τινα καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἃ βάλλομεν · τὸ δὲ διημαρτημένον οὐκ ἂν ὑπῆρχεν εἰ μὴ ἐλαμβάνομεν καὶ ἄλλην τινὰ κίνησιν ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς συνημμένην μὲν <τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ,>³⁴ διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν· κατὰ δὲ ταύτην [τὴν συνημμένην τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ, διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν]³⁵, ἐὰν μὲν μὴ ἐπιμαρτυρηθῇ ἢ ἀντιμαρτυρηθῇ, τὸ ψεῦδος γίνεται· ἐὰν δὲ ἐπιμαρτυρηθῇ ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρηθῇ, τὸ ἀληθές. [52] Καὶ ταύτην οὖν σφόδρα γε δεῖ τὴν δόξαν κατέχειν, ἵνα μήτε τὰ κριτήρια ἀναιρῆται τὰ κατὰ τὰς ἐνεργείας μήτε τὸ διημαρτημένον ὁμοίως βεβαιούμενον πάντα συνταράττῃ.

II. «Now falsehood and error always lie in the addition of opinion with regard to what is waiting to be confirmed or not disconfirmed, and then is not confirmed or is disconfirmed. [51] For the similarity of the images [φαντασμῶν] that are received as in a picture, or that arise in sleep or any other projections of the mind [ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας] or the other criteria [κριτηρίων], to things which exist and which are called true could not be if there were not these things against which we project [πρὸς ἃ βάλλομεν]. And error would not exist if we did not receive some other motion [κίνησιν] within ourselves that is fitted³⁶ to the imagistic projection [φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ] but has some difference [διάληψιν]; and it is in accord with this [sc. projection]³⁷, if it is not confirmed or is disconfirmed, that falsehood arises, but if it is confirmed or not disconfirmed, the truth. [52] It is therefore necessary to hold on firmly to this belief, so that neither may the criteria in respect to actualities be destroyed nor error be equally established and confound everything».

Epicurus' discussion of imagistic projection is closely bound up with his analysis of error. Accurate images reach the mind through various channels, but they are subject to distortion because of beliefs that we hold that are not properly derived from sensory or mental inputs but arise in other ways (Epicurus does not specify here how we acquire false opinions, but they are caused partly by mistaken inferences, for example concerning the distance of the sun on the analogy with other perspectival phenomena,

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³³ Dorandi (2013) omits Usener's supplement <ἐπὶ τοῦ προσμένοντος> and obelizes †ἐπιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι [...] καθ' ἣν τὸ ψεῦδος γίνεται†.

³⁴ Supplied by Usener; Dorandi (2013) omits it.

³⁵ The phrase is omitted in ms. Z, and marked as a gloss by Usener; it is enclosed in curly braces by Dorandi.

³⁶ συνημμένην (from *sunaptein*) is often used of thought; cf. LSJ s.v., def. 2.

³⁷ Conceivably the antecedent of κατὰ δὲ ταύτην is *dialêpsis*, in which case Epicurus will have meant that confirmation and the reverse depend on the difference between the *phantasia* and the object; however, I think it more likely that the *epibolê* is meant, as the criterion that allows one to verify the accuracy of the *phantasia*.

and partly from commonplace but erroneous habits of thought, as in the case of superstitions regarding the nature of the gods). Physically, such fallacious opinions take the form of mental motions, which indeed bear a relation to the images we receive either directly by the mind or by the senses, but nevertheless differ from them in some respect. To eliminate such deviations, it is necessary to test our mental images against their external sources, to see whether they are confirmed or disconfirmed. This takes place by projecting the *phantasia* onto the source of the image. This might be conceived of as the incoming simulacra, but because Epicurus rejects extramission in the visual process, it is likely that the projection is entirely internal to the organism. It is when the projected *phantasia* encounters the *tupos* from which it originated that it can be confirmed, which is to say, shown to match the impression, or else disconfirmed, due to its deviation (*dialêpsis*) from it: there is not a perfect fit. Such projection is the process in which one must consistently engage to be sure that our ideas are true. It may thus be regarded as a criterion, according to Epicurean epistemology, since, like perception, the *pathê* of pain and pleasure, and the *prolêpseis*, it delivers the truth about the world.

Some further observations are in order. First, projection is not only a means of putting images to the test; it occurs on a regular basis as one of the ways we acquire information, along with, for example, visions we have while asleep. There seems to be a constant back and forth between the senses and the *animus* or *dianoia*, presumably along the pores or vessels by which sensory information is transmitted to the mind. Second, it must be acknowledged that the text of Epicurus' letter is rather a mess; this pertains not only to the obvious repetitions and misplaced phrases, which editors adjust in various ways, but also to the reading of crucial words. The prime instance is the phrase, "if there were not these things against which we project". The last words correspond to the Greek πρὸς ἃ βάλλομεν, which conforms to the manuscripts (though some read ὅ instead of ἃ) and is retained by Dorandi, but was emended by Usener to εἰ μὴ ἦν τινα καὶ τοιαῦτα προσβαλλόμενα[38]. We may note too that confirmation here is not deduction or inference, but takes the form of a comparison of the image in our mind with the imprint on the senses (or, it may be, directly on the mind), which involves, on an atomistic account, the physical encounter of the image with the corresponding *tupos* - a process that may be deliberate but, I presume, need not be: there may be an ongoing interchange along the connecting apertures of which we must simply take notice (or hold on to the belief, as Epicurus puts it). The same process is at work in non-human animals, I suppose, but since they do not have beliefs, there is no danger that their mental images will be biased and so the projected *phantasiai* will always correspond accurately to the sensory impression[39].

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[38] HICKS (1925) reads εἰ μὴ ἦν τινα καὶ τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἃ παραβάλλομεν; Verde (2010) plausibly prints τινα καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἃ <ἐπι>βάλλομεν; others emend variously. Gassendi is responsible for emending ταῦτα to τοιαῦτα.

[39] I have not taken account of a possible distinction between φαντασίαι and φαντασμοί, but have treated the two terms as synonymous in this context. Both terms are distinct, I believe, from *phantasma*,

6. *Conclusion*

Since all perceptions are true, according to Epicurus, and yet people clearly have incorrect ideas about the world, it was incumbent upon the Epicureans to explain how such mistaken conceptions arise. The answer lay in atomic motions inside the mens or animus that alter and distort the *phantasiai*, which originate in the transmission of impressions from the senses to the mind but are subject to internal influences. These *phantasiai* are able to circulate back to the sensory organs by the same vessels that communicate to the animus the *tupoi* produced by simulacra. There, they either match the sensory impressions or differ in some respect; if they differ, it is a sign that they are erroneous. The important thing is to be attentive to possible discrepancies. The projected mental image will, upon contact, indicate whether it is true or not, and in this respect constitutes a valid criterion.

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which seems to mean "appearance". At D.L. X 31, φαντάσματα are the images perceived by madmen. At Epicur. *Ep.* [2], 75, they refer to the individual (ἴδια) way in which things appear to different peoples or ethnic groups, which explains the differences among languages. Cf. *Pyth.* 87 on the multiple explanations of celestial phenomena: τὸ μέντοι φάντασμα ἑκάστου τηρητέον καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ συναπτόμενα τούτῳ διαιρετέον, ἃ οὐκ ἀντιμαρτυρεῖται τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν γινομένοις πλεοναχῶς συντελεῖσθαι (also 102, 110). Enrico Piergiacomi points out to me that Chrysippus distinguished between *phantasia, phantaston, phantastikon* and *phantasma* (*SVF* II, 54); the first two are always true, while the latter two may be empty and false (Chrysippus gives as an example of *phantasmata* the visions of the Furies that Orestes wrongly believes to be real). I think it is entirely possible that Chrysippus derived this distinction from Epicurus (just as the Stoics took over the term *prolêpsis* and much else from the Epicureans, adapting the earlier doctrine to their own system); a full analysis must await a future discussion.

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«Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor».
Errori di valutazione nell'etica epicurea

«Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor».
Errors of Assessment in the Epicurean Ethics

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Abstract

The paper is focused on the reasons why in the Epicurean conception men are induced into errors of assessment about the criterion to be adopted for the achievement of the ultimate good; they, in fact, behave with the result to be unsatisfied and unhappy. To what extent are voluntary and involuntary aspects involved in such a circumstance? Moreover, to what extent can a disabling condition in the body and/or a strong emotional tension in the soul affect the decision? And finally how can we avoid mis-assessments of this type or, on the contrary, make the provision to achieve the ultimate good with the appropriate choices? Literary surveys show that in Epicurus and his school the degree of awareness of these problems is high and that the solutions offered are part of a conceptual framework consistent with the foundations of Epicurean philosophy and its ethical proposal.

Keywords: Epicurus, Epicurean ethics, psycho-physic states, human behaviours

Resumen

Lo que se pretende examinar en este artículo son las razones por las que en la filosofía epicúrea las personas caen en errores de evaluación sobre el criterio a seguir para alcanzar el bien final y además adoptan comportamientos que los hagan insatisfechos e infelices. ¿Cuánto hay de voluntario o involuntario en esta última circunstancia? ¿Cuánto puede pesar una condición incapacitante en el cuerpo y/o una fuerte tensión emocional en el alma? Y ¿cómo evitar las evaluaciones erróneas de este tipo o, por el contrario, hacer que la disposición hacia el bien final sea estable y se desarrolle por medio de las decisiones adecuadas? La investigación muestra que en Epicuro y su escuela el grado de conciencia de estos problemas es alto y que las soluciones ofrecidas forman parte de un marco conceptual coherente con los fundamentos de la filosofía epicúrea y su propuesta ética.

Palabras clave: Epicuro, ética epicúrea, estados psicofísicos, comportamientos humanos

1. *Questioni*

La domanda alla quale si cercherà di rispondere in queste pagine è come si spiega nei termini dell'etica epicurea la possibilità di compiere scelte sbagliate e di adottare

comportamenti devianti o non conformi rispetto ai principi che dovrebbero guidare l'azione. Ciò che in altri termini s'intende qui esaminare non è specificamente la giustificazione di Epicuro per la possibilità che individui diversi nella stessa situazione, o lo stesso individuo in situazioni diverse, adottino comportamenti discrepanti, non in linea con certi standard morali, per esempio fuggire di fronte al nemico in battaglia invece che affrontarlo coraggiosamente. Ci s'interrogherà piuttosto, da un punto di vista più generale, sulle ragioni per cui, secondo Epicuro, gli individui sono indotti in errori di valutazione sul criterio da seguire per il raggiungimento del bene ultimo e adottano comportamenti che li rendono insoddisfatti e infelici. Quanto c'è di volontario o d'involontario in quest'ultima circostanza? Quanto può pesare una condizione invalidante nel corpo e/o di forte tensione emotiva nell'anima? E in che termini è possibile evitare errate valutazioni di questo tipo e rendere al contrario stabile la disposizione a conseguire il bene ultimo con scelte adeguate?

L'indagine mostra che il grado di consapevolezza che Epicuro e la sua scuola hanno di problemi come questi è alto e che le soluzioni offerte, nonostante lo stato non sempre soddisfacente della documentazione, s'iscrivono in un quadro concettuale coerente con i fondamenti della filosofia epicurea e della sua proposta etica. Procedendo in modo da raccogliere in veste sistematica le disparate informazioni dei testi, l'analisi esaminerà dapprima (§ 2) il problema della scelta in ambito morale e della volontarietà delle azioni. Sulla questione, determinante per spiegare la disparità dei comportamenti umani, ma resa complicata dall'interpretazione della dottrina del *clinamen*, si procederà cercando di integrare i non molti rilievi reperibili nei testi conservati di Epicuro stesso con attestazioni di Epicurei e di testimonianze indirette. Sarà quindi preso in considerazione (§ 3) il problema dell'incidenza che sui comportamenti umani possono avere le componenti emotive nella loro dimensione psico-fisica. Anche questo aspetto sarà indagato cercando di integrare le proposizioni di Epicuro, sovente espresse in forma di massime o sentenze, con gli sviluppi del tema nell'ambito della scuola. Ciò a riprova, come nel caso precedente, non solo dell'importanza o dell'interesse che il tema suscitava tra continuatori e discepoli, ma anche del modo in cui le tesi di Epicuro erano elaborate, forse anche discusse e presentate all'esterno. Infine (§ 4) sarà dato conto delle soluzioni proposte da Epicuro per sopperire a uno stato di cose che costa agli uomini infelicità e insicurezza. Trattandosi di temi ben noti, la presentazione sarà volutamente schematica. In tal modo, però, si potrà avere una visione sinottica complessiva di essi e si potrà mostrare che, in ciò che potrebbe sembrare un elenco o una semplice rassegna di tesi, si può cogliere invece l'insieme dei precetti, quasi una sorta di decalogo, che Epicuro riteneva indispensabili per vivere una vita migliore possibile.

2. *All'origine della diversità dei comportamenti umani*

Per quanto però non siano oggetto specifico di discussione in questa sede, i diversi modi in cui gli uomini scelgono di comportarsi costituiscono un problema che può essere istruttivo esaminare perché introduce alla fondamentale questione della libertà

di scelta in ambito morale - una questione non secondaria anche per quel che riguarda la possibilità di deviare dal perseguimento del bene ultimo. Nell'etica epicurea è questo un problema particolarmente urgente, data l'impostazione materialista della sua psicologia e dato anche il ruolo determinante assegnato alla necessità degli atomi. Se infatti le operazioni dell'anima dipendono dalla sua struttura atomica e dalle modificazioni che essa subisce ad opera di *eidola/simulacra* che provengono dall'esterno, c'è ancora spazio per poter parlare di una dimensione psichica autonoma e autodeterminata dall'interno?

Testimoni indiretti, intendendo con ciò non Epicuro stesso, ma fonti epicuree e autori esterni alla scuola, additano come soluzione del problema il ricorso alla teoria del *clinamen*, cioè ad una capacità indeterminata e spontanea insita negli atomi di *deviare* dalla traiettoria del loro movimento naturale e necessario. Stando a resoconti di autori non epicurei[1], Epicuro avrebbe realizzato che, se tutto fosse dipeso dal moto «certo e necessario» degli atomi, nulla sarebbe stato «in nostro potere» (*in nostra potestate*) e avrebbe perciò attribuito agli atomi questa capacità di «deviare un pochino» (*declinare paululum*), di un «minimo» (*intervallo minimo*) dalla direzione conseguente al loro peso e alla caduta verso il basso. Proprio la scoperta di questo terzo movimento degli atomi, che tuttavia era giocoforza qualificare come «incausato» (*sine causa*) per renderlo indipendente da urti e collisioni atomiche esterne, sarebbe stata la sua risposta al determinismo stoico[2]. Ma poiché in nessuno

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[1] Cf. Plu. *An. procr.* 6, 1015c: Ἐπικούρῳ μὲν γὰρ οὐδ' ἀκαρὲς ἐγκλῖναι τὴν ἄτομον συγχωροῦσιν (οἱ Στωϊκοὶ) ὡς ἀναίτιον ἐπείσαγοντι κίνησιν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος («Ad Epicuro in effetti <gli Stoici> non concedono che l'atomo devii neppure di un poco, perché introduce in tal modo un moto senza causa»). Plu. *Soll. anim.* 7, 964c: οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτοὶ (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς καὶ τοῦ Περιπάτου) τῷ Ἐπικούρῳ διδόασιν ὑπὲρ τῶν μεγίστων σμικρὸν οὕτω καὶ φαῦλον, ἄτομον παρεγκλῖναι μίαν ἐπὶ τοὐλάχιστον, ὅπως ἄστρα καὶ ζῷα καὶ τύχη παρεισέλθη καὶ τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν μὴ ἀπόληται («<Stoici e Peripatetici> infatti non concedono ad Epicuro cose di somma rilevanza e neppure, credo, una cosa piccola e futile come questa, che <cioè> un solo atomo devii di un minimo, in modo da far spazio agli astri e agli animali e alla sorte e non distruggere ciò che dipende da noi»). Cic. *Fin.* I 18-19: «<Epicurus> censet enim eadem illa individua et solida corpora ferri deorsum suo pondere ad lineam, hunc naturalem esse omnium corporum motum. Deinde ibidem homo acutus, cum illud occurret, si omnia deorsus e regione ferrentur et, ut dixi, ad lineam, numquam fore ut atomus altera alteram posset attingere itaque <effici mundum non posse>, attulit rem commenticiam: declinare dixit atomum perpaulum, quo nihil posset fieri minus» («Epicuro ritiene, infatti, che quegli stessi corpi indivisibili e compatti si muovano in linea retta verso il basso per il loro peso e che questo sia il movimento naturale di tutti i corpi. Accortosi poi da uomo acuto che, se ogni cosa si muovesse dall'alto verso il basso e, come ho detto, in linea retta, mai si sarebbe dato che un atomo potesse toccarne un altro e che perciò un mondo potesse prodursi, introdusse una novità fantasiosa: disse che l'atomo declina di pochissimo, nella misura più piccola possibile»). Cic. *ND* I 69: «Velut Epicurus cum videret, si atomi ferrentur in locum inferiorem suopte pondere, nihil fore in nostra potestate, quod esset earum motus certus et necessarius, invenit quo modo necessitatem effugeret, quod videlicet Democritum fugerat: ait atomum, cum pondere et gravitate directo deorsus feratur, declinare paululum» («Così Epicuro, accortosi che se gli atomi si muovessero verso il basso per il peso, nulla sarebbe stato in nostro potere, poiché il loro moto era certo e necessario, trovò il modo di evitare la necessità, ciò che evidentemente era sfuggito a Democrito: disse che l'atomo, muovendosi in linea retta verso il basso per il peso e la gravità, devii un pochino»).

[2] Cf. anche Cic. *Fat.* 22-23: «Sed Epicurus declinatione atomi vitari necessitatem fati putat. Itaque tertius quidam motus oritur extra pondus et plagam, cum declinat atomus intervallo minimo (id appellat ἐλάχιστον); quam declinationem sine causa fieri si minus verbis, re cogitur confiteri. [...] Hanc

dei suoi testi conservati Epicuro parla di questa capacità degli atomi di deviare, si potrebbe pensare che la dottrina sia stata elaborata non da Epicuro stesso, ma nella scuola forse sotto la pressione di critiche di altre scuole. Ne parlano in effetti sia Filodemo sia Diogene di Enoanda[3], sottolineando entrambi l'importanza della scoperta da un punto di vista etico, per giustificare cioè la possibilità di scelte libere. Ma si tratta di indicazioni piuttosto generiche, che non chiariscono fino in fondo se il *clinamen* fosse una dottrina fisica o etica[4], né quindi se l'intento fosse un effettivo sganciamento dell'universo psichico dall'universo fisico.

Tanto più che in Lucrezio, al quale si deve l'unica trattazione estesa della dottrina (II 216-293)[5], piano fisico e piano psicologico, moti atomici e moti del soggetto agente

Epicurus rationem induxit ob eam rem, quod veritus est ne, si semper atomus gravitate ferretur naturali ac necessaria, nihil liberum nobis esset, cum ita moveretur animus, ut atomorum motu cogeretur» («Ma Epicuro pensa di evitare la necessità con la deviazione dell'atomo. Spunta perciò un terzo moto oltre a quelli del peso e dell'urto, in quanto l'atomo devia di uno spazio minimo (ciò che egli chiama ἐλάχιστον); la quale deviazione avviene senza una causa, come di fatto, anche se non a parole, deve ammettere. […] Epicuro introdusse questo ragionamento perché temeva che, se l'atomo si muovesse sempre per la gravità naturale e necessaria, non ci sarebbe alcuna libertà per noi, perché l'animo si muoverebbe così come costretto dal moto degli atomi»). Di seguito è quindi riferito il commento di Carneade: «Acutius Carneades, qui docebat posse Epicurua suam causam sine hac commenticia declinatione defendere. Nam cum docerent esse posse quendam animi motum voluntarium, id fuit defendi melius quam introducere declinationem, cuius praesertim causam reperire non possunt» («Con maggiore acutezza Carneade mostrava che gli Epicurei potevano difendere la loro causa senza questa fantasiosa deviazione. Infatti, poiché sostenevano che un certo moto volontario dell'animo è possibile, era meglio difendere questo piuttosto che introdurre la deviazione, specialmente perché non sono in grado di trovarne la causa»). Alcuni resoconti dossografici (Aët. I 12, 5, 6; I 23, 3-4) attestano solo classificazioni di tipi di movimento ammessi da Epicuro, una di quattro tipi (perpendicolare, di deviazione, per urto e per rimbalzo) e una di soli due (perpendicolare e di deviazione). La polemica tra Epicurei e Stoici sul *motus sine causa*, è discussa da ISNARDI PARENTE (1991).

[3] Phld. *Sign.* 54 De Lacy; Diog. Oen. fr. 54, col. 2-3 Smith. In particolare, Filodemo mostra che si tratta di una dottrina ammessa dagli Epicurei, ma anche comprovata tramite il principio che nulla nell'evidenza osservabile si oppone ad essa. Diogene invece ne fa menzione nella circostanza in cui polemizza con Democrito e la sua concezione di una necessità che esclude ogni libertà e sconfina nella credenza che esista il destino e la stessa divinazione. Suo anche il rilievo che, senza il movimento di deviazione, non avrebbe senso la lode o il biasimo che accompagnano le azioni.

[4] In questo senso anche MOREL (2009), 52.

[5] «Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus, / corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur / ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme / incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum / tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis. / quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum, / imbris uti guttae caderent per inane profundum, / nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata / principiis: ita nil umquam natura creasset. […] quare etiam atque etiam paulum inclinare necessest / corpora; nec plus quam minimum, ne fingere motus/ obliquos videamur et id res vera refutet. / Namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse videmus, / pondera, quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare, / ex supero cum praecipitant, quod cernere possis./ sed nil omnino <recta> regione viai / declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese? / Denique si semper motus conectitur omnis / et vetere exoritur <motu> novus ordine certo / nec declinando faciunt primordia motus / principium quoddam quod fati foedera rumpat, / ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur, / libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat, / unde est haec, inquam, fatis avulsa voluntas / per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas, / declinamus item motus nec tempore certo / nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens? / nam dubio procul his rebus sua cuique voluntas / principium dat et hinc motu per membra rigantur. […] iamne vides igitur, quamquam vis extera multos / pellat et invitos cogat procedere saepe / praecipitesque rapi, tamen esse in pectore nostro / quiddam quod contra pugnare obstaretque possit? / cuius ad arbitrium quoque copia

sono presentati senza soluzione di continuità[6]. Dapprima Lucrezio fissa i presupposti teorici della dottrina, mostrando il tipo di collegamento che sussiste tra moti atomici sul piano fisico e moti del soggetto agente sul piano psicologico. È (i) *necessario* che gli atomi declinino di pochissimo (*paulum inclinare necessest /corpora*, II 243-244), allontanandosi dalla traiettoria perpendicolare richiesta dal loro peso, altrimenti non potrebbero incontrarsi e formare le cose. Ed è anche (ii) *non impossibile*, nel senso di non avere testimonianza contraria nell'evidenza osservabile (*sed nil omnino <recta> regione viai /declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese?*, II 249-250). È (iii) questa *infine* (*denique*, II 251) anche la condizione alla quale *è possibile* dar conto della *voluntas* negli uomini. Infatti, se i moti atomici si succedessero gli uni altri «in ordine certo», e se non si desse che nella loro declinazione gli inizi delle cose (*primordia rerum*) costituiscano un certo principio (*principium quoddam*) che infranga i decreti del fato (*fati foedera*), evitando che «da tempo infinito causa consegua a causa», non

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materiai / cogitur interdum flecti per membra per artus / et proiecta refrenatur retroque residit. / quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necessest, / esse aliam praeter plagas et pondera causam / motibus, unde haec est nobis innata potestas, / de nilo quoniam nil posse videmus. / pondus enim prohibet ne plagis omnia fiant / externa quasi vi. sed ne mens ipsa necessum / intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis / et devicta quasi cogatur ferre patique, / id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum / nec regione loci certa nec tempore certo» («Anche questo desideriamo che tu conosca in tali questioni, / che i corpi primi, quando si spostano verso il basso in linea retta attraverso il vuoto / per i pesi loro propri, in un tempo sicuramente non determinato / e in luoghi non determinati deviano un poco dal cammino, / di quel tanto che tu possa dire che il moto è mutato. / Perché se non fossero soliti deviare, tutti in basso / come gocce di pioggia cadrebbero attraverso il vuoto profondo, / né scontro sarebbe nato né urto si sarebbe prodotto / tra i principi: così, nulla mai la natura avrebbe generato. [...] Perciò è tanto più necessario che i corpi deviino / un poco; non più di un minimo, perché non sembri che inventiamo / moti obliqui e ciò la vera realtà confuti. / E infatti questo vediamo essere evidente e manifesto, / che i pesi, per quanto sta in loro, non possono muoversi obliquamente, / quando cadono dall'alto, e tu puoi osservarlo. / Ma che per nulla assolutamente declinino dalla linea retta / chi è che possa vederlo da sé? / Infine, se ogni moto è sempre connesso / e dal vecchio <moto> il nuovo scaturisce in ordine certo / e con la deviazione gli inizi delle cose non possono creare un qualche principio che spezzi i decreti del fato, / di modo che dall'infinito tempo causa non consegua a causa, / da dove, da dove, dico, viene ai viventi questa volontà libera sulla terra, sganciata dai fati, / per la quale ci muoviamo verso là dove il piacere conduce ciascuno / e inclianiamo i moti non in un tempo determinato / né in un luogo determinato dello spazio, ma là dove porta la mente stessa? [...] Non vedi dunque che, sebbene una forza dall'esterno sospinga / molti uomini e li costringa contro voglia spesso ad avanzare / e a esser tratti a precipizio, c'è tuttavia nel nostro petto/ qualcosa che può opporsi e fare ostacolo? / Per suo arbitrio anche la massa della materia / talvolta è forzata a piegarsi nelle membra e nelle giunture/ e, respinta, è frenata e all'indietro si ferma. / Perciò anche nei semi questo è necessario riconoscere / che oltre a urti e pesi c'è un'altra causa per i moti, dalla quale viene a noi questo innato potere, / perché nulla vediamo nascere dal nulla. / Il peso infatti impedisce che ogni cosa si produca per gli urti / quasi per forza esterna. Ma che la mente stessa possegga una necessità / interiore in tutto ciò che fa / e, soggiogata, sia quasi costretta a subire e patire, / ciò è opera di una piccola deviazione dei principi / non in un luogo determinato dello spazio né in un tempo determinato»).

[6] Nell'interpretazione di LONG-SEDLEY (1987) I, 111, questa presentazione lucreziana non risulterebbe comunque incompatibile con le risultanze di altre testimonianze che collegano il *clinamen* alla libertà del volere, mentre l'assenza della spiegazione del carattere non fisico della causalità psicologica sarebbe dovuta al fatto che il poema si concentra sulla fisica. Nell'interpretazione di MOREL (2009) 54, invece, Lucrezio instaurerebbe più che altro un'analogia tra il *clinamen* degli atomi e il libero movimento dell'agente, entrambi caratterizzabili sui rispettivi piani come causa motrice indipendente da costrizioni necessitanti, procedendo in base al principio che nulla può accadere senza una causa.

ci sarebbe neppure una «libera volontà» divelta dal destino, per la quale andiamo verso dove il piacere guida ciascuno e «incliniamo» i nostri movimenti non in un tempo certo e in una certa sezione dello spazio, ma «là dove porta la mente stessa» (II 251-260).

Lucrezio passa quindi a caratterizzare i moti presenti nel soggetto agente. Si scopre allora che la *causa motrice* (psichica) dell'azione da compiere (o da non compiere) - ossia, la *libera voluntas* che *declina* dove vuole la *mens* - è «un qualche principio», mosso anch'esso e quindi corporeo, che trasmette il movimento a ciò che si muove (il corpo) in virtù dell'impulso ricevuto e mette (o non mette) in campo l'azione. Da quel *principio* i moti si diffondono per tutte le parti del corpo, perché per tutto il corpo deve essere sospinta la massa della materia, in modo che concorde sia il suo sforzo nel tener dietro all'«intento della mente» (*studium mentis*) trasportato dalla spinta che il movimento riceve nel «cuore» (*cor*, presumibilmente nel senso di *petto*, dove per Lucrezio risiede l'*animus*, l'intelligenza o appunto *mens*, II 261-283). La conclusione tratta a questo punto da Lucrezio non lascia dubbi sul fatto che nella sua presentazione della questione il piano fisico della natura esterna è preminente e nella natura del soggetto agente piano fisico e piano psichico interloquiscono in continuità. Alla luce di quanto detto, infatti, e fondandosi sul principio che nulla può nascere dal nulla, Lucrezio sollecita ad ammettere che nei «semi» di tutte le cose esiste, oltre agli urti e ai pesi, un'altra causa dei movimenti, da cui viene a noi questo «innato potere». Negli atomi è il peso che funge da causa interna di movimento; nella *mens* l'interiore necessità (*necessum intestinum*) è quella «piccolissima declinazione (*exiguum clinamen*) dei principi», gli atomi che la costituiscono dunque, che porta ad agire in tempi e luoghi non determinati (II 284-293). Forse la dottrina del *clinamen* lascia aperti una serie di problemi e non è la soluzione cercata[7]. Forse il resoconto di Lucrezio potrà sembrare non del tutto chiaro sui termini precisi in cui avviene l'atto volitivo[8]. Ma forse il ricorso a questa dottrina non ha solo un significato di polemica anti-

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[7] Ci si può chiedere, per esempio, se la deviazione atomica sia da considerare un moto solo episodico o sotteso invece a ogni azione che si compie; oppure se sia la causa immediata della volizione o lo stesso atto volitivo o una risposta a un atto di volizione; oppure se non si tratti di una condizione di possibilità, più che di una vera e propria causa. Discusse sono anche tra gli interpreti moderni le ragioni plausibili del silenzio di Epicuro stesso sul *clinamen*. Su queste tavole di problemi cf. Morel (2009) 52-53, 163, 164 n. 2, con riferimenti agli studi di Englert (1987), Purinton (1999), Gigandet (2001) e O'Keefe (2005). Cf. inoltre Masi (2006) 218-255; O'Keefe (2009). A proposito in particolare della *voluntas* in Lucrezio, a parere di O'Keefe (2005) 46, essa sarebbe da intendere come *volitional desire* e *intentional impulse*, non quindi come una facoltà o un'attività con cui si accoglie o si rifiuta un oggetto del desiderio. Più in generale per Bobzien (2000) nell'epicureismo il problema della libertà del volere non si sarebbe posto perché il fondamento della responsabilità sarebbe stato individuato nella capacità del soggetto di auto-determinazione più che su una totale indeterminazione mentale e sulla possibilità di una scelta tra diverse opzioni.

[8] È il rilievo avanzato da Morel (2009) 53. Vede invece nell'analisi del *clinamen* in Lucrezio la piena giustificazione dell'autonomo potere causale della mente restando nei limiti della fisica atomistica, Verde (2013) 206-211.

deterministica[9]. Il suo vantaggio dal punto di vista epicureo è che vince qualunque tentazione di dare ai fenomeni psichici uno status di separatezza dal mondo fisico e, nel microcosmo, dall'unione con il corpo dal quale l'anima non può prescindere. È l'unità psico-fisica del vivente interpretata in chiave atomistica, anche a costo di considerare la volontà come un motore mosso da altro. In questa chiave, come ancora Lucrezio spiega altrove (IV 877-891), la *voluntas* che funge da causa del movimento del corpo quando decidiamo di muoverci, nasce dall'impatto/impulso impresso sull'*animus* da «simulacri di movimento» (*simulacra meandi*) provenienti dall'esterno, perché «nessuno comincia a fare qualcosa / prima che la mente veda anticipatamente ciò che vuole» (*neque enim facere incipit ullam / rem quisquam, <quam> mens providit quid velit ante*) e dell'oggetto del volere si dia un'«immagine» certa (*constat imago*). Nella catena di moti che ne consegue, l'*animus* stimola a sua volta immediatamente l'*anima* che è disseminata per tutte le parti del corpo e questa infine mette in movimento l'intera massa corporea.

Dal canto suo Epicuro si limita a fornire nei testi conservati poche indicazioni. Una di queste potrebbe essere la tripartizione delle cause degli eventi elaborata nell'*Epistola a Meneceo*, comprendente eventi che dipendono dalla necessità (ἀνάγκη), eventi che dipendono dal caso (τύχη) ed eventi che dipendono «da noi» (παρ' ἡμᾶς). La differenza posta tra essi è che quelli dipendenti dalla necessità hanno una causa «inderogabile» (ἀνυπεύθυνον), quelli dipendenti dal caso una causa «instabile» (ἄστατον) e quelli dipendenti da noi una causa «priva di padroni» (ἀδέσποτον), che è anche la causa per cui possiamo essere lodati o biasimati. La terminologia non lascia dubbi sul fatto che a suo avviso le nostre azioni sono libere, non necessitate né causali, e di esse siamo noi stessi gli unici padroni. A ciò poi faceva seguito la nota presa di posizione contro la credenza nell'esistenza di una necessità assoluta, il cui bersaglio sembra essere proprio Democrito: «meglio sarebbe tener dietro al mito sugli dei che essere schiavi del destino dei fisici», perché «quel <modo> offre la speranza di placare gli dei con gli onori, questo invece detiene una necessità implacabile» (Epicur. *Ep.* 4, 134)[10]. Un'altra indicazione potrebbe vedersi in un passo dell'*Epistola ad Erodoto* interno alla sezione (*Ep.* 2, 63-68) dedicata allo studio dell'anima. Qui infatti non è solo rivendicata all'anima una supremazia causale (πλείστη αἰτία) rispetto al corpo nell'esercizio della funzione percettiva; è anche riconosciuto che il corpo partecipa della sensazione grazie all'anima, ma non di tutti i poteri che essa detiene (οὐ μέντοι

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[9] In pratica, l'opposizione al determinismo (nella versione stoica e nella versione del 'necessitarismo' democriteo) costituirebbe il modo in cui Epicuro avrebbe garantito una relativa indipendenza del piano della causalità psichica dal piano della causalità fisica; il che eviterebbe di individuare nel *clinamen* la soluzione del problema dell'autodeterminazione e indebolirebbe il valore teorico della dottrina. Cf. su ciò SEDLEY (1983 e 1988). Propende per questa interpretazione MOREL (2009) 53, 164-165, precisando tuttavia che il silenzio degli Epicurei sulla specifica natura del moto libero non sarebbe casuale, ma suggerirebbe che «da liberté n'est pas le *demonstrandum* ou le point d'arrivée des arguments épicuriens, mais au contraire leur point de départ et leur évidence fondatrice».

[10] L'adesione alla tesi della necessità pone anche chi la sostiene nell'impossibilità di contraddire la tesi opposta perché questa pure si deve ammettere che sia necessaria: *Sent. Vat.* 40.

πάντων ὧν ἐκείνη κέκτηται, *Ep.* 2, 64). Il che, se non intendo male, potrebbe sottintendere che ci sono attività dell'anima che si sottraggono al potere del corpo e alludere perciò ad una relativa indipendenza della dimensione psichica da quella fisica.

E poi ci sarebbero le sezioni superstiti del libro XXV *Sulla natura*, conservate dai papiri ercolanesi, da cui sembra di poter desumere in generale, con tutte le cautele del caso, che Epicuro affrontasse il problema del rapporto tra moti fisici della costituzione atomica e moti psichici (o forse direttamente la questione dei moti psichici come moti liberi e della loro indipendenza dai moti fisici), senza ricorrere al *clinamen*[11]. Sfuggono invece, com'è facile comprendere, i particolari delle sue argomentazioni. Pare comunque che Epicuro ammettesse (a) che esistono moti dell'anima che non sono dovuti all'introdursi di simulacri dall'esterno, ma che si producono da sé e di qui si sviluppano autonomamente[12]; (b) che questi moti di per se stessi, non perché dipendono dalla stessa causa degli atomi, possono dar luogo ad azioni da combattere e biasimare; (c) che quando questi moti si configurano secondo una certa qual differenza dalla configurazione degli atomi, il soggetto «acquisisce la causa che procede da se stesso»; (d) che questi moti non sono condizionati dall' «originaria costituzione» atomica, non perdono la loro propria causalità per il fatto che la costituzione atomica comporta moti necessari e sono «assolutamente in nostro potere»; (e) che questi moti sono altri e diversi da quelli che insorgono a causa della «natura e di ciò che ci circonda», né sono collegati a fattori come l'età[13].

Se ora qualche insegnamento si può trarre per la tematica che qui interessa da quel che finora è emerso, questo è il fatto che l'individuo ha nella sua anima un principio di autodeterminazione, quindi di agire diversamente, anche se per sua natura l'anima è strutturata con costituenti di per sé immutabili. Necessità e libertà non confliggono nella prospettiva epicurea, se *è possibile* (*non necessario*, ma anche *non impossibile*) che gli atomi *deviino* dalla traiettoria del loro moto naturale; oppure se si può mostrare, come del resto l'evidenza indica, che le azioni che si compiono sono lodate o biasimate e che non tutti i moti dell'anima si traducono in azioni; che inoltre il

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[11] Sul testo di questo libro cf. ARRIGHETTI (1973²), nᵒ 34. Successive edizioni sono di LAURSEN (1995 e 1997). Restituzioni e traduzioni di passi, corredate da tavole di corrispondenza tra le diverse edizioni, sono reperibili anche in MASI (2006). Secondo VERDE (2013), 205-206, non si potrebbe escludere che la dottrina del *clinamen*, pur non essendo esplicitamente menzionata nel libro in questione, abbia una relazione con il suo contenuto, almeno nel senso che nella dottrina troverebbe risposta un problema che nel libro non sarebbe stato risolto: conciliare cioè il potere causale autonomo della mente con la sua costituzione atomica. Cf. in questo senso già ARRIGHETTI (1973²), 631-632, nel commento a 34, 22.

[12] 34, 17 ARRIGHETTI 1973². Per questi moti Epicuro usa la denominazione di τὰ ἀπογεγεννημένα, difficile da intendere e da rendere. Tra le molte proposte di traduzione si possono citare: *moti volontari* (Diano, Isnardi Parente); *elaborati dei dati della sensazione* (Grilli); *moti e modi di essere dell'anima in senso generico* (Arrighetti); *developments* (Long-Sedley); *développnemt psychique personnel* (Morel); *prodotti* (Verde). Quanto al suo significato, non è definito se l'espressione sia da riferire ai «diversi stati (fisici) della *dianoia* durante il suo sviluppo» (così VERDE, 2013, 205), a stati del soggetto o allo stesso soggetto. Si vedano su ciò SEDLEY (1983) 17; ANNAS (1993) 57 e cf. MOREL (2009) 168 e n. 3.

[13] Epicur. *Nat.* XXV 34, 21; 34, 24-26; 34, 24 e 24, 33 ARRIGHETTI 1973².

carattere può essere modificato con esortazioni e ammonimenti; che ci sono comportamenti dettati da moti psichici conformi o in contrasto con la costituzione atomica[14], o anche che, quando sono trascinati a forza a compiere qualcosa contro il volere della *mens*, gli uomini oppongono resistenza[15]. Resta il problema iniziale: che cosa induce all'adozione di comportamenti non solo lodevoli, ma anche biasimevoli o, ancora più a monte, perché a volte gli uomini non operano per il loro bene e ottengono risultati controproducenti? La risposta può venire dall'esame dei movimenti dell'azione: se i modi d'agire sono conseguenti ai movimenti, a movimenti corretti e correttamente assunti corrisponderanno azioni congruenti.

3. *Cattivi consiglieri*

L'avviso di Epicuro è che «nessuno che veda il male lo sceglie, ma ne è adescato (δελεασθείς) e lo insegue come un bene a fronte di un male maggiore» (*Sent. Vat.* 16). Cioè: si vede il male ma non lo si sceglie; piuttosto ne siamo come irretiti e presi all'amo quando lo vediamo come un bene rispetto a mali più grandi, dunque in realtà come un male ritenuto minore. «La natura - diceva ancora Epicuro - è debole (ἀστενής) verso il male, non verso il bene, perché è salvata dai piaceri, ma distrutta dai dolori» (*Sent. Vat.* 37). Il dolore, ossia il male nell'etica epicurea, ci rende in altri termini fragili ed è per non soffrire di più che perseguiamo come bene un male apparentemente minore. La scelta quindi dipende da noi, è cioè volontaria, ma l'azione è compiuta per sopperire a uno stato di necessità in cui ci troviamo coinvolti involontariamente, ossia senza che lo volessimo. Al tempo stesso però la scelta appare viziata dal fatto che si agisce per impulso sotto la spinta di stati emotivi, pulsioni, passioni e sofferenze fisiche e psichiche. In questi casi quindi l'azione si configura come una sorta di risposta meccanica a ciò che procura dolore e turbamento e non nasce da un calcolo razionale dei piaceri come norma di vita, bensì dall'intento irriflesso di neutralizzare condizioni di afflizione momentanea e circoscritta. Non è forse da trascurare anche il fatto che, soprattutto nelle difficoltà contingenti, può aumentare il rischio di giudicare che cosa è bene e che cosa è male in base all'opinione che se ne ha, non in base a una conoscenza reale e oggettiva del criterio. È qui per Epicuro la radice dell'inganno e dell'errore (διημαρτημένον): in «ciò che l'opinione aggiunge (προσδοξαζόμενον) a quel che attende di essere confermato o non smentito», prima che sia confermato o smentito, in virtù di un «certo moto in noi stessi», connesso all'applicazione rappresentativa della mente ma differente da questa[16]. I guasti della *religio* quali sono descritti da Lucrezio a livello individuale e collettivo fanno il resto, fomentando i vizi degli uomini e acuendo i rapporti conflittuali tra essi[17]. Epicuro sembrava non dubitare che fosse in potere della libertà umana controllare i moti dell'anima e anche le rappresentazioni che dall'esterno

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[14] Così in Epicur. *Nat.* XXV 34, 21; 34, 23; 34, 25 ARRIGHETTI 1973[2].
[15] Così Lucr. II 273-280.
[16] Epicur. *Ep.* 2, 50-51.
[17] Lucr. V 1161-1240.

pervengono a impressionare mente e sensi; aveva anche fiducia che la pratica e l'esercizio della saggezza valessero a non lasciarsi veramente turbare da certe sensazioni[18]. L'anima in tal modo potrebbe essere ricondotta da uno stato interno di moto atomico alterato, come quello prodotto dalla *religio*, ad uno stato di moto quieto e dolore e sofferenza potrebbero risolversi a livello di atomi. Ma basterebbe questo a sanare il dolore del corpo, dal quale dipende la sensazione di dolore nell'anima, visto che configurazioni atomiche alterate a livello fisico come malattie e acciacchi non possono essere modificate perché non dipendono da noi e anzi ci capitano come noi non vorremmo che capitassero?

Tra anima e corpo, in effetti, sussiste un rapporto di vicinanza (ὁμούρησις) e corrispondenza reciproca (συμπάθεια) tale che l'uno è *co-affetto* insieme all'altra[19]. Sicché, bisogni e passioni, desideri e sofferenze si trasmettono dall'uno all'altra e viceversa senza soluzione di continuità: le affezioni conseguenti a questi diversi stati interessano il corpo tanto quanto l'anima e su entrambi si ripercuote la nostra fragilità di fronte a dolore e sofferenza, nonché l'impulsività con cui cerchiamo di porre rimedio a eventi che solo in apparenza hanno carattere di necessità. Così, per quel che riguarda (a) *bisogni e passioni*, è la nostra fragilità rispetto a bisogni primari come fame, sete o freddo che ci induce, per evitare maggiori sofferenze, a soddisfare malamente questi bisogni, o a perseguire i piaceri cattivi dei dissoluti per evitare il male maggiore di essere privati del piacere[20]. Anche l'anima però si mostra fragile quando cede alla schiavitù dell'accumulo di ricchezze o diventa eccessivamente parsimoniosa per evitare la povertà[21]; o quando, mossa da passione erotica, va alla ricerca di ogni occasione di incontro pur di non perdere i contatti con l'oggetto del desiderio[22]; o quando invidia qualcuno per timore di non poterne uguagliare la migliore condizione (*Sent. Vat.* 52); o ancora quando cerca fama e rinomanza per non rischiare oscurità o oblio[23]. Ma lo «scontento dell'anima» (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς

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[18] Cf. Epicur. *Nat.* XXV 34, 26 ARRIGHETTI 1973[2] e il suo commento alle pagine 633-634.

[19] Epicur. *Ep.* 2, 64-65: «Bisogna inoltre tener fermo che l'anima detiene la causa principale della sensazione. Certo essa non avrebbe sensazione se non fosse in certo modo ricoperta dal resto dell'aggregato. Ma il resto dell'aggregato, che le ha procurato questa causa, riceve dall'anima di partecipare anch'esso di siffatto accidente, non però di tutti quelli che l'anima possiede. Così, quando l'anima se ne è staccata, esso non ha più sensazione. Esso infatti non ha in se stesso questo potere, ma lo procura a qualcos'altro che si generato insieme ad esso. E questo qualcos'altro, servendosi del potere che in esso si è costituito, produce subito per se stesso, grazie al suo movimento, questo accidente che è la sensazione e lo restituisce <al resto dell'aggregato> in virtù della vicinanza e corrispondenza reciproca, come ho già detto».

[20] *Sent. Vat.* 33: «Il grido della carne è non aver fame, non aver sete, non aver freddo; chi infatti sia in possesso di ciò e speri di averlo in futuro, potrebbe contendere con Zeus in felicità». Cf. anche *Sent. Vat.* 59 e *MC* X.

[21] Cf. *Sent. Vat.* 25, 43, 63, 67; *MC* XV.

[22] Sull'argomento cf. *Sent. Vat.* 18 e D.L. X 118. Contro l'amore inteso come passione illusoria e travolgente, cf. Lucr. IV 1058-1287. Si veda in proposito BROWN (1987). Sul caso della trattazione lucreziana come spia sul tema della responsabilità e della libertà, cf. anche MOREL (2009), 179-183.

[23] Cf. *MC* VII. Epicuro tuttavia, secondo Plu. *Suav. viv. Epic.* 18, 1100a, riconosceva che alcuni piaceri possono derivare dalla fama. Per Lucrezio, V 1120-1240, fama, ricerca del potere, invidia, avidità sono un portato della *religio* e vanno di pari passo con il timore degli dei e della morte che la *religio*

ἀχάριστον) rende l'essere vivente goloso di una dieta alimentare infinitamente variata (*Sent. Vat.* 69), con conseguenze negative in genere sul modo di vivere, mentre il perseguire un fine diverso da quello della natura, per sceglierlo o rifiutarlo, crea incoerenza tra ciò che si dice e ciò che si fa, tra parola e azione (*MC* XXV), dunque instabilità e insicurezza.

Anche (b) i *desideri* sono cause di azioni; si agisce infatti nell'intento di soddisfarli. Per Epicuro male non è desiderare, ma desiderare il troppo invece del poco, il superfluo invece del necessario, l'*innaturale*, ossia ciò che la natura non richiede, invece del *naturale*, ossia ciò che soddisfa la natura. È l'ansia che nulla sia abbastanza che muove i comportamenti umani in tutti questi casi. Di qui la tendenza ad andare oltre, a superare i limiti di ciò che può soddisfare un desiderio per avere sempre di più. «Per tutti i desideri (ἐπιθυμίαι) - diceva Epicuro - bisogna porre questo interrogativo: che cosa mi accadrà qualora si compia ciò che è ricercato secondo il desiderio? E che cosa, qualora non si compia?» (*Sent. Vat.* 71). Era però consapevole anche del fatto che questo appello a fronteggiare responsabilmente i propri desideri e a conformare le proprie azioni alla valutazione delle loro conseguenze naufraga a fronte del timore della mancanza. Il poco appare allora insufficiente e il troppo è ricercato come rimedio per colmare la misura, ma anche per assicurarsi abbondanza anche in futuro (*Ep.* 4, 130). In realtà, egli affermava, «a chi non basta il poco nulla basta»[24]. Il fatto è però, come erano soliti dire gli Epicurei, che ci sono negli uomini anche desideri che, come quelli volti alla ricerca del superfluo e del lusso, non provengono da un «impulso (ὄρεξις) necessario», né sono «necessariamente generati da qualcosa che provoca dolore», ma derivano o da «qualcosa che provoca dolore e sofferenza per il solo fatto di non essere presente», o da qualcosa che arreca gioia, o ancora da credenze vane e false[25]. Né si tratta di desideri che mirano ad assicurare il superfluo solo per il corpo, come quelli di cibi o vesti raffinate; anche per l'anima si desidera il superfluo e insaziabile è allora il desiderio di beni, di ricchezze o di fama, perché si crede di accrescere con essi la quantità di bene per un tempo più lungo e perché si teme la morte come un tremendo male senza fine[26]. Ma sono questi i desideri precari e «senza limiti» (*infinitae*) che quanto più sono appagati, tanto più risultano inappagabili[27]. Per questo si poteva dire con Epicuro che «meglio è per te essere forte stando disteso su un giaciglio che essere turbato disponendo di un letto aureo e di una mensa sontuosa»[28]. Ancora una volta quindi è lo scontento dell'anima che sta alla base dell'indirizzo errato che un desiderio può prendere. La dimensione mentale del volere

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instilla nell'anima. Il riferimento di fondo è all'atteggiamento da tenere nei confronti della vita politica, da cui notoriamente Epicuro distoglieva, a meno che si trattasse di una situazione straordinaria o la rinuncia ad occuparsene causasse più sofferenza del non occuparsene. Cf. Sen. *Ot.* 3, 2; Phld. *Rh.* II 158, 6 Sudhaus; Plu. *Tranq. an.* 2, 465f ed Epicuro stesso in *Sent. Vat.* 58.

[24] Il detto è riportato da Ael. *VH* IV 3.
[25] La testimonianza è resa da Porph. *Abst.* I 49.
[26] Cf. su ciò *Schol. in Arist. Eth. Nic.* 171, 23; Porph. *Abst.* I 54.
[27] Per questa testimonianza cf. Sen. *Vit.* 13, 4.
[28] Il detto è trasmesso da Porph. *Marc.* 29.

umano è quindi innegabile. Poiché però lo scontento nasce dal moto interno con cui l'anima opina senza attendere riscontri o smentite dall'esperienza esterna, il rinvio alla sua configurazione atomica è comunque inevitabile. Ed è chiaro che si tratta di una configurazione in assetto di moto variabile, essendo l'opinione di per sé vera o falsa e quindi priva della stabilità della vera conoscenza. Perciò, né l'opinione né l'impulso portano a risultati stabili e duraturi: l'opinione è incerta e al fondo dell'impulsività, che induce ad agire senza la necessaria riflessione, si riconoscono moventi come paura, timore del futuro, ansia dell'illimitato e/o opinabili persuasioni.

Muove all'azione anche (c) il *dolore del corpo*, perché spinge chi lo prova a liberarsene al più presto e a qualunque costo. Il dolore, «sommo dei mali» per Epicuro (*Ep.* 4, 133), ha nel corpo diverse manifestazioni. È il «dolore della carne» (*MC* IV) e il corpo ne è afflitto quando (i) avverte la mancanza di ciò che è necessario per vivere, come cibi e bevande; nel qual caso il dolore nasce da un senso di *vuotezza* ed è accompagnato dalla tensione verso il *riempimento*, che possa sedare fame e sete integrando l'alimento o la bevanda di cui si avverte la mancanza (Lucr. IV 858-876). Oppure (ii) quando al contrario è oppresso da *riempimento*, nel qual caso il dolore è accompagnato dalla tensione verso lo *svuotamento*[29]. Oppure (iii) quando subisce l'azione di caldo o freddo esterni o di un colpo ricevuto in qualche sua parte, che eccita il moto delle componenti atomiche all'interno[30]. Oppure (iv) quando i suoi sensori siano danneggiati anche temporaneamente, come nel caso delle sostanze amare o aspre, come l'assenzio o la centaurea, che con la loro configurazione atomica uncinata, pungono e feriscono i canali del sensorio del gusto[31]. Oppure ancora (v) quando è la malattia a tormentarlo[32]. E la sofferenza qui non è un'opinione, ma una vera e propria «affezione» (πάθος), ha cioè una sua evidenza a livello della sensazione ed è perciò sempre vera. È anche prodotta da cause necessarie. Come infatti è spiegato in Lucrezio (II 963-965), si prova dolore quando «i corpi della materia, incalzati da una certa forza attraverso le vive viscere e gli arti/si muovono scompostamente (*trepidant*) nelle <loro> sedi all'interno». Esso ha dunque una sua necessità e una sua certezza ed è inevitabile esserne affetti, nonostante dal dolore si tenda a rifuggire trattandosi di qualcosa che, al contrario del piacere, è «estraneo» (ἀλλότριον), non «affine», o congeniale (οἰκεῖον) all'essere vivente (D.L. X 34). Non solo sulla sensazione del dolore è impossibile sbagliare; non possiamo neppure scegliere di non provar dolore o opporre ad esso un rifiuto. Piuttosto - diceva Epicuro - «anche la

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[29] Lucr. II 435-437; IV 1030-1036, dove l'esperienza è riferita al caso delle polluzioni notturne nei maschi.

[30] Lucr. II 431-435, 438-441.

[31] Lucr. II 398-407. Sugli effetti nefasti degli *absinthia taetra*, IV 11.

[32] Da Demetrio Lacone (*op. inc. PHerc.* 1012, col. 22, p. 33 De Falco (= Epicur. fr. 18 Arrighetti²) si apprende dell'esistenza di un'opera di Epicuro *Sulla malattia e la morte*, che era criticata dai detrattori perché si riteneva che in essa egli si dilungasse inutilmente a parlare di vermi e lombrichi come di cose «dissimili», ignorando cosa fosse la *sinonimia*. Se ne può arguire che nella sua trattazione Epicuro considerasse in dettaglio anche malattie causate da diversi tipi di vermi.

comparsa di certi dolori nel corpo è utile come salvaguardia da altri dello stesso tipo» (*Sent. Vat.* 73).

Il problema è se mai come sia possibile rimuoverlo e se la rimozione possa avvenire in tutti i casi. È infatti evidente che può essere facile rimuovere i dolori prodotti da mancanza o riempimento, agendo in modo da riempire la mancanza o, al contrario, svuotare l'eccesso. Facili da rimuovere sono anche i dolori prodotti da fattori della natura esterna, o da colpi ricevuti, perché hanno durata confinata all'episodio contingente e cessano nel momento in cui il movimento interno della compagine atomica riprende il suo andamento consueto. Anche i dolori dovuti alle malattie possono essere rimossi, purché si tratti però di malattie curabili. Per Epicuro infatti intensità e durata del dolore sono inversamente proporzionali e il tempo lo allevia, almeno nei casi in cui la malattia è inguaribile anche se non mortale, fino a trasformarlo in una sensazione di piacere. Il «dolore della carne non dura ininterrottamente», egli diceva, ma per un tempo minimo quando è all'apice e per non molti giorni quando «è di poco superiore al piacere», mentre si traduce direttamente in piacere se la malattia si protrae nel tempo. Sostanzialmente analoga la distinzione formulata da Diogene di Enoanda, il quale individuava tre specie di dolore: quello derivante da mancanza, quello derivante dalle «distorsioni e dalle ossa», sia ad opera di colpi sia impercettibilmente [= *senza che ce ne accorgiamo*] e infine quello derivante da «tutte le malattie da cui è possibile scampare, per quanto è possibile alla natura dell'uomo»[33]. Il dolore quindi non si può evitare e sembra anche avere in sé una carica di irriducibilità[34].

In modo diverso inducono ad agire anche (d) i *dolori dell'anima.* La diversità rispetto al dolore fisico consiste nel fatto che il dolore psichico coincide con stati di *turbamento* prodotti dalle opinioni vane - i vuoti dell'anima - che essa si rappresenta da sé perché trascinata da insensatezza e ignoranza delle vere cause delle cose. Soprattutto e fondamentalmente la travagliano le false credenze che esistano dei con potere d'intervento provvidenziale nel mondo e sul destino degli uomini; che l'attenda un aldilà dopo la morte, dove potrà ricevere premi o castighi; che il piacere sia difficile da ottenere e che il dolore sia un male eterno e inoppugnabile[35]. Ma poi essa attribuisce anche valore a cose il cui valore è solo opinabile, come la ricchezza o gli onori e vive perciò o nell'ansia di procurarsele o nella paura di perderle, perseguendo desideri che,

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[33] Per Epicuro cf. *MC* IV; *Sent. Vat.* 4. Per Diogene di Enoanda fr. 48, col. VI Smith.

[34] A giudizio di LAURAND (2003), 94-96, 101, la presa di posizione di Epicuro presenta due difficoltà. Da un lato, risulterebbe problematico conciliare il riconoscimento di uno status irriducibile del dolore con la dottrina del fine, che per Epicuro stesso (*Ep.* 4, 131) consiste «nell'assenza di dolore nel corpo (ἀπονία) e di turbamento nell'anima (ἀταραξία)». Dall'altro lato, il caso del dolore che dura sarebbe un caso generale di compensazione della sofferenza con il piacere, ma resterebbe oscuro come possano piacere e dolore coesistere. A meno di supporre che alla distinzione del dolore in base all'intensità e alla durata debba essere aggiunto come terzo criterio l'estensione, quindi una sua localizzazione. Inoltre, muovendo dalla classificazione di Diogene, si potrebbero distinguere dolori «vani» e dolori «naturali». Vani sarebbero sia «les douleurs vaines et vides», sia «les douleurs vaines et qui font mal». Naturali invece sarebbero sia i dolori naturali che possono essere soppressi, sia quelli naturali che non possono essere totalmente soppressi.

[35] Sono le ben note quattro radici dell'angoscia umana, oggetto di *MC* I-IV e *Sent. Vat.* 1-4.

neppure se soddisfatti, la soddisfano e bisogni artificiosi. Si tratta però di turbamenti che non avrebbero ragione di esistere, fantasmi che l'anima si finge da sé e che la agitano inutilmente, ma le procurano grandi sofferenze. Come diceva Diogene di Enoanda (fr. 2, col. I-II Smith), il motivo principale che lo aveva indotto a scrivere la sua epitome era stato di giovare ad uomini che sciupavano la loro vita perché «malati di false opinioni» e sordi alle «importanti e giuste lamentele del corpo» nei confronti dell'anima per il danno che ricava dall' ingiustificata aspirazione di essa verso cose non necessarie e causa di tormenti e infelicità, invece che verso cose «piccole, facili a procurarsi e della cui gioia anche l'anima può partecipare e vivere bene». Tra essi in effetti, date le ricadute che i vaneggiamenti dell'anima possono infliggergli, è il corpo che, come diceva Democrito (B59 DK), avrebbe ragione di citare l'anima in giudizio. In virtù del rapporto 'simpatetico' che li lega, infatti, non solo i dolori del corpo si riverberano sull'anima, ma anche quelli dell'anima sul corpo. Così, uno stato di forte paura dell'anima può indurre nel corpo pallore, sudori, inceppamento della lingua, svenimenti; e viceversa, l'anima si perde smarrita tra i malanni del corpo, come quando subentra uno stato di coma (*lethargus*) o il vino induce ebbrezza o durante un attacco di epilessia[36].

4. *Che fare?*

Ciò che in conclusione sembra di poter affermare è che passioni, desideri, bisogni, ansie, paure, sofferenze fisiche e psichiche come moventi dell'agire inducono ad azioni volontariamente compiute nel tentativo di accondiscendere a una passione, soddisfare un desiderio, dissolvere ansie, timori o dolori. Ciò a cui si mira, agendo di conseguenza per questi scopi, è evidentemente e fondamentalmente togliere i turbamenti dall'anima e il dolore dal corpo, ribaltando l'affermazione (*essere affetto* in un certo modo nell'anima e nel corpo) nella negazione (*non essere affetto* in un certo modo nell'anima e nel corpo). Ma il segno che questo fine non è raggiunto sta nel fatto che, nonostante si coltivino le passioni, si soddisfino desideri e bisogni e si cerchi con ogni mezzo di alleviare le sofferenze del corpo, sempre nuovi desideri e bisogni si presentano, paure e ansie non diminuiscono e il dolore fisico non dà requie. Le passioni in effetti - dicevano gli epicurei - sono insaziabili e rovinano i singoli, ma anche famiglie e interi stati, perché da esse nascono odi, divisioni, discordie, sedizioni, e guerre all'esterno, verso gli altri e all'interno dello stesso individuo, nella sua anima. E chi ha nell'animo dissidio e discordia tra tendenze e propositi contrastanti e in guerra reciproca non può essere in una condizione di quiete e tranquillità. Chi poi regola la sua vita nella speranza di acquisire in futuro beni di fortuna (denaro, ricchezza, gloria) compie azioni congruenti con questi suoi scopi e si comporterà perciò da uomo meschino, vile e sfiduciato, oppure malevolo, invidioso, intrattabile e «amante dell'oscurità», oppure ancora sfrenato nei rapporti d'amore, sfacciato,

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[36] Lucr. III 459-462, 147-160, 463-475, 476-483, 487-505. Complica la questione la distinzione in Lucrezio tra *animus* (il pensiero, la mente) e *anima* (il principio vitale del corpo). Per una discussione su questa distinzione lucreziana e i suoi rapporti con la dottrina di Epicuro rinvio a Repici (2008).

protervo, arrogante, violento, intemperante, ignavo e mutevole nelle sue opinioni[37]. Occorrono dunque altre strategie che consentano di raggiungere il fine e termine estremo dei beni e dei mali in sicurezza e di fissare un criterio stabile di comportamento, su cui modellare la condotta. Quelle proposte da Epicuro sono strategie che obbligano a scelte più rigorose di quel che si potrebbe presumere. Schematicamente, questi sono i punti qualificanti da lui fissati.

Fare filosofia. Come recita una sua massima, «non darsi l'aria di filosofare bisogna, ma filosofare veramente. Non abbiamo bisogno infatti di sembrare sani, ma di esserlo in verità» (*Sent. Vat.* 54). E ciò, secondo un'indicazione di matrice platonica[38], non solo quando si è giovani per imparare a non temere il futuro, ma anche da vecchi per imparare ad apprezzare i beni passati[39]. Di basilare importanza è la «scienza della natura» (φυσιολογία). Essa infatti «non addestra uomini vanitosi, produttori di parole e rinomati nella cultura famosa presso i più», ma «uomini fieri, autosufficienti e assai orgogliosi di ciò che è loro proprio, non di ciò che proviene dalle cose» (*Sent. Vat.* 45). E di essa specialmente abbiamo bisogno non solo per «dissolvere le nostre supposizioni sui fenomeni celesti», ma anche per «conoscere i limiti dei dolori e dei desideri» (*MC* XI).

Essere saggi. Per un criterio di orientamento stabile delle azioni serve la ragione pratica e calcolatrice. C'è un fine (τέλος) stabilito dalla natura cui bisogna mirare: il piacere, da identificarsi non con il piacere di gaudenti e crapuloni, ma con lo stato che consegue al non provare dolore nel corpo e turbamento nell'anima. Non in laute mense e feste e banchetti sta il «vivere in modo piacevole (ἡδέως)», ma nell'uso di quel «sobrio ragionamento (λογισμός)» che «scopra le cause di ogni scelta o rifiuto e dissolva le opinioni a partire dalle quali grandissima inquietudine s'impadronisce delle anime»[40]. Di tutte queste cose - scrive Epicuro (*Ep.* 4, 132) - «principio e massimo bene è la saggezza (φρόνησις), per questo anche più pregevole della filosofia». Da essa infatti si sviluppano le altre virtù ed è essa che «insegna che non è possibile vivere in modo piacevole senza vivere in modo saggio, bello e giusto, né in modo saggio, bello e giusto senza vivere in modo piacevole»; «le virtù sono infatti costitutivamente legate al vivere in modo piacevole e il vivere in modo piacevole è inseparabile da esse». È dunque l'utilità in vista del piacere che costituisce il metro di misura della *phronêsis* e delle altre virtù, ma non per questo la morale è subordinata al piacere, trattandosi piuttosto di una reciproca interdipendenza. In questo assunto consiste comunque la

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[37] Si veda su ciò Cic. *Fin.* I 43; 58; 61.

[38] *Gorg.* 484c-d, 485e; *Resp.* VI 487d, 498a-b, VII 536c-d, VII 538b-539d.

[39] *Ep.* 4, 122, *Sent. Vat.* 76 e inoltre 41 e 27.

[40] *Ep.* 4, 131-132; *MC* V. A giudizio di MOREL (2003), la nozione di τέλος o τέλος τῆς φύσεως (*MC* XXV) non ha alcun significato teleologico. Epicuro invece riformerebbe la nozione ridimensionandola in senso minimalista e la intenderebbe sostanzialmente come il limite fissato dalla natura fisica, in noi e fuori noi. Quanto all'operatività del λογισμός, esso avrebbe, secondo MOREL (2011), 153 n. 26, sia la funzione costruttiva di fornire i parametri causali di orientamento per ciò che è da scegliere e ciò che è da fuggire; sia la funzione decostruttiva di smontare le false opinioni che confondono il giudizio e creano inquietudine.

differenza più cospicua con la *phronêsis* aristotelica, cioè con l'intelligenza pratica che Aristotele qualificava come quella virtù dianoetica a cui fanno capo tutte le virtù del comportamento[41], nonché la distanza che separa l'etica epicurea dall'etica stoica[42].

Aver chiara la natura del piacere. È questo il *fine*, cioè lo scopo e il termine estremo dei beni e dei mali e il limite ultimo fissato dalla natura, ma anche il *principio*, cioè l'origine prima, limite e termine fisso dal quale si diparte la *vita beata* (*Ep.* 4, 128-130) Il piacere e la sensazione che l'accompagna sono dunque qualcosa di determinato e limitato, non di illimitato come credeva invece Platone[43]. Esso è anche *congenere* alla nostra natura ed è la natura stessa, non la ragione o l'apprendimento a renderlo tale, cioè οἰκεῖον, per noi[44]. Per queste ragioni, oltre che naturale e preferibile, il piacere è anche «regola» (κανῶν) per distinguere con certezza, in base alla sensazione che l'accompagna, ciò che è bene e vantaggioso da ciò che è male e dannoso. Come «affezioni» (πάθη) piacere e dolore sono perciò criteri di verità, al pari di sensazioni e prolessi[45]. Se ne può desumere che, contrariamente a quel che credeva Platone (*Gorg.* 494c-495b), piacere e bene s'identificano. Se però il piacere in quanto tale è di per sé sempre preferibile, non per questo tutti i piaceri sono ugualmente da scegliere. Occorre invece applicare un calcolo pratico e valutare razionalmente se si deve scegliere (o rifiutare) un piacere da cui può conseguire un dolore, o al contrario se si deve scegliere (o rifiutare) un dolore cui può conseguire un piacere. Il piacere pertanto è il bene, ma non tutti i piaceri sono beni, quindi da scegliere. Infine esso costituisce una condizione di quiete, è cioè *catastematico*, perché risulta dalla rimozione del suo contrario nel corpo e nell'anima. Ed è in questa dimensione che esso raggiunge il suo limite massimo d'intensità, che non la carne può valutare, ma un «esame ragionato» (ἐκλογισμός) del pensiero[46].

Limitare i desideri. In una delle sue sentenze Epicuro scriveva che «non bisogna forzare la natura, ma persuaderla»; e «la persuaderemo soddisfacendo i desideri necessari e quelli naturali se non arrecano danno, ma respingendo drasticamente quelli dannosi» (*Sent. Vat.* 22). Altrove (*MC* XXIX) la classificazione è più complessa perché comprende desideri *naturali e necessari, naturali e non necessari* e *né naturali né necessari*. Nello scolio che accompagna questa massima è precisato che naturali e necessari sono desideri come quelli di cibi e bevande; naturali e non necessari quelli che non liberano dal dolore del corpo, ma costituiscono variazioni del piacere, come i cibi sontuosi; né naturali né necessari, infine, desideri come quello di avere onori

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[41] Per considerazioni sul problema in Epicuro rinvio a Verde (2013) 182. Le differenze tra la φρόνησις epicurea e quella di Aristotele sono discusse da Morel (2019). Sulla valutazione in senso utilitaristico delle virtù cf. D.L. X 138 e Diogene di Enoanda, fr. 32, col. III e fr. 33 Smith.

[42] Sulla posizione stoica si veda per esempio D.L. VII 85; S.E. *M.* XI 73 e Cleante in Cic. *Fin.* II 69.

[43] *Gorg.* 493b; *Phil.* 27d-28d.

[44] Su questa base poggia la versione epicurea della teoria dell'οἰκείωσις, attestata in D.L. X 137 e cf. Cic. *Fin.* I 30. La questione è discussa da Brunschwig (1995) 69-112.

[45] D.L. X 31; 34.

[46] *MC* III, XVIII, XIX.

pubblici[47]. Altrove ancora (*Ep.* 4, 127-128) Epicuro stesso fornisce una classificazione in cui i desideri sono distinti in linea generale in *naturali* e *vani*; i *naturali* sono poi distinti in *naturali* propriamente detti e *necessari* e questi ultimi infine sono distinti in *necessari per la felicità, per la salute del corpo* e *per la vita.* Mettendo insieme questi diversi dati, si possono veder emergere due serie. Una è quella dei desideri vani, né naturali né necessari e dannosi, la cui origine è nella falsa opinione di ciò che è bene e male. L'altra serie è quella che comprende i desideri naturali, quelli cioè che hanno origine nella natura e non sono perciò artificiosi o vani, e i necessari, distinti a loro volta in desideri che è possibile *non* soddisfare senza subire un danno e desideri che *è impossibile non* soddisfare per evitare un danno. Sono perciò da soddisfare i desideri naturali che sono anche necessari perché giovano alla vita e alla sopravvivenza; non sono *necessariamente* da soddisfare quei desideri che, pur essendo naturali, non giovano alla salute del corpo; sono *necessariamente* da soddisfare quei desideri senza i quali non c'è vantaggio per la vita né per la felicità. La scelta, come si vede, comporta limitazioni, ma non costa sacrifici se, come Epicuro spiega, s'impara ad accontentarsi del poco, ottenendo così quel «gran bene» che è l'«autosufficienza» dai desideri (*Ep.* 4, 130-131).

Risanare l'anima. La terapia viene dalla scienza della natura che, fornendo le cause delle cose, insegna a non temere gli dei o la morte, a non coltivare false speranze di immortalità, a riconoscere il piacere come fine buono e facilmente accessibile e il dolore come male, ma non eterno né irresolubile. La parola risanatrice di Epicuro fa il resto. Per Lucrezio (VI 1-42) egli era da elogiare per avere scoperto, quanto all'anima, che è essa all'origine dei tormenti umani: «è il vaso stesso a causare il guasto». Come un vaso contenente liquido *infetto*, l'anima è in grado di infettare e corrompere ciò che di «sano» le giunge dall'esterno - cioè di stravolgere l'evidenza percettiva in false opinioni. E come inoltre un vaso *bucato*, essa non trattiene nulla dentro di sé e perciò non si riempie mai - tenderebbe ciò all'illimitatezza, ad avere sempre di più senza mai accontentarsi[48]. Ma desiderio d'illimitatezza e false opinioni non sono i soli mali dell'anima. Essa soffre anche più del corpo perché, mentre la carne soffre solo del dolore presente, mentre cioè sta provando dolore, l'anima invece soffre anche nel ricordo delle sofferenze passate e si angustia nell'aspettativa di quelle future[49]. Ma questa è anche per Epicuro la ragione per cui essa può godere di piaceri «più grandi», quando saranno fugate le tenebre che la spaventano come le ombre spaventano i bambini.

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[47] Una variante di questo scolio è fornita da un altro scolio: *Anonym. in Eth. Nic.* III 1118b, 170, 10-14 Heylbut (*CAG* XX), la cui attendibilità, secondo VERDE (2013) 179-180, sarebbe tuttavia dubbia.

[48] È così ribaltata sull'anima l'accusa che nel *Gorgia* (493b-494b) Platone rivolgeva al corpo paragonandolo a un orcio bucato mai sazio di piaceri.

[49] A giudizio di LAURAND (2013), 112-117, la memoria funzionerebbe qui da un lato come attività di focalizzazione sui simulacri dei dolori passati e, dall'altro, come attività di associazione di una certa configurazione atomica con una certa immagine o simulacro.

Minimizzare il dolore del corpo. Dato che esso dura tanto meno quanto più è intenso e, se dura, produce piacere, il dolore è «facilmente disprezzabile» (*MC* IV) o «trascurabile», come dicevano gli epicurei (Cic. *Tusc.* II 44). È sopportabile se «si tengono a mente i limiti e non si aggiungono in più vane opinioni»; insopportabile perché eccede i limiti è quello che conduce alla morte[50]; ma la morte - diceva Epicuro (*Ep.* 4, 124-125) - è nulla per noi, perché con essa la sensazione cessa. Con il suo stesso esempio poi egli mostrava che il dolore non è indomabile e il saggio può opporre ad esso un'anima contenta per il grato ricordo dei piaceri goduti in passato. Nella nota lettera a Idomeneo, egli scriveva infatti che, nonostante la sua malattia lo tormentasse tanto da fargli sentire prossima la fine, era pervaso dall' «allegrezza dell'anima nel ricordo delle nostre conversazioni passate»[51].

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[50] Così è riferito da Marco Aurelio VII 33 e VII 64.
[51] Diog. Laert. X 22 e cf. Cic. *Fin.* II 30.

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La confusion du juste chez Épicure, Hermarque et Lucrèce. Une inégalité intellectuelle des citoyenes?

Justice confused in Epicurus, Hermarch and Lucretius. An intellectual inequality of citizens?

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Abstract

This article aims to confront a serious difficulty in Epicurean political thought, through the investigation of a likely contradiction between the universal and soteriological ambition of Epicureanism, which presents itself as wisdom addressed to all and adapted to all, and the portrayal of a humanity with highly diverse intellectual capacities; within this humanity some individuals would not be able to attain an active and autonomous political consciousness. Despite the weakness of the textual sources, some elements of this political thought are known thanks to fragments of Hermarchus' *Against Empedocles*, which develop some of the lapidary hypotheses outlined by Epicurus in the last *Kuriai Doxai*. A particularly interesting point in Hermarchus' testimony is the division between different ways of understanding legal rules, associated with different types of rationality within the same population. We therefore propose to examine this thesis of an intellectual inequality of citizens, trying in particular to identify some of its axiological consequences within Epicurean political theory, and suggesting clues for a re-evaluation of the role of the wise man as educator.

Keywords: political theory, epicureanism, rationality, justice, law, punishment, inequality

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo afrontar una grave dificultad en el pensamiento político epicúreo a través de la investigación de una probable contradicción entre la ambición soteriológica universal del epicureísmo, que se presenta como una sabiduría dirigida a todos y adaptada a todos, y el retrato de una humanidad con diversas capacidades intelectuales, dentro de la cual algunos individuos no podrían lograr una conciencia política activa y autónoma. A pesar de la escasez de las fuentes textuales, algunos elementos de este pensamiento político se conocen gracias a fragmentos del *Contra Empédocles* de Hermarco, que desarrollan algunas de las hipótesis lapidarias esbozadas por Epicuro al final de las *Kuriai Doxai*. Un punto particular-mente interesante en el testimonio de Hermarco es la división entre diferentes formas de entender las reglas legales, asociadas con diferentes tipos de racionalidad dentro de una misma población. Por lo tanto, nos proponemos examinar esta tesis de una desigualdad intelectual de los ciuda-danos, tratando en particular de identificar algunas de sus consecuencias axiológicas dentro de la teoría política epicúrea y sugiriendo una reevaluación del papel del sabio como educador.

Palabras clave: teoría política, epicureísmo, racionalidad, justicia, ley, castigo, desigualdad

Introduction[1]

[τὴν μὲν οὖν σοφίαν οὐ πανταχοῦ κομι]-οῦμεν, ἐπεὶ πάντες μὴ δύνανται. δυνατὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἂν ὑποθώμεθα, τότε ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁ τῶν θεῶν βίος εἰς ἀνθρώπους μεταβήσεται. Δικαιοσύνης γὰρ ἔσται μεστὰ πάντα καὶ φιλαλληλίας, καὶ οὐ γενήσεται τειχῶν ἢ νόμων χρεία καὶ πάντων ὅσα δι᾽ ἀλλήλους σκευωρούμεθα.

«... puisque tous n'en sont pas capables. Mais supposons qu'elle soit possible: alors, véritablement, la vie des dieux passera chez les hommes. Tout sera, en effet, rempli de justice et d'affection mutuelle, et il n'y aura plus besoin de fortifications ni de lois, ni de tout ce que nous machinons pour nous protéger les uns des autres»[2].

Telle est la description, proposée par Diogène d'Œnoanda dans son inscription, d'une utopie politique rendue possible par la participation de tous à la sagesse d'Épicure. Cette vie de plaisir et d'harmonie, cet âge d'or se caractériserait par une paix universelle rendant caduques les institutions politiques, décrites ici comme uniquement dirigées vers le maintien de la cohésion sociale[3]. Mais d'emblée, Diogène souligne que cet état de paix ne peut sortir de la virtualité; en effet, «tous n'en sont pas capables».

D'où vient cette incapacité? Si l'on en croit ce fragment, il semblerait que les épicuriens aient adopté, vis-à-vis de la compétence politique, une perspective extrêmement pessimiste; il n'y a aucune expertise politique spontanée et l'esprit humain est plus ou moins apte à saisir les éléments fondamentaux de la justice, sans que cette inaptitude soit réformable. Ce qui n'est pas sans surprendre; cette hypothèse d'une insuffisance gnoséologique de certains hommes, si elle semble en adéquation avec des théories politiques aristocratiques comme celle de Platon, paraît peu cohérente avec le «popularisme» attribué aux sectateurs du Jardin[4]. Le fait est que Platon, dans les *Lois*, expulse de la Cité les «incurables» et les considère comme exclus de la politique sans espoir de retour[5]; une telle expulsion s'accorde très mal avec l'intention sotériologique de l'épicurisme et la volonté affichée dans de multiples textes de s'adresser à toute l'humanité pour lui apporter paix et bonheur. Le même Diogène d'Œnoanda dans les premiers fragments de son inscription n'écrit-il pas que son discours doit s'adresser «au plus grand nombre», y compris à ceux qui ne sont pas «de bonne composition»?

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[1] Je remercie chaleureusement les éditeurs et relecteurs qui m'ont aidé à améliorer cet article; les erreurs et imprécisions qui demeurent doivent m'être attribuées.

[2] Diogène D'Œnoanda, fr. 56, éd. SMITH (1993), trad. Morel dans DELATTRE *et al.* (2010), 1055; Morel relève que selon Smith le début manquant du fragment mentionne la sagesse, cf. Morel dans DELATTRE *et al.* (2010), 1413 n. 114.

[3] Sur la dimension hobbesienne des intuitions politiques épicuriennes, et la nécessité de relativiser cette catégorisation, voir ROBITZSCH (2017).

[4] Voir par ex GIOVACCHINI *et al.* (2011).

[5] Cf. HELMER (2017), 140-141, qui explique notamment comment ce filtrage est une dimension essentielle de la théorie politique platonicienne, à l'inverse des thèses démocratiques soutenues par Protagoras.

εἰ μὲν οὖν εἶς μόνον ἢ δύ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς ἢ τέτταρες ἢ πέντε ἢ ἓξ ἢ ὅσους, ἄνθρωπε, βούλει τῶν τοσούτων εἶναι πλείονας, μὴ πάνυ δὲ πολλούς, διέκειντο κακῶς, κἂν καθ᾽ ἕ[να— —] καλούμενος [πάν]τα παρ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ἔπραττον εἰς συμβουλίαν τὴν ἀρίστην.

«Si donc il y en avait un seulement ou deux, ou trois, ou quatre, ou cinq, ou six, ou autant que tu veux en plus, cher homme - sans toutefois que leur nombre soit excessif, qui soient dans de mauvaises dispositions, même s'il fallait alors un par un les convoquer [tous], je ferais ce qui est en mon pouvoir pour leur donner le meilleur conseil»[6].

Il convient donc d'analyser, pour résoudre cette apparente tension, d'une part l'ampleur et la nature de cette insuffisance politique qui oblige l'humanité à recourir aux artefacts que sont les «lois et les fortifications» pour sa survie; d'autre part les solutions éventuelles proposées par l'épicurisme pour pallier cette insuffisance. Ces solutions, on le verra, impliquent une réévaluation du rôle du sage, appelé à remplir une fonction non pas tant politique que pédagogique, donnant une saveur nouvelle à l'impératif de la «vie cachée» et à l'apparent mépris épicurien pour les fonctions officielles au sein de la Cité.

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L'hypothèse que les hommes ne sont pas égaux devant l'appréhension des notions nécessaires à la vie politique est d'emblée lisible dans la description même des mécanismes gnoséologiques à l'origine de ces notions, telle qu'on la trouve dans deux textes essentiels: d'une part, l'ensemble formé par les *Maximes Capitale*s d'Épicure 31 à 40, d'autre part la généalogie du droit attribuée à Hermarque et transmise par le *De abstinentia* de Porphyre[7]. Ces deux textes définissent le mécanisme mental en question sous le terme technique de *prolepsis* ou prénotion.

Épicure signale très explicitement dans les *Maximes Capitales* que le juste, défini comme «sumbolon tou sumpherontos»[8], est l'objet d'une prénotion et que cette prénotion évolue dans le temps - ce qui distingue d'emblée la prénotion de l'intuition stable et définitive d'une notion objective.

Τὸ μὲν ἐπιμαρτυρούμενον ὅτι συμφέρει ἐν ταῖς χρείαις τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας τῶν νομισθέντων εἶναι δικαίων ἔχειν τὴν τοῦ δικαίου χώραν [εἶναι], ἐάν τε τὸ αὐτὸ πᾶσι γένηται ἐάν τε μὴ τὸ αὐτό [πᾶσι γένηται]. ἐὰν δὲ νόμον θῆταί τις, μὴ ἀποβαίνῃ δὲ κατὰ τὸ συμφέρον τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας,

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[6] Fragment 3, éd. SMITH (1993), trad. Morel dans DELATTRE *et al.* (2010), 1029.

[7] La critique a pris l'habitude d'identifier dans cette longue citation de Porphyre, qui occupe plusieurs pages (I 7-12), un reste du *Contre Empédocle* d'Hermarque. Sur cette question d'attribution on pourra se reporter à OBBINK (1988) et la préface de LONGO AURICCHIO (1988). Porphyre lui-même, au début et à la fin de la citation, se contente de mentionner «les épicuriens»; mais plus loin dans le traité, en I 26, 4, Hermarque est cité nommément.

[8] *MC* XXXI.

οὐκέτι τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ δικαίου φύσιν ἔχει· κἂν μεταπίπτῃ τὸ κατὰ τὸ δίκαιον συμφέρον, χρόνον δέ τινα εἰς τὴν πρόληψιν ἐναρμόττῃ, οὐδὲν ἧττον ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἦν δίκαιον τοῖς μὴ φωναῖς κεναῖς ἑαυτοὺς συνταράττουσιν ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλ<ῶς> εἰς τὰ πράγματα βλέπουσιν.

«XXXVII Ce qui est confirmé comme utile dans les usages de la communauté des hommes entre eux, parmi les actes que les lois disent justes, occupe la place du juste, qu'il soit ou non le même pour tous. Et si quelqu'un édicte une loi qui n'aboutit pas à quoi que ce soit d'utile dans la communauté mutuelle, <cette loi> n'aura plus la nature du juste. Et si l'utile devient opposé au juste, et met un moment à s'adapter à la prénotion, il n'est pas moins juste pendant ce moment pour ceux qui ne se laissent pas troubler par des sons vides, mais qui attachent leur regard uniquement aux réalités».

Ἔνθα μὴ καινῶν γενομένων τῶν περιεστώτων πραγμάτων ἀνεφάνη μὴ ἁρμόττοντα εἰς τὴν πρόληψιν τὰ νομισθέντα δίκαια ἐπ᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων, οὐκ ἦν ταῦτα δίκαια· ἔνθα δὲ καινῶν γενομένων τῶν πραγμάτων οὐκέτι συνέφερε τὰ αὐτὰ δίκαια κείμενα, ἐνταῦθα δὴ τότε μὲν ἦν δίκαια, ὅτε συνέφερεν εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίαν τῶν συμπολιτευομένων, ὕστερον δ᾽οὐκ ἦν ἔτι δίκαια, ὅτε μὴ συνέφερεν.

XXXVIII Dans le cas où il ne s'est rien produit de nouveau dans l'état général des affaires, si ce que la loi dit juste ne s'adapte visiblement pas avec la prénotion <du juste> à propos des mêmes actions, alors cela n'est pas juste. Et dans le cas où il s'est produit du nouveau, si ce qui a été déterminé juste n'a plus d'utilité, alors cela était bien juste tant que cela était utile à la communauté mutuelle des concitoyens; et cela n'a plus été juste lorsque cela n'a plus été utile[9]».

Dans ces deux brefs paragraphes, Épicure arrive en quelque sorte au sommet de ses hypothèses sur la nature et l'histoire du droit, en proposant l'analyse, dans une langue très difficile, d'un cas-limite qui est justement une source de haute confusion: le cas où la prénotion du juste et le sentiment de l'utile entrent en discordance. Ce cas-limite va notamment être utilisé pour dégager la nature exacte de la distinction entre le juste et l'utile, et pour hiérarchiser conscience du juste et sentiment de l'utile au sein du processus socio-politique général qu'il décrit.

Pour comprendre les implications de ces deux *Maximes*, il convient d'abord de faire un point sur le terme même de prénotion. Il s'agit d'une réalité mentale, décrite avec soin par Diogène Laërce (X 33) dans son résumé du *Canon* d'Épicure comme le plus complexe des critères de vérité. La prénotion fonctionne à la manière d'une image mentale, qui a la particularité de renvoyer à un contenu notionnel toujours vrai - et de ce fait, susceptible d'un usage critérial exactement au même titre que les sensations, premiers critères de vérité pour Épicure. Ce qui n'est pas sans soulever une difficulté majeure: dans la mesure où la prénotion est bien le produit d'une construction, de ce fait discursive et située dans le temps, comment peut-elle jouer un rôle similaire à celui de la sensation qui fonde sa valeur critériale sur son alogicité et son immédiateté, c'est à dire sur le fait d'être donnée et non forgée? Le mécanisme de formation des

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[9] Éd. Marcovich (1999), nous traduisons.

prénotions, tel que décrit par Diogène Laërce, est de ce fait celui d'une synthèse empirique, qui s'appuie principalement sur la sollicitation de souvenirs d'impressions passées, sans faire appel au *logismos* discursif, ou seulement de façon minimale[10].

Une différence essentielle entre la prénotion et tout autre type de concept réside donc dans sa temporalité: la prénotion est dans le temps, car elle est à la fois une réalité mentale mais aussi le processus de production même de cette réalité, parce qu'elle est de nature synthétique[11]. En, d'autres termes, elle est le produit d'un travail de l'esprit appuyé sur la mémoire, toujours susceptible d'enrichissements et de modifications.

Cet effort de l'esprit est ce qui crée une tension dans les *Maximes* 37 et 38, et un décalage entre différents niveaux d'appréhension du juste, au sens où le juste ne peut pas être l'objet d'une intuition spontanée accomplie une fois pour toutes. Ces deux maximes décrivent de ce fait une réelle situation de confusion, susceptible de troubler fortement les esprits et de dissoudre la compréhension du juste; elles décrivent le moment où l'équivalence du juste et de l'utile se modifie - où ce qui était utile ne l'est plus, et où donc la nature même du juste intrinsèquement similaire à l'utile se transforme. Ce qui nous indique donc que le travail de la prénotion est bien un travail d'association du juste et de l'utile dépendant de circonstances extérieures à l'intuition elle-même, et que cette association est susceptible de subir des modifications au gré des changements de circonstance[12]. La confusion émergerait alors dans l'esprit de ceux qui seraient amenés à confondre le juste en tant que prénotion - c'est à dire synthétiquement lié à l'utile - avec les manifestations légales ponctuelles du juste. Ces individus, inconscients du travail mental de la prénotion sous-jacent à l'énoncé des lois elles-mêmes, seraient alors perturbés par la bascule sensible entre ce qui serait encore dicté par les lois, en décalage avec la prénotion, et ce qui apparaîtrait comme davantage conforme à l'utile et pourtant hors-la-loi.

Cette situation de confusion, en plus de faire ressortir la temporalité réelle du travail de la prénotion, crée également une hiérarchie entre le juste et l'utile - hiérarchie qui était déjà contenue en germe en *MC* 31, dans l'image du *sumbolon*.

> Τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιόν ἐστι σύμβολον τοῦ συμφέροντος εἰς τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν ἀλλήλους μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι.

> «XXXI Le juste naturel, c'est ce qui permet d'identifier (*sumbolon*) ce qui est utile pour ne pas se nuire mutuellement ni subir de nuisances»[13].

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[10] Sur la prénotion épicurienne en général, voir GLIDDEN (1985), MOREL (2008), ESSLER (2011), 148-187, GIOVACCHINI (2012), 29-37, TSOUNA (2016). Sur la prénotion juridique voir plus précisément le premier chapitre de GOLDSCHMIDT (1977), et MOREL (2000), 406-407.

[11] GOLDSCHMIDT (1977), 29 décrit la prolepse comme une «abstraction», un «mouvement de l'esprit».

[12] MOREL (2000), 409: «Quant à la prolepse du juste, elle ne doit pas être comprise comme une définition immuable du juste, mais comme un simple cadre de variation. À la fois générale et relative, latente et actuelle, elle est l'expression même de la dimension elle-même «actuelle», au double sens du terme, de la réalité politique».

[13] Éd. MARCOVICH (1999), nous traduisons.

Beaucoup a été écrit sur la première partie de cette maxime, notamment sur l'énigmatique expression «*to tès phuseos dikaion*» - et plus généralement, sur la question de savoir si, à partir de cet énoncé, on peut ranger Épicure plutôt parmi les naturalistes ou les conventionnalistes. Ce débat nous entraînerait trop loin[14]; nous nous intéresserons plutôt ici à la deuxième partie de la phrase, et à l'expression de «*sumbolon* de l'utile» dont nous proposons une traduction qui explicite le sens que nous donnons au *sumbolon.* L'image mobilisée[15], telle que nous la comprenons, est complexe; elle implique d'une part qu'il est impossible que le juste et l'utile soient indépendants par nature (l'un ne peut pas ne pas être lié à l'autre d'une façon ou d'une autre, mais c'est leur relation qui leur donne sens), d'autre part qu'ils sont mis à distance l'un de l'autre - on ne les a pas en même temps sous les yeux, sauf par un rapprochement volontaire. Ils sont en quelque sorte essentiellement liés mais pragmatiquement séparés[16]. Il nous semble qu'on peut ici tout à fait rapprocher cet usage du *sumbolon* de l'usage aristotélicien du début du *De Interpretatione*: ce qui caractérise le *sumbolon* c'est à la fois sa fonction de signe et sa nature conventionnelle. Aristote fait du signe écrit le *sumbolon* toujours provisoire du son signifiant (la parole), car l'écriture varie dans les lieux et les temps; c'est la relation occasionnelle, donc arbitraire, entre *sumbolon* et *phonè* qui fonde la signification et la soutient, le *sumbolon* étant nécessairement second par rapport à la *phonè*[17].

On va retrouver cette dissymétrie du symbolisé et du symbole dans le cas de la relation du juste et de l'utile; car, s'il y a prénotion, donc discursivité et évolution du juste, rien de tel pour ce qui est de l'utile. L'utile n'est pas l'objet d'une prénotion, mais d'une intuition spontanée, universelle et définitive; en ce sens l'utile est premier, et le juste n'en est que le *sumbolon* ou signe de reconnaissance. Encore faut-il s'entendre sur ce dont il est ici question quand on parle d'utile.

Cette nature intuitive et nécessaire de l'utile est en réalité un prérequis éthique important dans la doctrine épicurienne; on peut la retrouver en filigrane dans l'argument dit «des berceaux», transmis par Cicéron dans la bouche de l'épicurien Torquatus, et qu'on peut résumer ainsi: tout être vivant sait spontanément ce qui est bon pour lui, sans qu'il y ait besoin pour cela d'argument ou de démonstration - car «cela se sent»:

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[14] MOREL (2000), 396, fournit une synthèse de ces débats.

[15] Le *sumbolon* désigne depuis l'époque classique la tessère d'hospitalité, brisée en deux, partagée et pouvant servir de signe de reconnaissance entre deux individus; Louis Gernet a étudié les évolutions de sens de ce terme qui a peu à peu fini par devenir un équivalent matériel du contrat coutumier ou de l'accord conventionnel. Voir par exemple GERNET (1928), 349.

[16] En ce sens, l'image des deux faces du même objet, reprise par MOREL (2000), 402, nous semble trompeuse. Historiquement, le *sumbolon* est un objet brisé dont on peut ensuite réunir les deux parties. La mise côte à côte demeure possible même si elle n'est jamais effectivement réalisée - contrairement à la pièce de monnaie, dont les deux faces ne peuvent jamais être vues ensemble.

[17] La comparaison a ses limites car Aristote utilise dans ce contexte *sumbolon* pour désigner des signes explicitement et uniquement de nature linguistique, (ce que rappellent par exemple POLANSKY-KUCZEWSKI 1990), ce qui n'est pas le cas d'Épicure. Mais la relation dans les deux cas nous semble de même nature et c'est sur cette relation que porte le rapprochement que nous effectuons.

Omne animal, simul atque natum sit, voluptatem appetere ea que gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem aspernari ut summum malum et, quantum possit, a se repellere, id que facere nondum depravatum ipsa natura incorrupte atque integre iudicante. itaque negat opus esse ratione neque disputatione, quam ob rem voluptas expetenda, fugiendus dolor sit. sentiri haec putat, ut calere ignem, nivem esse albam, dulce mel. quorum nihil oportere exquisitis rationibus confirmare, tantum satis esse admonere.

«Tout être animé, dès sa naissance, recherche le plaisir et s'en réjouit comme étant le bien suprême, mais il abhorre la douleur comme étant le mal suprême et la repousse autant qu'il peut. Il se comporte ainsi quand il n'est pas encore perverti, la nature elle-même prononçant un jugement intègre et incorruptible. [Épicure] soutient donc qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de raisonner et de discuter pour savoir pourquoi le plaisir doit être recherché et la douleur évitée. Il pense que cela se sent, comme on sent que le feu est chaud, la neige blanche, le miel doux: il n'y a pas besoin de raisonnements sophistiqués pour le confirmer, il suffit de le faire remarquer»[18].

La conscience du *telos,* c'est à dire de ce qui doit fondamentalement être recherché, est sans enseignement et sans effort: elle est sentiment de ce qui est bon pour soi, *pathos* fondamental, résumé sous le terme de plaisir, qui renvoie dans l'économie générale de l'éthique épicurienne aussi bien à ce qui est plaisant que, et surtout, à ce qui va préserver l'intégrité morale et physique de l'individu - à ce qui va le maintenir en cohésion avec lui-même. La nature est, pour tout être sensible, organisée de façon bipolaire, entre éléments attirants (objets de choix) et éléments répugnants (objets de rejet), les choix et les rejets étant subordonnés à l'impératif absolu de se maintenir en bon état - et le sentiment de plaisir étant considéré comme le signe le plus sûr du bon état général du vivant. En ce sens, il n'y a pas de prénotion de l'utile comme il n'y a pas de prénotion du plaisant ou de l'agréable - car il n'y a aucune synthèse empirique à l'œuvre dans l'identification du plaisant ou de l'agréable, mais la sensation immédiate d'un soulagement ou d'une plénitude satisfaisante qui n'est pas susceptible d'évolution ou d'amélioration. Le plaisir est toujours reconnu, ce qui signifie qu'il est d'emblée archaïquement et fondamentalement connu.

Mais il est nécessaire de nuancer ce tableau éthique; en effet, l'argument des berceaux nous présente une humanité dans son état premier, l'état d'enfance, arationnel, non encore infecté par le jugement ou les artifices culturels. Hors de cet état d'enfance, la perception du *telos* est brouillée et les hommes confondent très régulièrement le plaisir et le déplaisant, faute de pouvoir se fier à leurs impressions. C'est ce qui justifie pour Épicure la parole philosophique elle-même: il s'agit de redonner à l'humanité la capacité à se repérer dans la nature selon la bipolarité du plaisant et du déplaisant, afin qu'elle puisse effectuer de façon sensée les choix et les rejets qui garantiront sa sécurité.

C'est aussi le cas pour le droit: alors que le sentiment de l'utile est un *pathos*, donc irrationnel et universel en théorie, il se trouve obscurci en pratique par les jugements

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[18] Cicéron, *De Finibus* I, IX 30, éd. SCHICHE (1915), trad. KANY-TURPIN (2016).

et opinions vides et doit donc être signalé, marqué par un *sumbolon* qui sera la prénotion du juste[19]. Mais on voit en suivant les *Maximes* que, dans le cas du droit, on a en réalité affaire à deux niveaux «symboliques»: car si la prénotion du droit signale l'utile, elle-même est formalisée dans les communautés humaines par la loi, qui fixe en quelque sorte pour une société donnée la relation du juste et de l'utile nouée par la prénotion. Il y a donc plusieurs niveaux de complexité, et par là, plusieurs occasions de confusion.

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Ces niveaux de complexité, ramassés chez Épicure dans des *Maximes* d'une densité qui en augmente l'obscurité, sont heureusement pour nous développés et en quelque sorte dépliés dans la généalogie du droit attribuée à Hermarque par Porphyre au premier livre du *De abstinentia*. L'approche généalogique lui permet d'expliciter ces différents moments de confusion, et de les attribuer à différentes catégories d'individus chez qui la confusion ne s'exprimera pas de la même façon et n'appellera pas les mêmes solutions[20].

> Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου ὥσπερ γενεαλογίαν μακρὰν διεξιόντες φασὶν ὡς οἱ παλαιοὶ νομοθέται, ἀπιδόντες εἰς τὴν τοῦ βίου κοινωνίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὰς πρὸς ἀλλήλους πράξεις, ἀνόσιον ἐπεφήμισαν τὴν ἀνθρώπου σφαγὴν καὶ ἀτιμίας οὐ τὰς τυχούσας προσῆψαν, τάχα μὲν καὶ φυσικῆς τινος οἰκειώσεως ὑπαρχούσης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς τὸ μὴ προχείρως φθείρειν τὸ τοιοῦτον ζῷον ὥσπερ ἕτερόν τι τῶν συγκεχωρημένων· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τήν γε πλείστην αἰτίαν τοῦ δυσχερανθῆναι τοῦτο καὶ ἀνόσιον ἐπιφημισθῆναι τὸ μὴ συμφέρειν εἰς τὴν ὅλην τοῦ βίου σύστασιν ὑπολαβεῖν. ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχῆς οἱ μὲν παρακολουθήσαντες τῷ συμφέροντι τοῦ διορίσματος οὐδὲν προσεδεήθησαν ἄλλης αἰτίας τῆς ἀνειργούσης αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς πράξεως ταύτης, οἱ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενοι λαβεῖν αἴσθησιν ἱκανὴν τούτου τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ζημίας δεδιότες ἀπείχοντο τοῦ κτείνειν προχείρως ἀλλήλους. ὧν ἑκάτερον φαίνεται καὶ νῦν ἔτι συμβαῖνον. καὶ γὰρ οἱ μὲν θεωροῦντες τὸ συμφέρον τῆς προειρημένης διατάξεως ἑτοίμως ἐπ' αὐτῆς μένουσιν, οἱ δὲ μὴ δεκτικοὶ τούτου τὰς ἀπειλὰς φοβούμενοι τῶν νόμων, ἃς ἕνεκα τῶν ἀσυλλογίστων τοῦ χρησίμου διώρισάν τινες, παραδεξαμένων αὐτὰς τῶν πλειόνων.

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[19] Nous ne suivons pas MOREL (2000), 397 qui fait de «l'utile commun» une réalité «variable dans ses manifestations et naturel[le] dans son principe»; en effet, si notre compréhension de la relation du juste à l'utile comme à son *sumbolon* est exacte, c'est le juste qui peut être susceptible de variation, jamais l'utile; car c'est le signe qui peut conventionnellement changer, mais pas le signifié. L'utile en tant que *pathos* demeure le même, de même que le *plaisir* qui, en tant que souverain bien, peut varier en intensité mais pas en nature - mais le *pathos* lui-même peut être le produit de démarches et de choix variés selon le lieu et le moment. C'est probablement un vrai point de fragilité dans l'édifice conceptuel épicurien, car il est bien difficile de soutenir ainsi que l'utile en tant que *pathos* est un invariant humain; mais il faut bien admettre que c'est ce que semble nous dire le texte des *Maximes*, et que nous ne pouvons ici sauver les épicuriens d'eux-mêmes.

[20] Pour une analyse globale de cette généalogie, voir en priorité VANDER WAERDT (1988).

«Ceux qui suivent Épicure disent, en développant ce qui ressemble à une vaste généalogie, que les anciens législateurs, ayant observé de près la communauté de vie des hommes et leurs conduites les uns envers les autres, ont dénoncé comme impie le meurtre d'un homme et lui ont attaché des châtiments bien spécifiques[21]; tout d'abord ils identifièrent rapidement une certaine appropriation des hommes avec les hommes, du fait de leur ressemblance de forme et d'âme, et en conclurent qu'il ne fallait pas immoler témérairement ce genre de vivant, en le confondant avec les vivants pour lesquels cela est admis; néanmoins <ils disent que> selon ces législateurs la raison principale du fait que cela soit considéré comme insupportable et dénoncé comme impie est que cela était désavantageux pour l'organisation générale de la vie. À partir de ce principe, ceux qui avaient compris l'avantage de cette décision n'eurent besoin d'aucune autre raison pour s'écarter de cette conduite, mais ceux qui ne pouvaient pas en avoir une sensation suffisante, craignant l'importance du châtiment, s'abstinrent de se tuer témérairement les uns les autres. Aujourd'hui encore, on observe chacune des deux attitudes. Et en effet ceux qui ont l'intuition du caractère avantageux de la convention décrite plus haut s'en tiennent à elle avec zèle, mais ceux qui ne sont pas capables de l'appréhender craignent les menaces des lois, qui ont été fixées à cause de ces individus dépourvus de la compréhension de l'utile, celle-ci ayant été acceptée par la plupart <des hommes>»[22].

Le texte d'Hermarque est rapporté par Porphyre dans une intention bien particulière, puisqu'il s'agit de rapporter ce qui, dans les conceptions épicuriennes, leur autorise la consommation de viande, donc le meurtre animal, mais leur interdit le meurtre humain. L'argumentation ici restituée par Porphyre porte donc sur un élément juridique particulier et d'une importance maximale puisqu'il est présenté comme un prérequis social: aucune communauté humaine ne peut survivre sans s'être prémunie contre le meurtre[23].

L'argument épicurien est développé sur plusieurs pages. Les deux paragraphes dont nous proposons ci-dessus une traduction en présentent une première version synthétique qui nous suffira dans le cadre de cet article pour analyser le point précis qui nous occupe; la suite du texte reprend et développe ces éléments en insistant d'une part sur la justification de la violence du châtiment pour entraîner l'adhésion de tous, y compris de ceux qui ne parviennent pas à comprendre le bien fondé de la loi, d'autre part sur l'autorisation du meurtre animal qui, lui, ne nuit pas à la communauté mais au contraire lui est utile.

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[21] Le meurtre est présenté par Hermarque comme un cas-limite, et son interdiction, une condition de possibilité de la vie politique. Cela lui donne un statut juridique particulier. Nous choisissons de traduire ici *atimias ou tas tuchousas* par «châtiments bien spécifiques» au lieu de la proposition de Bouffartigue, «indignités exceptionnelles»: il s'agit en effet pour Hermarque non pas de mettre en valeur l'ampleur des châtiments ou leur rareté, mais leur caractère inouï. C'est à partir de la question du meurtre en effet que les premiers législateurs font vraiment œuvre principielle, œuvre de fondation. Ils n'améliorent pas le droit existant ni ne l'amplifient, mais ils l'instaurent en faisant basculer l'humanité dans la vie politique.

[22] *De Abst.* I 7, éd. BOUFFARTIGUE (1977), nous traduisons.

[23] BESNIER (2001), 135-136 insiste ainsi à juste titre sur le caractère premier et fondateur de cette législation, qui crée pour le nomothète une double difficulté: inventer un cadre juridique inédit et l'imposer à ceux qui n'en comprennent pas la nécessité.

D'un point de vue lexical, on relève d'emblée que le terme de *sumbolon* n'apparaît nulle part; mais le développement fait en revanche plus loin intervenir un terme nouveau, celui de *pharmakon*, dans un contexte qui semble le rapprocher fonctionnellement du *sumbolon,* en tant qu'intermédiaire entre deux niveaux de compréhension: «car il n'y avait pas d'autre remède (*pharmakon*) contre l'ignorance de l'utile que la peur du châtiment prescrit par la loi»[24].

Les individus faibles intellectuellement (ce que connote le terme choisi pour désigner leur ignorance, *amathia*) ont besoin de quelque chose qui puisse jouer le rôle de *sumbolon* de l'utile; car ils sont dans un tel état d'incompréhension qu'il leur est impossible d'accéder à la prénotion du juste, et donc, à la connaissance de l'utile qui est sa conséquence. Se substitue donc au *sumbolon* le *pharmakon*, en l'occurrence ici la peur du châtiment; mais la relation ici, contrairement à la précédente, n'a plus rien de symbolique. Là où le juste signalait l'utile et en permettait la compréhension, la peur vient remplacer la compréhension, devenue impossible, et substitue donc un *pathos* réceptif à une anticipation active comme l'est la *prolepsis*. Ce qui est une autre façon de dire que l'individu faible d'esprit, malade, ne peut avoir qu'un rapport réactif et passif à la loi.

Toujours sur le plan lexical, la notion de justice quant à elle n'intervient qu'à la toute fin du développement:

> ὥστε τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι πᾶν τὸ καλὸν καὶ δίκαιον κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ὑπολήψεις ἐστὶ περὶ τῶν νενομοθετημένων ἠλιβάτου τινὸς γέμειν εὐηθείας. [...] καὶ γὰρ τὰ παραπλησίως ἐφαρμόττοντα νομοθετήματα πᾶσιν οὐ καθορῶσί τινες, ἀλλ᾽ οἳ μὲν τῶν ἀδιαφόρων δοξάζοντες εἶναι παραλείπουσιν, οἳ δὲ τὴν ἐναντίαν δόξαν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἔχουσιν, καὶ τὰ μὴ καθόλου συμφέροντα πανταχοῦ τινὲς οἴονται συμφέρειν. ὅθεν διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν ταύτην ἀντέχονται τῶν οὐκ ἐφαρμοττόντων, εἰ καὶ ἐπί τινων ἐξευρίσκουσι τά τε πρὸς αὐτοὺς λυσιτελῆ καὶ τὰ κοινὴν ἔχοντα τὴν ὠφέλειαν.

> «De sorte qu'ils sont boursouflés de bêtise, ceux qui disent, à propos des législations, que le beau ou le juste (*dikaion*) sont toujours dictés par des intuitions (*hupolepseis*) singulières. [...] Car certains ne voient pas les législations qui sont à peu près pareillement adaptées à tous, mais soit les négligent en les tenant pour indifférentes, soient les tiennent au contraire pour supérieures et, alors qu'elles ne sont pas universellement utiles, les pensent utiles partout. Pour cette raison ils s'attachent à des législations qui ne leur sont pas adaptés, même si leur intelligence comprend ce qui est dans leur intérêt individuel ou ce qui est utile à la collectivité»[25].

Il n'est pas dans ce passage question de la justice en elle-même, en tant que catégorie indépendante; mais le texte souligne, en maintenant une subtilité remarquable dans son analyse, d'une part la relativité irréductible du juste en tant qu'il demeure subordonné à une utilité variable en temps et en lieu, d'autre part l'invariabilité de certaines prescriptions que l'on va retrouver à l'identique ou

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[24] I 8, 3.
[25] I 12, 2-3, éd. Bouffartigue (1977), nous traduisons.

quasiment (le texte insistant sur cette nuance) d'un groupe à l'autre, le travail de l'intelligence consistant d'abord dans la capacité à adapter avec souplesse et rigueur la législation à la situation.

Sont conservés par rapport à l'exposé juridique des *Maximes* les termes liés à la légalité (*nomos* et *sunthèkè*) et à l'utilité (*sumpheron, chrèsimon*); le terme même de *prolepsis* est absent, mais figure à plusieurs reprises dans le texte celui d'*epilogismos,* procédure rationnelle empirique[26] qui joue ici un rôle noétique tout à fait important et très proche de celui de la prénotion, en ce qu'elle décrit exactement le mécanisme mental par lequel les individus comprennent le bien-fondé de la loi en mettant en relation l'interdit qu'elle énonce avec le rôle qu'elle remplit vis à vis de l'intérêt collectif - rôle proprement symbolique donc de mise en relation du signifiant qu'est le *nomos* avec le signifié qu'est le *sumpheron*. Au contraire, l'*hupolepsis* apparaît textuellement pour désigner la supposition personnelle, non appuyée sur la synthèse de l'*epilogismos* - une croyance ou opinion idiosyncrasique qui ne peut pas jouer de rôle symbolique car elle demeure strictement individuelle.

Le texte fait intervenir comme protagonistes de cette généalogie du droit les «anciens législateurs», nomothètes à l'origine de l'interdit fondamental du meurtre. Contrairement à la mise en scène qu'on peut lire par exemple dans le mythe de Protagoras tel que rapporté par Platon dans le dialogue éponyme, le droit est une technique, non pas providentielle, offerte ou dictée par la divinité, mais produite par l'intelligence humaine contrainte par une situation naturellement inconfortable. Selon un schéma anthropologique connu et attesté dans de multiples sources, la nature épicurienne se corrige en quelque sorte elle-même; elle n'est pas spontanément appropriée à l'homme, mais s'instruit elle-même[27] et s'amende par le biais des techniques qui ne sont pas apportées de l'extérieur à l'humanité mais qui procèdent d'un aménagement par l'homme de son environnement, aménagement d'abord grossier puis de plus en plus raffiné[28].

Néanmoins cet aménagement n'est pas le fait de tous les hommes, mais de certains, plus doués que les autres, qui font preuve d'un génie particulier. Or, la première technologie juridique, l'interdit du meurtre, est présentée par Hermarque comme axiologiquement première: elle est la condition initiale sans laquelle le groupe humain ne peut subsister. On se retrouve donc dans une situation anthropologiquement contradictoire: si tout homme, selon les principes de l'éthique épicurienne, sait par nature ce qui est bon pour lui et sa survie, au niveau collectif cette intelligence semble défaillante, et seuls quelques individus particulièrement doués sont capables de discerner ce qui va aller dans le sens de la survie du groupe. Dans la mesure où ces premiers législateurs interviennent au sein des toutes premières sociétés (puisqu'il

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[26] Sur cette notion méthodologique complexe nous renvoyons à SCHOFIELD (1996), et GIOVACCHINI (2012), 139-161.

[27] Cf. Epicur. *Ep.* 2, 75, où ce mécanisme de correction immanente est bien décrit à propos de l'origine du langage.

[28] Cf. MOREL (2016).

s'agit bien d'une généalogie, et qu'on va donc remonter à la source même du droit), l'argument de la corruption du jugement est faible. S'il est possible de mettre les erreurs individuelles de jugement sur le *telos* sur le compte des préjugés dictés par la culture et la dégénérescence humaine, il est difficile de considérer que les hommes avant toute vie sociale sont victimes de cet obscurcissement intellectuel. On doit donc admettre que l'intelligence politique n'est pas de même nature que l'intelligence éthique; elle ne procède pas d'une intuition humaine naturelle et spontanée, mais elle relève d'une capacité intellectuelle susceptible de variations d'un individu à l'autre[29]. Cette différence anthropologique est liée à la multiplication des niveaux de complexité déjà relevée dans les *Maximes*, et qui apparaît dans ce nouveau texte avec plus de précision. En effet, la généalogie d'Hermarque souligne bien l'absence de rapport direct entre le légal et l'utile, et la nécessité de les relier conventionnellement, la justice étant finalement le nom donné à cette convention. Là où n'importe quel individu, même peu doué, sait reconnaître son intérêt personnel, la reconnaissance de l'intérêt collectif va supposer une compréhension de cette convention, qui va mettre en jeu des qualités d'abstraction et d'anticipation plus subtiles. Si donc la justice, c'est à dire la relation conventionnelle qui unit le légal et l'utile, est facilement appréhendable pour le sage, elle ne l'est pas pour les autres hommes. Les lois interviennent pour aider les hommes peu doués à se soumettre à cette convention.

Ce qui fait qu'on a en réalité affaire, non pas à deux mais à trois niveaux de compréhension à l'œuvre au sein du groupe humain:

- maximal: celui qui a accès à la véritable prénotion du juste, qui est donc capable à la fois d'associer le juste et l'utile ici et maintenant et de le faire avec une souplesse telle qu'elle va anticiper les variations possibles et s'y adapter. Seuls ces individus ont les capacités pour être législateurs.

- intermédiaire: celui qui a compris la relation entre le juste et l'utile mais qui va la maintenir figée, et sacraliser en quelque sorte la loi - au lieu de ne voir dans la loi que la trace d'une relation momentanée entre le juste et l'utile. Celui-ci n'a pas besoin à proprement parler de la peur du châtiment, mais il a perdu la plasticité de la prénotion et peut donc se trouver embarrassé pour identifier les moments où le légal n'est plus le juste.

- bas: celui qui est incapable de saisir la prénotion parce qu'il ne comprend pas le lien du juste et de l'utile et croit que son intérêt est de ne pas suivre le juste; il a donc une mauvaise compréhension de son propre intérêt, due à un manque cognitif qui repose d'abord sur une incapacité à anticiper et à mettre en relation[30]. Il pose un

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[29] On trouve d'autres occurrences d'une telle partition dans le corpus épicurien; sans les citer toutes, on peut pointer particulièrement Lucr. V 1105; D.L. X 117; Diog. Oin. fr. 39 et 44.

[30] Besnier (2001), 143 semble rabattre l'une sur l'autre les deux catégories des moins avancés et des définitivement incapables: «ce n'est pas qu'une pareille chose soit contraire à leur nature (si elle l'était, les législateurs devraient imposer la décision par la force, ce qu'Hermarque écarte précisément), c'est simplement qu'en eux la nature est déficiente et qu'ils ne saisissent pas tout de suite l'utile, ou ne stabilisent pas cette appréhension». Il y a confusion ici entre force et contrainte; si tous les citoyens finissent par consentir à la loi, ce consentement doit être obtenu par le recours à la violence légitime (le

problème spécifique, en pratique résolu par le châtiment, solution pour que cet individu puisse demeurer dans la société. On va ainsi remplacer la prénotion, donc l'anticipation de ce qui est bon, par un *pharmakon*, la peur, c'est à dire l'anticipation de ce qui est mauvais; le châtiment est une violence paradoxale indispensable pour ne pas exclure ces personnes du contrat social. La peur de la souffrance leur donne une forme subalterne et atténuée mais efficace de «symbole de l'utile» qui rend possible avec eux un pacte. Or c'est la capacité ou l'incapacité à nouer un pacte qui fonde la possibilité d'une relation politique avec un être. Sans peur du châtiment, pas de pacte, pas de contrat, pas de politique.

* * *

Il nous reste alors à élucider ce qui demeure pour le moment comme une aporie: à savoir la difficile conciliation de ce recours au *pharmakon* de la peur avec la volonté émancipatrice de l'épicurisme. Dans l'édifice général de l'éthique épicurienne, la peur est un *pathos* négatif dont il convient de se défaire pour atteindre la vie heureuse, caractérisée au premier chef par l'*ataraxia* ou absence de trouble. Sur le plan sémantique, la doctrine épicurienne associe systématiquement la sagesse à l'élimination des peurs archaïques (peur des dieux, peur de la mort), présentées comme vides de sens et toujours nuisibles[31].

On peut supposer dans un premier temps qu'il convient de distinguer ces peurs irrationnelles, qui sont des opinions vides, de la peur du châtiment réel infligé par la loi, rationnellement fondée. Si les châtiments du Tartare ne sont pas à craindre, c'est d'abord parce qu'ils n'auront jamais lieu, la mort supposant la fin de la sensibilité; mais la condamnation pour meurtre entraînera des désagréments bien sensibles, et la salvation épicurienne ne s'adresse donc pas à ces peurs-là.

Mais l'argument est faible. On ne peut qu'être touché par la proximité lexicale, troublante, entre la *tetrapharmakos* ou quadruple remède éthique, et la qualification par Hermarque de la peur du châtiment comme d'un *pharmakon*. Ce qui indique que non seulement l'épicurisme n'a pas vocation à détruire toutes les peurs, mais qu'il admet le caractère sain et utile de certaines peurs sans lesquelles il n'est pas de vie collective possible. On peut en inférer que la véritable partition ne s'effectue pas entre certains types de peurs, mais certaines conditions d'existence dans lesquelles la peur est plus ou moins nécessaire. Alors que le quadruple remède éthique s'adresse à l'intime de l'homme, et cherche sa sauvegarde individuelle, la peur du châtiment

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châtiment) pour ceux qui ne sont pas capables de s'y soumettre autrement. Le fait que ce consentement soit bien volontaire ne doit pas nous faire oublier qu'il est obtenu par un recours à un *pathos*, la peur. L'adhésion de celui qui rationnellement comprend le bien-fondé général de la loi n'est pas de même nature que celle de l'individu qui obéit car il craint pour sa vie. Dans le premier cas, il y a une saisie de l'utile collectif grâce à la puissance éducative de la loi; dans le second cas, la saisie de l'utile collectif n'a jamais lieu, seul l'utile pour soi est perçu.

[31] Sur cette question on consultera prioritairement Warren (2009), et Mitsis (2014), notamment 77 n. 67.

concerne l'individu au sein du groupe, dans sa vie publique, dans un espace commun (*koinos*) hostile strictement opposé à la sécurité de l'espace privé (*idios*). Il faut nécessairement admettre que ce changement de lieu d'exercice, entre l'espace privé de la philosophie et l'espace public de la politique, suffit à transformer radicalement l'homme et sa relation au monde, au point que ce qui est amendable ou éducable dans le premier espace ne l'est plus dans le second. Les hommes sont les mêmes dans les deux cas, mais c'est leur situation qui modifie du tout au tout leur capacité à apprendre et à progresser.

> Παρρησία γὰρ ἔγωγε χρώμενος φυσιολογῶ<ν> χρησμῳδεῖ<ν> τὰ συμφέροντα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μᾶλλον ἂν βουλοίμην, κἂν μηδεὶς μέλλῃ συνήσειν, ἢ συγκατατιθέμενος ταῖς δόξαις καρποῦσθαι τὸν πυκνὸν παραπίπτοντα παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν ἔπαινον.

> «29. En ce qui me concerne en effet, je préfère user du franc-parler qui caractérise le physiologue et proférer des oracles utiles à tous les hommes, quand bien même personne n'y entendra goutte, plutôt que de me rallier aux préjugés en vogue, et récolter ainsi la louange de la foule»[32].

La Sentence Vaticane **29** ci-dessus oppose ainsi les «hommes», qui pourraient tous profiter des leçons de l'épicurisme, et ce qui est désigné dans le texte comme «la foule» ou «le grand nombre», l'humanité en tant que collectivité socialisée. La science épicurienne de la nature s'adresse bien à tous en droit, en tant que tous sont des hommes, donc, selon une caractérisation rappelée par Diogène d'Oenoanda, des «êtres de raison»[33]. Mais au sein de la foule l'homme devient irrationnel, superstitieux, et du fait même du rapprochement social est un danger pour son voisin. Épicure distingue deux situations, plutôt que deux catégories d'hommes.

Mais la doctrine épicurienne suppose également que toute l'humanité n'est pas contaminée par la vie sociale et que la confusion mentale qui rend nécessaire l'usage des châtiment n'est pas le lot de tous. Malgré l'inconfort de la collectivité, certains membres de la communauté conservent des capacités intellectuelles qui vont leur permettre d'assurer indirectement la sauvegarde de tous. La différence avec la salvation philosophique va résider dans la nature de l'enseignement proposé. Alors que le sage philosophe souhaite dissiper les craintes irrationnelles en adressant

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[32] *SV* 29, éd. MARCOVICH (1999), nous traduisons.

[33] Fr. 21. Le même Diogène souligne d'ailleurs dans un texte à l'argumentation complexe une répartition assez subtile entre ceux qui, ne craignant pas les dieux, agissent correctement parce qu'ils ont «une vision correcte de la nature des désirs, des souffrances et de la mort» et ceux qui le font «à cause des lois et des châtiments qu'elles font peser sur eux» (*NF* 126, trad. Morel dans DELATTRE 2010, 1038-1039). Il s'agit dans ce passage pour Diogène de souligner que l'absence de peur de la mort n'a aucune conséquence politique puisque ceux qui ne craignent pas les dieux ont bien d'autres raisons de ne pas agir injustement, soit de bonnes raisons (la pratique de la physiologie) soit de moins bonnes mais tout aussi efficaces (la peur des châtiments). Ce texte confirme ainsi un traitement clairement différencié entre ces deux peurs respectives, et une corrélation entre la peur du châtiment et la catégorie appelée «gens du vulgaire»; nous remercions grandement un des relecteurs de cet article qui a attiré notre attention sur ce très important fragment.

directement un contenu doctrinal accessible en théorie à tous, le sage législateur remplit une fonction pédagogique d'une nature tout à fait autre. Cette fonction est historiquement décrite par Lucrèce au chant V du *De Rerum Natura*, à l'occasion du récit de fondation des toutes premières sociétés. Celles-ci se dotent de rois, choisis parmi les individus les plus forts et les plus physiquement remarquables. Ces rois fondent des entités politiques, organisent la répartition des richesses, puis sont renversés et massacrés[34].

«Ergo regibus occisis subversa iacebat
pristina maiestas soliorum et sceptra superba,
et capitis summi praeclarum insigne cruentum
sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebat honorem;
nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum.
res itaque ad summam faecem turbas que redibat,
imperium sibi cum ac summatum quisque petebat.
inde magistratum partim docuere creare
iura que constituere, ut vellent legibus uti.
[...]
inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae.
circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque
atque unde exortast, ad eum plerumque revertit,
nec facilest placidam ac pacatam degere vitam
qui violat factis communia foedera pacis».

«Donc, une fois les rois tués, gisaient renversés
l'ancienne majesté des trônes et les sceptres superbes,
et l'insigne éclatant de la tête souveraine, ensanglanté,
sous les pieds de la foule pleurait son grand honneur;
car c'est avec avidité qu'on piétine ce qu'on a trop redouté auparavant.
C'est pourquoi les choses en arrivaient à la lie et au désordre extrêmes,
puisque chacun briguait pour soi le pouvoir suprême et la souveraineté.
Alors certains (*partim*) apprirent aux autres à créer des magistratures
et à établir le droit pour qu'ils acceptent de faire usage de lois[35].
[...]
Depuis la crainte des châtiments ternit les avantages de la vie.
Car la violence et l'injustice entourent chacun de leurs rets,
et d'où qu'elles naissent, elles se retournent le plus souvent contre leur auteur;
et il n'est pas facile de mener une vie calme et apaisée

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[34] SCHRIJVERS (1996) a rapproché l'histoire politique proposée par Lucrèce du *metabolè politeion* décrit par Polybe au livre VI de son *Histoire*. Chez Polybe une première royauté dégénère en tyrannie; les rois sont renversés; une aristocratie se met en place, elle-même dégénère à son tour en oligarchie et est renversée; l'avènement de la démocratie prépare l'arrivée de l'ochlocratie (gouvernement de la foule); le désordre général favorise alors la restauration de la royauté, et le cycle recommence … Un réseau commun d'influence avec Lucrèce semble très probable; cependant il existe une différence massive qui semble donner la clef de la théorie lucrétienne. L'originalité de Lucrèce est en effet d'inverser la dernière étape; c'est l'ochlocratie, dérivée de l'oligarchie qui cède peu à peu sa place à un régime stable de nature républicaine. Ce faisant, il ne semble pas que pour Lucrèce, le cycle puisse recommencer.

[35] «Inde magistratum partim docuere creare / iura que constituere, ut vellent legibus uti».

à qui, par ses actes, viole les pactes d'une paix commune»[36].

Enseignés par ces fameux «partim», les hommes parviennent à instaurer un système de lois, consolidé par l'invention du châtiment, qui doit avoir un effet dissuasif sur ceux qui restent incapables de se soumettre à la loi. Il est bien précisé par Lucrèce que ce système est encore valide au moment où il écrit: «inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae». Le système pénal est décrit comme une réutilisation de la violence exercée par les hommes entre eux; cette violence se retrouve détournée justement sur ceux qui cherchaient à l'utiliser contre la cité. La peur est présentée par Lucrèce comme une passion ambivalente: elle bride le bonheur car elle demeure un *pathos* négatif, mais elle est en même temps la condition de possibilité de la sécurité, dimension essentielle de la vie heureuse[37]; ainsi dans l'espace politique il est impossible de se débarrasser de la peur. Pour transformer l'espace public en espace sûr, il faut en passer par la peur. L'espace public est le lieu d'une promiscuité douloureuse, où se cacher est impossible; mais cette impossibilité de la dissimulation, dangereuse et risquée lorsque les lois n'interviennent pas, devient une bénédiction à partir du moment où la perspective du châtiment lui confère une intention nouvelle. Ne pas pouvoir se cacher se traduit dans l'espace de la cité par une certitude de la punition, et transforme la peur de l'autre, malsaine, en peur de la loi, saine[38].

La peur du châtiment n'est donc pas irrationnelle, elle est au cœur même de la politique dans la mesure où la vie politique est une mise en danger. L'objet de la loi est de tenir ensemble les hommes en substituant aux liens naturels (l'amitié des premières sociétés, qui disparaît au fur et à mesure que la communauté grandit)[39] des liens artificiels qui sont ceux de la convention. La peur devient le soutien nécessaire de la loi parce que tout le monde n'est pas ami, au sens où tout le monde n'a pas le sentiment de la communauté, de la ressemblance et de la communauté d'intérêt des uns avec les autres.

Les *partim* interviennent donc pour éduquer l'humanité à la politique, c'est à dire à la compréhension de l'intérêt collectif. Leur intervention n'a, comme chez Hermarque, rien de providentiel[40]. Mais, contrairement à ce que l'on peut lire chez

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[36] *DRN* V, 1135-1155 éd. Martin (1969), trad. Pigeaud dans Delattre *et al.* (2010).

[37] Cette dimension de sécurité est tellement essentielle à la vie heureuse qu'elle soumet le sage lui-même au cadre de la loi. Elle s'impose comme un environnement non négociable hors duquel il est proprement impossible de vivre heureux. De ce fait, l'expérience de Gygès appliquée au sage ne l'amènera pas à enfreindre la loi, malgré son caractère conventionnel - car le sage a justement conscience qu'il convient de s'y soumettre, non pas parce qu'elle serait juste en soi, mais parce que c'est la convention dont elle émane qui assure sa propre sécurité. Cf. entre autres Vander Waerdt (1987), 421.

[38] Cf. là-dessus notamment Austin (2012).

[39] Mitsis (2014), 129-130 relève le caractère pacifique des premières associations entre les hommes, à un moment où il n'y a pas encore de situation de prise de pouvoir, donc aucun rapport de force réel entre les groupes.

[40] Si nous suivons Besnier (2001) dans l'idée que cette intervention des sages «ne nous porte pas à une vénération exorbitante à l'égard de ceux qui en ont été à l'origine - les législateurs n'ont pas été des dieux, ni des surhommes -, ni à un attachement «religieux aux mesures instituées» (128), nous ne partageons pas le jugement qui consiste à y voir seulement le produit d'une «compréhension assez simple

Hermarque, ces sages politiques lucrétiens ne sont pas nomothètes; ces hommes plus doués que les autres ne produisent pas une véritable législation, mais ils préparent la communauté à fonder ses propres lois, par la prise de conscience de sa profonde communauté. Ils l'invitent à une forme d'autorégulation qui va varier selon les lieux et les temps; ils ne disent pas ce qui est juste mais quel critère adopter pour évaluer le juste.

Comment interpréter cette différence entre nomothètes et éducateurs? Il nous semble qu'il s'agit là de deux figures possibles de l'intervention politique, non pas contradictoires, mais dialectiques - c'est à dire, imaginées pour résoudre cette tension intrinsèque à l'épicurisme, entre la nécessaire universalité de la salvation philosophique, et l'impossibilité de cette même universalité appliquée à la sécurisation politique. En philosophie, il ne peut y avoir de mieux ou moins doués; mais tout homme est capable de recevoir l'enseignement d'Épicure et de construire ainsi l'espace intime de sa sécurité, au sein duquel il n'y a plus de peur car il n'y a plus d'opinions vides ni de dangers[41]. Le rôle pédagogique du sage est alors très clair: il est de diffuser la doctrine, comme ensemble objectif et constitué d'énoncés rationnels recevables par chaque individu pris individuellement. Il s'agit d'une pédagogie verticale et dogmatique, depuis un maître vers un élève, qui repose sur le principe simple d'une assimilation de la doctrine au sein des lieux privilégiés car intimes de la communauté des *philoi*; dans le cercle des amis, le maître s'adresse à des personnes autonomes et pacifiées[42].

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des avantages qu'on en peut retirer (et des limites au-delà desquelles ces avantages risquent de ne plus être obtenus)»; si la compréhension était simple, elle serait partagée spontanément par tous, ce qui n'est pas le cas, et l'absence de vénération religieuse pour la figure du législateur ou du politique ne se fonde pas sur la facilité de son intervention.

[41] Les différents relecteurs de cet article ont remarqué une apparente similitude entre la tripartition des individus que nous distinguons dans l'espace politique, et la distinction attribuée par Sénèque dans la lettre LII à Épicure lui-même entre les différentes aptitudes à la philosophie: le génie autodidacte, qui n'a pas besoin d'enseignement pour trouver seul la vérité, le disciple très doué qui suit aisément son maître, incarné par Métrodore, enfin le disciple plus lent qui a besoin non seulement d'un modèle mais d'une force pour le pousser à bien faire et bien penser («quibus non duce tantum opus sit, sed adiutore et, ut ita dicam, coactore», Sen. *Ep.* 52, 3), représenté par Hermarque. Mais nous voyons une très grande différence entre les deux situations, philosophique et politique, différence qui repose sur deux éléments importants: d'une part cette dernière catégorie est valorisée et non dépréciée par Sénèque, qui considère que ces élèves moins doués sont en réalité les plus admirables et les plus méritants des apprentis philosophes («tamen maior est laus idem effecisse in difficiliore materia»); d'autre part il n'y aucune différence de nature entre la sagesse détenue ou apprise par ces différents types d'apprentis, il s'agit bien toujours de la même philosophie («ad eundem finem uterque pervenerit») - alors que sur le plan politique, les moins doués n'ont jamais réellement accès à l'intelligence des lois. Il nous paraît donc bien que ce texte de Sénèque renforce l'hypothèse de l'universalité au moins potentielle du salut philosophique, indépendamment des qualités intrinsèques des individus.

[42] On pourrait opposer à cette universalité potentielle de la salvation philosophique l'évocation régulière dans le corpus épicurien de la notion de *diathesis*, disposition individuelle qui conditionnerait la possibilité de la vie philosophique. La *diathesis* comme disposition est explicitement évoquée par Diogène d'Oenoanda au fragment 111: «Ce n'est pas la nature qui nous a fait nobles ou vils - assurément elle est une pour tous -, mais ce sont nos actions et nos dispositions» (trad. Morel dans DELATTRE *et al.* 2010). Cette *diathesis* peut être interprétée, dans son versant strictement matérialiste, comme une configuration atomique propre à l'individu qui le rendrait plus ou moins apte à assimiler la sagesse, et

La situation de l'éducateur politique est beaucoup plus difficile: il ne s'adresse pas à l'individu mais à la collectivité, *hoi polloi*, dans un lieu et un temps donné, et il doit composer avec les limites de compréhension de certains membres de la collectivité, limites qui sont comme on l'a vu en grande partie causées par la vie sociale elle-même - c'est-à-dire par la situation des individus au sein d'un espace non plus privé mais public. Son rôle est alors double: il est à la fois, comme chez Lucrèce, celui qui va rendre viable la collectivité en l'adaptant à l'idée même d'une vie politique, dans une perspective quasiment transcendantale; et celui qui va plus prosaïquement, comme chez Hermarque, faire usage de ses capacités intellectuelles supérieures pour conce-voir les lois elles-mêmes, c'est à dire pour appliquer réellement à une communauté donnée la prénotion du juste via un système législatif.

Or, si la première de ces deux fonctions, métapolitique, pourrait éventuellement être considérée comme philosophique, la seconde ne l'est plus. Elle relève d'une pratique spécifique qui n'a plus réellement à voir avec la science de la nature elle-même, même si elle demande des capacités exceptionnelles. Cette nuance explique peut-être une série de contresens, favorisés par des lectures malveillantes des thèses politiques épicuriennes[43], qui mettent le désengagement du sage sur le compte d'un mépris général pour la vie collective. La politique n'est pas le métier du philosophe, parce qu'il n'y a pas besoin d'être philosophe pour exercer cette pratique - et que politique et philosophie n'interviennent pas dans le même lieu[44]. Ce qui ne signifie pas que l'activité politique ne suppose pas une intelligence spécifique qui, par certains aspects, sera proche de l'intelligence du philosophe - une capacité à anticiper et à exercer son raisonnement en faisant usage de prénotions correctement construites,

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dans son versant plus comportementaliste, comme une disposition susceptible d'orienter les actions et décisions dans l'une ou l'autre direction; les individus dotés d'une mauvaise *diathesis* seraient alors beaucoup plus difficiles à éduquer que les autres. Cette lecture, qui est notamment celle de Grilli (1983) reprise par Erler (2011), peut être considérablement atténuée par la prise en compte de la relation complexe établie par exemple par Philodème dans le *De ira* entre disposition, émotions et éducation (cf. Asmis 2011), relation qui semble pointer vers une compréhension dynamique et non statique de la disposition: la *diathesis* est susceptible d'une évolution favorable grâce à l'éducation. Cette dynamique est d'ailleurs nous semble-t-il déjà esquissée dans le fragment 111 cité ci-dessus, du fait de son association forte aux «actions». Nous remercions le relecteur de cet article qui a attiré notre attention sur ces éléments bibliographiques importants pour notre propos.

[43] Par exemple chez Cicéron, Plutarque ou Sénèque qui reprennent à de multiples reprises à leur compte le trope de l'épicurien indifférent car désengagé de la vie politique. Cf. là dessus Asmis (2001), 113, 120. Roskam (2007) a livré récemment une analyse exhaustive et magistrale de ce lieu commun philosophique extrêmement vivace.

[44] Voir par exemple Philodème qui, dans la *Rhétorique* (Sudhaus 1895, *Suppl.* 27, 20 = Us. 10) discute le point de savoir si la rhétorique politique est bien une *technè*. Elle n'est en tout cas ni une partie de la science de la nature ni un art savant, mais une *empeiria*; de ce fait, elle ne concerne pas en priorité le philosophe, qui n'est pas le mieux placé pour l'exercer. Voir par exemple Blank (1996 et 2001). Sur le même thème, Plutarque dans le *Contre Colotès* rapporte à la fois la vénération pour l'œuvre des premiers législateurs qui ont assuré la tranquillité politique (30, 1124d), mais aussi les attaques cruelles de Métrodore contre les sages qui, par vanité, ont voulu jouer au politique «en se prenant pour Lycurgue ou Solon» (1127b). Sur cette question chez Lucrèce, voir Fowler (1989).

afin de limiter le plus possible les difficultés liées à la permanence irréductible de la confusion du juste.

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Why Human Beings Become Bad.
The Early Stoic Doctrine of Double Perversion

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Abstract

In this article I offer a reconstruction of the early Stoics' account of why human beings become bad, which they referred to as the doctrine of «double perversion», and place this doctrine in its Hellenistic context. I do so on the basis of the extant sources, going beyond the standard collections of evidence on the Stoics, and with particular emphasis on Calcidius' account, which I suggest is somewhat longer than often assumed. The two causes the early Stoics identified are each first set out within Stoic thought itself and subsequently placed against the background of the debate about human conduct among the different schools of thought that emerged in the Hellenistic period. With regard to the first cause, persuasiveness of external matters, I maintain that the early Stoics in fact attacked the Epicureans, arguing that humans should not be misled by the pleasurable nature of some things. With regard to the second cause, verbal influence by others, the early Stoics actually followed Socrates and the Cynics in emphasizing the importance of thinking against common opinion.

Keywords: perversion (Greek: διαστροφή, Latin: *perversio*), badness, early Stoa, Epicurus, Cynics, Socrates, Calcidius

Resumen

En este artículo ofrezco una reconstrucción de la explicación de los primeros estoicos de por qué los seres humanos se vuelven malos, conocida como la doctrina de la «doble perversión», y coloco esta doctrina en su contexto helenístico. Lo hago sobre la base de las fuentes existentes, yendo más allá de las colecciones estándares de testimonios sobre los estoicos, y con especial énfasis en el relato de Calcidio, probablemente algo más largo de lo que a menudo se supone. Las dos causas identificadas por los primeros estoicos se enuncian primero en el propio pensamiento estoico y, posteriormente, se colocan en el contexto del debate sobre la conducta humana entre las diferentes escuelas de pensamiento que surgieron durante el período helenístico. Con respecto a la primera causa, la persuasión de los asuntos externos, sostengo que los primeros estoicos de hecho atacaron a los epicúreos, argumentando que los humanos no deberían dejarse engañar por la naturaleza placentera de algunas cosas. Con respecto a la segunda causa, la influencia verbal de otros, los primeros estoicos en realidad siguieron a Sócrates y a los cínicos al enfatizar la importancia de pensar en contra de la opinión común.

Palabras clave: perversión (griego: διαστροφή, latín: *perversio*), maldad, antiguo Stoá, Epicuro, Cínicos, Sócrates, Calcidio

1. *Introduction*

The early Stoics explained how human beings become bad with their doctrine of double perversion, as they sometimes called it. They identified two causes of badness, which have rightly drawn the attention of modern scholars[1]. In this contribution I offer a reconstruction of the doctrine on the basis of the few sources that have survived, placing the doctrine not only within the context of Stoics ethics itself, but also within the wider framework of the intense debate about human conduct among the different schools of thought that were founded in the Hellenistic period.

As for the structure, I start with the Stoics' broad conception of badness as the counterpart of their narrow understanding of goodness (section 2). I continue discussing where according to the Stoics the origins of badness can *not* be located: neither in the nature of the world (cosmic evil), nor in the nature of a human being (section 3). In section 4, I introduce the Stoic phrase «double perversion» (in 4.1) and set out two causes they *did* identify, and connect their first cause, persuasiveness of external matters, with their (especially Cleanthes') anti-Epicurean polemics (in 4.2) and their second cause, verbal influence by others, with the Socratic-Cynic approach of rethinking what is said by others (in 4.3). In the final section I propose that Calcidius' account of the early Stoic doctrine is even more informative on Stoicism than is often assumed.

2. *The Stoic conception of badness*

The Stoic conception of badness has a broad scope. First, the Stoics discuss badness in relation to human beings, but also in relation to their institutions. With regard to institutions, constitutions, laws, and other conventional arrangements, the early Stoics criticised them: they were all considered to be bad. According to the otherwise unknown thinker Diogenianus in Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340 CE), *Preparation for the Gospel* VI 8, 14 (*SVF* III, 324), Chrysippus of Soli (c. 280-206 BCE), the third head of the Stoic school, would have stated that «all positive laws and constitutions are wrong»[2]. With regard to human beings, they discussed badness as a disposition, that is a state of mind out of which the bad person acts badly. Here, and second, the Stoics went well beyond an ordinary conception of badness. Making a single erroneous judgment already implies a bad disposition, as can be inferred from Plutarch (c. 50-120 CE), *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1042c (*SVF* III, 760): «A bad disposition is something rational or rather reason gone astray»[3].

Why would already one mistake make someone bad? The Stoics' broad conception of badness had its counterpart in their narrow conception of goodness: they only considered the virtuous disposition to be good, on the basis of which the

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[1] LONG (1968); KERFERD (1977-1978), 492; INWOOD (1985), 158-161; TIELEMAN (2003), 108; GILL (2006), 257-258; BÉNATOUÏL (2006), 113-119; GRAVER (2007), 151-163; GILL (2010), 207; GRAVER (2012).

[2] τοὺς κειμένους νόμους ἡμαρτῆσθαι φὴς [sc. Chrysippus] ἅπαντας καὶ τὰς πολιτείας.

[3] ἡ δὲ κακία λογικόν ἐστι, μᾶλλον δὲ λόγος ἡμαρτημένος. Cf. LONG (1968), 334.

virtuous being will always be able to act well (cf. LUSCHNAT, 1958, 209; LONG, 1968, 336). Someone who makes a mistake no longer has such a virtuous disposition, no longer «has all the numbers» in the often repeated phrase in the sources[4]. This perfect, virtuous disposition consists in a rational disposition that is in conformity with (or is an active part of) the reason that guides all (cf. BROUWER, 2014, 39-41).

Not having such a perfect disposition does not imply that it is impossible to have insights or - in the Stoic neologism - «cognitions» (*katalepseis*). Also imperfectly rational beings can have cognitions. However, these cognitions are not embedded in a virtuous disposition, and hence considered to be weak. Cognitions are knowledge if and only if they are embedded in such a disposition. It is against the background of the distinction between cognition and knowledge that the Stoic conception of *akrasia*, usually translated with 'weakness of the will', is best understood (cf. GUCKES, 2004; GOURINAT, 2007). The translation is somewhat infelicitous, since it seems to imply that the Stoics acknowledged a faculty of will, which they did not (cf. BROUWER, 2020a). For the Stoics, *akrasia* is the weak state of mind, such that the weak person is not able to act upon an insight. According to the Stoics, then, someone can have a conception of the good, without being able to be good, without having the firm, immutable (strong) disposition of knowledge out of which the perfectly rational being will always be able to act well. The distinction between cognition and knowledge thus defuses Plutarch's criticism in *On Common Conceptions* 1071f (part in *SVF* III, 26): How can a bad person still desire to be good, if he has no conception of goodness? A Stoic would reply that whereas the imperfect human being may not have knowledge of the good, he or she can still have a conception of it, and can thus desire to be good.

Erroneous judgments are qualified by the Stoics as «emotions» (*pathē*) that need to be extirpated (see e.g. Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 446f, *SVF* III, 459, LS 6E). Such judgments can become integrated as a permanent disposition, especially when the mistakes occur early and frequently: the development towards goodness becomes even more difficult. With regard to the mistakes that have become permanent, the analogy with bodily illness is often used. The medical analogy works only to an extent, though: patients (with or without the help of doctors) may get healthy again; with regard to mental illness, only very few human beings will overcome it and become good or virtuous: according to the early Stoics, among human beings this may only have been the case with Socrates (469-399 BCE), whom they appeared to have considered a sage, if only towards the end of his life in prison (cf. BROUWER, 2014, 163-166).

3. *Origin in nature?*

Since badness is such a broad conception and applies to almost every human being, the question as to the origins of badness becomes even more pressing. According to the Stoics, badness is not to be found in nature, neither in the world at

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[4] See e.g. Stobaeus (5th century CE) II 7, 11ᵃ > II, 93, ll. 14-15 Wachsmuth (*SVF* III, 500, LS 59K), Diogenes Laertius (3rd century CE) VII 100 (*SVF* III, 83), cf. LONG (1991).

large nor is it inborn in human nature. As for an early example of an account of badness in nature at large, Empedocles had stipulated Strife as its cause, operating next to Love as the cause for goodness: whereas Love brings together, the «hatred of Strife» carries apart[5]. The Stoics rejected this kind of dualism[6]. The Stoics stipulated one active principle of divine reason pervading the other passive principle of matter. Reason thus shapes the world and the beings therein. The world is hence considered to be good: accounts of justice, according to Chrysippus as quoted by Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1035c (*SVF* III, 68, LS 60A), have their beginnings in Zeus or common nature (cf. LONG, 1968, 333; KERFERD, 1977-1978, 492).

Furthermore, as far as the nature of human beings is concerned, the Stoics did not consider badness to be inborn either. They did not hold that all human beings are born bad[7], or that some human beings are born with bad character traits. In the 2nd century CE, Galen in his *Character Traits*, at 28 l. 15 KRAUS (1937)[8], would defend the latter position, offering examples of conduct of children: e.g. if a child gets beaten up by another child, some join in the beating rather than help the child out (29 ll. 17-20)[9]. The Stoics also did not accept Plato's (or Aristotle's) account of the human soul as divided into two or three parts, irrational as well as rational. The division could lead to a struggle between the parts, with the irrational part dominating, and thus explain badness. Since we have explicit evidence that the early Stoics engaged themselves with Plato's account, whereas presumably they were not familiar with Aristotle's writings, let me briefly deal with Plato's account here. In his *Republic*, Plato had stipulated three parts of the soul, directed at knowledge, honour, and pleasure respectively. Whereas the other parts should follow the part directed at knowledge, they often do not, which results into a struggle within. According to Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034e (*SVF* I, 260), Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE), the founder of the Stoic school, severely criticised notably Plato's *Republic*. He argued against the division of the citizens into three groups in Plato's ideal city, instead proposing in his own *Republic* a city consisting of perfect human beings only[10]. While stipulating the parallel between city and soul (Zeno presumably followed the metaphor of the large and small print in Plato's *Republic* II 369a, see Plutarch,

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[5] Simplicius (6th century CE), *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 158 l. 1 (fr. 17 ll. 7-8 DK, fr. D73 LM).

[6] The Stoics' arguments against cosmic evil are conveniently assembled in LS 54Q-U, with brief commentary on 332.

[7] A version of this position was developed in the 4th century CE by Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants* I 9-12. Even though God did not create human beings with bad natures, Adam went against His will by eating the apple. God would have made Adam's descendants inherit his sin. For justification of this influential doctrine Augustine referred to the apostle Paul, according to whom, Romans 5, 12, in Adam «all have sinned». Cf. e.g. MANN (2001), 47.

[8] The treatise survived in an abridged version in Arabic, which has been translated into English by MATTOCK (1972), and revised by DAVIES (2013).

[9] See further WALZER (1949); GILL (2010), 271.

[10] On Zeno's city of sages see Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 329a-b (*SVF* I, 262, LS 67A), cf. e.g. BROUWER (2006); VOGT (2008), 86-90.

Lycurgus 31, *SVF* I, 263), Zeno will thus have criticised Plato's tripartition of the soul, too, proposing a monistic account of the soul instead, consisting of reason only[11].

Holding that badness is neither in the world nor inborn in human nature, the Stoics have sometimes been characterised as «optimists» (see e.g. WALZER, 1949, 93). In the seventh book of his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, the fullest systematic account of Stoicism we still possess, Diogenes Laertius offers different formulations of this optimism, a negative as well as a positive one. At VII 89 (*SVF* III, 228) the point is made negatively, in Greek with the use of the negating alpha, *a-diastrophos*, «unperverted» in English: «Nature provides unperverted starting points»[12]. At VII 87 (*SVF* I, 552, LS 63C) a more positive formulation is given: already Zeno as well as his successor as head of the school, Cleanthes of Assos (331-262 BCE) - the latter in his book *On Pleasure* - had maintained that «nature leads us to virtue»[13]. The accounts by Diogenes Laertius can be supplemented by e.g. Galen, who in chapter 11 of his *Capacities of the Soul* (816 Kühn, 1822; 80 ll. 11-14, BAZOU, 2011, *SVF* III, 234) had stated: «The Stoics believe all human beings to be adapted for the acquisition of virtue»[14] (tr. SINGER, 2013).

The Stoics referred to these starting points as seeds or sparks, which are a part or a fragment of the divine active principle. Like any being in the world human beings are the result of the active principle pervading matter. In inanimate things the principle manifests itself as the principle of 'holding together', in plants also as the principle of 'growing', in animals also as that of 'perceiving' and 'moving'. In human beings the active principle manifests itself in its highest form as fiery reason. The soul of the human being is or contains a special «part» (*meros*, Diogenes Laertius VII 156, *SVF* II, 774) of this active principle of fiery reason. Next to «part», the word *apospasma* (Diogenes Laertius VII 143, *SVF* II, 633, LS 53X) is used, from *apospaō*, «to detach», as «something that has been detached» or «fragment». At birth, then, this fragment of the active principle is but tiny: in the sources the terms used are seeds or sparks. The fragment needs to be developed towards virtue, both naturally as well as by one's own effort. The natural process towards developing a rational faculty is said to be completed at the age of seven in one source (Aëtius, c. 100 CE, IV 11, *SVF* I, 149), fourteen in another (Iamblichus, c. 250-325 CE, in Stobaeus I 48, 8 > I, 317 ll. 21-24 Wachsmuth, *SVF* I, 149); during that period the child will be even more vulnerable than later in life. In the beginning of the third book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, at 2 (not in *SVF*), Cicero (106-43 BCE) thus follows the Stoics, where he writes that «nature has given us only the tiniest sparks of understanding»[15] and that the «seeds of virtue are inborn in our characters, and if they were allowed to mature,

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[11] Diogenes Laertius VII 175 (*SVF* I, 135), cf. BROUWER (2014), 73-75.
[12] ἐπεὶ ἡ φύσις ἀφορμὰς δίδωσιν ἀδιαστρόφους.
[13] ἄγει γὰρ πρὸς ταύτην [sc. ἀρετὴν] ἡμᾶς ἡ φύσις.
[14] τῶν Στωϊκῶν ἅπαντας μὲν ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἀρετῆς κτῆσιν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν οἰομένων.
[15] «Parvulos nobis dedit [sc. natura] igniculos».

nature itself would lead us to the life of happiness»[16] (tr. GRAVER, 2002, slightly adapted).

4. *The doctrine of double perversion*

4.1. *The phrase «double perversion»*

However, this optimistic account of the beginning of the life of the newborn is not as Panglossian as it may appear at first sight. As already noted in section 2, its follow up is far more pessimistic: according to the Stoics, almost all human beings develop for the worse. If the all-nature is good and if human nature is equipped for goodness, how can this badness be explained?

In the extant evidence, one of the crucial passages is Diogenes Laertius VII 89 (*SVF* III, 228). The context of the passage is the Stoics' account of happiness and virtue: «The rational being is perverted[,] in some instances by the persuasiveness of external matters, in others by verbal influence from those around him or her; since nature provides unperverted starting points»[17] (tr. MENSCH, 2018, adapted). The modern translations are sometimes misleading: the Greek text bluntly states that the rational being is perverted, whereas Mensch's translation lacks a comma, which makes it appear as if the perversion only sometimes occurs. HICKS' (1925) Loeb translation presents the perversion as conditional: «When a rational being is perverted...». JÜRSS (2010) makes perversion an occasional affair, too («Bisweilen aber wird das vernunftbegabte Lebewesen etc.»)[18].

A far longer account that deals with the Stoics on the causes of badness can be found in the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* by the Platonist Calcidius (around 400 CE). Even though the treatise is late - at the beginning of 5th century CE, the Stoic school had long ago ceased to exist -, Calcidius appears to be remarkably well-informed about Stoic doctrine (cf. GRAVER, 2012, 24; REYDAMS-SCHILS, 2020, 151-152). In his account Calcidius speaks of the doctrine of «double perversion» (*duplex perversio*, 165). The phrase «double perversion» is attributed to the Stoics themselves: «There are numerous reasons for this error, the primary one that which the Stoics call the double perversion; and this arises both from things in themselves and from the promulgation of what people say»[19] (tr. MAGEE, 2016). *Per-versio*, a hapax in Latin (cf. BAKHOUCHE, 2011, 763), must be Calcidius' translation of *dia-strophē*.

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[16] «Sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum, quae si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret».

[17] διαστρέφεσθαι δὲ τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον, ὁτὲ μὲν διὰ τὰς τῶν ἔξωθεν πραγματῶν [reading in F; pragmateion in other mss.] πιθανότητας, ὁτὲ δὲ διὰ τὴν κατήχησιν τῶν συνόντων· ἐπεὶ ἡ φύσις ἀφορμὰς δίδωσιν ἀδιαστρόφους.

[18] Correct translations are given by GIGANTE (1998): «devia»; INWOOD-GERSON (2008): «is corrupted», and GOULET (1999): «est perverti».

[19] «Est erroris causa multiplex: prima, quam Stoici duplicem perversionem vocant; haec autem nascitur tam ex rebus ipsis quam ex divulgatione famae».

The doctrine of double perversion goes back to at least Chrysippus, who in his *On Emotions*, presumably in book 2, dealt with the diagnosis of the emotions (cf. TIE-LEMAN, 2003, 132). Our main witness is Galen, *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates* V 5, 14 (*SVF* III, 229a): «There are two causes Chrysippus says of [children's] perversion: one arises in them from the verbal influence of the majority of men; the other from the very nature of the things around them»[20] (tr. DE LACY, 1981, adapted: for «verbal influence» I follow Graver).

If the formulation «double perversion» indeed goes back to Chrysippus, this does not mean that he invented the doctrine himself. Lines 22-25 of the *Hymn to Zeus* (*SVF* I, 537, LS 54I), one of the very few extant texts from an early Stoic, written by Cleanthes, Chrysippus' predecessor as head of the school, may have inspired Chrysippus: «[Mortal men] devoid of intelligence rush into this evil or that, / some in their belligerent quest for fame, / others with an unbridled bent for material gain, / others for leisure and the pleasurable acts of the body»[21] (tr. LS). The formulation of double perversion can thus be characterised as a clarification of Stoic doctrine (GRAVER, 2002, 206), a common method used by the Stoic heads of the school[22].

Next to Diogenes Laertius, Calcidius, Galen, and the Stoic Cleanthes himself, other accounts of the doctrine of the double perversion can be found in Origen and Cicero. The account by the Christian author Origen (3rd century CE), *Against Celsus* III 69 (*SVF* III, 233), appears somewhat muddled: «We affirm that every rational soul is of the same nature, and deny that any wicked nature has been made by the Creator of the universe; but we think that many men have become evil by upbringing and by perversion and by environment, so that in some people evil has even become second nature»[23] (tr. CHADWICK, 1980). Origen places perversion on a par with the two causes upbringing and environment. He also uses the Greek word *periēchesis*, «environment», rather than *katēchesis*, «verbal influence», as we found it in Diogenes Laertius and in Galen's *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*.

Cicero offers two further accounts in his *On Laws* I 31-32 (*SVF* III, 230), I 47 (*SVF* III, 229b) and in his *Tusculan Disputations* III 2 (not in *SVF*). As a self-proclaimed follower of the moderate scepticism of Philo of Larissa (head of Plato's Academy between 110-79 BCE), in each case Cicero chose what he considered the most probable position (cf. e.g. WOOLF, 2015, 10-33). Here, without mentioning the Stoics explicitly, it seems likely that he followed them in both accounts (cf. GRAVER,

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[20] διττὴν γὰρ εἶναι τῆς διαστροφῆς τὴν αἰτίαν, ἑτέραν μὲν ἐκ κατηχήσεως τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγγιγνομένην, ἑτέραν δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς φύσεως.

[21] αὐτοὶ δ᾽ αὖθ᾽ ὁρμῶσιν ἄνοι κακὸν ἄλλος ἐπ᾽ ἄλλο, / οἳ μὲν ὑπὲρ δόξης σπουδὴν δυσέριστον ἔχοντες, / οἳ δ᾽ ἐπὶ κερδοσύνας τετραμμένοι οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ, / ἄλλοι δ᾽ εἰς ἄνεσιν καὶ σώματος ἡδέα ἔργα.

[22] For other examples and discussion see SCHOFIELD (1999), 81 n. 29; GILL (2010), 59-63; BROUWER (2014), 46 n. 144.

[23] ἡμεῖς δέ, μίαν φύσιν ἐπιστάμενοι πάσης λογικῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μηδεμίαν φάσκοντες πονηρὰν ὑπὸ τοῦ κτίσαντος τὰ ὅλα δεδημιουργῆσθαι, γεγονέναι <δὲ> πολλοὺς κακοὺς παρὰ τὰς ἀνατροφὰς καὶ τὰς διαστροφὰς καὶ τὰς περιηχήσεις, ὥστε καὶ φυσιωθῆναι ἔν τισι τὴν κακίαν.

2012, 127-128). I will return to Cicero's accounts in more detail shortly, in relation to my discussion of each of the causes of badness, to which I will turn now.

4.2. *The first cause: persuasiveness of external matters*

According to Diogenes Laertius VII 89, in the passage already quoted in section 4.1, the first cause of perversion is «persuasiveness of external matters». Whereas, as we have also seen in section 4.1, in his *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*, at V 5, 14, Galen had described the first cause as "the very nature of things", a little bit later on in this treatise, at V 5, 19 (also in *SVF* III, 229a) he also uses the term persuasiveness, which he yet again ascribes to Chrysippus: «For when he says that perversion arises in inferior persons in regard to good and evil because of the persuasiveness of impressions and the verbal influence of men, we must ask him why it is that pleasure projects the persuasive impression that it is good, and pain that it is evil»[24] (tr. DE LACY, 1981, adapted). In his *Capacities of the Soul*, chapter 11, Galen appears to discuss the same cause again, stressing yet another aspect: rather than the nature of things or the impressions they bring about, he simple refers to pleasure and pain as the cause of perversion, which can thus be understood as a shorthand for the pleasurable impressions things around us can bring about: «The claim that some make, that we are perverted by pleasure and pain, the one dragging us towards it, the other, with its unpleasant quality, pushing us away, is also very foolish»[25] (tr. SINGER, 2013). It has to be noted that the cause is not explicitly attributed to the Stoics, but since the passage follows upon Galen's discussion of the second cause, «to be perverted by the human beings around us», where he had mentioned its origin with the Stoics[26], this description of the first cause will also go back to them.

Before returning to the formulation «persuasiveness of external matters» let us first have a closer look at the role attributed to pleasure in the accounts on perversion. Pleasure is brought up either in relation to human beings in general or more specifically in relation to newborn children. The focus on children is dealt with in detail by Calcidius, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 165:

«For the moment children separate from the mother's womb, the birth takes place accompanied by a certain amount of pain because of the fact that they move from a warm and moist environment to the cold and dryness of the ambient air. To counteract this pain and cold experienced by babies the specialized care provided by midwives is

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[24] ἐπειδὰν γὰρ λέγη τὰς περὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν ἐγγίνεσθαι τοῖς φαύλοις διαστροφὰς διά τε τὴν πιθανότητα τῶν φαντασιῶν καὶ τὴν κατήχησιν, ἐρωτητέον αὐτὸν τὴν αἰτίαν δι᾽ ἣν ἡδονὴ μὲν ὡς ἀγαθὸν ἀλγηδὼν δ᾽ ὡς κακὸν πιθανὴν προβάλλουσι φαντασίαν.

[25] 818-819 KÜHN (1822); 84 ll. 2-5 BAZOU (2011), *SVF* III, 234: πάνυ δ᾽ εὐήθεις εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ διαστρέφεσθαι λέγοντες ἡμᾶς ὑπό τε τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τοῦ ἄλγους, τῆς μὲν ἑλκούσης <πρὸς ἑαυτήν>, τοῦ δ᾽ ἀποτρεπτικοῦ τε καὶ τραχέος ὄντος.

[26] 816 Kühn (1822); 80 ll. 11-14 BAZOU (2011), *SVF* III, 234: τῶν Στωϊκῶν ἄπαντας μὲν ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἀρετῆς κτῆσιν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν οἰομένων, διαστρέφεσθαι <δ᾽> ὑπὸ τῶν συζώντων («The Stoics believe that all human beings are adapted for the acquisition of virtue, but diverted from it by those aroud them», tr. SINGER, 2013).

enlisted in place of medicine, such that the newborns are warmed with warm water and changes in condition are applied, i.e., a simulation of the mother's womb through a warmth and heat conducive to the tender body's feeling pleasure and resting relaxedly. Thus from both sensations equally, pain and pleasure, a kind of natural opinion emerges to the effect that everything soothing and pleasurable is good and, conversely, that what causes pain is bad and to be avoided»[27] (tr. MAGEE, 2016).

As we know from other sources, the Stoics considered pleasure a by-product at best. According to them, the first impulse of the newborn is directed at preserving itself, as can be found in Chrysippus, *On Ends*, as Diogenes Laertius VII 85 (*SVF* III, 178, LS 57A) has it. Self-preservation is part of what in the modern literature is referred to as the process of «appropriation» (*oikeiōsis*), of becoming a perfectly rational being, who will be at «home» (*oikos*) in the world at large. Sometimes this impulse is accompanied by pleasure, as is stated in the continuation of Diogenes Laertius' account, at 86: «For pleasure, they say, if it does occur, is a by-product, which supervenes when nature itself seeks out and acquires what is suitable to the animal's constitution, just as animals frolic and plants bloom»[28] (tr. LS). In Calcidius' account the example is warm water, another would be food. Both warmth and food are needed to survive, but may be accompanied by pleasure: the warm water will avoid the pain of feeling cold, the food may well be tasty. A not so standard example of the first impulse to self-preservation, from mythology (not extant in the sources, as far as I know), is Hercules, strangling the snakes put in his cradle by Hera, who wanted to get rid of this illegitimate child of her husband Zeus. The Stoic position is that the newborn actually acts on the impulse of self-preservation, but erroneously thinks that it acts on what is only its by-product. It is thus the use of the impressions by the tiny sparks of reason within (cf. Calcidius' formulation «a kind of natural opinion»), even at this early stage, that already creates badness in children.

Even though the Stoics do not think that human beings are born bad (as Augustine would later maintain, see above n. 7), they thus *do* hold that it goes wrong with them almost immediately after birth. The Stoic account is hence also to be distinguished from Rousseau's well-known description of the newborn («homme naissant») in his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalite parmi les hommes* from 1755, at the beginning of the second part. Whereas for Rousseau the newborn can still act on

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[27] «Quippe mox natis exque materno viscere decidentibus provenit ortus cum aliquanto dolore, propterea quod ex calida atque humida sede ad frigus et siccitatem aeris circumfusi migrent; adversum quem dolorem frigus que puerorum opposita est medicinae loco artificiosa obstetricum prouisio, ut aqua calida confoveantur recens nati adhibeantur que vices et similitudo materni gremii ex calefactione atque fotu, quo laxatum corpus tenerum delectatur et quiescit. ergo ex utroque sensu tam doloris quam delectationis opinio quaedam naturalis exoritur omne suaue ac delectabile bonum, contra que quod dolorem afferat malum esse atque vitandum».

[28] ἐπιγέννημα γάρ φασιν, εἰ ἄρα ἔστιν, ἡδονὴν εἶναι ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτὴν ἡ φύσις ἐπιζητήσασα τὰ ἐναρμόζοντα τῇ συστάσει ἀπολάβῃ· ὃν τρόπον ἀφιλαρύνεται τὰ ζῷα καὶ θάλλει τὰ φυτά.

«pures sensations», for the Stoics a newborn already makes use of its impressions with its tiny sparks of reason and can thus already easily go astray[29].

As already Galen's three characterisations of the first cause, discussed at the beginning of this section, seemed to suggest, the phrase «persuasiveness of external matters» can now indeed be understood as that the nature of some things gives rise to the «persuasive impression», that it is pleasure that is followed (cf. BÉNATOUÏL, 2006, 116). Persuasiveness, according to the account in Diogenes Laertius, at VII 75, induces to assent only, but is not necessarily true. The persuasive impression of the child that it follows pleasure thus has to be distinguished from the cognitive impression or true insight that it is driven by the impulse to self-preservation. Persuasiveness of external matters is thus just a short-hand for how our impressions of things may put us on the way towards badness (cf. KERFERD, 1977-1978, 492).

The Stoic focus on the newborn is understandable enough. With its rational faculty as of yet underdeveloped, it will be especially vulnerable. It is this Stoic line of thought that also Cicero appears to be following. In *On Laws*, at I 47 (*SVF* III, 229b), he explicitly refers to how easily human beings are perverted, when they are «tender and unformed» (*teneros et rudes*). In his *Tusculan Disputations*, at III 2, immediately following the passage about the tiniest sparks of understanding quoted at the end of section 3 above, he continues by stating that «we [human beings] quickly put them [these sparks] out again, corrupted as we are by our wrongful habits and beliefs. Then nowhere can our natural light be seen»[30] (tr. GRAVER, 2002).

In his account, at 166 of his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (*SVF* III, 229), Calcidius continues with how pleasure keeps perverting in later life, when children grow up and become adults:

«[i] As they reach a more mature age, a similar, indeed identical, opinion is maintained with respect to need and satiety, their blandishments and rebukes, which is why once confirmed in that age they persist in an opinion formed earlier, thinking that everything pleasing is good, even if it is of no utility, and everything painful bad, even if it is advantageous. [ii] Consequently, they are excessively devoted to wealth, in which they perceive the primary means to pleasure, [iii] and embrace popularity instead of honour. To be sure, every human being is by nature desirous of praise and honour, for honour is evidence of virtue; but whereas wise men and those engaged in the study of wisdom know which kind of virtue they should cultivate, in its ignorance of things the inexperienced mob cultivate glory and popular esteem instead of honour and pursue a life drowning in pleasures instead of virtue, [iv] thinking that the power to do what they want is a kind of regal distinction. [v] And on the grounds that man is by nature a royal animal and power also accompanies kingship, they draw the further inference that kingship entails power, although kingship is just a form of guardianship of the obedient. [vi] At the same time, on the grounds that the happy man necessarily lives as he pleases,

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[29] BROOKE (2006), 113: «The Stoics would not, for example, have considered *oikeiōsis* a principle 'prior to reason', but rather one involving judgement or mental assent, however instinctive it might seem to be».

[30] «Celeriter malis moribus opinionibusque depravati sic restinguimus, ut nusquam naturae lumen appareat».

they make the further supposition that those who live according to their pleasure are happy. Such, I suppose, is the experience-based error that takes hold of human minds»[31] (tr. MAGEE, 2016, modified).

As indicated with the Roman numerals which I inserted in the text, a lot goes wrong as a result of taking pleasure seriously. Human beings erroneously [i] think that pleasure is good, [ii] become devoted to wealth as a means to pleasure, [iii] mix up popularity with honour, [iv] connect pleasure with kingship, thinking that a king lives a life of doing as one pleases, and hence [v] also connect pleasure with power, and [vi] think that pleasure brings about happiness.

The positive conception of pleasure as happiness, with which Calcidius' account ends, brings us to the context in which the early Stoics developed their negative conception of pleasure. This context is that of the emerging schools in the early Hellenistic period, when the role of pleasure was heavily debated[32]. Epicurus (341-272) and his followers had developed a conception of pleasure as happiness, the Stoics rejected this conception of pleasure (or of happiness, for that matter). Epicureans and Stoics debated the role of pleasure in the lives of newborn as well as grown-up human beings. With regard to the newborn, Epicurus had already used observations of their conduct and had done so in order to justify his conception of happiness, for which Diogenes Laertius X 137 (fr. 66 USENER, 1887) can be consulted: «As proof that pleasure is the goal, he [sc. Epicurus] points out that living creatures, as soon as they are born, are content with pleasure and averse to pain, by nature and without reason»[33] (tr. MENSCH, 2018). In the first book of his *On Ends*, at 30 (fr. 397 USENER, 1887), Cicero lets Lucius Manlius Torquatus (d. 48 BCE), his spokesman for the Epicurean cause, formulate it as follows:

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[31] «[i] Par atque eadem habetur sententia de indigentia quoque et exsaturatione, blanditiis et obiurgationibus, cum aetatis fuerint auctioris, propterea que confirmata eadem aetate in anticipata sententia permanent omne blandum bonum, etiam si sit inutile, omne etiam laboriosum, etiam si commoditatem afferat, malum existimantes. [ii] consequenter divitias, quod praestantissimum sit in his instrumentum voluptatis, [iii] eximie diligunt gloriam que pro honore amplexantur. natura quippe omnis homo laudis atque honoris est appetens – est enim honor virtutis testimonium –, sed prudentes quidem versati que in sciscitatione sapientiae viri sciunt, quam et cuius modi debeant excolere virtutem, vulgus vero imperitum pro ignoratione rerum pro honore gloriam popularem que existimationem colunt, pro virtute vero vitam consectantur voluptatibus delibutam, [iv] potestatem faciendi quae velint regiam quandam esse eminentiam existimantes; [v] natura siquidem regium animal est homo et quia regnum semper comitatur potestas, potestati quoque regnum obsequi suspica<n>tur, cum regnum iusta sit tutela parentium. [vi] simul quia beatum necesse est libenter vivere, putant etiam eos qui cum voluptate vivant beatos fore. talis error est, opinor, qui ex rebus ortus hominum animos possidet».

[32] The central theme of RIST (1974).

[33] ἀποδείξει δὲ χρῆται τοῦ τέλος εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν τῷ τὰ ζῷα ἅμα τῷ γεννηθῆναι τῇ μὲν εὐαρεστεῖσθαι, τῷ δὲ πόνῳ προσκρούειν φυσικῶς καὶ χωρὶς λόγου.

«Every animal as soon as it is born seeks pleasure and rejoices in it, while shunning pain as the highest evil and avoiding it as much as possible. This is behaviour that has not yet been corrupted, when nature's judgement is pure and whole»[34] (tr. WOOLF, 2001).

In modern scholarship observations about the first impulses of babies in cradles, for pleasure like the Epicurean one here or for self-preservation like the Stoic one we encountered earlier, have come to be referred to as cradle arguments (see especially BRUNSCHWIG, 1986). «Cradle» goes back at least as far as Antiochus of Ascalon (1st century BCE), under whose leadership the Academy would turn dogmatic and begin to develop systematic accounts of Plato's doctrines out of his writings now regarded as authoritative. Antiochus offered an account of the conduct of the newborn in terms of Plato's division of the material body and the immaterial soul, using the phrase «visiting the cradle»[35].

With regard to the role of pleasure later on in life, the debate between Epicureans and Stoics appears to have been especially fierce under the leadership of Cleanthes, «the most anti-hedonist of the Stoics» (SEDLEY, 2007, 217 n. 23). Cleanthes' anti-hedonism comes out well in two pieces of evidence. The first piece is Cicero, *On Ends* II 69 (*SVF* I, 553), which in the 4th century CE Augustine would take over in *On the City of God* V 20 (*SVF* I, 553). There Cleanthes offers a kind of thought experiment, in which he asked his audience to imagine what it would mean if pleasure were to be the end:

«He would ask his audience to imagine a painting of Pleasure, decked in gorgeous regal attire, sitting on a throne. By her side are the Virtues, depicted as servants who consider that their whole duty and function is to minister to Pleasure and whisper her warnings (if this can be conveyed pictorially) to take care not to do anything unwittingly which might offend public opinion, or bring her pain in any way. "We virtues", they cry, "were born to serve you. We have no other business"»[36] (tr. WOOLF, 2001).

Cicero's comment leaves no doubt as to what the response to this thought experiment should be: «You will be shamed, I tell you, by that scene which Cleanthes used to depict so skilfully in his writings»[37]. The second piece of evidence survived in Stobaeus, at III 6, 66 = III, 304 ll. 1-2 Hense (*SVF* I 556). In it, Cleanthes makes the point that pleasure leads to badness in an even more explicit manner: «Cleanthes said

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[34] «Omne animal, simul atque natum sit, voluptatem appetere eaque gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem aspernari ut summum malum et, quantum possit, a se repellere, idque facere nondum depravatum ipsa natura incorrupte atque integre iudicante».

[35] Cicero, *On Ends* V 55: *ad incunabula accedunt*. Cf. TSOUNI (2019), 133.

[36] «Iubebat [*sc.* Cleanthes] eos, qui audiebant, secum ipsos cogitare pictam in tabula Voluptatem pulcherrimo vestitu et ornatu regali in solio sedentem, praesto esse Virtutes ut ancillulas, quae nihil aliud agerent, nullum suum officium ducerent, nisi ut Voluptati ministrarent et eam tantum ad aurem admonerent, si modo id pictura intellegi posset, ut caveret ne quid faceret inprudens, quod offenderet animos hominum, aut quicquam, e quo oriretur aliquis dolor. "nos quidem Virtutes sic natae sumus, ut tibi serviremus, aliud negotii nihil habemus"».

[37] «Pudebit te, inquam, illius tabulae, quam Cleanthes sane commode verbis depingere solebat».

that if pleasure is the end, intellect is given to human beings to their harm»[38]. For Cleanthes - just as for the other Stoics -, pleasure is at best a cosmetic, as Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* XI 73 (*SVF* III, 155) has it: «Cleanthes holds that pleasure is neither natural nor has value in life, just as a cosmetic is not natural»[39] (tr. BETT, 1997). Whereas «cosmetic» did not gain currency, «by-product» did[40].

4.3. *The second cause: verbal influence*

Both in Diogenes Laertius, at VII 89, and in Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* V 5, the second cause is referred to with the Greek word *katēchesis*. The standard meaning of *katēchesis* is «instruction by word of mouth». Instruction fits the period of growing up best, since it suggests a formal relationship of authority between parent and child or teacher and pupil. The translation is perhaps less suitable for the period of adulthood thereafter: hence next to «verbal influence» used here, the translations «transmission» or «conversation» have also been proposed[41]. In his Latin *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, at 165 (*SVF* III, 229), Calcidius uses the phrase *divulgatione famae*. Unlike his translation of *diastrophē* into *perversio*, *divulgatio* cannot be a literal translation of *katechēsis*: *divulgatio* rather means «making public». DEN BOEFT (1970), 60-61 (followed by BAKHOUCHE, 2003, 733) proposed that Calcidius may have translated *periēchesis*, «resonance» (which as we saw above was used by Origen). Unlike instruction, however, resonance does not presume a relationship of authority of instructor to instructee. Combined with *fama*, «opinion of the multitude», the phrase surely already applies to the influence of public opinion later in life. In Magee's recent translation of Calcidius *divulgatione famae* thus becomes «promulgation of the talk of the multitude».

This cause of verbal influence manifests itself already in the earliest phases of childhood. In his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, at 167, Calcidius describes how mothers, nurses, but also poets, as well as - slightly more remarkable - painters and sculptors put young children on the wrong track. Mothers and nurses not only «whisper» their own incorrect opinions about the importance of money and popularity into the children's ears, they also frighten them with stories about bogeymen in order to make them behave well (cf. GRAVER, 2007, 158). Again, Cicero appears to be in line with the Stoics here, especially in his *Tusculan Disputations* III 2-3: «But as it is, no sooner are we born and received into the family than we are surrounded by all kinds of corrupting influences, and the most

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[38] Κλεάνθης ἔλεγεν, εἰ τέλος ἐστὶν ἡ ἡδονή, πρὸς κακοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν φρόνησιν δίδοσθαι (ms.; Meineke: δεδόσθαι). Cf. GOURINAT (2008), 185. For a parallel formulation see Cicero, *On Old Age* 40: *huic divino muneri ac dono* [*sc. mens*] *nihil tam esse inimicum quam voluptatem* («there is nothing more hostile to this divine gift and boon [of intellect] than pleasure», tr. DAVIE, 2017), cf. PEARSON (1891), 311.

[39] Κλεάνθης μὲν μήτε κατὰ φύσιν αὐτὴν [sc. ἡδονὴν] εἶναι μήτε ἀξίαν ἔχειν [αὐτὴν] ἐν τῷ βίῳ, καθάπερ δὲ τὸ κάλλυντρον κατὰ φύσιν μὴ εἶναι.

[40] For the translation of κάλλυντρον as «cosmetic» I follow RIST (1974), 176 and BETT (1997), 14.

[41] For «transmission» see GRAVER (2007 and 2012); for «conversation» see DE LACY (1978) *ad loc.*

wrongheaded beliefs, so it seems almost as if we had drunk in error along with the milk of our wetnurses»[42] (tr. GRAVER, 2002).

In adulthood it does not get any better. An example of the perverting verbal influence of others given by Chrysippus survived in Galen, *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates* V 5, 20 (*SVF* III, 229a): «When we hear the majority of men praise and glorify victory at Olympia and the erection of one's statute as good things, and when we hear them speak of defeat and disgrace as evil, why is it that we are readily persuaded?»[43] (tr. DE LACY, 1981). Of course, since for a Stoic like Chrysippus only the disposition of virtue is good, popularity is not. As with the doctrine of double perversion itself, here yet again Chrysippus may have been inspired by Cleanthes: as we know from Cleanthes' list of writings (preserved at Diogenes Laertius VII 175, *SVF* I, 481), he wrote two treatises which in the list are presented after each other: *On Popularity* (*doxa*) and *On Honour* (*timē*). According to standard Stoic doctrine (see e.g. Stobaeus II 7, 11ʰ > II, 103 ll. 6-7 Wachsmuth, *SVF* III, 563), honour is the counterpart of popularity: «Honour comes with the exercise of virtue, the only thing that is worthy of a reward»[44].

Again Cicero appears to endorse the Stoic position in his *On Laws* I 47 (*SVF* III, 229b), stating that people hold mistaken opinions about pleasure and pain, life and death, honour and popularity, as well as in the *Tusculan Disputations* III 2-3: «But it is when we meet with society at large [...] that we become thoroughly infected with corrupt beliefs and secede from nature absolutely»[45] (tr. GRAVER, 2002). The examples Cicero provides, e.g. about the high esteem of «military command» (*imperium*), are geared towards his Roman public.

It is obviously not the traditional (if not reactionary) Roman context, in which the early Stoics elaborated their thoughts about the second cause (if only for chronological reasons; later Stoics who presented themselves in the late Republican Rome would hence develop these thoughts in a less confrontational manner, see BROUWER, 2021b). Unlike the first cause, which - if my reconstruction above is correct - the Stoics developed arguing against the Epicureans' positive conception of pleasure, with regard to this second cause it seems rather likely that they would have done so by following the Cynics, as MOLES (1983) suggested, and above all Socrates. The Cynics were the undeniable champions of thinking against common opinion, but also Socrates made his fellow-citizens rethink their conventional convictions about virtue and the good life.

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[42] «Nunc autem, simul atque editi in lucem et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate et in summa opinionum perversitate versamur, ut paene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur».

[43] οὕτως δὲ καὶ διὰ τί τὴν μὲν νίκην τὴν [ἐν] Ὀλυμπίασιν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀνδριάντων ἀνάθεσιν ἐπαινούμενά τε καὶ μακαριζόμενα πρὸς τῶν πολλῶν ἀκούοντες ὡς ἀγαθά, περὶ δὲ τῆς ἥττης τε καὶ τῆς ἀτιμίας ὡς κακῶν, ἑτοίμως πειθόμεθα;

[44] τὴν γὰρ τιμὴν εἶναι γέρως ἀξίωσιν, τὸ δὲ γέρας ἄθλον ἀρετῆς εὐεργετικῆς. Cf. GRAVER (2007), 160.

[45] «Cum vero eodem quasi maxumus quidam magister populus accessit atque omnis undique ad vitia consentiens multitudo, tum plane inficimur opinionum pravitate a naturaque desciscimus».

Even though the reliability of the extant evidence has sometimes been put into doubt, we find the Stoics characterised as followers of both the Cynics as well as Socrates. One piece of (surely stylized) evidence is the anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius, at VII 3. Zeno, upon his arrival from Cyprus around 312, is said to have become interested in pursuing wisdom by hearing about Socrates: «After having heard the bookseller reading about Socrates and Zeno having expressed his interest in Socrates, Crates of Thebes passed by, whereupon the bookseller suggested to Zeno that he should "follow that man!"» Crates of Thebes (c. 360-280 BCE) had been a pupil of Diogenes of Sinope, the first self-proclaimed Cynic. Zeno thus became a student of Crates, a Cynic, who like Socrates and his own teacher, Diogenes of Sinope, propagated the simple life of disregarding conventions.

As for the Cynics, in their confrontational and sometimes even shocking manner, they argued against conventional opinion, such as that life should be comfortable, and propagated a simple lifestyle instead: Diogenes wore a simple double cloak, lived in tub, and begged for his food. They argued against the traditional inequality between the sexes, in favour of same-sex clothing and free marriage. They rejected conventional communities or citizenship, declaring themselves citizens of the world[46].

As for the Stoics, already Zeno, in his *Republic*, the book that made him famous, criticised conventional communities, arguing against traditional marriage, currency, temples, law courts[47]. Such anti-conventional opinions were not confined to Zeno or to his early *Republic* for that matter (as some embarrassed later Stoics would argue, especially those that became active in conservative Rome), they were also held by Chrysippus. Not only could Chrysippus' language be rude and indecent in Cynic fashion, «more suitable to prostitutes»[48], he is also said to have allowed incest and the eating of the corpses of the dead (see Diogenes Laertius VII 187-188), and to have argued against the need for weapons or currency, and against conventional religion[49].

Whereas Cynic anti-conventionalism was thus part and parcel of early Stoicism[50], the role these Cynic doctrines played in their thought has been assessed differently, such as that the early Stoics would advocate it outright or that they would do so with regard to specific circumstances only. In the context of the Hellenistic polemics, the Epicureans, who as we have seen had been severely attacked by Cleanthes, struck back. They were prepared to exploit Stoic anti-conventionalism to the full, presenting the Stoics' Cynicising doctrines in a particularly ugly fashion, even up to distorting them «in bad faith» (GOULET-CAZÉ, 2017, 605). An example thereof is Philodemus

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[46] For a fuller account see DESMOND (2008), 77-131, with reference to the relevant sources. HARD (2012) provides a collection of the sources on early Cynicism in English translation.

[47] See esp. Diogenes Laertius VII 33-34, other evidence is presented and discussed by BALDRY (1959); SCHOFIELD (1999), 3-21; VOGT (2008), 20-64.

[48] Diogenes Laertius VII 188: χαμαιτύπαις μᾶλλον πρέπουσαν.

[49] See Philodemus, *Against the Stoics* XVI-XVII Dorandi (fr. 216 GIANNANTONI, 1990). For an English translation see HARD (2012), 49-50.

[50] For the Cynic influence on the Stoic doctrine of common law (or natural law, as it would come to be called) see BROUWER (2021a).

of Gadara, *On the Stoics*, at cols. XVIII-XIX DORANDI (1982), where he summarizes «the noble thoughts of these people», i.e. of Diogenes, Zeno and his followers[51]. Sexual matters get most of the attention (masturbation in public; free sexual intercourse, with sisters, mothers and other members of the family, brothers as well as sons, sometimes even in the form of rape), but also their approval of killing fathers. It appears more likely, though, that the Stoics did not carry their Cynicism to the extreme. See yet again a (stylized) anecdote with regard to Zeno, which continues the one about him following Crates, at Diogenes Laertius VII 3:

> «From then on he studied with Crates, proving in other respects well suited for philosophy, though he was bashful about adopting Cynic shamelessness. Hence Crates, who wanted to cure him of this, gave him a pot of lentil soup to carry through the Cerameicus. And when he saw that Zeno was ashamed and tried to keep it hidden, he struck the pot with his cane and broke it. As Zeno was running away, the soup streaming down his legs, Crates said, "Why run away, little Phoenician? Nothing terrible has happened to you"» (tr. MENSCH, 2018).

This brings us to Socrates, about whom Zeno had heard the bookseller reading in the earlier anecdote. Despite the differences in the accounts about Socrates, «his searching for wisdom, examining himself and others» (Plato, *Apology* 28e) stands out. In his search he exposed his citizens, confronting them with the incorrectness of their conventional opinions, presenting them his own set of unconventional opinions, such as the overall importance of virtue, or that virtue is knowledge. These convictions are referred to as *paradoxes*, in the literal sense in Greek as «doctrines that go against common opinion», in the ancient sources and in the modern scholarly literature[52]. The Stoics exploited Socrates' unconventional opinions, as can already be inferred from Cicero, *On the Paradoxes of the Stoics*, Pr. 4 (not in *SVF*, but cf. his *Lucullus* 136, *SVF* III, 599):

> «These doctrines are surprising and they run counter to common opinion (the Stoics themselves actually term them paradoxes); […] and I wrote them with the greater pleasure because these Stoic paradoxes appear to me to be in the highest degree Socratic, and far and away the truest»[53] (tr. RACKHAM, 1942, modified).

With regard to the Stoic use of the Socratic paradoxes, what is relevant here yet again is that for the Stoics (or Socrates or the Cynics) «verbal influence of others» cannot go unexamined.

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[51] Col. XVIII ll. 1-2: τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

[52] For the Socratic paradoxes see e.g. O'BRIEN (1967), who reconstructs them from Plato's texts only; GERSON (2013), 41; cf. DILLON (2019), 41, who rather speaks of «principles» (which are, of course, no less controversial; for the Stoic paradoxes and Socrates see ALESSE, 2001, 121; BROUWER, 2020b).

[53] «Quae quia sunt admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium (ab ipsis etiam παράδοξα appellantur), [...] eoque hos locos scripsi libentius, quod mihi ista παράδοξα quae appellant maxime videntur esse Socratica longeque verissima».

5. *A final remark on Calcidius'* Commentary

According to the Stoics, human beings are born with sparks of reason that need to be developed. Unfortunately, these sparks are but tiny and hence human beings, obviously even more so when just born, are vulnerable creatures. Both the impressions that things can bring forth, notably that pleasure is a good, as well as the verbal influence by others make that the vast majority of people develop bad dispositions.

This cannot be the place to go into Stoic accounts on how to overcome these bad dispositions, that is on how to educate children and on how in adulthood one can cure oneself from one's bad emotions, both vast topics in themselves and best left to other occasions. Here I would like to end with a remark on the educational programme that Calcidius sets out immediately after his presentation of the Stoic doctrine of double perversion, at 168:

«Thus those who would want to become sages require a free education and precepts leading to virtue as well as erudition which is foreign to the mob, and they must see and contemplate all that has been selected to drive them toward wisdom. Above all they require divine aid for perception of the highest goods, which, although proper to divinity, are nevertheless made common to human things. Also, the body's obedience to the faculties of the soul must be at a level sufficient for its tolerating the labour entailed by the exercise. Likewise, good teachers must be available, and the mode of conduct that each is allotted in the form of his tutelary genius. For Socrates is said to have been "accompanied from childhood by a *daimōn*", an instructor in what was to be done, not one such as to urge him to any particular course of action, but such as to warn against those whose fulfillment would not be beneficial, the reason being that, if the things that are within human power should be enacted through imprudence when its is not beneficial for them to be enacted, they would bring ruin, which the benevolent genius kept away from Socrates»[54] (tr. MAGEE, 2016, adapted).

Von Arnim did not take up the passage in his collection of evidence on the Stoics, but as already WASZINK (1975), 196, suggested, Calcidius' account is well in line with Stoic thought, including the references to «sages» (*sapientes*) and to the (Socratic) *daimōn*, which the Stoics were happy to exploit[55]. Even if Calcidius were to rely on

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[54] «Opus est ergo futuris sapientibus tam educatione liberali praeceptis que ad honestatem ducentibus quam eruditione a vulgo separata uidenda que eis et spectanda sunt lecta omnia quae protelent ad sapientiam. ante omnia divino praesidio opus est ad perceptionem bonorum maximorum quae, cum sint propria divinitatis, cum hominibus tamen communicantur. corporis quoque obsequium sufficiens animae viribus esse debet ad tolerandum exercitii laborem. oportet item sufficere praeceptores bonos propositum que id quod sortiti sumus singuli numen. quippe Socrati dicitur a pueris comes daemon rerum agendarum praeceptor fuisse, non ut hortaretur eum ad aliquem actum, sed ut prohiberet quae fieri non expediret propterea quod, quae in hominis potestate sunt, si per imprudentiam agantur, cum agi ea sit inutile, cladem afferant, quod a Socrate arcebat benivolum numen».

[55] For *daimōn* see e.g. the Stoics' conception of the good life in Diogenes Laertius VII 88 (*SVF* III, 4, LS 63C): εἶναι δ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ εὐδαίμονος ἀρετὴν καὶ εὔροιαν βίου, ὅταν πάντα πράττηται κατὰ τὴν συμφωνίαν τοῦ παρ᾽ ἑκάστῳ δαίμονος πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τῶν ὅλων διοικητοῦ βούλησιν («And this very thing constitutes virtue and smooth current of the happy life, when everything is done in light of the harmonious accord of each man's *daimōn* with the will of him who governs the universe», tr. MENSCH, 2018, adapted).

Plato's educational programme, as set out in his *Republic* VII 521c-541b, as den BOEFT (1970), 66, followed by BAKHOUCHE (2011), 765 suggested, it is remarkable, though, Calcidius does not use the typically Platonic terms guardians or of philosopher-kings. It is tempting to think, then, that the programme Calcidius presents in this passage was in fact developed by the Stoics themselves as their response as to how to deal with the two causes of human badness they had first set out[56].

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Hecato of Rhodes and Stoic Casuistry

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Abstract

This article focuses on one of the most important figures of the so-called Middle Stoicism, Hecato of Rhodes. By his use of the *disputatio in utramque partem* («debating both sides»), Hecato tackles the problem of moral dilemma, or conflict of duties. An analysis of his examples, compared to the ones previously used by Antipater of Tarsus, Diogenes of Babylonia and Chrysippus, sheds a new light on Stoic ethics. Hecato first shows that a moral rule is always linked to practical parameters and that the moral calculation consists precisely in articulating all of them, without crushing it under the weight of the absolute value that is virtue. Saying virtue is the supreme value is not enough, when it comes to matter of conscience: the whole question rests in our balancing the burden that each parameter places on us. But how can we be sure that this rational calculation is still following the moral compass we have, that is, the absolute value that is virtue? Hecato's suggestion is the following: practising morality causes a good to be passed on and returned in a continuous movement; its aim is to make the good pervade the world, and this can be achieved by the most visible good on the human stage, i.e. the practice of beneficence, love and friendship. Therefore, our first injunction is not a strictly rational one: it is an appeal to loving other people, because by this we orient ourselves in the right direction.

Keywords: duty, casuistry, dilemmas, virtue, Hecato of Rhodes, Intermediate Stoicism

Resumen

Este artículo se centra en una de las figuras más importantes del llamado estoicismo intermedio, Hecato de Rodas. Mediante el uso de la *disputatio in utramque partem*, Hecato aborda el problema del dilema moral o conflicto de deberes. Un análisis de sus ejemplos, comparado con los utilizados anteriormente por Antípatro de Tarso, Diógenes de Babilonia y Crisipo, arroja una nueva luz sobre la ética estoica. Hecato muestra en primer lugar que una regla moral está siempre ligada a parámetros prácticos y que el cálculo moral consiste precisamente en articular todos esos parámetros, sin aplastarlos bajo el peso del valor absoluto de la virtud. Decir que la virtud es el valor supremo no es suficiente, cuando se trata de una cuestión de conciencia: toda la cuestión está en equilibrar la carga que cada parámetro nos impone. Pero, ¿cómo podemos estar seguros de que este cálculo racional sigue todavía la brújula moral que tenemos, es decir, el valor absoluto representado por la virtud? La sugerencia de Hecato es la siguiente: practicar la moralidad hace que un bien se transmita y se devuelva en un movimiento continuo; su objetivo es hacer que el bien penetre en el mundo, y esto puede lograrse mediante el bien más visible en el escenario humano, es decir la práctica de la beneficencia, el amor y la amistad. Por tanto, nuestro primer mandamiento no es estrictamente racional: es un llamado a amar a otras personas, porque así nos orientamos en la dirección correcta.

Palabras clave: deber, casuística, dilemas, virtud, Hecato de Rodas, Estoicismo intermedio

1. *Introduction*

Hecato of Rhodes, a student of Panaetius, is one of the forgotten figures of Stoicism. Still, he was of great importance in antiquity, if we consider that Diogenes Laertius very frequently quotes Hecato in his *Lives and Doctrines of Eminent Philosophers*, that is to say, much more often than Panaetius, and pretty much as often as Zeno and Chrysippus[1]. Furthermore, Hecato is a privileged interlocutor for Cicero, especially in *De officiis* book III, and one of the main sources used by Seneca to write his *De beneficiis.*

How come that this important figure, who was likely a friend of Quintus Aelius Tubero[2] and therefore probably part of the so-called Circle of Scipio is nowadays totally ignored? The first reason is possibly the loss of his work, even though it was of huge extent: according to the three sources mentioned above, Hecato wrote eight treatises, covering the then usual Stoic topics, namely a Περὶ τέλους (seven books), a Περὶ ἀγαθῶν (at least nine books), a Περὶ ἀρετῶν (at least three books), a Περὶ παθῶν (at least two books), a Περὶ παραδόξων (at least three books), a Περὶ καθηκόντων (at least six books), two books of Χρεῖαι dealing with Cynics and Stoics, and most likely a Περὶ χαρίτων (*On Benefits*). All of it amounts to about thirty books at least, of which only twenty-nine fragments remain. But how is it that this considerable oeuvre, used by well-known authors, among them two philosophers, has been lost? The personality of Cicero and Seneca may have something to do with this. It can be established that they both use Hecato, even following the structure of his treatises to write their own in the case of Seneca. It is also a fact that they used to integrate and reformulate borrowed arguments, so that it becomes difficult to find out what was originally said. Finally, their overwhelming influence may have over-shadowed Hecato's legacy.

Working on Hecato demands a meticulous analysis of the method and perspective of each source, tracking back the influence he may have had on philosophers who build their own thinking freely. Difficult as it may be, it is nonetheless possible to draw some conclusions. The first regards the kind of Stoic tradition in which Hecato operates: the account of the Stoic school, as it is transmitted by Diogenes Laertius, links Hecato to a Stoic tradition that claims its Cynic roots (which is confirmed, among other things, by his *Chreiai*), but in a Socratic way: Socrates is the background figure, through Antisthenes, who is assumed to have been at the same time a student of Socrates and the first Cynic[3]. The second conclusion is about Hecato's contribution to ethics[4], namely his understanding of virtue: Hecato is both a doxographer, who

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[1] For all this, see VEILLARD (2021): most frequently quoted is Chrysippus, then Posidonius, then Zeno and Hecato.

[2] According to Cic. *Off.* III 63 (see VEILLARD, 2021, fr. 10), Hecato dedicated his work on duties to Q. Aelius Tubero, who was the grandson of L. Aemilius Paullus and the nephew of Scipio Aemilianus.

[3] A second tradition, to which Panaetius seems to belong, also wants to draw a line between Stoicism and Socrates, but through a tradition aligned with the Academics, i.e. in this case, Plato and Aristotle.

[4] We have no trace of treatises about logic or physics, but some fragments show an interest in syllogisms applied to ethics (see fr. 3 and 4, VEILLARD, 2021: D.L. VII 127-128 and VII 101). This

takes over arguments already used by Antisthenes, Chrysippus, Antipater of Tarsus and Diogenes of Babylonia, as well as a philosopher, who has his own way of conceptualizing the difference between the virtues and the different ways they can be achieved.

The most interesting part of Hecato's ethical doctrine regards what we could call circumstantial ethics. How can we decide which virtue is to be used in such-and-such an action? More importantly, how do we determine what we have to do when it comes to tricky situations? Hecato is the kind of man who asks very curious questions, such as: is a good man justified in not feeding his slaves during a period of great scarcity? If something has to be thrown into the sea during a storm, should it be a priceless horse or a valueless slave? Let's assume that in a shipwreck a foolish man grabs a plank, should a sage be justified in snatching it in order to save his life even if it means drowning the fool? (Cic. *Off.* III 89, see below). Hecato devises several examples of what we now call a «dilemma», thus exploring the field of «circumstantial duties» (*kathekonta kata peristasin*). All this is closely tied up with the definition of a duty, considering that the content of this very duty can change if the circumstances of the action should change[5].

This issue - that is, the dependence of duty (καθῆκον) on circumstances - had already been discussed by earlier Stoics, namely Diogenes of Babylonia and Antipater of Tarsus, as is shown by Cicero in *De officiis* III 49-55. The problem more specifically raised is the possibility of a conflict between good and useful, that is to say: between what is morally good (*honestum*) and what is practically advantageous (*utile*). According to Cicero's account, the Stoics themselves were puzzled about this point: either they considered this to be the most important question, when it comes to ethics; or they regarded the question as meaningless, assuming that this kind of conflict could never occur from a Stoic point of view. Hecato obviously took the question very seriously: not only does he develop Antipater's and Diogenes' discussion, but he is also the first to use dilemma in a systematic way in order to search for what could be a criterion for the right decision. For that purpose, he builds on a very specific method, the *disputatio in utramque partem* («debating both sides»), which appears to be the core of this new ethical discipline called «casuistry».

This paper aims at showing how Hecato departs from his predecessors, methodologically as well as doctrinally. 1). Our first step is to survey the Hecatonian examples, which take place within the framework of the well-known polemic about

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interest in formalization can be linked to the effort made to produce one single rule or procedure applicable to various circumstances.

[5] This uncertainty comes from the very loose definition of duty, as Zeno puts it (D.L. VII 107-108): «They also say that a duty is that for which, once done, a reasonable defence (εὔλογον ἀπολογισμόν) can be given, for example harmony in the tenor of life's process (τὸ ἀκόλουθον ἐν τῇ ζωῇ), which indeed extend to plants and animals. For duties can be seen in them as well. Zeno was the first to use this term καθῆκον, the name being derived from κατά τινας ἥκειν, "to have arrived in accordance with certain persons". A duty is an activity appropriate to constitutions that accord with nature» (transl. Hicks, Loeb edition, slightly modified).

the possible conflict between what is morally good (*honestum*) and what is useful or advantageous (*utile*). 2). This will allow us to determine which part is his, and which part he borrows from his predecessors, especially Antipater and Diogenes. 3). The comparison with Chrysippus will highlight the specific problem of the value (ἀξία) of life, which will lead us to Hecato's innovative solution: that feelings of a certain sort can play a part in the moral calculation.

2. *The conflict between* honestum *and* utile: *Hecato, the source of Cicero?*

In his *De officiis*, Cicero intends to consider duty from a practical point of view: he does not want to study the definition of duty, nor the different types of it[6]; he wants to discover what we ought to do, practically speaking. To that end, he follows the structure, and probably the content, of Panaetius' lost Περὶ καθηκόντος, which was organized like this[7]: at first, we have to discover what is good; then what is useful; then we are compelled to analyze situations in which what is good all of a sudden appears to be contradictory to what is useful, or what is useful contradictory to what is good. In this case, the moral agent finds herself in an axiological confusion because none of the previous rules seems to apply correctly: what is good suddenly seems useless, or what is determined as useful seems disgraceful. This means that the definition of «morally good» and «useful» could be erroneous[8]. If we follow what appears to be good, we achieve something looking silly or disadvantageous; if we decide to follow what appears to be useful, we achieve something looking unjust or immoral. This last part of the reflection, «regarding duty relative to circumstances» (περὶ του κατὰ περίστασιν καθηκόντος), is the most important part of the subject, says Cicero, following Posidonius, and yet, the latter handled the topic very briefly, only «in some commentaries» (*in quibusdam commentariis*, Cic. *Off.* III 8).

This disappointing conclusion is confirmed elsewhere by Cicero. In a letter, he points out that he could not find anything worthwhile in the supplementary documentation he ordered from Atticus (Cic. *Att.* XVI 11, 4-8): according to Cicero, Posidonius investigated the question, probably in his Περὶ καθηκόντος[9], and Athenodorus Calvus wrote a summary (τὰ κεφάλαια) about it[10]. In a later letter,

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[6] Cic. *Off.* I 7. If we follow the topical division of the subject, the different types of duties are: duty (καθῆκον), right action (κατόρθωμα) and the «duty relative to others» called *beneficium* (χάρις). See for example the doxography of Eudorus in Stobaeus *Ecl.* II 7, 2 (II, 42, 7-45, 6 W.). On the Eudorean division, see GIUSTA (1964), 151-193.

[7] This treatise, by the way also unfinished, is completely lost: the few informations we have about it comes from Cicero (see ALESSE, 1997, Test. 92-103).

[8] Cic. *Off.* III 7. Panaetius declared that he would cover the three topics, but he wrote three books on the first two, leaving the third untreated.

[9] This conclusion is unanimously shared by commentators, see DYCK (1996), 485. This book is mentioned by D.L. VII 124 and 129 (fr. 39-41c EK).

[10] This Stoic philosopher was a teacher of Augustus (see GOULET, 2000). The κεφάλαια were either a summary of Posidonius' περὶ καθηκόντος, or a mere Stoic doxography. For the first solution, see GIGON (1969), 267-278, esp. 271. The second solution is preferred by POHLENZ (1965), 253-291. According to Pohlenz, this doxography is the source used by Cicero to write the third book of *De officiis*.

Cicero speaks about Athenodorus' «rather nice *aide-mémoire*» (*satis bellum* ὑπομνή-μα)[11]. The comment made in *Off.* III 34, however, shows that he was finally disappointed with all answers he encountered:

> «The part that he left, therefore, I shall complete without any auxiliaries, but, as the saying goes, fighting my own battle (*Marte nostro*). For there is no treatment of this question since Panaetius, at any rate such that meets with my approval, in the writings that have come into my hands»[12].

This means that neither the summary (τὰ κεφάλαια), nor the *aide-mémoire* (ὑπομνήμα) of Athenodorus (assuming these were two different books), nor the *commentarii* written by Posidonius[13] were helpful. So, what was? A tempting answer would be: Hecato, of course! Unfortunately, this goes against Cicero's words, when he claims to think and write only on his own, and to follow Panaetius' spirit; it also goes against some comments by Cicero which suggest that he did not approve of Hecato's conclusions; it also goes against the very few mentions of Hecato: only three in book III[14]. One must then conclude that Cicero used Hecato only for some examples and not for a specific thesis. We can nevertheless be confident about the following point: if Hecato «packed book VI of his περὶ καθηκόντος with examples of this type» (Cic. *Off.* III 89), it was surely because he found the subject highly valuable and intended to treat it by means of cases called «*dilemmata*». The fact that Cicero disapproved of his conclusions clearly means that, on that very point, he had ones. A conclusion can therefore be drawn: when it comes to the difficult problem of circumstantial duties, and more precisely when it comes to the most important question in ethics, that is the possible conflict between two rules (the one of *honestum* and the one of *utile*), there come the examples of Hecato; Hecato is the one to be used, probably because he was the one who dedicated more space to these questions, even if Cicero wants to reach a different conclusion on that point.

Before moving on, let's tackle a first point. Hecato will use examples as starting points of his search. These examples are, at first sight, merely examples, that is examples in the trivial sense of the word: we will encounter a dishonest wine seller, a horse owner travelling on a boat, a father digging a tunnel to rob a temple, among other funny characters. These examples are therefore simple cases, from which we will be able to draw some conclusions. We are not yet dealing with *exempla* in the

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[11] Cic. *Att.* XVI 14, 4. It remains to be seen whether ὑπομνήμα and κεφάλαια are one and the same work. See on that point the summary by DYCK (1996), 485-486, who arrives at no definite conclusion.

[12] Cic. *Off.* III 34 (transl. GRIFFIN-ATKINS, 1991).

[13] See DYCK (1996), 486-487, for the possible identification of *commentarii* with ὑπομνήμα and κεφάλαια. Dyck thinks that the *commentarii* are passages from Posidonius' περὶ καθηκόντος that Cicero finally received. We agree with this conclusion, because of a point made by LÉVY (1997), 191-207. Lévy shows (194-195) that when Cicero mentions a book for the first time, he does it in a very precise way with a Greek title; further references are less precise, according to a principle of «reference to the reference». In that case, τὰ περὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος, *eius librum* and *commentarii* are three ways of pointing to the same book.

[14] Cic. *Off.* III 50-55; 63; 89-92 (fr. 11bis, 10 and 11 VEILLARD, 2021).

technical sense of the word: when a simple example (usually a real man, like Cato) becomes so paradigmatic that it gives birth to a genuine model, this simple example becomes an *exemplum*. Persisting in using the word «example», instead of «case», is a way to highlight the obvious link between the mere example (or case) and the paradigmatic *exemplum*. Hecato is precisely the one who introduces the method of casuistry, in order to establish test-cases, and ultimately perhaps exemplary examples, then, real *exempla*. But, at first, he merely works on examples in the sense of cases. It is in this loose sense that we will speak of the Hecatonian examples.

3. *Hecato's examples in* De officiis *III*

At first, Hecato's examples are noteworthy because of their argumentative structure. We deal here with (says Cicero) *quaestiones*, or *controversa iura*, belonging both to the *disputatio in utramque partem*. If we follow the definitions of Cicero's *De Oratore* III 109, a *quaestio* is a general statement, usually doubtful, similar to the Aristotelian *thesis*: it is a question without specification, like «What do we do with war prisoners?»; a *controversia*, or a *causa*, is a more detailed question, with particular specifications, like «Should we give the Carthaginians their prisoners back in order to get our own prisoners back from them?» In our texts, it seems that Cicero makes no difference between the two terms. The philosophical background of all this is in fact the Cynic διατριβή, in which a speaker imagines a lively dialogue with a fictional interlocutor making objections and resorting to everyday situations. The Socratic dialogue is one of the possible figures of this διατριβή, as well as the paradox, which is a surprising statement that requires careful analysis in both sides to be proven true. This explains why serious and long philosophical discussions, as well as very specific cases, both belong to the common form of the *disputatio in utramque partem*.

The discussion *pro* and *contra* has Platonic and Aristotelian origins[15] but has also been used by Chrysippus. The latter warns against this «debating both sides» (διαλέγεσθαι πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία): as Chrysippus sees it, this method cannot be used in a wide range of cases; it may be dangerous because it is morally confusing; it makes contradictory solutions appear equally right, while obviously they are not. This confusion is no more than the result of ignorance of what is good: virtue, and only virtue. This method requires then caution, in order not to be convinced that both theses are true (Plu. *De Stoic. rep.* 10, 1035f-1036a). It is thus not only inappropriate for someone who wants to reach knowledge and a coherent life; there may even be a risk, already pointed out by Aristotle: we could be convinced that what is immoral is as well-founded as what is morally right. Carneades gave a striking demonstration of

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[15] See Cic. *Tusc.* II 3, 9: the habit to discuss a topic from opposite sides (*in contrarias partes disserendi*) is common to the Academy and to the Peripatos. See also D.L. IX 51 (Protagoras). Aristotle (*Rh.* I 1, 1355 a 33) assumes that the discussion *in contrarias partes* serves as a preparation for convincing someone of the contrary of what we think and helps acquire a wide knowledge of the subject. Aristotle insists on the fact that there is only one right way to argue, because there is only one right way to act (the problem is to find out which one it is, and by consequence we need to investigte both paths).

this danger in his discourses about justice, pronounced in front of the Roman Senate in 155 B.C., which earned him a quick and firm escort out of the city.

If Hecato packed his book with discussions of this sort, it means that he used them on a wide range of topics and considered the method itself efficient. By using this method in a systematic way, Hecato broke the Chrysippean law, as it were. The fact that Tubero is the dedicatee of Hecato's treatise on duties points in the same direction, since the man was known for his talent in this kind of discussion.

The method appears to be the following: an example is given and several circumstances are applied in order to test the validity of the rule used to solve the case. If the rule resists all circumstantial variations, we can be sure that it is the right rule to follow. This structure is obvious in the first Hecatonian testimony involving dilemmas: this is the extensive passage of Cicero, *Off.* III 89-92 (frag. 11 Veillard, transl. Griffin and Atkins slightly modified):

«The sixth of Hecato's books on duties is full of questions of this kind (*talium quaestionum*):
(1) would a man who is good (*sitne uiri boni*) fail to feed his slave household when corn is extremely dear? He argues on either side (*in utramque partem disputat*), but in the end he measures duty by what is useful (*utilitate*), as he thinks, rather than by humanity (*humanitate*).
(2) He asks whether, if some cargo must be thrown overboard at sea, one should sacrifice an expensive horse rather than a cheap little slave. Personal wealth draws us one way, humanity the other.
(3) "If a foolish man in a shipwreck seizes a plank, will the wise man (*sapiens*) wrest it from him if he can?" "He denies that, because it could be an injustice". "Well then. Will the master of the ship snatch what is his?" "Not at all, no more than he would be willing to throw a passenger from the ship on to the sea, because the ship is his. For until they arrive at the place for which the ship is chartered it belongs not to its master but to the passengers". "Well, suppose there is one plank and two sailors, both of them wise men. Would each of them grab it for himself, or would one give it to the other?" "One should give in to the other, that is to the one whose life most matters for his own or the republic's sake". "And what if such considerations are equal for both?" "There will be no contest, but one will give in to the other as if losing by lot, or by playing odds and evens'".
(4) "All right then. Suppose that a father despoils a temple, or dig a tunnel to the treasury, will his son denounce him to the magistrates?" "That would be impious. He should rather defend his father if he is charged". "Does one's country not, then, take precedence in all duties?" "Yes, indeed. But it actually assists one's country to have citizens who revere their parents". "And if a father should try to impose a tyranny, or to betray his country, will his son keep silent?" "He will beseech his father not to do it, and if he has no success, he will rebuke him and threaten him. In the last resort, if the affair would lead to the ruin of his homeland, he will put its safety before that of his father".
He also asks this: (5) if a wise man (*sapiens*) has foolishly accepted counterfeit coins for good ones, when he discovers it, would he pay with them any debt he may have, instead of good coins? Diogenes says yes, Antipater says no, and I agree rather with him. (6) If a man is knowingly selling a wine that will not keep, ought he to say? Diogenes thinks it unnecessary, Antipater considers that a good man (*uiri boni*) would do so. Such

matters are for the Stoics like disputed points of law (*Haec sunt quasi controuersa iura Stoicorum*).
(7) Should one declare the faults of a slave whom one is selling? Not of course the faults one is required by civil law to state, or else to have the slave returned, but these: that he is untruthful, or a gambler, or steals, or drinks? It seems to one of them that you should declare them, and to the other not. (5) If anyone is selling golds, but thinks that he is selling brass, will the good man (*uir bonus*) inform him that it is gold, or buy it for one denarius when it is worth a thousand? It is by now clear both what my view is, and what the dispute (*controuersia*) is between the philosophers whom I have named».

The cases raised by Hecato cover two main questions, each coming in several variations: A). What do I choose, morality or utility? B). Where does my loyalty lie, with my family or with the state? The first question is scrutinized by the first three cases [(1) The famine: feeding the slave or not; (2) The storm: horse or slave; (3) the shipwreck[16]] and the last two cases [(5): the counterfeit money and (6): the bad wine]. The second question is illustrated by the conflict between a son and his father, the latter intending to endanger the preservation of the state [(4): the vile father)].

The first two cases [(1) The famine; (2) The storm] oppose two preferred indifferents, wealth and life: either one maximizes one's own benefit, getting rid of the slave instead of the horse, or feeding his slaves in a poorly manner to save some money, or one makes the interest of someone else prevail over one's own interest. The conflict arises when we hesitate between our duty to preserve our own interest and the duty of justice. The first calls us to select what is necessary to protect our savings[17], in order (ultimately) to preserve our life, the second calls us to do nothing that could serve our interests at someone else's expense[18]. If we trust Cicero, Hecato - whose answer is never explicitly given - decides against humanity, which could mean that he adopts a pragmatic solution (better me than the other); but the end of case (3) leads to another conclusion: we are never allowed to prefer life to virtue. One solution could be the following: in *De officiis* III 63 (frag. 10 Veillard), Hecato says that the wealth of the individual is the wealth of the city, which means that people ought to protect their savings because it builds the wealth of the city itself. In a similar way, in case (4), if a son has a duty to defend his father in a trial even if this father is obviously guilty of a crime against the city (Pl. *Euthphr.* 4a sq), it is because the city needs the sons to be faithful to their fathers[19].

Case (5) shows that Hecato is also drawing on the well-known debate between Antipater of Tarsus and Diogenes of Babylonia: the examples here are the use of counterfeit money and the selling of a bad wine (6). We will find two similar examples

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[16] There is a similar case in *Anonymous commentary on Plato's Theaetetus* 5, 18-6, 31 (LS 57H), which is a comment on 143d.

[17] Cic. *Fin.* III 20-21 (LS 59 D): the first *duty* is to preserve one's own life. Aristotle already said that the waste of holdings is a blow to the person herself (Arist. *EN* IV 1, 1120a 1-3).

[18] Cic. *Off.* I 20 (LS 59 E); see also Chrysippus *ap.* Cic. *Off.* III 42.

[19] Honouring the parents is a καθῆκον, neglecting them is a παρὰ τὸ καθῆκον (D.L. VII 108-109 = LS 59 E). Idem in Cic. *Fin.* III 22 (LS 59 L).

in another long passage also transmitted by Cicero (probably also through Hecato), *Off.* III 49-55 (frag. 11bis Veillard). The first one stages a corn seller in a situation of shortage, which matches the first question raised by Hecato (question A) but combines the problem of maximizing one's own profit and the problem of the silence of the buyer:

«For example, (8) suppose that a good man (*uir bonus*) had brought a large quantity of corn from Alexandria to Rhodes at a time when corn was extremely expensive among the Rhodians because of shortage and famine. If he also knew that several more merchants had set sail from Alexandria, and has seen their boats *en route* laden with corn and heading for Rhodes, would he tell the Rhodians? Or would he keep silent and sell his own produce at as high a price as possible. We are imagining that he is a wise and good man (*Sapientem et uirum bonum fingimus*); our question is about the deliberations and considerations of a man who would not conceal the facts from the Rhodians if he judged it dishonourable, but is uncertain as to whether it is dishonourable (*de eius deliberatione et consultatione quaerimus qui celaturus Rhodios non sit si id turpe iudicet, sed dubitet an turpe non sit*). In cases of this type, Diogenes of Babylon, a great and respected Stoic, tended to have one view, his pupil Antipater, an extremely intelligent man, another [...]».

The second example, found further on, is the selling of an insanitary and crumbling house [54: case (9), cited below]. In a way, all these cases deal with deception and the possible difference between lying and merely concealing information: is there a legitimate use of concealing things, if it is to my own benefit? Should a wise man conceal an information, useful to others, in order to maximize his own interest?

The debate between Antipater and Diogenes is well known, and does not require further attention[20]. To put it in a nutshell, the answer of Antipater is clear: we are never allowed to prefer our own interest, for the simple reason that common interest is identical to private interest; working against the former is working against the latter. In that case, our moral compass is simple: the common good is the only thing to be aimed at.

Diogenes objects the following: when it comes to selling, this moral rule - which is a legitimate and good rule - cannot be the only one to call for application. This would actually be an irrational move, to refuse to enforce economical rules. Considering this economic framework and considering that we are not in a purely moral position, which would require us to give rather than to sell, it would be absurd not to sell at the higher price. The only requirement is to abide by commercial laws, that is, precisely the rules about latent defect. If we acknowledge the importance of the economic framework, we should not disregard it when circumstances change.

In this debate, Diogenes usually looks like a pragmatic philosopher, who doesn't care much for morality, whereas Antipater is the noble and magnificent figure of virtue and humanity. But what needs to be pointed out is rather the fact that the first tries to articulate different rules, deriving different duties from them, whereas the

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[20] For the interpretation of their positions, see SCHOFIELD (1999), 160-177. *Contra*: ANNAS (1989).

second crushes all of them under the weight of an abstract good. The way the debate is set up is significant and leads us to understand it within the wider context of the controversy between the Stoics and Carneades about the very notion of justice. The Ciceronian passage introduces two characters who are supposed to become, at the end of it, one and the same: a *bonus uir* and a *sapiens.* Either two behaviours are described, or we only have one act performed by someone who is both a *bonus uir* and a *sapiens.* This peculiar wording is an echo of what we find in Carneades, who cunningly turned the Stoic terminology upside down[21] when using examples similar to what we found in the two previous passages:

«[25] If a good man, he says, (7) has a runaway slave or (9) an unhealthy and infected house, and he alone knows these faults, and on this account offers it for sale, will he give out that the slave is a runaway, and the house which he offers for sale is infected, or will he conceal it from the purchaser? If he shall give it out, he is good (*bonus*) indeed, because he will not deceive; but still he will be judged foolish (*stultus*), because he will either sell at a low price or not sell at all. If he shall conceal it, he will be wise (*sapiens*) indeed, because he will consult his own interest; but he will be also wicked (*malus*), because he will deceive»[22].

In the following lines, comes the example of the golden or brass object (5), leading to this conclusion : «From which he wished it to be understood, both that he who is just and good (*iustus ac bonus*) is foolish (*stultus*), and that he who is wise (*sapiens*) is wicked (*malus*)». Then follows the case of the shipwreck (26), similar to the one in Hecato:

«Therefore, he passed to greater things, in which no one could be just without danger of his life. For he said: Certainly, it is justice not to put a man to death, not to take the property of another. (3) What, then, will the just man (*iustus*) do, if he shall happen to have suffered shipwreck, and some one weaker than himself shall have seized a plank? Will he not thrust him from the plank, that he himself may get upon it, and supported by it may escape, especially since there is no witness in the middle of the sea? If he is wise (*sapiens*), he will do so; for he must himself perish unless he shall thus act. But if

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[21] For the relation between Carneades and Diogenes of Babylonia, see DORANDI (1994): he had perfect knowledge of the writings of Chrysippus and of Diogenes' dialectical works. It is hard to say which one of them decided to strike first. The passage of Cic. *Resp.* III 12, as well as *Off.* III 55 sq., plays with the following ideas: the sage (*sapiens*) is sensible but dishonest (*malus*); the good man (*bonus uir*) is just but stupid (*iustus sed stultus*). *Stultus*, in the Stoic terminology, refers to the fool (φαῦλος), i.e. the man deprived of any wisdom, and he becomes, in Carneades' story, the one who represents the Stoic sage (he does moral things, but these are crazy to normal people, and so insane). On the contrary, the *sapiens* (the sage, φρόνιμος) acts according to common sense, but against morality. In my view, Carneades leads an attack against the Stoa as well as the Academy. POHLENZ (1965), 269, was the first to assume that he takes aim at Stoicism. See *contra*, ANNAS (1989), 151-173, esp. 156-158, who argues that the targets are Plato and Aristotle, taking for granted that, for Carneades, Chrysippus has nothing really important to say on the matter of justice (according to Cic. *Resp.* III 12). This is not enough to count the Stoa out, as SCHOFIELD (1999), 168 shows: Carneades is a threat to Stoic doctrine, and Diogenes responds to him repeatedly, just as he replies to Antipater.

[22] Carneades, *ap.* Cic. *Resp.* III 16, 25-17, 27, *ap.* Lact. *Inst.* V 16, 5-12 (my translation).

he chooses rather to die than to inflict violence upon another, in this case he is just, but foolish (*iustus ac stultus*), in not sparing his own life while he spares the life of another. (10) Thus also, if the army of his own people shall have been routed, and the enemy have begun to press upon them, and that just man (*iustus*) shall have met with a wounded man on horseback, will he spare him so as to be slain himself, or will he throw him from his horse, that he himself may escape from the enemy? If he shall do this, he will be wise (*sapiens*) but also wicked (*malus*); if he shall not do it, he will be just (*iustus*) but also of necessity foolish (*stultus*).

[27] When, therefore, he had thus divided justice into two parts, saying that the one was civil (*ciuilem*), the other natural (*naturalem*), he subverted both: because the civil part is wisdom (*sapientia*), but not justice (*iustitia*); but the natural part is justice but not wisdom».

Antipater's sage is merely a fool, then, for he ignores the practical parameters of his action and always decides against what common sense sees immediately; Diogenes' agent, on the contrary, is a wise man because he is clever enough to conform with the rules and to know how far he can go without breaking them. Nevertheless, his decisions may sometimes appear immoral. Carneades' conclusion is the following: there is no justice whatsoever, neither in the moral sphere nor in the legal sphere. Acting morally is foolish and contrary to common sense; acting merely legally is not enough, compared to what is morally good.

So, what is to be done? In his texts, Hecato obviously stands on Diogenes side (utility against humanity, if we follow Cicero's wording). He takes very seriously the practical circumstances in which the content of our actions has to be determined. By doing so, he is compelled to adopt a pragmatic solution, while sticking to the idea that the only good is virtue and that all indifferent things are not to be taken into account when it comes to happiness.

The example of the shipwreck in Hecato is particularly interesting in this perspective, with regard to its structure as well as its conclusion, which Hecato is the only one to formulate in these specific words. Let's highlight first that he variates the circumstances of the case, even to the point of absurdity or, at the very least, improbability: in a shipwreck, we will consider first a sage facing a fool holding a plank, then a sage facing the owner of the ship (therefore of the owner of the said plank), then a sage facing another sage. Each time the same question is raised: what should a sage do if he were able to save his own life at the cost of somebody else's life? The variation regards the definition of this other person, to see if the answer should be different or not. Hecato claims that the sage should never prefer his own life, even when it appears more useful to save him instead of a useless man: he regards virtue as the only value to be sought and not life. More interestingly, legal rights (like private property) are not decisive either: it is not because the owner of the ship owns the plank that the sage will leave it to him but because it would be disgraceful to act otherwise. Finally, the last configuration mentioned (a sage facing a sage) highlights the main feature of Hecato's reasoning: if the lives of two sages are at stake, they are to pick one, after debating about the usefulness of each of them. We must figure this amusing

situation: in the middle of the sea, in danger of drowning any time soon, these two men should politely discuss their respective merits, which surely are exactly the same if we consider that they are both equally wise (because virtue has no degree and each one is in principle as useful as the other). If they cannot reach a definite conclusion, they toss a coin or flash their fingers playing the game called morra, or, which is more interesting, decide which is the one who wants to live more. Considering that their virtue is equal, the criterion is then the love for life, which is quite new idea within a Stoic framework. His reasoning about the *utile*, which can first be understood as a calculation based on the advantages that a sage could bring to the collective life (because he is useful to it) takes him towards a new understanding of the word *interesse*: in what way is a sage *interested in life*? This small change appears to be a sign of Hecato's innovation and of the way he chooses to depart from the reasoning of his predecessors, namely, at this point, Antipater and Diogenes.

This means that Hecato takes psychological factors into account, like the feeling of happiness and harmony we can experience, to weigh how much someone prizes his life. In so doing, Hecato puts new cards on the table. These new cards are affective factors, which in theory are not admitted in moral arithmetic. This love for life is coherent with another characteristic feature of Hecato's thought: the call on emotions. His ethical fragments show that he turns to love and joy to produce right behaviour, a theme that we will investigate now. In drawing this conclusion, Hecato goes a step further than Chrysippus, who already raised a similar case about the value of life and asked the following question: how can we weigh the price of life?

4. *The price of life in Chrysippus*

According to Plutarch, Chrysippus raised the following question: is it better to live being insane or not to live at all?

> «He declares that evil is the essence of misfortune, in each of his writings about physics and ethics, and keeps saying that living according to evil is equivalent to living in misfortune. But, in the third book of his *On Nature*, pointing out beforehand that it is advantageous to live being a fool rather than not to live at all, even if there is no chance for us ever to become sensible, he then adds: « Such are the goods for man: in a way, evils come first, before intermediate things».

A bit further on, Chrysippus explains what he means:

> «He adds, regarding evils: in fact, these are not the ones which come first, but certainly reason, with which it is fitting for us to live even if we are fools»[23].

Reason is the enabling condition for being either good or bad, for making right or wrong decisions, for having right or wrong definitions of things, and therefore, for

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[23] Plu. *De Stoic. rep.* 18, 1042a-c (my translation). See an exact parallel in Plu. *Comm. not.* 12, 1064 f.

being virtuous or vicious. This is why it is always better to be alive - i.e. to possess this enabling condition - than to be dead, even if we can be sure never to achieve right reason. The addition of this concession is a bit puzzling, because reason does no longer operate as an enabling condition if we are sure that perfect reason cannot be achieved. The argument may be the following: even if this reason will never (μηδέποτε) be in a right state, possessing reason is still better than not possessing reason, because it enables us to think and act either right or wrong. Reason, as the power to achieve contradictory things, is better than the "one way" acting, which is the property of a non intelligent animal. In short: «Being deprived of reason and of perception is worse than being insane»[24].

This argument sheds some light on an otherwise weird assertion, made by the same Chrysippus in Plu. *De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos* 11 (the whole paragraph is about suicide). The first principle assumed by Chrysippus is that «Life should not be counted among what is good or evil, but among what is according to or contrary to nature» (1063d). Plutarch asks: when the issue is life or death, do we therefore have to weigh things that are of no absolute value, meaning intermediate things, that are neither advantageous nor disadvantageous? Chrysippus of course would have replied that these things (κατὰ and παρὰ φύσιν) are precisely the ones that can be called advantageous and disadvantageous, having a value according to the way we use them. Intermediates are valuable things, but their value (ἀξία) depends on our use; contrary to this, good and evil (that are of absolute value) always have the same causal power, whatever use we make of them: like a heating fire that never cools, good is always useful and never produces disadvantages[25]. Plutarch's reluctance to admit the Stoic terminology brings him to this conclusion (at very end of 1063f): for the Stoics, neither wealth nor health are part of happiness, which is a correct assertion only if we take that they are not direct productive causes of happiness. Yet, this does not mean (as Plutarch implies) that they count for nothing at all when it comes to weigh the value and happiness of a life[26]. That is why Plutarch pretends he doesn't understand why the Stoics can «swap prudence for health» (1064a) when they say that Heraclitus and Pherecydes would have done better to swap their virtue for health, if that move would have been possible, considering the unbearable pain they were suffering. Similarly,

«if two potions were poured by Circe, the first turning virtuous men into fools, the second <turning men into virtuous donkeys>, Odysseus <would have been wiser to

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[24] Plu. *Comm. not.* 12, 1064f (my translation): χεῖρον γάρ ἐστι τὸ ἄλογον καὶ τὸ ἀναίσθητον εἶναι τοῦ ἀφραίνειν.

[25] D.L. VII 103.

[26] This question has been raised (and properly solved, in my view) by Diogenes and Posidonius: see respectively Cic. *Fin.* III 49 (only good produces what is useful; wealth is a cause linked to effects like pleasure or health, but if they depend upon it, on the reverse, wealth neither produces nor includes (*continere*) virtue); Sen. *Ep.* 87, 31-40 (fr. 170 EK) and Galen *PHP* V 6, 11-12, 328; 13-14 De Lacy (preferred indifferents like wealth are not goods and do not produce happiness, but they are antecedent causes).

choose> the potion for foolishness rather than to change his look into a bestial form while keeping his prudence - and with prudence, of course, happiness. And as they say, it is prudence herself that commands it: "Abandon me and do not care about me if I am to be destroyed and damaged in the guise of a donkey"»[27].

By this example, the Stoics surely intended to show that the right reason that we call prudence is bound to exist inside a human figure only because it is necessarily linked to the possession of reason, a specific feature of human beings denied to animals. This hypothetical «donkey prudence» is not a real one, because prudence in that case is inevitably spoiled without the basis of reason. Plutarch wants to draw the contrary conclusion that Odysseus, and with him the Stoics, care more about appearance (and beauty) than about virtue. The Stoic conclusion is, on the contrary: we would better remain human beings, even bad ones, rather than give up the only means that can provide us with the opportunity to become better, namely reason.

These Chrysippean questions deal with the price of life and the weighing of several items different in value in order to decide whether it is better to stay alive or to die. These are the same issues that we find in Hecato's fragments. But Hecato reaches a different conclusion. There is an important factor to be considered, and this is the attachment we can have to our live, that is to say, to ourselves, but in a very specific way: the attachment to a life in which we enjoy the presence of virtue. What Hecato shows, more than Chrysippus or Diogenes or Antipater, is the importance of being alive and enjoying this life.

5. *Hecato's appeal to love*
We can find in Seneca a rule given by Hecato:

«Meanwhile, because I have to pay you my daily debt, hear what I found today, much to my delight, in Hecato: "You ask, he says, what progress did I make? I began being friends with myself"»[28].

We can recognize here a *chreia* of Antisthenes:

«When he was asked what advantage had accrued to him from philosophy, his answer was: "the ability to live with myself"»[29].

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[27] Plu. *Comm. not.* 11, 1064a-b (my translation). The lacuna in the text does not change the interpretation of it if we consider the following sentence: either Odysseus becomes a donkey with prudence (that is, the human virtue based on reason); or he keeps his human form (and reason, even if this reason is never used correctly) but loses his virtue (that is, the right reason that is prudence).

[28] Sen. *Ep.* 6, 7 (fr. 18 VEILLARD, 2021): «Interim quoniam diurnam tibi mercedulam debeo, quid me hodie apud Hecatonem delectauerit dicam. "Quaeris", inquit, "quid profecerim? Amicus esse mihi coepi"» (my translation).

[29] D.L. VI 6: «ἐρωτηθεὶς τί αὐτῷ περιγέγονεν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας, ἔφη "τὸ δύνασθαι ἑαυτῷ ὁμιλεῖν"» (transl. Hicks, slightly modified).

To be able to live with oneself is the result of a philosophical life, according to the Socratic Antisthenes, that means, being in agreement with oneself: this points to the harmonious life, that is, a virtuous life. In a Stoic understanding, this could appeal to the theory of οἰκείωσις[30]: our first tendency is self-love, meaning the tendency to protect one's own life[31] and to select things appropriate to this goal[32]; self-love extends into love for offspring, with the tendency to protect their life[33]; then, the love for offspring extends to strangers, insofar as they possess a resemblance with me, i.e. reason, and right reason[34]. From self-love arises friendship and this special friendship that we can feel for ourselves once we have made the move from the natural impulse to protect our life (φιλαυτία) to the affection for the rational being that we have become (φιλία). In the cases mentioned by Hecato, this is precisely what happens: one can see oneself as a natural living-being who wants to preserve his life, as a rational agent who needs to calculate in order to protect his offspring, or as a moral agent whose compass is virtue and only virtue. In these cases, φιλαυτία plays its role too, but also this rational affection that we call love for a philosophical or moral life. Being a friend to oneself does not only mean that one has achieved the objective harmony between oneself and what the world requests one to be (a rational agent) - what we could call agreement (ὁμολογία) - but also the affective validation of this objective harmony, and the deep wish to persist in this life because it is a good life.

Hecato's examples can be read as the attempt to articulate these different spheres of existence, not only the political and economical one in contrast to the moral one, but also the affective one in contrast to the moral life. In that case, we certainly have a means to arbitrate between two sages, if we take for granted that it does make a difference if one sage loves himself more than the other one does, if, in other words, he cares more for carrying on with living than the other, not only for rational reasons - he can be useful to the whole - but for mere personal and affective reasons - he loves being useful and loves being alive.

If this makes a difference between two sages, one loving himself more than the other, it is because Hecato takes an interest in some of what the Stoics call good affections (εὐπάθειαι), joy (χαρά) in particular, that is affections coming with virtue. This is obvious in the fragments transmitted by Seneca's *De beneficiis*, which is - as we demonstrated it - based on two works on benefits (most likely two Περὶ χαρίτων) written by Chrysippus and Hecato[35]. This theme is also clearly used in some of Hecato's short sentences adopted by Seneca as mottos in his letters (we just saw one above). The use of what is not a virtue, but close to it, like affections linked to the

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[30] See Cic. *Fin.* III 16 sq.; Hierocles, *ap.* Stob. IV 27, 23 (IV, 671, 7-673, 11 H. = LS 57 G). For the text, see RAMELLI-KONSTAN (2009). On this theory, see GOURINAT (2016); LAURAND (2005); ENGBERG-PEDERSEN (1986); STRIKER (1983); PEMBROKE (1971); BRINK (1956).

[31] Cic. *Fin.* III 16; Hierocles IX 3.

[32] Hierocles IX 5-10.

[33] Cic. *Fin.* III 62; Hierocles IX 3-4.

[34] Hierocles, *ap.* Stob. IV 27, 23 (IV, 671, 7-673, 11 H. = LS 57 G).

[35] See Sen. *Ben.* I 3, 2-9.

possession of virtue or to the performing of good actions, is a special feature of Hecato's understanding of moral achievement.

Let us first consider the appeal to good affections. First, it should be noted that this appeal stays strictly within the limits drawn by Stoicism. The achievement of wisdom is never compared to a lonely and sad life, locked up in an impassiveness comparable to the life of a stone: the sage will have friends, he will rejoice, first of all in practising virtue. He will not exult in excessive delight (*laetitia*), but will experience joy (χαρά, *gaudium*); he will not be misguided into hope (ἐλπίς), but will have rational wish (βούλησις)[36].

A second testimony offers an echo of Circe's potions evoked by Chrysippus:

«You ask how you can quickly make friends. This I will say, if you agree that I pay you right now what I owe you, and that for this letter we will be even. Hecato says: "I will show you a philter without potions, without herbs, without any magical incantation: if you want to be loved, love first"»[37].

Hecato's sentence is above all a call to action: in order to produce love, it is necessary to initiate this affective movement by loving first. We can call upon rational emotions not by irrational and disordered means, but by the use and practice of virtue itself. The philter which conjures up the affection is very simple: to love first. The vocabulary used here is interesting, and the search for parallel texts is enlightening. This love philter (*amatorium*) is a recipe to generate love in someone else; yet, this recipe has nothing to do with trickery, passion, or magical incantations that are usually used to produce the amorous transport (ἔρως). We can therefore be confident that it is φιλία that we search in this *amare*, and not ἔρως. The term *medicamentum* matches the Greek φάρμακον, used in a common sense[38], that appears for example in Plutarch to denote ointments, dyes or perfumes women use to charm their lovers[39].

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[36] For all this, see D.L. VII 113-114: there are four ways to dispose oneself badly, that is having an excessive impulse born from a wrong opinion on a present good (pleasure); having an excessive impulse born from a wrong opinion on a future good (desire); having an excessive impulse born from a wrong opinion on a present evil (pain); having an excessive impulse born from a wrong opinion on a future evil (fear). Fear is the expectation of a future evil (προσδοκία κακοῦ). In the Chrysippean classification of passions, hope is the wish for something to happen in the future. It is therefore a passion subordinate to fear. In a way, wishing that something good will happen is a logical mistake, because all that is good is virtue and depends on us, meaning that there is no point in wishing it; we just have to do it. The call to avoid hope is taken up by Hecato in Sen. *Ep.* 5, 7 (fr.17 VEILLARD, 2021): «*Desines, inquit, timere, si sperare desieris* (you will stop getting fears, if you stop getting hopes)». On the contrary, if we are well disposed, having a moderate impulse born from a right appreciation of what is a present good, we will experience joy (χαρά); the rational wish to be good in the future is called βούλησις; the rational and moderate impulse to avoid what is really bad is called caution (εὐλάβεια).

[37] Sen. *Ep.* 9, 6. (fr. 19 VEILLARD, 2021): «Quaeris, quomodo amicum cito facturus sit : dicam, si illud mihi tecum conuenerit, ut statim tibi soluam, quod debeo, et quantum ad hanc epistulam, paria faciamus. Hecaton ait: "Ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius ueneficae carmine: si uis amari, ama"» (my translation).

[38] This term occurs only once in the *SVF* III, 238 (Simplicius, *in Arist. Cat.* 102a): taking remedies (φαρμάκων) is one of the causes for the loss of logic and virtue.

[39] Plu. *Erotikos* 6, 752c; 16, 759b.

Hecato's sentence also recalls Euripides' *Hippolytus*: the nurse explains to Phaedra, that «there are incantations and enchantments (εἰσὶν δ' ἐπῳδαὶ καὶ λόγοι θελκτήριοι)» and that they surely will find «some remedy to her illness (φανήσεταί τι τῆσδε φάρμακον νόσου)». Further on, the nurse has «philters and love enchantments (φίλτρα ... θελκτήρια ἔρωτος)»[40]. There is therefore good reason to think that the Senecan *medicamentum* matches the Greek φάρμακον, whereas *carmen* translates ἐπῳδή («incantation»).

In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, we can find the same terminology. In a context linking friendship, beneficence and ingratitude, Prodicus says in his *On Heracles*: «If you want to be loved by your friends, you must be for them a source of benefits»[41]. Moreover, when Socrates wonders why Chaerecrates and his brother Chaerophon always quarrel, they mention a philter (φίλτρον)[42], that is supposed to produce nice and kind behaviour between them. The content of this philter is drawn from the examples taken: if you want to be invited for dinner, the best way is to invite first; if you want someone to keep an eye on your belongings, you'd better offer to do it first. The conclusion is the following: «For two brothers, when they are friends, act simultaneously for their mutual benefit even if they are far away from each other»[43]. The Socratic context, as well as the theme analyzed (benefits), is congruent with the Hecatonian landscape. This has therefore nothing to do with an Epicurean *pharmakon*, from which Hecato would drink[44]. The chase of friends is also a Zenonian feature[45], and this is what we find, precisely, in the following lines. If you want to get friends, you have to chase them in a very special way: first you have to determine who is worth of chasing[46]; then, you have to use the right method, because they cannot be tracked down like hares, nor caught by trickery like birds, nor taken like enemies by force:

> «Indeed, it is difficult to get hold of a friend despite himself, as it is difficult to keep him prisoner like a slave; those who suffer such a treatment become our enemies, and not our friends. Then how do we get friends? There are incantations (Εἶναι μέν τινάς φασιν ἐπῳδάς), as they say, that the ones who know them can sing to charm those

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[40] E. *Hipp.* 509-510.

[41] X. *Mem.* II 1, 21; 28 (my translation).

[42] *Ibid.* II 3 11.

[43] *Ibid.* II 3 14; 18-19.

[44] This is the hypothesis of GRIMAL (1989), 1970, according to which Hecato «roamed widely beyond Stoicism», borrowing from Epicureanism. See also GRIMAL (1969), 146.

[45] Zeno explains that «Love (ἔρως) is a kind of hunting, which chases the young man, who is imperfect but has a gift for virtue» (Plu., *Comm. not.* 28, 1073b; my translation) There is therefore a strong continuity between love and friendship, the former being defined as follows: «Love is the aim at making friends, due to the beauty that shows in young men in their prime (Τὸν δὲ <ἔρωτά> φασιν ἐπιβολὴν εἶναι φιλοποιίας διὰ κάλλος ἐμφαινόμενον νέων ὡραίων)» (Stob. II 7, 11ˢ = II, 115, 1-2 W., my translation).

[46] These are unworthy men with defects, the men without flaws but unable to be grateful (II 6, 4).

whom they want to be their friends, there are philters (εἶναι δὲ καὶ φίλτρα) that the ones who know them can use on those they want to be loved by»[47].

The chasing of friends needs the soft constraint of love; we must entangle the beloved in the mesh of our benefits: according to Seneca, who follows Hecato's portrayal of the three Graces at this point, you will succeed in shaping someone into virtue if you overpower him with your benefits[48]. The Graces (Χάριτες), dancing in a circle, holding hands, smiling, and wearing loose dresses, are the living images of the structure of beneficence: one good is freely given, without forcing the beneficiary into a constraining relation, but giving him the impulse to enter the game. Because he has been moved in the direction of what is good, through good affections like joy and friendship, he is bound by a moral link called «gratitude» and invited to contribute to the spread of good throughout the world. Flooding him with good, invading him with loads of good actions performed for his sake and the sake of what is good will force him into a virtuous circle. As a consequence, the injunction « love first » means that our duty consists in making the first move. Good affections can be our motives to act and a criterion to solve a case in tricky situations.

6. *Conclusion*
Through his examples Hecato shows that a moral rule is always linked to practical parameters and that the moral calculation consists precisely in articulating all of them, without crushing all of them under the weight of moral good. If so, the moral action remains an abstract and sometimes an unjust injunction. So, how can we balance the burden that each parameter places on us? Hecato holds on to the tenet that there is only one good, virtue, and only one evil, vice. By consequence, the one and only compass remains the same: virtue and its use, i.e. acting morally. But what does it mean exactly? Acting morally is understood according to the duties we define, whether we are fathers or brothers, sellers or buyers, sages or not. If the rational calculation of what we have to do is tied up with the sphere of activity we happen to engage in, this could endanger morality itself: would I always be right in doing what I do if I can show that it is a rational move? Hecato seems to give us a hint: one way to decide is to determine if, due to my action, the good pervades the world, and this can be achieved by the most visible good on the human stage, i.e. the practice of beneficence. Being beneficent to others, that is, practising good actions for the sake of good and the sake of the beneficiary, is the first step to morality. Because Hecato defines duty by this special feature of reciprocity, practising morality causes a good to be passed on and returned in a continuous movement. Therefore, our first injunction is not a strictly rational one: it is an appeal to loving other people, because by this we orient ourselves in the right direction. Love is the first step to performing a good

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[47] X. *Mem.* II 6, 10. We find φίλτρον again, with the same meaning, in II 3, 11 and 14 (my translation).
[48] Sen. *Ben.* I 3, 1.

action, because love (self-love, then love for others in form of φιλία, then love for ourselves once we are virtuous) is the root of justice. Each affection must be guided by the search for good, and, conversely, experiencing good affections is the first step to morality. Marcus Aurelius will reach the same conclusion: one has to love the others, even if they are unbearable, because this love is the only rational attitude appropriate to one's rational and sociable nature[49]. This love for a rational and virtuous life can then become the tool to decide when and at what price we have the duty to protect our own lives.

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[49] See M. Ant. III 7; IX 27; V 28; VI 27.

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Corruzione morale e virtù nel pensiero di Posidonio.
Per il riesame di alcuni frammenti

Moral Corruption and Virtue in Posidonius's Thought.
A Re-Examination of Some Fragments

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Abstract

This article offers a text-critical and exegetical re-examination of some fragments of Posidonius on moral corruption and virtue (Sen. *Ep.* 90, 6 = Posidon. F 284 EK = F 448 Th; D.L. VII 91 = Posidon. F 29 EK = F 403 Th; D.L. VII 91 = Posidon. F 2 EK = 435b Th), as well as of other related texts (Verg. *Aen.* VIII 313-328; Strab. XVI 2, 35-39 = Posidon. F 133 Th; Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8). The author sheds new light on Posidonius's conception of the golden age (which can be reconstructed starting from Seneca's epistle 90) and on the text of Strab. XVI 2, 35-39; proposes a new interpretation of Posidon. F 29 EK and an emendation to Posidon. F 2 EK; notices for the first time the Posidonian background of Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8.

Keywords: Posidonius, fragments, textual criticism, moral corruption, virtue

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece un reexamen crítico-textual y exegético de algunos fragmentos de Posidonio sobre la corrupción moral y la virtud (Sen. *Ep.* 90, 6 = Posidon. F 284 EK = F 448 Th; D.L. VII 91 = Posidon. F 29 EK = F 403 Th; D.L. VII 91 = Posidon. F 2 EK = 435b Th), así como de otros textos relacionados (Verg. *Aen.* VIII 313-328; Strab. XVI 2, 35-39 = Posidon. F 133 Th; Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8). El autor arroja nueva luz sobre la concepción posidoniana de la edad de oro (que puede reconstruirse a partir de la epístola 90 de Séneca) y sobre el texto de Strab. XVI 2, 35-39; propone una nueva interpretación de Posidon. F 29 EK y una enmienda a Posidon. F 2 EK; advierte por primera vez el trasfondo posidoniano de Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8.

Palabras clave: Posidonio, fragmentos, crítica textual, corrupción moral, virtud

Secondo lo Stoicismo ortodosso l'uomo nasce con una naturale predisposizione al bene. Πάντες φύσει πεφύκαμεν οὕτως, ὥστε ζῆν ἀναμαρτήτως καὶ καλῶς, afferma Musonio Rufo (2, p. 6, 5-6 Hense)[1]: «tutti per natura siamo conformati in modo tale da vivere senza peccato e virtuosamente». Il male si spiega, per gli Stoici,

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[1] Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 94, 56: *nulli nos vitio natura conciliat: illa integros ac liberos genuit.*

con la διαστροφή, il pervertimento che distoglie l'individuo dal cammino verso la virtù, a cui la natura lo indirizza. Due sono le cause della διαστροφή: la seduzione delle cose esterne e il cattivo influsso del prossimo: διαστρέφεσθαι δὲ τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον ποτὲ μὲν διὰ τὰς τῶν ἔξωθεν πραγμάτων πιθανότητας, ποτὲ δὲ διὰ τὴν κατήχησιν τῶν συνόντων (D.L. VII 89 = *SVF* III 228)[2].

La dottrina ora sintetizzata sembra essere stata condivisa da Posidonio; la sua concezione circa l'origine delle passioni e del vizio è stata, infatti, recentemente dimostrata da Tieleman, in pagine a mio avviso persuasive, come *de facto* conforme a quella stoica-ortodossa[3].

Vorrei concentrarmi, in questo contributo, su un punto non ancora messo a fuoco soddisfacentemente dalla critica, ossia sul ruolo essenziale nella storia politica e culturale del genere umano che Posidonio sembra avere assegnato tanto alla naturale inclinazione degli uomini a discernere e scegliere il bene, quanto alla διαστροφή. Cercherò di mostrare, infatti, che per Posidonio l''età dell'oro' è il frutto della sinergia tra la perfetta virtù di alcuni membri di una comunità e la propensione al bene degli altri, e che - nella concezione posidoniana - con il manifestarsi della διαστροφή l''età dell'oro' termina.

Come apprendiamo dall'*Epistola* 90 di Seneca, per Posidonio nella cosiddetta 'età dell'oro' (5: *illo* [...] *saeculo quod aureum perhibent*) gli uomini, che allora *naturam incorrupti sequebantur* (4), si sarebbero spontaneamente sottomessi agli individui intellettualmente superiori - individui che Posidonio definiva *sapientes* (lo Stoico greco avrà scritto σοφοί) e a cui sembra aver attribuito la *recta ratio* (*i.e.* l'ὀρθὸς λόγος), considerandoli dunque, evidentemente, genuini sapienti[4].

Tali individui sarebbero stati gli illuminati *reges* (*reges* per volontà dei sudditi)[5] delle prime, 'auree', comunità umane politicamente organizzate, e avrebbero dato l'originario, fondamentale impulso allo sviluppo della civiltà, inventando le tecniche necessarie alla sopravvivenza del genere umano (Sen. *Ep.* 90, 7). Bisogna inferire che Posidonio riconduceva la spontanea sottomissione dei primi uomini ai *sapientes* da un lato alla sopra evocata tendenza naturale degli esseri umani al bene, dall'altro al loro connaturato istinto di autoconservazione[6].

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[2] Cf. *SVF* III 229-236; cf. TIELEMAN (2003), 132-139.

[3] Si veda TIELEMAN (2003), 198-287 e *passim*. Secondo l'interpretazione convenzionale pre-tielemaniana - cf. *e.g.* BEES (2004), 46-74; 332-337 -, invece, Posidonio avrebbe attribuito all'uomo non solo una predisposizione al bene, ma anche un'innata inclinazione alla malvagità.

[4] *Ep.* 90, 5; 24-25. Sugli elementi posidoniani nell'*Ep.* 90 (lettera di eccezionale complessità) mi sia consentito di rimandare a un mio lavoro di qualche anno or sono (ZAGO, 2012), che mi piacerebbe, *si vacabit*, ripubblicare con modifiche (non minime) e supplementi. A mio parere l'opera posidoniana (perduta, come tutto Posidonio) cui Seneca ha attinto per comporre l'*Ep.* 90 era il *Protrettico*. Da vedere anche, sui segmenti posidoniani della lettera senecana (contestualizzati in un'agile e dotta storia del pensiero politico stoico), le fini considerazioni di WILDBERGER (2018), 124-133.

[5] *Nemo* [*scil.* tra i *sapientes reges* dell''età dell'oro'] *quantum posset adversus eos experiebatur per quos coeperat posse* (*Ep.* 90, 5).

[6] Secondo la dottrina stoica della οἰκείωσις l'uomo è geneticamente programmato per provvedere alla sua propria conservazione e a quella della specie. Il più rilevante contributo recente sulla dottrina

È probabile che Posidonio non immaginasse uno Stato primordiale cosmopolita con al vertice una pluralità di re sapienti che governavano assieme (come nella *Repubblica* di Platone)[7], ma piuttosto che pensasse a una molteplicità di *sapientes reges*, ciascuno dei quali avrebbe dominato su una singola comunità[8], che lo avrebbe designato come guida e che attorno a lui si sarebbe sviluppata.

L'ʻetà dell'oro' evocata da Posidonio termina quando i vizi «sottentrano» e i *regna* si tramutano in tirannidi (*Ep.* 90, 6: *subrepentibus vitiis in tyrannidem regna conversa sunt*). L'esposizione senecana è fortemente brachilogica, e il testo non dice come si sia manifestata la διαστροφή, e chi abbia colpito. Tenderei a escludere che, per Posidonio, siano stati i *sapientes reges* a tramutarsi in tiranni. Secondo Posidonio - pienamente concorde, su questo punto, con l'ortodossia stoica -, i σοφοί sono infatti ἀπαθεῖς, e «non sono mossi passionalmente» (οὐκ ἐμπαθῶς κινοῦνται) neppure da ciò a cui aspirano e che considerano il sommo bene, ossia la virtù[9]; impossibile, dunque, che i re dell'ʻetà dell'oro' siano stati traviati dalla seduzione delle cose esterne o dal cattivo influsso del prossimo, e che, dopo essere stati sovrani ideali, si siano volti al vizio e abbiano ambito alla tirannide.

Ipotizzerei, se mai, che la corruzione si sia insinuata nei figli dei *sapientes reges*, alla morte dei padri ascesi al regno per volontà dei sudditi[10]. Non escluderei che Posidonio pensasse che con l'avvento dei figli al potere si fosse rotta l'armonia ʻaurea' tra regnante e sottoposti, e che si fossero di conseguenza create le condizioni per la trasformazione della βασιλεία (cioè della monarchia fondata sul consenso[11]) in tirannide. Si confronti quel che Polibio scrive a proposito dei discendenti dei primitivi βασιλεῖς (VI 7, 6-8):

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della οἰκείωσις è Bees (2004); non condivido però l'interpretazione che Bees dà della psicologia posidoniana (cf. n. 3).

[7] Nella Καλλίπολις, lo Stato ideale della *Repubblica* platonica, i filosofi re di norma sarebbero stati, appunto, più d'uno.

[8] Se, come penso, Posidonio accettava l'idea stoica secondo la quale i primi uomini sarebbero nati come funghi *in omnibus terris et agris* (Lact. *Inst.* VII 4, 2-3), allora è del tutto verisimile che egli immaginasse comunità primordiali sparse per tutta l'ecumene.

[9] Cf. Gal. *PHP* IV 5, 26-27; 29; V 2, 5 De Lacy (Posidon. F 163-164 EK = F 409; 413 Th): cf. Roskam (2005), 51; 56. Con i *sigla* EK e Th faccio riferimento alle due fondamentali edizioni dei frammenti posidoniani, quella di Edelstein e Kidd (Edelstein-Kidd, 1972) e quella di Theiler (1982).

[10] Per l'idea secondo cui la monarchia dei βασιλεῖς primitivi, amati per le loro benemerenze, sarebbe divenuta ereditaria per volontà dei sudditi cf. Arist. *Pol.* III 14, 1285b 3-9: τέταρτον δ' εἶδος μοναρχίας βασιλικῆς αἱ κατὰ τοὺς ἡρωικοὺς χρόνους ἑκούσιαί τε καὶ πάτριαι γιγνόμεναι κατὰ νόμον. Διὰ γὰρ τὸ τοὺς πρώτους γενέσθαι τοῦ πλήθους εὐεργέτας κατὰ τέχνας ἢ πόλεμον, ἢ διὰ τὸ συναγαγεῖν ἢ πορίσαι χώραν, ἐγίγνοντο βασιλεῖς ἑκόντων καὶ τοῖς παραλαμβάνουσι πάτριοι; Plb. VI 7, 2, ove si dice che i sottoposti avrebbero trasmesso il potere regio ai figli dei primi βασιλεῖς, prevedendo che essi si sarebbero rivelati dotati delle stesse qualità morali e politiche dei padri: οὐ γὰρ μόνον αὐτοῖς [*scil.* ai primi βασιλεῖς], ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τούτων <οἱ> πολλοὶ διαφυλάττουσι τὰς ἀρχάς, πεπεισμένοι τοὺς ἐκ τοιούτων γεγονότας καὶ τραφέντας ὑπὸ τοιούτοις παραπλησίους ἕξειν καὶ τὰς προαιρέσεις.

[11] Cf. Plb. VI 4, 2: οὔτε γὰρ πᾶσαν δήπου μοναρχίαν εὐθέως βασιλείαν ῥητέον, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν ἐξ ἑκόντων συγχωρουμένην καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τὸ πλεῖον ἢ φόβῳ καὶ βίᾳ κυβερνωμένην, su cui cf. il commento di Walbank (1957-1979), I, 642.

ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐκ διαδοχῆς καὶ κατὰ γένος τὰς ἀρχὰς παραλαμβάνοντες ἕτοιμα μὲν εἶχον[12] ἤδη τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, ἕτοιμα δὲ καὶ πλείω τῶν ἱκανῶν τὰ πρὸς τὴν τροφήν, τότε δὴ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἑπόμενοι διὰ τὴν περιουσίαν ἐξάλλους μὲν ἐσθῆτας ὑπέλαβον δεῖν ἔχειν τοὺς ἡγουμένους τῶν ὑποταττομένων, ἐξάλλους δὲ καὶ ποικίλας τὰς περὶ τὴν τροφὴν ἀπολαύσεις καὶ παρασκευάς, ἀναντιρρήτους δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῶν μὴ προσηκόντων τὰς τῶν ἀφροδισίων χρείας καὶ συνουσίας. Ἐφ᾽ οἷς μὲν φθόνου γενομένου καὶ προσκοπῆς, ἐφ᾽ οἷς δὲ μίσους ἐκκαιομένου καὶ δυσμενικῆς ὀργῆς, ἐγένετο μὲν ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας τυραννίς.

«Poiché, succedendo al potere sulla base della stirpe, avevano ormai pronti i mezzi di difesa, e pronti e anche superiori al necessario i viveri, allora, assecondando le proprie brame, a causa di tale sovrabbondanza ritennero che i governanti dovessero avere vesti diverse da quelle dei sudditi, e un'alimentazione peculiare, varia e gradevole, e che non dovessero subire dinieghi nel godimento dei piaceri sessuali e nelle relazioni erotiche, anche quelle illecite. Suscitarono così talora invidia e risentimento, talora odio infiammato e ira ostile, e dalla βασιλεία nacque la tirannide».

Più probabile, tuttavia, sembra un'altra ipotesi, ovvero che, secondo Posidonio, alla morte dei *sapientes reges* i nuovi monarchi avessero preso il potere non ἐκ διαδοχῆς καὶ κατὰ γένος, bensì in séguito all'elezione del migliore della comunità, ma che gli eletti non fossero all'altezza del compito. In maniera analoga, ossia, appunto, in séguito alla scelta di governanti che sono i migliori tra gli eleggibili, ma che risultano indegni delle funzioni che sono destinati a ricoprire, si verifica la crisi dello Stato dei filosofi descritta nell'VIII libro della *Repubblica* platonica, e la degenerazione del suo regime politico (cf. Pl. *R.* VIII 545c ss.).

L'ipotesi che sto avanzando, secondo la quale l'«età dell'oro» immaginata da Posidonio sarebbe terminata a causa della διαστροφή non dei *reges* primordiali ma dei loro successori e delle comunità politiche di cui questi ultimi sarebbero stati emanazione, è suffragata, inoltre, da due passi di matrice posidoniana che trattano di 'età dell'oro' e di monarchia ideale. Il primo è Verg. *Aen.* 8, 313-328, ove Evandro afferma che Saturno, in qualità di re evergeta e civilizzatore, avrebbe instaurato nel Lazio un'epoca 'aurea', che si sarebbe poi conclusa a causa dell'insorgere dei vizi (non in Saturno, ma appunto tra i suoi sudditi)[13].

Il secondo passo è Strab. XVI 2, 35-39[14], in cui leggiamo che Mosè, sacerdote egizio, con la sua predicazione circa la reale natura della divinità (stoicamente con-

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[12] Soggetto di εἶχον e - nel séguito di questo complicato periodo - di ὑπέλαβον sono appunto i discendenti dei primi βασιλεῖς. Polibio sta affermando che la tirannide «depends on human nature, and the vices which arise naturally in the 'second generation' in power»: cf. Walbank (1957-1979), I, 655.

[13] Che il luogo virgiliano abbia ascendenza posidoniana fu intuito da Norden (1893), 425-428. Ho rilanciato e corroborato l'intuizione di Norden nella relazione *Ancient Latium and the Golden Age. On the Source of* Aen. *8, 313-336*, che ho presentato al convegno *Rome's Future, Rome's Past: the 8th Book of the Aeneid* (University of Manchester, 13-15 maggio 2019) e che presto pubblicherò.

[14] La matrice posidoniana del passo di Strabone è stata riconosciuta da vari illustri studiosi: segnalo in particolare Reinhardt (1928), Theiler (1982), che stampa il passo come Posidon. F 133, e Radt (2002-2011), VIII, 321, che offre ulteriore bibliografia. Il luogo straboniano non è invece accolto nell'edizione EK dei frammenti posidoniani (cf. n. 18).

cepita come il principio razionale che pervade ogni cosa, ossia τὸ περιέχον ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας καὶ γῆν καὶ θάλατταν, ὃ καλοῦμεν οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν, Strab. XVI 2, 35) persuase a seguirlo non pochi uomini assennati, e li condusse nel luogo ove Gerusalemme sarebbe stata fondata:

Μωσῆς [...] μὲν οὖν εὐδοκιμήσας τούτοις συνεστήσατο ἀρχὴν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν [...]. Οἱ δὲ διαδεξάμενοι χρόνους μέν τινας ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς διέμενον δικαιοπραγοῦντες καὶ θεοσεβεῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντες. Ἔπειτ᾽ ἐφισταμένων ἐπὶ τὴν ἱερωσύνην τὸ μὲν πρῶτον δεισιδαιμόνων, ἔπειτα τυραννικῶν ἀνθρώπων κτλ. [...]. Πέφυκε γὰρ οὕτως, καὶ κοινόν ἐστι τοῦτο καὶ τοῖς Ἕλλησι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις. Πολιτικοὶ γὰρ ὄντες ἀπὸ προστάγματος κοινοῦ ζῶσιν· ἄλλως γὰρ οὐχ οἷόν τε τοὺς πολλοὺς ἕν τι καὶ ταὐτὸ ποιεῖν ἡρμοσμένως ἀλλήλοις, ὅπερ ἦν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον[15] κοινόν[16]. Τὸ δὲ πρόσταγμα διττόν· ἢ γὰρ παρὰ θεῶν ἢ παρὰ ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ οἵ γε ἀρχαῖοι τὸ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἐπρέσβευον μᾶλλον καὶ ἐσέμνυνον, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο [...] ὁ Μίνως παρὰ τοῖς Κρησὶν [...] βασίλευε [...] δι᾽ ἐννέα ἐτῶν [...] ἀναβαίνων ἐπὶ τὸ ἄντρον τοῦ Διὸς καὶ παρ᾽ ἐκείνου τὰ προστάγματα λαμβάνων καὶ παρακομίζων εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· τὰ δ᾽ ὅμοια ἐποίει καὶ Λυκοῦργος ὁ ζηλωτὴς αὐτοῦ [...] καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οἱ μάντεις ἐτιμῶντο - ὥστε καὶ βασιλείας ἀξιοῦσθαι - [...]. Τοιοῦτος δὲ […] καὶ ὁ Ὀρφεὺς καὶ ὁ Μουσαῖος [...], παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς οἱ Γυμνοσοφισταί, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Πέρσαις οἱ Μάγοι [...]. Τοιοῦτος δέ τις ἦν καὶ ὁ Μωσῆς καὶ οἱ διαδεξάμενοι ἐκεῖνον, τὰς μὲν ἀρχὰς λαβόντες οὐ φαύλας, ἐκτραπόμενοι δ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον.

«Mosè [...] con ciò acquisì dunque fama e fondò un dominio non dappoco [...]. I suoi successori per un certo periodo si mantennero fedeli al suo esempio operando con giustizia ed essendo veramente pii. In séguito, essendo preposti al sacerdozio uomini dapprima superstiziosi, poi tirannici *ecc.* [...]. È naturale che sia così, e ciò è comune sia agli Elleni che ai barbari. In quanto esseri politici, infatti, essi vivono obbedendo a

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[15] Come mi fa notare uno degli anonimi *referee* di *Pegé/Fons*, che ringrazio, Strabone (Posidonio?) usando il sintagma νέμειν βίον κοινόν sembra riecheggiare il famoso luogo zenoniano sul νόμος (Plut. *Virt. Alex.* 329a-b = *SVF* I 262), sul quale cf. WILDBERGER (2018), 76-77.

[16] La mia interpunzione di quest'ultimo periodo (Strab. XVI 2, 38) è diversa da quella vulgata, che sia THEILER (1982), F 133, sia l'ultimo editore critico di Strabone, RADT (2002-2011), IV, 342, accettano. Theiler interpunge, infatti, ἄλλως γὰρ οὐχ οἷόν τε τοὺς πολλοὺς ἕν τι καὶ ταὐτὸ ποιεῖν ἡρμοσμένως ἀλλήλοις, ὅπερ ἦν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν, e Radt edita similmente (ἡρμοσμένως ἀλλήλοις - ὅπερ ἦν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι - καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν), traducendo: «sonst ist es ja nicht möglich, daß die Menge in Einklang miteinander ein und dasselbe tut - darin besteht doch das Leben in einem Staat - und einigermaßen ein gemeinsames Leben führt»; traduzioni analoghe in REINHARDT (1928), 16; MALITZ (1983), 318; BAR-KOCHVA (2010), 360. A mio avviso tale interpunzione è innaturale. Io propongo, appunto, la *distinctio* ἡρμοσμένως ἀλλήλοις, ὅπερ ἦν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν, ipotizzando che τοὺς πολλούς («gli uomini in massima parte») si riferisca agli Elleni e ai barbari (menzionati assieme nel periodo immediatamente precedente), e che il segmento καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν sia coordinato a πολιτεύεσθαι (l'articolo τὸ sostantiverebbe, dunque, sia πολιτεύεσθαι sia ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν). Il *dicolon* ὅπερ ἦν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ ἄλλως πως νέμειν βίον κοινόν è per me un'epesegesi bimembre dell'infinitiva ἕν τι καὶ ταὐτὸ ποιεῖν («facciano la stessa identica cosa»). Secondo la mia interpretazione, l'autore vuole affermare che i Greci e i barbari sono 'animali sociali', e che hanno in comune sia il πολιτεύεσθαι, cioè «il partecipare attivamente alla vita politica dello Stato», sia l'esercizio di forme diverse di socialità. Che anche tali forme di socialità, e non solo il πολιτεύεσθαι, siano pienamente naturali e non degradanti per l'uomo, che è κοινωνικὸν ζῷον, rappresenta un motivo squisitamente stoico: basti rileggere il *De otio* di Seneca.

un comando comune: in caso contrario non sarebbe possibile, infatti, che gli uomini in massima parte facciano, all'unisono gli uni con gli altri, la stessa identica cosa, ovverosia che partecipino alla vita politica dello Stato e conducano in qualche altro modo un'esistenza comunitaria. Il comando è di duplice natura: viene dagli dèi oppure dagli uomini. E gli antichi attribuivano maggior prestigio e importanza a quello proveniente dagli dèi, e per questo [...] presso i Cretesi [...] regnava Minosse, che ogni nove anni [...] saliva all'antro di Zeus, e da Zeus riceveva i comandi e li comunicava agli uomini. E simili cose faceva anche Licurgo, il suo emulo [...]. E per questo anche gli indovini erano onorati, tanto da essere ritenuti degni del potere regale [...]. Tali [*scil.* erano] [...] Orfeo e Museo [...], e presso gli Indiani i Gimnosofisti, presso i Persiani i Magi [...]. Tali erano anche Mosè e i suoi successori, che dopo inizi non spregevoli degenerarono.

L'analogia tra il passo posidoniano-straboniano e Sen. *Ep.* 90, 4-6 appare palese. In entrambi i brani leggiamo che individui eccezionali e benefici, nati in più luoghi dell'ecumene, ricevono spontanea obbedienza e ottengono la leadership e la βασιλεία, che però degenera in tirannide quando i loro successori prendono il potere. In entrambi i brani, insomma, viene spiegata allo stesso modo la genesi dello Stato ideale (e quindi, per così dire, di un''epoca aurea'), genesi che, evidentemente, Posidonio riteneva possibile in ogni momento e in ogni luogo, a condizione che ci fosse un *sapiens* a cui conferire il potere e una comunità di uomini εὐγνώμονες (Strab. XVI 2, 36) o *incorrupti* (Sen. *Ep.* 90, 4), tali da riconoscerne l'eccellenza e attribuirgli il comando. Per Posidonio, sembra di capire, le 'età dell'oro' sono potenzialmente infinite; tutte però sono fisiologicamente destinate a concludersi a causa della διαστροφή, che *cito subrepit*[17].

L'affinità tra Sen. *Ep.* 90, 4-6 e il passo di Strabone da un lato supporta fortemente la tesi secondo cui quest'ultimo avrebbe matrice posidoniana[18], dall'altro stimola a utilizzare, come appunto io ho fatto, il brano straboniano per l'esegesi della pericope sulla διαστροφή di *Ep.* 90, 6.

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[17] Cf. Sen. *QN* III 30, 8, un passo che forse risente dell'influsso della dottrina posidoniana circa l''età aurea'. *Sed de hoc alias.*

[18] L'affinità non è percepita da KIDD (1988), II, 951-952, *ad* Posidon. F 279 EK, secondo cui in Strabone non ci sarebbe nulla di «caratteristicamente posidoniano» (e infatti Strab. XVI 2, 35-39 non figura nell'edizione EK dei frammenti di Posidonio). BAR-KOCHVA (2010), 358-362, considera posidoniani i paragrafi 35-37 di Strabone, non posidoniani i paragrafi 38-39, sulla base essenzialmente della differenza tra la lista di legislatori data nel luogo straboniano e quella posidoniano-senecana di *Ep.* 90, 6. Si tratta, tuttavia, di un argomento inconsistente: Bar-Kochva non tiene in considerazione, infatti, che Seneca e Strabone attingono a due opere distinte: al *Protrettico* (o comunque a un'opera filosofica) Seneca (cf. n. 4), alle *Storie* - verisimilmente: cf. THEILER (1982), II, 96-98 - Strabone. In due opere diverse Posidonio poteva ben aver proposto due liste diverse! Nettamente più significativa di questa divergenza è invece, a mio parere, l'affinità ideologica, che ho cercato di mettere in luce, tra Strab. XVI 2, 35-39 nel suo complesso e Sen. *Ep.* 90, 4-6, affinità che Bar-Kochva non può cogliere appieno perché fraintende completamente il passo senecano-posidoniano, immaginando a torto (BAR-KOCHVA, 2010, 367-368) che il *regnum* dei sapienti evocato da Posidonio fosse «a universal society encompassing all of mankind», e addirittura che «the sages are obviously [*sic*!] the ones through whom 'he (the king) had begun to have power' (Sen. *Ep.* 90, 5 *fin.*)», quasi che in Sen. *Ep.* 90, 4-6 fosse evocato un *rex* universale eletto da un comitato di saggi. Nella pericope di *Ep.* 90, 5 richiamata da Bar-Kochva e da noi trascritta *supra*, alla n. 5, *per quos* («through whom») si riferisce invece, come abbiamo detto, all'insieme dei membri delle singole comunità primordiali, ciascuna delle quali sceglie un *sapiens* come suo *rex*.

Perché la ricostruzione della dottrina posidoniana in merito all''età dell'oro' che stiamo proponendo appaia verisimile dobbiamo tuttavia verificare se per Posidonio la virtù e la sapienza fossero obiettivi effettivamente raggiungibili per l'uomo. Credo si possa affermare con sicurezza che Posidonio le ritenesse tali. Un passo di Diogene Laerzio, in particolare, lo testimonia.

> D.L. VII 91 (Posidon. F 29 EK = F 403 Th; F 2 EK = 435b Th): τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦ ὑπαρκτὴν εἶναι τὴν ἀρετήν φησιν ὁ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ α΄ τοῦ Ἠθικοῦ λόγου τὸ γενέσθαι ἐν προκοπῇ τοὺς περὶ Σωκράτη, Διογένη, Ἀντισθένη[19]. εἶναι δὲ καὶ τὴν κακίαν ὑπαρκτὴν διὰ τὸ ἀντικεῖσθαι τῇ ἀρετῇ. διδακτήν τε εἶναι αὐτήν, λέγω δὲ τὴν ἀρετήν, καὶ Χρύσιππος ἐν τῷ α΄ Περὶ τέλους φησὶ καὶ Κλεάνθης καὶ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τοῖς Προτρεπτικοῖς καὶ Ἑκάτων· ὅτι δὲ διδακτή ἐστι, δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ γίνεσθαί ἀγαθοὺς ἐκ φαύλων.

> «Prova dell'esistenza della virtù Posidonio, nel primo libro dell'*Etica*, dice essere il progresso morale di Socrate, Diogene, Antistene. Afferma inoltre che anche il vizio esiste, in quanto antitetico alla virtù. E che essa, cioè la virtù, sia insegnabile lo sostengono sia Crisippo, nel primo libro dell'opera *Sul fine*, sia Cleante, sia Posidonio, nel *Protrettico*, sia Ecatone; che essa sia insegnabile è evidente dal fatto che si diventa buoni da individui dappoco che si era».

Il segmento laerziano, come si vede, contiene due frammenti di Posidonio (Posidon. F 29 EK = F 403 Th: τεκμήριον δὲ [...] ἀντικεῖσθαι τῇ ἀρετῇ; F 2 EK = 435b Th: διδακτήν τε εἶναι [...] ἐκ φαύλων), che non sono ancora stati interpretati (ed emendati) in maniera soddisfacente. Iniziamo dal primo (Posidon. F 29 EK). Per Sedley[20], questo passo significherebbe che, secondo Posidonio, Socrate, Diogene e Antistene avrebbero posseduto la virtù, e con il possederla ne avrebbero dunque dimostrato l'esistenza; se non l'avessero posseduta, infatti, essi non sarebbero stati tanto abili nel promuovere il progresso morale (προκοπή) dei loro allievi. La προκοπή degli allievi dimostrerebbe, insomma, la ἀρετή dei maestri, che a sua volta dimostrerebbe l'esistenza della ἀρετή *tout court*[21]. Tale interpretazione mi pare problematica: in primo luogo, non è certo che il sintagma τοὺς περὶ Σωκράτη, Διογένη, Ἀντισθένη significhi «gli allievi di Socrate, Diogene, Antistene», perché potrebbe anch'essere stato usato per indicare semplicemente «Socrate, Diogene, Antistene» (così, appunto, ho tradotto), oppure «Socrate, Diogene, Antistene e i loro seguaci»[22]. In secondo luogo, credo sia poco probabile che uno Stoico sostenesse che dal progresso morale degli allievi fosse inferibile la virtù dei maestri; dalla προκοπή degli allievi uno Stoico avrebbe se mai desunto - credo - che προκόπτοντες («pro-

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[19] Ci si attenderebbe in realtà τοὺς περὶ Σωκράτη, Ἀντισθένη, Διογένη: cf. D.L. I 15; Phld. *Sto.* 3, col. XIII, 1-4 DORANDI (1982). Suggerirei dunque, come congettura 'diagnostica', di trasporre, in D.L. VII 91, Διογένη dopo Ἀντισθένη.

[20] SEDLEY (2007), 233 n. 67.

[21] L'interpretazione di Sedley è stata in parte anticipata da BONHÖFFER (1894), 217 n. 1, ignoto a Sedley.

[22] Sul significato del nesso οἱ περί cf. BROUWER (2014), 107-109.

gredienti») erano anche i maestri[23]. Mi sembra dunque opportuno proporre un'ipotesi alternativa, e mi pare che l'esegesi più naturale del frammento posidoniano sia un'altra, ossia che per Posidonio fosse la προκοπή *in se stessa* a dimostrare l'esistenza della ἀρετή.

Nella concezione stoica, progredire moralmente significa dedicarsi alla filosofia e intraprendere un cammino che conduce alla virtù portando l'uomo a perfezionare la sua naturale capacità di discernere il bene; chi progredisce verso la virtù, ma non è ancora giunto alla meta, continua, tuttavia, ad appartenere al novero dei φαῦλοι (ossia degli «uomini dappoco», degli «stolti»). Con una dotta similitudine, Cleante (Ar.Did. *apud* Stob. II 7, 5^b 8 = *SVF* I 566) paragonava gli esseri umani ai meliambi, tipo di componimento poetico appartenente al genere σπουδογέλοιον, in cui una forma apparentemente 'bassa' e leggera (φαύλη) era usata per trasmettere un insegnamento serio; il meliambo aveva un finale (τέλος) moraleggiante (*id est* contenente un σωφρονισμός), che chiariva e dava senso al componimento stesso, il quale - se privo del finale - sarebbe risultato *in toto* φαῦλος. Come i meliambi - scriveva Cleante - tendono a un τέλος serio (σπουδαῖον), ma prima di raggiungere il τέλος hanno un carattere leggero e 'basso', così gli uomini tendono naturalmente alla virtù, ma finché non l'hanno ottenuta sono stolti (φαῦλοι, appunto): πάντας γὰρ ἀνθρώπους ἀφορμὰς [«risorse, attitudini verso qualcosa»] ἔχειν ἐκ φύσεως πρὸς ἀρετήν, καὶ οἱονεὶ τὸν τῶν μελιάμβων λόγον ἔχειν κατὰ τὸν Κλεάνθην· ὅθεν ἀτελεῖς μὲν ὄντας εἶναι φαύλους, τελειωθέντας δὲ σπουδαίους[24].

La dottrina posidoniana di cui ci informa Diogene Laerzio in VII 91 (Posidon. F 29 EK), se interpretata come io propongo, potrebbe dunque sembrare paradossale; nondimeno, ritengo che la mia interpretazione sia sostenibile, non solo perché è l'esegesi più naturale del luogo posidoniano-diogeniano, ma anche per ragioni filosofiche. L'argomento di cui Posidonio si serviva, teste Diogene, per dimostrare l'esistenza del vizio era di natura logica (il vizio esiste in quanto antitetico alla virtù)[25]; l'argomento con cui dimostrava l'esistenza della virtù era empirico (l'esistenza reale della προκοπή), ma - credo - con implicazioni epistemologiche. È probabile infatti, a mio avviso, che Posidonio sviluppasse questa sua prova dell'esistenza della virtù prendendo il paradosso di Menone come assunto: se non si può cercare quello che non si conosce (Pl. *Men.* 80d 5-e 5), allora chi ricerca la virtù deve sapere che cosa sia la virtù stessa; se la προκοπή è reale (ossia è un reale progresso in direzione della ἀρετή)

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[23] Cf. l'*Ep.* 6 di Seneca, in cui il merito del progresso morale di Metrodoro, Ermarco e Polieno viene attribuito al *contubernium Epicuri* (6); è chiaro che, nella prospettiva senecana, la grandezza degli allievi di Epicuro, definiti *magni viri*, ma certo lontani dalla perfetta sapienza, dimostra che Epicuro stesso era un grande uomo e un *proficiens* (= προκόπτων): solo un *proficiens*, però, perché per Seneca, come è superfluo rimarcare, Epicuro non era affatto l'incarnazione della σοφία genuina, quella a cui si giunge avendo compiuto interamente la προκοπή (cf. *infra*). Per gli Stoici - è fin troppo noto - il *sapiens* è l'uomo perfetto, dotato di ogni qualità, infallibile e per nulla inferiore a Giove: cf. ZAGO (2017) e, in generale sul σοφός stoico, BROUWER (2014).

[24] Sul testo e il senso di questo passo cf. LIVREA (1987); ZAGO (2012), 32-33 e n. 53. Sul tema del progresso morale, nello Stoicismo e non, cf. ROSKAM (2005), ottimamente documentato.

[25] Per tale argomento cf. Pl. *Tht.* 176a; *SVF* II 1169; cf. KIDD (1988), II, i, 153.

essa dunque presuppone che il vero «progrediente» (προκόπτων) sappia che cosa la virtù sia *realmente*, e questo implica che la virtù sia qualcosa di reale, altrimenti neppure la προκοπή lo sarebbe. La mia interpretazione mi pare peraltro supportata da un parallelo, ovvero Sen. *Ep.* 89, 4-8:

> «Sapientia perfectum bonum est mentis humanae; philosophia sapientiae amor est et adfectatio: haec eo tendit quo illa pervenit. Philosophia unde dicta sit apparet: ipso enim nomine fatetur quid amet. [5] Sapientiam quidam ita finierunt ut dicerent divinorum et humanorum scientiam; quidam ita: sapientia est nosse divina et humana et horum causas. Supervacua mihi haec videtur adiectio, quia causae divinorum humanorumque pars divinorum sunt. Philosophiam quoque fuerunt qui aliter atque aliter finirent: alii studium illam virtutis esse dixerunt, alii studium corrigendae mentis; a quibusdam dicta est adpetitio rectae rationis. [6] Illud quasi constitit, aliquid inter philosophiam et sapientiam interesse: neque enim fieri potest ut idem sit quod adfectatur et quod adfectat [...]. [8] Quidam ex nostris [*scil.* tra gli Stoici], quamvis philosophia studium virtutis esset et haec peteretur, illa peteret, tamen non putaverunt illas distrahi posse: nam nec philosophia sine virtute est nec sine philosophia virtus. Philosophia studium virtutis est, sed per ipsam virtutem; nec virtus autem esse sine studio sui potest nec virtutis studium sine ipsa [...]: ad virtutem venitur per ipsam, cohaerent inter se philosophia virtusque».

> «La sapienza è il bene della mente umana portato a perfezione; la filosofia è amore e aspirazione alla sapienza: essa tende alla meta cui la sapienza è pervenuta. Risulta evidente quale sia l'origine del termine filosofia: nel nome stesso rivela ciò che ama. [5] Alcuni definirono in tal modo la sapienza: conoscenza delle cose divine e di quelle umane; altri così: sapienza è conoscere le cose divine, quelle umane e le loro cause. Questa aggiunta mi sembra superflua, dal momento che le cause delle cose divine e di quelle umane sono parte delle cose divine. Ci sono stati uomini che hanno definito anche la filosofia in modi diversi: alcuni la hanno chiamata ricerca[26] della virtù, altri ricerca finalizzata a rendere retta la mente; da qualcuno essa è stata definita appetizione della retta ragione. [6] Ciò, per così dire, rappresentò un punto fermo, che tra filosofia e sapienza ci sia una qualche differenza: non può accadere, infatti, che ciò a cui si aspira e ciò che aspira siano la stessa cosa [...]. [8] Alcuni tra i nostri [*scil.* gli Stoici], benché la filosofia sia ricerca della virtù e la virtù sia cercata, la filosofia cerchi, non reputarono, tuttavia, che esse fossero separabili: infatti, né la filosofia esiste senza virtù, né la virtù senza filosofia. La filosofia è ricerca della virtù, ma attraverso la virtù stessa; e d'altra parte non può esserci virtù senza ricerca di virtù, né ricerca di virtù senza la virtù stessa [...]: si giunge alla virtù attraverso la virtù stessa, filosofia e virtù sono intimamente legate».

Nessuno ha notato l'analogia tra il paragrafo 8 della lettera senecana e D.L. VII 91 (Posidon. F 29 EK), ma a mio parere è chiaro che per Posidonio, così come per quegli Stoici (*quidam ex nostris*) lì evocati da Seneca, *ad virtutem venitur per ipsam*

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[26] Con «ricerca» traduco *studium*, che ha qui lo stesso significato di ἐπιτήδευσις nei passi greci di cui ho trattato in ZAGO (2016), 163-165, ossia «l'applicarsi a qualcosa per giungere ad acquisirlo e a possederlo compiutamente».

(«si giunge alla virtù attraverso[27] la virtù stessa»): il percorso filosofico (*i.e.* la προ-κοπή) che conduce alla ἀρετή presuppone, cioè, l'esistenza della ἀρετή stessa. Dal momento che non conosciamo nessun altro Stoico che abbia espresso tale idea dovremo, fino a prova contraria, attribuire matrice posidoniana a Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8[28], e non potremo non vedere nel luogo senecano una delle chiavi di volta per l'interpretazione di D.L. VII 91 (Posidon. F 29 EK)[29].

Veniamo ora al secondo frammento, D.L. VII 91 (Posidon. F 2 EK), da cui apprendiamo che per Posidonio la virtù è insegnabile. Quello che sopra ho trascritto e tradotto è il testo tràdito dai testimoni di Diogene Laerzio, che è conservato dal più recente editore dell'opera diogeniana, Dorandi[30], ma che risulta problematico, e tale resta anche se, con Marcovich[31], si integra <τινας> («alcuni») dopo γίνεσθαι (traduzione: «è evidente dal fatto che <alcuni> diventano buoni da individui dappoco che erano»). Come osserva Kidd[32], il divenire virtuosi non prova di per sé che la virtù sia insegnabile, perché si potrebbero postulare anche altre cause del fenomeno: la dimostrazione è dunque cattiva, e né Posidonio né altri Stoici l'avrebbero potuta proporre nella forma in cui i manoscritti di Diogene ce la tramandano. Kidd definisce, pertanto, «convincente», e registra nell'apparato critico della sua edizione del passo (Posidon. F 2 EK) l'ipotesi di Sandbach secondo la quale all'interno del segmento δῆλον [...] φαύλων («è evidente [...] individui dappoco che si era») sarebbe caduto il participio διδασκομένους («ricevendo insegnamenti»). La proposta di Sandbach[33] è senza dubbio intelligente (ma si potrebbe pensare anche alla caduta di sostantivi quali διδασκαλία, ο διδαχῇ, ο μαθήσει: «per istruzione», «per apprendimento»); suggerirei, tuttavia, una soluzione diversa, più verisimile dal punto di vista della genesi dell'errore: δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ γίνεσθαι <ἀγαθοὺς μαθήσει τοὺς> ἀγαθοὺς ἐκ φαύλων: «è evidente dal fatto che i buoni diventano buoni per apprendimento da individui dappoco che erano» (cf. - per la formulazione - Pl. *Men.* 89c 1: ἆρ᾽ οὖν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται, ἆρα μαθήσει;). Il segmento di testo da me

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[27] Un *referee* mi fa rilevare che attribuendo a *per ipsam* un'accezione strumentale («per mezzo di») si potrebbe intendere il brano senecano come Sedley intende Posidon. F 29 EK: «si giunge alla virtù per mezzo della virtù stessa (*scil.* quella dei maestri)». L'osservazione è acuta, ma il contesto induce decisamente a propendere per l'interpretazione spaziale di *per*: cf. *venitur* e, poco prima, l'immagine degli *itinera quae ad urbes perducunt*, che occorre in un segmento di *Ep.* 89, 8 che non ho citato e che è lacunoso - cf. l'apparato di REYNOLDS (1965) -, ma il cui senso generale è chiaro.

[28] La locuzione senecana *quidam ex nostris* può senz'altro alludere a Posidonio o a suoi discepoli.

[29] Afferma Diogene Laerzio, come abbiamo visto, che l'idea secondo cui τεκμήριον [...] τοῦ ὑπαρκτὴν εἶναι τὴν ἀρετήν [...] τὸ γενέσθαι ἐν προκοπῇ τοὺς περὶ Σωκράτη, Διογένη, Ἀντισθένη era stata esposta da Posidonio nel primo libro dell'*Etica*. Non è detto che Seneca avesse letto direttamente l'*Etica* di Posidonio; potrebbe infatti aver attinto a una *Mittelquelle* dossografica. Da un testo dossografico post-posidoniano sembrano dipendere - si noti - i paragrafi immediatamente seguenti (9-13) dell'ottantanovesima lettera senecana: cf. WILDBERGER (2006), I, 134. Interessante osservare che il paradosso di Menone è ricordato da ROSKAM (2005), 95-97, nella sua analisi di Sen. *Ep.* 89, 8. Roskam ignora, però, la connessione tra il passo di Seneca e D.L. VII 91 (Posidon. F 29 EK).

[30] DORANDI (2013), 528.

[31] MARCOVICH (1999), I, 498.

[32] KIDD (1988), II, i, 100.

[33] Citata in apparato, assieme all'integrazione di Marcovich, anche da DORANDI (2013), 528.

integrato potrebbe facilmente essere caduto per *saut du même au même*. Non si può, tuttavia, essere certi che la lacuna da noi ipotizzata sia un guasto occorso nella tradizione manoscritta di Diogene Laerzio, perché l'omissione potrebbe essersi verificata nella fonte cui Diogene attinge. Diogene, infatti, nell'elaborare il suo VII libro si rifaceva a compilazioni e dossografie, non ai testi originali di Crisippo, Cleante, Posidonio, Ecatone e degli altri Stoici[34], e tendeva a prendere per buono ciò che in tali compilazioni trovava scritto (da qui tante stranezze e incongruenze). L'omissione di ἀγαθοὺς μαθήσει τοὺς (o di qualcosa di simile), insomma, potrebbe essere pre-diogeniana e aver già sfigurato la fonte di Diogene. Non inserirei, dunque, nel testo di una nuova edizione di Diogene Laerzio la mia integrazione, ma la relegherei, 'diagnosticamente', in apparato; la porrei nel testo, invece, se dovessi rieditare i frammenti di Posidonio.

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Blinded by the Vice. A Reading of Seneca's Letter 50

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Abstract

This paper offers a reading of Seneca's *Ep.* 50, focusing on the opening anecdote, the story of the fool slave Harpaste, who suddenly became blind but thought that it was the outside that had darkened rather than her sight. Harpaste is a speaking name, which hints at her being a joke of nature and at her becoming blind. She is foolish, mad and blind, so she represents in many respects our actual condition: we all are foolish, so we act like mad people, blinded by our vices. Yet her blindness is due to a physical disease while ours is ethical, and it is due to our moral feebleness. Besides the medical metaphor, the main semantic field of the letter is that of learning and knowing: this leads us to understand that our moral diseases come from a refusal to admit our limits, that is, to know ourselves, which is the first and crucial step towards wisdom.

Keywords: Seneca, *Moral epistles*, Blindness, Harpaste, 'Know thyself', Vices

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece una lectura de Séneca, *Ep.* 50, centrándose en la anécdota inicial, la historia de la esclava tonta Harpaste, que de repente se quedó ciega, pero pensó que era el exterior lo que se había oscurecido y no su vista. Harpaste es un nombre hablante, que insinúa que ella es una broma de la naturaleza y aún más al volverse ciega. Es tonta, loca *y* ciega, por lo que representa en muchos aspectos nuestra condición actual: todos somos tontos, por eso actuamos como locos, cegados por nuestros vicios. Sin embargo, su ceguera se debe a una enfermedad física, mientras que la del ser humano es ética y se debe a su debilidad moral. Además de la metáfora médica, el principal campo semántico de la letra es el de aprender y conocer: esto nos lleva a comprender que las enfermedades morales provienen de una negativa a admitir nuestros límites, es decir, a conocernos a nosotros mismos, que es el primer y crucial paso hacia la sabiduría.

Palabras clave: Séneca, *Epístolas morales*, ceguera, Harpaste, 'conócete a ti mismo', vicios

> Blinded by the light
> Revved up like a deuce
> Another runner in the night…
> (B. Springsteen, *Blinded by the Light*)

Introduction

As a Stoic, Seneca is an intellectualist: knowing and discerning good from bad necessarily leads to correct action, which is also the natural one, because in order to act well one must act according to nature.

That notwithstanding, Seneca never underestimates the difficulty of learning and understanding: it is a slow and complicated process with stops, regressions, impeded by personal and often unsurmountable limits. These difficulties engender a fundamental contradiction: if nature is good, and one is part of it, why is it so difficult to discern right from wrong? His answer is: a lack of will. We prefer to give in to our vices, ascribing them to society while they depend on us[1].

To discuss this argument, I am going to focus on Seneca's *Letter* 50, a text where the philosopher exposes his reasoning (but also significantly leaves some questions unanswered) and relies on various medical metaphorical mappings, whereby vice is cast as a disease (especially blindness) and a moral deviation. I will first provide an overview of the letter, then an analysis of its structure and of the semantic fields of learning and self-improvement. The argument will start by, and conclude on, the core of the letter, i.e. Harpaste's example. I will show how she represents a living metaphor of moral blindness.

1. *Letter 50: an overview*

The letter, as it often happens in Seneca, opens with witty autobiographical anecdotes and pithy sayings (1-2), followed by deeper and more general considerations (3-6) and a final, positive exhortation (7-8).

Because he received Lucilius' letter with a long delay, Seneca does not ask him about his moral progress but touches on it himself, pointing out how we ascribe our vices to time and places, while, in fact, they depend only on us (1). He then quotes an example: his fool Harpaste, an unpleasant heritage from his wife[2], who eventually became blind, but thought that it was the outside that had darkened rather than that her sight had declined (2). The same thing happens to all of us. We impute our vices - ambition, luxury, angriness - to contemporary way of life, but we are fully responsible for them. And yet, even if we are as blind as that woman, we wander without a guide: we do not acknowledge our issues, and we do not look for a doctor who can help us heal. As a consequence, our disease keeps worsening (3-4). We must learn how to live correctly, which is no impossible task, just as it is not impossible to straighten a bent board. Moral strengthening should actually come easier since spirit is far softer than wood (5-6). At present, vices possess us, but it is a feeble possession, because they are not inherent to our nature; on the contrary, once we apprehend virtue, it stays with us, because it is part of our original nature (7-8).

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[1] Bellincioni (1978), 15-69; Lotito (2001), 69-76; Roskam (2005), 60-97; for ancient Stoicism, Vegetti (1983). Specifically, on moral judgements, Barney (2003); Inwood (2005), 201-233.

[2] This passage is traditionally quoted as evidence for the fact that Seneca had a wife who died (or from whom he divorced) before marrying Paulina; yet Gloyn (2104), 243-244, interprets it as referencing Paulina herself.

2. *We Are All Harpaste*

The main metaphorical field to which Seneca recurs here is one of his favorites: medicine[3]. In this case, it is interesting that he starts by an actual illness - which is indeed, as we shall see, a double illness, and then arrives at the moral application of it by a simile. After having become blind, Harpaste thought that her inability to see was caused by darkness outside her. Our condition is a form of blindness, too, but, as we shall see, at a moral level (below, 2.1 and 2.2); this condition is even worse than Harpaste's, because, unlike her, we even refuse to follow a guide, Seneca says.

The story of Harpaste illustrates the core point of the letter: even at first sight, we understand that it is not just a funny story but has important philosophical implications, which concern precisely the possibility of knowing something - more precisely, knowing ourselves (see below, section 3).

While *Letter* 50 as a whole has been neglected by Senecan scholars, Harpaste gained a certain amount of interest in scholarship devoted to diseases, and the so-called dark irony they sometimes elicit[4]. This is undoubtedly an interesting point of view; and yet we cannot see Harpaste alone, without comparing her to us. Seneca's sarcasm towards her was typical of his age, but the main point at issue in letter 50 is not the irony towards Harpaste, but the irony towards ourselves and our inability, which turns into a refusal, to admit our flaws (below, section 2.1). Furthermore, this figure offers a network of philosophical implications and connections which shed light on the interpretation of the letter as a whole.

Let us start with her name, which is a speaking name, as it often happens in Seneca. Indeed the neuter substantive *harpaston*[5] is a Greek transliteration, etymologically linked with *harpazo*, "to snatch", which we find in Latin in two meaningful occurrences: a ball game (Mart. IV 19, 6)[6] and an eyewash (*CIL* XIII 10021). In my opinion, both meanings are in play in this context: play with a ball because, as Seneca points out (50, 2-3), Harpaste is considered as living entertainment in the time's social culture; and the eyewash, because she becomes blind. Thus, in this case, her name expresses both her social status *and* her destiny.

2.1. *Harpaste as a Fool*

Harpaste's name, thus, has a double-meaning, and the same goes for her disease. Indeed, there is not only one illness at issue. The woman who is the subject of the episode is not only blind; she is mad, (a condition, we can maliciously add, which is made worse by the fact that she is a woman, i.e. a being who is by nature far less intelligent than a man, at least according to the ancients' view, which Seneca shares)[7].

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[3] ARMISEN-MARCHETTI (1989), 136-138; SJÖBLAD (2015), 27-34; GAZZARRI (2020), esp. 171-198.
[4] BEARD (2014), 145; KIDD (2014), 42-43; KATZANTZIDIS-TSOUMPRA (2018), 275-276. For the medical issues (blindness etc.) see below.
[5] *ThlL* VI 3, 2540, 20-24.
[6] Martial underlines that this ball has to be 'snatched' (*harpaston a manu pulverulenta rapis*).
[7] With few and partial exceptions, such as those of Marcia and his mother Helvia (POCIÑA, 2003).

More precisely: she is first mad, and then blind: her absurd behavior depends on this unique set of conditions. Therefore, when Seneca maintains that we are like her, he is suggesting that we are blind from a gnoseological point of view: in other words, that we cannot identify anything, and especially our condition, clearly. But he is also defining us as out of our minds, and this is the reason why we cannot acknowledge our vices. So, we are mad, i.e. we cannot understand or know anything, and so, even if we are not physically blind, were are at a cognitive level. The ground for this sentence is the famous Stoic assertion according to which "all fools are mad"[8]. Given the Stoic correspondence between body and soul, it is easy to shift from the medical and technical condition of mental illness to metaphorical and psychological 'madness'[9].

In this particular case, Seneca uses a specific adjective to define madness: *fatua.* A rare word, which Seneca uses elsewhere only in the *Apocolocyntosis*[10]. It is worth trying to understand if there are philosophical reasons for this unusual word-choice.

Fatuus derives from *fari*, and generally connotes someone who cannot understand what he says and what other people say (Isid. *Etym.* X 103). A significant instance of this use we find at Catullus 83, 2, where Lesbia's husband is termed *fatuus* because he does not understand that Lesbia is blaming Catullus because she is in love with the poet. In the case of Seneca's *Ep.* 50, the adjective in question probably stands as a technical term for those 'fools' which rich people used to carry along for entertainment. Although we cannot quote any other occurrence of *fatuus* referencing this habit, the context of the Senecan passage nonetheless suggests it. In this regard, a note by Isidorus comes in handy. The etymologist quotes a sentence by the second century BCE comic poet Afranius and distinguishes between *stultus* and *fatuus* (*Etym.* X 246):

> «Stultus, hebetior corde, sicut quidam ait [Afran. 416 R.]:
>> *Ego me esse stultum existimo: fatuum esse non opino,*
> id est obtunsis quidem sensibus, non tamen nullis. Stultus est qui per stuporem non movetur iniuria; saevitiam enim perfert nec ultus est, nec ulla ignominia commovetur dolore».

> «Stolid, rather dull in spirit, as a certain writer says: "I consider myself to be stolid; I don't think myself a fool". That is, with dulled wits, not with none at all. A stolid person is one who in his stupor is not moved by injustice, for he endures and does not avenge cruelty, and is not moved to grief by any dishonor» (Trans. BARNEY, 2006).

Fatuus is in a way a step beyond *stultus*, the average term for the non-sage. Of course, we cannot apply a Stoic sense to Afranius' verse; yet, as Armisen-Marchetti has pointed out, this word has been deliberately chosen by Seneca instead of a

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[8] See below, and STOK (1981), esp. 10-13.
[9] Below, 128-129.
[10] *Apocol.* 1 and 11, 2, in both cases Seneca alludes to Claudius' dumbness.

philosophical term, because of its vividness and frequency in common language[11]. So we may infer that the semantic characterization of *stultus* in the Stoic sense was present to the philosopher, as is shown in another letter (15, 9):

> «Quam nunc tu vitam dici existimas stultam? Babae et Isionis? Non ita est: nostra dicitur, quos caeca cupiditas in nocitura, certe numquam satiatura praecipitat».

> «What life do you suppose is that being called foolish? That of Baba and Ision? That's not it: it is ours that is meant. Blind avarice hurls us toward things that may harm and certainly will not satisfy us» (Trans. GRAVER-LONG, 2015, here and below).

Here, Seneca distinguishes between our stupid life (*stulta vita*), which is subjected to a blind vice (*caeca cupiditas*), and that of two jesters[12], who are actually foolish, and thus may be labelled as *fatui*.

Indeed, *stultus* is someone who misses something, but he is still considered capable of reasoning. On the contrary, *fatuus* refers to someone who is completely obtuse, who is incapable of any form of understanding. Thus, the fool Harpaste is not only a *stulta*, she represents an even worse condition. Given the fact that Seneca compares us to Harpaste, we too are worse than *stulti*, in that we are not unable to understand anything, but - and this is far worse - we actually *refuse* to do it, thus rejecting the evidence for our viciousness. We are not blinded by a disease like the innocent fool: we are blinded by our own fault. In other words, we do not want to acknowledge that our cognitive impairment is due to us, while she is incapable to do this. So, she is not responsible for her flaws, while we are.

2.2. *Harpaste's Blindness*

Let us focus on the woman's blindness.

Blindness has a double-faced story in antiquity: on the one hand, it is a sort of magical condition which endows a person with the ability to see more with their mind's eye than others with their visual organs (e.g. in the case of Homer and Tiresias); on the other hand, blindness is a disease which cuts men off from social life and, as a consequence, leaves humans in an intermediary state between life and death, as is the case with Oedipus.

From a metaphorical point of view[13], we can also reference a double level: sight is a sense linked to exteriority, and as such it is subject to mistakes and relies on appearances. Yet it is crucial for the process of learning. Thus, the idea of an imperfect sight is frequent in Seneca, with special reference to some peculiar expressions and ideas, among which we can quote the *imbecillitas oculorum*, «feebleness of the eyes»

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[11] ARMISEN-MARCHETTI (2009), 349-357.
[12] Cf. GRAVER-LONG (2015), 514.
[13] ARMISEN-MARCHETTI (1989), 144-145 and 174-176; GAZZARRI (2020), 102-109. On the relevance of the sense of sight in Seneca, SOLIMANO (1992), 14-18.

due to some diseases[14], and the *caligo mentis*, «blurring of mind»[15]. The two images display different representations of our vision and the attendant understanding and learning processes. In the first case, especially frequent in reference to natural phenomena, our eyes are constitutionally feeble, and this implies that we have to make an effort to correct their mistakes, e.g. with a specific eyewash and a light therapy[16]. In the second case, Seneca represents the blurring as a sort of veil caused by our vices, which philosophy can rip off, thus giving us the hope of seeing (and so understanding) correctly. This time, the impairment of sight is not connatural but due to something external, and so it is quite easy to provide a definite cure.

As for physiological blindness, Seneca otherwise cites it as an example of apparent misfortune which the sage could endure (*Prov.* 5, 2; *Ep.* 9, 4; 92, 22): people consider loss of sight as one of the most terrible things a man can suffer, and the historical examples quoted are Appius Claudius Caecus, the famous politician of the ancient Republic, and Lucius Caecilius Metellus, a former consul who apparently lost his sight while trying to save the Palladium from the fire of the temple of Vesta in the third century BCE[17]. The aforementioned *exempla* represent exceptional men who tolerate blindness without losing their good spirits; it is no surprise that a dull person like Harpastes fails in the task. Moreover, blindness is explicitly compared to «madness» (*insania*) in a context where there is a comparison between not loving someone's parents, which is a vice, *impietas*, and not recognizing them, which is *insania* (*Ben.* III 1, 5)[18]. This confirms my interpretation of the case of the *fatua* Harpaste as something exceptional and more problematic than the common vices of a *stultus*.

If we turn to passion imagery[19], blindness is, from Homer on, the representation of passion taken to its extreme level. The Ate lamented by Agamemnon in *Il.* XIX as the cause of his unfair behaviour towards Achilles is not so far from the *caligo mentis* quoted above, but also close to the *caecitas* induced by, e.g. *furor* (*Herc. f.* 991; *Oed.* 590; *Thy.* 27) or *cupiditas* (*Pol.* 9, 5; *Const.* 2, 2; *Ep.* 15, 9), *aviditas*, *ambitio* (*Ben.* VII 2, 6; VII 26, 4), and so on. All these expressions are common in Latin poetry. In the case of *furor*, its correspondent passion *ira* is compared to an eye- disease (*Ir.* II 25, 1; III 39, 2): so, again, the situation of *Ep.* 50 does not concern a common, as it were 'normal' vice, but an extreme one.

Ate is far from having a precise meaning or interpretation; scholars still debate over it[20]. Yet there are some common features on which scholars agree. A recent study

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[14] Courtil (2015), 206-208 and 281-284. A list of different eyes pathologies in 536-538.

[15] See Santini (1999), 357-360. Cf. *Vit. b.* 1, 1; *Brev.* 3, 1; *Ira* II 35, 5.

[16] See e.g. *NQ* III 1, 2 (thermal waters); *Ep.* 94, 19-20 (light), with Courtil (2015), 318-319 n. 2226. For medical therapy, cf. Gaillard-Seux (1998).

[17] Cic. *Scaur.* 48; Sen. *Contr.* IV 2; VII 2, 7; Ov. *Fast.* VI 437.

[18] *Vitiosi oculi sunt, qui lucem reformidant, caeci, qui non vident: et parentes suos non amare impietas est, non agnoscere insania.*

[19] Armisen-Marchetti (1989), 176.

[20] See also *Il.* IX 505-7. On this concept from Homer on, Dodds (1973), 2-8 and 37-41; Dawe (1969), 95-123; Cairns (2012).

defines it a word which «covers both the harm that results from a human being's actions, and the harm to his mental faculties that causes that outcome in the first place»[21].

It is worth quoting the lines which describe Ate as a personified entity (*Il.* XIX 91-94):

πρέσβα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἄτη, ἣ πάντας ἀᾶται,
οὐλομένη· τῇ μέν θ᾽ ἁπαλοὶ πόδες· οὐ γὰρ ἐπ᾽ οὔδει
πίλναται, ἀλλ᾽ ἄρα ἥ γε κατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν κράατα βαίνει
βλάπτουσ᾽ ἀνθρώπους· κατὰ δ᾽ οὖν ἕτερόν γε πέδησε.

«Ruin, Eldest daughter of Zeus, she blinds us all,
that fatal madness - she with those delicate feet of hers,
never touching the earth, gliding over the heads of men
to trap us all - She entangles one man, now another» (Trans. FAGLES, 1992).

In this passage, as the translation itself shows, *ate* and its correspondent verb *aao* clearly indicate a blindness of the mind, which impedes average logic and rationality[22]. The person who is hit by it is no longer in control of his actions, even if usually he is reasonable and balanced. Therefore, Ate is something which makes people go around like blind men.

And this is precisely what happens to all of us in *Ep.* 50, 3:

«Hoc quod in illa ridemus, omnibus nobis accidere liqueat tibi; nemo se avarum esse intellegit, nemo cupidum. Caeci tamen ducem quaerunt, nos sine duce erramus et dicimus: «Non ego ambitiosus sum, sed nemo aliter Romae potest vivere. Non ego sumptuosus sum, sed urbs ipsa magnas inpensas exigit. Non est meum vitium, quod iracundus sum, quod nondum constitui certum genus vitae; adulescentia haec facit».

«You should be well aware that what we laugh about in her case happens to every one of us. No one realizes he is grasping or avaricious. The blind at least request a guide; we wander about without one, and say, «It's not that I am ambitious; this is just how one has to live at Rome. It's not that I overspend; it's just that city living demands certain expenditures. It's not my fault that I am prone to anger, that I do not yet have any settled plan of life - this is just what a young person does».

The interesting thing is that Seneca represent these 'us' in a fashion comparable to the Homeric Agamemnon, and the ancient Greeks in general: we ascribe to external causes the faults and flaws which depend on us. The structure of the speech is similar: first, the denial of responsibility; then, the ascription to an outside entity: ἐγὼ δ᾽ οὐκ αἴτιός εἰμι, «it is not my fault» (*Il.* XIX 86), is the starting point of Agamemnon, and of the many Homeric characters who refuse to take direct responsibility for their

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[21] CAIRNS (2012), 14-15.
[22] DOYLE (1984), 8-14. See also GEISSER (2002), 103. CORAY (2016), 55-58, interprets *ate* as «delusion», a choice which is not shared by the scholars previously quoted.

errors[23]; *non ego ambitiosus sum*, «it's not that I am ambitious», start the 'we' of Seneca. On his side, Agamemnon lists three major deities, or precisely divine powers, as causes of Ate[24] before describing her; the 'we' of Seneca's letter, on the other side, ascribe everything to the city and their youth (*urbs ipsa*, *adulescentia*). In both cases, the causes of the error, or, in other words, of the passion, are considered external[25], with an attendant complete denial of any personal responsibility. Moreover, Ate is described as something which moves rapidly[26] on men's heads: this hints at the sudden, rapid, and unpredictable burning of passions, whose arrival we cannot see, and also, I guess, at the intellectual and moral wandering which is provoked by her. Moreover, the characterization of Erinys as ἠεροφοῖτις, whose meaning is most likely «she who flies through the mist» (*Il.* XIX 87)[27] - a sort of reduplication of *ate* - can be compared to the condition of men blinded by vices.

Evidence in support of this connection between the Greek poetic image and the Senecan one can be gleaned from Sophocles, *Ant.* 620-624:

> [...] Σοφία γὰρ ἔκ του
> κλεινὸν ἔπος πέφανται·
> τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ᾽ ἐσθλὸν
> τῷδ᾽ ἔμμεν, ὅτῳ φρένας
> θεὸς ἄγει πρὸς ἄταν·

> «It was a wise man who told
> how evil shows the fairest face,
> to those whom the gods will destroy» (Trans. Fainlight-Littman, 2009).

Here, in the words of the chorus, *ate*, to which, again, a deity drives the mind, is responsible for a misunderstanding of what is good and bad, which is precisely the condition of the *stulti*, and more specifically of the one of letter 50.

I am here not suggesting that *Ep.* 50 contains a conscious and intentional allusion to the Homeric passage (as seductive as this hypothesis might be). My contention is that Seneca is reworking the Stoic narration of passion through an original and witty story, which is in fact rooted in the concept of *ate*, the blinding impulse coming from outside: an ideawhich was well-known to each and any of his readers. In sum, the philosopher produces a low-style, comic version of a serious Homeric pattern: on the one side, he achieves that this pattern is immediately comprehensible to his readers (something which would not have happened if he had referred to dry, hyper-dialectic Stoic argumentations); on the other side, by lowering the level of discourse so drastically, Seneca deprives us of the support of an epic model for our hypocritical

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[23] Cairns (2012), 28-30.

[24] *Il.* XIX 87, ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα καὶ ἠεροφοῖτις Ἐρινύς.

[25] This does not happen always with *ate*, Cairns (2012), 33-36.

[26] The same image in *Il.* IX 505-507.

[27] Cf. Coray (2016), 51-53 *ad locum*; *Il.* IX 571-572: «and the Erinys who flies through the night / heard her from Hell, she who has an unpitiful heart».

excuses and underlines the ridiculous condition shared by the majority of men, who are blinded without being conscious of it and always ready to jettison personal responsibility and to ascribe flaws to external causes[28].

Let us now go back to Seneca's intertext and check other recurrences of blindness in his works. An image which recalls Harpaste's story is that of those who move around in the dark, tripping on their own furniture: an image of voluntary, if temporary, blindness, for which Seneca *Ira* II 10, 1 provides two moral interpretations:

> «Illud potius cogitabis, non esse irascendum erroribus. Quid etiam, si quis irascatur in tenebris parum vestigia certa ponentibus? Quid, si quis surdis imperia non exaudientibus? [...] Inter cetera mortalitatis incommoda et hoc est, caligo mentium nec tantum necessitas errandi sed errorum amor».

> «You'll better contemplate this thought: errors shouldn't make us angry. What if one had to become angry at people unable to put one foot surely after another in the dark? Or at deaf people who don't listen to orders? [...] Among all those other disadvantages that are ours as mortals, there's this: the murkiness of our minds, whence both the inevitability of our mistakes and our fondness for the mistakes we make» (Trans. KASTER, 2010)

Seneca calls the action of walking in the dark an *error*, and he compares it to deafness. In the end, after other examples of such "going the wrong way", he provides a general definition of this attitude as a "blurring of mind", something which we not only do but also love. Here, we find the idea of *errare* (both «wandering aimlessly» and «making mistakes») linked to that of blindness (as is the case at *Ep.* 50, 2-3), and also to the idea of love for our moral wandering (i.e. our main fault corresponding to the apologetic speech at *Ep.* 50, 3).

Again, we find a similar image at *Vit. b.* 3, 1, with special reference to the opposition between appearance and reality:

> «Quaeramus aliquod non in speciem bonum, sed solidum et aequale et a secretiore parte formosius: hoc eruamus. Nec longe positum est: invenietur, scire tantum opus est quo manum porrigas: nunc velut in tenebris vicina transimus, offensantes ea ipsa quae desideramus».

> «We should seek on something that is not good to look at, but robust and unvarying and more beautiful on its hidden side. We should recover it. It's not placed far away. It will be discovered: you only need to know where to extend your hand. For now, it is as if we are passing nearby things in the darkness, bumping up against exactly what we long for» (Trans. KER, 2014).

So, the same illustration previously attributed to one who does not know what he is doing (and is therefore not responsible for it), is here referred to a similar state of

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[28] Something similar happens at Plutarch, *Mor.* 168B (= *Superstit.* 7) where the superstitious man deems *ate* responsible of all misfortunes.

unconsciousness but, in this case, the overtone is strictly cognitive. We do not recognize the true goods because we are blind. Even worse: we bump against the very things which we desire, and so we get hurt instead of taking pleasure from them.

With this apparently light and ironic story, Seneca shifts from Lucilius' good behavior to an all-encompassing (and negative) 'we' which comprehends each and any human being. But, as we shall see in the next section, the correspondences between the opening section and the corpus of the letter suggest that Lucilius is directly engaged in the discussion.

3. *The Semantic Field of Learning and Knowing in Letter 50*

We have seen at which point the story of Harpaste is connected with questions related to self-consciousness, learning, and knowing. If we analyze the semantic field of 'knowing-learning' in the letter, we can clearly see how the structure of the letter is grounded on these concepts. The main verbs utilized are *scio/nescio*, *intellego*, and *disco/dedisco.* In Latin, *scio* is the verb for an acquired knowledge, which can find practical application; *intellego* designates something one understands and that could be of use in the future[29]; *disco* means 'to learn.' Thus, *disco* is related to a preliminary phase of the learning process; *intellego* represents a sort of second level, while *scio* refers to a process which culminates in acquired competences.

In the opening of the letter Seneca uses the verb *scio* in the first person (50, 1):

«Spero te sic iam vivere ut, ubicumque eris, sciam quid agas».

«But I hope that you are now living in such a way that I know how you are doing no matter where you are».

This is a sort of rewriting from a pedagogical angle of the 'know thyself' precept: it is not Lucilius who ought to know himself, but Seneca (as his teacher).

Among the things which Lucilius is surely doing, as part of his training, Seneca immediately introduces the main theme of the letter (50, 1):

«Quid enim aliud agis quam ut meliorem te ipse cotidie facias, [...] ut intellegas tua vitia esse quae putas rerum?»

«What other endeavor do you have than to make yourself a better person each day [...] to come to understand that what you think are flaws your situation are in fact flaws or yourself?»

So, to spur oneself on on the path of self-bettering is tantamount to recognizing one's personal responsibility for one's flaws. In order to illustrate this sentence Seneca narrates Harpaste's story. She is a *fatua* and a *prodigium.* This means that she is not a clown or something of this sort which the Romans were used to carry along for fun

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[29] Cf. *OLD*, *s.v. intellego* 1 «to grasp mentally, understand, realize»; *s.v. scio* 1 «to know».

(*in illa ridemus*, 50, 3), but she is a monster or, in modern terms, a mentally ill person who was exhibited and considered fun because she would accidentally say nonsense and absurdities.

The third recurrence equally refers to her (50, 2):

«Incredibilem rem tibi narro, sed veram: nescit esse se caecam; subinde paedagogum suum rogat ut migret, ait domum tenebricosam esse».

«It is scarcely credible what I am telling you, and yet it is true: she does not know she is blind, but asks her attendant over and over for a change of apartments, saying that her quarters are not well lit».

She does not know, she does not understand that she has become blind. One of the most evident signs of a serious disease is that the patient refuses to admit it. The image of the fool ceaselessly moving here and there recalls the one of anxious men who always travel searching for tranquility, something impossible to find in the outside world, given its being a mental possession. The main text in which Seneca deals with this idea is *Ep.* 28. This letter presents lines of reasoning which are very similar to the ones expressed at *Ep.* 50. The philosopher starts with the exhortation to take care of one's soul, because external goods (such as places) do not affect the sensation of happiness (28, 1-2)[30]:

«Hoc tibi soli putas accidisse et admiraris quasi rem novam quod peregrinatione tam longa et tot locorum varietatibus non discussisti tristitiam gravitatemque mentis? Animum debes mutare, non caelum. [...] Onus animi deponendum est: non ante tibi ullum placebit locus».

«Do you think you are the only one this has happened to? Are you amazed to find that even with such extensive travel, to so many varied locales, you have not managed to shake off gloom and heaviness from your mind? You must change the mind, not the venue. [...] You must shed the load which is on your mind: until you do that, no place will be pleasing to you».

This is the case with Harpaste: she too has a load on her mind, i.e. her mental illness, and she is, therefore, not able to give a correct evaluation of anything. In *Ep.* 28 Seneca seems to talk about distress (*tristitia*, 28, 1) and not vices: but this is because the protagonist is Lucilius, whom he never accuses of being subject to heavy passions. Indeed, ending his letter with a general conclusion, Seneca turns to vices in the proper sense and quotes a sentence by Epicurus, which in turn connects his reasoning in *Ep.* 28 with the opening of *Ep.* 50 on the importance of acknowledging our flaws (28, 9-10):

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[30] The model for this epistle is clearly Horatius, *Ep.* I 11, esp. 27: *caelum, non animum mutant, qui trans maria currunt.* The theme itself is a commonplace (bibliography below, n. 31).

«"Initium est salutis notitia peccati". Egregie mihi hoc dixisse videtur Epicurus; nam qui peccare se nescit corrigi non vult: deprehendas te oportet antequam emendes. [...] Ideo quantum potes te ipse coargue, inquire in te; accusatoris primum partibus fungere, deinde iudicis, novissime deprecatoris; aliquando te offende. Vale».

«"Awareness of wrongdoing is the starting point for healing". Epicurus spoke very well here, I think, for he who does not know that he is doing wrong does not wish to be set right. Before you can reform yourself, you must realize your error. [...] Bring in accusation against yourself, as stringently as you can. Then conduct the investigation. Take the role of the accuser first, then the judge, and let that of the advocate come last. Offend yourself sometimes. Farewell».

Seneca ends the epistle with the same exhortation to self-examination with which he opens *Ep.* 50. Both letters focus on the fact that we ascribe our flaws (*tristitia gravitasque mentis*, 28, 1; ambition, anger, luxury, 50, 2) to some exterior conditions, which consist primarily of a physical place (different ones in *Ep.* 28; Rome in *Ep.* 50). On the contrary, our flaws depend only on us, and we can make ourselves better only if we start by acknowledging this simple truth. Not by chance, the subsequent *Ep.* 51, but also *Ep.* 55 and 56, deal with the question: «Is the place where we are relevant for tranquility?»[31] *Ep.* 50 seems to reopen, if only indirectly, the question treated in *Ep.* 28, this time without the support of Epicurus and only with Stoic forces.

If we concentrate, again, on the frame of the letter, we will observe that the sentence about Harpaste, *nescit esse se caecam* («she does not know she is blind», *Ep.* 50, 2) is a rephrasing of the previous one: *ut intellegas tua vitia esse quae putas rerum* («to come to understand that what you think are flaws your situation are in fact flaws or yourself», *Ep.* 50, 1). The hyperbolic example shows the absurdity of our average behavior: the disregarding of our vices. This is what Seneca says right after this (50, 3):

«Hoc quod ~~in illa~~ ridemus ~~omnibus nobis~~ accidere liqueat tibi: ~~nemo se avarum esse intellegit~~, nemo cupidum. Caeci tamen ducem quaerunt, nos sine duce erramus...»

«You should be well aware that what we laugh about in her case happens to every one of us. No one realizes he is grasping or avaricious...»

Harpaste is not aware of her blindness (*nescit*, 50, 2). Similarly - and this should be evident to us (*liqueat tibi*) - we do not realize (*intellegit*, 50, 3) that we are greedy or yearning. In both cases, a fundamental fault in the process of self-scrutiny, which has an internal cause, is totally ignored. Yet we are possibly even worse than Harpaste because we refuse a guide. This further fault looks like an indirect blame of Lucilius if he ever refused Seneca's teaching and thought that he did no longer need it.

Seneca's analysis of our vices is again ironic; and then he adds (50, 4):

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[31] See Montiglio (2006), Berno (2014).

«Non est extrinsecus malum nostrum: intra nos est, in visceribus ipsis sedet, et ideo difficulter ad sanitatem pervenimus quia aegrotare nescimus».

«Our trouble is not external to us: it is within, right down in the vital organs. The reason it is so difficult for us to be restored to health is that we do not realize we are sick».

In this passage, the identification of the reader with Harpaste becomes even more evident: the expression *aegrotare nescimus* («we do not realize we are sick») contains the same verb *nescio* which was applied to her at 50, 2, and another verb, *aegroto*, which is primarily medical in meaning. Not only our habit, but also our condition is identical to that of the mentally ill and blind woman. From now on, the idea of *scio/intellego*, with its implication of 'already learned concepts', disappears, and it is replaced by that of learning itself: *disco/dedisco.* This happens because Seneca first offers his analysis of the phenomenology of the event: indeed, a medical diagnosis. In other words, he describes what happens when people make some mistakes, and shows how this is always due to incorrect or missing (self)-knowledge. Seneca then prescribes a therapy, which consists precisely in *learning* and, in so doing, in filling this knowledge gap or amending misinterpretations. This is what we do not want to do, and for this reason, it is difficult for us to become better persons.

According to Seneca's analysis, we are ill because we refuse to ask a doctor for treatment: indeed, we are ashamed of learning how to be good (50, 5):

«Nemo difficulter ad sanitatem reducitur nisi qui ab illa defecit: erubescimus discere bonam mentem. [...] ne labor quidem magnus est, si modo, ut dixi, ante animum nostrum formare incipimus et recorrigere quam indurescat pravitas eius».

«If it is difficult to guide us back into our natural path, it is only because we have deserted it. We blush to learn excellence of mind [...] But the work is not hard, provided we start in time, as I said, and begin to shape and straighten the mind before its perversities become ingrained».

This blushing is the ultimate reason for our difficulty to start shedding our vices. We are just like ill persons who are ashamed to see a doctor. It is worth noticing that *bona mens* is first of all a physiological conceit, which designates a «healthy mind». Indeed in this same letter, Seneca opposes it to the *aegra mens*, «ill mind» (50, 9), and defines philosophy, which corresponds here to *discere bonam mentem*, as *salutaris*, «healthy» (50, 9)[32]. A healthy mind - a normally operating mind, not a 'good' or 'special' mind - can learn and understand correctly, i.e. it can reason correctly. Thus, this illustration which references ethical and cognitive content, presents also a medical overtone. At sections 5 and 6, Seneca talks about serious diseases and introduces a peculiar image: that of a deformed wood beam which can be straightened and molded according to one's needs. All the more easily, can a tender and flexible material such

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[32] Cf. also *Ep.* 41, 1: *facis rem optimam et tibi salutarem si, ut scribis, perseveras ire ad bonam mentem.*

as pneumatic soul be straightened. The philosopher shifts perspective from difficulty (*labor*) to easiness of self-bettering[33].

4. *Learning and Healing: The Difficulty of Being Naturally Good*

Beginnning from section 5, the semantic grid of learning is intertwined with that of healing, which is central to Harpaste's story. Furthermore, Seneca's reasoning tackles one of the key issues in Stoic philosophy, the inborn good nature of men[34]. There is an apparent inconsistency between section 5 and section 7: in the fifth section, Seneca says that the way to self-improvement is hard only for someone who goes against his nature. What is implied here is the Stoic postulate according to which man is naturally good, while evilness intervenes as a consequence of voluntary deviation from the right and natural path. In the seventh section, he seems to maintain the opposite view (50, 7):

«Illud, mi Lucili, non est quod te inpediat quominus de nobis bene speres, quod malitia nos iam tenet, quod diu in possessione nostri est: ad neminem ante bona mens venit quam mala; omnes praeoccupati sumus[35]; virtutes discere vitia dediscere est».

«It is true that we now are inhabited by vice, and have been so for a long time; but this does not mean, dear Lucilius, that you should give up hope. No one acquires an excellent mind without first having a bad one. All of us have been taken over already, and to learn virtue is to unlearn one's faults».

Evil (*malitia*) owns us; she is *in possessione nostri.* We are under her power: we are constitutionally bad (*mala*, sc. *mens*), and only after having experienced this moral slavery, we may acquire a good, i.e. virtuous and healthy, mind (*bona mens*). This seems to mean that we are born evil, and that, with much struggle, we eventually try to become good. The idea of learning is paradoxically explained as a way of unlearning (*dediscere*). Through this logical shift Seneca reconnects with the Stoic idea of men as naturally good. Evil is something which is indeed very tempting and powerful, but is also exterior, unnatural to us, even if we experience it from early on. All we have to do to become good is to get rid of it, i.e. to come back to our original and natural goodness[36]. Seneca's answer may come across as somewhat sophistic, yet it is less inconsistent than it could appear at first sight. As newborns, we are potentially good; but virtue's seeds have to be accurately cultivated for growing in the right way (*Ep.* 38). If we do not have the force to follow the right direction and lack the right guide, but instead trust our parents' and nurses' wishes for us to achieve material

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[33] Here we find the metaphor of the philosopher as a craftsman, on which see CERMATORI (2014), 299-301.

[34] See above, n. 2.

[35] An expression which we find also at *Ep.* 75, 16: *praeoccupati sumus, ad virtutem contendimus inter vitia districti.*

[36] Above, n. 34; ROSKAM (2005), 71.

goods, we immediately come under the attack of vices[37], and this is why we must get rid of these. This process leads to the 'madness' that all fools suffer according to the Stoic paradox. This is why we have to be forced (*cogo*, 50, 9) to go in the right direction[38].

The matter is germane to the famous Stoic exhortation to «follow one's nature». This is one's only duty to achieve goodness. But this process is not directed by instinct, or else we would all be effortlessly good. What then is the solution to the conundrum? Seneca solves it by referring this expression to one's self. To follow one's nature, one has to know oneself, to meditate about all one's actions. This does not come easy; we do not want to do it because it is difficult; it could be painful to see and admit things which we definitely do not like. This is why understanding 'one's nature' takes a long time, sometimes a lifetime.

The idea of getting rid of evil is reversed into its positive counterpart in the following section (50, 8):

> «Sed eo maiore animo ad emendationem nostri debemus accedere quod semel traditi nobis boni perpetua possessio est; non dediscitur virtus[39] [...] Virtus secundum naturam est, vitia inimica et infesta sunt».

> «Yet we may be of good cheer as we tackle the job of self-correction; for once we do come into possession of the good, it is ours forever. One does not unlearn virtue. [...] Virtue is in accordance with our nature; faults are inimical to it».

First, it was *malitia* which possessed us (*in possessione nostri*, 50, 7); now, we possess the good (*boni perpetua possessio*, 50, 8): and this is a permanent acquisition, because good is natural to us. Contrary to this, since vices are unnatural, they can be erased by our soul. On the one side, this process characterizes good as stronger than evil, since it corresponds to our nature; on the other side, the formal expressions are slightly inconsistent with the aforementioned position. In fact, good is described as an object which is *in our possession*, while in the case of evil the act of possession is inverted: we *were possessed* by it. This shows that evil has a far more powerful effect on us than good. How, then, can something which is unnatural, even contrary to our nature, be more powerful than what is natural? This depends on the influence that appearance and ignorance have on us. Moreover, weak souls are frightened by the idea of the unknown, and so they have to be led towards goodness by force (50, 9):

> «Sed quemadmoum virtutes receptae exire non possunt facilisque earum tutela est, ita initium ad illas eundi arduum, quia hoc proprium inbecillae mentis atque aegrae est, formidare inexperta; itaque cogenda est ut incipiat».

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[37] This process is technically defined as διαστροφή, «perversion» of our natural goodness; cf. BELLINCIONI (1978), 15-31; GRAVER (2007), 61-74.

[38] Cf. *Ep.* 90, 36 and 44-46, where early people are depicted as incorrupt but unable to become wise, while modern people are corrupted by bad influences but able to take the path to virtue.

[39] Cf. *Ep.* 76, 19: *stultitia ad sapientiam erepit, sapientia in stultitiam non revolvitur.*

«But even as virtues once attained cannot depart from us and keeping them is easy, so also it is arduous to begin attaining them. For it is characteristic of a mind that is weak and ill to fear what it has not yet experienced, so that it has to be forced to make a start».

Again, virtues are represented as objects that can be acquired and preserved. Here the medical imagery resurfaces through the expressions *inbecilla mens* (which recalls the *fatua* Harpaste) and *aegra* (sc. *mens*), which runs counter to the *mens bona* (50, 5, the ideal condition we strive for), and is thus characteristic of the *stulti*. In addition, it alludes to *aegrotare nescimus* (50, 4). So, in the final sections Seneca picks up again the medical image and traces a clear *Ringkomposition.* We are all ill, like Harpaste: yet, while she is irrecoverable, because of her congenital mental illness, in our case there is a concrete chance of healing, and contrary to what one would expect, therapy is pleasant from its onset (50, 9). Given the strict interaction between body and soul theorized by Stoicism, goodness is a consequence of health. The two ideas overlap, in the sense that a healthy mind *cannot* act badly and is naturally good.

Also the analogy drawn by Seneca between Harpaste's condition and ours is problematic. He avers, like he does elsewhere (e.g. *Ep.* 53), that diseases at their very start are easier to heal, but we cannot recognize them, and this is the reason why they get worse and more difficult to treat. But how can one ignore blindness? In *Ep.* 53 he speaks about muscular pains and light temperature, two symptoms that can actually signal a trivial indisposition, but can equally suggest severer diseases, like gout and high fever (53, 5-7)[40]. This makes sense. But one cannot underestimate or even fail to perceive blindness. So, this case is worse than the others, because it entails a kind of voluntary delusion.

5. Conclusion

We have seen how in letter 50 Seneca focuses on the ideas of knowing oneself and learning. The main metaphorical vehicle for this moral debate is medicine. Harpaste, far from being only the protagonist of a fun story, represents the theoretical core of the letter. Indeed, she is a living metaphor: her blindness and her reaction to the disease are a concrete example of the effects of any extreme passion which can blind us. While she does not understand her condition, we do, and yet we still act like her. With this story of the blind woman, Seneca puts in front of our eyes some crucial postulates of his ethics: first, that we have to know ourselves in order to know something; second, that the greatest difficulty does not consist in our physical limits, but in our psychological deficiencies: we are terrified by the idea of knowing ourselves, and we try to avoid it at all cost. This is why we need a guide, a doctor, a mentor to force us to do the right thing. This is why we need Seneca.

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[40] Berno (2006), 67-83 *ad locum.*

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Galen and the Stoic 'Double Perversion' Theory

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Abstract

Galen argues that the Stoic view that children are immediately familiar with what is good is false. Chrysippus holds that when a person acts badly, this is so because her nature has been perverted, and that the cause of perversion (διαστροφή) is twofold: the influence of the companions and what derives «from the very nature of things». Children, Galen contends, rush towards pleasure and avoid pain without any instruction. Additionally, they become angry, which proves that the first natural thing is not a propensity to what is good, but to emotions. However, Galen grants that, although at the beginning children are familiar with pleasure and victory, when they grow up, they have a natural familiarization with the good. In this paper I argue that the Stoics have a reasonable way of replying to Galen's objection: since he admits that when human beings develop their rationality, a familiarization with the good comes about (such familiarization to the good being something natural), he implicitly grants that the inclination to the good is part of human nature. In my discussion I briefly deal with the first orientation of the human animal towards himself, and suggest that this is the first good; in fact, for animals the appropriate thing to do is to pursue the primary natural goods that guarantee the preservation of their own constitution. That initial good is not yet a moral good, but it is a necessary condition for the correct development of the person, which will foster the correct development of one's inclination towards what is appropriate in a moral sense.

Keywords: Galen, Stoics, perversion, natural good, human animal, ethics

Resumen

Galeno sostiene que la visión estoica de que los niños están familiarizados inmediatamente con lo que es bueno es falsa. Crisipo argumenta que cuando una persona actúa mal es porque su naturaleza ha sido pervertida y que la causa de la perversión (διαστροφή) es doble: la influencia de los compañeros y lo que se deriva «de la naturaleza misma de las cosas». Los niños, sostiene Galeno, se precipitan hacia el placer y evitan el dolor sin ninguna instrucción. Además, se enfadan, lo que prueba que lo primero natural no es la propensión a lo bueno, sino a las emociones. Sin embargo, Galeno reconoce que, aunque al principio los niños están familiarizados con el placer y el deseo de ganar, cuando crecen tienen una familiaridad natural con el bien. En este artículo sostengo que los estoicos tienen una forma razonable de responder a la objeción de Galeno: dado que él admite que, cuando los seres humanos desarrollan su racionalidad, se produce una familiaridad con el bien (siendo dicha familiaridad algo natural), implícitamente concede que la inclinación al bien forma parte de la naturaleza humana. En mi discusión me ocupo brevemente de la primera orientación del animal humano hacia sí mismo y sugiero que éste es el primer bien; de hecho, para los animales lo apropiado es perseguir los bienes naturales primarios que garantizan la preservación de su propia constitución. Ese bien inicial aún no es un bien moral, pero es una condición necesaria para el correcto desarrollo de la persona, es decir de la inclinación hacia lo que es apropiado en el sentido moral.

Palabras clave: Galeno, estoicos, perversión, bien natural, animal humano, ética

1. *Introduction: how good are humans by nature?*

Galen argues that it is not true that children have no natural inclination to pleasure and avoidance of pain[1]. He also notes that it is Chrysippus himself who points out that, even when a child has never seen or heard an example of vice, he will not necessarily philosophize (*PHP* V 5, 318, 28-34). What the Stoics are intent on endorsing is that humans have from nature inclinations (ἀφορμαί) towards virtue[2] and towards stabilizing their impulses[3].

According to Chrysippus (as reported by Galen), the cause of perversion (διαστροφή) is twofold: the first is «the influence of the majority of people»; the second arises «from the very nature of things»[4], a somehow vague expression that Galen rephrases later as «the persuasiveness of the impressions» (τὴν πιθανότητα τῶν φαντασιῶν, *PHP* V 5, 320, 17-18). This fits with the account furnished by Diogenes Laertius, who reports that the Stoics maintained that the rational animal at times is perverted (διαστρέφεσθαι) by the persuasiveness of exterior things or by the influence of companions, while the starting-points provided by nature are supposed to be «uncorrupted» (ἀδιαστρόφους)[5]. But Galen intends to show that, since Chrysippus only focused on the best part of the soul (i.e., τὸ λογιστικόν), he is unable to explain the origin of vice. Additionally, Galen objects to Chrysippus that, if children are from the beginning immediately familiar (εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ᾠκείωται) with what is good, vice could not arise from causes intrinsic to themselves, but should only come from without (*PHP* 318, 20-30). Moreover, it cannot be said that children's impulses are governed by reason, for they do not have reason yet (*PHP* 316, 24-25).

Of particular interest is the fact that Galen challenges the Stoic thesis of familiarization (οἰκείωσις), according to which (i) the first impulse of the animal is

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[1] Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (*PHP*), V 5, 316, 28-320, 28, ed. De Lacy.

[2] Stob. II 7, 5^b8 (II, 65, 8-9, ed. Wachsmuth). The view that human beings have a natural tendency towards what is good is also reported by other sources (Calcidius, *In Tim.* chap. 165; *SVF* III, 229. Musonius Rufus, *Diss.* 3, p. 9, 15-9, 16, ed. Hense). Seneca states that the well born is the person «well set up by nature for virtue» (*Ep.* 44, 5). Of course, this does not mean that virtue is given without qualification; as warned by Seneca, virtue will not simply descend on oneself and is not discovered by trivial work or a small effort (*Ep.* 76, 6). In Seneca's *Ep.* 120 the main subject of discussion is how humans have acquired the knowledge of good and evil (for discussion see HADOT, 2014, 15 ff. and GLOYN, 2014, 239 n. 19). See also Cic. *Fin.* III 23; he maintains that, even though all due acts (*officia*) originate from nature's principles and we are commended (*commendari*) to wisdom by the starting-points of nature (*ab initiis naturae*), one gets perfect rationality *only over time*.

[3] The technical Stoic term normally associated with the animal's inclination to what is good (ἀφορμή) also explains that Panaetius has claimed that the goal is living according to the ἀφορμαί given to us by nature (cf. Clem. Alex., *Stromateis* II 21, 129, 4).

[4] Gal. *PHP* V 4, 320, 1-2. On this see TIELEMAN (2003), 132-139; GILL (2006), 257-258, 385. Seneca renders διαστροφή by *perversitas* (*Ep.* 95, 34; also, *pravitas*, *Ep.* 50, 4; 122, 5). For discussion see BERNO (2014), 371-372; 378-379.

[5] D.L. VII 89. See also Cic. *Fin.* III 22-23.

not pleasure, but self-preservation and (ii) there is a natural orientation towards what is good. Galen denies (i) because children rush towards pleasure and avoid pain without any instruction.

Within the framework of his argument, the restriction «without instruction» (ἀδιδάκτως) is relevant since, in case there was instruction, one could argue that this inclination to pleasure is due to instruction, not to nature. But the fact is, Galen maintains, that there is no 'didactic training' responsible for that orientation towards pleasure.

He insists that thesis (ii) should also be rejected because in fact children get angry, which proves that the first impulse (D.L. VII 85: πρώτη ὁρμή) is not a propensity to good, but to passionate states (a detail that is observed not only in children but also in irrational animals)[6]. However, Galen grants that, although at first children are familiar with pleasure and victory, on reaching maturity, they have a certain *natural* familiarization (τινὰ φυσικὴν οἰκείωσιν) with the good (καλόν). Now, young children are rational, even though they are not rational yet in the sense that they can use their reason properly. Moreover, if at the beginning of a newborn's life the leading part of its soul is like a sheet of paper ready for being written upon[7], one should assume that newborns have no concepts of what is good or bad yet, so that their souls cannot be perverted.

There has been a great deal of discussion about the issues treated in this paper. The central problem is the development of character. As suggested by Christopher Gill, a good starting-point is Cicero, who states that the first appropriate act (*officium*) is the animal's self-preservation in its natural constitution; the second is that the animal retains the things according to nature and rejects the ones contrary to nature (Cic. *Fin.* III 43 and V 24; 43). This process is described as a sort of necessary condition to grasp what is good: once this natural procedure of selection and rejection has been discovered, what can be truly called 'good' appears to the agent. This process depicts «an ideal pattern of development», which can culminate in virtue (but a succesful culmination of this process requires the presence of a developed rationality)[8]. The development of one's character can be analyzed according to different levels; the first is that of 'primary natural things', objects towards which animals are instictively attracted in the initial stage of their development. This being so, one should assume that the goodness a human being is inclined to by nature is its own self-preservation (or so I shall argue). Pursuing the primary natural things is an appropriate act for any animal. Now, if those primary natural things are pursued rationally, the appropriate act achieves what is suitable for the human constitution[9]. It is true that at the outset

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[6] Galen probably draws on Pl. *R.* IV 441a 8-9.
[7] Aëtius IV 11, 1-5 (Pseudo-Plutarch, *On the Doctrines of the Philosophers*, 900a-d).
[8] GILL (2006), 129-130.
[9] This, as emphasized by GILL (2006), 131, does not yet constitute virtue. In order to reach virtue, one must be able to attain a complete understanding of the good and that only can be acquired once one's reason has been (correctly) developed (GILL, 2006, 133).

of the human animal's life the orientation to its constitution (understood as a sense of appropriation of what allows oneself to function correctly) and the preference for those things that permit self-preservation are good for that purpose alone[10]. Nevertheless, this basic good can be considered a necessary condition for the correct development of the person, which will foster the correct development of our inclination towards what is approriate in a moral sense. In *Fin.* V 43 Cicero argues that nature generated the *vis hominis* to enable us to acquire any virtue, which explains why young children without instruction are stirred by resemblances of the virtues containing within themselves «the seeds of virtues»[11].

Graver, for her part, provides a detailed reconstruction of the whole process of character formation according to the Stoics. First, she contends, one's character and behavior are not caused by forces beyond one's control. We are responsible for forming the beliefs and habits we have, but again, one might suspect that this is possible once one's reason has been developed or during the very process of developing one's rationality. According to Graver, «Stoic providentialism asserts that the mind is geared towards the acquisition of correct knowledge throughout one's life»[12]. But as she clarifies, we are not born with knowledge, although we have innate tendencies which give us some guidance for a correct intellectual development; the kind of innatism related to these inclinations, I hold, should be understood as a dispositional innateness (i.e. the innate capacity to correctly develop one's character in the direction of knowledge rather than of error)[13]. Despite providence's beneficent plan, Graver underlines, we acquire many erroneous beliefs. In that process, «the persuasiveness of impressions» plays a decisive role, although the most interesting point in Graver's argument is the emphasis she places upon the fact that the native tendencies must be very closely allied with the points of view of nature[14].

In this article I argue that the Stoics have a reasonable way of replying to Galen's objection: since Galen admits that when a human being develops his rationality, a familiarization to the good comes about (such familiarization to the good being something natural), he is implicitly granting that the inclination to good is part of human nature. In fact, as soon as we are born, the Stoics claim, we are familiarized

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[10] GRAVER (2007), 152.

[11] See Cic. *Tusc.* III 2, where he stresses that «seeds of virtues» are inborn (*semina innata virtutum*) in our characters (see Sen. *Ep.* 120, 4: *semen scientiae*). *Fin.* V is not supposed to report Stoic doctrine, but this assertion is unquestionably Stoic. Moreover, according to Cic. *Leg.* I 44, nature has given us a kind of common understanding (*communis intellegentia*), so that we are able to identify the noble (*honesta*) with virtue and what is disgraceful (*turpia*) with vice. This 'intelligence' or understanding, «sketched or imperfect» (*inchoata*) is straightforwardly related to the Stoic thesis, attested by Seneca (*Ep.* 49, 11-12; 120, 30), that nature has not given us the concept or knowledge of righteousness, but rather «seeds of that knowledge» (the same idea can be found in Musonius Rufus, *Diss.* II, p. 6, 5 ff.; p. 7, 12 ff. ed. Hense). As suggested by an anonymous reviewer, in Roman philosophy the term *semen* is the original element (starting with Lucretius: *semina rerum* are the atoms). So, maybe Cicero applies a Lucretian (physical) lexicon to an epistemological context.

[12] GRAVER (2007), 149-150.

[13] GRAVER (2007), 175.

[14] GRAVER (2007), 153.

with what is naturally good for us and alienated from what is naturally bad[15]. The prescriptions that come from reason are part of human nature, and it is thanks to those prescriptions that a human being can recognize errors, vindicate virtues and carry out actions in accordance with these virtues. I shall briefly treat the first orientation of the human animal towards self-preservation - which at the beginning of the animal's life can be understood as a selfish feeling, but later can become an 'altruistic' feeling that is directed not only at one's own interest but also at the interest of the others. While discussing the issue of an animal's attachment to itself, I will suggest that this is the first good (both for human and non-human animals); for animals the appropriate path is to pursue primary natural goods that guarantee the preservation of their own constitution. As stated above, even though self-preservation can be taken to be the first good to which a newborn is inclined, that initial good is not yet a moral good, though it is a necessary condition for the correct development of the person, which will foster the correct development of our inclination towards what is appropriate in a moral sense.

My paper proceeds thus: in the next section (2) I contrast the Epicurean and Stoic view regarding what the newborn animal's object of desire is and emphasize the Stoic arguments against pleasure as that to which the just born animal is oriented. At this point I return to Galen's evaluation of the Stoics and show that he endorses the Epicurean view. In treating this, I present the Stoic arguments against Epicureanism as reported by Cicero, Seneca, and Diogenes Laertius to explain the sense in which I take self-preservation to be the first good towards which the human animal is directed. Next (3), I examine the presumably unperverted nature of the newborn before it is corrupted, and insist that the fact that the knowledge the human animal has of what is good in its first stages, even though it is a certain kind of knowledge, cannot qualify as a 'real good' in the sense of what is morally good. I also attempt to make plausible the idea that the animal's good in terms of what is convenient for its preservation and the good in a moral sense are somehow related. In 4 I explain the issue of the «persuasiveness of impressions» and provide some concluding remarks.

2. *The Epicureans and the Stoics on newborn animals' first object of desire*

Cicero (*Fin.* I 29-31) famously reports that, according to the Epicureans, as soon as each animal is born, it seeks pleasure as the highest good (*ut summo bono*) and rejects pain as the greatest evil (*ut summum malum*). The animal does this while it is still uncorrupted (*ipsa natura incorrupte*) and sound. By contrast, the Stoics, probably bearing this Epicurean account in mind, argue that as soon as the animal is born, it strives for its self-preservation. Both Epicureans and Stoics think that at some point nature is perverted. The fact is that, for the most part, human beings live their lives having their nature perverted, since perversion of nature arrives very soon in a person's life. Irrational animals are the only animals that live their lives with their

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[15] See ANNAS (1993), 148.

nature unperverted, and this is so because they have no practical life in the strict sense. In other words, they do not have the sort of life which is supposed to deal with what is bad and good in a moral evaluative sense for a rational being. If a practical life is related to a life where what is bad and good is relevant, non-human animals do not qualify as a type of individual whose nature can be perverted or modified in evaluative terms *vis-a-vis* what is morally incorrect. The basic assumption (both for Epicureans and Stoics) is that nature in its origin always is good and it can be a sort of pattern for what is good and bad.

Turning now to the objection Galen presents against the Stoic tenet that children have no natural inclination to pleasure, we see that he sides with the Epicureans (i.e., their view that the animal, including the human animal, seeks pleasure and avoids pain). Casting doubt on the Stoic view, Galen implies that human nature is not naturally good, thus implicitly opposing the stance that one's (still unperverted) nature can be a pattern of what is good or bad. The Stoic arguments against the Epicurean view that animals have a natural inclination to pleasure and avoidance of pain are well reported by Diogenes Laertius, Seneca, and Hierocles[16]. D.L. VII 85 probably provides the most clear and complete argument, usually ascribed to Chrysippus; at this point, my hunch is that the other Stoics are drawing on Chrysippus' argument (i.e. Musonius, Seneca, Hierocles and Cicero when reporting the Stoic view). In what follows I will present those arguments and contrast them with Galen's view.

The Platonic Eudoxus had already suggested before Epicurus that pleasure is that which, without question, human beings and all other animals pursue[17]. Epicurus went even further: he tried to show that pleasure is the *only* natural end by arguing that newborns, who are still free from any destructive influence of their own nature, direct their first impulse towards pleasure. Therefore, pleasure is not only a starting point, but also a final end[18]. The Stoics, for their part, denied that the *first* natural impulse was towards pleasure, or that pleasure is the final end of human life; the primary impulse of the animal is towards its own self-preservation[19]. Chrysippus' argument runs thus[20]: (*a*) the first thing one is familiarized with is both one's own constitution

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[16] Even Musonius Rufus provides an argument against the view that the first impulse is towards pleasure (*Diss.* XXIV).

[17] See Arist. *EN* X 1, 1172b 9-10 and, before him, Pl. *Phlb.* 11b, when he presents the view of crude hedonism.

[18] On this, see Sextus Empiricus, *PH* III 194 (Usener 398); see also Cic. *Fin.* I 29-31.

[19] A similar idea can be found in Musonius Rufus (*Diss.* XVII, p. 89, 5-8, ed. Hense). But see D.L. VII 148, where several Stoic philosophers (including Chrysippus, Posidonius, Antipater and Boethus) are said to have suggested that nature aims both at what is advantageous and at pleasure (τοῦ συμφέροντος στοχάζεσθαι καὶ ἡδονῆς), and that this is obvious from human artisan activity (ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου δημιουργίας). As LONG-SEDLEY (1987), II, 264-265 observe, there is no other evidence that fully confirms or explains this claim, and with some doubt they suggest interpreting the word ἡδονή as a very general term for «gratification» or «contentment». Although this suggestion sounds attractive, it does not solve the issue.

[20] For the sake of my purpose here, I just present the argument in a very schematic way; for detailed discussion of this passage see INWOOD (1985), 184-194 (who, in my view, provides the clearest discussion

(σύστασις; i.e. physical constitution) and the awareness (συνείδησις) of it. Since nature familiarizes the animal with itself from the beginning of its life, its first impulse is directed towards its own preservation (ἐπὶ τὸ τηρεῖν ἑαυτό). (*b*) Then a teleological explanation is introduced: nature has produced the animal and could have made it (*b.1*) alien to itself, (*b.2*) neither alien to nor familiar with itself, or (*b.3*) familiar with itself. The alternatives (*b.1*) and (*b.2*) are dismissed; in fact, it is not plausible to think that nature, after having produced an animal, would not have provided it with the necessary means for its self-preservation. If so, one might wonder *for which sake* nature produced the animal. Amid the teleological argument positing nature as the cause of familiarization, the objection to the Epicurean thesis is introduced: (*c*) pleasure only appears once nature seeks and obtains what fits the constitution of the animal. This being so, pleasure is only a byproduct (ἐπιγέννημα)[21] and presupposes the familiarization of the living being to itself. The Stoics denied that the initial stage in the development of the animal was a natural impulse towards pleasure because the tendency to self-preservation is prior to pleasure.

Both Cicero and Seneca offer two interesting arguments to show this: before feeling pleasure or pain the newborns (*parvi*) want what provides them a certain welfare and reject the opposite. However, this can only happen if, as a prior fact, the animal is able to appreciate its own condition and fear its destruction. But one cannot desire something unless one has self-awareness, from which it follows that self-awareness is prior to pleasure as the object towards which the animal is oriented (*Fin.* III 16-18, 20; *SVF* III, 182, 189). Indeed, the animal tends toward pleasure at any time, but feeling pleasure for something presupposes having a certain awareness (*sensus*) of oneself.

For his part, Seneca contends that all living beings have a perception of their own condition; that is obvious from the way animals move their limbs «neatly and nimbly just as if they were trained for this» (transl. E. Fantham). No living being moves its own limbs with difficulty; so, since all living creatures do this as soon as they are born, it should be inferred that they 'arrive at the world' endowed with this knowledge (as if they were born trained). Someone might object that animals move their parts neatly

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of the issue). See also ANNAS (1993), 263-267; COOPER (1999), 434-444; KÜHN (2011), 270-279. Interestingly IOPPOLO (2013), 175, notes that if the distortion of reason is a moral-psychological process («un processo psicologico morale»), the representations that arouse passions must have as their object good or evil. From birth, Ioppolo holds, the child associates the concept of good with the representation that comes from healthy and useful things for its preservation. The problem with this view is that newborns do not have concepts yet.

[21] Clement, apparently evoking a Stoic view, points out that «the sensation of pleasure» (τὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς πάθος) is not at all a necessity (καθόλου ... οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον), but «the accompaniment of certain natural needs» (ἐπακολούθημα δὲ χρείαις τισὶ φυσικαῖς), such as hunger, thirst, cold, marriage (this last «natural need» must be taken for granted to beget children; see *Strom.* II 20, 118, 7-119, 3; *SVF* III, 405). Pleasure has been introduced into life as a sort of «auxiliary» (ὑπουργία), but it is neither an activity (ἐνέργεια), nor a disposition (διάθεσις), nor any part of us. The most important philosophical antecedent regarding the fact that pleasure is a certain kind of ἐπιγέννημα is Aristotle, who argues that «pleasure completes the activity not as the inherent state (ὡς ἡ ἕξις ἐνυπάρχουσα) does but as an end which *supervenes*» (ὡς ἐπιγινόμενόν τι τέλος, *EN* X 4, 1174b 32-33, transl. Barnes-Kenny).

because if they moved differently, they would feel pain. This being so, it is fear, not will, what moves them in the right way. Nevertheless, the Stoic takes this to be false, since actions performed by necessity are slow, while the agility demonstrated by animals comes from voluntary movement. Furthermore, animals strive to achieve their natural movement even when pain prevents them. Therefore, it is not fear that guides an animal's movement, but a sort of 'implicit knowledge' that, even in a pre-intellectual sense, allows it to be aware of its parts and functions. It is not the fear of pain that drives the animal because, even when pain is presented as an impediment, the animal strives to develop its natural movement (*Ep.* 121, 5-8). This positively shows, Seneca concludes, that the animal is not primarily pleasure-oriented; in fact, it carries out actions that involve pain (trying to stand, *e.g.*, the infant falls and rises again and again while crying), but it is through pain that the infant manages to achieve a degree of training that implements what its own nature demands of itself (standing up). It is not true, therefore, that the animal is primarily oriented toward pleasure from the beginning of its life: there are cases in which pain can accompany fitting training to perform what is naturally appropriate.

Both Cicero and Seneca clearly favor the priority of the animal's interest in itself, not pleasure; both pleasure and pain stem from familiarization (οἰκείωσις), understood both as a sort of self-preservation and self-recognition. Self-recognition seems to precede pleasure (in several senses: logically, causally and temporally), since before recognizing one's bodily self, one cannot know what gratifies or pleases oneself. Hence pleasure cannot be the primary impulse of the living being because it is something derived and therefore a byproduct.

Such recognition surely starts with the awareness of one's own constitution, which would facilitate control of one's own parts. However, this awareness does not mean that the individual has an intellectual understanding; when one objects to the Stoic view, asking how it is possible for a baby to understand such an intricate question, Seneca replies that what he argues for is not that the newborn understands a definition of its constitution, or that it knows *in conceptual terms* what its physical constitution is, but that it knows its constitution nevertheless. Indeed, an individual can tend towards what is good without being able to conceptualize the *notion* of good. It is a form of 'pre-intellectual understanding' that the animal has of its limbs insofar as it «knows» their functions (*Ep.* 121, 10-12)[22].

3. *The movement from the unperverted to perverted nature*

If Seneca is to be trusted, in its first stages of development the human animal has a «certain kind of knowledge», as it were, such «knowledge» being a cognizance of what is convenient or good for its own survival. It is clear that this good does not qualify as a 'moral good'. Against the Stoics (and in line with the Epicureans) Galen

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[22] Furthermore, probably one should not be so demanding with the Stoics; if Cicero is right, what nature has in fact given us are only the «tiniest sparks of understanding» (*parvulos nobis dedit igniculos*). We are corrupted by our wrongful habits and beliefs (*Tusc.* III 2).

states that all children rush into pleasures and flee from pains untaught. In fact, he contends, they not only become angry, but they also kick and annoy, so young children have emotions and their first impulse is pleasure[23]. This behavior is also noted, Galen remarks, in non-human animals (such as quails, roosters, and «thousands of other animals»). This shows, Galen insists, that children seem to be familiar both with pleasure and victory, and when they grow in age, they have a natural familiarization with what is noble. Thus, Galen's reasoning attempts to make clear that familiarization, even though a natural phenomenon, is posterior to the natural inclination of the newborn to pleasure. As Galen wisely points out, it is true that as children get older, they carry out many actions in accordance with their *concepts* of those virtues (κατὰ τὰς τῶν ἀρετῶν τούτων ἐννοίας). When they were young children, though, they lived immersed in their emotional states, without worrying about the prescriptions that came from reason.

A Stoic, I claim, would have a plausible reply to Galen's reasoning: (i) If Chrysippus and Seneca could answer Galen, they would use the argument they actually employ against the Epicureans to reject the view that the animal's first impulse is aimed at pleasure (it is interesting to note that Galen keeps silent regarding those argumentative devices); (ii) if Galen acknowledges that familiarization is a natural phenomenon, he also should recognize that the inclination to good is natural in a human being. Of course, Galen is very careful to avoid associating familiarization with the issue of self-preservation, which is the core of the Stoic argument in the already commented-on passages by Diogenes Laertius (reporting Chrysippus' view), Cicero and Seneca. But if he accepts that humans can have a *natural* familiarization with what is noble, he needs to explain why this appears when reason manifests itself, not when reason is just a capacity that needs to be activated. Galen can reply that this cannot take place before reason is developed because without rationality there cannot be a concept of just or good. Even admitting this objection, a Stoic, notwithstanding, could say that for the animal to be familiar with itself (that is, for familiarization to take place in the basic, though no less important, sense of self-recognition) it is not necessary to be in possession of developed reason. In fact, this is an important detail in Seneca's argument. The usual objection, Seneca recalls, is that an infant cannot comprehend this complicated matter, and if it were true, all animals should be born (as) logicians (*dialectica nasci oportet*) in order to understand the definition of «constitution» (*ut ... istam finitionem ... intellegant*). Of course, babies cannot understand the definition of their constitution: «Nature is more easily understood than explained» (*Ep.* 121, 11; transl. B. Inwood), However, they can know their constitution insofar as they are aware of it. (iii) The interesting point addressed by Galen is the idea that when children become older and can express themselves better,

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[23] See Gal. *PHP* 316, 28-320, 28 (*SVF* III, 229a). This can be taken as part of Galen's argument against the Stoic view that an emotion is just one's reason disposed in a certain way: since children do not have reason yet (i.e. they do not have developed their reason), and in fact they have emotions, an emotion cannot be reason.

they can perform many actions following their concepts of those virtues. Of course, when children grow up and their rational capacities are developed, they are already capable of conceptualizing what is right and wrong. My point is that, even though the Stoics claim that nature provides us with unperverted starting points, they do not say that we are born having the clear *notion* of what is just or good. That is why it seems reasonable to assume that the first impulse aimed at self-preservation can be taken to be aimed at a certain kind of pre-intellectual good, which is a necessary condition for the person's character formation anyway in the process that eventually can culminate in the correct development of rationality.

The psychological Platonic view endorsed by Galen shows why he was puzzled (ἀπορεῖ) when trying to explain the origin of vice, and was unable to find out how children are wrong (ἁμαρτάνει). This passage (where Posidonius' position about οἰκείωσις is supposed to be presented) is useful to show that Galen's views on moral psychology presuppose the Platonic tripartition of the soul (i.e. a psychology that is alien to the monistic psychology of the older Stoics). In the last three decades or so, several studies have reconsidered the position of Posidonius and have maintained that he did not reject the psychological monism of Chrysippus[24]. This interpretation states that in all sources - *with the exception of Galen* - Posidonius seems to have always been considered an 'orthodox Stoic' in moral psychology. The problem in this case is that Galen is, most likely, the main source for reconstructing Chrysippus' and Posidonius' stances on moral psychology, and what Galen informs us of it is that Chrysippus held a (in his opinion counterintuitive) monist view that does not admit parts in conflict[25]. Indeed, Posidonius thought that Zeno and, above all, Cleanthes defended a psychological model based on the partition of the soul; according to Galen, Cleanthes describes the soul as an entity with two conflicting factors: λογισμός and θυμός[26]. In any case, if Galen would not ascribe to Posidonius a tripartite psychology (which he approves), his objection to Chrysippus regarding the Stoic inability to explain the origin of vice could not be understood.

The Stoic good understood in terms of what is convenient for the living being at the first stage of its life and the good in a moral sense are somehow related: if the human animal is not able to preserve itself, it cannot develop a flourishing life in moral terms. This is the way that the awareness the human animal has works as the very condition to determine any other posterior good. Human rationality, which is a crucial ingredient of human nature, should play a central role in the passage from childhood to adulthood. Interestingly, when one's nature is unperverted, one's reason

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[24] See especially FILLION-LAHILLE (1984), 122-123, 153; GILL (1998) and COOPER (1999), 451-455, 467-468.

[25] In Galen's view, Posidonius endorses a more reasonable tripartite position (see Clem. *Strom.* II 2, 129, 4). Despite the sophisticated arguments offered by the scholars just mentioned, I still believe that Posidonius must have defended a tripartite psychology (if it were not so, the three types of οἰκείωσις distinguished in this passage would not be understandable; maybe the issue can be solved if, as suggested by ISNARDI PARENTE, 1989, 2220, it's just a division of the faculties of the soul, not of its οὐσία).

[26] For a monistic reading of Cleanthes' passage, allow me to refer to BOERI (2005), 392-394.

is still not activated or developed. Thus, one's nature starts being perverted when one's reason begins to be developed. This sounds somewhat odd, but in part depends on the fact that, for a Stoic, having reason does not guarantee that one already has *right* reason. It depends on oneself to develop one's reason in the correct way[27].

4. *The orientation towards what is good and the persuasiveness of impressions.* *Concluding Remarks*

So far, I have argued that, against what Galen seems to assume, the Stoics are not stating that young children already have a *notion* of what is virtuous when asserting that infants have a natural orientation towards the good. Galen is right in pointing out that, as children grow older, they can carry out virtuous actions following their *concepts* of those virtues. Nevertheless, the Stoics do not imply that a newborn is able to do that when they claim that the natural orientation is towards the good. By their nature, young children only have the innate capacity to develop right reason, which will allow them (at some point during their development) to correctly determine what is good. However, according to the Stoics, all humans share a common rational background; if this is so, one could wonder how evaluative concepts could mean different things to different people. Epictetus' account can be helpful here: people need an education, not in order to teach us what is good and bad, but to teach us *to apply* our preconceptions of rational and irrational (and presumably of what is good and bad) to particular cases according to nature (*Diss.* I 2, 5; II 11, 1-11). Such a process of learning to rightly apply (i.e. «according to nature») one's preconception of what is good proves that one's natural orientation towards good is explained by the possession of an innate preconception of what is right[28]. Thus, what the Stoics mean is not that newborns have a real understanding of moral issues, but that until they have refined their cognitive abilities, they will not be able to *conceptually* recognize what is truly good and eventually practice it.

At the outset of this paper I pointed out that the kind of innatism related to natural human inclinations towards good should be understood as a dispositional innateness. Several sources describe the way in which the Stoics explain how a moral concept arises; for the sake of brevity, I will comment on a well-known passage where Cicero

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[27] The distinction between *ratio* and *recta ratio* is also stressed by Cic. *Leg.* I 23 in a supposedly Stoic context, where *recta ratio* becomes the tenet of *lex* (I owe this reference to an anonymous reviewer).

[28] Regarding concept formation, the Stoic empiricism should deny any form of innatism; for the sake of coherence, one might assume, the origin of a concept must be the result of a perceptual impression (for this view, see BOERI-SALLES, 2014, 129-131). The issue of preconceptions in Stoicism and how it can be said that they are «innate» or «inborn» (Plutarch, *De stoic. rep.* 1041e-1042a; *SVF* III, 69: ἔμφυτοι προλήψεις) has been widely discussed. In his pioneering book on Epictetus, BONHÖFFER (1890), 193-203, attempted to show that the Stoic preconceptions do not depend on perceptual experience, since they are limited to practical concepts. SANDBACH (1971), 22-23, 35 n. 12, challenges Bonhöffer's view by showing some textual evidence that indicates that *any* concept depends on experience (in favor of Bonhöffer's interpretation see HADOT, 2014, 10-11, 17, who draws on M. JACKSON-McCABE, 2004). For a fresh discussion of the topic, see SCOTT (1995), 202-204, who defends a dispositional approach to Stoic innatism.

reports the Stoic account about concept formation (*Fin.* III 33-34), emphasizing that our concept of good arises by a sort of rational inference. In the context, this is explained by stating that our mind 'ascends' from the things according to nature to the notion of good. Now if in order to reach the notion of good, we need a rational inference, the awareness of the concept of good should be posterior in the human animal's development, but that does not prevent the person from (i) having an inclination to the first appropriate thing (self-preservation, which can be taken to be a certain 'good' as well) and (ii) having such inclination somehow due to the preconception of good, which is a notion implanted in the person by nature. Hence, at the initial state of life, one does not need to perform actions following one's *concept* of what is good (further, the Stoics do not think that newborns 'perform actions' in the strict sense: insofar as their reason is not developed yet, their condition is not different from irrational animals, in which there is not yet a distinction between good and bad). An implicit assumption of the whole discussion is that human beings are constitutively 'attracted' to the good, which does not mean that every human being will be a good person from the beginning (or even after the person has achieved complete rational development)[29]. Thus, the fact that one is constitutively attracted to the good does not mean that one will carry out good actions immediately after one is born; human beings, by the mere fact of being humans, have the *capacity* to theoretically identify what is good (when their rationality is mature), to distinguish it from evil, and eventually to apply what the agent takes to be good to action[30].

My final point focuses on «the persuasiveness of impressions», the second cause of perversion of one's nature according to Chrysippus. I propose to explain the expression by resorting to Epictetus, who cites it (*Diss.* II 22, 6: ταράττῃ ... αἱ πιθανότητες αὐτῶν) probably with Chrysippus in mind. According to Epictetus, the third area of study that philosophy deals with concerns assent (*Diss.* III 2, 2), and while stating that we ought not to accept an impression (which is related to the things which are persuasive and attractive: τὰ πιθανὰ καὶ ἑλκυστικά, III 12, 14) without examination, he evokes the psychology of action, according to which the assent to a certain kind of impression (impulsive impression) produces an impulse which culminates in action[31]. What Epictetus recommends is that one should avoid precipitancy while giving assent. However, the fool is incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, since by incorrectly using his impressions and incorrectly

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[29] The first and most obvious attraction experienced by the human animal is the instinctive attraction in the first stage of its development (self-preservation, a kind of attraction which takes care of one's condition as a psychophysical organism; on this see GILL, 2006, 130).

[30] Once more, Epictetus is helpful to better comprehend this approach: he stresses that the good is something innate, and suggests that when there is a «clear impression (or appearance) of the good» (ἀγαθοῦ φαντασίαν ἐναργῆ, *Diss.* III 3, 4), the agent cannot do anything else than give his assent, which means to assent to the propositional content of the «clear impression of the good».

[31] See Stob. II 7, 9 (*SVF* III, 169, 171, 173); on 'impulsive impression' as the sort of impression whose assent gives rise to an impulse and action cf. also Origen, *De principiis* III 1, 2, 11-12, and Epictetus, *Diss.* I 1, 12, 2; 21, 2; III 8, 4.

distinguishing between them, he is disturbed and overcome by false impressions and by their persuasiveness. The immediate effect is that the agent first believes that *x* is good, then that the same *x* is bad, and later that it is neither the one nor the other (*Diss.* II 22, 6; 25)[32]. Whoever has his cognitive abilities properly trained, on the other hand, will have his character well-disposed and will notice that the good is his own choice (or «volition»: προαίρεσις) correctly disposed (*Diss.* I 8, 16; 29, 1). One will have a good life only if one makes correct use of his impressions (a theme on which Epictetus frequently insists)[33], which is dependent on the agent. Humans cannot remove impressions (φαντασίαι), but adult human beings can critically examine them, so as to reject those that have not passed the examination of (right) reason. Epictetus insists that nature has endowed us with reason to use our impressions correctly, which is nothing more than to examine and distinguish between them, and not accept any that has not been examined (*Diss.* I 20, 5-8). External things (τὰ ἐκτός) are the materials of our choice, and the only way by which the choice will attain what is truly good is not to have a special consideration for such materials: if one's own beliefs (δόγματα) regarding them are correct, they will make our choice good; if perverse or distorted, they will make it evil (*Diss.* I 29, 2-4). Ultimately, individual responsibility lies not in impressions, but in the correct use each of us makes of them.

Finally, if a fool is ignorant, what can be done to be aware of, and eventually reverse, that ignorance? If the peculiar task of the good person is to deal properly with impressions (i.e. to do what is «according to nature»; *Diss.* III 3, 1) and if one chooses the correct course of action when doing so, whoever makes correct use of impressions must already be wise. If this is not the case, one should think that the agent's own evaluation of an impression would necessarily be incorrect. However, when something good appears to a person, said good immediately activates the soul towards it, while when evil appears, the soul moves away from it, because «a soul will never reject a clear impression of good» (*Diss.* III 3, 4; transl. R. Hard). But, whose soul? If Epictetus is thinking of the wise person, there is no problem; but if he thinks that this also occurs in the fool's soul, the account seems implausible. No doubt, one needs to have true beliefs in order to be able not to reject a clear impression of good. Perhaps Epictetus is only pointing out the natural disposition that rational beings have towards good insofar as all rational beings are born with an 'implanted' conception of good and evil (*Diss.* II 11, 3-4), hence the agent will be completely rational when she is able

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[32] This is reminiscent of Medea, Chrysippus' favorite example to account for the weakness of character. On this see Gal. *PHP* IV 5, 270, 10-24; 272, 9-274, 26 (*SVF* III, 473); his purpose is to show that Chrysippus contradicts himself when he argues that emotions are judgments, for at the same time he accepts that although Menelaus had formed his judgement to kill Helena and drew his sword to do so, when he approached her, moved by her beauty and «because of the absence of tension and the weakness of his soul», he not only got rid of his sword, but kissed the woman and put himself in her hands. If this is so, Galen concludes, Chrysippus accepts the existence of a psychological conflict.

[33] See *Diss.* I 1, 7; 12; I 6, 13. Even 'the essence' of the good and the evil depends on the (correct) use of impressions (II 1, 4). For discussion, see LONG (2002), 85, 214-217.

to recognize what is good, at the theoretical level, and to act well at the practical one. Thus, there is an essential relationship between good as an object of impulse and good as an object of knowledge; but the impression of a real good, not of an apparent good, is the only one capable of setting in motion the correct impulse (which the agent translates into a virtuous action). That is why in the virtuous agent what is good and right reason coincide.

To Galen's question as to why «pleasure projects a persuasive impression as if it were good, and pain a persuasive impression as if it were an evil» (Gal. *PHP* V 5, 320, 18-19), Chrysippus could reply that, although pleasure *appears* to be good, the soul of the virtuous agent will never find such an appearance persuasive enough as to give assent[34].

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[34] As Jula Wildberger pointed out to me, the sage never assents to persuasive impressions, only to cognitive impressions. I say 'persuasive' in a very general way to stress that the supposedly 'persuasive character' of a φαντασία derived from pleasure is something misleading (related to the seductive character associated with pleasure), and that the sage realizes that.

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The Year of the Four Emperors.
Axiological Confusion in Tacitus' *Histories*

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Abstract

This paper deals with axiological confusion as seen in Tacitus' *Histories*. Through the analysis of different cases in the historical narrative, it demonstrates Tacitus' explanation of how emperors, generals or soldiers were brought to a state in which they were no longer able to discern what was good or bad for them. Tacitus saw fear and the uncertainty characteristic of the civil wars of AD 69 as originating a particular spiral of disloyalty and betrayal which accounted for the confusion in the agents' moral judgement. By interspersing his narrative with outstanding examples of the virtues that counteracted the vices responsible for impairing correct moral reasoning, Tacitus showed models of conduct who managed to overcome the confusion and worked both for their own good and that of Rome.

Keywords: Tacitus, *Histories*, civil wars, fear, betrayal, *fides*, *constantia*

Resumen

Este trabajo trata sobre la confusión axiológica en las *Historias* de Tácito. A través del análisis de diferentes casos de la narrativa histórica, se busca demostrar cómo el historiador explica la manera en que emperadores, generales o soldados se encontraron en situaciones donde no fueron capaces de discernir lo que era bueno o malo para ellos. Para Tácito habría sido el miedo y la incertidumbre propios de las guerras civiles del año 69 d.C. lo que había originado una espiral específica de deslealtad y de traición que explicaría la confusión en el juicio moral de los agentes. Al intercalar ejemplos excepcionales de las virtudes que contrarrestan los vicios que alteran un razonamiento moral adecuado, Tácito prueba la presencia de modelos de conducta que consiguieron vencer la confusión y trabajar para su propio bien y el de Roma.

Palabras clave: Tácito, *Historias*, guerras civiles, miedo, traición, *fides*, *constantia*

Introduction

In the year 44 BC Cicero wrote his *De Officiis* in the form of a letter to his son - though also intended for a wider audience - consisting of a treatise on the topic of the moral duties that a good Roman should observe in order to live in the best way. The influence of the Stoic philosopher Panaetius is particularly obvious and important in the first and second books (cf. Cic. *Off.* I 6-7), while the third shows more strongly

the independence of Cicero's own moral thinking[1]. In any case, Cicero's lessons on morality perfectly blend the traditional Roman code of conduct with Stoic ethical principles[2]. As such, the work presents an idealized picture of how to behave, and the examples are clear-cut, with little room for confusion or moral ambiguity (cf. Cic. *Off.* I 4).

In the third book, Cicero discusses specifically the conflict between what is right (*honestum*) and what is expedient or beneficial (*utile*), and argues that one must try to maintain a difficult balance between moral principles on the one hand, and doing everything in one's power to serve oneself, one's own cause or the community on the other. Cicero maintains that the sometimes opposing categories of honest actions on the one hand, and beneficial actions on the other, are in some sense identical: «but for all cases we have one rule, with which I desire you to be perfectly familiar: that which seems expedient must not be morally wrong; or, if it is morally wrong, it must not seem expedient»[3]. He expands on this, explaining how to make a choice when conflicting values each present themselves as the highest good, and shows how it is only an apparent conflict, as nothing will be truly expedient that is not at the same time morally right, and vice versa.

Several years after *De Officiis*, the Roman historian Tacitus follows a different path from Cicero. Rather than theorizing about how the right action is to be chosen, he examines the historical period that he is writing about and narrates situations where men have been placed in difficult circumstances and have had to make important moral choices. Through the narration of historical events, the historian's goal is not only to illustrate how things happened, but also to explain *why* they happened. Like other Roman historians, Tacitus aims particularly at explaining, interpreting and understanding the past; he seeks to provide the reader with an account not only of the processes of how the decisions were taken, but also of their contexts and, more significantly, the emotional state of the people involved in taking those decisions. The historical narrative appears to be a particularly apt means to illustrate how axiological confusion happens in the real world.

In his *Histories*[4], for example, Tacitus depicts several cases where, for different reasons, people were not able to discern properly what was good or bad for them, and

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[1] For *De Officiis*, see for example, GRIFFIN-ATKINS (1991), DYCK (1996) and more recently NEWTON (2016).

[2] For an account of the Stoic philosophical principles on this topic, see for example, M. Boeri, R. Brouwer, C. Veillard and G. Zago in this volume.

[3] Cic. *Off.* III 81: *Sed omnium una regula est, quam tibi cupio esse notissimam: aut illud, quod utile videtur, turpe ne sit, aut si turpe est, ne videatur esse utile.* For a more detailed analysis of this particular passage, see REMER (2009), 1-29. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are taken from the Loeb editions with some modifications.

[4] The *Histories* of Tacitus is his first major historical narrative - the other one is the *Annals* - written after the three works that are commonly known as *opera minora*: *Agricola*, *Germania* and the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*. The *Histories* start narrating the events from 1st January AD 69 and is believed to have continued up to the death of Domitian in AD 96. Only Books I to IV survive in complete form, and part of Book V.

chose to do wrong thinking that it was right. Axiological confusion is shown especially clearly in the *Histories* because its action takes place during a «period rich in disasters, terrible with battles, torn by civil struggles, horrible even in peace»[5]. For the historian, it is a time of perplexity, misunderstanding and chaos in general, which produced such a confused state of affairs as to result in the cognitive impairment of the agents, preventing them from thinking clearly when deciding on a course of action. Among the evils of the age, Tacitus saw something particularly wrong about civil war; it appeared to involve a certain corruption from its origin, that added disorientation and bewilderment to the already bleak situation: «slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those who had no enemy were crushed by their friends»[6].

One of the main goals of this paper is to show how axiological confusion worked in practice with emperors, soldiers, or people in general, through the historical narrative of one of the acutest Roman historians. The specific period that the first books of the *Histories* narrate, the civil wars of AD 69, provide a particularly rich and contrasting setting for this confusion. Even though Rome had undergone other serious crises in her political history, what seemed novel in the crisis that arose after Nero's death was the coming together of so many negative factors: weak and inept emperors ruled, bad and self-centred generals had to control undisciplined and rebellious armies, foreign wars had to be fought in remote parts of the Empire, feeble and inactive magistrates and senators had to govern over the different factions that divided the city. Tacitus seems particularly keen to highlight the generalized state of confusion and distrust at all levels of society, the widespread weakness in people that brought out the worst in them[7].

In what follows, I will deal, in the first place, with the characteristics or conditions present in Tacitus' narrative that caused confusion in the moral judgement of the actors, seen specifically in Galba's betrayal and assassination. Secondly, I will look at how Tacitus considers the successive treasons of different commanders under the emperor Vitellius. In the final part of the paper, I suggest that, besides depicting axiological confusion abundantly in the *Histories*, Tacitus also presents significant examples of the qualities that could counteract the fear and mistrust which seemed to overwhelm Romans at that time.

<div align="center">I</div>

According to Tacitus, the chaotic situation at Rome during what has been called 'the year of the four emperors'[8] appeared to have been seriously aggravated by the

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[5] Tac. *Hist.* I 2: *opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum.*
[6] Tac. *Hist.* I 2: *corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus per amicos oppressi.*
[7] See, for example, Tac. *Hist.* I 88.
[8] Cf. GREENHALGH (1975); WELLESLEY (1975); MORGAN (2006); COSME (2012).

omnipresence of fear. In itself, this does not seem particularly novel. As David Levene puts it, «[f]or the Roman historians, no passion is more prominent than fear. Fear for them is perhaps the single most important influence on the behavior of individuals and states»[9]. Tacitus seems, therefore, to be following a certain tradition, and in the *Histories*, fear (*metus*) appears mainly as the negative emotion in response to danger or threat[10]. What is not depicted is the kind of healthy fear that helps one survive, for example, or that prevents rash actions. The fear that Tacitus talks about in the *Histories* is usually an extreme, even paralysing, fear; the kind that darkens judgement[11]. There is fear in the people and in the armies; the senators, the generals and even the emperors themselves are said to have felt fear, so the historian expands the vocabulary to suit his purposes from *metus* to *formido*, to *pavor* and *terror*[12].

Although some of the manifestations of fear are physiological, Tacitus is more concerned with showing how it can activate particular behaviors or even cloud the reasoning of the intellect, and he presents it as working in several ways. In the first place, fear seems to have been an important feature during the Principate, especially because of its connection with *adulatio* (submissive flattery). This became almost a standard characteristic of politicians, whose fear of the powerful led them to unrestrained flattery (as Tacitus himself often says in this work)[13]. Furthermore, fear, expressed through adulation, was also particularly significant because of its profound relationship with *servitus* (servitude), as fear could - and did - take away the freedom to act honorably[14]. *Servitus* out of fear added to the lack of *libertas*, characteristic of the rule of the emperors (cf. Tac. *Agr.* 3, 1), resulting in a «passionate love for servitude», as Tacitus notes[15].

But above all, fear became a serious political feature which not only transformed Romans' relationships with one another, but also conditioned the development of events in the political, military and social spheres. Fear in Tacitus' *Histories* became a means - and an important one - of interaction between the emperor and his people, the generals and their armies, the leaders and the mob. Extreme fear resulted in complicated actions that destabilized the dynamics of the Roman political system. In

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[9] LEVENE (1997), 128.

[10] Though in itself it need not be seen as necessarily a bad one, cf. Arist. *EN* III 7, 1115b 17-29 and also Sall. *Jug.* 41-42 with the idea of fear of the enemy (*metus hostilis*).

[11] For the topic of fear in the works of Tacitus, see, for example: HEINZ (1975); CARDAUNS (1981); MASTELLONE IOVANE (1989); CONDE (1991); MORGAN (1994b); LEVENE (1997); ZUCCARELLI (1999). For fear in ancient historiography in general, see for example, KNEPPE (1994); MARINCOLA (2003) and KAPUST (2008).

[12] It is remarkable to see how many times Tacitus uses fear-related words. In Book I alone, there are 22 instances of words related with *metus*; 11 with *formido*; 10 with *pavor*; 9 with *terror*; 9 with *trepido* and 4 with *timor*.

[13] See, for example, at the beginning of the *Histories* I 1, where Tacitus talks about historians during the Principate who disregarded the truth «because of their passionate desire to flatter» (*libidine adsentandi*). See also I 32: «they acted according the traditional custom of flattering the emperor» (*tradito more quemcumque principem adulandi*); or I 47; I 74; I 90. Cf. KAPUST (2009).

[14] For flattery, see KAPUST (2018).

[15] Tac. *Hist.* I 90: *libidine servitii.* A similar claim appears in *Ann.* I 1; III 65.

Tacitus' account, fear is seen not only as deterring people from a particular course of action, but also as triggering and motivating ignoble actions - fear as cause; and there were certain occasions when fear was even the outcome of some reactions and events, decisions or behaviors - fear as result[16].

It is in this *metus* in the context of civil wars that Tacitus locates the height of the axiological confusion which emperors, soldiers and the people experienced, and which, in a kind of spiral, escalated to unprecedented levels. However, that was not all. For him, this fear or *metus* felt by the characters in the *Histories*, that was intimately related to adulation and servility towards the powerful, was also capable of corrupting the most basic trait of human relationships: loyalty. It turned enmities and friendships upside down.

The virtue of loyalty (*fides*) appears particularly tricky to follow and trace in times of civil wars. According to Tacitus, to fear, adulation and servitude, were necessarily added suspicion, mistrust and betrayal. Disloyalty, therefore, is a paramount element that becomes entangled in the vicious spiral of fear. The soldiers, the people, even important generals change sides according to the emotions of the day. Through his narrative, Tacitus shows how, most of the time, *fides* becomes meaningless when allegiances shift so quickly: if one had betrayed Galba, was it more honourable to be loyal to an Otho or a Vitellius? Was it honourable or even expedient for Vespasian to encourage Othonians or Vitellians to transfer their *fides* to his own cause? Expediency mingles with fear and the result is betrayal. In Tacitus' *Histories*, *metus* corrupts *fides* among Romans - especially in commanders and the army - in a crescendo which almost necessarily ends in the axiological confusion of individuals.

Right at the beginning of the *Histories*, while Tacitus announces the subject-matter of his work, he also prepares the reader to encounter terrible things[17]. He presents the panorama of a «world that has been shaken to its foundations»[18], and the description of the general political chaos goes on with extraordinary precision, until the people fell prey to such confusion that things that were traditionally seen as good started to be perceived as threats or even as decidedly evil: «high birth, wealth, the refusal or the acceptance of office, all gave ground for accusations, and virtues caused the surest ruin»[19]. By saying that virtues - the customary means to achieve glory and honour by Roman standards - caused destruction and annihilation, Tacitus declares that something was radically wrong. The violence of the struggle and fierce

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[16] Some of these ideas have been explored in BALMACEDA (2017), 182-183, but from a different angle.

[17] Tac. *Hist.* I 2: *Opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum. Quattuor principes ferro interempti: trina bella civilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta.* See DAMON (2003), *comm ad loc.*, who suggests that Tacitus omits the positive and exaggerates the negative. For disaster narrative in Tacitus, see KEITEL (2010).

[18] Tac. *Hist.* I 16: *in hoc concussi orbis motu.*

[19] Tac. *Hist.* I 2: *nobilitas, opes, omissi gestique honores pro crimine et ob virtutes certissimum exitium.*

competition of the would-be emperors and their undisciplined supporting armies would not end till they reached exhaustion and self-annihilation.

The case of the emperor Galba (3 BC - AD 69), for example, who succeeds Nero in AD 68, clearly illustrates how some good qualities under the rule of fear are a mark for destruction. Servius Sulpicius Galba was probably the most illustrious Roman with regard to the nobility of his family, wealth and his achievements[20]. In Tacitus' account, Galba's display of amiability (*facilitas*) towards his friends (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 12); his moderation (*moderatio*) when governing Africa (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 49), and uprightness (*iustitia*) as a proconsul of Hither Spain (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 49), seemed to qualify him - at least at first sight - to become *princeps*. Besides, according to Tacitus, even in moments of great stress - such as the (mistaken) announcement of Otho's death - Galba demonstrated strength and equanimity: «he showed a remarkable spirit in checking licence on the part of the soldiers; before threats he was unterrified, and incorruptible against flattery» (*insigni animo ad coercendam militarem licentiam, minantibus intrepidus, adversus blandientis incorruptus*, Tac. *Hist.* I 35).

But, as Tacitus will show, all of these virtues did not seem to count for much, and they could not prevent Galba's fall. On the contrary, the emperor's *severitas* (severity) and *vetera disciplina* (old-fashioned rigor)[21] proved dangerous to his and Rome's safety because, as Tacitus indicates, the Romans could not endure them anymore[22]. For Tacitus, Galba, in fact, proved inadequate[23]: he exercised no prudence in the practice of traits which could have been good qualities, but which failed to adjust to the times. His lack of *moderatio* in the application of *disciplina* became something very near to cruelty, and his proverbial *avaritia* in not giving the customary donative to the soldiers certainly helped to ruin his reputation; to which problems were added that he was weak and old (*invalidum senem*)[24]. Furthermore, Tacitus adds that on certain occasions Galba had also shown a disgraceful lack of firmness (*foeda inconstantia*)[25], and weakness of character (*mobilitate ingenii*), which resulted in great harm for Rome and the emperor himself: the rise of powerful freedmen, the greed of slaves, discreditable nominations for office, and a city for sale (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 7).

Galba's failures to adapt to the mood of the times, especially his strictness and stinginess[26], were also combined with the growing discontent of the urban troops, and the fear provoked by his bloody march and entry into the city of Rome, accompanied

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[20] The other sources coincide in this with Tacitus, cf. Suet. *Galb.* 2-8; Plut. *Galb.* 3; 29; and D.C. LXIII 23. See also WELLESLEY (1975), 1-33; SOCHAT (1981a); SYME (1982); MURISON (1993), 31.

[21] For references to Galba's stinginess and severity see, for example, Plut. *Galb.* 3; 15; 18; 22; Suet. *Galb.* 6; 12; 14; 17; D.C. LXIV 2-3.

[22] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 5. See also at Tac. *Hist.* I 18: *nocuit antiquus rigor et nimia severitas, cui iam pares non sumus.*

[23] His obituary in I 49 makes this evident: *ipsi medium ingenium, magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus* [...] *maior privato visus dum privatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset.*

[24] Tac. *Hist.* I 6. For other references to Galba's old age, see I 5; I 7; I 12; I 49.

[25] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 19, when appointing ambassadors.

[26] See note 21 above.

by arbitrary executions, and the massacre of unarmed soldiers[27]. According to Tacitus, this created the perfect mix to provoke sedition and revolt: fear degenerated into hatred that, with the proper encouragement, moved the praetorians to acclaim Otho as emperor and support him in his plan to get rid of Galba[28]. To these circumstances must be added Otho's fierce resentment, for Galba had not adopted him but preferred Piso as heir to the throne; and the unrest of the city soldiers, who had not received their promised donative and were apprehensive about their worsening conditions of service[29].

It is difficult to explain what follows next because the situation became more and more confused until the actors seemed out of control, losing the ability to judge whether what they were doing was right or wrong. Tacitus' very detailed description lasts for several chapters[30]. Disloyalty spread like a contagion among the legions (*infecit ea tabes legionum*), who were both terrified of death and at the same time bold enough to dare the foulest of crimes: killing their emperor (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 26-28). It was fear together with greed that made the soldiers act in this way: the sight of an old emperor allowing his subordinates to practice indiscriminate cruel behavior, and his refusal to pay them their customary donative, made them fear for their own future. Fear worked as the *causa* of their forgetting their duty and loyalty: they rebelled. But the result of the action caused by fear was also fear: fear as *finis*. The soldiers' sedition, the fact that some had acclaimed a new emperor when the old one was still alive, made them even more afraid of the consequences of their actions[31]. They did not know what the best course was now: they had betrayed their loyalty to Galba by breaking their *sacramentum*[32], some placing themselves on the side of the traitor in the city, Otho, and some acclaiming a new head abroad, Vitellius[33]. According to Tacitus, city soldiers and legionaries, supporters and contestants were left at the mercy of whatever may occur by chance and without any warning, and therefore rash judgements and frenzied actions were highly likely (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 31).

There was a state of uncertainty in the city, «Rome was in a state of excitement and horror-stricken»[34], which was increased by rumors coming from different places. Tacitus explains how in civil wars, different groups on the same side often fight for

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[27] Marines enrolled by Nero who met Galba with demands as he entered Rome. For the massacre of unarmed soldiers in Galba's march towards Rome, see Tac. *Hist.* I 5; Suet. *Galb.* 12, 1 with DAMON (2003) *comm ad loc.*

[28] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 6. Cf. also Suet. *Galb.* 11-12; Plut. *Galb.* 15, 4; and DAMON (2003), 106-110.

[29] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 5-8. For MURISON (1993), 60, Galba's behavior, especially towards the praetorians, was «utterly foolish».

[30] For Galba's death in other sources, see Suet. *Galb.* 19-20; Plut. *Galb.* 26-27; D.C. LXIV 7, 4.

[31] Twenty-three soldiers from the Bodyguard saluted Otho as emperor on 15th January. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 27.

[32] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 12; 51. *Sacramentum*: literally means 'oath', in this case, the military oath or *sacramentum militare* was the oath taken by the soldiers swearing their loyalty to the emperor, cf. Veg. *Mil.* II 5. See also ASH (2009), 90-91.

[33] Vitellius was made head of the army in Lower Germany, cf. D.C. LXIII 4; Tac. *Hist.* I 18-19.

[34] Tac. *Hist.* I 50: *Trepidam urbem ac simul atrocitatem recentis sceleris.*

different reasons, so that a single cause can conceal a whole range of varied motives. Even the process of declaring war tends to be less organized than in a foreign conflict, where an individual does not have to choose sides. As Ash puts it, «escalation, rather than a deliberate declaration of war, typifies civil conflict, which makes untangling the moral issues particularly challenging»[35]. It was total confusion. Otho himself did not even know whether he was still a private citizen (*privatus*) or the emperor (*imperator populi Romani*), or even a public enemy (*hostis*)[36]. And people in the city held loyalty cheap; for them, unstable governments meant that fear and flattery became general practice, and the more endemic they became, the greater was the danger, because it affected everyone (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 33; 36).

A distinctive characteristic of both fear and civil war, that can increase axiological confusion in the agents, is the corruption of language. Thucydides had expressed this long before Tacitus. The passage on *stasis* at Corcyra is a classic example of Thucydides showing that civil war and the devaluation of language mutually reinforced one another: «they exchanged their usual evaluations of deeds for new ones, in the light of what they now thought justified»[37]. Subversion of political vocabulary was something that Thucydides had denounced as an inevitable feature of internal political struggle, and Sallust would pick this up in his presentation of decline: «in very truth we have long since lost the true names for things»[38]. Remarkably, Tacitus has Otho accusing Galba of corrupting language or changing the customary meaning of words: «For what other men call crimes he [Galba] calls 'remedies', falsely naming cruelty 'strictness', avarice 'frugality'; the punishment and insults you suffer, 'discipline'»[39].

Obviously corruption of language leads to confusion, and if the terms in question are value words - such as the virtues and vices that Tacitus indicated through Otho's mouth - this will give rise to axiological confusion. Ugly and disgraceful actions like cruelty, avarice or torture need to be labeled with positive-sounding words taken from the traditional canon of Roman virtues: *severitas, parsimonia, disciplina*. Words and language are the means that sustain communication in society; if words become corrupted, the life of society will not remain unaffected. Otho accuses Galba of reshaping the evaluation of what is considered cruelty or insults; thus he will unconsciously start changing the grounds on which he operates and, in the end, his conduct. Words can not only create realities, but also shift standards of behavior, producing confusion and misperception towards good and evil.

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[35] Ash (1999), 2.

[36] Tac. *Hist.* I 37. For Tacitus on Otho, see Stolte (1973); Sochat (1981b); Keitel (1984); Perkins (1993); for Otho in general, Wellesley (1975); Morgan (2006); Roche (2008); Charles-Anagnostou-Laoutides (2014).

[37] Th. III 82, 4: καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιώσει. Wilson's translation in (1982), 18-20. Cf. also Swain (1993).

[38] In Cato's speech at the Senate, *Cat.* 52, 11: *iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus.* For more corruption of language in Sallust, see *Hist.* I 55, 24; III 48, 12-13.

[39] Tac. *Hist.* I 37: *Nam quae alii scelera, hic remedia vocat, dum falsis nominibus severitatem pro saevitia, parsimoniam pro avaritia, supplicia et contumelias vestras disciplinam appellat.* For the corruption of language in Thucydides, Sallust and Tacitus, see Spielberg (2017).

In Tacitus' account, Galba was responsible for inspiring fear and discontent not only in the soldiers, but also in the people, and therefore he was accountable for creating the climate for confusion to arise. Soldiers and civilians became so confused that the former betrayed and killed their old emperor; the latter insulted him and flattered the newly-acclaimed one, not knowing what was best for them. In the events of January AD 69 narrated by Tacitus, fear, anger, resentment were emotions that confused and clouded the intellect's ability to choose right over wrong. The historian does not accuse Galba of acting out of these emotions, but he holds the emperor accountable for having awoken them in others. The confusion created extends to Tacitus' final ambiguous and almost contradictory judgment on Galba's person and his government: «his own character was mediocre, rather free from vices than rich in virtues [...] when he was a commoner he was too big for his station: the universal view was that he had the qualifications to be a ruler - if only he had not ruled»[40].

II

Even though fear and the lack of *fides* (*perfidia*) appear as paramount for Tacitus in explaining the confusion and chaos in which the different scenarios of the empire were immersed in AD 69, it was not always possible even to define whether some individuals were in fact loyal or disloyal to their cause[41]. The confusion of the times provided no clear panorama, and commanders did not commit themselves to one cause lest it proved inexpedient. «There were many desertions, as is always the case in civil wars»[42].

Throughout Tacitus' narrative, ambiguous or wavering behaviors are seen in leaders and generals who, according to the historian, should have behaved otherwise and followed superior motives. This «failure of leadership» has even been offered as an explanation for the three successive civil wars[43]. And it is in the Vitellian faction where Tacitus portrays this failure more prominently, with several important generals betraying their emperor. Even though Tacitus undoubtedly considered it a good thing that Vitellius was vanquished, that did not mean that those who switched their allegiance to Vespasian should be praised, because they had twice committed treason towards their emperors, first Galba and then Vitellius[44]. Among these commanders, we find Vitellius' principal aide: Caecina.

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[40] Tac. *Hist.* I 49, quoted above n. 23.
[41] For *perfidia*, see I 51; II 27; II 60; II 99-100; III 4; III 9; III 12; III 31; III 46; III 57; III 61-62; III 70; III 86.
[42] Tac. *Hist.* I 34: *crebris, ut in civili bello, transfugiis*. See also II 75: *fluxam per discordias militum fidem*.
[43] Cf. MASTER (2012), 85.
[44] Tac. *Hist.* III 86: *rei publicae haud dubie intererat Vitellium vinci, sed imputare perfidiam non possunt qui Vitellium Vespasiano prodidere, cum a Galba descivissent.* See YAVETZ (1969).

A. Caecina Alienus is described by Tacitus as a handsome young man of great ambition, who had won over the legions he was in charge of by his skillful oratory[45]. He had supported Galba after Nero's death, but had afterwards joined Vitellius' army in Germany and, together with Fabius Valens - his colleague and, later, rival - had defeated Otho's troops at Bedriacum. Tacitus records that Valens claimed to have saved Caecina's life - and perhaps boasted too much - and enjoyed the fervent support of the legions of the Lower Germany, hinting that this may have been the reason why Caecina's loyalty to Vitellius started to waver (cf. Tac. *Hist.* II 93). However, a couple of chapters later the historian suggests different theories for Caecina's change, not actually endorsing any one of them. Tacitus mentions Caecina's old ambition (*ambitio vetus*) and newly acquired indolence (*torpor recens*) which, together with the memory of his hatred and jealousy (*odiorum invidiaeque*) for Valens as Vitellius' favorite, may have moved him «to acquire credit and influence with a new emperor» (Tac. *Hist.* II 99, i.e. Vespasian).

In spite of having different characters and temperaments, during the campaign to put Vitellius on the throne Valens and Caecina had previously worked together, overcoming their apparent rivalry and suspicion: «they laid aside their hatred and devoted themselves to the common interest»[46]. They had won the decisive first battle of Bedriacum and made progress together on their march towards Rome. Tacitus explains that when jealousy and fear of losing the first place in Vitellius' favor took hold of Caecina, he decided to change sides to the Flavians and abandon Vitellius. Furthermore, he used all his resources to undermine his own legions' loyalty to the emperor (cf. Tac. *Hist.* II 101). The axiological confusion here is evident: when *fides* is corrupted - and Tacitus talks of *vilem fidem* (worthless loyalty, Tac. *Hist.* II 101) - there are no longer any clear signposts to the right course of action. Instead of collaboration with comrades for the benefit of the *res publica*, times of civil war subverted ideals into zeal for one's own expediency and advancement, obliterating the honorable path. Caecina had first transferred his loyalty from Galba to Vitellius, then from Vitellius to Vespasian, but it seemed that he could not remain loyal to anyone. In AD 79 he was accused of conspiring with Eprius Marcellus against the emperor Vespasian and was murdered at a dinner party on Titus' orders (cf. Suet. *Tit.* 6, 2 and D.C. LXIV 16, 3). Caecina's disloyalty proved self-destructive.

Caecina's betrayal is narrated in some detail, as he was one of the two commanders-in-chief of the Vitellian forces, but he was not the only important general who deserted Vitellius. Sextus Lucilius Bassus had been promoted by Vitellius from prefect of the cavalry to commander of the fleets at Ravenna and Misenum, but according to Tacitus it was his disappointment at not being immediately (*non statim*) chosen as prefect of the Praetorian Guard that set in motion his treacherous plan to

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[45] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 53, a very different description from the one found in Plut. *Otho* 6, 3: «Caecina had neither the speech nor the outward appearance of a Roman citizen, but was offensive and strange, a man of huge stature.»

[46] Tac. *Hist.* II 30: *sed condito odio eandem utilitatem fovere.*

betray his emperor[47]. The historian's words leave no doubt of the shame and guilt he attributes to Bassus' conduct in «taking the revenge of his unjust resentment with disgraceful treachery» (*iniquam iracundiam flagitiosa perfidia ulciscebatur*, Tac. *Hist.* II 100). Bassus' treason brought about the revolt of the fleet and their change to Vespasian's side (cf. Tac. *Hist.* III 12). As with Caecina, Tacitus implies that Bassus also took an active part in corrupting the fleet which, having previously served Otho, were not too reluctant to rebel (cf. Tac. *Hist.* II 101). Bassus himself was temporarily taken prisoner, but soon set free. He was later appointed governor of the province of Judaea in AD 71, and died a year or two after that (cf. Joseph. *BJ* VII 6).

Caecina and Bassus are both described by Tacitus as dishonest or bad men (*malos*) for betraying the emperor whom they had sworn an oath to protect (Tac. *Hist.* II 100). However, the same or even more censure falls to the historians who, when recording these turbulent times during the Flavian dynasty, had justified the conduct of the two generals as being «patriotic and desirous of peace» (*curam pacis et amorem rei publicae*). In fact Tacitus uses the verb «betray» to refer to these historians, who were prepared to falsify the truth in order to flatter: *corruptas in adulationem causas, tradidere*[48]. This is the *veritas pluribus modis infracta* («truth shattered in many different ways») to which Tacitus refers at the beginning of the *Histories*: because such false historians cared more for peace, they betrayed truth.

Another significant disloyal defection from Vitellius' side recorded by Tacitus is the case of Valerius Festus. According to Tacitus, this Valerius was a young relative of Vitellius and commander of the legion in Africa (cf. Tac. *Hist.* IV 49), who at first loyally supported the Vitellian faction and joined in the enthusiasm of the provincials. Tacitus does not give an explanation of why he soon (*mox*) became unsteady and began double dealing: supporting Vitellius officially but staying in secret communication with Vespasian[49]. The undoubted advantage of his deceit was that he could quickly change his support to whichever side proved victorious. Probably Valerius soon realized that Vitellius' side was less prepared and did not look very promising.

Valerius' axiological confusion is clearly shown when Tacitus reports that, after Vitellius' death and therefore now eager to prove his allegiance to Vespasian, Valerius was involved in the assassination of L. Calpurnius Piso, governor of the province of Africa, who had been accused of plotting against the emperor Vespasian (cf. Tac. *Hist.* IV 49-50). Making sure that Piso was in fact murdered in the confusion of the moment, Valerius Festus won gratitude from the Flavians and was later rewarded by a long career of service under the emperor Domitian[50]. In narrating this episode, Tacitus contrasts this example of perfidious personal expediency with the noble conduct of a slave who, when he realized that Piso was going to be killed, bravely gave

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[47] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* II 100-101; III 12. According to ASH (2007b), 378, *non statim* underscores Tacitus' disapproval as it makes it look like an impatient and unrealistic desire.

[48] Tac. *Hist.* II 101: *curam pacis et amorem rei publicae.*

[49] Tac. *Hist.* II 98: *ac primo Valerius Festus legatus studia provincialium cum fide iuvit.*

[50] For Valerius Festus' later career, see GALLIVAN (1981), 186-220 and ABASCAL (2018).

his life for his master[51]. This slave was probably one of the «slaves [with] a fidelity which defied even torture» (Tac. *Hist.* I 3), whom Tacitus talks about at the beginning of the *Histories*.

These changed allegiances and broken oaths certainly did not look like the struggle for personal glory of republican times: then - at least in theory - the generals had competed in acts of *virtus* for the benefit of the *res publica*, and attained glory as a consequence. Now, by contrast, they competed not in acts of courage but cunning to destroy their rivals and secure their own future in safety. Tacitus describes these commanders as having taken advantage of the situation, and when the test came, they chose the *utile* (expedient) over the *honestum* (honorable) course of action, working for their own personal benefit instead of the good of Rome[52]. Their confusion was of a different sort from that produced under Galba. The confusion created by the old emperor made others mistake what was good and what was evil. Vitellius' commanders, on the contrary, seemed to have lost sight of the fact that what was good for themselves was not always good for Rome; accordingly, the decisions they took had near-disastrous consequences for the Empire. Tacitus clearly blames Vitellius' military leaders for the anxiety and restlessness felt by Vitellius' own party: «Nor on the side of Vitellius were men's minds at ease; their distress, however, arose from more fatal discord, due not to the suspicions of the common soldiers, but to the treachery of the commanders»[53]. Amidst the turmoil of a civil war it was certainly difficult to establish what it meant to fight *rei publicae causa* and to stay firm; but working for individual aims and fostering one's own advancement while risking the wellbeing of the state was certainly not the way.

III

In his *Histories*, Tacitus shows that in a situation of political disorder, chaos and especially fear, everybody is more liable to err in the perception of what is good or bad for them and make the wrong decision. His narrative illustrates this liability persistently. However, Tacitus also makes clear that these circumstances may have made people more prone to confusion, but they did not necessarily force them to it or determine their actions.

It is quite significant, then, that in the midst of all the horrible crimes, treachery and falsity during the civil wars, Tacitus - as if to give the reader a respite - narrates the acts of the few who did maintain their judgement unaffected and behaved nobly. At the beginning of the work he had acknowledged that there was still room for

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[51] Tac. *Hist.* IV 50: *servus egregio mendacio se Pisonem esse respondit ac statim obtruncatur.*

[52] Tacitus makes a similar judgement about Antonius Primus, and also other generals who helped the emperors of AD 69 along their way towards power, such as Fabius Valens. For Tacitus' treatment of these generals, see for example, DOREY (1958); MORGAN (1994a), (1997) and (2006), 174-189; MEULDER (1995); ASH (1999).

[53] Tac. *Hist.* III 12: *Ne in Vitellii quidem partibus quietae mentes: exitiosiore discordia non suspicionibus vulgi, sed perfidia ducum turbabantur.*

virtues: «Yet this age was not so barren of virtue that it did not display noble examples»[54]. He describes good mothers and wives supporting or accompanying their sons and husbands; men displaying courage and firmness; and slaves showing their loyalty[55]. In the last section of this paper, I would like to show what Tacitus sees as the defining factors that make people maintain their principles and values even under terrible circumstances[56]. It is with these examples that Tacitus the historian becomes a guide; by providing instances of good behavior, he directs the readers out of confusion.

If fear was the general condition and emotional state of the majority under a civil war - because it was difficult to know which side would end up being stronger - it follows that it was the opposite of fear that made some people overcome the inaction or paralysis created by fear on the one hand, or the rashness resulting from fear on the other. Tacitus emphasizes a particular quality that seemed to counteract fear, and work as its antidote, namely firmness or *constantia*.

Constantia or steadfastness consisted mainly of keeping one's independence of thought, being determined to hold on to one's principles and not changing them out of expediency or fear. This was certainly an aspect of the virtue of courage (*virtus*), although perhaps expressed in a subtler way than the spectacular bravery that soldiers could show in battle[57]. Tacitus gives examples of the *constantia* of military men such as Julius Agrestis and Vocula, whom he praises for being two good generals who restored discipline in the armies and showed «outstanding determination» (*notabilis constantia*) and «admirable firmness» (*mira constantia*) respectively[58]. This, of course, contrasted greatly with - for example - Galba's «disgraceful want of firmness» (*foeda inconstantia*) exhibited at some point[59], or the «innate fickleness» (*insita levitas*) displayed by many (Tac. *Hist.* II 101). *Constantia* was a way of expressing valor and determination to maintain one's loyalties in spite of danger; firmness in the pursuit of one's aims in life without being swayed by good or bad circumstances.

Certainly, a model of constancy in the *Histories* is Marius Celsus[60]. In AD 63 Celsus had led the Fifteenth Legion to war against the Parthians (cf. Tac. *Ann.* XV 25), and was designated by Nero as suffect consul for AD 69. Later he was called to be an adviser to Galba, to whom he remained loyal till the end[61]. After Galba's death, Celsus was in danger of being killed, but when he pleaded guilty of constant loyalty

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[54] Tac. *Hist.* I 3: *non tamen adeo virtutum sterile saeculum ut non et bona exempla prodiderit.*

[55] Tac. *Hist.* I 3: *Comitatae profugos liberos matres, secutae maritos in exilia coniuges: propinqui audentes, constantes generi, contumax etiam adversus tormenta servorum fides; supremae clarorum virorum necessitates fortiter toleratae et laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus.*

[56] For good men in Tacitus in general, see Ríhová (1974).

[57] For the role of *virtus* and *constantia*, see Balmaceda (2017), 199-208.

[58] Tac. *Hist.* III 54 and IV 26 respectively. On Vocula see Ash (2010), 211-231.

[59] Tac. *Hist.* I 19. The same idea is conveyed in I 7, referring to his «weakness of character» (*mobilitas ingenii*).

[60] On Celsus, see Townend (1962); Shotter (1978), 197-200.

[61] Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 45: *Marium Celsum, consulem designatum et Galbae usque in extremas res amicum fidumque.*

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to Galba (*constanter servatae erga Galbam fidei crimen confessus*), Otho saved him and took him into his inner circle (*inter intimos amicos habuit*, Tac. *Hist.* I 71). Tacitus also shows Celsus working faithfully and prudently under Otho, displaying his energy (*industria*) and vigor (*vigor*), and even after the emperor's fall, Celsus was able to maintain his consulship under Vitellius (a remarkable fact considering that he found himself on the 'wrong', defeated, side). He survived the civil wars and under Vespasian served as governor of Germania Inferior[62].

Tacitus portrays Celsus as working for the regime, using all his talents and achieving brilliant successes (*res egregiae gestae*, Tac. *Hist.* II 24), but never allowing his blameless character (*innocentia*) to be compromised (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 45). Throughout his career, Celsus was in real danger several times, the worst being when after Galba's murder, the soldiers asked for Celsus' capital punishment. In their confusion they demanded Celsus' life, because after having killed the emperor, they were obviously afraid of his faithful friend. Out of fear-inspired axiological confusion «they hated his energy and upright character as if they were vicious qualities» (Tac. *Hist.* I 45), instead of trying to win over the good man to their side for the new government. Celsus, however, never defended himself at the cost of his honesty or principles. Moreover, together with his *constantia*, he displayed remarkable loyalty: *fides integra* (Tac. *Hist.* I 71).

Fides became a serious concern in times of civil war, as it was necessary to maintain one's loyalty to the emperor to whom one had sworn allegiance. Traditionally, *fides* inspired brave actions and also implied a touch of magnanimity in the sense that the loyal subordinate was able to put his own benefit in second place for the sake of a larger cause, namely the *res publica*, in this case, the emperor. But *fides* could be a dangerous quality in civil war, as faithfulness and loyalty were held cheap owing to the instability of emperors holding on to unsteady power. Besides, for a subordinate to be loyal to his commander when the latter was not totally worthy of this loyalty could be counted as unsafe. However, Tacitus' praise of Celsus' *constantia* in showing *fides* first to Galba and then, after his death, to Otho, suggests that Tacitus saw *fides* as a quality which required much courage and firmness.

Marius Celsus in Tacitus is especially moderate in his desires; industrious in his work as a general, a good leader to his soldiers, prudent, and above all, firm in his loyalty to whoever stood at the head of the *res publica*. He may be one of the great men under bad emperors (*viri magni sub malis principibus*) to whom Tacitus referred in the *Agricola* (42, 5), since he did what he could to contribute to the welfare of the state even in civil war.

Also faithful, but less fortunate than Marius Celsus was Junius Blaesus, whose steadfast loyalty is also praised by Tacitus. This Blaesus first appears in the *Histories* joining the Vitellian forces in Book I (59) and later on Tacitus gives a more complete portrait of this man whom he would even qualify as *sanctus*, a high tribute indeed

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[62] Cf. ECK (1982), 287-91.

(Tac. *Hist.* III 39). Blaesus came from an illustrious family[63] and was very rich, generous, and cultured in character. The sum of these qualities seems to have confused Vitellius: very soon the emperor was convinced - particularly by his brother, Lucius Vitellius - that Blaesus was a threat to the throne, but he camouflaged his hatred under servile flattery[64]. Tacitus shows Vitellius' behavior as unreasonable, since it makes no sense to destroy a man of steadfast loyalty (*fidei obstinatio*), who put all his resources into supporting the emperor and had no interest at all in becoming head of the empire (cf. Tac. *Hist.* III 39).

Tacitus shows how Blaesus' *fides* - a virtue to be treasured in times of sedition and betrayal - counted for nothing, as Vitellius mistakenly feared his faithful friend. Finally, Blaesus, victim of Vitellius' confused and fearful state of mind - *trepidanti inter scelus metumque* - was poisoned by the emperor[65]. Here it is the emperor's conduct which falls prey to axiological confusion, «behaving irrationally and failing to see what is in his best interests»[66].

Tacitus intersperses more examples of great loyalty and firmness throughout the narrative, such as the case of Sempronius Densus, a centurion who, in spite of being seriously wounded, bravely defended Piso during the sedition against Galba and enabled him to escape (cf. Tac. *Hist.* I 31); or the governor of Raetia, Porcius Septiminus, who remained incorruptibly loyal to Vitellius (cf. Tac. *Hist.* III 5). Further examples of fidelity are the four centurions of the Twenty-Second Legion, Nonius, Donatius, Romilius and Calpurnius, who remained faithful to Galba and were therefore executed on the orders of Vitellius, their crime being loyalty, «worst of charges among rebels»[67].

It was clear, then, that *constantia* and *fides* in civil war demanded refusing to be ruled by fear or to act on it. According to Tacitus it was firmness and steadfastness that made these exemplary men keep a clear head and not become confused as to what was right or wrong, regardless of how everybody else was behaving. Tacitus shows how the dilemma of choosing between the honorable course (*honestum*) and the advantageous one (*utile*) was solved in the ideal Ciceronian way, that is, by choosing the *honestum* or the right thing to do, which won them the glory of posterity and in this sense became advantageous and beneficial as well.

By means of his narration of history, Tacitus shows how and why some Romans were prevented from acting according to particular virtues and took the wrong path during the frenzied year of the four emperors. He demonstrates how axiological confusion works by taking a very Roman approach to the historical records of a particularly complex period. Focusing on the behavior of different figures, he gives

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[63] He had the Antonii and the Junii as his ancestors, cf. III 38.
[64] Tac. *Hist.* II 59. For Junius Blaesus, see ASH (2007b), *comm ad loc.*
[65] For the episode of Blaesus' death at III 38-39, see MILLER-JONES (1978); GALTIER (1981). Another account of Blaesus' death is narrated - without naming him - by Suet. *Vit.* 14.
[66] LEVENE (1997), 139.
[67] Tac. *Hist.* I 59: *fidei crimine, gravissimo inter desciscentis.*

examples to imitate or to avoid (cf. Liv. *Praef.* 10), and thus illustrates axiological confusion in action.

Tacitus shows the tensions and ambiguities of the period he is recounting; he is concerned not only to denote bad examples, but also to find new role models and steer the reader between rash action on the one hand and servile passivity on the other. Vital to his purpose was the portrayal of good and active Romans who maintained their *fides* in spite of personal danger and for whom *constantia* in working for the *res publica* was paramount.

In Tacitus' view, the civil wars that followed Nero's death made political behavior more radical. Widespread confusion and chaos had major ill effects on the capacity for discernment exercised by emperors, soldiers and people, preventing them from evaluating actions according to the customary criteria of good and bad. The turmoil of continuous civil wars that produced persistent fear and mistrust among Romans resulted in the axiological confusion that Tacitus illustrates with expert skill. The narrative portraying this confusion with all its bad examples, moreover, helps him to fulfil «the highest function of history»: that, in spite of everything, «virtues may not be passed over in silence»[68].

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[68] Tac. *Ann.* III 65: *praecipuum munus annalium* [...] *ne virtutes sileantur.*

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G‌IORGOS V‌AVOURANAKIS, C‌ONSTANTINOS K‌OPANIAS, C‌HRYSANTHOS K‌ANELLOPOULOS (eds.), *Popular Religion and Ritual in Prehistoric and Ancient Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean*, Archaeopress Archaeology, Oxford 2019, pp. XIV + 168, ISBN 978-17-896-9045-3.

Las relaciones con la divinidad o divinidades se encuentran en el centro de las sociedades tradicionales. La creencia en la existencia de seres superiores que pueden controlar la vida humana favoreciendo o perjudicando a las comunidades es, probablemente, anterior a la aparición de los homínidos. Las sociedades se han construido sobre la base de la convicción de que determinadas conductas de los grupos y los individuos pertenecientes a ellas podían afectar positiva o negativamente esa relación. La repetición de ciertas conductas que resultaban aparentemente exitosas o concomitantes con pérdidas puede haber dado lugar a la aparición de rituales y tabúes que luego se conformarían en las estructuras sociales. Aunque la hipótesis sobre el desarrollo de la sociedad que acabo de describir pueda parecer aceptable, no es menos cierto que es el producto de una proyección de nuestras propias creencias y actitudes en un pasado que nos es desconocido.

La comprensión de la función y evolución de ritos y creencias asociadas a él tiene una importancia capital para entender no sólo el origen, sino especialmente la raíz de las conductas y las estructuras sociales actuales. No es una tarea fácil la reconstrucción de las etapas prehistóricas que ha recorrido esta representación, no sólo por la escasez de testimonios materiales que deben ser interpretados con muy pocas referencias contextuales, sino también por la dificultad que tiene todo intérprete para trascender su propio horizonte cultural. Esto es especialmente cierto en el caso de aquellos testimonios que carecen de referencias literarias que puedan aclarar su significación.

El presente volumen reúne una selección de 17 trabajos de los 33 presentados en un congreso realizado en la Universidad de Atenas en diciembre de 2012. Las contribuciones abordan el tema desde diferentes aspectos de la investigación arqueológica, histórica y filológica. En algunos casos, los capítulos optan por una perspectiva general, mientras que en otros son estudios de aspectos concretos de la vida religiosa. Las contribuciones se centran especialmente en las civilizaciones del sur de la Península Balcánica y parte de la cuenca del Mediterráneo oriental desde la época minoica hasta el período clásico griego. En su presentación, G. Vavouranakis (a partir de ahora V.) señala el relativo abandono de la investigación de las formas populares de prácticas religiosas y la tradicional concentración de la arqueología en el estudio de las expresiones culturales de las elites (VII-XIII). Los primeros seis trabajos se ocupan del problema de la relación entre poder y multitud en la edad minoica. V. abre las exposiciones con un panorama de los resultados alcanzados en el ámbito de las prácticas religiosas y la función de la multitud en la civilización minoica del segundo milenio antes de Cristo (1-10.) V. cree que los ritos populares se extendieron durante el segundo milenio por toda Creta. El surgimiento de los palacios en la misma época

sería una respuesta de la elite al surgimiento de esas formas relativamente laxas y horizontales de organización del culto popular. Sobre la base de la evidencia cerámica, I. Caloi coincide en la existencia de una oposición entre la multitud y la oligarquía gobernante, pero cree que las actividades rituales en los cementerios en esa época muestran que el culto popular era una forma de resistencia al incremento de poder de las elites (11-18). M. Haysom, por el contrario, no ve una muestra de cultura popular en los centros cultuales en las cimas de las montañas, sino una manifestación de las oligarquías dominantes (19-28). Una forma cultual relacionada con los antepasados observa S. Privitera en las copas cónicas invertidas (29-37). L. Platon establece una continuidad entre las prácticas cultuales minoicas y las Antesterias atenienses a través de un *chythros* minoico encontrado en Zakros, uno de los principales centros administrativos minoicos (39-45). La parte dedicada a la época minoica cierra con un análisis de los murales de Acrotiri en Tera por A. Højen Sørensen, W. L. Friedrich y K.M.S. Søholm (47-54). Expresión de las prácticas de la elite, los frescos muestran el interés de estos sectores por la continuidad del cambio, un punto central del pensamiento religioso de Tera.

Tras la ocupación del sur de la península balcánica y las islas circundantes por pueblos del tronco helénico, la cultura micénica conservó muchas de las prácticas y creencias existentes en el mundo minoico, al menos en lo que se refiere a los círculos dominantes. La forma y la importancia del cambio que produjo la llegada de los nuevos habitantes no ha sido aún esclarecida totalmente. Tres trabajos del volumen se ocupan de diferentes aspectos de la civilización micénica. H. Whittaker (55-61) y N. Polychronakou Sgouritsa (63-71) suponen una dicotomía que ha de persistir en el período clásico. Los micénicos habrían tenido dos tipos de cultos, cultos privados o familiares que no estaban dirigidos a las divinidades oficiales, sino a los antepasados y cultos públicos de divinidades oficiales, fuertemente influidos por las preexistentes prácticas minoicas. Por su parte, E. Salavoura (73-83) dedica su trabajo al análisis de dos cultos en las cimas de la montaña en los que ve expresión de cultos populares que conservan también características de época minoica.

Th. Eliolopoulos (85-95) comprueba asimismo la continuidad de cultos minoicos durante la denominada 'edad oscura' a través de un análisis de las estatuillas de la diosa minoica con las manos alzadas. El capítulo de A. Leriou se ocupa de los santuarios rurales en esa misma época en Chipre. Contrariamente a los otros casos, propone prácticas cultuales unitarias en las que no puede distinguirse entre un culto popular y otro de los grupos dominantes (97-104). Probablemente, este hecho se deba a que la debilidad de las relaciones de poder entre los diferentes grupos existentes en la isla impidió el surgimiento de una clara división entre poderosos y pueblo llano.

Los cinco estudios que se dedican al período clásico tratan aspectos particulares. Dos capítulos dedicados a las prácticas mágicas en la Atenas clásica (J.L. Lamont, G. Boundouraki, 125-135, y Y. Chairetakis, 137-142) muestran su importancia en los ámbitos populares. La persistencia de las cavernas como sitios de ritos de pasajes en la época clásica (M. Spathi, 143-155) y como lugares de culto popular durante el

helenismo (S. Koursoumis, 157-164) pone de relieve la continuidad de las prácticas religiosas en la cuenca oriental del Mediterráneo habitada por los pueblos griegos. El volumen cierra con la consideración de un aspecto religioso de importancia, la evolución de los juegos olímpicos de culto popular local a manifestación de un culto panhelénico (165-168). La importancia de los centros cultuales panhelénicos se extiende más allá del mundo griego y es un punto de importancia que quizás debería haber recibido mayor atención en el volumen. Algo semejante puede afirmarse respecto de la aportación de E. Apostola, ya que es la única que se interesa por la posible influencia exterior en la cultura minoica y griega (113-124). En su contribución, la autora muestra la presencia en Rodas y Samos de un culto proveniente de Egipto, el del dios-*daimon* Bes. Fuera de la zona estudiada, pero de una importancia capital para la comprensión de la relación de los cultos populares con las elites, se encuentra el trabajo de Valia Papanastasopoulou, dedicado a clarificar las trazas de cultos populares en los siglos VIII y VII a. C. en Judea. Las numerosas estatuillas de la diosa Ashera indican la existencia de un culto a esa diosa, supuesta consorte de El o de Jahwe, y una manifestación clara del sincretismo super-viviente en las capas populares. Dada las condenas de su culto preservadas en el Antiguo Testamento, es una interesante referencia a la contradicción entre el culto de los poderosos y la resistencia de las capas populares. También muestra la posible contaminación de las creencias de las clases dominantes por la ideología de la multitud.

Es imposible incluir en un solo volumen todos los temas propios de un ámbito tan denso como el de las creencias de la multitud en un período del que no quedan prácticamente restos escritos como el minoico o el micénico. No obstante, una mayor referencia al contexto específico de la cuenca oriental del Mediterráneo y a las interconexiones culturales en el campo de los cultos y creencias populares habría permitido al lector apreciar la dinámica intercultural en esos tiempos. Estos trabajos siguen en este aspecto la tendencia tradicional a considerar el mundo griego como un hecho peculiar y aislado de su contexto histórico.

Entre los factores que contribuyen a dificultar la comprensión de los fenómenos comunitarios de relación con supuestas fuerzas externas al quehacer humano se encuentra la impronta de la experiencia del cristianismo y de las religiones estructu-radas alrededor de un dogma. El mismo concepto de religión aplicado ya sea a las elites dominantes o al pueblo llano o multitud es en sí problemático, ya que alude a una cierta coherencia que es más propia del monoteísmo que de las prácticas arcaicas. De todas maneras, este volumen representa una importante aportación en un tema escasamente investigado y confirma, por otro lado, la perdurabilidad de las creencias minoicas en el mundo helénico incluso después de la generalización del cristianismo.

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ELISABETTA BIANCO, *Sparta e i suoi navarchi*, Edizioni dell'Orso ("Fonti e studi di storia antica" 21), Alessandria 2018, pp. VI + 186, ISBN 978-88-627-4850-6.

Ci si può sorprendere di quanta poca attenzione sia stata rivolta al rapporto tra Sparta e il mare; anche perché, per lungo tempo, si è data quasi per scontata l'idea secondo cui gli spartani avessero poco a che fare con le attività marittime. Eppure, già prima del periodo classico, Sparta ha partecipato a spedizioni in Libia e in Sicilia, oltre alle imprese coloniali che hanno riguardato la fondazione di Taranto e di Tera. Inoltre, nonostante le difficoltà suscitate dalla celebre lista delle talassocrazie di Eusebio, a Lacedemone è associata un'egemonia marittima durata almeno due anni, tra il 517 e il 516. Il rapporto tra Sparta e il mare, dunque, è stato proficuo e stabile, anche se in nessun documento del VI secolo appaiono riferimenti alla navarchia, che invece inizia a manifestarsi durante la seconda guerra persiana.

Ad eccezione di alcune episodiche investigazioni, molti studiosi si sono soffermati su contributi decisivi riguardanti singole figure di navarchi: il presente lavoro di Elisabetta Bianco, invece, prende in esame l'intero arco cronologico nel quale la *polis* del Peloponneso, la cui vocazione bellica fu principalmente terrestre, ha espresso la sua ascesa, il suo massimo potere e poi il suo declino (dunque tra 430-429 e 373-372). È questo il periodo in cui si rintraccia, grazie a un numero considerevole di fonti antiche, la maggiore concentrazione di notizie sull'attività dei navarchi, che ci consegna anche una presenza di riferimenti accurati e particolari.

Informa Elisabetta Bianco che «La famiglia di termini *nauarch-* è attestata 172 volte in 153 testi differenti, provenienti da tutte le aree geografiche, 23 dall'Attica, 4 dal Peloponneso, 7 dalla Grecia centrale, 5 dalla Tracia, 4 dal Mar Nero, 56 dalle isole, 28 dall'Asia Minore, 32 da Cipro, 7 dalle aree più orientali, 2 da quelle più occidentali, 4 dall'Africa, ma quasi tutte queste attestazioni sono di età ellenistica» (3). Sicuramente, la parola può essere utilizzata in un'accezione doppia: sia in senso generico, per indicare gli ammiragli delle flotte navali di qualsiasi città, sia in senso più specifico, ossia per connotare i magistrati spartani che svolgono funzioni di comando nell'ambito delle operazioni militari marittime. Se pure, tuttavia, non possiamo asserire con assoluta certezza l'esistenza di una magistratura *ad hoc* che si occupava della guida delle navi militari, con molta probabilità tale istituzione non apparteneva all'ordinamento originario di Sparta. Si tenga conto che neppure nella stessa Atene, città a grande vocazione marittima, non esisteva una magistratura specifica per la flotta navale.

Il ruolo di navarca a Sparta potrebbe essere assegnato al re, o comunque far riferimento alle sue funzioni. Il navarco gode del supporto dell'*epistoleus*, ossia un segretario che si occupa delle relazioni con la madrepatria, ma può anche avvalersi di un *symboulos*, ovvero un consigliere di emergenza, che va in aiuto del navarca quando ci sono delle difficoltà. Non si conosce la durata della carica, ma numerose

sono le fonti che attestano la sua regolarità temporale: siamo a conoscenza anche del caso del *proteron nauarchon*, il quale continuava a svolgere i suoi compiti anche alla scadenza dei termini dell'incarico. È plausibile, comunque, che la nomina a comandante navale avvenisse con una precisa regolarità nel corso dell'anno, probabilmente in prossimità dell'equinozio d'autunno, ma che la preparazione e, successivamente, la partenza della flotta, potessero realizzarsi in tempi differenti a seconda degli eventi. Non è chiaro, inoltre, se tale carica fosse iterabile o meno: una legge, probabilmente successiva alla battaglia di Cizico, proibisce l'iterazione della carica, come attestato anche dagli avvenimenti di Araco e Lisandro nel 406-405, quando al primo dei due, uomo politico di spicco, fu affidata ufficialmente la navarchia, mentre il secondo fu nominato luogotenente (Xen. *Hell.* II 1, 7); in realtà, era proprio Lisandro il comandante effettivo delle operazioni.

Ma ci sono anche gli episodi di Pollide e Teleutia che potrebbero indurre a ipotizzare altro. Il primo comandante della flotta navale spartana, nel 480-479, è Euribiade, a cui succedono il re Leotichida (479-478) e poi Pausania (478-477), quest'ultimo impegnato nelle guerre contro Bisanzio e Cipro. Da questo momento, in cui Sparta attraversa non poche fasi complicate (il terremoto e la terza rivolta messenica, per esempio), fino al 430-429 non ci sono attestazioni documentali riguardanti la presenza di tale figura militare, il che non esclude automaticamente la sua esistenza in quei decenni.

Secondo le fonti, il primo navarco ad essere impegnato in uno dei primissimi scontri con la flotta ateniese durante la guerra del Peloponneso è lo spartiata Cnemo, appunto nel 430-429, che probabilmente operò anche nel 429-428. A seguire, Alcida (428-427) e Trasimelida (426-425); una lacuna nel 427-426 non permette di individuare il nome del navarca incaricato in quell'anno. Tra il 426-425 e il 413-412, anno in cui è attestato il nome di Melancrida come comandante della flotta spartana, non si citano altri navarchi.

Nel libro di Bianco lo studio della navarchia si concentra volutamente sul periodo finale della guerra del Peloponneso, da Astioco (412-411) e Lisandro (405-404) fino a Mnasippo (373-372), e dunque alla fine dell'egemonia spartana nel 371. Sebbene si conoscano altri nomi di navarchi, l'importanza di tali figure diminuisce in corrispondenza del declino del potere spartano proprio alla fine degli anni Settanta del IV secolo. Lo studio si focalizza poi sui comandanti della flotta lacedemone negli anni fondamentali della supremazia spartana, utilizzando un numero elevato di fonti antiche: Erodoto, Tucidide, Senofonte, Aristotele, Diodoro Siculo, Plutarco, Pausania, in pratica dando voce direttamente ai testi. Il saggio è composto di quattro capitoli, più una conclusione e un'appendice. Il primo capitolo introduce le prime attestazioni della navarchia (7-10) e i primi navarchi durante la guerra archidamica, con le personalità di Cnemo (10-15), Alcida (15-21), Trasimelida (21-23). Nel secondo capitolo si descrive l'istituzione spartana durante la guerra ionica, presentando i seguenti navarchi: Melancrida (25-27), Astioso (27-37), Mindaro (38-46), Pasippoda (46-47) Cratesippida (48-52), Lisandro (52-55), Callicratida (56-69), Araco e di

nuovo Lisandro (69-79). Il terzo capitolo illustra i navarchi nel periodo successivo alla vittoria contro Atene, ossia tra 404 e 394: Libi (81-82), Pantoide (82-83), Samio o Samo o, forse, Pitagora (83-85), Anassibio, sostituito da Polo (85-87), Farace o Faracida (87-99), Archelaida e Pollide (99-101), Chiricrate e Pisandro (101-105). Il quarto e ultimo capitolo parla dell'ultimo periodo in cui siano attestati navarchi, ossia dal 394 al 371: Podanemo ed Ecdico, che ressero la navarchia durante la prima fase della guerra corinzia (107-115), Teleutia e Iarace (115-118), Antalgica e, nuovamente, Teleutia (118-124), Pollide (124-127), Nicoloco (128-129), Mnasippo (129-136). E, infine, le conclusioni (137-144), seguite dall'appendice (145-146).

La precisione cronologica della struttura generale, che comunque non perde mai di vista la prospettiva diacronica, la chiarezza linguistica ed espressiva, lo spettro conoscitivo ampio, la visione globale del fenomeno della navarchia spartana, il raffinato intreccio degli eventi in seno alla narrazione storica, rendono il lavoro di Elisabetta Bianco un titolo centrale per ogni eventuale ricerca nell'ambito della storia militare spartana. Lo studioso di istituzioni del mondo antico troverà in questo libro una finestra indispensabile per comprendere una tipologia particolare dell'organizzazione interna lacedemone, cui finora si è prestata poca attenzione; il testo assume pertanto una valenza storiografica e saggistica di fondamentale importanza e il riferimento imprescindibile per qualsiasi lavoro sul tema.

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CHRYSANTHOS S. CHRYSANTHOU, *Plutarch's* Parallel Lives. *Narrative Technique and Moral Judgement*, De Gruyter ("Trends in Classics - Supplementary Volumes" 57), Berlin-Boston 2018, pp. 228, ISBN 978-31-105-7298-8.

Plutarco è stato recentemente definito come «buen patriota griego», nostalgico recensore degli illustri personaggi di un mondo (ellenico) arcaico a confronto con quelli (romani) più vicini al suo tempo per mezzo di una «narrativa de evasión hacia un pasado de libertades ya desaparecido»[1]. Ma, se le antiche libertà della Grecia classica sono ormai scomparse, per quale tipo di lettore scrive allora Plutarco? A chi dirige le proprie ricostruzioni etico-storiche in forma di biografia, e soprattutto con quale obbiettivo? Offre una risposta a questi interrogativi di carattere narrativo-letterario la densa ricerca di Chrysanthos S. Chrysanthou (d'ora in poi Ch.), *Plutarch's* Parallel Lives. *Narrative Technique and Moral Judgement*, rielaborazione di una tesi di dottorato completata nel 2016 presso l'Università di Oxford.

Il libro si compone di sei capitoli: uno introduttivo, quattro centrali (costituenti il momento argomentativo e analitico sostanziale) e uno conclusivo, per un totale di 170 pagine. Le rimanenti sono dedicate alle abbreviazioni (171), una ricchissima bibliografia (172-195), un *Index locorum* (196-215) e un *Index nominum et rerum* (216-228), che riveste grande importanza, considerato il carattere estremamente analitico degli argomenti inclusi (che superano certamente, e non solo in quantità, i riferimenti onomastici). La lettura - bisogna riconoscerlo sin da subito - è accattivante, sia grazie all'inglese estremamente chiaro e disteso in periodi della giusta misura, sia grazie allo stile compositivo di ciascun capitolo. Ogni singola parte (paragrafo, sotto-capitolo, capitolo) è infatti breve e incisiva, numerata in progressione analitica, secondo un tipico stile anglosassone, e munita di titoli e sottotitoli molto eloquenti. In una dozzina di casi Ch. intitola il paragrafo con una citazione plutarchea, ovviamente di natura narratologica o meta-letteraria, vicina alla teoria della comunicazione che informa ogni pagina dell'indagine.

Uno degli intenti principali del libro è dimostrare la complessità del giudizio morale plutarcheo, in rapporto alla tecnica narrativa e alle reazioni suscitate nel lettore. Per questo sin dalla presentazione iniziale Ch. avverte dell'esistenza di numerosi «moments of tension» (2) all'interno delle *Vite*, quelli in cui il biografo espone o accenna a valutazioni di qualità, disallineate rispetto alla narrazione in quanto relative a fatti e azioni che il lettore ancora non conosce. Tale composizione di informazioni nella ricostruzione storica e nel giudizio morale risponde a una precisa concezione biografica di Plutarco, finalizzata a un profilo dal carattere dinamico, a sua volta esito di una scrittura sofisticata e altresì dinamica (come permette di dimostrare la σύγκρισις delle vite parallele). Detto diversamente, a Plutarco importerebbe

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[1] J. SIGNES CODOÑER, *Breve guía de la literatura griega desde Hesíodo hasta Pletón*, Madrid 2019, 311-312.

Reseñas bibliográficas (MICHELE CURNIS)

trasmettere al lettore più la trama e il processo argomentativo da cui si ricava il giudizio che non un giudizio dall'orientamento netto e dall'aspetto apodittico. Appare evidente come tale impostazione risenta molto delle esigenze epistemologiche della critica contemporanea, ma il modo in cui Ch. struttura la propria tesi e rilegge le *Vite* plutarchee è perfettamente attendibile e fruttuoso; per questo, la lettura del libro sarà particolarmente utile al filologo classico, che apprezzerà l'applicazione di indagini narratologiche alla lingua e al lessico di Plutarco, alla struttura delle sue biografie, all'avvicendarsi e richiamarsi di fatti e considerazioni da un capitolo all'altro del testo letterario, con una unica grande ambizione di fondo: suscitare la riflessione del lettore (ben oltre qualsivoglia 'piacere della lettura' o semplice edificazione moralistica).

Il secondo capitolo (*Life-Writing in Triangles: Plutarch, Readers, and the Men of History*, 26-65) è dedicato all'attività dello storico dell'antichità nella veste di indagatore delle virtù e delle buone disposizioni (anziché dei lati peggiorativi) dei campioni del passato. Questo capitolo, forse ancora più dei due successivi, determina l'approdo alle conclusioni del volume, allorché Ch. ricostruisce un'ipotetica (e assai godibile alla lettura) *Plutarchi malignitas*, rapportando i valori che nei *Moralia* insistono sulla 'cattiveria erodotea' nella presentazione dei personaggi a scelte analoghe ricorrenti nelle biografie. A volte nelle *Vite* si percepisce infatti una sorta di fastidioso moscone, che ronza attorno alla rosa olezzante di virtù ed edificazione morale apposta per dar fastidio (è *The Beetle in the Rose*, titolo dell'ultimo paragrafo dell'esposizione, 168-170). Ch. si chiede se anche Plutarco sia caduto nella tentazione di rilevare i difetti, porre in rilievo le disgrazie, utilizzare un lessico severo o deteriore, inclinarsi per la variante meno favorevole al personaggio, insomma se abbia assunto tutti quegli atteggiamenti che aveva rimproverato a Erodoto e bollato come manifestazione di una gratuita e immorale cattiveria. Dopo aver ricordato che il contesto di composizione del trattatello anti-erodoteo è del tutto diverso da quello delle *Vite*, e che risente dell'impostazione retorica di un'arringa accusatoria recitata in un agone giudiziario, Ch. suppone nel lettore di Plutarco una reazione originale (e sorprendente), come l'immedesimazione nel lettore delle *Storie*: «Readers might well wonder about wheater and to what extent they may identify themselves with those unwitting readers of Herodotus, who as Plutarch says, have been deceived (854e) and beguiles (874b) by the charm and grace of the *Histories*» (170). La disamina analitica conferma, a detta di Ch., che non solo non vi è alcun compiacimento nella menzione degli errori o dei difetti dei personaggi presentati, ma che anzi Plutarco si premura di considerare criticamente l'ambito che li ha determinati, a salvaguardia della generale e positiva qualifica del protagonista. In ogni caso, come la citazione chiarisce, Ch. è convinto che Plutarco ritenesse che la direttrice qualitativa seguita da uno scrittore determinasse la riflessione critica o il disinganno del lettore, e che - di conseguenza - l'analisi della 'mala fede' di Erodoto costituisse una strategia di accertamento indiretto della propria 'buona fede'.

Plutarco si impone un protocollo valutativo determinato, che è possibile ritrovare alla base di ogni biografia. Nella *Vita di Dione*, per esempio, suggerisce allo storico di

non elogiare il personaggio nel suo operato, per poi biasimarlo, deriderlo o addirittura insultarlo ricordando la durezza del destino nei suoi confronti o il finale tragico della sua esistenza (μήτε τὰς πράξεις ἐπαινῶν μήτε τὰς τύχας ὀνειδίζων, 36, 4). Un lettore italiano potrebbe a questo punto proporre una definizione della corretta scrittura biografica come «vergin di servo encomio / e di codardo oltraggio». Eppure, azioni e condotte riprovevoli sono ben presenti all'interno delle *Vite*, come ogni lettore di Plutarco sa bene; nel terzo capitolo del libro (*Emotion, Perception, and Cognition: The Individual and Society*, 66-102), Ch. si dedica, tra altri temi, alla dimostrazione di come apparenti contraddizioni nei giudizi sul personaggio o sul confronto tra personaggi si possano spiegare come funzionali alla presentazione positiva del protagonista. È il caso, per esempio, del Cimone-personaggio della *Vita di Pericle*, a confronto con il Cimone-protagonista della relativa *Vita*; la parzialità del primo serve a far risaltare il protagonista di quel peculiare contesto, che è Pericle, mentre il secondo gode a sua volta della condizione di protagonista, diventando degno del rispetto e di tutta la considerazione documentaria e argomentativa da parte del biografo. Lo stesso terzo capitolo è soprattutto dedicato alla ricerca delle relazioni emotive e del dialogo tra il personaggio plutarcheo e la società con cui interagisce. Se si classifica tale 'dialogo cognitivo' come fondamentale nella redazione delle biografie di Plutarco, naturalmente le considerazioni tradizionali sul lettore antico delle *Vite* devono essere aggiornate, quale conseguenza di una ricostruzione più centrata sulla ricerca storico-affettiva che non sull'inclusione di tutte le possibili informazioni da trasmettere alla posterità. Questo implica anche - secondo Ch. - che le motivazioni della scrittura di Plutarco risiedano precisamente nel dialogo con la società contemporanea, a cui il biografo rivolge continuamente l'invito a non giudicare frettolosamente i grandi del passato. Lo scrittore «invites empathy from the readers and dissuades them from quickly moralising judgements, for it induces a special kind of immersive response, drawing the readers to get inside the skin of historical agents and work actively to figure out how and why they acted (and finally failed) as they did» (164). Tale *immersive response* potrebbe essere assunta come l'intento di fondo di ogni biografia plutarchea: una considerazione meditata e profonda delle qualità di un *carattere*, che soltanto grazie a tale filtro si trasforma in *personaggio* coerente e paradigmatico del passato. Anche il sistematico esercizio di confronto tra azione individuale e contesto collettivo sarebbe sempre finalizzato all'attivazione della riflessione autonoma del lettore, giacché Plutarco «invites the readers to engage with the minds of historical agents, that background of motives, thoughts and feelings, against and within which they act» (163).

Esemplare dell'analisi di Ch. (ma anche delle possibili conseguenze di tale prospettiva critica) è l'episodio dell'attraversamento del Rubicone da parte di Cesare, riletto in funzione delle possibili reazioni del lettore. Il celebre passo (Plu. *Caes*. 32), esaminato nel cuore del terzo capitolo del libro, dopo una rassegna di monologhi, riflessioni intime e silenzi dei protagonisti delle *Vite*, si configura anche come utile avvertenza sulle possibili derivazioni teoriche della proposta interpretativa di Ch. Da

una parte, infatti, lo studioso suppone che Plutarco voglia indurre i lettori a riflettere su un Cesare cogitabondo (che però non esprime i suoi pensieri) e momentaneamente incerto (però poi determinato nell'attraversare il fatale confine); dall'altra, l'autore ipotizza che il λογισμός muto di Cesare coincida con l'allusione alla fortuna del racconto (λόγος) di questo grandioso episodio (ὅσον τε λόγον αὐτῆς τοῖς αὖθις ἀπολείψουσι, 32, 7) e si possa identificare con la stessa pagina del biografo. Ancora una volta, «Plutarch's mastery of intra-psychic conflict reveals an interest in the individual's social role and interpersonal dialogue. Plutarch, his readers, and the men of history all engage and intimately participate in a self in dialogue not simply with the self of the protagonist but with his social context as well» (78). L'ipotesi è senza dubbio affascinante, ma - a questo punto - si corre anche il rischio di uscire dal testo e concedere più attenzione ai silenzi e al non detto che non alla consistenza (assai corposa nel caso di Plutarco) delle informazioni sopravvissute.

Vinta la tentazione di scrutare al di là della parola scritta, al termine della monografia di Ch. il lettore si rende conto che effettivamente nelle *Vite* di Plutarco molti elementi stilistici, retorici, narrativi e strutturali sono motivati dall'intenzione di suscitare una determinata reazione nel lettore. È significativo che l'indice degli argomenti contempli voci come «address to the readers» (216), «ambiguity - concerning narrator and readers» (216), «audience» (217), «experience - reader's extratextual» (220), «perspective(s) - of the reader(s)» (224), ovviamente «reader(s)», articolata in ben sei tipologie (225-226), «reflection - the readers'» (226) e che tutte quante forniscano abbondanti riferimenti diretti all'opera di Plutarco. Manca, tuttavia, la registrazione della categoria del 'constructed reader', di cui Ch. dà notizia nelle pagine iniziali della ricerca (4-6), soprattutto per differenziarlo dal 'lettore reale'. Mancano poi esempi storici di lettura delle *Vite*; in particolare Ch. avrebbe potuto trarre giovamento dal confronto con le testimonianze di lettura risalenti all'epoca imperiale e all'inizio della straordinaria fortuna di Plutarco. Gellio, Macrobio, Apuleio, Ateneo, sono tra gli autori che per primi testimoniarono la diffusione della sua opera, e che con le loro citazioni esplicitarono gli interessi e l'attenzione dei contemporanei nei confronti delle *Vite*. Tali nomi non compaiono nel lavoro di Ch., ma chi fosse interessato a confrontare l'accostamento teorico alle tecniche narrative di Plutarco con le testimonianze letterarie antiche e medioevali potrebbe ricorrere a uno strumento collettivo e sistematico come il *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plutarch*, edito da Sophia Xenophontos e Katerina Oikonomopoulou, pubblicato nel 2019.

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Elio Lo Cascio, Dario Mantovani (eds.), *Diritto romano e economia. Due modi di pensare e organizzare il mondo (nei primi tre secoli dell'Impero)*, Pavia University Press ("Pubblicazioni del CEDANT"), Pavia 2018, pp. 834, ISBN 978-88-6952-094-5.

El volumen reúne los resultados de la investigación realizada en una de las reuniones del *Collegio di Diritto romano* que organiza el *Centro di studi e ricerche sui Diritti Antichi* (*CEDANT*), ligado a la Universidad de Pavía. Así lo indica una nota introductoria, que explica además las particularidades de esta actividad científica colegial, desarrollada generalmente en el mes de enero de cada año para profundizar en un aspecto del Derecho de la antigüedad. La fórmula elegida responde a un proyecto de alta formación en el que conviven docentes especialistas en la materia abordada, pertenecientes a distintas universidades europeas, y jóvenes investigadores de procedencia internacional seleccionados por concurso de méritos. Durante tres semanas, los docentes imparten un conjunto de seminarios que forma parte de un programa orgánico concebido previamente y los estudiantes son invitados a discutir y a profundizar sobre los asuntos propuestos para exponer y debatir, en una segunda sesión en el mes de septiembre, las conclusiones obtenidas en su investigación individual. Las sesiones del año 2013 se dedicaron a la reflexión sobre la relación entre el Derecho y la Economía romanos y dieron como fruto esta obra colectiva, que solo puede describirse aquí en sus líneas más generales y que merece ser leída con detenimiento en su integridad.

A pesar de su naturaleza coral y de que los editores han respetado la pluralidad de enfoques de cada estudioso, puede decirse que el libro afronta la relación del Derecho y la economía romanos guiado por un principio metodológico común: el de mantener el mayor apego posible a las fuentes. Los ensayos abordan problemas y situaciones tratados en ellas y evitan las generalizaciones que no se desprenden cómodamente de los textos. Así, siendo ellos el principal instrumento de análisis, la investigación colectiva parte de una interrogante de naturaleza fenomenológica que acaba obteniendo una respuesta afirmativa que da título al volumen: *Diritto romano e economía. Due modi di pensare e organizare il mondo.*

El Derecho y la Economía de la actualidad, subraya la contraportada, comparten su interés por hechos como la apropiación, producción, consumo e intercambio de bienes y servicios, o la prestación del trabajo, las inversiones y el ahorro. Sin embargo, resulta innegable que cada disciplina atiende a preocupaciones y métodos distintos, y que una y otra han recorrido caminos distintos en su evolución a lo largo de la historia. A diferencia de lo que ocurre con el Derecho, la reflexión científica sobre la actividad económica (la definición precisa de su objeto, de sus métodos, sus leyes de funcionamiento, su lenguaje y sus propios conceptos) no se produjo hasta la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII, fijándose convencionalmente su nacimiento en el momento de la publicación de *La riqueza de las naciones* de Adam Smith (*An Inquiry into the Nature*

and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, 1776). A pesar de ello, se ha demostrado que el conocimiento humano experimenta un avance cuando las distintas teorías sobre la realidad encuentran el modo de complementarse entre sí y es legítimo preguntarse si estos ámbitos del saber, la economía y el Derecho, pueden colaborar para comprender mejor esa realidad por la que ambos se interesan; una pregunta que resulta especialmente desafiante cuando el escenario de encuentro se produce en el contexto de la antigüedad romana, que se presenta hoy irremediablemente incompleta y que, paradójicamente, resulta demasiado próxima y demasiado lejana. Próxima, por ser nosotros sus herederos directos y por llevar su sello la tradición cultural en la que estamos inmersos; lejana, por haber transcurrido ya más de un milenio desde que fueros escritos los textos que utilizamos para aproximarnos a ella.

Por todas estas circunstancias resultan esclarecedores los ensayos incluidos en la primera parte del volumen, titulado *Storia della storiografia e questioni di metodo*, porque explican los principales problemas con los que han debido enfrentarse los estudiosos en el análisis interrelacionado de estos dos campos científicos. En primer lugar, del análisis de la historiografía se desprenden de forma clara cuáles han sido las dificultades y las inquietudes intelectuales que han guiado las distintas reflexiones a lo largo del tiempo. Por otro lado, exponer los problemas metodológicos que salen al paso de la investigación sirve también como una carta de navegación que alerta sobre las rutas que no deben transitarse por haberse revelado estériles.

Elio Lo Cascio (*La storia economica: i principali orientamenti degli studi (XIX-XXI secolo)*, 3-22) presenta la evolución de los estudios sobre la historia económica de la antigüedad, desde la célebre discusión académica originada entre Karl Bücher (*Die Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, 1893) y Eduard Meyer (*Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Altertums*, 1895). Un debate que se mantiene hasta hoy y que, según cita el propio Lo Cascio, Keith Hopkins todavía calificaba en 1983 como un verdadero *academic Battleground*. Lo Cascio señala los hitos más importantes en la evolución de la historiografía dedicada a la historia económica, subrayando las aportaciones de Max Weber (*Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum*, 1909), Michael Rostovzeff (*Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 1926), Karl Polanyi (*Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, 1957) y Moses Finley (*The Ancient Economy*, 1973), sin olvidarse de las más recientes perspectivas de la obra *The Cambridge Economic History of the Grecoroman World* (2007), que incluye como criterios analíticos la ecología y la demografía; o *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy* (2012), que asume una metodología comparatista con otras economías preindustriales. El ensayo señala como especialmente relevantes para comprender la historia económica las aproximaciones que se proponen desde la *New Institutional Economics* y la *Law and Economics* o análisis económico del Derecho y afirma que la línea recomendada por la primera (que sigue de cerca las aportaciones del Nobel Douglass North y critica el paradigma neoclásico de la maximización del beneficio como criterio único para explicar el fenómeno económico) ofrece 'nuevas y potentes claves de lectura de la economía moderna y de las economías del pasado'.

Considerar los costes de transacción y el papel desempeñado por las instituciones ayuda a comprender que el individuo no puede hacer una mera elección racional de la maximización de la riqueza desde el momento en que su capacidad para el análisis de su realidad está impregnada y condicionada por las circunstancias y las instituciones que le circundan. Pueden ser entendidas éstas como 'normas de juego' y pueden ser formales y explícitas, como las normas jurídicas, o informales o implícitas, como las convenciones sociales, los tabúes, las costumbres y tradiciones, entre otras[1]. Se entrecruzan aquí el campo del Derecho y el de la economía y desde estos presupuestos cree Lo Cascio que pueden intentarse estudios que aborden las fuentes con nuevas interrogantes. Un análisis que, por cierto, orienta muchos de los trabajos compendiados en esta obra, como se verá después.

Laureta Maganzani (*Economia e diritto romano (XIX-XXI sec.). Storie varie di convergenze parallele*, 23-171), da cuenta de cómo ha sido abordada la relación de la economía y el Derecho romano en la historiografía de los siglos diecinueve y veinte. Señala que el análisis del Derecho romano ha sido efectuado desde dos aproximaciones económicas distintas: o bien, utilizado conceptos de la economía actual para explicar las normas del pasado; o bien, tratando de reconstruir el contexto de las normas romanas para explicar su economía. La estudiosa centra la atención en este segundo tipo de análisis, realizado por juristas y por economistas, y elabora una exhaustiva reseña de las distintas corrientes intelectuales, su contexto y sus principales representantes en estas dos últimas centurias. Dedica una atención especial a las aportaciones de las ya mencionadas *Economic Analysis of Law* y *New Institutional Economy* y señala las dificultades para aplicar sus métodos al estudio del Derecho romano, que ha de vérselas con un número escaso de fuentes, de interpretación no siempre sencilla, y con el riesgo de proyectar el presente sobre el pasado que se pretende conocer. Maganzani concluye que, siendo la economía y el Derecho dos disciplinas profundamente lejanas entre sí, tienden, sin embargo, a acercarse; sobre todo, en los períodos en los que cada una de ellas acusa una excesiva abstracción y formalismo. Una panorámica que se completa con el ensayo de Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi (*Diritto, Società ed economia in Roma antica e romanisti del Novecento*, 173-208), dedicado a los romanistas del siglo XX que prestaron una atención especial al contexto socioeconómico de las instituciones jurídicas.

Se cierra esta primera parte del volumen con tres ensayos dedicados a reflexionar sobre algunas cuestiones epistemológicas que suscita la investigación propuesta. Se medita, por ejemplo, sobre las peculiaridades de las fuentes jurídicas romanas y si éstas ofrecen o no una muestra confiable para deducir datos sobre la economía coetánea. También sobre si estos textos jurídicos contienen verdaderos conceptos económicos y, en todo caso, qué significado tenían para los juristas que los escribieron.

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[1] Sobre este punto cf. E. Lo Cascio, *La 'New Institutional Economics' e l'economia imperiale romana,* en *Storia romana e storia moderna*, Bari 2005, 69-83.

Los trabajos de Luuk de Ligt (*Roman Law and Roman Economic History: Some Methological Problems*, 209-221) y Giorgia Maragno (*I numeri nelle fonti giurisprudenziali. Prospettive di analisi*, 255-286), el primero de forma más general y el segundo en relación con el valor real de las cantidades que se mencionan en los textos jurisprudenciales, ponen su acento en las limitaciones que tienen las fuentes jurídicas como documentos de estudio de la economía. Luuk de Ligt incide, por ejemplo, sobre la dificultad para deducir de ellos cuál fue su auténtico ámbito de aplicación, es decir, si reflejaban una práctica generalizada en toda la sociedad romana o, al contrario, restringida a las *élites* a las que pertenecían sus autores. Insiste también en que, a pesar del carácter casuístico de los textos, se ha de tener en cuenta que los juristas no prestaban atención a los supuestos más habituales o frecuentes, sino a los más interesantes para la creación del Derecho, los casos peculiares que se salían de lo normal; características que desaconsejan que se utilicen para medir el volumen de la práctica económica. Tampoco las cantidades mencionadas en ellos son indicativas de las dimensiones de la economía, tal y como demuestra Maragno, porque los textos utilizan a menudo 'números casuísticos', en vez de magnitudes reales, es decir, cantidades estandarizadas que sirven para ejemplificar o para ayudar a comprender mejor el problema jurídico que aborda el jurista. En su estudio estadístico, Maragno ha detectado una repetición de los números 10 y 100 y también de los múltiplos de 5 y entiende que pueden haber servido para facilitar el cálculo mental y centrar la atención en el razonamiento jurídico.

El ensayo de Jean Andreau (*Concepts économiques dans les oeuvres des juristes romains*, 223-254) selecciona para su análisis una gama de vocablos latinos que tienen significado económico por cuanto están relacionados con la producción, la distribución y el consumo de bienes y servicios. Su estudio se ocupa de verificar si tales vocablos contienen un significado convencional propio, o si se trataba de nociones equivalentes o cercanas a las utilizadas por filósofos y retóricos de la cultura grecorromana, ligadas con ellas por un vínculo filogenético. El estudioso francés desaconseja el análisis aislado de conceptos individuales y considera preferible tomar en consideración un conjunto de ellos, de forma semejante, quizás, a las poblaciones de conceptos aludidas por Stephen Toulmin[2]. Andreau identifica en los términos económicos de los juristas numerosos puntos de contacto con el significado que tenían en su contexto cultural (por ejemplo, el término agricultura, que alude a una actividad, perfectamente delimitada, cuya acepción es compartida por el pensamiento erudito y por el jurisprudencial); pero aprecia, al mismo tiempo, que el Derecho los utiliza a veces de un modo particular y propio. Señala, por ejemplo, el término *operae*, y cita un estudio de Yean Thomas, que, dando un paso más allá, afirmaba que los juristas lo utilizaban para referirse a un objeto de intercambio, es decir, una mercancía, con un significado próximo al actual concepto abstracto de trabajo. *Operae* hace referencia a un conjunto heterogéneo de actividades que tienen en común ser remuneradas y que

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[2] S. Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, Princeton 1972.

implican para el asalariado la obligación de efectuar, no un resultado, sino una actividad cuantificable y valorable económicamente. La objetivación de las *operae* se produce, según Thomas, de la mano de los juristas y se aprecia especialmente en el tratamiento jurídico del usufructo del esclavo[3]. Podría ser un ejemplo de cómo el Derecho romano dio los primeros pasos en la construcción de algunos conceptos que fueron asumidos y forjados después por la reflexión económica.

Después de esta primera parte, las investigaciones sucesivas se disponen divididas en dos bloques: *Forme giuridiche di attività economiche* e *Il mercato e il Diritto: autonomia, tutela, effettività*; a las que se añade un ensayo final de Dario Mantovani, que sistematiza la pluralidad de estudios, y explicita su coherencia en la obra de conjunto. Dada su utilidad como guía de lectura, se tomará aquí como hilo conductor para reseñar el resto de los trabajos del volumen.

Señala Mantovani que la relación de las normas con la economía se ha analizado en la obra desde dos perspectivas: por un parte, se han considerado los efectos económicos de determinadas reglas jurídicas, es decir, su impacto económico; por otra parte, se ha reflexionado acerca de si de los textos puede deducirse que tales normas obedecieran a motivaciones económicas. A estas líneas guía puede añadirse, además, que algunos estudios han puesto de manifiesto lo ya anticipado en los primeros ensayos de naturaleza metodológica, como se verá a continuación.

En lo que se refiere a la virtualidad que tienen los textos jurídicos para informar sobre datos económicos, una cierta desconfianza queda justificada, por ejemplo, en el estudio de Alfons Bürge (*Fome giuridiche del lavoro subordinato*, 395-407). Subraya que, frente a la gran variedad de contratos de trabajo subordinado que documentan los textos de los juristas, la realidad que reflejan los documentos papirológicos de la práctica indica una clara prevalencia de los contratos suscritos con esclavos y revela un uso frecuente del trabajo de éstos fuera de la casa, aportando un ingreso económico extra para el *pater familias*. Por su parte, Gwladys Bernard (*The Epigraphy of the* Societates*: Economic Activities and Legal Status of Place-name Partnerships*, 343-364), analiza las fuentes epigráficas relativas a las *societates* denominadas según su localización (*place-name societies*), como es el caso de la S(*ocietas*) m(*ontis*) F(*icarensis*) del Sureste de *Hispania*, y comprueba que se trataba de explotaciones mineras no gestionadas por *publicani* bajo concesión pública, sino por particulares que las habrían adquirido por ocupación (en contraste con el régimen general de explotación minera documentado por las fuentes jurídicas). Y puede citarse también en este sentido el ensayo de Werner Eck (*Die Wirksamkeit des römischen Rechts im Imperium Romanum und seinen Gesellschaften*, 747-782), quien a partir de una tabla hallada en la provincia de la Dacia (*CIL*, III, 940) que recoge la *mancipatio* de un esclavo realizada entre extranjeros (a los que, en principio, no era de aplicación del Derecho romano por no reunir el *status civitatis*) induce que el Derecho romano pudo

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[3] Y. Thomas, *Travail incorporé dans une matière première, travail d'usage et travail comme marchandise. Le droit comme matrice des catégories économiques a Rome*, en J. Andreau, J. France y S. Pittia (eds.), *Mentalités et Choix économiques des romains*, Bordeaux 2004, 201-225.

alcanzar un uso extendido a lo largo de todo el imperio y ser empleado por todo tipo de personas, no solo las élites, quizás con la finalidad de alcanzar una mayor seguridad jurídica en las transacciones económicas.

De estos trabajos se deduce, en definitiva, que las fuentes jurisprudenciales son, cuando menos, insuficientes para reflejar el estado de la economía, ya que ofrecen solo un retazo particular de la realidad, que es el que ha sido seleccionado por el jurista en función de su propio ámbito de interés. Una conclusión a la que llega también el estudio de Mattia Balbo (*Obblighi del padrone ed equipaggiamento del fittavolo nella riflessione dei giuristi*, 431-444), quien, a través de un texto de Ulpiano que tradicionalmente ha sido considerado clave para la comprensión de la economía agraria de época altoimperial, propone observaciones interesantes. Llama la atención sobre la variedad de formas de explotación que documentan las fuentes y la consiguiente dificultad para concluir que la aludida en el mencionado texto de Ulpiano pueda considerarse una práctica generalizada o mayoritaria. Y destaca también que la circunstancia de que Ulpiano cite al jurista Neracio para referirse a una costumbre (*soleat*), es difícil que aluda a una práctica económica, pues las condiciones de la economía eran muy distintas en los periodos en los que vivieron uno y otro. Según Balbo, la referencia indicaría más bien una praxis jurídica, puesto que Upiano apelaría a Neracio para reforzar su razonamiento dentro de la tradición jurisprudencial. Mantovani destaca las conclusiones del estudio para poner el foco de atención en el método seguido por los juristas romanos y las precauciones con las que se debe actuar a la hora de deducir el contexto socioeconómico que podría haber detrás de los textos jurisprudenciales: los textos tratan 'casos tipo' y se ocupan de problemas jurídicos en el seno de una reflexión que tiene su propia tradición. Una actitud de cautela que previene también contra el 'presentismo' en que se incurriría si se interpretaran los textos según una teoría económica comprensiva de la que carecían sus autores. Este último extremo se constata asimismo en los estudios de Andrea Lovato sobre la noción de *pretium* (Pretium *e* quanti ea res est *nei giuristi: rapporto fra il prezzo di mercato e il calcolo giuridico*, 661-706) y en el de Ulriche Babusiaux (*Die Duchsetzung ökonomischer Interessen im klassischen römischen Zivilprozess*, 707-746) sobre la aplicación de criterios económicos en el proceso civil romano.

Los ensayos que abordan el impacto económico de las normas, adoptan, señala Mantovani, dos referentes de valoración económica que van, desde criterios cualitativos que consideran de forma genérica y global los recursos y su utilización; a apreciaciones más cuantitativas ligadas al criterio de eficiencia de la teoría económica neoclásica o a los más modernos costes de transacción. Entre estos últimos, Constantin Willems (*Vermögensallokation in Verarbeitungsfällen. Eine Effizienzanalyse von Eigentumszuordnung und Ausgleichsansprüchen im Fall der* specificatio, 569-600) considera que el óptimo paretiano explica las distintas soluciones dadas por los juristas al problema de la adquisición de la propiedad por especificación realizada de buena fe.

Luigi Pellecchi (*Dimensione economica e azione della giurisprudenza: il caso delle garanzie reali*, 445-505) investiga si el concepto moderno de costes de transacción sirve para valorar la eficacia de la regulación jurídica de las garantías reales y constata que lo que hoy está detrás de este concepto fue tenido en cuenta por los antiguos como un problema para la concesión del crédito y que, en este sentido, las garantías reales fueron un instrumento eficaz para favorecerlo. Ahora bien, de los textos jurisprudenciales no se desprende, según su estudio, ninguna justificación económica. Las razones económicas no aparecen como criterio para la solución de los casos planteados a los juristas, el pretor o la legislación imperial y es la búsqueda del equilibrio entre las partes en conflicto, la *aequitas*, dice Pellecchi, la que se muestra como criterio guía de las decisiones jurídicas relacionadas con las garantías reales. También Roberto Fiori (*L'allocazione del rischio nei contratti relativi al trasporto*, 507-567) concluye que los juristas, cuando valoran en cada caso quién debe asumir el riesgo en los distintos contratos con los que se reguló el trasporte de mercancías, no se apoyan en motivaciones económicas, sino en una lógica interna propia del esquema contractual elegido.

Desde un punto de vista más cualitativo, Dennis Patrick Kehoe (*Agency, Tutorship and the Protection of Pupils in Roman Law*, 409-430) y Tiziana J. Chiusi (*'A che cosa servivano le* actiones adiecticiae qualitatis*?'. Sulla funzione delle cosiddette azioni adiettizie*, 289-322), explican la institución de la tutela y el *peculio* y las acciones adyecticias, respectivamente, como casos en los que las normas favorecen la economía en la medida en la que otorgan seguridad y estabilidad a las relaciones sociales y al tráfico comercial. Aldo Petrucci (*Il riflesso dell'attività di intermediazione finanziaria sulle regole giuridiche*, 365-393) subraya la importancia que las normas concedieron a la actividad bancaria por ser ésta necesaria, en su opinión, para la utilidad pública. Juan Manuel Blanch Nougués (*El modelo de la contratación pública en los tres primeros siglos del Imperio: un ensayo de análisis económico-jurídico*, 601-657) subraya la eficiencia económica del régimen jurídico de la contratación pública, que recurría al régimen de las concesiones por adjudicación en subasta pública. Y David Johnston (*The Impact of Economic Activity on the Structure of the Law of Partnership*, 323-342) concluye que lo que hoy se valora como una rémora en el contrato de sociedad romano, es decir, aquello que dificultaría que estas agrupaciones pudieran desempeñarse con agilidad y eficacia en el mundo de los negocios (la falta de personalidad jurídica, la falta de responsabilidad limitada, la extinción de la sociedad por la voluntad unilateral de un solo socio, ...) puede explicarse porque las funciones que las *societates* desempeñaban en aquel contexto no habrían demandado tales características, puesto que se sabe que el Derecho romano contempló algunos aspectos de las sociedades modernas en casos especiales, como el de la *societas argentarii* o la *societas publicanorum*.

En lo que se refiere a si existe o no una motivación económica de las decisiones jurídicas, puede decirse que todos los ensayos concluyen que los textos reflejan criterios de decisión elaborados específicamente por y para el razonamiento jurídico.

Así lo resume Mantovani, que ofrece además una particular exégesis de otros textos y una reflexión final que cierra el volumen.

Necessitas y utilitas, señala Mantovani, son nociones que aparecen con frecuencia en la motivación de las decisiones de los juristas, pero con un significado muy concreto que estaba relacionado con las partes cuyo conflicto se debía resolver. Menciona algunos ejemplos: cuando Ulpiano en D. XIV 1, 1, 5 habla de la utilitas navegantium, «el jurista razona desde el punto de vista del usuario» y de su necesidad de navegar, «y no del empresario o de la economía»; cuando Gayo menciona la utilidad pública de los argentarii en D. II 13, 10, 1 (officium eorum atque ministerium publicam habet causam), apela a la utilitas para reforzar la tutela de los clientes que depositaban su dinero en manos del argentarius, obligando al banquero a elaborar libros contables según un patrón determinado y a facilitarlos cuando sus clientes lo precisaran. Los textos muestran que «las motivaciones jurídicas en la esfera del aequum tomaban en el mundo romano el puesto que en el mundo contemporáneo ocupan los argumentos económicos».

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Mario Vegetti (1937 - 2018)

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Mario Vegetti ci ha lasciato l'11 marzo 2018, in seguito a una grave malattia che non gli aveva tuttavia impedito di lavorare quasi fino all'ultimo giorno. Era nato a Milano nel 1937 e lì era sempre vissuto. Si era brillantemente laureato in Filosofia a Pavia e negli anni immediatamente successivi - un fatto che pochi conoscono - era diventato l'addetto alle pubbliche relazioni in una società italo-americana di elettronica. Nello stesso tempo proseguiva i suoi studi, che in quel periodo riguardavano la medicina antica, un ambito allora pionieristico, dedicandosi tra l'altro alla traduzione delle opere di Ippocrate, pubblicata nel 1965. Il conseguimento della libera docenza aveva consentito a Vegetti di entrare nel mondo accademico, diventando professore incaricato di Storia della Filosofia antica a Pavia nel 1967. Fu il primo docente pavese di quella disciplina, che solo in quegli anni aveva iniziato a costituire un insegnamento autonomo. Diventato professore ordinario, Vegetti insegnò ininterrottamente a Pavia fino al 2002, anno in cui decise di andare in pensione, con largo anticipo rispetto ai limiti di età previsti dalla legge. Negli anni successivi continuò a dedicarsi con assiduità e passione agli studi, ad attività seminariali e a conferenze in sedi prestigiose italiane e straniere. Nel 2000 era stato uno dei fondatori del *Collegium Politicum*, la rete internazionale di ricerca per lo studio delle teorie politiche antiche e della loro ricezione.

Gli studi di Vegetti, nel corso della sua lunga carriera, si erano orientati in molteplici direzioni. Anzitutto, si era occupato della medicina greca e della scienza antica in generale, un ambito a cui si riferiscono, tra i numerosi contributi, le importanti edizioni delle opere di Ippocrate e di Galeno, e delle opere biologiche di Aristotele. Dalla metà degli anni Settanta, con la pubblicazione dell'articolo *L'ideologia della città*, in collaborazione con l'amico e collega Diego Lanza, Vegetti iniziò una serie di studi caratterizzati da una modalità nuova di accostarsi al mondo antico, in particolare alla città greca, ai suoi meccanismi di funzionamento, alle sue forme di sapere. Erano gli anni in cui era molto vivo il confronto con gli studiosi francesi, da Vernant, a Detienne, a Vidal-Naquet, che avevano utilizzato nuove metodologie, dall'antropologia allo strutturalismo, per imprimere una svolta agli studi di antichistica, fino ad allora contrassegnati da una forte impronta classicistica. Nel

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corso degli anni Ottanta Vegetti incentrò i suoi studi soprattutto sull'etica, occupandosi prima dell'etica stoica e scrivendo poi il volume *L'etica degli antichi*, uno dei suoi libri più fortunati, che viene continuamente ristampato.

Il coronamento di questi studi sull'etica è costituito da quella vera e propria impresa - per usare le parole dello stesso Vegetti - rappresentata dalla traduzione e dal commento della *Repubblica* di Platone. Quest'opera, in sette volumi, pubblicati nell'arco di un decennio, comprende la traduzione annotata, scritta dallo stesso Vegetti, e un tipo di commento del tutto innovativo, costituito, per ogni libro del dialogo, da una serie di saggi redatti da vari specialisti, dedicati a tutti gli aspetti che ne emergono: teorici, storici, sociali, antropologici. L'impresa, che ha visto il suo completamento nel 2007, con il volume dedicato al libro X, ha goduto di un vasto apprezzamento a livello nazionale e internazionale.

Negli anni successivi, la produzione scientifica di Mario Vegetti continuò a essere molto rilevante. Tra i volumi, che si affiancano a numerosi saggi, sono da ricordare: *Quindici lezioni su Platone* (2003), *«Un paradigma in cielo»: Platone politico da Aristotele al Novecento* (2009), *Incontro con Aristotele* (2016), *Chi comanda nella città* (2017). Gli ultimi mesi della sua vita sono stati dedicati alla raccolta e alla riedizione dei saggi, composti nel corso del tempo, su Ippocrate e su Galeno.

Mario Vegetti è stato senz'altro un grande studioso, non solo uno storico della filosofia antica, ma un vero e proprio filosofo, che ha occupato un posto di rilievo nel panorama culturale italiano e internazionale. Allo stesso tempo è stato un grande maestro per generazioni di studenti, alcuni dei quali, come me, hanno avuto la fortuna di formarsi e poi di lavorare con lui. La sua profonda cultura, la sua capacità di mettere a fuoco i problemi e di proporne soluzioni originali, la sua apertura alla discussione hanno sempre costituito un esempio e uno stimolo alla ricerca.

Questo ritratto di Mario Vegetti non sarebbe completo se non ricordassi la sua passione politica: un marxista militante, che aveva assunto sempre posizioni lontane da ogni dogmatismo. Voglio menzionare anche la sua infaticabile attività di organizzatore culturale, che ha dato luogo alla progettazione e alla realizzazione di innumerevoli cicli di incontri, in particolare presso la Casa della Cultura di Milano: alle ultime manifestazioni aveva partecipato pur essendo ormai profondamente segnato dalla malattia.

Mario Vegetti ha offerto costantemente un esempio di rigore, sia nell'ambito dei suoi comportamenti, sia nel suo infaticabile impegno di studio, che sarà sempre ricordato da chi lo ha conosciuto e frequentato. La sua intelligenza critica si riflette nelle opere di cui è stato autore, che continuano a costituire un punto di riferimento nell'ambito della storia della filosofia antica.

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