Debating the Unity of Virtues in the second century: Following ‘antakolouthein’ from Alexander of Aphrodisias to Plotinus

Vlis, Anouk van der

DEBATING THE UNITY OF VIRTUES IN THE SECOND CENTURY

Following 'antakolouthein' from Alexander of Aphrodisias to Plotinus

Name: C.A. van der Vlis

Study: Philosophy MA (120EC)

Specialisation: Philosophy of Humanities

Supervisor: Prof.dr. F.A.J. de Haas

Date: 17-11-2021

Inhoudsopgave

Introduction

Even though the commentary on Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea* from Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 2nd century AD) is lost, pieces of Alexander's ethical theory have survived in his works *Ethical Problems* and the *Supplement to On the Soul,* also known as the *Mantissa.*[1] These pieces consist of specific questions on different topics, such as virtues and pleasure, and they show which topics Alexander was actively discussing within his school as well as the topics of the active philosophical debates among the philosophical schools such as the Stoics.[2]

One of the debates is about the mutual implication of the virtues. Its main thesis is that if you have one virtue, you have the others as well. *Mantissa* 18 is dedicated to this topic, as well as one *quaestio* in the *Ethical Problems*.[3] The discussion of the mutual implication is marked by the specific term *antakolouthein* (ἀντακολουθεῖν), meaning 'to be reciprocally implied'.[4]

Interestingly, the same term is found in Plotinus' *Enneads,* namely in *Ennead* 1.2 and 1.3, which both discuss ethical topics.[5] Since it is known that Plotinus (204-270 AD), the founder of Neoplatonism, has used Alexander's writings and commentaries for his philosophy, especially for his metaphysics, one can assume that Plotinus knew of Alexander's ethical writings as well.[6] Because there is an already established connection between Alexander and Plotinus and they share this topic of the mutual implication of the virtues, this raises the question of what further connections there are between Alexander and Plotinus on this subject?

It is impossible to determine whether Plotinus is directly influenced by Alexander, but it is possible to determine whether Plotinus actively engages with the debate visible in Alexander's ethical texts. Therefore, the task at hand in this thesis will be to answer the following question: To what degree does Plotinus participate in the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues as is visible in Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Ethical Problems* and *Mantissa?*

The basis for the answer lies in comparing both philosophers on the subject of the mutual implication of the virtues and finding the differences and similarities between them. The starting point of this thesis will therefore be Alexander's arguments on the mutual implication of the virtues, which will show the different perspectives of the debate.

---

[1] See Tuominen (2012: 888–89) for an overview of the extant and lost works of Alexander of Aphrodisias. See the entire article (852-95) for an overview of the other commentators on Aristotle from the first century BC until the late sixth century AD, including general themes, extant and lost works and an extensive bibliography.
[2] It is debated whether the author of these texts is Alexander himself. Tuominen (2012: 889) attributes them to an unknown author from Alexander's school. For clarity, I will refer to the author of these texts in this thesis as 'Alexander'.
[3] Alex. *Mant.* 153.28-156.27; Alex. *Eth. P.* 142.23-143.8. All Greek editions used in this thesis are listed in the bibliography.
[4] *LSJ* 9th ed., s.v. "ἀντακολουθέω".
[5] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.1; Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.9-10.
[6] See Porph. *Plot.* 14.5-13 for the influences on Plotinus.

Before going to Plotinus' treatment of this topic, Aristotle and the Stoics must be discussed first. Because Alexander is a commentator on Aristotle, Aristotle's philosophy has had a tremendous influence on Alexander. It needs to be determined to what degree Alexander's arguments on the mutual implication of the virtues are Aristotelian. The same question must be answered for the Stoics because they are participants in the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues. Answers to these questions will help to identify echoes of the debate in Plotinus as well. Therefore, chapter 2 is dedicated to Aristotle and chapter 3 to the Stoics.

In the final chapter, Plotinus' treatment on the mutual implication of the virtues will be explained and the differences and similarities between Plotinus and Alexander and the Stoics shall be pointed out. Then an answer to the question of to what degree Plotinus participates in the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues visible in Alexander will be formulated in the conclusion.

Chapter 1: Alexander of Aphrodisias on the mutual implications of the virtues

In the *Mantissa* and the *Ethical Problems,* Alexander presents different arguments based on different aspects for the mutual implication of the virtues, which complicate determining what his main argument would have been in the debate. A further difficulty is that the arguments are presented in a disjointed manner. The *Ethical Problems* contains thirty chapters with overlapping content to the point of being identical to each other.[7] Only one chapter deals with the mutual implication of the virtues, which is very similar to some arguments in *Mantissa* chapter 18. In turn, the arguments in the *Mantissa* are presented in the 'battery of arguments' style, recognizable by the repeated use of 'moreover' (*eti*).[8] Though characteristic of the *Mantissa*, it means that it is a collection of arguments and not one argumentation.[9]

The goal of this chapter is twofold: firstly to give an overview of Alexander's arguments on the mutual implication of the virtues and secondly to construct Alexander's main argument from these arguments. Before going to the arguments, two aspects of the debate must be discussed first, namely the meaning of the term *antakolouthein* and the unity of the virtues. This provides the basis for deciding whether Alexander's arguments are useful for constructing his main argument. Finally, this chapter presents the reconstructed main argument of Alexander on the mutual implication of the virtues.

1.1: Shaping the debate: implication, unity, and necessity

The question of whether the virtues mutually imply each other is only part of the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues. The other part consists of how the implication works and on what kind of terms this implication occurs. The term *antakolouthein* already carries information in itself about the implication, answering the former. The latter is answered by looking at the unity of the virtues and how this unity can be conceived.

1.1.1: The necessity of *antakolouthein*

The relation of the mutual implication of the virtues is indicated with the verb *antakolouthein,* meaning 'to be reciprocally implied'.[10] It appears in the title of *Mantissa* chapter 18, as well in the title of *quaestio* 22. According to Sharples, this term is Stoic and it occurs in several Stoic

[7] Sharples (1990: 15-16). These pages give an overview of all *quaestiones* with titles. *Quaestio* 26 (p. 69) on nobility in relation to pleasure is "almost verbally identical to the latter part of *P. Eth.* 23".
[8] Sharples (2000: sec. 2). Due to publication in an online magazine only, there are no page numbers. Instead, I will refer to the numbered sections in the text.
[9] Sharples, (2004: 159).
[10] *LSJ,* 9th ed., s.v. "ἀντακολουθέω".

fragments on virtues, which will be further discussed in chapter 3.[11] Although *antakolouthein* is used exclusively in the context of virtues in this thesis and the *Ethical Problems* and the *Mantissa*, Alexander has also used it in his commentary on Aristotle's *Analytica Priori,* the work on syllogistic logic.[12] The logical context has an impact on the meaning and associations of *antakolouthein*.

Though *antakolouthein* is not used often in the commentary, the related verb *akolouthein* (ἀκολουθεῖν) is used much more frequently. The standard translation is 'to follow'.[13] The translators of the commentary say the following about *akolouthein* in this context: "The conclusion *hepetai* or *akolouthei* the premisses: we use 'follow (from)' for both verbs – which both carry the spatial and temporal sense of 'follow' (i.e. 'come after') in non-logical contexts. *Akolouthia* is the cognate noun: there is no good English noun from 'follow', so we use 'implication' for *akolouthia* and lose the transparency from its connection with *akolouthein*."[14] The logical context gives a sense of necessity to 'to follow', which is also found in the cognate noun and their translation of 'implication'. The conclusion does not follow randomly but necessarily from the premises: the conclusion is implied by the premises. In this logical context, therefore, *akolouthein* and the cognate noun *akolouthia* express the necessary relationship between premise and conclusion.

The verb *antakolouthein* is built from *akolouthein* and the suffix *anti-* (ἀντί). The suffix in compositions with verbs has several meanings, among others 'mutually', 'in return' or 'equal to'.[15] The combination of *akolouthein* and *anti-* can thus be translated as the LSJ offers for *antakolouthein*: 'to be reciprocally implied'.[16] From its use in the context of logic, it can be gathered that this implication happens necessarily. It is not 'having one means having the other', but the stronger 'you cannot have one without the other'.

The use of *antakolouthein* in a logical context illuminates the necessity in the relation of the mutual implication, which must be remembered in the ethical context of the virtues. For this reason, any argumentation on the mutual implication of the virtues must show the necessity of the implication, thus why you cannot have one virtue without the others.

1.1.2: The question of the unity of the virtues

The other question that must be answered in this debate, is on what basis the mutual implication rests, which means that the question of the mutual implication of the virtues is inseparable from the question of the unity of the virtues. Answering the question of the unity

[11] Sharples (2004: 160n542).
[12] Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG), http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/Iris/inst/tsearch.jsp#s=18 (accessed October 14, 2021). Via 'text search', I have searched for the lemma 'ἀντακολουθέω', and then specified the search for Alexander's commentary on the *Analytica Priori.* The TLG gave 10 occurrences of *antakolouthein* in this text.
[13] *LSJ,* 9th ed., s.v. "ἀκολουθέω".
[14] Barnes (1991: 20).
[15] *LSJ,* 9th ed., s.v. "ἀντί".
[16] *LSJ,* 9th ed., s.v. "ἀντακολουθέω".

of the virtues gives answers to the questions of how and on what terms the implication works.

There are multiple ways of approaching the unity and subsequent mutual implication. In his article on the unity of virtues, Sharples offers two approaches.[17] The first approach, in this thesis called 'unity model 1', states that there is only virtue and the individual virtues are in fact the same, as illustrated in figure 1.[18] We mistakenly think that they have a different meaning or content, which is reflected in our use of the names of individual virtues. The virtues imply each other because they *are* each other, but this view does not allow for different identities of the virtues.

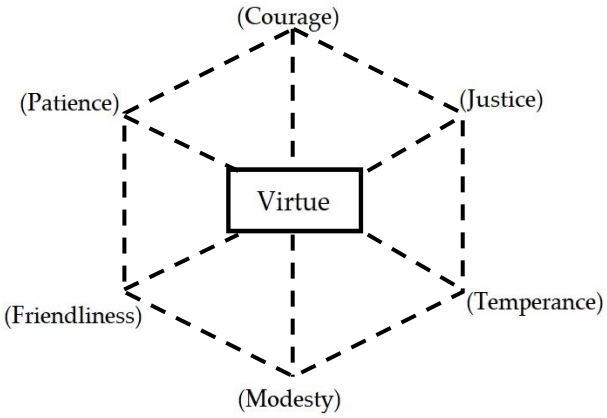

Figure 1: Unity Model 1 [19]

Illustrated in figure 2, the second approach ('unity model 2') states that the individual virtues are based on the same underlying reality, in which: "the words for the different virtues do indeed apply to a single underlying reality, in such a way that they may all correctly be applied to every instance of virtuous action, but particular instances can nevertheless be most properly named with reference to one particular virtue".[20] It is the underlying reality that is shared, while the virtues still retain their individuality. Having any virtue implies having the rest because one possesses the underlying reality. Acquiring the underlying reality will therefore mean that one has all the virtues as well. It is also possible to posit a principle instead of an underlying reality to secure the unity of the virtues.

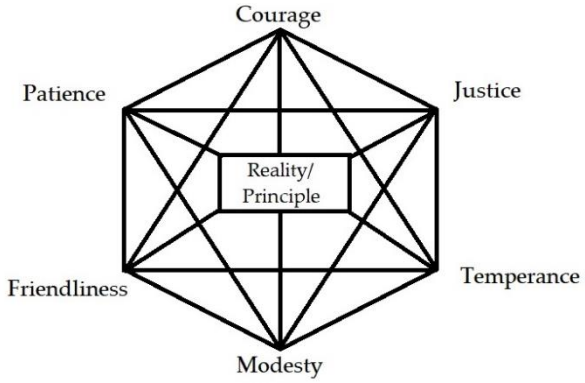

Figure 2: Unity Model 2

Based on Kraut's explanation of the reciprocity of the virtues, a third approach can be identified, as is illustrated in figure 3.[21] He sees reciprocity as a list of biconditionals: "one is temperate iff one is courageous; one is courageous iff one is generous; one is generous iff magnificent; etc."[22] Though not

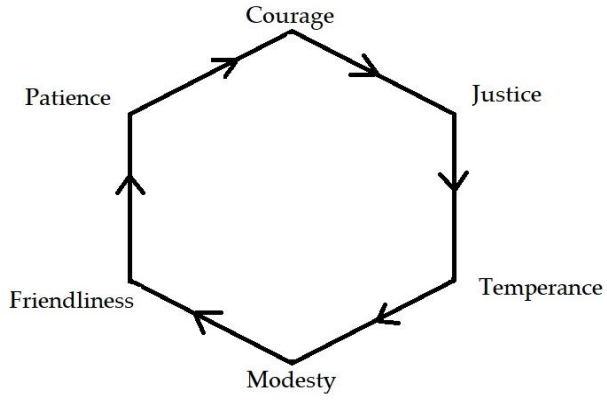

Figure 3: Unity Model 3

[17] Sharples (2000: sec. 1).
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] For clarity, I have chosen to illustrate the models using six virtues, but this can be expanded to an indefinite number of virtues.
[20] Sharples (2000: sec. 1).
[21] Kraut (1988: 79–86).
[22] *Ibid.* 80.

strictly about the unity of the virtues, one can imagine that the list will end with temperance, closing the list and creating a circle of biconditionals. This will form a unity and having any virtue will therefore imply having them all. However, any virtue is only directly connected to the one it implies and the one it is implied by. It can be questioned whether this is enough to say that the virtues form a unity in which any virtue implies the other virtues. Furthermore, Kraut does not explain whether the order should be set or random, or have a set starting point, which impacts the kind of unity one can form based on this model.

With the necessity and the different models of unity as aspects of the debate in mind, we can now turn to Alexander's arguments.

1.2: The arguments of Alexander

The disjointed presentation of Alexander's arguments entails that each argument must be seen as an argumentation on its own. Sharples rightly points out that it is unclear to what extent the individual arguments are meant to be taken together.[23] Therefore, each argument will be presented in the same way they are presented in the *Mantissa* and the *Ethical Problems*. The numbering used here will be used throughout this thesis.

It is important to note that the arguments are not necessarily exclusively Alexandrian or Aristotelian in origin. Because it is a debate, arguments from other philosophers or schools would have been considered as well and included in the list. Furthermore, each argument will be discussed only in terms of usefulness. The usefulness will be determined by whether the argument explains the necessity of the implication and the unity of the virtues. When the argument is deemed not useful, it will be explained why. The useful arguments will be used in the construction of Alexander's main position.

1.2.1: The arguments from the *Mantissa*

Mantissa chapter 18 opens with: "That the virtues are implied by one another might also be shown in the following way".[24] There are, in fact, two ways: the first way is to show how and why the virtues imply each other. The second way is to appeal to the plausibility of the mutual implication of the virtues. The first way concludes the mutual implication, the latter takes it as its starting point.

Arguments (1) to (4) fall in the latter category of arguments.[25] Alexander shows the plausibility of the claim that the virtues imply each other by showing that the virtues must be a unity from the situations of arguments (1) to (4). These arguments, while valid when the unity of the virtues is assumed, do not explain why or how the virtues are a unity. While

[23] Sharples (2000: sec. 5).
[24] Alex. *Mant.* 153.29.
[25] Alex. *Mant.* 153.29-154.16. All translations of Alexander used in this thesis are by R.W. Sharples.

they are therefore not useful for the construction of Alexander's main argument, they do show his approach to the virtues and their unity.

Alexander opens argument (1) by stating that it is impossible to only have one virtue in its entirety, but not the others too.[26] He shows this with the following examples: "For it is not possible to have justice in isolation, if it belongs to the just person to act justly in all things that require virtue, but the licentious person will not act justly when something from the class of pleasant things leads him astray, nor the coward when something frightening is threatened against him if he does what is just".[27] The point is that one cannot be a just coward (or any other combination of virtues and vices) because cowardice interferes with acting completely justly in all situations requiring virtue and therefore this just coward is not properly just. The only situation in which one can be properly just is when one would have all virtues. Thereby it is shown that the virtues must mutually imply each other.

Argument (1) is a valid argument if one presumes that a virtue can only be a proper virtue if the other virtues are present and there are no vices. This means that having virtues is an all-or-nothing matter: one either has all the virtues or none of them at all. This also raises the bar for the acquisition of any virtue.

These points are also visible in argument (2), which is about the use of the adjective 'good' in relation to virtue.[28] According to Alexander, "[…] the person who has virtue is called 'good' without qualification and without an addition, and it is impossible for the person to be good without qualification who is not good in all respects. So it is impossible to have a single virtue in isolation."[29] In contrast, people who possess certain skills or knowledge are 'good' with qualification, such as a good carpenter.[30] But only if someone has all virtues, would he be called good in all respects, which is equivalent to good without qualification. The just coward (if such persons would exist) is simply not good in all respects and can therefore not be called good without qualification. For this reason, 'the person who has virtue' must therefore refer to general excellence, meaning having all the virtues. To be good is thus to have all the virtues, making it an all-or-nothing matter again.

Argument (3) is a combination of arguments (1) and (2). Taking the adjective 'bad', Alexander argues that a person who has vice is bad without qualification and therefore cannot be called good without qualification.[31] It becomes clear from the conclusion that 'a person who has vice' actually means 'a person who has any vice': "it is impossible for one who has any vice to have virtue simultaneously".[32] As in argument (1), any vice interferes with properly having any virtue. Argument (3) is the stronger version of this: any vice is incompatible with having virtue at all. With arguments (1) and (2) in mind, argument (3)

[26] Alex. *Mant.* 153.30-31.
[27] Alex. *Mant.* 153.31-154.1
[28] Alex. *Mant.* 154.17-23.
[29] Alex. *Mant.* 154.21-23.
[30] Alex. *Mant.* 154.17-20.
[31] Alex. *Mant.* 154.23-27.
[32] Alex. *Mant.* 154.27.

seems to suggest that one is either bad without qualification or good without qualification. So, one would, again, have all of the virtues or none at all.

Argument (4) continues with the theme of vice. The argument is as follows: "if [i] the vices are not implied by one another – and how [could they be] when they are opposite to one another, given that some consist in excess and some in deficiency? – and if [ii] vice is sufficient for unhappiness, [iii] just a single vice will be sufficient for unhappiness. But how is it possible to say that an unhappy person has any virtue?"[33]

From the previous arguments, we have seen that any vice is incompatible with having virtues. Thus, the conclusion that an unhappy person, someone who has any vice, does not possess any virtue, is correct, but only if the unity of the virtues is assumed. Happiness is put opposite to unhappiness and vice opposite to virtue: it is either one or the other. The all-or-nothing approach is thus seen again in argument (4), meaning that Alexander sees the virtues as a unity that one either has or has not.

From argument (5), Alexander uses the other way to show that the virtues mutually imply each other. Argument (5) is focused on *to kalon* (το καλόν), which is the good or, in Sharples' translation, the noble. Alexander uses both *to kalon* and *agathos* (ἀγαθός) to refer to what is good in the arguments, which indicates that these terms have the same meaning for him. Whenever 'the noble' is mentioned in the context of Alexander, it can be changed to 'the good' and vice versa. The good is connected to virtue because "virtue performs all its actions for the sake of the noble, *qua* noble […] the person who has virtue will be a lover of what is noble."[34] Many different things can be noble and nobility is what virtue is focused on. So, if one is a lover of all things noble, one would equally love courageous things as well as just things, because they both share in being noble. This would then entail that this lover of the noble has all virtues.[35] For if he would love courageous things but not just things, he would not know what is noble, because the knowledge of the noble is singular.[36]

This argument seems more Platonic than Aristotelian, for the good is present here as the goal of all virtuous actions. Aristotle criticises Plato for using 'good' for all kinds of things that are not the same kind.[37] The focus of Alexander on the knowledge of the good also has Platonic echoes.[38] This argument points out the shared use of the knowledge of the noble between the individual virtues, using the singularity of the good on the one hand and the multiplicity of the virtues on the other hand. Therefore argument (5) is useful for Alexander's main argument.

Argument (6) picks up the theme of argument (5) and shows how the unity and individuality of virtues are related to the noble: "the virtues differ from one another not by

[33] Alex. *Mant.* 154.26-31.
[34] Alex. *Mant*. 154.32-33.
[35] Alex. *Mant.* 154.34.
[36] Alex. *Mant.* 155.2.
[37] Aris. *EN.* 1096.23-29.
[38] See Cormack (2006: 27-36), where he discusses Plato's dialogues *Laches* and *Charmides* and the role of knowledge in the early dialogues. In both dialogues, the knowledge of good and evil is touched upon. For further reading on the relation between knowledge and the virtues in Plato, see Cormack (2006).

their goal but by the things with which they are concerned".[39] Having one virtue is having nobility as the goal, which is common to all virtues, meaning that having one virtue entails having them all. This argument strengthens the line of thought started in argument (5) and will therefore be considered in the construction of the main argument.

Argument (7) presents the individual virtues as parts of a whole and links them to different faculties of the rational mind. A single virtue is the culmination of that part of the reason.[40] Sharples rightly points out it is not made clear here how virtues are connected to different faculties of reason.[41] Using the terms from argument (2), Alexander presents the individual virtues as qualified virtues while virtue as a whole is unqualified.[42] Virtue is only considered a whole when all the parts are present. Furthermore, the individual virtues are only virtues when they are part of the whole, but they are virtues in name only once they are separated from the whole.[43] The goal of becoming virtuous is thus acquiring the whole of virtue. The whole is again connected to the noble as the common goal of virtues that unites the virtues. The all-or-nothing position on virtues is also visible here because a single virtue is not considered a real virtue unless it is part of the whole, which in turn can only be whole when all its parts are present.[44] It does, however, present an interpretation on how to think the unity and multiplicity of the virtues together and will therefore be considered in the construction of Alexander's main argument.

Argument (8) starts with the difference between the reasoning part of virtue, which is understanding and knowledge of good things, and the emotional part of virtue, which is doing good things. They are connected by knowledge of the good. It is claimed that "it is not possible to do good things if one is not acquainted with them and does not know them, nor is it possible to know that good things are good if one does not choose them and have an inclination towards them".[45] Alexander sees knowledge as the unifying factor of the virtues, as all virtues require this knowledge of the good. Argument (8) therefore follows on the preceding arguments (5)-(7) and will be taken into account for the construction of the main argument.

In argument (9), Alexander moves away from the good and focuses on practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Alexander argues that "if knowing that good things are good has as a consequence choosing them also […] and knowing belongs to practical wisdom, choosing to the moral virtues, then the moral virtues will be a consequence of practical wisdom."[46] In short, if one has moral virtues, one must necessarily have practical wisdom. The mutual implication is found in the fact that this relationship also works the other way around. Sharples outlines the argumentation here as follows: "(i) practical wisdom is accompanied by

[39] Alex. *Mant*. 155.6-7.
[40] Alex. *Mant.* 155.17.
[41] Sharples (2000: sec. 5).
[42] Alex. *Mant*. 155.22-24.
[43] Alex. *Mant.* 155.24-29.
[44] Sharples (2000: sec. 5).
[45] Alex. *Mant.* 155.33-35.
[46] Alex. *Mant.* 156.1-4.

(all) the moral virtues, (ii) any moral virtue is accompanied by practical wisdom, (iii) any moral virtue is accompanied by all the moral virtues."[47] This argument is a serious contender for Alexander's main argument as it presents an argument based on unity model 2 and it will be discussed in the construction of the main argument.

Argument (10) continues the theme of argument (9): "if every action in accordance with virtue is a combination of having a goal of a certain sort and of being done in a certain way, and if to make the goal sound belongs to moral virtue, while to know what contributes to this belongs to practical wisdom, how can [the one] be separated [from the other]?"[48] While the individual virtues are not mentioned, it is clear that the ideas expressed in argument (9) are present here. It will therefore be taken into account in the reconstruction.

The thought started in argument (10) is explained in the last argument of *Mantissa* 18, argument (11). Firstly, Alexander states that practical wisdom must be wisdom about everything: "if it is impossible for someone to have practical wisdom if he does not have it concerning everything, someone who does have practical wisdom will be able to know all the things that are to be done."[49] The things that are to be done, however, need a goal. This is given by virtue and the reason why practical wisdom and virtue are inseparable: "And in this way he also has all virtue, if it belongs to the moral virtues to determine the best end and goal of things that are to be done, and the person with practical wisdom has the best goal determined in all things that are done."[50] This argument will be considered in the main construction as well because it continues thoughts from arguments (9) and (10).

1.2.2: The arguments from the *Ethical Problems*

The *quaestio* on the mutual implication of virtues in the *Ethical Problems* is number 22, titled "That the virtues imply one another".[51] The argumentation in this *quaestio* is very similar to arguments (9) through (11) in the *Mantissa.* The virtues mutually imply each other, because of right choice which comes from practical wisdom on the one hand and virtue on the other hand.[52] Alexander repeats the same point on *phronesis* and virtues:

> "Moreover: it is necessary for the person who possesses any moral virtue whatsoever to possess wisdom, if moral virtue performs actions defined by wisdom and right reasoning. And it is also necessary for the person who possesses wisdom to possess moral virtue, if it is proper to wisdom to enquire how it is possible to achieve the necessary goal, which it belongs to moral virtue to define."[53]

[47] Sharples (2004: 165n561).
[48] Alex. *Mant.* 156.6-10.
[49] Alex. *Mant.* 156.10-13.
[50] Alex. *Mant.* 156.17-19.
[51] Alex. *P. Eth.* 142.
[52] Alex. *P. Eth.* 142.23-28.
[53] Alex. *P. Eth.* 143.1-2.

Sharples rightly points out that Alexander fails to conclude here that the necessary possession of practical wisdom means that the virtues must imply each other.[54] After stating the necessity of *phronesis* and virtue for the right choice, he moves to the next argument (indicated by 'moreover') without concluding the mutual implication of the virtues.[55] But even though *quaestio* 22 is focused on choice, the argument is the same as in argument (9). Since choice cannot be right without the presence of *phronesis* and virtue, who are in turn inseparable as well, the basis of this argument still rests on *phronesis* being necessary for virtues. This argument will be discussed further in the context of arguments (9) to (11).

Besides *quaestio* 22, there are two other important *quaestiones* in the *Ethical Problems* in regard to the mutual implication of the virtues, namely *quaestio* 8 and 28.[56] They both discuss the question of whether virtue is a genus or a totality, which addresses the question of the unity of the virtues. For the sake of the argument presented here, they will be discussed later in section 1.4.

As discussed above in section 1.1, any argumentation for the mutual implication of the virtues must show the necessity of the implication and what constitutes the unity of the virtues. After reviewing Alexander's arguments for the mutual implication of the virtues, there were eight arguments found useful for the construction of the main argument, because they fulfilled these requirements. To prevent complicating the construction of the main argument, we will first look at the useful arguments before turning to Alexander's arguments on the unity of the virtues.

1.3: Constructing the main argument: two possibilities

The eight arguments are divided by theme, namely four on practical wisdom and four on the good. These themes show Alexander's strategy for the question of unity: he prefers unity model 2. However, two themes mean two different principles, which entails two main arguments for the mutual implication of the virtues. Before choosing which principle would be better for the main argument, both possible arguments must be worked out first.

1.3.1: Based on the good

Arguments (5) to (8) work on the basis of the good as the underlying principle. The argument for the implication based on the good is as follows: if one has a virtue, one must be a lover of the good. Because the good is singular, one must love the good in all things. Thus, having one virtue implies having the others, for one is a lover of the good. The individual virtues only differ in the things they are concerned with.[57]

[54] Sharples (2000: sec. 7).
[55] Sharples (2000: sec. 7).
[56] Alex. *P. Eth.* 128.4-23; *P. Eth.* 157.10-158.3.
[57] Alex. *Mant*. 155.6-7.

The lover of the good must know what is good, for "if he knows it but does not choose it, he will not be a lover of what is noble".[58] Being a lover of the good is thus equal to knowing the good. The singularity of this knowledge is explicitly stated by Alexander in argument (5): "For if [this person] does not know all that is noble, he will not know this particular thing *as noble*; for the knowledge of the noble, *qua* noble, is single".[59]

One cannot be virtuous without this knowledge. And if one has any virtue, one knows the good and will do all the good things for the sake of them being good, which will mean that this person has all the virtues. Schematically, the argument for implication based on the good looks like this:

Pk1: a person with any virtue knows the good.
Pk2: knowledge of the good is singular.
Pk3: each virtue requires knowledge of the good.

Ck: the virtues imply each other.

This is the first possible main argument of Alexander. It fulfils the requirements of necessary implication and the unity of the virtues. Having one virtue must imply having the rest because having any virtue requires having knowledge of the good, which is singular and the same for each virtue, thereby unifying the virtues.

1.3.2: Based on practical wisdom

The second group of arguments, argument (9) to (11) and *quaestio* 22, is based on practical wisdom as the underlying principle. Moral virtue and practical wisdom are namely implied by each other because virtue defines the goal and practical wisdom determines how this goal is achieved, which in turn determines the actions of virtue. Like the good, practical wisdom concerns everything, which is explained by Alexander in argument (11).[60] This means that *phronesis* is singular and does not consist of parts. Practical wisdom requires virtue and any virtue require practical wisdom. Because practical wisdom is singular, having any virtue implies having all the other virtues as well. The schematic argument will therefore look like this:

Pw1: a person with any virtue has practical wisdom.
Pw2: practical wisdom is singular.
Pw3: each virtue requires practical wisdom.

Cw: the virtues imply each other.

[58] Alex. *Mant.* 155.3. Italics in original.
[59] Alex. *Mant.* 155.1-2.
[60] Alex. *Mant.* 155.15-17.

Sharples' argumentation structure, as seen in the discussion of argument (9), uses the phrase 'x is accompanied by y'. This does not show the necessity in the relation between practical wisdom and the virtues, therefore leaving the necessity of the implication obscure as well. The argument above does meet the required explanation of the necessity of the implication and the unity of the virtues.

Because both arguments follow unity model 2, their structure is the same. Because X (the good or practical wisdom) is required for having any virtue and because one either has X or does not have X because X is singular, having any virtue implies having all the other virtues because of the required presence of X. From an ethical perspective, however, it is hard to choose between the two principles because it makes as much sense that any virtue would require knowledge of the good as that any virtue would require practical wisdom. But one must choose because it would be illogical that the unity of the virtues would be based on both principles at the same time.

Based on Alexander's arguments alone, it cannot be determined which principle Alexander would choose. Before turning elsewhere to determine the answer, one fundamental problem with these arguments must be addressed first. If the good and practical wisdom are singular principles concerning everything and individual virtues concern different things, how would having one virtue lead to knowing the good or having practical wisdom?

1.3.3: The shortcut problem

The problem lies in the difference between the scope of individual virtues and the scope of practical wisdom and knowledge of the good, which causes problems in the combination of premises 1 and 2.

Imagine practical wisdom or knowledge of the good as graduation and each virtue as a different class required for graduation. Each class has a different topic, meaning that they have a limited scope of things, such as knowledge or skills, it is concerned with. This is the same for the individual virtues: they are concerned with different things like physics and history are concerned with different things.[61] Passing the class means that one possesses the knowledge and skill particular to this class; likewise, acquiring a virtue, which is done by making the virtuous activity into a habit, is achieved by practising those things that the virtue is concerned with until they are habitual.[62]

The scope of graduation, on the other hand, consists of the scopes of the classes combined, so it is concerned with everything. Because practical wisdom and knowledge of the good are required for all virtues, their scope must consist of the combined scopes of all virtues as well. Otherwise, they can be of no use to all virtues. Furthermore, one either

[61] Alex. *Mant*. 155.6-7.
[62] See Alex. *P. Eth.* 150.17-20. He follows Aristotle on this point. *Quaestio* 25, titled 'Summary account of the discovery and establishment of the virtues', combines the main ideas from book I, II and VI of Aristotle's *EN*.

graduates or not, just like one either has practical wisdom or knowledge of the good or not: they are singular principles. To make the scope of these principles explicit, I will use 'complete' for these principles, but this does not mean that they consist of parts.

According to Alexander's arguments as formulated in sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, it seems to be the case that passing one class is equal to graduation, which would entail that one has passed all classes. This is the shortcut for acquiring the virtues in these arguments: because complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good are required for having a virtue, acquiring a single virtue implies the presence of complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good and therefore having all virtues according to the argument. But because of the differences in scope, it cannot be the case that acquiring a single virtue equals the presence of complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good, just like it is impossible to graduate without passing all required classes. Even when taking possible overlap between virtues into account, one still cannot hold that the person with a single virtue is completely wise or has complete knowledge of the good, because he simply does not have the other virtues.

The question is how to solve this problem. If one wants to continue holding premises 1 and 2, one must concede that all virtues are in essence the same. If acquiring any virtue does lead to the presence of complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good, then the scope of each virtue must include the scopes of the other virtues. The virtues would then have the same meaning, which means that the mutual implication is based on a unity model 1 instead of model 2. Alexander has made clear, however, that the individual virtues do refer to different things, so this is not the right solution.

The other solutions exist in denying premise 1 or 2. Denying premise 2 is not possible, because Alexander clearly states the singularity of both principles.[63] It would be the easiest solution if they would exist of parts, so the scope of an individual virtue matches with the scope of a part of either principle, but they do not. This leaves premise 1 to be denied. A person with any virtue does not have complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good. The only possibility for keeping premise 1 is stating that a person with any virtue has complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good *only when* all virtues are acquired because in that situation having any virtue would correspond to complete practical wisdom and complete knowledge of the good. This situation is not the same as 'having any virtue', because all virtues are already present. So, premise 1 must be denied.

In conclusion, because denying premise 1 solves the shortcut problem, both arguments fall apart and neither can serve as Alexander's main argument. It must be noted that for Alexander, the process of acquiring virtue would contain one life-changing moment in which somebody would go from being not virtuous at all to completely virtuous. If the virtues are not proper virtues until complete practical wisdom or complete knowledge of the good is acquired and after acquiring either principle one would have all virtues, it means

[63] Alex. *Mant.* 155.2; *Mant.* 155.11-13.

that one is either virtuous in all respects or not at all. This corresponds with arguments (1) to (4).

Furthermore, the shortcut problem reveals the difficulty of thinking unity and multiplicity together. Trying to honour both unity and multiplicity seems impossible because honouring the unity turns all virtues into the same thing while honouring the multiplicity actually requires the principles to exist of parts, which they do not. The same question can also be asked for virtue as the unity of the virtues. How do the individual virtues relate to virtue for Alexander?

1.4: The relationship between virtue and virtues

Alexander discusses the relationship between virtue and the individual virtues in *quaestio* 8 and 28 of the *Ethical Problems*. Their content largely overlaps, but *quaestio* 28 adds a third view not found in *quaestio* 8. Both *quaestiones* discuss the structure of the relationship between virtue and the individual virtues as either genus-species or as whole-parts. Alexander argues it cannot be the case that virtue is a genus, because "genus is not removed if one of the species is removed, but virtue is removed along with one [of the particular virtues]."[64] Moreover, Alexander argues that the genus-species structure would even be more unsound if the virtues would imply each other because the removal of one species does not lead to the removal of other species.[65] In the case they do not imply each other, then practical wisdom would still be required for virtue to be a proper virtue, so if wisdom is removed, so is virtue.[66]

Having dismissed this option, Alexander turns to virtue as a totality with the individual virtues as parts. In a footnote, Sharples explains what is meant with 'totality': "a whole of parts (*holon*) which requires the presence of every part if it is to be complete."[67] This only works when the parts are similar. The individual virtues are not similar, according to Alexander.[68] In the case of dissimilar parts, the individual part "does not admit of the definition of the totality".[69] An individual virtue does admit of the definition of virtue. Hence, virtue cannot be a totality.

Alexander offers two modifications to what he has discussed so far. The first is called the 'focal meaning' argument and remedies the problems in the genus-species structure.[70] He proposes a hierarchical structure, where "one [thing] is first, another second, so that when the first is removed so are both that which is common *and* the other things that follow [the first one]."[71] This would guarantee that when removing the first (whether virtue or practical

[64] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.4-5.
[65] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.7. *Antakolouthein* is also used here.
[66] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.8-10.
[67] Sharples (1990: 33n84).
[68] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.11-12.
[69] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.11.
[70] Sharples (2000: sec. 8).
[71] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.13-14.

wisdom), the second (a virtue) will be removed with it. However, it will only work from top to bottom and not the other way around, meaning it does not follow the rule of virtue being removed along with the removal of one of the individual virtues. So even with this modification, the genus-species structure does not work for the relationship between virtue and individual virtues.

The second solution focuses on the problem with virtue as totality. If one takes the definition of virtue to be "the best state of the whole rational soul" [72], then this would not apply to the individual virtues, because justice, for example, is defined differently. Thus, when defining virtue in a more general way, virtue can be a totality with the individual virtues as parts. This solution, however, is formal and artificial, though it corresponds to Aristotle as Alexander points out.[73] The totality-part relationship is saved because the parts do not admit the definition of the totality, but this is achieved by changing how one articulates the totality. It is still unclear how this structure works and how they form a unity.

A more detailed image of virtue as totality can be found in argument (7), where Alexander explains the following:

> "So, as in the case of other parts the parts considered in the whole are parts [only] when they complete the whole, but when they are separated and come to be in themselves they are no longer parts, unless in name only; just so the virtues as parts [are] virtues when they are in the whole [of virtue] <but no longer once they have been separated>, except that we are in the habit of speaking of fitness [for various things] and good natural endowments as virtues, applying the name only."[74]

This correlates with what has been discussed so far: if a part is removed, the whole will fall apart as well. Argument (7) adds that the part is not even a part anymore when the whole is not complete. It is only a part in name. It does not mention the virtues being similar or dissimilar parts, but considering that virtues are concerned with different things, they are probably supposed to be dissimilar as well here.

The third view of *quaestio* 28 answers the question of how the totality-parts relation works for virtue: virtue is a *uniform* totality and the virtues are similar parts.[75] The argument is that complete virtue is a mixture of all the individual virtues.[76] All the virtues are similar parts but concerned with different things. Once mixed together, they make a new whole, namely virtue. This whole is then a uniform totality, which is something new emerging from the mixture.

---

[72] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.20.
[73] Alex. *Eth. P.* 128.20-21. Sharples (1990: 34n93) supplies the references to Aristotle: Aris. *EN.* 1144a5 and *EN.* 1130a9.
[74] Alex. *Mant.* 155.24-29.
[75] Alex. *Eth. P.* 157.19-158.3.
[76] Interestingly, Alexander has written a treatise called '*De Mixtione',* discussing the mixture of physical bodies and arguing against the Stoics on this topic. See for Todd (1976) for the translation, commentary and further essays on *De Mixtione.*

This idea can be clarified by imagining the individual virtues as colours. Each virtue is a different colour, so they all look different. Putting all individual colours together creates a new colour in which the individual colours are not recognizable anymore. This new colour would not be this colour if not all the individual colours had come together, so the totality will only emerge if all parts are present. The whole then forms a new uniform colour. Because the whole is a colour, the parts admit of the definition of the whole: they are colours. And if one would remove a single colour, the totality will disappear, because not all parts are present anymore, but it would not remove the other individual colours.

Alexander changes virtues from being dissimilar parts to being similar parts that are concerned with different things. While this seems like another artificial solution, Alexander mentions this in argument (6) too. The colour analogy also helps in clarifying this: colours differ from each other because of their respective colour, but they are all colours. So, virtues differ from each other because of their respective scope of things they are concerned with, but they are all virtues. The only point that is not covered by the analogy is that individual colours will still be colours, before adding to the whole and even once removed, whereas per argument (7), removed virtues are not virtues nor are they virtues before addition to the whole. Still, this argument offers more because it explains the relationship between virtue and the individual virtues and how and when it is a totality. With this information, Alexander's main argument can be reconstructed.

1.5: The main argument of Alexander

Based on *quaestio* 28 and argument (7), it is possible to create an argument for the mutual implication of the virtues, where the unity of the virtues and the necessity of the implication are included. Furthermore, this argument supports the arguments based on practical wisdom and knowledge of the good too. The main argument is as follows:

P1: virtue is a singular uniform totality.
P2: each individual virtue is required for virtue.

C: The virtues imply each other when you have virtue.

Virtue is made up of similar parts, namely the individual virtues. They are concerned with different things. Once all added together and mixed, they form a new uniform whole. All virtues must necessarily be included because otherwise, uniform virtue would not be present. One is only in possession of the individual virtues as proper virtues once the whole is complete. Before completion or as soon as one of the individual virtues is removed, the whole is incomplete and therefore the individual virtues will be virtues in name only. The mutual implication is necessary, because having one virtue means that the whole is complete, therefore it entails having the rest of the virtues.

This argument supports the two arguments from 1.3 because it solves the shortcut problem for virtues are only virtues when the whole is complete. So properly having any virtue does then mean having the complete practical wisdom and complete knowledge of the good. The shortcut problem ceases to exist with this argument in place.

It is important to note that a consequence of this argument is that the mutual implication of the virtues only takes effect at the end of the process of acquiring virtues and not at the beginning. This eliminates any possibility of the shortcut. It also follows that at the end of the process, the total scope of the virtues matches with the scope of complete knowledge of the good and complete practical wisdom. Because one is virtuous in all respects at this point, it seems logical that this person understands that all virtues share in the good and knows how to act towards the good in general. Virtue, though comprised of all individual virtues, seems to transcend the boundaries of the individual virtues and can therefore give the insights one needs to see that having any virtue would indeed imply having the rest as well.

One also does not have to choose between the good or practical wisdom as the underlying principle. One could keep both as necessary principles for having virtues without having to build the unity of the virtues on them. But does virtue in this case function as an underlying principle, or does the uniform whole turn it into unity model 1?

This question is part of a larger, more general question concerning the mutual implication of the virtues. Regardless of which type of unity the implication is built on, one ends up with the case that one cannot have one virtue without having the rest as well. Does this mean that one then always acts from all virtues in all situations? For unity model 2, Sharples mentions that "while all courageous acts are also just, and *vice versa,* nevertheless actions that primarily display courage can meaningfully be distinguished from actions that primarily display justice."[77] One can question whether this would be enough to secure the identity of each virtue and call courageous acts courageous, even though these acts are just too. In the case of the main argument, where all the virtues are mixed into a new uniform whole, the identity of individual virtues seems to be lost in the new identity of being virtuous. This would mean that this argument functions on unity model 1.

On this matter, Alexander has said the following:

> "For the virtues differ from each other by the fact that this one of them is concerned with these particular things, another with others, as we see in the case of the natural virtues. For in the completion, that comes about in the mixture of each of them with the others, these produce a whole which is uniform. Accordingly it seems that activity is with each of them [individually], when it is concerned with the things the being of incomplete and natural courage, say, is concerned. But [a man] does not act with this [particular virtue] alone in respect of those [actions] of which virtue is reasonably

[77] Sharples (2000: sec. 1). Italics in original.

> predicated in a single sense on account of such a mixture of things which are similar to one another; and these indeed we call virtues in the proper sense."[78]

Alexander distinguishes natural virtues, which are incomplete virtues, from the proper virtues, which are those in the uniform whole of virtue. As seen in argument (7) (quoted on page 17), the names of individual (proper) virtues are applied to natural virtues by the habit of speaking. He shows here that because of that habit, the same name of individual virtue is understandably applied to the activities of natural virtues and the activities of the proper virtues in the same way. However, because in the latter case one has the complete uniform whole of virtue (otherwise the virtue is not proper), the other virtues will always be present in the activity of any proper virtue, because they are mixed together. It might be the case that from the outsider perspective the distinctions are not clear enough and therefore, according to unity model 1, the names for the individual virtues are mistakenly used by the outsider for those activities of proper virtues. In any case, the concern for the identity of the individual virtues when they are a unity is valid.

Lastly, it has been pointed out that the mutual implication of the virtues involves a strong 'all-or-nothing' position towards the virtues, meaning that there will be one life-changing moment of becoming completely virtuous. This position raises the bar of becoming virtuous significantly. Though this position fits with the philosophy on the virtues during these centuries, which the following chapters will underline, one can still question whether this position is desirable for an ethical theory.

In this chapter, several aspects of the debate have come forward. The logical background of *antakolouthein* shows the necessity of the implication and the unity of the virtues can be thought in several forms. The reconstructed argument of Alexander shows that the virtues form an uniform whole, created out of the mixture of individual virtues, and that then they mutually imply each other. From the discussion of Alexander's arguments, it has become clear that while he wants to secure the individual identity of the virtues, there is a distinct risk that the virtues end up meaning the same. The 'all-or-nothing' position does not help him with this risk, nor the thesis that having all virtues means acting from all of them. In the next chapter, we will turn to Aristotle as the philosophical background for Alexander and see to what degree the arguments from this chapter are Aristotelian.

[78] Alex. *Eth. P.* 157.21-158.2.

Chapter 2: The Aristotelian tradition

As the Commentator on Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias has consciously placed himself into the Aristotelian tradition.[79] This means he adheres to the theories set out by Aristotle and does not deviate from them. The problem that arises in our present case is that a theory on the unity of the virtues or the mutual implication of the virtues does not seem to be present in Aristotle. The treatment of the individual virtues in the *Ethica Nicomachea* gives the rather strong impression that they are individual things. This impression already existed in Alexander's time, because Diogenes Laertius (fl. 2nd century AD), the biographer of many philosophers, remarks that "he [Aristotle] held that the virtues are not mutually interdependent [*antakolouthein*]."[80]

Sharples points out, however, that for "argument (X) of *mantissa* 18, this derives from Aristotle, *EN* 1145a5-6, though here [*quaestio* 22] the wording is identical to Aristotle's, which it is not in the *mantissa.*"[81] Alexander did however use Aristotle for his arguments, so the question is what to make of this in light of Diogenes' remark. Did Alexander quite radically alter Aristotle's theory on virtue, meaning Diogenes was right in his assessment? In this chapter, we will examine Aristotle's remarks on the mutual implication of the virtues and see how it served as background for Alexander.

2.1: Aristotle's argument

Diogenes rightly pointed out that Aristotle did not say that the virtues mutually imply each other with the term *antakolouthein*, but it is also not the case that the virtues are separate from each other for Aristotle. In the sixth book of the *Ethica Nicomachea* on the intellectual virtues, we find the following passage:

> "It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral excellence. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the excellences exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the excellences, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural excellences, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the excellences.[82]

[79] "In antiquity, Alexander was the Commentator on Aristotle with a capital C." Tuominen (2012: 888).
[80] Diog. Laert. 5:31. Translation by R.D. Hicks.
[81] Sharples (2000: sec. 7).
[82] Ari. *EN.* 1144b30-1145a2. All translations of Aristotle in this thesis are by W.D. Ross.

Aristotle states that he is opposed to the theory that the virtues are separate from each other, at least when the moral virtues are concerned. Even though Sharples says that it is unclear if "Aristotle is arguing for just the mutual implication of the virtues, or for their unity in the stronger sense (2)", Aristotle's argument is the same as Alexander's argument based on practical wisdom, so on the basis of practical wisdom as underlying principle according to the argument in 1.3.2.[83]

Each premise can be found in Aristotle too. The first sentence of the passage shows that Aristotle holds Pw1 and Pw3 (see page 13). In the preceding passages (*EN* 1144b1-30) he explains how he arrives at this point, starting with the contrast between the natural virtues and the moral virtues. The natural virtues are those traits present since birth: "For all men think that each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; for from the very moment of birth we are just or fitted for self-control or brave or have the other moral qualities".[84] Though the natural virtues may look like virtues, they are not proper virtues. For becoming proper virtues, practical wisdom is required.[85] Accordingly, Aristotle arrives at Pw3: in order to have a moral virtue, one needs practical wisdom. This leads necessarily to Pw1 because someone with any virtue must have practical wisdom.

The second premise is also found in the passage above. "[T]he presence of the one quality, practical wisdom" is translated from the Greek τῇ φρονήσει μιᾷ ὑπαρχούσῃ, where μιᾷ means 'one'.[86] It is contrasted with πᾶσαι, which means 'all' and refers to all the virtues.[87]

These premises lead to the conclusion that the virtues imply each other because when practical wisdom is present, the virtues must be present as well. The unity is based on practical wisdom as the underlying principle. It is *because* of the presence of practical wisdom that one must have all the virtues, which is also shown with *gar* in the last sentence of the passage, which introduces the cause or reason of the preceding.[88] Though Aristotle does not use the term *antakolouthein*, he does support the thesis that the virtues imply each other. From this exposition, it can be established that arguments (9) to (11) and *quaestio* 22 are certainly Aristotelian.

2.2: Problems and contradictions

Like Alexander's argument, this argument is not without problems because it allows for a shortcut in acquiring the virtues. Premise 1 cannot be maintained because the acquisition of one virtue does not equal the acquisition of complete practical wisdom, which one needs as the foundation for possession of all the virtues according to the argument. For Aristotle, though, his theory on practical wisdom actually contradicts premise 1.

[83] Sharples (2000: sec. 10).
[84] Ari. *EN.* 1144b4-6.
[85] Ari. *EN.* 1144b14-18.
[86] *LSJ*, 9th ed., s.v. "εἷς".
[87] *LSJ*, 9th ed., s.v. "πᾶς".
[88] *LSJ*, 9th ed., s.v. "γάρ".

Practical wisdom is discussed within the book on the intellectual virtues, which focuses on the 'right reason' part of the definition of virtue.[89] Different intellectual virtues, such as philosophical wisdom (*sophia*), knowledge (*episteme*), and art (*techne*), are discussed to find out which intellectual virtue qualifies for 'right reason'. Because virtue is about actions, the right reason must also be about actions, which is why Aristotle determines that practical wisdom is the right reason.[90]

Because it is concerned with actions, practical wisdom deals with particulars: "Nor is practical wisdom concerned with universals only—it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars."[91] Herein lies the contradiction with premise 1. The practically wise man cannot be wise without knowledge or experience of particular cases, which means that: "Wisdom crucially includes experience of particular cases, empirical knowledge, astuteness, and cleverness in judging particular situations".[92] For this reason, Aristotle says that it is impossible to be young and practically wise because "such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but a young man has no experience, for it is length of time that gives experience."[93] Because all virtues rely on practical wisdom, it means the practically wise man must have knowledge of and experience in many different areas, or to be precise, in all things all virtues are concerned with.

As explained in section 1.3.3, having one virtue is not sufficient for the possession of complete practical wisdom, thus premise 1 cannot be held. It is now possible to be precise about why. Experience of all things all virtues are concerned with is necessary for having practical wisdom. One virtue will only provide the experience of things this virtue is concerned with. Having one virtue is therefore not sufficient for the possession of complete practical wisdom. The same argument can be made with empirical knowledge in the place of experience, so Aristotle's theory on practical wisdom, therefore, contradicts premise 1.

The necessity of experience and empirical knowledge shows how virtue and practical wisdom go hand in hand: as virtue is acquired by practising, meaning one is immersed in the particular cases, one builds his practical wisdom by gaining the empirical knowledge and the experience. Only in this way can one become familiar with all the things all the virtues are concerned with, which might be one of the reasons Aristotle has given such lengthy descriptions per virtue.[94]

Where Alexander offers alternative argumentation for the argument based on practical wisdom or the unity of the virtues, Aristotle offers none. He only mentions in

[89] Ari. *EN.* 1138b19-21.
[90] Ari. *EN.* 1144b23-25.
[91] Ari. *EN.* 1141b14-16.
[92] Irwin (1988: 65).
[93] Ari. *EN.* 1142a12-16.
[94] For a large part, the *Ethica Nicomachea* (excluding book I, II, III.1-8, VI, VII.12-15 and X) consist of descriptions of the individual virtues. In *EN.* 1115a3-5, Aristotle announces that he will do this: "Let us take up the several excellences, however, and say which they are and what sort of things they are concerned with and how they are concerned with them; at the same time it will become plain how many they are."

passing that virtue is a totality in *EN* 1130a9 and *EN* 1144a5 but does not further elaborate on the unity of the virtues here nor does he revisit this point later in the *Ethica*.[95] The argument of Aristotle on the mutual implication of the virtues and the unity of the virtues, for now, is at best inconclusive, at worst invalid.

Still, Aristotle's position has the same outline as Alexander's. Because the virtues are inseparable for Aristotle, one must either have them all or have none at all, meaning one is either virtuous in all respects or not virtuous at all; and if one has them all, must act from all of them. Thus for Aristotle, the mutual implication of the virtues also only happens at the end of acquiring virtues, which is equal to acquiring practical wisdom, which means that the 'all-or-nothing' position is present in Aristotle too.

It also means that the considerations raised at the end of the previous chapter cannot be solved by Aristotle. The 'all-or-nothing' position regarding virtues would not be problematic for him. There is also no answer from Aristotle on the question of whether the mutual implication of the virtues entails that they are all the same. His claim of the inseparability of the virtues suggests that they are, especially if this means that one is virtuous or not. Something Aristotle offers that Alexander does not is that he clearly shows how becoming virtuous is a process of development. His theory of practical wisdom shows in much more detail the process of acquiring a virtue and also what is required for it.

Even though it is a small passage in the large *Ethica,* the fact that the argument has been left inconclusive by Aristotle has had long-lasting and severe consequences. Diogenes' denial of Aristotle supporting the mutual implication shows that this impression already existed in the 2nd century AD, even though this is the wrong impression. In contrast, the perception of the virtues as independent individual things has survived persistently until now. Overlooking the fact that for Aristotle the virtues are inseparable means that one misses a central point of Aristotle's views on the virtues and therefore of the *Ethica Nicomachea* as a whole.

2.3: Alexander the Commentator at work

We can now answer the question of whether or not Alexander altered Aristotle's theory. He did not alter Aristotle, but we can understand now where the impression comes from. The inconclusive argument is easy to dismiss and because Aristotle does not further reinforce his argument, we are left to think that for Aristotle the virtues are separate things.

What we see in the *Mantissa* and the *Ethical Problems,* is the commentator Alexander at work. The work of the ancient commentators of Aristotle was an attempt to express Aristotle's writings clearly and understandably because his writing, mostly the esoteric works, was difficult to understand.[96] Besides this, their commentaries served the commentators in three ways, namely in systematizing Aristotle, in educating Aristotle's

[95] See footnote 73.
[96] Tuominen (2012: 853).

philosophy in the school, and in responding to criticism from philosophical opponents.[97] Because of the 'rumour' that the virtues were separate for Aristotle and Aristotle's inconclusive argument on this, this was a particularly good subject for Alexander to take on. He could work on making the argument conclusive and fitting within the larger context of the *Ethica Nicomachea,* he could educate his students on this topic, address the rumours and he was able to formulate arguments against the opponents.

For Alexander, the passage on the inseparability of the virtues in Aristotle is the starting point for making a working argument that fits with the rest of Aristotle's work. The main holes to fill are the questions of how virtue is a totality and of whether the unity of the virtues is established at the beginning or at the end of the process of acquiring virtues. Through addressing these questions and elaborating on these matters, Alexander formulates a theory on how the virtues imply each other, hereby systematizing Aristotle's work. Both points are present in Aristotle but are underdeveloped and overshadowed. Even though Alexander's main argument as reconstructed above is not Aristotle's argument, it is important to point out that it does not contradict Aristotle's position. When the individual virtues form a new totality, one expects complete practical wisdom to be present as well. Therefore, it is true that all virtues are present when practical wisdom is present.

Furthermore, the educating function of the commentaries explains 'the battery of arguments' instead of the presence of one argumentation. One can imagine that when this topic was discussed in Alexander's school, multiple arguments would be discussed on their strengths and weaknesses. The battery of arguments in *Mantissa* is thus a list of all possible arguments from all philosophical schools, like the notes of a lecture titled 'Whether the virtues imply each other'. What is missing in the *Mantissa* and the *Ethical Problems,* is the discussion part of the lecture where the arguments are compared, disproved, confirmed, combined or reinforced, after which one final argumentation on the mutual implication of the virtues would have been brought forth. Essentially, this is what has been done in chapter 1.

From discussing Aristotle, we have gathered that for Aristotle, the virtues mutually imply each other as well and Alexander has based argument (9-11) and *quaestio* 22 on this argumentation. It has also become clear that Aristotle's theory on practical wisdom contradicts premise 1 in the argument, making it invalid. In the next chapter, we will turn to the Stoics, for they are important as participants of the debate.

[97] *Ibid.* 854.

Chapter 3: Mutual implication according to the Stoics

Besides the fact that the Stoics are participants in the debate and the philosophical opponents of Alexander, there are two other reasons why the Stoics must be discussed here. Firstly, it is thought by several scholars that the term *antakolouthein* belongs to or even originates from Stoic doctrine. This would suggest that the debate on the unity of virtue is Stoic too. Secondly, Plotinus has used the Stoics for his philosophy too, so for determining what echoes of the debate are visible in Plotinus' treatment of the mutual implication of the virtues, the Stoic position on the mutual implication of the virtues must be clear too.

In this chapter, the focus will lie on Chrysippus for two reasons. Firstly because his account has the most complete argument and secondly because his arguments are also against other Stoics such as Zeno or Aristo, making his position the last but also the most extreme position among the Stoics.[98] According to Cooper and Dentsoras, Chrysippus is the most successful in solving the issues the Stoics encounter with the question of the unity of virtue.[99] The main issue for the Stoics is how to have distinct virtues while maintaining unity, which is a familiar issue for Alexander. The idea that virtue is knowledge of good and bad, which stems from Socratic intellectualism, creates the risk of individual virtues collapsing into each other as 'knowledge' in such a way that they will essentially be the same thing without any real distinction. Chrysippus tries to account both for the unity and the multiplicity of the virtues. Before going to Chrysippus, the matter of *antakolouthein* being a Stoic term must be discussed first.

3.1: A Stoic debate?

There is a trend among scholars of attributing the term *antakolouthein* and the thesis of the mutual implication of the virtues to the Stoics whenever they encounter *antakolouthein* in the context of the virtues. They immediately refer to the Stoics, before (if at all) they list places outside the Stoics where it can also be found. Dillon and Kalligas do this in their respective commentaries on Alcinous, a Middle-Platonist philosopher, and Plotinus.[100] Sharples goes one step further and explicitly states that *antakolouthein* is a Stoic term, referring back to Pohlenz as the one pointing this out.[101]

This trend shows that scholars assume *antakolouthein* and the doctrine of mutually implied virtues is Stoic. This assumption steers any discussion on the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues because the starting point for each interpretation or conclusion on this topic is the Stoic doctrine. It is not clear, however, on what basis they assume this. Pohlenz, for example, only mentions *antakolouthein* as the term used for mutual implication

[98] See Cooper (1998: 233–74) for the argumentations of several Stoic philosophers, including Zeno, Aristo and Chrysippus.
[99] Cooper (1998: 273); Dentsoras (2020: 18).
[100] Dillon (1993: 180); Kalligas (2015; 1:147).
[101] Sharples (2004: 160n542); Sharples (2000: sec. 2n11).

when he discusses the Stoic theory on the virtues.[102] Furthermore, according to him, the presence of *antakolouthein* in Alexander and his arguments show that he was inspired (*angeregt*) by the Stoics.[103] Chapter 2 proves this is not necessarily true, but in any case, this is not 'pointing out' that this term is Stoic. There is no argumentation for this statement by Pohlenz. It seems to be the case that scholars have assumed it is Stoic because the mutual implication is part of the Stoic doctrine and *antakolouthein* is used whenever the doctrine is discussed.

They have, however, overlooked one important aspect of Stoic philosophy: Stoic philosophy has fragmentarily survived through second-hand accounts. This means that our first record of Stoic doctrine is in these second-hand accounts. One must therefore take the large time gap into account. The quoted Stoic philosophers are without exception the early Stoics: Zeno (335-262 BC), Cleanthes (330-230 BC), Aristo (fl. 260 BC), and Chrysippus (279-206 BC). In contrast, the main quoting authors are at least centuries later: Plutarch lived from 49-119 AD, Galen from 129-206 AD, and Diogenes Laertius is active around 200 AD.[104] Much later is Stobaeus, fl. 5th century AD, through whom a first century AD account from Arius Didymus on Stoic ethics has survived.[105]

One must also take into account the difference in philosophical alliances or research interests. Not one of these quoting authors is a Stoic philosopher themselves. Plutarch was, besides a historian and biographer, a Platonist who reacted against the Stoics in several essays.[106] Jedan identifies Plutarch as "our main but unfavourable witness" for Chrysippus on the virtues.[107] Galen was a physician and philosopher who based himself on Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy and often turned against Stoic doctrine.[108] Diogenes Laertius was a biographer who wrote about the lives of famous philosophers, recording everything from gossip to doctrine.[109] About Stobaeus not much is known: his work is a collection of various topics in which he has quoted many different authors.[110]

---

[102] Pohlenz (1948; 1:127) "Im Sinne der alten Stoa had später Hekaton diese notwendige Wechselbeziehung, die 'Antakoluthie' der Tugenden, so erläutert […]"

[103] *Ibid.* 1:358. "Aber in seinen Ausführungen über den natürlichen Ursprung der Gerechtigkeit geht er ganz wie diese von der Gemeinschaftsnatur aller Vernunftwesen aus and übernimmt auch sonst manches aus ihrer Beweisführung, und wenn er einmal die gegenseitige Verflechtung der Tugend verficht, so zeigt nicht nur der Terminus 'Antakoluthie', daß er durch die Stoa angeregt ist."

[104] See White (2021: 2-11) on Diogenes' origin and dating. There is little information on the origin and dating of Diogenes Laertius and White devotes much attention to these topics in his introduction.

[105] Cooper (1998: 253n28).

[106] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Plutarch," (accessed October 14, 2021).

[107] Jedan (2009: 75).

[108] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Galen," https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Galen/35854 (accessed October 14, 2021); See Jedan, (2009: 75): in *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5.5.38-40, Galen writes a polemic against Chrysippus on the unity and plurality of virtue.

[109] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Diogenes Laërtius," https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Diogenes-La%C3%ABrtius/30531 (accessed October 14, 2021).

[110] Edwards, W.M., and R. Browning. "Stobaeus." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-6090

The gaps in time and philosophical alliance or research interest between the Stoic philosophers and the second-hand accounts have consequences of what can and cannot be concluded about Stoic philosophy. Because these accounts are centuries later, it is hard, if not impossible, to determine whether the Stoic philosophers are quoted directly or paraphrased. It is also hard to determine what is early Stoic philosophy or what has later been adjusted because Stoic philosophy was still practised after the Hellenistic period.[111] While those ancient scholars may have had access to texts now lost to us, it does not solve this problem. Furthermore, the gap in philosophical alliance or research interests means that these scholars do not necessarily have the best interests at heart for Stoic philosophy. They talk about the Stoic positions and arguments but do not necessarily defend them as a Stoic philosopher would or with the same language or technical terms. The influence of the perspective of the second-hand account on the original Stoic theory, in general, must therefore be taken into account.

It is in this context and moment in time that the use of *antakolouthein* must be placed. In their discussion of Chrysippus' position on the mutual implication of the virtues, *antakolouthein* is used by Galen, Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch, scholars from the first and second century AD.[112] The use of *antakolouthein* throughout the centuries shows a distinct spike in the second century AD, mostly because of Alexander.[113] There is only a handful of mentions before this century, which are mainly fragments of Chrysippus. But Chrysippus is discussed by these later authors and it is not clear if they quote directly from Chrysippus because of the fragmentary survival and the time gap. The lack of presence of *antakolouthein* in the 3rd century BC or the centuries before or after until the 2nd century AD makes it unlikely that this term was around and used by Chrysippus himself.

Antakolouthein must therefore be seen as the fashionable term from the second century AD and its use signals involvement in the second-century debate on the mutual implication of the virtues and the unity of the virtues, regardless of philosophical orientation. It can be found in the context of Aristotelian, Platonic and Stoic philosophy. Because the Stoics believe that the virtues imply each other, their involvement in this debate is expected and the use of *antakolouthein* for the Stoic position makes perfect sense, but it cannot be said that therefore the debate or the term are Stoic.

(accessed October 14, 2021). The lack of reference to Christian writers has been interpreted for Stobaeus being a pagan, but it remains unclear.

[111] Brad Inwood (2000: 132-33).

[112] Diog. Laert. 7.125 (= *SVF* 3.295)**;** Gal. *Opt. Med.* Vol. I, 61K. (= *SVF* 3.296); Plut. *De Stoic. Rep.* 27, 1046e (= *SVF* 3.299).

[113] Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. (accessed October 14, 2021). The TLG has a function 'statistics' for authors and lemmata, based on the full corpus of the TLG. Searching on the lemma ἀντακολουθέω in the 'statistics' function gives the data on the occurrences of *antakolouthein* throughout the full corpus of the TLG, so when, where and by whom this term is used.

3.2: Chrysippus on the unity and individuality of the virtues

The fragments with *antakolouthein* show that Chrysippus holds the thesis that the virtues mutually imply each other, but they do not provide further argumentation about how or why. Only Diogenes Laertius gives a hint on what ground Chrysippus sees the unity: "They hold that the virtues involve one another, and that the possessor of one is the possessor of all, inasmuch as they have common principles, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Virtues*, Apollodorus in his *Physics* according to the Early School, and Hecato in the third book of his treatise *On Virtues*."[114]

It is Stobaeus, who based himself on Arius Didymus, who provides a more detailed argumentation on the mutual implication of the virtues, their unity and their individuality for Chrysippus:[115]

> "All the virtues which are sciences and expertises share their theorems and, as already mentioned, the same end. Hence they are also inseparable. For whoever has one has all, and whoever acts in accordance with one acts in accordance with all. They differ from one another by their own perspectives. (2) For the perspectives of prudence are, primarily, the theory and practice of what should be done; and secondarily the theory also of what should be distributed, for the sake of infallibly doing what should be done. (3) Of moderation the special perspective is, primarily, to keep the impulses healthy and to grasp the theory of them; but secondarily, the theory of what falls under the other virtues, for the purpose of conducting oneself infallibly in one's impulses. (4) Likewise courage primarily grasps the theory of everything that should be endured; and secondarily, that of what falls under the other virtues. (5) And justice primarily studies individual deserts; but secondarily, the rest too. (6) For all the virtues focus upon the range of objects that belongs to all of them and upon each other's subject-matter."[116]

In both texts, the ground of the mutual implication is found in the common theorems (*ta theoremata koina*), which is a fixed set of theorems. This suggests that Chrysippus argues for the mutual implication on grounds of unity model 2, with the set of theorems being the underlying principle. According to Stobaeus, the common theorems are not the only principle: the virtues also share the same end (*telos*). The end and the theorems are in line with each other because of the Socratic intellectualism in Stoic philosophy. The pervasive rationality of the Stoic philosophy and the idea that the human soul only consists of one part, which is rational, entail that the theorems and the end go back to the same thing: knowledge.[117]

---

[114] Diog. Laert. 7.125 (= *SVF* 3.295). Translation by R.D. Hicks.
[115] Cooper (1998: 253).
[116] Stob. *Flor.* 2.63,6-24. (= Long & Sedley 61D). All translations of Stobaeus are by A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley.
[117] Inwood (2000: 130).

This can be shown by the following. It is the group of virtues which are expertises and sciences (*epistemai kai technai*) that mutually imply each other. Specifically, these virtues are the four cardinal virtues, as Stobaeus tells us:

> "(1) Of goods, some are virtues but others are not. Prudence [*phronesis*], moderation [*sophrosune*], < justice > [*dikaiosune*] and courage [*andreia*] are virtues; but joy, cheerfulness, confidence, well-wishing and the like are not virtues. (2) Of virtues, some are sciences and expertises of certain things, but others are not. Prudence and moderation and courage and justice are sciences and expertises of certain things, but magnanimity and vigour and strength of soul are not."[118]

These virtues consist of knowledge.[119] The theorems are therefore also about knowledge because this is shared by the virtues.

According to the Stoics, the end of life lies in living in accordance with nature, which "implies living according to our own rational nature, of focussing our attention on our virtue conceived as an excellent disposition of the soul."[120] Cooper explains that "the basis of the perfection of the soul, what fundamentally constitutes that condition, is the knowledge of good and bad."[121] The end is thus knowledge of good and bad.

Chrysippus thus makes the following argument for the mutual implication of the virtues: because having a virtue implies that one knows the theorems and the end, and the set of theorems and the end is the same for all virtues, having one virtue will imply having the rest because one knows the set of theorems and the end. This is similar to Alexander's arguments (5)-(8), where knowledge of the good is necessary for virtues.

The question is, however, if the virtues share some theorems or all theorems. Because the virtues are distinct, they would contain different knowledge based on different areas. But if they share all the theorems, which are also knowledge, this will practically mean that each virtue contains the same knowledge as any other virtue and thus has the same meaning. The unity model 2 argumentation will not hold up in practice and revert to unity model 1.

This also means that Chrysippus' argument allows for the shortcut. Jedan perfectly shows how sharing all theorems leads to the shortcut but fails to see that this is problematic for the individuality of the virtues: "A parallel report in Diogenes Laertius 7.125 uses the

---

[118] Stob. *Flor.* 2.58,5-15 (= Long & Sedley 60K).
[119] Cooper (1998: 254). Also compare Stob. *Flor.* 2.73,16-74,3 (= Long & Sedley 41H), where Stobaeus lists the different aspects of *episteme* for the Stoics: "(1) Scientific knowledge [*epistēmē*] is a cognition [*katalēpsis*] which is secure and unchangeable by reason. (2) It is secondly a system of such *epistēmai*, like the rational cognition of particulars which exists in the virtuous man. (3) It [scientific knowledge here = science] is thirdly a system of expert *epistēmai*, which has intrinsic stability, just as the virtues do. (4) Fourthly, it is a tenor for the reception of impressions which is unchangeable by reason, and consisting, they say, in tension and power."
[120] Sellars (2006: 127). Also see Stob. *Flor.* 2.77,16-19 (= Long & Sedley 63A.1): "(1) They [the Stoics] say that being happy is the end, for the sake of which everything is done, but which is not itself done for the sake of anything. This consists in living in accordance with virtue, in living in agreement, or, what is the same, in living in accordance with nature."
[121] Cooper (1998: 254).

definite article with *theoremata,* thus confirming that the virtues share *all* their theorems. The virtues are bodies of knowledge which contain exactly the same theorems."[122] He concludes that "[s]ince the virtues consist in knowing the same theorems, somebody who acquires the knowledge of one virtue has thereby acquired the knowledge of all virtues".[123]

There seems to be no further argumentation or evidence that Chrysippus meant for the virtues to share some theorems. It is unlikely, however, that he would allow for the shortcut. Becoming virtuous is an almost impossible feat according to the Stoics because one must achieve the excellent disposition of the soul. Even if Chrysippus holds that one virtue contains all the knowledge of the other virtues, one would still need to acquire that knowledge. In this way any Stoic virtue is comparable to Aristotle's practical wisdom: each area of behaviour must be experienced and known.

This is also where an important difference lies between the Stoics and Aristotle and Alexander. Chrysippus is more susceptible to the shortcut problem and having unity model 2 reverting into model 1 than Aristotle or Alexander because the soul only consists of one rational part for a Stoic. Aristotle and Alexander recognize a rational and an irrational part of the soul and they divide the excellences accordingly.[124] *Epistemai* belong to the intellectual virtues because it is knowledge about the necessary unchangeable things.[125] *Technai* are comparable to the moral virtues, as Annas explains:

> "Someone with a skill can give a true account of what he is making—can give, that is, reasons for doing things one way rather than another, for why some products are better than others. Skill crucially involves some level of *understanding* what it is that you are doing in exercising your skill. […] The virtuous person is not just the person who does in fact do the morally right thing, or even does it stably and reliably. She is the person who *understands* the principles on which she acts, and thus can explain and defend her actions."[126]

While, as seen in chapter 2, moral virtues require the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom for Aristotle, a moral virtue is not an intellectual virtue. The Stoics do not and cannot make this difference because of the full rationality of the soul. Their virtues are therefore *epistemai and technai,* meaning they run a greater risk of having the virtues collapse into each other because they are bodies of knowledge.

But, as Chrysippus argues above, the virtues are distinct: "they differ from one another by their own perspectives." The distinction between virtues is made on basis of their

[122] Jedan (2009: 78).
[123] *Ibid.* 78–79.
[124] Aris. *EN* 1102a26-32.
[125] Aris. *EN* 1139b19-35.
[126] Annas (1993: 67). Italics in original.

perspectives (*kephalaia*).[127] A perspective can be understood as a particular prioritisation of the theorems, as Cooper explains: "Plainly, the main idea here is that each of the several particular virtues knows everything that any of the other virtues do: there is a common body of moral theory that they share. They differ, nonetheless, in the order in which, in different cases, the common knowledge is arranged."[128] From this will follow, as Stobaeus states, that any act in accordance with one virtue is done in accordance with all virtues, for all virtues are always present but ordered differently. Because the order of the theorems depends on the required perspective, acts will be primarily just because this perspective has priority, while they are also prudent, moderate and courageous. The identity of the individual virtues thus lies in their particular perspectives, which is the one thing the virtues do not share.

One can question whether the different perspectives are enough to keep the virtues sufficiently separated and prevent them from collapsing into each other. Cooper argues it is enough: "Justice may know everything that temperance knows about how and why to make impulses steady, but it knows this only as something to be duly distributed; if the impulse with which the action is done is actually to *be* steady, temperance is still needed in order to bring that around. Justice merely helps temperance as it makes the impulse steady by seeing the steadiness as something *due*."[129] This can be understood in such a way that the virtues know (as *episteme*) everything of the other virtues, but only understand (as *techne*) that knowledge in their own perspective.

3.3: Same position, different philosophies

The Stoics were honest in telling how hard it is to become virtuous.[130] One has either reached the perfection of the soul or not. Considering their focus on knowledge and the fact that their soul consists of one rational part, the all-or-nothing approach is inherent to the Stoics. There would be one life-changing moment in which one goes from not virtuous to virtuous, and at this moment that the mutual implication of the virtues is activated. Alexander would agree with this. Alexander and Chrysippus also both believe that having all virtues means that one acts according to all. Furthermore, in arguments (5)-(8) Stoic undertones can be found, which can, due to the Socratic background of Stoic philosophy, also be read Platonically. The knowledge of the good as the underlying principle and the good as the goal of all actions are points that Chrysippus would endorse.

The similarity in Alexander's and Chrysippus' positions means that the same dangers exist for Chrysippus: he also has trouble explaining to what degree the virtues are still separate from each other once they are a unity. The risk of reverting to model unity 1 exists

[127] I have followed Long & Sedley in their translation of *kephalaia.* Others have opted for different translations: Jedan (2009: 78) prefers 'primary considerations'; Cooper (1998: 256) has 'main concerns'; Annas (1993: 81) has 'main points'.
[128] Cooper (1998: 257).
[129] Cooper (1998: 260).
[130] Becker (2008: 146).

for him too. though they are greater for him because of the Stoic metaphysics and theory on the human soul. Both Alexander and Chrysippus argue for the mutual implication on basis of an underlying principle, but it is hard to explain to what degree the virtues are still separate things from each other.

However, one could say that for Chrysippus, this risk is greater because of the Stoic metaphysics and theory on the human soul. This is also where the differences between Alexander and Chrysippus lie: Alexander would disagree with the Stoics on these aspects of their philosophy. But these aspects form the basis on which Chrysippus has built the mutual implication of the virtues and their unity. Alexander would also not agree to the different use of *phronesis, sophia* or *episteme,* but this also stems, ultimately, from differences in metaphysics.

Chrysippus explains in more detail than Alexander how one acts from different virtues after unity has been reached. The explanation of the perspectives adds more than Alexander's statement that the virtues concern different things. In contrast, Chrysippus does not explain how or when the unity of the virtues is reached or what the situation is before the unity.

In this chapter, we have seen that this debate on the mutual implication of the virtues is a second-century debate and not a Stoic debate. Furthermore, Chrysippus' position on the mutual implication is similar to Alexander's or Aristotle's position. The main differences lie in the differences in metaphysics and theory of the human soul. In the next chapter, we will turn to Plotinus and see if echoes of the debate can be identified. This will answer the question of whether Plotinus actively participates in the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues.

Chapter 4: Echoes of the debate in Plotinus' *Enneads*

Plotinus discussed the mutual implication of the virtues in *Ennead* 1.2 "On Virtues", but he also uses *antakolouthein* in the context of dialectic, ethics and the virtues in the *Ennead* 1.3 "On Dialectic".[131] Both *Enneads,* however, do not contain technical discussions on the unity of virtues or the mutual implication as we have encountered so far. The presence of *antakolouthein* does show that Plotinus thought about the matter, but the main question for him was rather about finding the right basis of the implication for his philosophy.

It is in the answer to this question that echoes of the debate can be found, though neither *Ennead* 1.2 nor 1.3 show clear references to the arguments of Alexander or the Stoics. It is very probable, however, that Plotinus knew the debate and arguments from both sides, as Porphyry, Plotinus' pupil, biographer, and commentator, points out that Plotinus' writings are "full of concealed Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines".[132] The unity of the virtues was also transmitted to Plotinus through Platonism, as he is the founder of neo-Platonism. As seen in chapter 3, the question of the unity of the virtues was already posed by Socrates in Plato's dialogues, most notably the *Protagoras*.[133] Moreover, Dillon points out that the "mutual implication of the virtues was accepted by all Middle Platonists from Antiochus on […]. Later, Plotinus also accepts it (*Enn.* 1.2.7.1-2), and it is unchallenged in Neoplatonism."[134] This is also shown by Alcinous (fl. 2nd century AD), author of the *Didaskalikos* or *The Handbook of Platonism,* who uses *antakolouthein* in his explanation on why the virtues cannot be separate from each other because they all go back to wisdom.[135]

The philosophical background on this topic is extensive for Plotinus, which begs the question of what influences can be seen in his presentation of the mutual implication of the virtues in his *Enneads.* It is through his presentation and identifying possible echoes in it that it can be determined to what degree Plotinus participated in the debate visible in Alexander. In this chapter, *Ennead* I.2 and I.3 will be discussed, after which the echoes will be pointed out and discussed.

4.1: Plotinus' hierarchical system of virtues

Plotinus' philosophy is characterized by his hierarchical metaphysical system of the three hypostases of the Soul, the Intellect and the One, which works according to the image-model analogy where the lower hypostasis is a lesser image of the model.[136] The goal for human

[131] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.1. and *Enn.* 1.3.6.11.
[132] Porph. *Plot.* 14.7. Translation by A.H. Armstrong. For influences and sources, see Porph. *Plot.* 14.5-13.
[133] See Cooper (1998: 235–40) and Cormack (2006: 58-62) on Socrates and the unity of virtue.
[134] Dillon (1993: 181).
[135] Alcinous, *Didask.* 182.43-183.16. The mutual implication is on basis of reason: each virtue can be linked to wisdom.
[136] See Plot. *Enn.* 5.1 "On the Three Hypostases".

souls is to ascend from the material or sensible world to the One. Plotinus incorporates this goal in his ethics as well, as the opening of the *Ennead* 1.2 "On Virtues" shows:[137]

> "Since evils exists in the sensible world and 'of necessity circulate in this place', and the soul wants to flee evils, it should flee from the sensible world. What, then, is this flight? Plato says that it is assimilating oneself to god. And this would occur if we were to become 'just and pious with wisdom' that is, generally, if we were in a virtuous state. If, then, it is by virtue that we are assimilated to god, are we assimilated to one who has virtue? Moreover, to which god will it be?"[138]

The ascension to the One, here described as fleeing the evils of the material world, is achieved by becoming virtuous, which is equal to assimilation to god. From the observation that this god cannot possess civic virtues because he does not need them, Plotinus arrives at a distinction between greater virtues and lesser virtues.[139] From this distinction, he formulates a hierarchical system of grades of virtues, in which he holds on to "the model–image analogy for the relation of the intelligible to the perceptible, while denying that the virtues are present at the superior level".[140] The question is how the implication of the virtues works within this system of grades. Before discussing the implication, the different grades will be explained first.

Like Aristotle, Plotinus distinguishes intellectual virtues from moral virtues, but they do not exist beside each other for Plotinus. The intellectual virtues are considered the greater virtues, which can be explained from the goal for human souls. The problem for human souls is that they are corrupted by matter in the sensible world and they have forgotten the existence of the Intellect, "even though they are parts of the intelligible world and completely belong to it."[141] Human souls must therefore remember their lineage and leave the sensible world.[142] Because virtue belongs to the soul and becoming virtuous is ascending to the Intellect, the soul detaches itself more and more from the sensible world by becoming virtuous.[143] The grades of virtues resemble the level of detachment the soul has from the sensible world and to what degree it is tuned into the Intellect. For this reason, the intellectual virtues are the greater virtues.

It is important to note that *Ennead* 1.2 does not explicitly number the grades, which has led to interpretations of two, three or four grades.[144] The exact number of grades does not

[137] See Bene (2013:141–61) for the relationship between ethics and metaphysics in Plotinus.
[138] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.1.1-7. All translations of Plotinus are by G. Boys-Stone, unless otherwise indicated.
[139] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.17-27.
[140] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.1.10-53; Kalligas (2015: 133).
[141] Plot. *Enn.* 5.1.1.3.
[142] Plot. *Enn.* 5.1.1.27-36.
[143] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.3.31: "Virtue belongs to the soul, not to Intellect nor to that which transcends it."
[144] Emilsson (2017: 300–302) identifies "two or three grades". Remes (2006: 3–4) works according the "generally accepted view of at least two levels or grades of virtue" and Dillon (1996: 333n10) says it is "not Plotinus' intention to postulate more than two grades".

impact Plotinus' theory on the mutual implication and here Porphyry's interpretation will be followed. The four grades of virtues are thus the following:

> "We thus have four kinds of virtue: 1, the exemplary virtues, characteristic of intelligence, and of the being or nature to which they belong; 2, the virtues of the soul turned towards intelligence, and filled with their contemplation; 3, the virtues of the soul that purifies itself, or which has purified herself from the brutal passions characteristic of the body; 4, the virtues that adorn the man by restraining within narrow limits the action of the irrational part, and by moderating the passions."[145]

The lowest grade, number four in Porphyry's list, consists of the civic virtues.[146] These are the virtues of the citizen, making "us benevolent in our dealings with our fellow-human beings".[147] The civic virtues are measures to ourselves and are assimilated "to the measure that is in the intelligible world and they have a trace of the best that there is."[148] There is some form of assimilation with the civic virtues, but it is not yet the proper assimilation.[149] This is reflected in the description of the four cardinal virtues by Plotinus, where he shows that each civic virtue is the rational measure of emotion or area of behaviour, so the virtues are still clearly attached to the body.[150]

The proper assimilation starts when the soul turns to the intelligible world and away from the sensible world. This is the next grade: the virtues as purifications.[151] One purifies one's soul from the sensible world and matter such as the body. Like the civic virtues, each virtue is defined in relation to the body but the key point is that here the soul begins to eliminate its relation to the body.[152]

The purification is a process of 'turning around' of the soul, so there is a beginning and an end. The result of this process is the possession of the second category of virtues identified by Porphyry, the contemplative virtues.[153] Having detached itself from the body, the soul now focuses upon the intelligible world. It is at this moment that the impressions of the Beings in the intelligible world on the soul are illuminated and recognized, which is reminiscent of Plato's theory of recollection.[154] This also answers the question posed at the beginning of this treatise: the god we assimilate to is the Intellect.

---

[145] Porph. *Sent.* 32, 29.8-30.1. Translation by K.S. Guthrie. Porphyry discusses *Ennead* 1.2 in chapter 32 of his *Sententiae*, which is quite long. For clarity, I have referenced to the chapter (32) and then to the page numbers and lines in Lamberz' edition of Porphyry's *Sententiae.*
[146] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.1.16.
[147] Porph. *Sent.* 32, 23.7-8.
[148] Plot. 1.2.2.19-20.
[149] Plot. 1.2.1.23-27; Emilsson (2017: 299).
[150] Plot. 1.2.1.17-21; Emilsson (2017: 298).
[151] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.3.11.
[152] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.3.14-19.
[153] Porph. *Sent.* 32, 27.7-9.
[154] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.4.21-29; Kalligas (2015: 142).

Each virtue is now defined solely in relation to the Intellect: "So, the justice in the soul that is greater is activity in relation to intellect, and the greater self-control is a turning inward towards intellect, and the greater courage is a lack of affection inasmuch as there is an assimilation of itself to the unaffected nature towards which it is looking."[155] These virtues are the direct image of the virtues in the Intellect.

Plotinus reminds us, however, that "[…] in the intelligible world, there is no virtue; virtue is in the soul. What, then, is in the intelligible world? Its own activity, that is, what it really is. But in the sensible world, when what comes from the intelligible world is found in another, that is virtue. For neither Justice itself, nor any of the others, is a virtue, but rather a paradigm."[156] The last category of virtues, therefore, technically does not consist of virtues but is still included in the grades of virtue by Porphyry. Dubbed 'the exemplary virtues' by Porphyry, these virtues are the paradigms in the Intellect, for which Plotinus is able to give descriptions: "For intellection in the intelligible world is scientific understanding or theoretical wisdom, and being self-related is self-control, and taking care of one's own affairs is one's proper function, and courage is in a way the immaterial state of remaining pure in oneself."[157]

With the grades of virtues clear, illustrated by the definitions of the four cardinal virtues in each grade, we can now turn to the relations between these virtues and the mutual implication.

4.2: Horizontal and vertical relations

The grades of virtues allow for horizontal and vertical relationships between the virtues, meaning that mutual implication is possible in both directions. This raises the question of in which direction they imply each other in addition to the question of what basis they imply each other. Plotinus turns to the matter in *Ennead* I.2.7, stating the following: "The virtues themselves in the soul are, then, mutually implicating [*antakolouthousi*] just as are their paradigms prior to virtue in the Intellect."[158] Three things can be gathered from this statement: firstly, that Plotinus follow the thesis of the mutual implication of the virtues, secondly, that the implication rests on the relation between the paradigms in the Intellect, and, thirdly, since this paragraph is directly after the discussion of the contemplative virtues, that these virtues at least horizontally implicate each other.

The horizontal implication, however, only happens at the end of the purification process. Plotinus namely states the following: "And as for purification, if indeed all the virtues are purifications, in the sense that they are states of having been purified, purification necessarily produces all of them; otherwise none would be complete."[159] One would not be

[155] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.6.24-26.
[156] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.6.15-18.
[157] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.2-5.
[158] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.1-2.
[159] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.9-11.

called purified if the process of purification was still ongoing for one or more of the virtues. Thus it is only at the end, when one has all the contemplative virtues and is completely purified, that they necessarily mutually imply each other. Plotinus, therefore, does not allow for the shortcut.

Does the horizontal implication extend to the lower grades of civic and purification virtues? Plotinus does not address this question and Kalligas only recognizes the horizontal implication for the contemplative virtues in his commentary.[160] Though not directly read in Plotinus, Porphyry explains that the lower grades prepare the soul for the next grade: "While the civil virtues are the ornament of mortal life, and prepare the soul for the purificatory virtues, the latter direct the man whom they adorn to abstain from activities in which the body predominates."[161] Even though Porphyry only mentions the civic and purification virtues here, this must be the same for all grades. If not, it would be possible to have purification virtues and contemplative virtues simultaneously and as pointed out above, this is impossible. One must thus complete a grade of virtues, i.e. having them all, before advancing to the next and it is therefore not possible to have virtues from different grades simultaneously.

Furthermore, the process of becoming virtuous can be seen as gaining more understanding per grade. This is reflected in the definitions of the four cardinal virtues per grade: the virtues are first rational measures in the sensible world, then turning towards the Intellect and detaching from the body, then detached from the body and seeing the Intellect to, lastly, the paradigms in the Intellect. Knowledge and insight are gained at each grade. Therefore, it makes sense that the lower grades must also horizontally imply each other when completing the grade. At the completion of the grade, the insight particular to that grade is unlocked, which prepares the soul for the next grade.

The horizontal implication for the lower virtues can also be explained from the metaphysical background of the virtues. The paradigms in the Intellect imply each other, on basis of which Plotinus concludes with *toinun*, signifying a logical conclusion[162], that the contemplative virtues must also mutually imply each other. If we extend the image-model analogy to the other grades, then each grade is based upon the paradigms in the Intellect and horizontal implication must be in those grades as well.

This brings us to the question where Plotinus bases the implication on, thus how he argues for the unity of the virtues. He refers to the Intellect but does not further explain the unity of the virtues here. Elsewhere, in *Ennead* V.1, he explains that the Intellect is both Identity and Difference:

> "There [in the Intellect] must be Difference, so that there can be both thinking and what is being thought; in fact, if you were to remove Difference, it would become one and fall silent. It also must be that things that are thought are different from each

[160] Kalligas (2015: 147–48).
[161] Porph. *Sent.* 32, 24.4-7.
[162] *LSJ*, 9th ed., s.v. "τοίνυν".

other. There must also be Identity, since Intellect is one with itself, that is, there is a certain commonality in all its objects, but 'differentiation is Difference'."[163]

This means that the paradigms are one, but also distinct from each other, thus forming a unity while remaining a multiplicity. According to the model-image analogy, this works the same for the virtues in the soul. The Intellect, therefore, functions as an underlying reality, making Plotinus' argument a version of the unity model 2. It must be noted that because the Intellect is both Identity and Difference, it is particularly suited to be the underlying reality. It would not collapse into unity model 1, because there would always be Identity *and* Difference.

Turning to the vertical relations between the virtues, it can be gathered from the fact that the lesser grade prepares for the next grade, that the higher grade must imply the lesser grade but not vice versa. This is exactly what Plotinus states: "Whoever has the greater ones will have the lesser in potency, too, necessarily, though one who has the lesser will not necessarily have the greater."[164] While someone has the potency of having the virtues of all grades, even before having civic virtues, this is not the same potency Plotinus refers to in the latter part. The difference lies in the fact that someone with the higher virtues has already actualized the lower virtues once. Should a situation arise in which the lesser virtues were required, this person would be able to instantly actualise those lesser virtues. Someone with the lesser virtues could not do the same for the higher virtues, even though he has the potency to attain those virtues.

The actuality of the lower virtues disappears once someone has reached a higher grade. Having the higher virtues entails that one has better principles to act accordingly.[165] The lesser virtues are also mostly redundant for someone with higher virtues because the higher virtues entail a different kind of life: "he will not locate the act of self-control in imposing a measure, but in separating himself entirely as far as possible, absolutely not living the life of the good human being, which civic virtue values, but leaving this, and opting for another, the life of the gods."[166] This means that the question of potency or actuality of the lower virtues for someone with higher virtues is redundant too. It seems that Plotinus allows the lower virtues to be there in potency so that he can guarantee that the man with higher virtues would act in the right ways if the situation required it. Whether he thinks this is likely, is another matter.[167]

From Plotinus' treatment of the mutual implication of the virtues in *Ennead* I.2.7, several echoes to Alexander or the Stoics can be identified. The position Plotinus takes regarding the horizontal mutual implication is similar to Alexander's because for both philosophers the mutual implication of the virtues happens at the end of the process of

[163] Plot. *Enn.* 5.1.4.37-42.
[164] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.12-13.
[165] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.21-23.
[166] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.23-27.
[167] For the practicality of Plotinian ethics and the activity of a Plotinian wise man, see Dillon (1996), Remes (2006) and Smith (1999).

acquiring them. It is less clear, however, how Plotinus views the unity and multiplicity of the contemplative virtues. Where Alexander states clearly that the virtues form a new uniform totality of virtue and Chrysippus describes how the virtues retain their individuality, Plotinus only states that each virtue is required for the completed purification and they model the paradigms in the Intellect.

The descriptions of each contemplative virtue relate in a specific way to the Intellect, which resembles the perspectives of Chrysippus. Both focus upon the four cardinal virtues, though the virtues are not described in relation to each other as in Chrysippus. Because the Intellect is singular and functions as the underlying reality, each contemplative virtue would contain the rest of the virtues as well. Their difference would then be given by their different perspectives on the Intellect.

Another similarity between Plotinus and Chrysippus, and the Stoics in general, lies in the focus upon rationality. The important virtues are intellectual for both philosophers. The rationality is also visible in the description of the paradigms. Intellection (*noesis*) "in the intelligible world is scientific understanding [*episteme*] or theoretical wisdom [*sophia*]".[168] A few lines down, theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) are lumped together: "In soul, then, theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom in relation to the Intellect are the act of seeing."[169] Like Chrysippus, Plotinus does not seem to differentiate between *phronesis*, *sophia*, or *episteme*.

In line with this, one can also assume that the contemplative virtues deal with knowledge. The Beings in the Intellect are illuminated and thus known once someone has purified himself. While Plotinus does not explicitly connect good and bad to the Intellect here, one can imagine that knowing the Beings will also include knowledge of good and bad. This could be a Stoic echo as well.

So far, it looks like Alexander and Chrysippus would agree with Plotinus' position. The virtues imply each other horizontally and vertically, both being necessary: one needs all the virtues of each grade before one can progress to the next. Furthermore, there is an underlying principle which safeguards the unity of the virtues, while the virtues remain distinct from each other. The choice for the Intellect as the principle and the hierarchical system of virtues is dictated by Plotinus' metaphysics, as is explained above. Alexander and Chrysippus would not support this part of Plotinus' position.

In addition, Plotinus' position does not seem to be an all-or-nothing position concerning the virtues, which is a shared position by Aristotle, Alexander and Chrysippus. Plotinus does not make explicit that certain conditions need to be met before a virtue is considered a virtue, which Alexander and Aristotle did do, so it seems possible that one could have the civic virtue of justice, but not of courage. This person would then not be able to ascend to the next level. Furthermore, the distinct steps in the journey of becoming fully

[168] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.2-3.
[169] Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7.8-9.

virtuous entail that one can always have some virtues, though on the whole, one never actively has all of them.

Plotinus also does not address the question of whether one acts according to all the virtues when acting according to one. This is due to Plotinus not explaining how the unity and individuality of the virtues work once one has the contemplative virtues. However, because being purified is a singular state, Plotinus would likely agree with Alexander and Chrysippus in that one will act from all virtues when acting from one. This purified state is synonymous with being fully virtuous and would work accordingly. This would count for the lower grades as well due to the model-image analogy. This would point towards an all-or-nothing position, but then per grade of virtue.

These similarities show echoes of Alexander's or Chrysippus' position and arguments, but there are also points Plotinus does not address. Before an answer can be given to the question to what degree Plotinus participated in the debate, *Ennead* I.3 must also be discussed, for Plotinus also uses *antakolouthein* in the context of the virtues.

4.3: Dialectic and the mutual implication of the virtues

Plotinus starts *Ennead* 1.3, which follows chronologically on *Ennead* 1.2, by questioning what the person is like who will ascend, distinguishing philosophers, musicians and lovers from each other as Plato did.[170] Furthermore, he asks himself what the manner of the ascent is. Plotinus discusses the journey to the intelligible world for the different starting points of these different persons. It is in the context of the philosopher that the mutual implication of virtues is discussed.

The starting point of the philosopher is in contrast with the others much better, for he "is ready by nature".[171] This readiness expresses itself in the fact that the philosopher is virtuous by nature.[172] Because of this, "he should be led to the perfection of virtues, and after the mathematical studies, dialectical arguments should be given to him and he should be made into a complete dialectician."[173] In contrast with the others, the philosopher is already gazing in the right direction, so to the intelligible world: "he has moved himself in the upward direction."[174]

This passage may seem to refer to Aristotle's natural virtues, but this is incorrect. The fact that the philosopher already gazes in the right direction suggests that he has higher virtues than the civic virtues. He cannot yet have the contemplative virtues because he still needs to be led to the perfection of the virtues, which are the contemplative virtues. The philosopher is thus already in the process of purification. If the purification virtues were the natural virtues that everyone possesses, then the musician and the lover would have them

[170] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.1.1-9. Kalligas (2015: 151-152) notices both Platonic and Aristotelian echoes in these lines.
[171] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.3.1.
[172] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.3.8.
[173] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.3.8-11. See Kalligas (2015: 155) for the Platonian echoes in the educational references here.
[174] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.3.2-3.

too. They, however, explicitly do not have them, so the natural virtuous state cannot refer to Aristotle's natural virtues.

The last part of *Ennead* 1.3, however, does point towards the Aristotelian natural virtues. Plotinus says:

> "Is it possible for the lower virtues to be present without dialectic and theoretical wisdom? Yes, but imperfectly and deficiently. Is it possible for someone to be wise and a dialectician without these virtues? In fact, this would not happen, but they must have been there previously or they must grow up simultaneously. And perhaps someone could have natural virtues, from which the perfect ones arise when theoretical wisdom arises. Theoretical wisdom comes, then, after the natural virtues."[175]

The natural virtues, as the imperfect moral virtues, become perfect virtues when wisdom is acquired, just as Aristotle has explained. The difference is that the virtues become real virtues when theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) arises instead of *phronesis*, which again points towards the emphasis on rationality. The natural virtues are absent from *Ennead* 1.2, so it is unclear which virtues Plotinus refers to. He also refers to "virtues of character".[176] This further complicates the interpretation of *Ennead* 1.2. It seems contradictory to interpret the virtues of character as civic virtues because they are the moral virtues according to Aristotle, but the lowest virtues according to Plotinus.

The focus on dialectics is due to it being "the more honourable part of philosophy […] For it is not concerned with base theorems and rules, but it is concerned with real things, and, in a way, has Beings as its material."[177] If Beings are the material of dialectics, then dialectics deals with the Intellect, for only in the Intellect are Beings or the Forms.[178] Philosophy has more parts besides dialectics, namely the philosophy of nature and moral philosophy.[179]

Moral philosophy "theorizes with principles from the intelligible world, adding the habits and exercises from which the habits arise."[180] Following Aristotle's example, the virtues are habits (*hexeis*).[181] The virtues of character could refer to the virtues being habits, for the Greek word for 'character'(*ēthos*) also means 'habit'.[182] While this was not present in *Ennead* 1.2, the idea that virtues are habits is not contradictory to *Ennead* I.2. As habits are

---

[175] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.15-19.
[176] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.20.
[177] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.5.9-12.
[178] See Plot. *Enn.* 5.1.4. and specifically, *Enn.* 5.1.4.22: "It has, then, all Beings stable in it". Also see *Enn.* 5.9 "On Intellect, Ideas, and Being", which is "concerned with the relation between Intellect and the Forms, together constituting Being." Gerson (2017: 625).
[179] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.1-6.
[180] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.5-7.
[181] See Aris. *EN.* 1103a14-1103b25 on virtues as habits.
[182] *LSJ,* 9th ed., s.v. ἦθος. Cf. Aris. *EN.* 1103a17-18: "moral excellence comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for 'habit'."

stable conditions, it would make sense that virtues in any grade are stable conditions, especially once the grade is completed. These habits are, however, intellectual and have dialectical principles, meaning they deal with the Intellect.[183] This suggests that the virtues in question here are the contemplative virtues. Only someone with the contemplative virtues is actively contemplating the Intellect and is able to do so, for he is not distracted by the evils of the sensible world.

Plotinus then goes on to discuss the difference between practical wisdom and the other virtues, which is also where *antakolouthein* is used: "And while the other virtues involve calculative reasoning concerning particular states and actions, practical wisdom [*phronesis*] is a kind of meta-calculative reasoning, concerned more with the universal and whether things are mutually implied, and if one should hold back from acting either now or later, or whether something wholly different would be better."[184]

In contrast with *Ennead* I.2, Plotinus attributes a different role to *phronesis* here than to the other virtues: it is not calculative reasoning (*logismos*), but meta-calculative reasoning (*epilogismos*), making it "purely theoretical and consequently draws its principles and its directions from dialectic."[185] *Phronesis* is now put on a higher level and is concerned with the universal and questions of acting now or later, and, surprisingly, 'whether things are mutually implied'.

This is where we find the second occurrence of *antakolouthein* in Plotinus. It is important to look at the Greek here, for the translation above conceals an important point:

καὶ αἱ μὲν ἄλλαι ἀρεταὶ τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι τοῖς ἰδίοις καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν, ἡ δὲ φρόνησις ἐπιλογισμός τις καὶ τὸ καθόλου μᾶλλον καὶ εἰ ἀντακολουθοῦσι καὶ εἰ δεῖ νῦν ἐπισχεῖν ἢ εἰσαῦθις ἢ ὅλως ἄλλο βέλτιον·

The form of *antakolouthein* used here is a third person plural, meaning its subject must also be plural. Boys-Stone's translation is so far correct: 'whether *things* are mutually implied'. Armstrong, however, reworks the entire sentence and makes the verb into a noun, thereby abandoning the subject of *antakolouthousi* altogether. His translation reads: "it considers questions of mutual implication".[186] Both translations leave open what the subject of *antakolouthousi* is, while there is only one logical option. The subject must be the virtues. *Antakolouthein* has been used almost exclusively in the context of virtues since the second century AD and Plotinus himself has used it in 1.2.7 for the virtues too. The context here is the same. The correct way of translating is, therefore "whether the virtues mutually imply each other".

[183] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.7.
[184] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.6.9-13.
[185] Kalligas (2015: 160).
[186] Armstrong (1969: 163). The whole passage is translated as: "The other virtues apply reasoning to particular experiences and actions, but practical wisdom is a kind of superior reasoning concerned more with the universal; it considers questions of mutual implication, and whether to refrain from action, now or later, or whether an entirely different course would be better."

Making the subject of *antakolouthein* explicit is important because the mutual implication of the virtues is here connected to *phronesis.* It is practical wisdom that is concerned with whether the virtues mutually imply each other, which poses a problem in light of *Ennead* 1.2. Instead of the Intellect, *Ennead* 1.3 seems to suggest *phronesis* is the underlying principle.

According to Kalligas, Plotinus does make this switch: "It is worth remarking that, as this passage indicates, inter-entailment is not to be taken for granted in the case of the lower virtues […], but only comes about as a result of the regulative intervention of wisdom."[187] The mutual implication is the result of wisdom, meaning that wisdom would have to be the underlying unifying principle. But considering what has been explained so far, this cannot be the case for Plotinus.

In line with *Ennead* 1.2, it must first be decided which grade of practical wisdom one would need for it to function as an underlying principle. It can only be the contemplative grade of practical wisdom because only this grade is capable of contemplating the intellectual paradigms. But, as established above, one cannot have this virtue if the purification is not completed. While the mutual implication happens at the completion of the grade, how would the necessary mutual implication at the lower grades be possible if one did not yet actively possess the contemplative grade of practical wisdom? Adding mutual implication retroactively to the lower grades would achieve nothing because a person with the contemplative virtues has lower grades only in potency.

Moreover, Plotinus cannot explain why practical wisdom of the contemplative grade is required besides for the completion of the purification. Such explanation is necessary if it must function as the underlying principle like Alexander and Aristotle have provided. As discussed above, each contemplative virtue is equally required for the completion of the purification, so why, then, would practical wisdom be especially required or be the virtue that unites them? Even with the meta-calculative reasoning powers, practical wisdom is still an intellectual virtue like the rest of the contemplative virtues. In contrast, for Aristotle and Alexander, practical wisdom is necessary because it provides the right reason for the moral virtues, which they as natural virtues do not have and this turns them into them proper virtues. Plotinus' statement that theoretical wisdom perfects the natural virtues is also not of help here, because it is not practical wisdom that perfects the natural virtues. Even though Plotinus does not strictly follow Aristotle's distinctions for all intellectual virtues, *sophia* and *phronesis* cannot be used interchangeably.

Besides these arguments, considering that 1.3 follows chronologically on 1.2 which establishes the particularly suitable Plotinian Intellect as the underlying principle, it would make no sense that Plotinus would change it that fast. Therefore, the meta-calculative reasoning of contemplative grade practical wisdom should rather be interpreted as follows. Someone with contemplative grade practical wisdom can contemplate the Intellect and this is where the intellectual principles and dialectical principles come in. This turns *phronesis*

[187] Kalligas (2015: 160).

into something entirely theoretical, as Kalligas points out. With dialectics being "the capacity to say what each thing is, and in what way it differs from other things, and what it has in common with them, and in what and where each of these is, and if it is what it is,"[188], someone with *phronesis* as contemplative virtue would then gain the insight that the virtues form a unity and thus that they are mutually implied by each other. This would be a meta-ethical insight, which is theoretical. The Intellect is still the underlying principle, which is precisely what is uncovered when someone has completed the purification and can see and understand the Intellect.

The emphasis of *phronesis* and the appearance of natural virtues and virtues being habits all have Aristotelian undertones. While *Ennead* 1.2 is clearer on the mutual implication of the virtues, the fact that practical wisdom is here connected to the mutual implication can be seen as an Aristotelian or Alexandrian echo. Furthermore, practical wisdom is presented as dealing with universal questions and questions of acting now or later or doing something else entirely, which also corresponds with Aristoteles. Because the treatment of the mutual implication of the virtues by Plotinus is now clear and the echoes are identified, we are now able to answer the main question of this thesis.

[188] Plot. *Enn.* 1.3.4.2-7.

Conclusion: Plotinus in the debate

In this thesis, we followed the use of *antakolouthein* in the context of the virtues from Alexander to Plotinus. Alexander's *Mantissa* and the *Ethical Problems* shows an ongoing debate on the mutual implication of the virtues and the unity of the virtues. The discussion of Aristotle as the philosophical background of Alexander and the Stoics as participants in the debate has given insight into the origin of Alexander's arguments, as well as the insight that this debate should be seen as a second-century debate and not a Stoic debate.

Between Plotinus and Alexander, there was already an established connection because Plotinus has used Alexander's writings in his philosophy. The observation that they both discuss the subject of the mutual implication, marked in both philosophers with *antakolouthein,* led to the main question of this thesis: To what extent does Plotinus participate in the debate on the mutual implication of the virtues visible in Alexander of Aphrodisias?

Plotinus does participate in the debate, but differently than Alexander or the Stoics. Where they present a technical discussion of why the virtues mutually imply each other, Plotinus does not, nor does he argue for this position. This position was a given for him. The main question Plotinus deals with instead is how the mutual implication of the virtues looks within his philosophy. For him, the virtues imply each other horizontally in each grade of virtues and the higher grades imply the lower virtues but not vice versa.

In Plotinus' treatment of the mutual implication, echoes of the Stoics, Alexander and Aristotle can be found. While these philosophers all support the thesis of the mutual implication of the virtues, there are distinct differences. These differences emerge from the differences in the philosophers' respective metaphysics and theories on the human soul. As we have seen throughout this thesis, these aspects of their philosophies influence and limit the options for the argumentation for the mutual implication of the virtues. This is most visible in the way the philosophers, with different rates of success, try to simultaneously secure the unity and the multiplicity of the virtues. One could argue that because of his metaphysics, Plotinus even succeeds best in this task, because his underlying reality is both Identity and Difference.

Knowing the debate and its participants, the different aspects of the mutual implication of the virtues, and the background and use of *antakolouthein* gives the reader of *Ennead* 1.2 and 1.3 the framework in which to place the passages on the mutual implication. This framework must be taken into account not only when Plotinus must be interpreted, but any philosopher who uses *antakolouthein* in the context of the virtues. The debate as is visible in Alexander of Aphrodisias stretches across the different philosophical schools. While the details of the argumentation differ, each philosopher holds on to the unity of the virtues in this debate. And if the virtues form a unity, it is only natural that having one virtue implies having them all.

Bibliography

Primary texts

Alcinous, *Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*. ed. J. Whittaker and P. Louis. Paris, 1990.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *"De anima libri mantissa": A new edition of the Greek text with introduction and commentary*. ed. R.W. Sharples. Berlin, Boston, 2014.

Alexander of Aphrodisias. *Supplementum Aristotelicum; vol. 2, pars 1-2. Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta minora*. ed. I. Bruns. Berolini, 1887.

Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*. ed. I. Bywater. Oxford, 1975.

Armin, H. von, ed. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta: Volume III Chrysippi fragmenta moralia.* Berlin, 2010.

Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Volume I: Books 1-5.* Translated by R. D. Hicks. Cambridge, 1925.

Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Volume II: Books 6-10*. Translated by R. D. Hicks. Cambridge, 1925.

Galen. *Claudii Galeni Pergameni Scripta Minora.* ed. J. Marquardt (ed.), I von Müller, (ed.), and G. Helmreich (ed.), Leipzig, 1891.

Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers: Volume 2: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography.* Cambridge, 1987.

Plotinus. *Ennead, Volume I: Porphyry on the Life of Plotinus. Ennead I.* Translated by A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge, 1969.

Plutarch. *Moralia, Volume XIII: Part 2: Stoic Essays*. Translated by H. Cherniss. Cambridge, 1976.

Porphyry. *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*. ed. E. Lamberz. Leipzig, 1975.

Stobaeus. *Joannis Stobaei anthologium*. ed. K. Wachsmuth. Berolini, 1884.

Translations and commentaries

Aristoteles. 2014. *Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume 2: The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by J. Barnes. Princeton.

Barnes, J. 1991. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.1-7*. Ithaca.

Dillon, J. 1993. *Alcinous, The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford.

Gerson, L. P., ed. 2017. *Plotinus: The Enneads*. Translated by G. Boys-Stones et al. Cambridge.

Kalligas, P. 2014. *The Enneads of Plotinus: A Commentary*. Vol. 1. Princeton.

Long, A.A., and D.N. Sedley. 1987. *The Hellenistic Philosophers.* Vol. 1. Cambridge.

Sharples, R.W. 1990. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Ethical Problems*. London.

Sharples, R.W. 2004. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Supplement to On the Soul*. London.

Todd, R.B. 1976. *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics : a Study of the "De Mixtione" with Preliminary Essays, Text, Translation and Commentary.* Leiden.

White, S., ed. 2021. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers: An Edited Translation.* Cambridge

Secondary literature

Annas, J. 1993. *The Morality of Happiness*. New York.

Becker, L.C. 2018. 'Stoic Virtue' in N.E. Snow (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, New York, 130-52.

Bene, L. 2013. 'Ethics and Metaphysics in Plotinus'. In F. Karfík (ed.) and E. Song (ed.), *Plato Revived: Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic J. O'Meara*, Berlin, 141–61.

Brittanica Academic, s.v. "Diogenes Laërtius," https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Diogenes-La%C3%ABrtius/30531 (accessed October 14, 2021).

----------, s.v. "Galen," https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Galen/35854 (accessed October 14, 2021).

----------, s.v. "Plutarch," https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Plutarch/60464 (accessed October 14, 2021).

Cooper, J.M. 1998. 'The Unity of Virtue'. *Social Philosophy & Policy* 15.1, 233–74.

Cormack, M. 2006. *Plato's Stepping Stones: Degrees of Moral Virtue*. London.

Dentsoras, D. 2020. 'Carving Up Virtue: The Stoics on Wisdom's Scope and the Multiplicity of Virtues'. *International Philosophical Quarterly* 60.1, 5–21.

Dillon, J.M. 1996. 'An Ethic for the Late Antique Sage'. In L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, Cambridge, 315–35.

Edwards, W.M., and R. Browning. "Stobaeus." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-6090 (accessed October 14, 2021).

Emilsson, E. K. 2017. *Plotinus*. New York.

Inwood, B. 2000. 'Stoicism', in L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, vol.1, Cambridge, 126-39.

Irwin, T.H. 1988. 'Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues'. In J. Annas (ed.) and R.H. Grimm (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Supplementary Volume*, Oxford, 61–78.

Jedan, C. 2009. *Stoic Virtues: Chrysippus and the Religious Character of Stoic Ethics*. London.

Sellars, J. 2006. *Stoicism*. Durham.

Kraut, R. 1998. 'Comments on "Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues" by T.H. Irwin'. In J. Annas (ed.) and R.H. Grimm (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Supplementary Volume*, Oxford, 79–86.

Pohlenz, M. 1948. *Die Stoa: Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*. Vol. 1. Göttingen.

Remes, P. 2006. 'Plotinus's Ethics of Disinterested Interest'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44.1, 1–23.

Sharples, R.W. 2000. 'The Unity of the Virtues in Aristotle, in Alexander of Aphrodisias, and in the Byzantine Commentators'. *Ethics & Politics* II,2. http://www2.units.it/etica/2000_2/index.html.

Smith, A. 1999. 'The Significance of Practical Ethics for Plotinus'. In J.J. Cleary (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, Aldershot, 227–36.

Tuominen, M. 2012. 'Philosophy of the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle'. *Philosophy Compass* 7,12, 852–95.