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**Soul Searching: Moral Psychology and Psychological Morality in Second-Century AD Middle Platonism**
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# Soul Searching

Moral Psychology and Psychological Morality
in Second-Century AD Middle Platonism

Research Master Thesis Classics and Ancient Civilisations: Classics
Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University

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πόλεμον οὐ κινεῖς διὰ νόσον σώματος,
διὰ δὲ ψυχῆς νόσον οἱ πολλοὶ πόλεμοι

war is not started by sickness of the body, but
many wars *are* started by sickness of the soul

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Maximus of Tyre, *Oration* 7.3

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# Introduction
# Middle Platonic Moral Psychology: Physics and Ethics Joining Forces

What does it mean for us to be a good person? How should we behave? What is our soul like; how is it structured? And how does our soul affect our behaviour?

These questions have occupied us since the beginning of time, and throughout the ages many a philosopher, wielding many a different approach, has painstakingly attempted to answer them. When considering these types of questions in a modern psychological context, it is obvious to us that psychological affairs go hand in hand with ethical questions: we know for a fact that the health of our minds corresponds to our actions and thoughts, and vice versa. In antiquity, however, matters were presented less straightforwardly. Traditionally, psychology was grouped under the category of physics, as it is the branch of ancient philosophy that concerns itself with the nature and structure of the human soul. Ethics, then, comprising the thought surrounding virtue and moral principles, occupied its own philosophical class. While it appeared obvious to great philosophers such as Plato that the healthily structured soul inevitably had one's good moral behaviour as a consequence – demonstrating the conventional notion of moral psychology being the field dealing with character development – later philosophical thought, especially that of the Hellenistic variety, generally maintains this strong split between psychology and ethics, resulting in the two fields being treated separately in philosophical treatises and in the prevailing thought of the day. Contrary to this, however, in the later Platonic tradition thinkers return to the fundamental relationship between the structure of the human soul and matters of ethics and good behaviour. Especially in second-century AD Middle Platonism – when the intellectual movement experienced its heyday – it is discernible that thinkers are actively reconciling psychological and ethical thought. By using the structure of the human soul – a structure they more often than not establish themselves over the course of their corpus – to think about good ethical behaviour, second-century AD Middle Platonists seem to seek to redefine coeval approaches to questions of moral psychology. At first sight, one could conclude that this is simply the Middle Platonists' return to, and copying of, Plato and his way of writing, arguing and thinking. After all, Plato frequently and convincingly uses the structure and nature of the human soul when it comes to explaining moral behaviour. Middle Platonists have therefore traditionally received the label "B-List Actors" in scholarship, and are thus often written off as unimportant. However, when these thinkers and their texts receive the attention and research they deserve, it becomes obvious that they are not merely weak Platonic

deductions, but are rather of great philosophical significance. Innovation in both method and material is present in Middle Platonism: these thinkers are operating in an entirely different playing field than Plato did, having to now also take into account their own intellectual milieu, contemporary medical knowledge, as well as their wide range of audiences. Yet, how precisely are the Middle Platonists going about merging psychology with their ideas on morality in the context of their own philosophical environment? How are they innovating upon traditional Platonic moral psychology? And what do their thoughts and methodological tendencies tell us about the (in)coherence and (un)importance of the Middle Platonic intellectual movement?

## I. MIDDLE PLATONISM: A BRIEF HISTORY

Before delving into the main concern of this thesis, it is essential to give an, albeit brief,[1] introduction to the intellectual movement of Middle Platonism and inquire into its identity, history, and sources of inspiration. The operational period of Middle Platonism starts when Antiochus of Ascalon dissociated himself from the New Academy in 88 BC,[2] rejecting its scepticism and returning to a more doctrinally oriented approach to Plato's works. The movement reaches its heyday in the second century AD – with important players in the philosophical field including Apuleius of Madaura, Taurus of Beirut, Numenius of Apamea, Plutarch, Maximus of Tyre, Alcinous, and Galen – coinciding with the flourishing of the second sophistic,[3] and it remains present until the first half of the third century AD, when it made room for Plotinus' Neoplatonism. Despite this doctrinal approach, however, Middle Platonism is generally not a movement that presents cohering doctrines, but rather a rich conglomerate of authors and thinkers who impose upon themselves the notion that Plato implies unwritten doctrines and subsequently incorporate many different ideas from many different philosophical schools in order to reach satisfying conclusions. Middle Platonists are left with the entirety of Plato's corpus, along with all of its internal discrepancies and oddities, as well as its elegance and philosophical authority, and they have set themselves the task of making sense out of this decidedly chaotic hodgepodge. A (Middle) Platonist, therefore, does not seem to be a thinker that exclusively presents Plato's thought, but rather a thinker that is *inspired* by him and

[1] This thesis does not allow the space to give an elaborate exploration of the Middle Platonic intellectual movement. For such discussions I refer to e.g. Dillon (1977), Opsomer (1998), Boys-Stones (2017), and Tarrant et al. (2017).
[2] Dillon 1977: 52-62, especially 53.
[3] I refer to e.g. Anderson (1993) for an examination of the second sophistic.

primarily builds upon his ideas in order to come to what they deem to be the most Platonic end result.

This diversity within the field of Middle Platonism inevitably raises the question of eclecticism:[4] are Middle Platonists merely cherry-picking in order to argue what they wish to argue? Or are they collecting philosophical evidence and moulding it into a coherent whole? It really depends on the definition of "eclecticism" under which one operates. Cherry-picking has strong negative connotations and implies fastidiousness and lack of creativity. The etymology of eclecticism – ἐκλέγειν, meaning to pick or to choose something – rather implies the building upon, working with, deviating from, and refuting a large amount of material, including one's own thought, in order to reach the most substantiated conclusion. In my well-considered view it is then unfair to call Middle Platonists eclectics in the sense that they would be cherry-picking, but it *is* fair to state that they are eclectics on account of their carefully working with a range of material.

And that range of material with which Middle Platonists work is positively gigantic. It would be impossible to go over every bit of every source of inspiration in detail,[5] nor would it be possible to treat every piece of preceding moral psychological information. Let us nevertheless briefly address the most important precursing ideas that make their way into Middle Platonic thinking in order to sketch the basis upon which the authors discussed in this thesis are building.

First of all, of course, Plato.[6] Plato treats the structure of the human soul most elaboratively in his *Republic*, and gives further dimensions to the nature of the human soul and its ideal character development in dialogues such as the *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, and *Symposium*. Middle Platonists, not surprisingly, most frequently use the tripartite soul as presented in *Republic* IV.436a-441d, which consists of a rational, spirited, and appetitive part, each part having its own proper function. When ideally balanced, the rational part of the soul holds its chief position with the goal of leading us towards the Good, an idea which is strengthened by the immortality of the human soul *an sich* as explored in the *Phaedo*, particularly in its Myth of the Afterlife in 107d-115a. The tyrannical soul, as presented in *Republic* IX, does also often seem to be on Middle Platonists' minds, as they utilise this imbalanced soul – which, due to its

[4] For a more in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of eclecticism in ancient philosophy, I refer to e.g. Dillon & Long (1988) and Donini (2010: 197-209).

[5] For general studies regarding ancient moral psychology – which unfortunately do not treat Middle Platonic moral psychology in any capacity – I refer to e.g. Cooper (1999) and Warren (2022).

[6] For more in-depth discussions of Platonic (moral) psychology I refer to e.g. Brickhouse & Smith (2010), Ferrari (2007), and Kamtekar (2017).

insatiable desires, is a slave to its own spirited part, and therefore utterly unhappy – to demonstrate its subsequent unfavourable behaviour.

Particularly in works such as the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explores the structure and nature of the soul along with its ethical ramifications.[7] Ironically, more often than not Middle *Platonists* use a relatively large amount of *Aristotelian* thought in their moral psychological views. Especially Aristotle's hylomorphic account of the body-soul unit, as well as his initial bipartite division of the soul, are in popular demand among Middle Platonists.

Also on the Middle Platonist's desk when philosophising and authoring their own works are, though ostensibly in a lesser degree than Plato and Aristotle, Stoic and Epicurean treatises.[8] Particularly their eudaimonistic approach to moral psychology seems to make its way through to Middle Platonic thinking.[9] The Stoic and Epicurean structures of the human soul, however, given their materialistic nature, are favoured less among the Middle Platonists, as these thinkers generally prefer the incorporality and thereby essential immortality of the traditional Platonic soul. Nevertheless, more Stoically inclined physicalist approaches to the soul are indeed taken by for example Galen.

In short, a lot of philosophical material, often quite complex in nature, is applied in Middle Platonic works. Typical of these works is that most of them are not philosophical treatises *pur sang*. While thinkers such as Plutarch do indeed opt for the traditional philosophical treatise, most Middle Platonists purposefully present their thought in other literary packaging such as educational handbooks and rhetorical orations. This, however, does not make their works any less philosophically valuable: philosophical treatises reach the initiated, aristocratic student; other, more accessible, literary forms reach much broader audiences with which Middle Platonists are apparently concerned. Moral psychology is then a particularly important topic to be discussed, as it affects its listeners and readers on a practical level, and on a daily basis. The variety of literary forms used to propound philosophy demonstrates that Middle Platonists are experimenting with the most effective ways of communicating their ideas to their respective audiences and within their respective intellectual contexts. Within the texts themselves, then, we find that many a Middle Platonist often uses the structure of the soul in order to argue in favour of their own ideals regarding practicable

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[7] For explorations of Aristotle's (moral) psychology I refer to e.g. Caston (2006), Cooper (1999: 251-252), and Pakaluk & Pearson (2011).

[8] I refer to Everson (1999) and Rosenbaum (1996), and Brennan (2003) and Long (1999) for discussions of respectively Epicurean and Stoic (moral) psychology.

[9] Cf. Cooper 1999: 427; 485.

good behaviour, rather than solely professing practically unfeasible paragons of moral perfection. In other words, Middle Platonists, as this thesis will examine and establish, explore moral psychology by the means of a method of psychological morality.

## II. STATUS QUAESTIONIS

While in recent decades interest in the previously almost fully overlooked intellectual movement of Middle Platonism has certainly increased, both the size as well as the philosophical range of the scholarly field is quite narrow. Still relatively little attention goes out to Middle Platonism, and when it does, it leaves many a stone unturned when it comes to the topics it treats.

It is thus difficult to present any leading interpretations of thought presented by Middle Platonists. A few notable scholars and their works and views, however, should be mentioned in order to gain an adequate view of the state of the field. To start with, Dillon's 1977 work (revised in 1996) is a first stop when examining Middle Platonism. Dillon, next to displaying many a Middle Platonist's work, does consider their ethical as well as psychological thought specifically. However, he, albeit excellently, merely *reports* these philosophical ideas, and does not thoroughly *investigate* them. Boys-Stones (2017) too explores many Middle Platonic texts and thought extensively, but unfortunately does so in a rather perfunctory manner. Opsomer (1998), then, concentrates on the Middle Platonists' attitudes towards, and ways of dealing with, Plato's texts, thereby trying to determine the place of Middle Platonism within the Platonic tradition. His discussion, however, does not come to much more than the conclusion that Middle Platonists are a loose conglomerate of thinkers on account of the fact that questions regarding the either sceptical or doctrinal nature of Middle Platonic thinkers do not receive any clear answers. Furthermore, both Trapp (1997) and Lauwers (2015) study one Middle Platonist in particular, namely Maximus of Tyre – an endeavour which in itself is certainly laudable – and stress the value of his works in general. Trapp meticulously sifts out Maximus' many references to his sources of inspiration – mainly Plato and Aristotle, but also some contemporaries – but unfortunately generally argues that Maximus does not bring anything new to the table. In other words: Maximus' creativity is overlooked. Lauwers does in fact allow for some creativity by focussing on Maximus' effective communication strategies, demonstrating the importance of rhetoric when it comes to getting across philosophical matters to a broader audience.

It may be clear, then, that a common theme within research on Middle Platonism is the fact that it seems to treat Middle Platonic thinkers as "isolated islets", never in conjunction with other Middle Platonists and their thought (with the notable exception of Lauwers, perhaps, who, albeit concisely, explores the rhetorical strategies of other Middle Platonists besides Maximus as well). Thought is not compared, nor are methodologies. The result is that the scholarly consensus still seems to be that Middle Platonism is, simply, a mishmash with a reported source of inspiration called Plato. Potential systems, methodologies, and connections are ignored.

Ancient moral psychology, on the other hand, is a huge scholarly field. On Plato's and Aristotle's moral psychologies we most notably find Kamtekar (2017) and Pakaluk & Pearson (2021) respectively. For more general works on ancient moral psychology, we find Cooper (1999) and Ostenfeld (1987). However – and this may not come as a surprise – Middle Platonic moral psychology is overlooked in these works. They will indeed prove themselves to be useful when examining the philosophical contexts in which Middle Platonic thinkers operate, but they will eventually evince themselves to be insufficient when it comes to examining Middle Platonic moral psychology – along with its explanatory and enforcing strategies in order to effectively transmit ideas on practical ethics – *per se*.

In short, then, while Middle Platonism, its authors, texts, and its importance in some capacity, is being recognised more and more in scholarship, research in multiple of its philosophical areas leaves much to be desired. Middle Platonic psychology – or even physics in general – is often overlooked, as well as moral psychology. Ethical thought is indeed considered, but methodologies as to *how* exactly certain moral conclusions are reached are glossed over. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, the idea that Middle Platonists possess philosophical creativity themselves and produce their own systems and connections between several philosophical fields seems to be virtually out of the question in scholarship.

## III. THE AIM OF THIS THESIS

Having explored the questions by which many a Middle Platonic thinker is occupied, and having briefly established the relevant philosophical history and context in which these questions arise, as well as the state of the scholarly field surrounding these matters, it is now time to get to business and address the questions at hand in this thesis. Given the apparent tendency to turn to the constitution of the human soul in order to tackle moral conundrums, as touched upon above, the main concern of this thesis can be summarised in one question:

how do the Middle Platonists of the second century AD use the structure of the human soul in order to enforce practical ethics? This thesis focuses on practical ethics in particular – rather than on ethics as a whole – because of the second-century AD Middle Platonic authors' apparent position within society: the nature of their texts suggests that they wish to speak to a relatively wide array of audiences who can in turn practically implement philosophical thought in their day-to-day life. The demarcated area of the second century AD has been chosen on account of it being Middle Platonism's heyday and it therefore providing the most complete and encompassing view of the movement's thought and methodologies.

In order to answer its main question, this thesis will be divided into three main chapters, after which a concluding chapter will follow in order to summarise the thesis' findings. Each chapter will begin by outlining the context in which the respective author operates. Then, both the proposed structures of the human soul as well as the moral behaviours for which is argued will be demonstrated. It will subsequently be explored *how* exactly the constitution of the human soul – psychology, that is – is being used in order to argue for the propounded desirable conduct. By examining the primary texts in this way, this thesis concerns itself both with moral psychology as well as with its methodology.

It may be clear, then, that it is key to examine primary texts from different genres within the same intellectual movement, as this will allow for a comprehensive view of the methods and thoughts of second-century AD Middle Platonism regarding (moral) psychology. Therefore, the authors, who are representative of their respective genres, that will be examined are: Maximus of Tyre, Alcinous, and Galen. Selections of these authors' primary material will be examined through the lenses of ancient (moral) psychology. Chapter I will dive into Maximus of Tyre's *Orations*, exploring the rhetorical side of second-century AD Middle Platonism. Chapter II considers Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*, the educational handbook that advances a decidedly sensitive take on Platonic moral psychology. Finally, chapter III focuses on the medical treatises *Affections and Errors* and *The Capacities of the Soul* by Galen, who demonstrates a strongly physicalist approach to Plato. The philosophical treatise *pur sang* will not be treated in this thesis, wherefore Plutarch will not feature as a main character.[10] This is due to the fact that Plutarch authored his works in similar fashion to, and with comparable aims and audiences as, Plato's own texts. It is to be expected for moral philosophy and psychology to be combined in Plutarch's texts, whereas such intricate thought and methodologies do not

[10] For discussions of Plutarch's ethics I refer to e.g. Demulder (2022), Van Hoof (2010), and Xenophontos (2016). For his moral psychology I refer to Castelnérac (2007). Plutarch's philosophy in general is discussed by Lamberton (2001) and Beck (2014).

necessarily lie in the line of expectation in rhetorical, educational, and medical texts. It is, therefore, indeed more fruitful to focus on the numerously present non-strictly-philosophical works of the era.

Exploring the usages of the structure of the human soul in matters of practical ethics from these different angles – while aspiring to remain unbiased when it comes to the cohesion of the Middle Platonic intellectual movement and while being careful not to draw rash conclusions – this thesis aims to show how the second-century AD Middle Platonic tendency to blur the lines between psychology and practical ethics, as well as to clarify and clearly communicate ideas surrounding these matters, has developed into what seems to be a methodology of psychological morality: the structure of the human soul is being used in order to enforce good moral behaviour.

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# CHAPTER I
# BLURRY LINES, CLEAR WORDS: MAXIMUS OF TYRE

Let us thus start by examining one of the most rich Middle Platonic authors of all: the orator Maximus of Tyre, who presents Platonic thought in a strongly rhetorical, yet nevertheless original and refined, way in his *Orations*. Maximus addresses almost all philosophical themes presented by Plato in his dialogues, ranging from morality to metaphysics,[11] but seems to be especially concerned with advancing what he deems to be good Platonic ethical behaviour to a relatively large and diverse public.[12] To, of course, remain within the demarcation of this thesis, this section will, after a brief introduction to the elusive figure of Maximus of Tyre, examine the material presented in several *Orations* in order to see how Maximus uses the structure of the human soul, which he himself contrives over the course of his *Orations*, in order to enforce practical moral matters. The *Orations* that will be addressed in this section are those predominantly concerned with psychology – first and foremost *Oration* 11 ('Plato on God'), as well as *Oration* 6 ('Knowledge') – and a selection of those *Orations* with more ethical inclinations – *Oration* 6 again, as well as *Oration* 7 ('Diseases of Mind and Body'), and *Oration* 37 ('Virtue and the Liberal Arts').

## I. INTRODUCTION: EXCLAIMING PHILOSOPHY

### *Maximus of Tyre: life, work, and context*

Awfully little is known about Maximus of Tyre as a historical figure.[13] Eusebius states in his *Chronicon* that Maximus 'came to prominence' (agnoscitur) in Olympiad 232, which corresponds to the years 149-152 AD, and the *Suda*, moreover, places Maximus of Tyre in

[11] In contrast to the scholarly consensus, Maximus certainly concerns himself with metaphysical matters (contra e.g. Dillon (1977: 400) and Trapp (1997a: xv)). Especially the combination of *Orations* 8 and 9 ('Socrates' Daimonion' – for a discussion of Maximus' demonology, I refer to Timotin (2013: 201ff.)) and 11 ('Plato on God') provide a clear layout of the metaphysical system in which Maximus is operating. While this system is not necessarily complicated, nor fully worked-out, such as Plato himself presents his, it is workable, sufficient, and elegant enough in Maximus' rhetorical, and more popularly inclined, context.

[12] Trapp (1997a: xxff.) argues that Maximus' audience consisted of a selection of rich and aristocratic young men. Lauwers (cf. his entire section on 'Maximus' Audience' (2015: 139ff.)), more nuancedly, notes that 'Maximus' audience in all likelihood at least partly – but not necessarily exclusively! – consisted of young adolescents of about 16 to 20 years old; *not necessarily* exclusively because the careful rhetorical handling of the philosophical material may have lend itself to a wider exposition in a theatre or another public place' (2015: 139). I wholeheartedly agree with Lauwers that it is certainly likely that most of Maximus' audience was a scala of young men looking for philosophy, but that Maximus would surely have performed his *Orations*, given their oratorical and rhetorical nature, to a larger public as well.

[13] Cf. Trapp 1997a: xiff..

Rome at the time of emperor Commodus, which would have been in 180-191 AD,[14] making Maximus a thinker present in the second half of the second century AD. Other than that, more or less all we know about him is what we can glean from his *Orations*, information which tells us about his intellectual interest more so than about anything else.

Maximus' corpus consists of 41 *Orations*,[15] and it seems to have been transmitted in full, minus a few lacunae in the texts here and there. These *Orations* are in their tradition referred to as both 'philosophical questions' (ζητήματα) as well as 'talks' or 'lectures' (διαλέξεις).[16] It is unfortunately unclear whether these *Orations* were actually delivered in front of a live audience, or if they were intended for private recitation or readership.[17] In any case, the *Orations* have a strong didactic character. That does not mean, however, that the *Orations* are uncomplicated, so to speak. Maximus presents intricate and decidedly complicated material in a deceptively simply way, exemplifying his so-called dual status as a rhetor and a thinker.[18]

The context in which Maximus operates is a rhetorical one. With his ornamented *Orations*,[19] Maximus can be comfortably placed within the Second Sophistic.[20] This cultural phenomenon, as Anderson (1993) rightly calls it, is present in the Roman Empire from the second half of the first century AD until the first half of the third century AD, according to Philostratus' cataloguing. It is characterised by a revival of Attic fifth- and fourth-century BC values, ideals, thought, and education. As for Maximus' personal case, his works fit into this sophistic context thanks to his ability to present this relatively complicated intellectual material

[14] Ibid.. *Suda*/ Hesychius s.v.: διέτριψε δὲ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐπὶ Κομόδου; the manuscript of Maximus' *Orations* (Paris 1962 fol. 1) states that Maximus delivered his *Orations* when he came to Rome for the first time: τῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ διαλέξεων τῆς πρώτης ἐπιδημίας. Lauwers (2015: 1), among others, points out that Eusebius' account of Maximus is most likely wrong, which would make him an even more elusive figure than he was already supposed.

[15] A few textual editions of Maximus of Tyre's 41 *Orations* exist, and the orders in which the *Orations* feature in those editions differ somewhat. Examples of editions include *Laurentianus Conventi Soppressi* 4 (cf. Trapp 1997b for a discussion of this manuscript), which has its own order; Dübner (1892) and the Paris manuscript gr. 1962, which share an ordering; and Hobein (1910), Trapp (1994), and Koniaris (1995), which in turn share a separate ordering. This thesis utilises the most recent ordering of the *Orations*, namely that by Hobein, Trapp, and Koniaris. In addition, these textual editions provide, in my view, the most authoritative solutions to lacunae and thoughtful emendations to Maximus' texts. The specific textual editions used for this thesis are those edited by Hobein (1910) and Trapp (1994).

[16] Trapp 1997a: xxxii.

[17] Cf. e.g. Fowler 2016: 86; Trapp 1997a: xli. Cf. also Trapp 1997a: xlff. for a discussion on the manuscript title of the *Orations:* διαλέξεις. The word, being a derivative of διαλέγεσθαι, Trapp notes, suggests the conversational nature of the *Orations* and the intention of the author to have this conversation with an audience, as well as the author's objective to have a Socratic-dialectical conversation with that audience. Given the fact that this is the title of a 15th-century manuscript, however, this notion is only tentative.

[18] Cf. Anderson 1993: 137.

[19] Cf. Trapp 1997a: xxxiiff. for a discussion of the rhetorical form of the *Orations*. For a more general discussion of Greek oratorical art, I refer to Russell (1983).

[20] This thesis is not the place to delve much further into the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic or rhetoric in the second century AD. For discussions on these topics I refer to Anderson (1993), Bowersock (1969), Fowler (2008; 2017), and Lauwers (2015).

in an accessible manner.[21] With the help of many an adornation and literary reference – for example the numerous Homeric allusions, which both literally mention Homer before a citation as well as rely on the audience's knowledge of the Homeric epics – Maximus succeeds in skilfully and elegantly getting across the points he wishes to make. What results is a highly embellished collection of texts which aim to effectively communicate Platonic thought.

***Maximus the thinker***

Let these embellished texts not prevent us from appreciating the *Orations*' philosophical value. When talking about Middle Platonists such as Maximus, one is nowadays often prevented from calling them *philosophers*. Dillon, who dedicates a meagre page and half to Maximus in his great work on Middle Platonism, calls Maximus 'a sophist rather than a philosopher',[22] and this is a trend that seems to be maintained in scholarship. While it is indeed a relatively challenging endeavour to argue that Maximus – who, like many other Middle Platonic authors, has certainly chosen a divergent fashion from philosophical texts and dialogues for his propounding of Platonic thought – is a full-blown philosopher, it is unfair to simply state that he merely poorly copies Platonic philosophy in his *Orations*. The following material will indeed show that Maximus – as well as the authors that will pass in review in this thesis' subsequent chapters – deserves much more credit than he has generally received. I argue that, on account of his undertakings of presenting philosophical matters in an understandable, innovative, and thought-provoking manner, Maximus can indeed be referred to as a philosopher. It would undoubtedly be overconfident to level Maximus with Plato in terms of his philosophical contributions, but it would at the same time be negligent to write Maximus off as a poorly parrot of Plato's thought. Contrary to the prevailing scholarly notion,[23] Maximus does not seem to be playing fast and loose with his predicate 'Platonist'.[24] While Maximus certainly does not merely present Plato's ideas in his *Orations* – as sometimes he conforms to Plato, sometimes he deviates from him, sometimes he builds upon his ideas, and on top of that he is also clearly inspired by contemporaries and ideas based upon concerns of the day, as well as by Aristotelian, Stoic, and even Epicurean thought – his self-professed Platonism in the end does uphold. Maximus' broad

[21] Trapp 1997a: xxxiv.
[22] Dillon 1977: 399.
[23] Contra e.g. Trapp 1997a: xxv.
[24] Cf. Petrucci 2018: 96. Apart from a very brief mention by Tarrant in the chapter on 'Platonism before Plotinus' (2000: 91 n.48), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Gerson: 2000), in the chapter by Fowler (2000: 100-114), groups Maximus under the Second Sophistic, rather than in the category of (Middle) Platonism, discarding Maximus' status as Πλατωνικός. This, as stated in the main text of this chapter, seems incorrect.

philosophical interests, with Plato at the core of these, is far from a negative aspect: it rather argues in favour of the philosophical value of his *Orations*. A predominantly Platonic thinker that resides in a particular intellectual and cultural milieu cannot do otherwise but be influenced by, and build upon, the ideas and interpretations of others. It is the challenge, then, to present these different ideas as interesting, coherent, and understandable, and that is precisely what Maximus is doing. While he does not come up with a philosophical system that is entirely his own, he does clearly think about, and build upon, many profound philosophical ideas originating in different schools, while also presenting the occasional philosophical innovation. This is, as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, also the case when it comes to Maximus' thinking on the structure of the human soul, moral psychology, and the usage of the former in matters of the latter.

## II. EXEGESIS AND EXAMINATION OF *ORATIONS*

### *Maximus' intricate model of the human soul*

It is essential to first of all establish what model of the soul and its capacities Maximus constructs in order to subsequently see how this is being used in the propounding of good moral behaviour. While psychology seeps through in many of Maximus' *Orations*, one of them in particular stands out, namely *Oration* 11 ('Plato on God'). This *Oration* primarily concerns itself with the place and identity of god within the universe, yet it also provides a context in which Maximus seizes the opportunity to explore the nature of the human soul in relation to this omnipotent and supreme divine being. While also taking into consideration *Orations* which present further psychological thought, let us thus take *Oration* 11 as our primary guide and edify the idea of the human soul under which Maximus operates.

Offering a model of the soul based on Maximus' presented thought is a less straightforward endeavour than one might initially expect, as Maximus introduces surprisingly difficult and intricate material. It is then key to start from the most basic division within the human soul which Maximus makes:

Τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχῇ δύο ὀργάνων ὄντων πρὸς σύνεσιν, τοῦ μὲν ἁπλοῦ, ὃν καλοῦμεν **νοῦν**, τοῦ δὲ ποικίλου καὶ πολυμεροῦς καὶ πολυτρόπου, ἃς **αἰσθήσεις** καλοῦμεν (…).

(*Or*. 11.7)

There are two faculties present in the human soul, which present a unity, one of which is simple, which we call **intellect**, and the other is diverse and various and manifold, which we call **perception** (…).[25]

Already, this is an intriguing initial division: one would first of all naturally expect a three-part division of the human soul, yet, a two-part division is made in this Platonic context, a division upon which this section will later elaborate further. Moreover, the full inclusion of intellect in the human soul can strike us as quite bold, as the average Platonist would be quite hesitant to state that intellect is *in* the soul of a human, rather than something that can be tapped *into* and that may or may not be attainable. The qualifications of intellect (νοῦς) and perception (αἴσθησις) are given in *Oration* 11.7 as well:

**τὸ δὲ νοητόν**, ἀπηλλαγμένον τῆς τούτων ἐπαφῆς καὶ ἐπερείσεως **αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ ὁρᾶσθαι πέφυκεν ὑπὸ τούτου** (…). Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ ἡ **τῶν αἰσθητῶν** φύσις, **πολυειδής τε οὖσα, καὶ συμπεφορημένη, καὶ ῥέουσα, ἐν μεταβολῇ παντοίᾳ** συνδιατίθησιν αὐτῇ τὴν ψυχήν, ὥστε καὶ μεταβιβάζουσαν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ φύσιν, στάσιμόν τε οὖσαν καὶ ἑδραίαν, μὴ δύνασθαι διορᾶν ἀσφαλῶς ὑπὸ τοῦ σάλου καὶ τοῦ ταράχου κραδαινομένην.

(*Or*. 11.7)

**The intelligible**, being free from contact with or dependence on such things [= sensory experiences], **can be understood on its own by itself, by the intellect** (…). As to the nature of **perceptibles**, **being manifold and mashed-up and constantly-flowing, in an ever-going state of change**, it forms the soul to their own image, so that, when the soul moves on to the realm of the intelligible, it is so stopped in its ways and knocked-out, that it is not able to see clearly due to it being shaken up by the uproar and tumult.

The intellect is clearly defined as something that can think itself, by itself, on account of itself, while perception is something that has the tendency to corrupt the intellect in one way or another, so much so that the soul is blind and shaken if and when it arrives in the intelligible realm, and is therefore, if perceptibles have taken over too much, supposedly quite unable to

[25] All translations in this thesis are my own.

adapt to the new situation of residing in a purely intellectual environment. This text and its notion clearly resembles Plato's Allegory of the Cave as presented in *Republic* VII.514a-520a.

Matters get even more intricate when Maximus divides the soul further:

> Τῶν ὄντων τοίνυν **τὰ μὲν ἄψυχα**, **τὰ δὲ ἔμψυχα**· καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄψυχα, λίθοι καὶ ξύλα καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα· τὰ δὲ ἔμψυχα, φυτὰ καὶ ζῷα· κρεῖττον δ' ἔμψυχον, ἀψύχου· Τοῦ δ' ἐμψύχου **τὸ μὲν φυτικόν**, **τὸ δὲ αἰσθητικόν**· τὸ <δὲ> αἰσθητικὸν τοῦ φυτικοῦ κρεῖττον· Τοῦ δὲ αἰσθητικοῦ **τὸ μὲν λογικόν**, **τὸ δὲ ἄλογον**· κρεῖττον δὲ τὸ λογικὸν τοῦ ἀλόγου· Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν λογικῇ ψυχῇ, ἐπειδήπερ ἐστὶν ἡ πᾶσα ὥσπερ ἄθροισμά τι, **θρεπτικόν**, **αὐξητικόν**, **κινητικόν**, **παθητικόν**, **νοητικόν** (…).
>
> (*Or.* 11.8)
>
> Now, in all beings the **inanimate** and the **animate** can be found: and as for the inanimate, these are stones and sticks and so on: as for the animate, these are plants and animals: and the animate is superior to the inanimate: and in the animate category the **vegetative** and the **perceptive** can be found: and the perceptive is superior to the vegetative: and in the perceptive category the **rational** and the **irrational** can be found: and the rational is superior to the irrational: but also in the rational soul, since it is as a whole a kind of compound, the **nutritive**, **vegetative**, **motive**, **affective**, and **intellective** faculties can be found: (…).

Before dissecting this passage from a psychological viewpoint, one point of interest must be noted first, namely Maximus' use of the term ἄθροισμά. The application of this term here is striking, as Plato himself uses the term only sporadically. He, however, uses it in an ontological sense – in order to refer to a collective of similar beings or objects, such as humankind – rather than, in a psychological sense, to refer to a compound of different elements that make up an entity like the human soul as Maximus does. A fervent user of the term – and one of the very few users indeed – however, is Epicurus, particularly in his Letter to Herodotus,[26] where he refers to the atomic make-up of bodies. If Maximus was inspired by Epicurus when he constructed his model of the soul, it could be suggested that Maximus' soul is at least partially mortal and can therefore break apart, based on the Epicurean idea that compound can dissipate. While this idea of a partially mortal soul is certainly not unheard-of in Middle Platonic thinking – as the subsequent chapters of this thesis will evince – it is unlikely that Maximus argues for a (partially) mortal soul on account of his strongly and explicitly arguing in favour of an

[26] E.g. in *Ep. Hdt.* 62-65.

immortal and unbreakable soul in *Oration* 10.5. It is rather more likely that Maximus was aware of his Hellenistic predecessors, in this case particularly the Epicurean tradition, and used the term for his own Middle Platonic thinking regarding the soul, rather than for the purpose of arguing in favour of an Epicurean model of the soul. On top of that, as Schrenk (1991) rightly notes, by the time of Maximus the term has made its way to the relatively standard and wide-spread philosophical vocabulary, which, while it may still have different usages, corroborates the fact that the term is no longer solely Epicurean intellectual property.

Now to return to the compound that is the human soul according to Maximus. As the passage above demonstrates, everything on earth can be put into the category of either animate (ἔμψυχα) or inanimate (ἄψυχα) beings. Inanimate beings – if *beings* is indeed the correct term to use, as these things are not ensouled and thus not really alive, wherefore *things that are* might be a more accurate phrase – are, as Maximus states, sticks and stones and so on, while animate beings are said to be animals and plants. Maximus shows us that the category of animate beings can be further divided into vegetative (φυτικόν) animate beings and perceptive (αἰσθητικόν) animate beings. It may be clear here that perceptive animate beings are not at all the same as the abovementioned perceptive part of the human soul. By making this particular division, Maximus seems to make a distinction between vegetative plants (φυτὰ) and the like, which, while animate, are incapable of perception, and perceptive living beings (ζῷα), which are indeed capable of perceiving and do not merely exist in a vegetative state. Maximus continues his methodology of philosophical division (διαίρεσις),[27] and further divides the class of perceptive living beings into rational (λογικόν) beings and irrational (ἄλογον) beings, of which the rational beings are argued to be the superior. It must, in my view, be gleaned from context and Maximus' presented thought that animals are to be reckoned under the category of the irrational, and human beings under that of the rational. Rational souls, if we look back at the passage of *Or.* 11.7 posed above, seem to be divided into two main parts, namely the intellect and perception. The intellect is deemed pure and simple and therefore indivisible, while perception, then, as Maximus states clearly and ascendingly, can be divided even further into five parts, namely the nutritive (θρεπτικόν), vegetative (αὐξητικόν), motive (κινητικόν),

[27] Cf. Trapp 1997a: 102 n.30. Maximus is, quite amusingly, being rather self-reflective regarding his methodology in this *Oration*. In *Or.* 11.8, Maximus states that 'reason divides entirely familiar kinds of things in half, and then each next time further dividing the most valued one of the remaining pieces, until it arrives at the object of what we are now examining' (Διαιρούμενος τὰς γνωριμωτάτας φύσεις δίχα, καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν τὴν τιμιωτέραν τέμνων ἀεί, ἔστ' ἂν ἐφίκηται τοῦ νῦν ζητουμένου), giving a succinct definition of what it means to employ the method of διαίρεσις.

affective (παθητικόν), and intellective (νοητικόν). This final intellective part does indeed seem to be closely linked to the pure intellect of the soul. One could indeed argue that the intellective part of the soul's faculty of perception presents itself as the potential of the actuality that is the intellect of the soul – if one may speak in Aristotelian terms here. Given the strong insinuation that, due to its close relationship to the intellect in the soul *per se*, the intellective faculty is the most rational of the five presented under perception, one can argue that we are to suppose varying degrees of rationality within the perceptive part of the soul. In other words: it seems that the intellective faculty of the soul's grander perceptive faculty is deemed more rational than this faculty's other four subordinate faculties. But are we to assume, then, that the whole of the human soul is rational, given that humans are gathered under rational beings? This information is not to be found in *Oration* 11, but must be looked for elsewhere, for example in *Oration* 6 on Knowledge (an *Oration* which will be further treated below). There, in 6.4, it is explicitly stated that perception is the irrational (ἄλογον) element of the soul, while its intellect is considered the divine (θεία) element. A strong, and not unwarranted, temptation is then to deem this divine element rational.

The material presented above is, as stated earlier, rather complex. A schematic representation of the human soul and its parts within the grander scheme of earthly beings will serve to clarify Maximus' thought-through and intricate model of the soul:

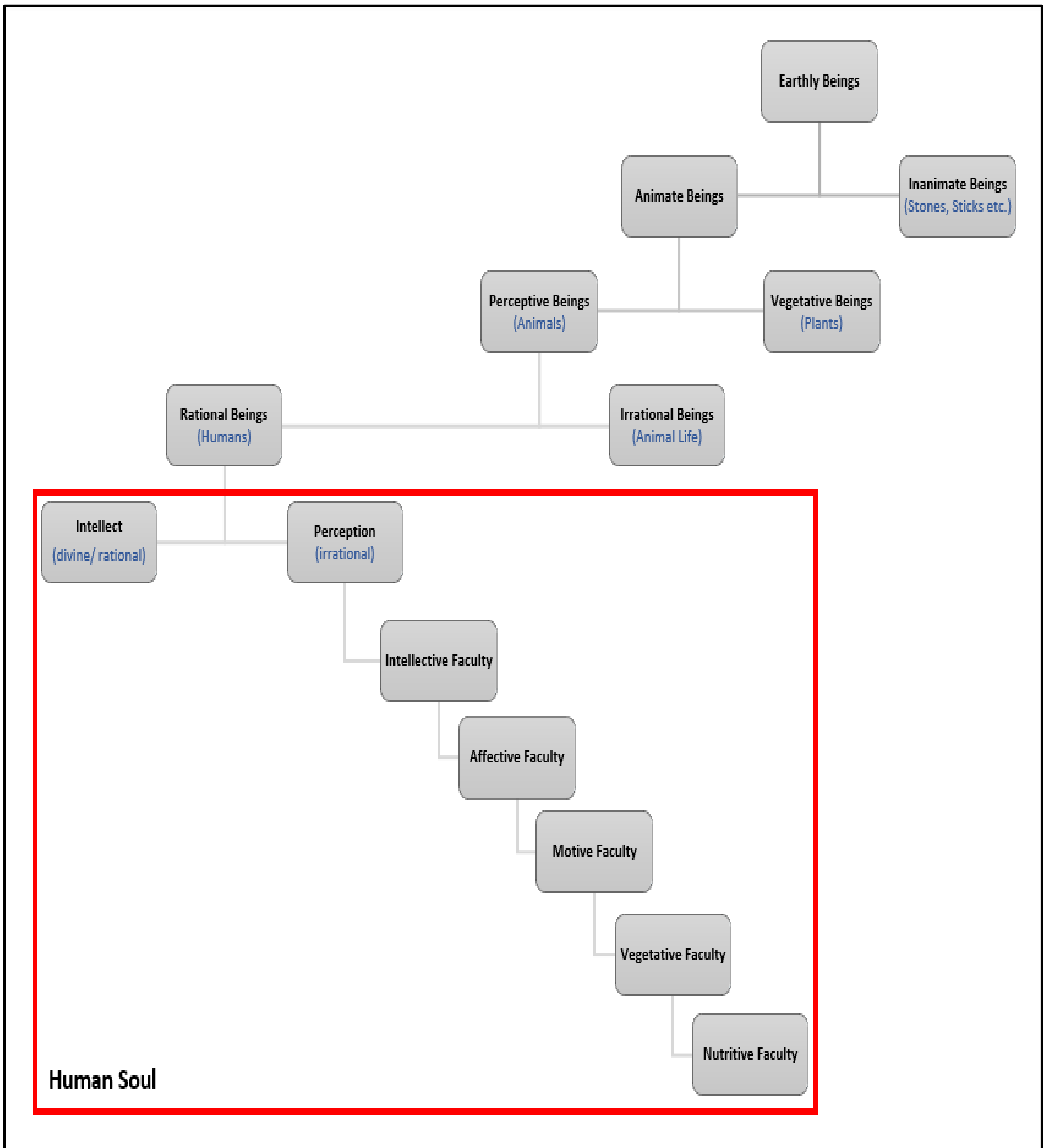


**Figure 1.** *Model of the human soul, as well as its relation to the other earthly beings, as presented by Maximus of Tyre in* Orations *11.7-8 and 6.4.*

So, what are we left with then? A few important things can be noted from this model already. It is intriguing that, contrary to what one would expect in a Platonic context, Maximus seems to advance the idea of an initial two-part division of the soul.[28] One, then, might be tempted to argue, as for example Trapp (2013) does, that an underlying thought of the *Orations* is the idea of a human soul with a higher rational part and a lower appetitive and emotional part. This sentiment, however, seems only partly true. While the text of *Oration* 11 does suggest that there is a hierarchy in the faculties of the soul that fall under its perception-faculty, the primary material does not allow us to conclude that Maximus argues in favour of this greater distinction between a higher rational and lower irrational part of the soul. Nowhere does Maximus state that the irrational, perceptive part of the soul is inferior to, or in service of, the rational intellect. While in its entirety irrational, it is clear that Maximus assumes the perception-faculty, along with its five sub-faculties, especially the intellective faculty, to be at least partly rational as well. This stress on rationality should not be so surprising. Given the fact that the human soul, in a Platonic context, is destined to eventually reach the realm of Forms – an endeavour which is achieved by training and exercising the soul in virtues – one needs a soul that, by nature, possesses rational faculties. It is not unreasonable to assume that Maximus deemed the human soul a primarily rational entity with irrational elements on account of the fact that this would strengthen the notion that one is capable of living the ideal philosophical life in pursuit of the ultimate Good.

Maximus, then, clearly does not argue for a tripartite model of the soul, as his master Plato did in *Republic* IV.436a-441c.[29] This has not been left unnoticed in scholarly literature. It is often argued that Maximus rather presents us with an Aristotelian bipartite model of the soul, as put forward in, for example, the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[30] As stated above, Maximus does divide his human soul initially in two parts, namely intellect and perception.[31] This indeed seems to correspond to the Aristotelian two-part division in the *Nicomachean Ethics* between

[28] One could argue that this is Maximus' interpretation of Platonic dualism as purported in for example the *Phaedo*. There, the soul is obviously separated from the body, which could correspond to Maximus' division between the rational part of the soul that is concerned with the intellect and the irrational part that is more closely connected to bodily matters. This, however, is, in my view, a tentative conclusion at best.
[29] Plato, of course, demonstrates that, according to him, the human soul consists of a rational part – τὸ λογιστικόν (e.g. *Resp*. IV.439d5) – a spiritual part – τὸ θυμοειδές (e.g. *Resp*. IV.439e2; 441c3) – and an appetitive part - τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν (e.g. *Resp*. IV.439d8). While Maximus may certainly, in one way or another, have taken inspiration from these notions, it does not closely correspond to his own model of the human soul.
[30] E.g. by Fowler (2016: 85) and Trapp (1997a: 55 n.15).
[31] Compare *Or*. 16.5, where Maximus more explicitly argues for a tripartite soul, which, due to the political comparisons Maximus makes, strongly resembles the material presented in Plato's *Republic*. This notion of the soul is not worked out sufficiently, however, by Maximus, wherefore it does not feature in the main discussion of this thesis.

the rational and irrational parts of the soul.[32] So far so good: while perhaps somewhat embarrassing to admit for a Platonist, it seems that Maximus was clearly inspired by Aristotle when he constructed his model of the human soul. In the *De Anima*, more points of agreement between Maximus and Aristotle can be found. There Aristotle states that there are 'the capacities of nourishment, appetite, perception, movement in space, and thought' (δυνάμεις δ' (…) θρεπτικόν, ὀρεκτικόν, αἰσθητικόν, κινητικὸν κατὰ τόπον, διανοητικόν).[33] These connections, however, are much less watertight. Stating that Maximus' subdivisions of the intellective, affective, motive, vegetative, and nutritive faculties correspond to Aristotle's account of the soul is too rash.[34] For example, Maximus makes distinctions that Aristotle does not make, such as that between the nutritive (θρεπτικόν) and the vegetative (αὐξητικόν) faculties. Maximus ostensibly has read his Aristotle, but it would be unfair to conclude that he has simply copied, or even that he was solely inspired by, his material.

The human soul, then, according to Maximus, seems to be an animate entity consisting of a naturally rational and divine element – the intellect – and an irrational part – perception – which further consists of nutritive, vegetative, motive, affective, and intellective faculties. It does not, however, stop there. Further capacities can be attached to this model of the soul, as Maximus demonstrates in other *Orations* besides *Oration* 11. One of these – one could argue the most important one – is the human soul's natural capacity for knowledge. This claim is in itself, particularly in a Platonic context, quite striking, but as *Oration* 6 will demonstrate, the potential for knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is inherent to the human soul, and, even though a human employs it, does not differ in an essential way from *actual* knowledge.[35] Maximus explains this at the very beginning of *Oration* 6:

> Τί ποτ' ἐστὶν τοῦτο, ᾧ διαφέρει ἄνθρωπος θηρίου; καὶ τί ποτέ ἐστιν, ᾧ διαφέρει ἀνθρώπου θεός· Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι θηρίων μὲν ἀνθρώπους ἐπιστήμῃ κρατεῖν, θεῶν δὲ ἐλαττοῦσθαι σοφίᾳ· θεὸς μὲν γὰρ ἀνθρώπου σοφώτερον, ἄνθρωπος δὲ θηρίου ἐπιστημονέστερον. **Ἄλλό τι οὖν ἐπιστήμην σοφίας ἡγεῖ; Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ ζωὴν ζωῆς**· ἀλλὰ κοινὸν ὑπάρχον τὸ τῆς ζωῆς θνητῇ φύσει πρὸς τὸ ἀθάνατον, κατὰ μὲν τὴν ποιότητα ἰσομοιρεῖ, κατὰ δὲ τὴν βραχύτητα τοῦ βίου σχίζεται· θεοῦ μὲν γὰρ ζωὴ αἰώνιος, ἀνθρώπου δὲ ἐφήμερος. Ὥσπερ οὖν εἴ τις ἦν δύναμις ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρᾶν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀποτείνειν διηνεκῶς τὴν ὄψιν καὶ δέχεσθαι τὴν προσβολὴν τοῦ φωτός, καὶ μηδὲν αὐτοῖς ἔδει καλυπτόντων βλεφάρων μηδὲ ὕπνου πρὸς ἀνάπαυλαν μηδὲ νυκτὸς πρὸς

[32] E.g. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* I.13-9-10; I.13.19-20.
[33] Arist. *De An.* 2.3. Cf. also *De An.* 2.4-5 and 3.9.
[34] As Trapp (1997a: 102 n.30) does.
[35] Cf. Lauwers 2015: 245.

ἠρεμίαν. **κοινὸν μὲν ἦν τὸ ὁρᾶν ἐκείνοις τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς πρὸς ταυτηνὶ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν ὄψιν, διέφερεν δὲ τῷ διηνεκεῖ· οὕτως ἀμέλει καὶ ἡ ἐπιστήμη, κοινόν τι οὖσα, διαφορὰν ὅμως ἔχει ἡ θεία πρὸς τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην.**

(*Or.* 6.1)

What is it, then, that differs man from beast? And what is it that differs god from man? I for my part know that men are superior to beasts in knowledge, and inferior to gods in wisdom: for god is wiser than man, and man is more knowledgeable than beast. **But do you then take knowledge to be something different from wisdom?' No, by Zeus, no more different than I deem life different from life**: but granted that the origin of life is shared by mortal nature with the immortal, even though it participates equally in its quality, the shortness of human life separates the two: for the life of a god is eternal, but the life of a human is ephemeral. So, just like if there were some power in eyes to see eternally and to extend a gaze continuously and to receive the incoming rays of the light, and for them there is no need for covering eyelids nor for sleep to give them rest nor for night to give them quietude. **The faculty of sight would be something in common for those eyes with conventional vision, but it differs in degree of continuity: and just like that knowledge, even though it is something similar, differs in its human and its divine forms.**

As is evident from the *Oration*'s text, Maximus deems human knowledge to be no more different from divine wisdom than he deems life to be different from life: they are, in essence, the same. He strengthens this sentiment with the use of a natural analogy: both the divine and human possess the faculty of sight, yet this sight merely differs in degree of continuity. The divine, on the one hand, is able to see everything eternally, at the same time, and without interruption or blockages. Human eyes, on the other hand, are sometimes blocked by eyelids and by the interruption of sleep and the darkness of night.[36] In essence, however, divine and human sight are the same: they are simply operated in different degrees of continuity. For Maximus, knowledge works in a similar fashion: qualitatively human knowledge and divine wisdom are the same, but they differ quantitatively. Divine wisdom is described as integral and continuous, while human knowledge is fragmented and intermittent. The cause of this difference, then, seems to be the short span of human life:[37] humans are simply unable to have the same share in wisdom as the divine does – presumably, given the Platonic context of

[36] While Maximus uses the natural analogy of the eye and its vision here in order to describe the workings of knowledge and wisdom, this analogy seems to be of Aristotelian origin. In *De Anima* II.7, where Aristotle describes the sense of vision, it is noted that *light* is the actualisation of the transparent, while *darkness* is its potentiality. This is why we cannot see colours in the dark. This Aristotelian notion seems to relate to Maximus' idea that vision is blocked during the night.

[37] This idea is further elaborated upon by Maximus in *Or.* 11.8.

Maximus' *Orations*, due to a human's perishable and impermanent body – wherefore Maximus gives the name of *knowledge* to this human capacity.

So, how does knowledge precisely relate to the soul then? After all, Maximus recognises the need to 'attribute some contemplative property to the soul' (ἕξιν τινὰ θεωρίας τῇ ψυχῇ προστίθεμεν (*Or.* 6.4)). The clue lies in the fact that, contrary to perception, a faculty which is shared with other, non-human, animals, knowledge is a distinctly human capacity:

> Μήποτε οὖν αἴσθησις μὲν καὶ πεῖρα οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον, **λόγος δὲ ἀνθρώπου ἴδιον· καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη ἄλλο ἐπιστήμη πλὴν βεβαιότης λόγου** (…).
>
> (*Or.* 6.4)
>
> Perhaps then it is so that perception and experience are not **distinctive of humans**, but **reason** is: **and then knowledge would be nothing more than the secure operation of reason** (…).

It is not difficult to see that this 'secure operation of reason (λόγος)' is a matter that belongs to the intellect, as well as the intellective sub-faculty, given the fact that this is a rational (λογικόν) part. Knowledge then would seem, simply enough, a capacity that belongs to the intellect. There is, however, more to it than initially meets the eye. Maximus explicitly states that knowledge is the 'harmony' (ἁρμονία) of the operation of multiple faculties of the human soul:

> Καὶ ἐστὶν ἔργον ψυχῆς, ὡς μὲν ἀλόγου, αἴσθησις· ὡς δὲ θείας, νοῦς· ὡς δὲ ἀνθρωπίνης, φρόνησις· ἀθροίζει[38] δὲ αἴσθησις μὲν ἐμπειρίαν, φρόνησις δὲ λόγον, νοῦς δὲ βεβαιότητα· **τὴν δὲ ἐξ ἁπάντων ἁρμονίαν ἐπιστήμην καλῶ**.
>
> (*Or.* 6.4)
>
> And the function of the soul, in terms of its irrational element, is perception; and as for its divine element, it is intellect; and as for its human element, it is prudence: perception collects experience, prudence collects reason, and intellect collects stability. **And I call the harmony of all of these things knowledge**.

Knowledge does not belong to one single faculty of the soul, but is then, in some way, the harmonious employment of both the intellect-faculty (νοῦς) of the soul *and* its perception-faculty (αἴσθησις), *as well as* the distinctly human function of the soul referred to as 'prudence'

[38] Note the similarity between the use of the verb ἀθροίζει here and the use of ἄθροισμά in *Or.* 11.8. In contrast to Maximus' atypical use of the word in *Or.* 11.8, where he refers to a conglomerate of different things, here in *Or.* 6.4 his employment of the verb is a more expected one, as he now refers to collecting multiple of the same thing.

(φρόνησις).[39] The notion of prudence is not elsewhere discussed in the context of the human soul by Maximus, wherefore it is rather striking that he suddenly introduces it here. It is, however, not an entirely illogical introduction: φρόνησις has to do with actions and practical wisdom,[40] something that is specifically reserved for humans. Knowledge, then, is not simply a matter for the intellect – or the intellective faculty, for that matter – but is rather a harmonious combination of both the rational and irrational part of the human soul. In order to gain knowledge, a human soul must employ intellect *and* perception, along with all of the latter's sub-faculties. Knowledge is thus not a distinctive part of the soul, like intellect is, but rather a capacity that comes about when the parts of the soul are harmoniously employed. This having of, and employing, knowledge is hugely important, as, especially due to Maximus' inclusion of prudence in the matter, it allows for ethical considerations and subsequent good actions.

***Use your soul wisely: act knowledgably***

Thus, we can now start to see how this particular model of the soul that Maximus lays out is being used in order to enforce moral behaviour. We see this first of all in the usage of the human soul's inherent capacity for knowledge as described above, because, as Maximus states, 'what is the point of knowing, if it is not used towards knowing' (τίς ὄνησις τοῦ εἰδέναι, εἰς ἅπερ συντελεῖ τὸ εἰδέναι (*Or.* 15.6)), that is, towards its proper goal? That it is important for humans to act knowledgeably – that is, use all of the faculties of the soul harmoniously – Maximus describes in an elaboration on the mortality and immortality of the human soul:

> ἀλλὰ ὡδὶ λέγωμεν· ὅτι ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ τὸ εὐκινητότατον οὖσα τῶν ὄντων καὶ ὀξύτατον, κεκραμένη ἐκ **θνητῆς** καὶ **ἀθανάτου** φύσεως, κατὰ μὲν **τὸ θνητὸν** αὐτῆς ξυντάττεται **τῇ θηριώδει** φύσει, καὶ γὰρ τρέφει, καὶ αὔξει, καὶ κινεῖ, καὶ αἰσθάνεται· κατὰ δὲ **τὸ ἀθάνατον τῷ θείῳ** {καὶ} ξυνάπτει, καὶ γὰρ νοεῖ, καὶ λογίζεται, καὶ μανθάνει, καὶ ἐπίσταται· καθὸ δὲ ξυμβάλλουσιν αὐτῆς αἱ θνηταὶ φύσεις τῷ ἀθανάτῳ, **τοῦτο πᾶν καλεῖται φρόνησις, διὰ μέσου οὖσα ἐπιστήμης πρὸς αἴσθησιν**.
>
> (*Or.* 6.4)

[39] This has a decidedly Aristotelian ring to it. Cf. e.g. Arist. *De An.* III.4-8, passages throughout which Aristotle describes how the intellect and perception work together in order for the human soul to gain knowledge. This Aristotelian passage is notoriously vague and difficult to interpret, and it seems that Maximus – by trying to find the right balance amongst intellect, perception, and prudence – is engaging in an intellectual sparring match with Aristotle here.

[40] Cf. e.g. Pl. *Symp*. 209a4; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* VI.v (1140a24). Maximus does not use the term too often over the course of his *Orations*. Most instances can be found in *Or.* 6, with sporadic usages in *Orr.* 4.8; 15.2; 26.4; and 33.7.

> Let us instead say this: that the human soul, which is the most agile and the keenest of all beings, being a compound of **mortal** and **immortal** nature, in virtue of its **mortal element** it falls into the same category of nature as **wild beasts**, for it is also nourished and it too grows and it is set in motion and it perceives; but in virtue of its **immortal element** it unites with **the divine**, for it too thinks and reasons and learns and knows; and in so far as its mortal characteristics meet with its divine ones, **that whole is called prudence, which is in between knowledge and perception**.

A few things must be clarified and noted here. First of all: what are the mortal and immortal parts of the soul are supposed to be? One may be tempted to say that, obviously, the soul's mortal element equals the perception-part, and its immortal element is supposed to be the intellect-part. However, one should not draw rash conclusions. It should be proven, and it can be with the help of Maximus' model of the human soul. Given the descriptions and explanations Maximus utilises, the human soul's mortal part is to be understood as the perception-part: wild bests – or other animal life besides humans, if you will – are perceptive beings too – as figure 1 above, and the discussion around it, demonstrated – but lack the intellect-part. Bodies, and therefore wild beasts, are mortal – wherefore we are to conclude that the mortal part of the soul is its perception. The immortal part of the soul, then, is quite easily defined as the intellect, as this is, in *Or*. 6.4 – noted above as well – deemed the divine (θεία) part of the soul. Secondly, it should be noted that the passage above seems to display a discrepancy with the material presented before: here it is stated that 'prudence (…) is in between knowledge and perception', whereas, in *Or.* 6.4's passage above it is noted that knowledge is the harmonious usage of intellect, perception, and prudence. How can prudence be something in between knowledge and perception then? One could explain this by the fact that prudence is in itself not a faculty of the human soul, as intellect and perception are, but it is rather something distinctly human that involves actions and practical wisdom. Prudence is then presumably obtained by experience, received through perception, combined with the reason of the soul's intellect-part and the employment of the intellective sub-faculty. Both in the sense that it is, very much like knowledge, not a full faculty of the human soul, and that it is something that is not quite equal to perception, prudence can be something in between knowledge and perception.

With regards to straightforwardly ethical matters then, this passage seems to propound that acting knowledgeably means to act virtuously. This, of course, needs further clarification. Knowledge is, again, the harmonious employment of intellect, perception, and prudence. Isolated in terms of intellect, exercising one's natural capacity for knowledge then seems aimed

at reaching the divine, which is, of course, the goal for any Platonist, as living the ideal philosophical life is aimed at reaching the divine Forms. The intellect, given its divine nature, is the part of the soul that stands closest to the purity of the Forms, and would therefore allow the human soul to reach these and make them its own. Maximus strengthens this idea by likening the intellect to a divine law in *Or*. 6.5, stating that 'its function is freedom, and virtue, and a life free from pain, and a steadfast happiness' (ἔργον ἐλευθερία, καὶ ἀρετή, καὶ βίος ἄλυπος, καὶ ἀσφαλὴς εὐδαιμονία). It is not clear whether or not, according to Maximus, one is capable of just simply accessing and exercising the intellect, or if one should travel some other route throughout the faculties of the soul in order to exercise the intellect *pur sang*. It is not unreasonable to presume that the perception-faculty is somehow employed in this matter. Rather than being deemed an entirely interfering faculty of the soul, perception is not at all useless according to Maximus. He states in *Or.* 6.5 that 'experience, which deals with fire and iron and all kinds of other material, utilises the resources of the crafts for the purpose of facilitating the needs of life' (Καὶ ἡ μὲν ἐμπειρία, περὶ πῦρ καὶ σίδηρον καὶ ἄλλας ὕλας πραγματευομένη παντοδαπάς, ἐρανίζει τὰς χρείας τοῦ βίου ταῖς εὐπορίαις τῶν τεχνῶν). Experience is, as stated above as well, that which perception accumulates. Ergo, in a rather Aristotelian way in this overall Platonic ideal, perception is an essential faculty of the soul that gathers experience which the human soul is to use in order to develop knowledge, which in turn sets in motion the journey towards the reaching of the Forms. That is not to say that perception should not be controlled in any way. As one would expect from a Platonist, Maximus strongly argues that it is prudence that is supposed to 'take control over the passions of the soul, and subject them to the power of reason' (Ἡ δὲ φρόνησις ἐπιτεταγμένη τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς παθήμασιν, καὶ οἰκονομοῦσα ταῦτα τῷ λογισμῷ (*Or.* 6.5)). The passions of the soul – the πάθηματα – are clearly related to the affective sub-faculty of the perception-part of the soul – the παθητικόν – the second most rational sub-faculty after the intellective sub-faculty. One would therefore assume that to 'take control over the passions of the soul' entails not only keeping the affective sub-faculty of the soul in check, but also the sub-faculties that are rationally inferior to it: the motive, vegetative, and nutritive sub-faculties. The power of reason – the λογισμός – that Maximus is talking about would then be related to the intellect, as this is a rational unit. Prudence thus, it seems, fulfils an intermediating function: it governs the perception-part of the soul, thereby clearing the road for the intellect to take control so that the human soul can exercise virtues in order to reach the Forms. This is what acting knowledgeably seems to be about: the harmonious operation of intellect, perception, and prudence, which work together in order to reach the best result for the human soul as a whole. This desired result is, of course,

living the ideal philosophical life in pursuit of the Good. Concisely said, acting knowledgeably leads to moral excellence.[41]

Yet, this is still rather abstract. What exactly does it mean to "act knowledgeably" in practice? *Oration* 6 does not elaborate on this any further, but other *Orations* certainly do. *Oration* 7 – an overall moral psychological lecture titled 'Diseases of Mind and Body' – gives us clear examples of what it means to keep one's passions in check. Maximus lays out the main concern of the *Oration* by stating the following:

> Ὑγεία μὲν σώματος τέχνης ἔργον, ὑγεία δὲ ψυχῆς, ἀρετῆς ἔργον· **νόσος ψυχῆς μοχθηρία**, νόσος σώματος δυστυχία· **ἑκούσιον ἡ μοχθηρία**, ἀκούσιον ἡ δυστυχία· ἐλεεῖται τὰ ἀκούσια, μισεῖται τὰ ἑκούσια.
>
> (*Or.* 7.2)
>
> The health of the body is product of craft, while the health of the soul is the product of virtue: **sickness of the soul equals moral turpitude**; sickness of the body equals misfortune; **moral turpitude is voluntary**, misfortune is involuntary; involuntariness is to be pitied, voluntariness of evil is to be hated.

In this comprehensive and concise statement Maximus stresses the importance of virtue once again: falling ill in one's body is quite simply a matter of misfortune and is a matter of chance, but moral corruption is a matter of choice. So, it is the active duty and the responsibility of the human soul to choose to act virtuously rather than viciously, and therefore not commit any of the misbehaviours laid out by Maximus:

> πόλεμον οὐ κινεῖς διὰ νόσον σώματος, διὰ δὲ ψυχῆς νόσον οἱ πολλοὶ πόλεμοι· οὐδεὶς νοσῶντὸ σῶμα **συκοφαντεῖ**, ἢ **τυμβωρυχεῖ**, ἢ **ληΐζεται**, ἤ **τι ἄλλο δρᾷ κακὸν μέγα** <…>· νόσος σώματος ἀνιαρὸν τῷ ἔχοντι· **νόσος ψυχῆς ἀνιαρὸν καὶ τῷ πλησίον**.
>
> (*Or.* 7.3)
>
> War is not started by sickness of the body, but many wars *are* started by sickness of the soul: no one who is physically ill **gives false evidence**, or **breaks open graves**, or **acts as a plunderer**, or **does anything else that is immensely wrong** <whereas sickness of the soul is at the root of all such offences[42]>: a sickness of the body is grievous to the sufferer; **a sickness of the soul is grievous to those around him too**.

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[41] Something similar is argued by Maximus in e.g. *Oration* 5 ('Prayer'). In *Or.* 5.1 it is stated that evils do not originate in the divine, but rather in their own 'unreasoning lack of reason' (ἄλογος ἀλόγου), which seems to imply that evil is the result of a lack of intellect, which would make it impossible to act knowledgeably, as this is the harmonious employment of intellect, perception, and prudence.

[42] Trapp (1997a: 62 n. 8) takes the lacuna in the Greek text into account and subsequently offers the suggested translation in brackets.

A sick soul, which has fallen into moral turpitude, would lie, rob, and plunder, and commit any other crime unscrupulously.[43] Its perception-part – particularly its affective, motive, vegetative, and nutritive sub-faculties – seems to have taken control over the soul: acts like cheating and stealing are driven by an uncontrollable desire for gain, and not the good intellectual kind, but rather the lavish kind that corrupts the soul. Moreover, a social responsibility is stressed as well by Maximus: others are affected by one's abominable behaviour. Keeping one's passions in check and preventing oneself from, for example, taking what is not one's own, but rather spending one's time by exercising one's intellect, is essential and desirable behaviour for oneself as well as for society as a whole.

In order to train and use one's intellect appropriately, Maximus suggests some conducive activities to practice in *Oration* 37 ('Virtue and the Liberal Arts'):

> Φέρε δή, νομοθέτου δίκην παρίτω **φιλοσοφία**, ψυχὴν ἄτακτον καὶ πλανωμένην κοσμήσουσα, καθάπερ δῆμον· παρακαλείτω δὲ ξυλλήπτορας ἐσομένας αὐτῇ καὶ ἄλλας τέχνας, οὐ βαναύσους, μὰ Δία, οὐδὲ χειρουργικάς, οὐδὲ οἵας συντελεῖν τὰ φαῦλα ἡμῖν· ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν τὸ σῶμα τῇ ψυχῇ παρασκευάζουσαν ὄχημα εὐπειθὲς καὶ ἐρρωμένον τοῖς προστάγμασιν ὑπηρετεῖν, **γυμναστικὴν** ταύτην ὀνομάζουσα· τὴν δὲ ἄγγελον τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς διανοημάτων, **ῥητορικὴν** ταύτην ὀνομάζουσα· τὴν δὲ ἀγαθὴν τιθήνην καὶ τροφὸν γνώμης νέας, **ποιητικὴν** ταύτην ὀνομάζουσα· τὴν δὲ ἡγεμόνα τῆς ἀριθμῶν φύσεως, **ἀριθμητικὴν** ταύτην ὀνομάζουσα· τὴν δὲ καὶ λογισμῶν διδάσκαλον, **λογιστικὴν** ταύτην ὀνομάζουσα· **γεωμετρίαν** δὲ καὶ **μουσικήν**, ξυνερίθω τὲ καὶ ξυνίστορε φιλοσοφίας, τῶν αὐτῶν νείμασα ἑκάστῃ μέρος τοῦ πόνου.

(*Or.* 37.3)

> Come then, let **philosophy** come forward as a law-giver, bringing order to a disorganised and wandering soul, like to a people: and let her call to her assistance other arts as well, not only mechanical ones, god forbid, which involve manual labour, and bring us only vulgar things; but first of all that which will make the body an obedient vehicle to the soul and is strong to provide for its commands, which she calls **gymnastics**; then that which is the messenger of the soul's conceptions, which she calls **rhetoric**; then the 'goodly nurse and nurturer of young minds', which she calls **poetry**; then the guide to the nature of numbers, which

[43] This seems to be a reference to the ninth book of Plato's *Republic*, where he describes the behaviour of a tyrannical soul – that is, the soul that has completely been taken over by its spirited part. Cf. specifically *Resp*. IX.575b6-9 (Οἷα κλέπτουσι, τοιχωρυχοῦσι, βαλλαντιοτομοῦσι, λωποδυτοῦσιν, ἱεροσυλοῦσιν, ἀνδραποδίζονται· ἔστι δ' ὅτε συκοφαντοῦσιν, ἐὰν δυνατοὶ ὦσι λέγειν, καὶ ψευδομαρτυροῦσι καὶ δωροδοκοῦσιν: 'For example, they steal, they break into houses, they are pickpockets, they steal clothes, they plunder temples, they kidnap; and sometimes it is so that they are sycophants, if they can speak in such a way, and they are false witnesses and they accept bribery').

> she calls **arithmetic**; then the teacher of reason, which she calls **logic**; and finally let her call to her assistance **geometry** and **music**, the pair of helpers and confidants to philosophy, and give to each its own share in her labours.

Thus, in order to exercise one's intellect one needs to, essentially, become a philosopher. Philosophy is to make an entrance into one's life, at the same time with which order will be created within the soul. Φιλοσοφία – philosophy – is of course a derivative of σοφία – wisdom, that from which knowledge only differs in terms of quantity rather than quality, as observed above. This implies that exercising the activities that philosophy commands one to do can help one in reaching a more pure and more continuous form of knowledge, which could eventually resemble and perhaps even become wisdom. This final stage would then be the attainment of the Forms, one presumes. The activities one should undertake in order to exercise one's intellect cover many different fields of expertise. As stated in the passage above, one should train oneself in gymnastics, rhetoric, poetry, arithmetic, logic, geometry, and finally music.[44] This list of liberal arts encompasses a wide variety of skills in which one should become proficient, and all of them seem to serve as a way of making the body and the irrational parts of the soul subservient to its rational part. It is, for example, interesting to note that for Maximus, in contrast to its modern focus that lies on the health and fitness on the body, gymnastics serves to make the body submissive to the soul. All of the liberal arts Maximus mentions require the attention of the intellect of the soul *per se*, as this is the rational part and therefore the part where contemplation takes place. One assumes, however, that the intellective sub-faculty of the perception-part of the soul is also required for doing the abovementioned activities: after all, one has to read and write in order to practice these liberal arts. And if one is not capable of reading and writing, one at least has to *listen*, *see*, and so on, and in any case in one way or another take experiences and perception into account when undertaking any of these liberal arts. While Maximus does operate under the very Platonic assumption that the memory of the Forms is stored within the soul,[45] the Aristotelian line of thinking that one quite literally learns from experience also has its place within Maximus' model of the soul. Everything that is being taken in by the affective, motive, vegetative, and nutritive sub-faculties is presumably evaluated

[44] Trapp (1997a: 292-293 n.12) notes that the list of liberal arts – rather than mechanical crafts – Maximus lays out is not necessarily conventional. He for example does not specifically stress the liberal art of dialectic – though this is assumed to fall under Maximus' category of logic – and he omits astronomy altogether. A discussion of the latter, however, is present in the discussions of music and geometry in *Or*. 37. It should also be noted that Plato would never have included rhetoric in his philosophical curriculum, given his aversion against the practice.
[45] Cf. e.g. Maximus' *Oration* 10 ('Learning and Recollection').

by the intellective sub-faculty, given the fact that this sub-faculty is the superior one and related most closely to the intellect *an sich*.

Acting knowledgeably means the ideal harmonious employment of the intellect- and the perception-part of the soul, as well as the distinctly human ability of prudence. This harmonious employment entails keeping one's perception-part in check by controlling its passions with the help of prudence. This results in the abstinence from stealing, cheating, and the like. The other side of acting knowledgeably culminates in training and exercising one's intellect by committing to the liberal arts which philosophy presents. The intellect may then be the part that is primarily used for the purpose of these liberal arts, but that does not mean that the perception-part is left out. It is rather used – both its intellective sub-faculty for the surveyance and examination of experiences, as well as the other sub-faculties in order to collect these experiences in the first place – for one's intellectual benefit.

The moral material presented above is not the limit of Maximus' ethical discussions. In more politically and civically centred *Orations*, for example *Oration* 12 ('Revenge') and *Oration* 17 ('Homer in Plato's State'), Maximus propounds ideal ethical behaviour as well. However, these ethical prescriptions do not seem to be anchored in the construction of the human soul, as those above were. Moreover, contrary to expectation perhaps, since it is also very much a matter of personal and intellectual growth, Platonic love is clearly anchored in something other than the structure of the soul. In *Orations* 18-21 ('Socratic Love') Maximus discusses the ideal way of loving[46] – Platonic love, that is, as described by Plato in the *Symposium*'s well-known speech by Diotima (201d-212c). While, among other things, referring back to Diotima's *scala amoris*, Maximus explains his notions on Platonic love by using mainly natural analogies. A connection to for example the intellect or the affective sub-faculty of the human soul – or to the soul in general – is not being made. One wonders what the reasons for this are. Certainly, using the structure of the human soul in order to enforce ethical behaviour is not a necessity: there are many other ways of clarifying and furthering complex ideas. A tentative explanation for this difference could be the idea that the human soul is a highly personal matter: each individual soul, in the Platonic tradition, is to reach the Forms by themselves. One has to live virtuously and behave well towards others, but when push comes to shove, it is the individual that is to return to its origin. Activities that can be employed to train one's individual human soul, like practicing gymnastics and geometry, are then logically enforced by the structure of that soul. While loving properly is also a personal matter – after

[46] For a discussion of Socratic love in Maximus of Tyre's *Orations* I refer to e.g. Scognamillo (1997).

all, it leads the soul towards the Good – it is logical that Maximus anchors this discussion in Plato's *Symposium*: it is most obvious to make use of the direct connection to Plato's text and thought on such well-developed and well-known ideas.

## III. CONCLUSION: PSYCHOLOGICAL NUANCES IN LOUD ORATORY

This chapter has demonstrated that Maximus is a much more creative, refined, and innovative thinker – rather than a mere Platonic messenger – than he has previously been given credit for in scholarship. The model of the human soul with which he presents us – particularly in *Oration* 11 and *Oration* 6 – is a thoroughly worked-out and intricate one. It is, as the material above has shown, a decidedly Aristotelian model in a Platonic cover, with Maximus' own innovations put into the mix. This model, given its elaborate nature, allows Maximus to utilise it in order to argue in favour of what he deems good ethical behaviour. He works out particularly how one is to train and apply one's intellect; how prudence is to keep the soul's passions in check; and how perception nevertheless is able to benefit the development of the soul.

Thus, not only is the structure of the human soul a mechanism of rhetorical persuasion for Maximus – after all, the use of an intricate model of the human soul generally does it quite well in terms of authority – it is also a refined apparatus that he uses to propound that, on account of the nature of the human soul, one has no choice but to behave well. Maximus specifically uses his notions of the human soul to argue that one has to act knowledgeably – in order to finally, if possible, become wise – which entails more abstract ideas such as keeping one's passions in check and giving control to one's intellect, as well as more concrete prescriptions of actions such as abstaining from cheating and stealing and exercising oneself in music and rhetoric. In a more implicit sense it is also clear that, simply by demonstrating that, for example, the affective sub-faculty is lesser than the intellective sub-faculty in the model of the human soul, Maximus argues that one needs to keep an eye on this lest it takes over the soul *an sich*.

Based on the thought presented in this chapter, it can further be concluded that Maximus' material is a relatively coherent whole. Of course, the occasional discrepancy in his work can be found, but Maximus is overall consistent, which shows his well-versedness and intellectual capabilities as a thinker. With the bombasticism of his oratory, Maximus uses the structure of the human soul in a surprisingly nuanced way. He is clearly, as Lauwers rightly calls him, both the 'accessible insider', as he comprehensibly and ornamentally proclaims his

thought, as well as the 'authoritative instructor',[47] given the fact that he is obviously the master of his own material *and* provokes thought and subsequent moral actions in his audience. In short: Maximus repackages complex thought in an understandable and coherent story.

In sum then, some methodology of psychological morality is clearly present here: Maximus enforces what he deems to be good moral behaviour by using the structure of the human soul.

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[47] Lauwers 2015: resp. 147ff. and 155ff..

# CHAPTER II
# SOUL, SENSES, AND SEEMLINESS: ALCINOUS

After having just discussed the rhetorical side of Middle Platonic (moral) psychology with the help of Maximus of Tyre and his *Orations*, it is now time to move on to a different branch of philosophical business, namely the educational handbook. In his pocket sized work *Didaskalikos*,[48] a 36-chapter Handbook of Platonism, the thinker Alcinous attempts to assemble most, if not all, of Plato's thought in very few yet well-considered words. This does not mean, however, that Alcinous merely summarises and copies Plato's work: while amalgamating and combining the Platonic corpus, one of Alcinous' greatest concerns seems to be to make Plato's thought coherent. In other words: Alcinous is trying to filter out Plato's internal discrepancies and paradoxes while at the same time making Plato's thought fit with his own intellectual milieu. While this tendency is also discernible in the logical chapters of the handbook, for the purpose of our current investigation, this section focuses on the handbook's physical – specifically those chapters focussing on psychology (chapters 23-25) and the senses and sense-perception (chapters 17-19) – and ethical chapters (27-30) in order to answer the question of how Alcinous uses the structure of the human soul in order to enforce what he deems good moral behaviour. Because of his proclivity to wish to "make Plato work", Alcinous ends up with a structure of the human soul that has a much closer relationship to the body and the physical senses and sense-perception than Plato himself would have allowed for. Alcinous demonstrates how the human soul is structured; where its parts are housed within the human body, and thus how these parts are related to the senses that are connected to a particular body part; and how all of this affects our behaviour.

## I. INTRODUCTION: POCKET-PLATO

### *Alcinous: life, work, and context*

Let us, however, first of all briefly consider the figure of Alcinous, as he is quite the elusive one. As this thesis' previous section stated, little is known about Maximus of Tyre. Even less

[48] Edition of the Greek text of the *Didaskalikos* in this thesis is that by Louis (1945). One must note that Louis still deems the author of the *Didaskalikos* to be Albinus. This does not, however, detract anything from the contents and quality of his edition.

is known about Alcinous,[49] so much less that he went by the name Albinus in the scholarly tradition until quite recently. A thinker by the name of Albinus, the teacher of Galen, had long been thought to be the author of the *Didaskalikos*, with the name 'Alkinos' then being a corruption of 'Albinos'. It was, however, later virtually proven that the author of the *Didaskalikos* really was one Alcinous,[50] not to be confused with the actual Albinus, the author of different Platonic works. This confusion in the scholarly tradition regarding the *Didaskalikos* does make it a bit awkward to examine the actual figure of Alcinous – and thus the *Didaskalikos* that in reality belongs to him – but it is not impossible. Literature that attributes the *Didaskalikos* to Albinus is still useful, as long as it concerns the *Didaskalikos* alone, and none of the other works which should be attributed to Albinus, such as the *Eisagôgê* ('An Introduction to Plato's Dialogues').[51]

As mentioned above, the *Didaskalikos* attempts to deal with all of Plato's thought in a succinct and systematic manner.[52] The manual concerns itself with logic in chapters 1-6; then with metaphysics and physics along with all its branches in chapters 7-26; and finally with ethics in chapters 27-34, after which the final two chapters close Alcinous' educational agenda with a discussion of the difference between a sophist and a philosopher, as well as offering some motivating words.[53]

### *Alcinous the scholar*

While a handbook of Platonism may be seen as an introduction to Plato's thought, the *Didaskalikos* is often riddled with surprisingly advanced material that is influenced by the tradition of Platonism, other philosophical thinkers and schools such as Aristotle and Stoicism, Alcinous' intellectual zeitgeist, and, of course, Alcinous' own desire to amalgamate. Thus, while little is known about Alcinous himself, some conclusions regarding his audience can be drawn based on the philosophical material presented in the *Didaskalikos*. The complexity of

[49] Alcinous, in contrast to Maximus' meagre page-and-a-half, does receive a decent examination of his work by Dillon (1977: 267-306). This is, however, at the time when Dillon still deemed the author of the *Didaskalikos* to be Albinus, wherefore the information about his life may be incorrect. It is of little to no importance, however, when it comes to the examination of the *Didaskalikos per se*.
[50] It was proven by John Whittaker – and assumed and furthered by e.g. John Dillon (1993) – that Alcinous was really the author of the *Didaskalikos*. I agree with this notion on account of the arguments summarised by Dillon (1993: ix-xiii).
[51] Cf. e.g. Dillon 1977: 268. Literature that attributes the *Didaskalikos* to Albinus but still is useful for the purpose of examining this work includes Dillon (1977), Reedy (1991), and Witt (1971).
[52] Cf. Lauwers 2015: 141.
[53] Cf. Dillon 1993: xvii-xxvi.

the work as well as the required foreknowledge demonstrates that the manual is intended for the already-initiated, rather than for the curious novice.[54]

It would thus seem that Alcinous is not simply the educator with his handbook of Platonism – quite the misleading title, given by Dillon (1993), due to not merely Plato's thought being presented in it – but also very much an independent and inventive thinker. Rather than being merely a teacher, Alcinous would seem to be the true scholar, examining and building upon previous work while at the same time being concerned with the comprehensible transfer of information to students. Certainly, Alcinous adopts many a Platonic thought – and often does indeed almost literally copy Plato's work – but he also interprets it. His creativity and ingenuity lies in his ability to elegantly combine and integrate Plato's often conflicting thought into a coherent system that is becoming of his own intellectual milieu of the second century AD. This is especially discernible when we look at the way Alcinous has designed the human soul, how he connects this structure to the body, and how he relates this combination to practical ethics.

## II. EXEGESIS AND EXAMINATION OF *DIDASKALIKOS*

### *Alcinous' sensitive model of the soul*

Plato, most distinctly in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*, famously propounded the idea of dualism – that is, the human soul is an ontologically different entity from the body to which it is attached.[55] While this notion of dualism certainly persisted in the Platonic tradition, the idea that the body is merely a cumbersome load that impedes the soul in its philosophical quest towards the Good seems to be modified and dulled somewhat. Alcinous is one of the thinkers who take a strongly physical approach to affairs surrounding the human soul, particularly its placement within, and relationship to, the body. It turns out that, according to Alcinous, the relationship between the body's senses and the soul is an interwoven and fundamental one. He takes into account the importance of the body and its abilities when it comes to the structure and placement of the human soul, as well as when it comes to how all of this is related to practical ethics: how is one supposed to behave *on account* of the relationship between the soul and the body along with its senses and sense-perceptive capacities?[56]

[54] O'Brien 2017: 171. Cf. also Dillon 1993: xiv.
[55] Robinson 2020; Nightingale 2016: 57; 58.
[56] In recent years, the human senses have become a field of the humanities just as much as of the sciences. The ancient senses, in particular, have experienced a lift in interest, of which the academic series 'The Senses in Antiquity' is a prime example. The six volumes treat each of the five traditional senses, as well as the

It behoves us thus, even in a discussion of a Middle Platonic model of the *soul* and its influence on practical ethics, to focus on the *body* and its senses as well. Let us therefore first of all consider the traditional five physical senses of the human body as presented by the *Didaskalikos*.[57] Alcinous describes most elaborately, though still succinctly, the sense of vision in the dedicated chapter 18. This description – it may even be referred to as the poetic version of Plato's text – is strongly Platonic and is found in decidedly similar vocabulary in Plato's *Timaeus* 45b2-46a2:[58]

> Ἱδρύσαντες δὲ περὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τὰ φωσφόρα **ὄμματα** καθεῖρξαν **ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ πυρὸς τὸ φωτοειδές**, ὅπερ λεῖον ὑπάρχον καὶ πυκνὸν ἀδελφὸν ᾠοντο εἶναι τοῦ μεθημερινοῦ φωτός. Τοῦτο δὴ ῥᾷστα δι' ὅλων μὲν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, **μάλιστα δὲ κατὰ τὸ μέσον αὐτῶν διεκθεῖ, τὸ καθαρώτατόν τε καὶ εἰλικρινέστατον**· ὃ γινόμενον συμπαγὲς τῷ ἔξωθεν, **ὅμοιον ὁμοίῳ**, ὁρατικὴν αἴσθησιν παρέχεται.
>
> (*Did.* 18.1)
>
> Having placed the **light-bearing eyes** upon the face, **in them** they [the gods] enclosed **the luminous element of fire**, which, as it is smooth and dense, they deemed to be the brother of the light of day. With the greatest ease this flows out of the whole eye, **but most of all from the middle of the eye, which is the most pure and most refined**, and as this is blended with the external light, **like to like**, the sensation of vision is produced.

The sense of vision is clearly, as one would expect, a matter of the eyes. These eyes are, quite literally, able to shed light upon perceivable matters due to the fact they themselves possess the light-bearing and -conducting element of fire, which objects in the perceivable world exude as well due to that world around us also consisting of the same four elements that make up the human body: earth, water, air, and, of course, fire.[59] Out of the whole eye, the pupil is the part

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phenomenon of synaesthesia, from Greek and Roman literary, philosophical, cultural, and historiographical perspectives. Cf. Butler & Nooter (2017) on sound, Purves (2017) on touch, Rudolph (2017) on taste, Squire (2015) on sight, Bradley (2014) on smell, and Butler & Purves (2014) on synaesthesia.

[57] Alcinous discusses the construction of the human *body* in chapter 17. He mainly borrows elements from Plato's *Timaeus* 42e-43a and 72e-75c, but it is also especially interesting to note that Alcinous seems to be inspired by Epicurus and Democritus: his constructing the body-parts from a.o. triangular entities strongly resembles the atomistic approach typical of Epicurus and Democritus (cf. Nightingale 2016: 55ff.).

[58] Dillon 1993 (especially pp. 138-148, wherefrom this thesis has taken the passages of the *Timaeus* regarding the senses and sense perception). Dillon yonder gives a more in-depth exploration and a catalogue of the material from the *Timaeus* on which Alcinous seems to be basing his work. Cf. Nightingale (2016: 57ff.) for an exploration of vision in Plato's *Timaeus*.

[59] Alcinous describes the generation of the perceivable world in his chapter 12. In 12.2, he elaborates upon the usage of fire, earth, water, and air yonder. These elements are then subsequently also used in the construction of the human body in chapter 17 (cf. note 57 above). Alcinous is certainly primarily using Plato's thought in his

that is able to receive – as well as itself radiate – this luminous element most of all thanks to it reportedly being the eye's least adulterated portion. In other words, then, the experience of seeing is brought about by the interaction between the inner light of the eyes and the external light of visible objects. It is thus too simple to state that, according to Alcinous, one virtually touches an object with the help of the light of the eyes. Alcinous rather sets out what seems to be a true interaction between inner and external light that causes sight to occur. Seeing something is thus not an instance of one-way-traffic that originates either in the human eye or in external objects: it rather is the mutual interactivity of light-bearing and -conducting entities. This interactivity is particularly special: Alcinous states that, when inner and external light are blended, **'like to like'** (**ὅμοιον ὁμοίῳ**), vision can come about. In very similar terms to Plato – though not exactly the same: Plato uses ὅμοιον πρὸς ὅμοιον (*Tim.* 45c6) – Alcinous does not only explain that vision operates based on the principle that 'like is known by like'[60] – that is, the fiery light exuding from the eyes and that from the external object have the same essential nature, wherefore they can properly interact – but he also simultaneously argues against Aristotle. Aristotle, namely, would argue that the unlike is affected by the unlike, after which these two unlikes will become like, as they will be assimilated through the act of perception.[61] The fact that Alcinous here seems to argue *against* Aristotle is interesting to note, as he will later on, in his discussion of the parts of the soul, use Aristotle's notions in a *positive* sense for the sake of his own argument.

It is clear that, as mentioned before, vision is a matter of the eyes, but unlike the other senses which Alcinous is about to describe, he does not tell us *where* a vision ends up in the body. One can, however, anticipatorily say that, due to the strong focus on the eyes, vision remains within the region of the head.

The other four senses are treated in chapter 19 in a more condensed fashion. Alcinous first of all elaborates upon the sense of hearing. In a passage that strongly resembles the *Timaeus'* treatment of the sense of hearing in 67a7-c3, of course highlighting the famous Platonic analogy of sound being a blow,[62] Alcinous describes in 19.1 how sound enters the body

construction of the perceivable world and the body, but elements of Stoic materialism are also discernible in his account.

[60] Lamb 1925: 101.

[61] Arist. *De An.* II.5 (418a5-6).

[62] Cf. Pl. *Tim.* 67b3-4 (ὅλως μὲν οὖν φωνὴν θῶμεν τὴν δι᾽ ὤτων ὑπ᾽ ἀέρος ἐγκεφάλου τε καὶ αἵματος μέχρι ψυχῆς πληγὴν διαδιδομένην: 'let us therefore on the whole lay down that a sound is a blow transmitted through the ears by the action of the air upon the brain and the blood, reaching as far as the soul').

via the ears, then travels through the brain and blood before finally ending up in the upper abdomen, where the liver is located:

> Ἀκοὴ δὲ γέγονε πρὸς φωνῆς γνῶσιν, ἀρχομένη μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν κινήσεως, **τελευτῶσα δὲ περὶ ἥπατος ἕδραν**· ἡ δὲ **φωνή** ἐστιν ἡ δι' **ὤτων** ἐρχομένη **ἐγκεφάλου** τε καὶ **αἵματος, διαδιδομένη δὲ μέχρι ψυχῆς πληγή**, ὀξεῖα μὲν ἡ ταχέως κινουμένη, βαρεῖα δὲ ἡ βραδέως, καὶ μεγάλη μὲν ἡ πολλή, μικρὰ δὲ ἡ ὀλίγη.

(*Did*. 19.1)

> Hearing has come into being for the purpose of recognising sound, beginning from a movement that is situated around the head, **and ending up in the seat of the liver**: **and sound is a blow** that is transmitted through the **ears** and the **brain** and the **blood**, and **is penetrating as far as the soul**, sharp when it is a quick movement, deep when it is a slow one, and loud when it is a large movement, and soft when it is a small one.

In the same way as sound, an odour – which Plato treats in *Timaeus* 66d1-67a7 – too ends up in the abdomen, but this time in its lower region. It comes in via the sense of smell that is governed by the nose, then travels through the veins, and finishes in the area around the navel, by which Alcinous presumably means the bowels.[63] Taste – found in *Timaeus* 65c1-66c7 – only travels so far as the chest: after it has touched the tongue, it journeys through the veins and stops in the heart.[64]

In contrast to the other four senses, the power of touch is not linked to a specific sensory organ of the body. Without mentioning the skin in any capacity, Alcinous nevertheless implies that the whole body is somehow affected by touch. When describing the sensation of feeling cold, Alcinous notes in *Didaskalikos* 19.5 that 'a shock and a tremble then take over, after which a shivering sensation within the bodies follows' (Σεισμὸς γάρ τις καὶ τρόμος τότε συνίσταται, καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τούτῳ πάθος ἐν τοῖς σώμασι ῥῖγος ὑπάρχει). The text does not state explicitly that this shivering sensation is felt across the *whole* body, yet the phrase ἐν **τοῖς** σώμασι is not indefinite either: it refers to ***the*** bodies. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the experience of cold – or any such sensation for that matter – is felt across the whole body, a notion which hints at the idea that the whole body is capable of perceiving touch. Alcinous, with these ideas, seems to deviate from Plato's account of touch in *Timaeus* 61c3-64a1 somewhat then: for Plato, vision, hearing, smell, and taste are subcategories of the so-called

[63] Alcinous *Did*. 19.2: (…) μέχρι τῶν ὀμφαλὸν τόπων: '(…) as far as the region of the navel'.
[64] Alcinous *Did*. 19.3: (…) μέχρι καρδίας: '(…) as far as the heart'.

"gate-way sense" of touch. One can for example "touch" a sound with one's sense of hearing, or "touch" an odour with the sense of smell.[65] In other words: those four senses are deemed a form of touch. Alcinous, however, does seem to differentiate between all five senses equally. They each fulfil their own specific purpose, and do so operating in their own specific manner. Moreover, unlike Plato, Alcinous does not use any haptic terminology when it comes to describing the other four senses apart from touch.[66] For Alcinous, then, all senses exist in their own right and are full-fledged.

Having treated the sensitive, it is now time to concern ourselves with the soul: its structure  as well as its relationship with the senses and sensory organs as explored above. This latter matter will prove to be especially important when it comes to Alcinous' propounded practical ethics. As is beseeming of his Middle Platonic intellectual milieu – as chapter I of this thesis on Maximus of Tyre also demonstrated – Alcinous is strongly influenced by Aristotle's thought on the human soul, and thus initially seems to argue in favour of a bipartite rather than a true Platonic tripartite soul.[67] In chapter 24.2 Alcinous presents a two-part division of the soul in a rational (τὸ λογιστικὸν) and an irrational, or, more precisely, an affective part (τό παθητικὸν). However, Alcinous tries his utmost best to incorporate the three Platonic parts of the human soul into this bipartite model:[68]

> Ἑξῆς δὲ περὶ ψυχῆς ῥητέον, ἐντεῦθέν ποθεν ἀναλαβόντας τὸν λόγον, εἰ καὶ δόξομεν παλιλλογεῖν. Ψυχὴν γὰρ παραλαβόντες ἀνθρωπίνην **ἀθάνατον** οὖσαν, ὡς δείξομεν, παρὰ τοῦ πρώτου θεοῦ οἱ τὰ θνητὰ γένη δημιουργοῦντες θεοὶ δύο αὐτῇ προσέθεσαν μέρη θνητά· **ὡς δὲ μὴ τῆς φλυαρίας τῆς θνητῆς ἀναπιμπλάμενον ᾖ τὸ θεῖον αὐτῆς καὶ ἀθάνατον**, κατῴκισαν ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος ἐπὶ τῆς οἷον ἀκροπόλεως, **ἄρχον καὶ βασιλεῦον** ἀποφήναντες οἴκησίν τε ἀπονείμαντες αὐτῷ τὴν **κεφαλήν**, σχῆμα ἔχουσαν μιμούμενον τὸ τοῦ παντός, ὑπέθεσαν δὲ τὸ ἄλλο σῶμα πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ὡς ὄχημα προσφύσαντες, καὶ **αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς θνητοῖς** αὐτῆς μέρεσιν οἴκησιν ἄλλην ἄλλῳ ἀπένειμαν.
> (2) **Τὸ** μὲν γὰρ **θυμικὸν** ἔταξαν ἐν **καρδίᾳ**, **τὸ** δὲ **ἐπιθυμητικὸν** ἐν **τῷ μεταξὺ τόπῳ τοῦ τε πρὸς τὸν ὀμφαλὸν ὅρου καὶ τῶν φρενῶν**, καταδήσαντες ὥσπερ τι οἰστροῦν καὶ ἄγριον θρέμμα· τὸν πνεύμονα δὲ ἐμηχανήσαντο τῆς καρδίας χάριν μαλακόν τε καὶ ἄναιμον σηραγγώδη

[65] Dillon 1993: 143. Cf. also Arist. *DA* II.3 (414b12), where he states that 'flavour is one of the things that apprehended by touch' (ὁ δὲ χυμὸς ἕν τι τῶν ἁπτῶν ἐστίν).
[66] Plutarch's *De Genio Socratis* is an example of a Middle Platonic text that does frequently use haptic terminology in order to describe those senses and sense perceptions other than touch. For an examination of this topic I refer to e.g. Roskam (2014).
[67] Cf. e.g. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* I.13. Cf. Dillon 1977: 290; Dillon 1993: 139; O'Brien 2017: 177.
[68] Alcinous emphasises the notion of a tripartite soul in 24.1 when he states that 'the soul is **tripartite** corresponding to its powers' (**τριμερής** ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὰς δυνάμεις).

τε καὶ σπόγγῳ παραπλήσιον ὅπως ἔχοι τι μάλαγμα πηδῶσα ἡ καρδία κατὰ τὴν ζέσιν τοῦ θυμοῦ. Τὸ δὲ ἧπαρ πρὸς τὸ διεγείρειν τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ πρὸς τὸ καταπραΰνειν ἔχον γλυκύτητά τε καὶ πικρότητα.

(*Did*. 23.1-2)

Next one must mention the soul, resuming our discussion at the following point, even if we seem to be repeating ourselves. For when they received the human soul in its **immortal** form, as we will demonstrate, from the primal god, the gods who fashion the mortal races added to it two mortal parts. **But, so that the divine and immortal part of the soul should not be filled with mortal rubbish**, they placed it on the acropolis of the body, as it were, deeming it **the ruling and kingly part**, and assigning it to the **head**, which has an order that resembles the whole of the universe, they subordinated the rest of the body to its service by attaching it to it as a vehicle, and **to each of the mortal parts** of the soul they assigned a different house.
(2) And they arranged **the spirited part** in the **heart**, and **the appetitive part** in **the region between the boundary at the navel and the midriff**, binding it down like a raging and savage beast. The lungs they fashioned for the sake of the heart as soft and bloodless and full of cavities like a sponge, so that the heart, when it is leaping in the heat of spirit, might have some padding around it. The liver possesses sweetness and bitterness for the sake of arousing and softening the appetitive part of the soul.

This section of the *Didaskalikos* leaves us with a quite a bit of information to unpack.[69] Not only does Alcinous succeed in establishing a tripartition within an initial bipartite model of the soul – distinguishing the rational and immortal (ἀθάνατον) part, and the irrational and affective part, which is further divided into the spirited (τὸ θυμικὸν) and the appetitive (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν) parts, which receive mortal status (θνητός) – but he also manages to demonstrate where and why the soul is distributed throughout the body, especially when the material presented here in chapter 23 on the construction of the human soul is combined with that on the workings of the senses in chapters 18 and 19 as presented above. Let us first discuss the mortal parts of the soul. As noted above, the heart is the destination of taste, a sensory experience which passes over the tongue in the mouth and through the veins. The heart is also, as chapter 23.2 makes abundantly clear, that part of the body where the spirited part of the soul is housed. It is therefore also interesting to note that, unlike Aristotle, who argues that the centre of perception lies in the heart and the heart alone,[70] Alcinous operates under the assumption that the heart is simply the terminus of taste, and that sense perception *en general* is a full-body affair. The appetitive part,

[69] Plato discusses the situating of the soul within the human body in general in *Tim*. 43a-44e and 69c-72d.
[70] Cf. e.g. Arist. *Parv. Nat*. 469a10 (= *De Iuventute et Senectute, de Vita et Morte*).

then, is housed in the upper and lower abdomen. A sound travels through the ears, via the brain and the blood, down to the liver, and an odour similarly travels to the appetitive part of the soul via the nose and the veins. While it is not explicitly stated by Alcinous, this distribution of the spirited and appetitive parts to respectively the heart and the upper and lower abdomen is certainly not illogical: simply based on the fact that we feel hunger and libido somewhere in the abdomen, and that we experience heart palpitations when we fall in love, it is not strange that Alcinous – especially considering his physical approach to matters of the soul – connects these areas of the body to specific parts of the soul and their inherent qualities. This now leaves us with the rational part of the soul. This part, which is deemed immortal, is assigned to the head on account of this resembling the roundness and therefore perfection of the universe, and is deemed the soul's 'ruling and kingly part'.[71] The eyes, situated on the head, with their most pure and unadulterated pupils, perceive vision, which then seems to be passed on directly to the rational part of the soul. While this is not directly stated in the text, it is clear that Alcinous, in contrast to Plato himself, is aware of the fact that the brain makes up the nervous system along with the spinal chord and the nerves,[72] wherefore it is entirely logical that the rational part of the soul is placed within the head and linked to the eyes and the sense of vision. This placement is then no longer a necessity on a solely Platonic basis, but is also based on scientific grounds.

As explored above, the human soul consists of one immortal and two mortal parts. It should be noted, however, that Alcinous, taking the argument from the *Phaedo*,[73] also states that the whole of the soul is immortal:

> Ἡ ψυχὴ ὅτῳ ἂν προσγένηται, ἐπιφέρει τούτῳ τὸ ζῆν ὡς σύμφυτον ὑπάρχον ἑαυτῇ· **τὸ δὲ ἐπιφέρον τινὶ τὸ ζῆν ἀνεπίδεκτόν ἐστι θανάτου· τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον ἀθάνατον**. Εἰ δὲ ἀθάνατον ἡ ψυχή, καὶ ἀνώλεθρον ἂν εἴη· ἀσώματος γάρ ἐστιν οὐσία, ἀμετάβλητος κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ νοητὴ καὶ ἀειδὴς καὶ μονοειδής· οὐκοῦν ἀσύνθετος, ἀδιάλυτος, ἀσκέδαστος.
>
> (*Did*. 25.1)

[71] The rational part of the soul is also deemed 'the leading part' (τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν) by Alcinous in 17.4. The usage of this term is particularly Stoic (cf. e.g. Diog. Laert. *Lives of and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* VII). Cf. O'Brien 2017: 178.
[72] Cf. especially *Did*. 17.2. As Dillon (1993: 140) states: 'The discovery that the brain is the centre and origin of the nervous system is to be credited to the physician Erasistratus of Ceos in the third century BC, and so was quite unknown to Plato'. Cf. Dillon 1977: 289; O'Brien 2017: 179.
[73] Dillon 1993: 151.

> The soul brings life to whatever it attaches itself as naturally associated with itself; **but that which brings life to something is itself not-accepting of death; and such a thing is immortal**. And if the soul is immortal, it would also be indispersible; for it is an incorporeal being, unchanging in its substance and intelligible and invisible and uniform: therefore it is uncompounded, indissoluble, ineffaceable.

This idea that the soul is supposed to be immortal as a whole, while at the same time consisting of an immortal and two mortal parts, seriously complicates things.[74] This immortality-mortality paradox is, however, not unsolvable, as will be explored below when we discuss Alcinous' practical ethics based on the structure of the human soul.

This structure of the human soul and its fundamental relationship to the senses and sense perception can be clearly visualised in the schematic representation below. It demonstrates how external stimuli make a journey through the body towards particular parts of the soul. As is clear, touch – a sensation that is sensible across the whole of the body and thus presumably perceived through the medium of the skin – is not included in this model, as it does not seem to be linked to a specific destination within the body or a specific part of the soul.

[74] More so than in Maximus' texts: Maximus too constructs a model of the soul that consists of immortal and mortal parts, but quite easily solves this by combining the mortal and immortal parts into the distinctly human activity of prudence, not making much more of a point of it. For Alcinous, the (im)mortality conundrum is a much greater issue, as he connects the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul thusly closely to the physical body.

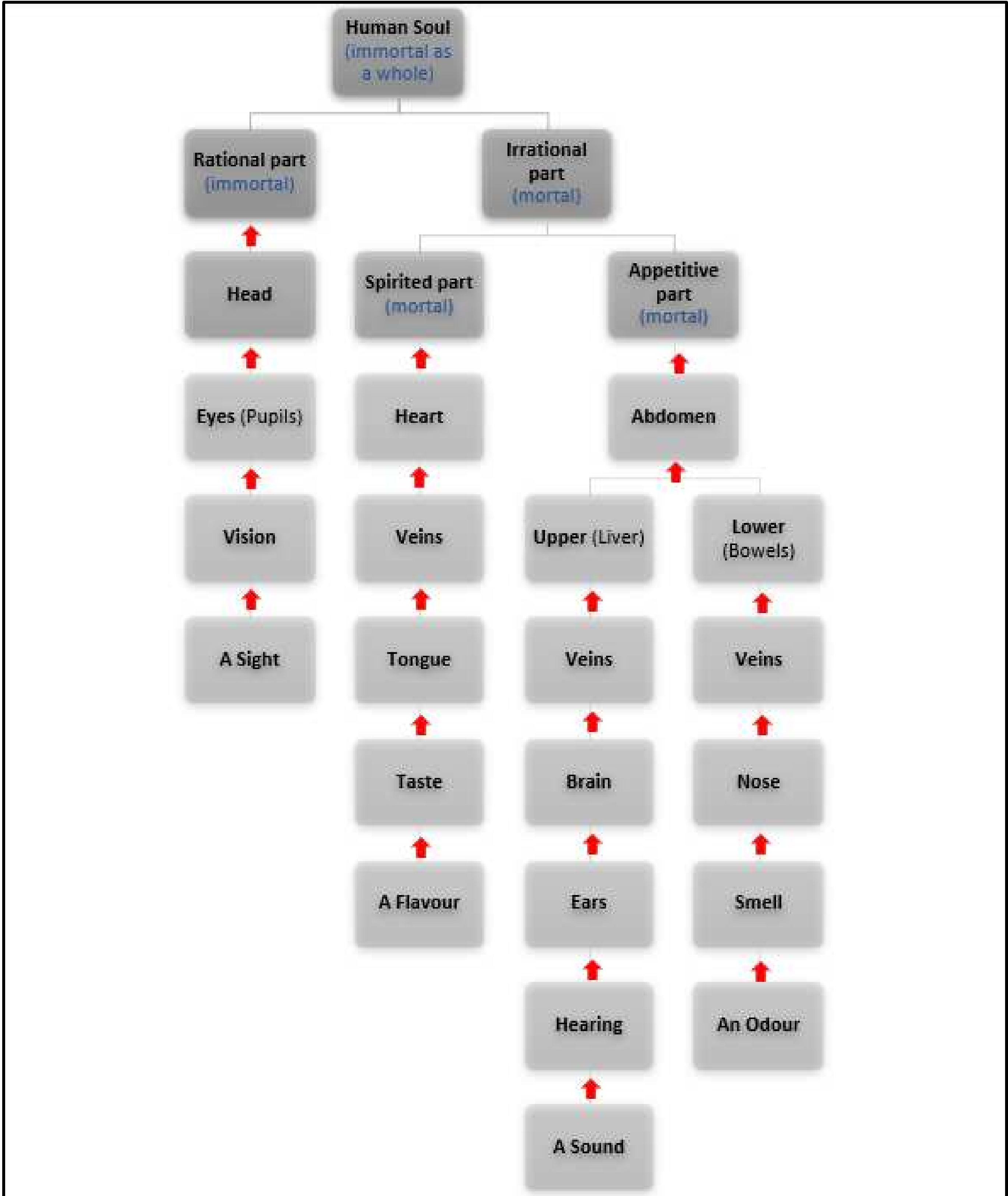


**Figure 2.** *Model of the human soul according to Alcinous'* Didaskalikos *18-19 and 23-25.*

***To be(come) immortal***
Having explored Alcinous' structure of the soul above, it is already clear that Alcinous seems to be quite the empiricist in a Platonic context. This would seem to be a rather strange conclusion to draw, but it is not necessarily untypical considering Alcinous' own intellectual milieu as well as his tendency to amalgamate all of Plato's thought into one Platonic manual. Moreover, Alcinous makes the soul relate more closely to the world around us, and uses his highly sensitive model of the human soul in two ways: in order to enforce practical ethics, he both uses the (im)mortality of the soul, as well as its relationship to the senses and sense perception.

The first way in which Alcinous most conspicuously uses the structure of the human soul in order to enforce practical ethics is by emphasising its immortality. As noted above, the whole of the soul is to be seen as immortal, but at the same time, Alcinous states that the affective and irrational part – that is, the spirited and appetitive parts – of the soul is mortal, while its rational part is immortal. This seriously complicates matters. How is it possible that both mortal and immortal parts can exist in the unit of the soul that is in itself supposed to be whole, indispersible, and imperishable? These matters seem, at first glance, irreconcilable. Looking at the structure of the soul and its interactions with the senses and sense perception, however, certainly provides clarification. As our exploration of this chapter of this thesis so far has demonstrated, the body and its sense are important for the soul when it comes to interpreting external stimuli. At least three out of the five senses – taste, smell, and hearing, and perhaps touch – are directly connected to the irrational and mortal parts of the soul. Vision, then, seems to be attached to the rational and immortal part of the soul situated in the head. One may most logically explain this particular connection of vision to the immortal by arguing that the physical act of seeing something beautiful reminds the soul of Beauty itself and thus allows the soul to glimpse at the divine Forms.[75] Taste, smell, and hearing, on the other hand, are linked to the mortal parts of the soul located around the heart and the abdomen. In contrast to vision, which possesses the light-bearing and -conducting element of fire, taste, smell, and hearing are linked to mortal and unimportant matters: while many different flavours, odours, and sounds exist, Alcinous suggests in chapter 19 that these do not have any particular value for the soul.[76] That is certainly not to say that one can then just go and act loosely and indulgently: it is rather to

[75] This idea, of course, resembles Diotima's *scala amoris* as presented in Pl. *Symp*. 210a-212a. One may also note that a similar idea is found in the Neoplatonist Plotinus' work *On Beauty* (*Enn.* 1.6 [1]), where it is, in short, propounded that the vision of something colourful reminds the soul of higher Beauty.
[76] Alcinous' description of the mechanical and thus relatively inconsequential workings of taste, smell, and hearing in *Didaskalikos* 19.2-4 seem reminiscent of the Stoic notion of *indifferentiae*.

say that one will not reach moral superiority by perfecting one's senses of taste, smell, and hearing. Moral superiority is rather reached by keeping those passions in check – the job of the rational and immortal part of the soul. Moreover, these three senses are more closely connected to bodily functions themselves: food, which is smelled and tasted, needs to be digested by the body. As the body is reported to be perishable – it is, for example, 'dispersible, composite, multiform' (σκεδαστόν, συντεθόν, πολυειδές (*Did.* 25.2)) – the parts of the soul that are related to these sense perceptions are therefore, in a sense, perishable too: the body and its parts, as well as the matters it perceives via the senses of taste, smell, and hearing, can die, and thus the parts of the soul that are located in those particular parts of the body and are connected to those particular senses can metaphorically die off as well. Because these parts of the soul concern themselves with mortal things, these parts are in that sense mortal too. Thus, because they have differently natured connections within the body and to the soul, the senses elegantly allow for the human soul to be mortal and immortal at the same time.

And *if* we are essentially immortal then, that means that we have to behave accordingly: morally good, since, according to Alcinous as well as the Platonic tradition in general, our soul, by being immortal, participates in the Good.[77] For Alcinous, in a nutshell, this means that one has to use one's mind: acting morally good and actualising one's immortality lies 'in the knowledge and contemplation of the primal Good' (ἐν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ (*Did.* 27.1)),[78] and in the usage of our human right mind (φρόνιμος (*Did.* 28.1)) and reason (λόγος (*Did.* 28.4)). In less abstract terms, this means that one has to train the soul, particularly its rational part – the perfection of which is referred to as wisdom[79] – for the purpose of a proper preparation of our soul's ability to handle potentially soul-damaging factors:

> προτέλεια δὲ καὶ προκαθάρσια τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν δαίμονος, εἰ μέλλει τὰ μείζονα μυεῖσθαι μαθήματα, εἴη ἂν τὰ διὰ **μουσικῆς**· καὶ **ἀριθμητικῆς** τε καὶ **ἀστρονομίας**· καὶ **γεωμετρίας**, συνεπιμελουμένων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ σωμάτος· διὰ **γυμναστικῆς**, ἥτις καὶ πρὸς πόλεμον καὶ πρὸς εἰρήνην εὔθετα τὰ σώματα παρασκευάσει.
>
> (*Did.* 28.2)
>
> The introductory ceremonies and the first purification of our inherent guide, if one is to be initiated into the greater sciences, will consist of **music**, and **arithmetic** and **astronomy**, and **geometry**, and at the same time we must care for our body: through **gymnastics**, which will prepare our bodies properly for both war and peace.

[77] Alcinous *Did.* 27.2.
[78] Cf. Dillon 1977: 299; 1993: xxii; xxiii.
[79] Alcinous *Did.* 29.1; 29.3.

Like Maximus, who, as demonstrated in this thesis' previous chapter, distinguished gymnastics, rhetoric, poetry, arithmetic, logic, geometry, and music as ways to exercise one's soul, Alcinous too lays out the practices with which one should ideally concern themselves: a well-trained soul entails exercising music, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and gymnastics. Alcinous, however, differs slightly from Maximus when he describes the goal of gymnastics: whereas Maximus defines gymnastics as a medium to truly make the body obedient and subservient to the soul, Alcinous allows for a more positive approach. For him, gymnastics prepares our body thusly that it will provide the proper energy and training in order for our soul to subsequently be able to act virtuously in war and peace.

Our immortality necessitates us to primarily exercise the rational part of our soul, but our mortal parts should be exercised properly too according to Alcinous. In order to argue for this, Alcinous then most conspicuously uses the sensitive part of his model of the human soul. Yet, rather than being used in a positive and adhortative sense, for the purpose of enforcing practical ethics the soul's connections to the body, along with its senses and sense perceptions, are being used more prohibitively: the spirited and appetitive parts and the body and its senses to which they are connected should be kept in check, which is done not only by the rational part of the soul, but also by the spirited and appetitive parts themselves due to their own specific virtues which are acquired through habituation and practice,[80] as well as their respective abilities for courage (ἀνδρία) and self-control (σωφροσύνη).[81] Courage expresses itself in the ability of the spirited part to hold a correct opinion of what is and what is not to be feared (Ἡ δὲ ἀνδρία ἐστι δόγματος ἐννόμου σωτηρία <περὶ τοῦ> δεινοῦ τε καὶ μὴ δεινοῦ (*Did.* 29.3)). Thus, rather than having the rational part of the soul make this decision, the spirited part is to have a courageous heart and judge whether something is to be feared or not with the help of its connections to the experienceable world via the body's sensory inlets. For the appetitive part, 'self control is a sense of order in relation to passions and desires and the submission to their ruling element' (ἡ δὲ σωφροσύνη τάξις περὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ τὰς ὀρέξεις καὶ τὴν εὐπείθειαν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸ ἡγεμονικόν (*Did.* 29.2)). The job of the appetitive part here is then to filter the external stimuli that come in via the sensory inlets, for example a pleasant odour, and act on it appropriately, namely to pass on the decision of whether or not we should go after

[80] Alcinous *Did*. 30.3.

[81] Alcinous *Did*. 29.1. Cf. also Alcinous *Did*. 28.2. Courage and self-control can indeed be a purely bodily affair, because if one dies, one's rational part of the soul persists and ideally reaches the divine, and, as for example Aristotle explains in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Eth. Nic.* X.7 (1178b7ff.)), the gods find things like courage absolutely useless.

a piece of cake that smells nice to the rational part of the soul. This ability to be self-controlled is thus inherent of the appetitive part, and is not superimposed on it by the rational part.

Thus, in quite a logical and basic manner, the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts of the soul act appropriately towards external stimuli respectively by acting wisely, by being courageous, or by being self-controlled thanks to their interactions with the body, along with its sensory inlets and organs and sense-perceptive abilities. Alcinous clearly highlights the senses and their connections to the parts of the human soul in his laid-out structure, but he still mostly emphasises the importance of exercising the rational part of one's soul. This focus – which is certainly Platonic – is strengthened by the fact that Alcinous makes the soul both entirely immortal as well as partly mortal and partly immortal in his model. This (im)mortality conundrum, which is elegantly solved by making connections between the soul and the senses, essentially goes two ways when it comes to practical ethics: because one's soul is immortal as a whole, one simply has to behave well on account of its essential immortality; and if one behaves well – that is, actively exercise the rational part and properly deal with the spirited and appetitive parts – one can become (more) immortal.

## III. CONCLUSION: ACTING AND INTERACTING SENSIBLY

Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* is a deceivingly unchallenging work. When examined more thoroughly, however, as this chapter has aimed to do, a complex yet well-thought-out psychology with a physicalist approach emerges. It can immediately be said that not only Alcinous' intellectual context differs from that of Maximus – the former being educational and the latter being rhetorical – but their approaches certainly also differ: specifically utilising the senses and making connections to the functions and the parts of the soul is something that Maximus does not do. Doing this allows Alcinous to demonstrate that one's soul is both immortal as a whole – as it participates in the immortal Good – as well as partly mortal – for its spirited and appetitive parts are concerned with mortal matters – and partly immortal – as one's rational part is concerned with immortal matters, namely wisdom and virtue. Therefore, one must particularly take care of this rational part by exercising it with, among other things, music and geometry. Furthermore, as one perceives matters with the body, which are in turn filtered and handled by a specific part of the soul that is connected to a specific body part and sensory organ, one must act accordingly – that is, wisely, courageously, or self-controlledly.

While Alcinous definitely and ostensibly falls back on his master Plato when it comes to presenting his thought, he also makes the active endeavour to amalgamate Plato's sometimes discrepant ideas and therefrom create a novel structure of the human soul that incorporates physicality. Alcinous uses this structure to enforce good moral behaviour by focussing on both the immortality of the soul as a whole and its rational part in isolation, as well as on its mortality and its relationship to the senses. The structure of the human soul as Alcinous propounds it is then used, other than to simply show the connections between the soul and the senses, as a persuasion mechanism that demonstrates why we have to behave well and why we cannot do anything but behave well – we are immortal, after all, and thus we inherently strive for the Good.

Just as the previous chapter demonstrated in the case of Maximus, there seems to be a methodology of psychological morality present in Alcinous' work in some measure too. Alcinous uses the structure of the human soul, though in a more abstract sense as he particularly focuses on the soul's (im)mortality, to enforce good Platonic ethical behaviour.

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# CHAPTER III
# PUTTING THE PHYSIQUE INTO THE EQUATION: GALEN

It is now lastly time to turn to the medical side of Middle Platonic philosophy and examine one of the most prolific and influential authors not only in the second century AD, but also in the whole of antiquity: Galen of Pergamon. Though primarily a physician, Galen also propounds his fair share of philosophical thought on ethical matters. This section will examine how Galen, with his strongly physicalist approach, structures the human soul and subsequently uses this structure to enforce ideal ethical practice. The Galenic corpus cannot be described otherwise than enormous. Rather than attempting to study all of Galen's thought, then, this section will therefore go about investigating Galen's moral psychology by focussing on two of his treatises: *De Propriorum Animi Cuiuslibet Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione – The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Affections and Errors Peculiar to Each Person's Soul – Affections and Errors* for short; and *Quod Animi Mores Corpores Temperamenta Sequantur – The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body – The Capacities of the Soul* for short.[82] While Galen has generally received ample scholarly attention, his moral psychological and ethical thought has gone somewhat under the radar. This is a shame, as this thought features prominently in his treatises on the anatomy of the soul. This chapter demonstrates that Galen takes what Alcinous did – namely taking a physical approach to matters regarding the human soul – to the extreme and comes up with a model of the human soul that lends itself excellently to the enforcement of ethical matters, as it allows for humans to make desirable choices in a traditionally Platonic tripartite context.

## I. INTRODUCTION: MEDICAL PLATONISM

### *Galen: life, work, and context*

Out of the three Middle Platonists examined in this thesis, by far the most is known about Galen.[83] Claudius Galenus was born in Pergamon in Asia Minor and was the pupil of one

[82] Greek editions of the texts are those by Kühn (1821 – *The Capacities of the Soul* – and 1823 – *Affections and Errors*). The chapter divisions are those as used by Singer (2014). For detailed analyses of *The Capacities of the Soul* and *Affections and Errors* I refer to Singer (2014: 343-359 and 220-232 respectively).
[83] For a more elaborate discussion of Galen's person, I refer to e.g. Singer (2014). For a general examination of Galenic medicine, I refer to Nutton (2013).

Albinus[84] – a thinker actually named Albinus, who is not to be confused with Alcinous/ Albinus of the previous chapter – but spent most of his professional life as a physician-philosopher in Rome. While working, dissecting, researching, and practicing medicine – as Tieleman notes, Galen was also quite the exhibitionist who performed his medicine in Rome for an elite audience[85] – Galen authored many treatises on physiology, pharmacology, anatomy, as well as on (moral) psychology and the effects of physical and philosophical therapy.

While the "Platonist allegiance" of the previous two authors treated in this thesis was not in question, in the case of Galen one needs to delve a bit further into this matter: does Galen even belong in the list of Middle Platonists?[86] Boys-Stones puts Galen in his list of 'people commonly thought of as Platonists, but whose claim on the criteria is problematic or untenable'.[87] Indeed, because of his abstaining from the immortality of the soul – as will become clear below – Galen certainly is not the Platonist one would expect to encounter. He nevertheless is a thinker that explicitly engages with, builds upon, is influenced by, and utilises Plato's thought – which is not atypical of the so-called average Middle Platonist.[88] Galen surely is an exegete of Plato who ostensibly reveres the great philosopher's work and thought and aims to reconcile it with his own medical and physicalist background and approaches. It would therefore, in my considered view, be validated to refer to Galen as a "junior" Middle Platonist, or at least a Platonising author, and his Platonism is particularly discernible in his psychological discussions.

### ***Galen the physician-philosopher***

Dillon calls Galen 'first and foremost a doctor', and points out his utilisation of Platonist philosophy in his medical practice and thinking.[89] But, as Galen himself points out with his eponymous treatise, 'the best physician is also a philosopher' (*si quis optimus medicus est, eundum esse philosophum*). Galen makes great effort to examine the origins of, and relationships between, physical and psychological affections and issues.[90] As the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, Galen succeeds in combining his physiological ideas – on the basis

[84] Boys-Stones 2017: 603.
[85] Tieleman 1996: xiii.
[86] The question of Galen's Platonism has often passed in scholarly review, and opinions are divided. Cf. e.g. Chiaradonna (2009: 243), Dillon (1977: 339), Singer (2014: 18), and Tieleman (1996: xx). Cf. Gill (2010) for a discussion of the relationship between Galen and Stoic thought.
[87] Boys-Stones 2017: 593.
[88] Tieleman 1996: xxi.
[89] Dillon 1977: 339.
[90] Cf. Veith 1961: 316. I refer to Hankinson (2008) and Gill, Whitmarsh & Wilkins (2009) for general studies of Galen and his medical and philosophical thinking. I refer to Rocca (2018) for a discussion of the relationship between Galen's medical epistemology and the Platonic Demiurge.

of medical thought and empiricism – with the traditional Platonic tripartite model of the soul by appointing a physiological origin to psychological problems and vice versa.

Galen will thus turn out to be not merely an intelligent medical doctor, but also an inventive and innovative thinker who manages to successfully approach Plato and Platonist thinking in a physicalist way. By including the medical knowledge of his time, Galen comes up with a structure of the soul that lends itself perfectly for the usage of advice regarding ethical behaviour on account of it taking into account the reality of bodily and physical experience.

## II. EXEGESIS AND EXAMINATION OF *AFFECTIONS AND ERRORS* AND *THE CAPACITIES OF THE SOUL*

### ***Galen's physicalist approach to the traditional Platonic soul***

Like Alcinous, Galen is clearly aware of the fact that our brain is the centre of our nervous system. Unlike Alcinous, Galen has extensive medical knowledge, which he appropriates in an attempt to scientifically prove the Platonic tripartition of the soul.[91] This is the starting point from which Galen departs one of his other major works, aside from *Affections and Errors* and *The Capacities of the Soul*, on psychology: *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (*De Hippocratis et Platonis Decretis*). This work, in nine books, sets out the initial tripartite Platonic structure of the soul.[92] With his quintessential physicalist approach to the structure and nature of the human soul, Galen already manages to reconcile the human physical experience and anatomical truth with Platonic psychology in this work.[93] He builds upon it further in *Affections and Errors* and, in particular, *The Capacities of the Soul*. There, Galen not only lays out the traditional three parts of the Platonic soul, using the same terminology as Plato does, but he also attributes several functions to each of these parts, and explains what each function means and to what part of the body, and how, each function is connected and related. One especially telling and extensive passage can be found in chapter 2 of *The Capacities of the Soul*. After having explained that a capacity of the soul is simply something of which it is capable of doing, just like there is no difference between saying that 'aloe is capable of cleansing' and 'aloe has a cleansing capacity' (ὡς οὐδὲν διαφέρον ἢ καθαίρειν δύνασθαι φάναι τὴν ἀλόην ἢ δύναμιν ἔχειν

[91] Hankinson 1991: 210. Cf. Hankinson (1991) in general, as well as Tieleman (1996) for excellent discussions of Galen on the human soul in *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*.
[92] Cf. Dillon 1977: 339.
[93] Cf. Hankinson 1991: 231.

καθαρτικήν (IV770 K, 24 M)), Galen goes on to elaborate on the parts and capacities of the human soul:

> κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ὅταν εἴπωμεν ‘ἡ ἐν **ἐγκεφάλῳ** καθιδρυμένη **λογιστικὴ ψυχὴ** δύναται μὲν αἰσθάνεσθαι διὰ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων, δύναται δὲ καὶ μεμνῆσθαι [διὰ] τῶν αἰσθητῶν αὐτὴ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν ἀκολουθίαν τε καὶ μάχην ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ὁρᾶν ἀνάλυσίν τε καὶ σύνθεσιν,’ οὐκ ἄλλο τι δηλοῦμεν ἢ εἰ περιλαβόντες εἴποιμεν ‘**ἡ λογιστικὴ ψυχὴ δυνάμεις** (771) **ἔχει πλείους,** αἴσθησιν καὶ μνήμην καὶ σύνεσιν ἑκάστην <τε> τῶν **ἄλλων.’** ἐπεὶ δ’ οὐ μόνον αἰσθάνεσθαι δύνασθαί φαμεν αὐτὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ κατ’ εἶδος ὁρᾶν ἀκούειν ὀσμᾶσθαι γεύεσθαι ἅπτεσθαι, πάλιν αὖ **δυνάμεις** αὐτὴν ἔχειν λέγομεν **ὀπτικὴν ἀκουστικὴν ὀσφρητικὴν γευστικὴν ἁπτικήν**. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὴν **ἐπιθυμητικὴν** αὐτῇ **δύναμιν** ὁ Πλάτων ὑπάρχειν ἔλεγεν, ἣν [τε] δὴ κοινῶς ἐπιθυμητικήν, οὐκ ἰδίως ὀνομάζειν ἔθος αὐτῷ. Πλείους μὲν γὰρ εἶναι <καὶ> ταύτης τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιθυμίας φησί, πλείους δὲ καὶ τῆς **θυμοειδοῦς**, πολὺ δὲ πλείους καὶ ποικιλωτέρας τῆς τρίτης, ἣν δι’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο κατ’ ἐξοχὴν ὠνόμασεν **ἐπιθυμητικὴν εἰωθότων**. (…) (772) **ἐπιθυμητικὸν** οὖν ἐστι κατὰ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας σημαινόμενον ἀληθείας μὲν καὶ ἐπιστήμης καὶ μαθη**μάτων καὶ συνέσεως καὶ μνήμης καὶ συλλήβδην εἰπεῖν ἁπάντων τῶν καλῶν** ἐκεῖνο τὸ μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς, ὃ καλεῖν εἰθίσμεθα **λογιστικόν· ἐλευθερίας δὲ καὶ νίκης <καὶ> τοῦ κρατεῖν καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ <τοῦ> δοξάζεσθαι καὶ [τοῦ] τιμᾶσθαι τὸ θυμοειδές· ἀφροδισίων δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἑκάστου τῶν ἐσθιομένων τε καὶ πινομένων ἀπολαύσεως** τὸ κατ’ ἐξοχὴν ὀνομαζόμενον ὑπὸ Πλάτωνος **ἐπιθυμητικόν**.

(*QAM* IV770-772 K, 34-36 M)

> And along the same lines, when we say: ‘the **rational soul**, which is seated in the **brain**, is capable of perceiving through the perceptive organs; is capable of remembering the objects of perception by itself; is capable of seeing the consequence and combat in things, as well as their analysis and synthesis’, we demonstrate nothing other than what we would if we summarisingly said: **‘the rational soul has a multitude** (771) **of capacities: perception and memory and understanding and each of the others’**. But since we do not only say that it is capable of perceiving, but also that it is specifically capable of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, yet again we say that it has the **capacities of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch**. In this way Plato said that it had the **capacity of desire** – calling it desiderative by its customary usage in the common sense, not in the specific sense. For he says that there are many desires of this soul, as is also the case with the **spirited** soul, and there are much more and more manifold desires of the third soul, which for this very reason he called **appetitive *in the usual way***. (…)

(772) And thus, in the general case of desire, that part of the soul which we are accustomed to call **the rational is desiderative**, namely **of the truth and of scientific knowledge and of learning and of understanding and of memory and of, in short, all fine things**: **and the spirited part is desiderative of freedom and of victory and of domination and of power and of reputation of and of honour**: and in very much the same way that part which is called **appetitive** by Plato is desiderative **of sex and of the enjoyment of everything that is eaten and drunk**.

This elaborate passage tells us much about Galen's psychological thought. To start, Galen divides the human soul in three parts: the rational soul (λογιστικὴ ψυχὴ), the spirited soul (qυμοειδής ψυχὴ), and the appetitive *in the customary sense* soul (ἐπιθυμητική ψυχὴ εἰωθότως). *In the customary sense* seems to mean that this part is called appetitive by Plato and should be separated from the appetitive, or desiderative, capacities of each of the three parts of the soul. Galen's referring to the three parts of the human soul as 'souls' should not be overinterpreted: it is simply his way of indicating the *parts* of the soul. While it is clear from this passage that the rational part of the soul is, well, rational, the question of the (ir)rational nature of the other two parts rises. Galen answers this question in for example the sixth chapter of the book *Affections* in *Affections and Errors*, where he deems the spirited and appetitive parts non-rational:

(29) **δύο** γὰρ ἔχομεν **ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς δυνάμεις ἀλόγους**, μίαν μέν, ἧς <τὸ> **θυμοῦσθαί** τε παραχρῆμα καὶ **ὀργίζεσθαι** τοῖς δόξασί τι πλημμελεῖν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔργον ἐστί. τῆς δ' αὐτῆς ταύτης καὶ τὸ **μηνιᾶν** ἄχρι πλείονος, ὃ τοσούτῳ πλεῖόν ἐστι θυμοῦ πάθος, ὅσῳ καὶ χρονιώτερον. ἄλλη δ' ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν δύναμις ἄλογος ἐπὶ τὸ φαινόμενον ἡδὺ **προπετῶς φερο**μένη, πρὶν διασκέψασθαι, πότερον ὠφέλιμόν ἐστι καὶ καλόν, ἢ βλαβερόν τε καὶ <κακόν>.

(*Aff. Dig*. 20 DB, V29 K)

(29) For we have **two non-rational capacities in our soul**:[94] the first, of which the function is to be **enraged and angered** on the spot at those who seem to us to be doing us some wrong. Of this the function is also the holding of **resentment** over a long period of time, which affection of the spirit is greater, as it is longer-lived. Our other non-rational capacity **is dragged rashly** towards that whichever seems pleasant, without examining whether it is helpful and good, or harmful and bad.

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[94] It is rather confusing that Galen here calls the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul 'capacities' (δυνάμεις), as in the passage above of *QAM* IV770-772 K, 34-36 M the soul was divided in *souls* (ψυχαί), or *parts*, each of which had its own *capacities*. One should assume that this is simply a Galenic linguistic discrepancy, and take that the passage of *Aff. Dig.* 20 DB, V29 K is describing the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul.

Each of the three parts of the soul has its own specific functions or capacities (δυνάμεις). As Galen demonstrates above, the rational part of the soul has, among other things, the capacities of understanding (σύνεσις), memory (μνήμη), and, last but not least, perception (αἴσθησις), the inclusion of which in the rational part of the soul is probably one of the most striking things to note. Perception is not a part of the soul *per se*, as Maximus would have it, nor does the rational part of the soul merely interact to certain a degree with perceptive organs, as Alcinous propounded, but for Galen perception is indeed an inherently rational capacity. This inclusion also demonstrates that physical matters are always nearby in Galenic thought: it is obvious that the rational part of the soul ought to interact with the sense-perceptive organs in order to be capable of perceiving, receiving, and understanding the senses. It seems that, therefore, Galen has incorporated sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (ὀπτικὴν ἀκουστικὴν ὀσφρητικὴν γευστικὴν ἁπτικήν) – the traditional five senses – as sub-capacities of perception: according to Galen, there certainly seems to be a co-dependent relationship between the rational part of the soul, along with its capacities, and the body, along with its sense-perceptive functions. Furthermore, as is clear from the very beginning of the passage of *The Capacities of the Soul* above, Galen operates under the assumption that the rational part of the soul takes up its residence in the brain.[95] Elsewhere in *The Capacities of the Soul* – namely in IV772 K, 36 M – he propounds that the spirited part of the soul is housed in the heart, while the appetitive part is seated in the liver.[96] The capacities of the spirited part of the soul include anger and, the longer-lasting version of that, the ability to hold resentment. The appetitive part of the soul only seems to have the capacity of desire, a capacity which all three parts of the soul have in common, but in different gradations and iterations. By laying out these desires specific to each part of the soul, Galen clarifies the natures of each of its parts. Given the fact that the rational part desires truth, memory and so on, we can say that this part is certainly more intellectually inclined. The spirited part is desiderative of matters which may make one's ego grow, such as honour and power. The appetitive part then desires what seem to be purely physical matters, such as sex and food.

Aside from the question of (ir)rationality of the parts of the human soul, a question that also naturally rises in the context of Platonic psychology is the question of (im)mortality of the human soul. This is quite the conundrum, as Galen is not straightforward when it comes to these matters. In order to somewhat answer that question we have to turn to a different section of *The Capacities of the Soul*. There, in chapter 3, he immediately poses the idea that, due to the fact

[95] Cf. note 72 above.
[96] Cf. Donini 2008: 187; Gill 2010: 93; Johnston 2020: 327.

that the heart and the liver perish at death, the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul do so as well (πρῶτον οὖν ἐπισκεψώμεθα περὶ τῶν ἐν καρδίᾳ καὶ ἥπατι τῆς ψυχῆς εἰδῶν, ἃ κἀκείνῳ κἀμοὶ συνωμολόγηται φθείρεσθαι κατὰ τὸν θάνατον (IV773 K, 36 M)), making them essentially mortal. The rational part's (im)mortality lies more complicatedly. The closest we can come to an answer is perhaps in IV774-775 K, 38 M, where Galen states that, if the rational part of the soul exists, then it must be mortal on account of it being a mixture of the brain (εἰ μὲν οὖν τὸ λογιζόμενον εἶδος τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστι, θνητὸν ἔσται· <καὶ γὰρ> καὶ αὐτὸ (775) κρᾶσίς τις ἐγκεφάλου).[97] The brain is a physical entity, wherefore the rational part that houses there has to expire along with it as it dies. This makes the soul in its entirety mortal. In the end, however, Galen does not answer the question head-on, and he seems to dissociate himself from the question of the (im)mortality of the soul. His sympathies, nevertheless, seem to go out to the notion that the human soul is essentially mortal. This puts Galen on the edge of Platonism, so to speak, as immortality is, as noted above, quite the crucial element in a Platonic context. However, despite this essential mortality, one could of course still reach so-called earned mortality – that is, becoming immortal through virtuous action, given the fact that virtues are in themselves ever-existent. This will be discussed below.

Taking all of the above together, Galen, perhaps surprisingly, leaves us with a relatively uncomplicated and traditional Platonic model of the human soul.

[97] Cf. Hankinson 1991: 202-203.

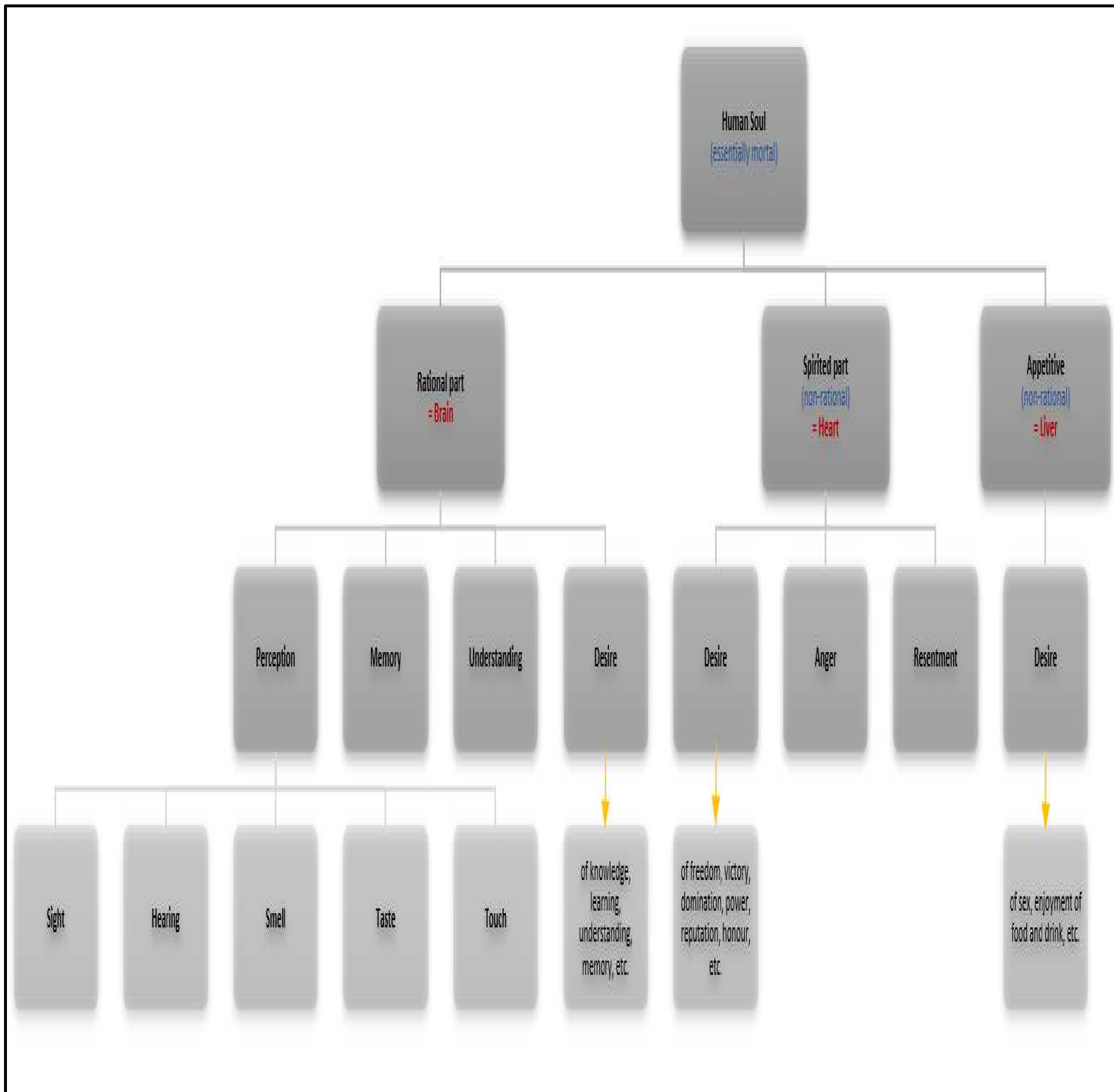


**Figure 3.** *Model of the human soul according to Galen's* Affections and Errors *(20 DB, V29 K) and* The Capacities of the Soul *(IV770-772 K, 34-36 M; IV772 K, 36 M; IV773 K, 36M; IV774-775 K, 38 M). This model assumes that Galen deems the human soul essentially mortal.*

An *almost* entirely Platonic model of the human soul, that is: while it is visible that Galen explicitly operates under the traditional tripartition of the human soul, it is also visible that the soul is not immortal, as Plato would have it.

*Deceptively Platonic*, would then be a better denomination for Galen's model of the human soul. This, however, is not necessarily problematic: his Middle Platonic intellectual context allows Galen to come up with a noticeably physicalist approach to psychology. As has already become clear above, the soul and the body are strongly interconnected according to Galen, making his approach one that combines Platonic and Aristotelian thought.[98] The human soul is even referred to as 'the mixture of the body' (ἡ κρᾶσις τοῦ σώματος (cf. IV782 K, 44M)), suggesting not only the influence of the body on the soul and vice versa, but also the ethical connections between the treatment and temperament of the body and one's behaviour – this we will discuss below.

This physicalist and almost holistic approach, as well as his reluctance to call the human soul immortal, could lead one to assume that Galen thinks the soul is material. It is, however, in short, impossible to answer this question on account of Galen's vagueness on the matter – not only in the texts discussed in this chapter, but throughout the whole of his corpus. While the idea strongly suggested by Galen that all three parts of the human soul are mortal could imply that, therefore, a part has to be able to perish and thus has to be material in order for it to be perishable, and while Galen also explains that it is impossible for an incorporeal entity – the soul, one presumes – to act upon a corporeal one – the body – in *QAM* IV775 K, 39 M, he refrains from any strong claims regarding the materiality of the human soul.[99]

In sum, Galen's psychology is both Platonic and *deceptively* Platonic in nature. Starting from the point of the traditional Platonic tripartite soul, Galen is truly building on this model and incorporating elements of his own intellectual and medical zeitgeist, eventually presenting a view of the human that can comfortably be referred to as psychosomatic.

### *Philosophical and physical therapy*

This psychosomatic model of the soul allows Galen to much closer involve the body in matters of moral psychology and good ethical behaviour. Nevertheless, some more traditionally Platonic cognitive way of therapy is certainly also present in Galen's thinking. 'Philosophy as

[98] Cf. Donini 2008: 197-198; Gill 2006: 292; 297; Gill 2010: 104; 328; Johnston: 2020: 326-327; Singer 2014: 338.

[99] Cf. Hankinson 1991: 203; Tieleman 1996: 9; Singer 2014: 33; 335-336; Veith 1961: 319.

therapy', as Gill elegantly calls it,[100] consists of both the education and correction of respectively the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul,[101] as well as the development of its rational part. According to Galen in *Affections and Errors*, the education of the spirited part involves the steering of affections: rage (θυμὸς), anger (ὀργὴ), fear (φόβος), distress (λύπη), envy (φθόνος), and excessive desire (ἐπιθυμία σφοδρά) (7 DB, V7 K), as well as love of quarrel (φιλονεικία), love of reputation (φιλοδοξία), and love of power (φιλαρχία) (24 DB, V35 K). These affections of the spirited part of the soul cause one to be taken over by this part and subsequently behave irrationally and, in extreme cases, as Galen states, cause one to for example get mad at a door.[102] The errors of the spirited part include drunkenness, involvement in prostitution, and going to wild parties ((…) ὅστις ἐν μέθαις ἑταίραις τε καὶ κώμοις καταγίνεται (5 DB, V5 K)). The steering and controlling of the affections and errors of the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul is to be achieved by the active further development of the rational part of the soul, which involves the constant act – as one, according to Galen, has to keep on training throughout one's life in order to become a perfect man (Δεῖται γὰρ ἀσκήσεως ἕκαστος ἡμῶν σχεδὸν <δι'> ὅλου τοῦ βίου πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι τέλειος ἀνήρ (11 DB, V14 K)) – of contemplation (διασκέψασθαι[103]), so that one will not conduct oneself solely under the influence of the spirited and appetitive parts and thereby experience affections and errors such as anger, envy, and drunkenness.

This cognitive approach is very much to be combined with a balanced treatment of the body – the body is, after all, interconnected with the soul, as was demonstrated above. This balance is to be found in the proper sustenance of the body, as well as the resistance of the (excessive) desires of the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul.[104] Galen makes a reasonable number of comments about proper dietary practices,[105] for example when he states that 'we bring about a good mixture through food and drink' (διὰ τῶν ἐδεσμάτων τε καὶ πομάτων (…) εὐκρασίαν ἐργαζόμεθα (*QAM* IV768 K, 32 M)). A more specific prescription is made, using quotations from Plato's *Timaeus*, based on the notion that one's body is supposed to lean towards the dry side of things, on account of the fact 'that, because of the wetness of the body, the soul reaches a forgetfulness of the things which it knew before entering the body' (ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ σώματος ὑγρότητος εἰς λήθην ἔρχεσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν ὧν πρότερον ἠπίστατο πρὶν

[100] Gill 2010.
[101] E.g. Gal. *Aff. Dig*. 19 DB, V28 K. Cf. Gill 2006: 295; Gill 2010: 256; 318.
[102] Gal. *Aff. Dig*. 16 DB, V22 K.
[103] E.g. Gal. *Aff. Dig*. 10 DB, V12 K. Cf. Singer 2014: 226.
[104] Cf. e.g. Singer 2014 : 223.
[105] Cf. Singer 2014: 375, n.6.

ἐνδεθῆναι τῷ σώματι (*QAM* IV780 K, 42 M)). This statement requires more explanation. One could, at first sight, quickly conclude that one should not be drunk on account of it disconnecting one from the memory of the eternal Platonic Forms. This would, however, be a strange conclusion: the *memory*[106] of the eternal Platonic Forms is a logical impossibility in the Galenic system in which the human soul is mortal. If the soul perishes, it cannot have roamed eternity. Therefore, eternal Forms cannot have been instilled in it. Thus, stating that 'the soul reaches a forgetfulness of the things which it knew before entering the body' does not make any metaphysical sense. Why is Galen saying it then? The answer lies in the fact that Galen is appropriating Plato's *Timaeus* – in which the dryness-wetness metaphor is used to explain why newborn infants have forgotten the eternal Forms[107] – to argue that diet influences the soul. Simply using this passage does not commit Galen to the Platonic anamnesis-theory, but does allow him to use the authority of Plato to promote his own point about drunkenness and the abstinence therefrom.

In terms of resistance, then, Galen states that one has to completely distance oneself from the enjoyment of the spirited and appetitive parts' desires, for that would make these parts strong and predominant over the whole soul, which is far from ideal in a Platonic context.[108] It is absolutely fine, imperative even, to seek after necessities such as a roof over one's head and sufficient nutrition,[109] but Galen strongly recommends us to refrain from luxuriousness of any variety, in order to remain dignified.[110]

It is important to further address the question of (im)mortality in Galen's psychology. As this chapter has made clear, Galen seems to be obliged to give up the immortality of the soul on account of his physicalist approach. Essential immortality is thus out of the question. However, earned immortality – that is, becoming "immortal" through virtuous behaviour, as these virtues are everlasting – indeed seems to be possible. As Galen explains, it is feasible to become wise – with true wisdom then equalling earned immortality:

> κἂν τὴν τοῦ σοφοῦ μὴ δυνώμεθα σχεῖν, ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν ἐλπίζωμεν ἕξειν κἀκείνην, **ἂν ἐκ μειρακίου προνοώμεθα τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν**.
>
> (*Aff. Dig.* 11 DB, V15 K)

[106] The *memory* of the eternal Forms seems to be impossible in Galen's thought; their *existence* is an entirely different discussion. Eternal Forms could still exist – and they indeed seem to exist according to Galen, as he suggests ideal behaviour based on immortal virtues, which are supposedly derived from the Forms.
[107] Pl. *Tim.* 43aff.; cf. Singer 2014: 384-385. The idea that diet influences the soul is not found in the *Timaeus*.
[108] E.g. Gal. *Aff. Dig.* 19 DB, V28 K; 20 DB, V29 K.
[109] E.g. Gal. *Aff. Dig.* 31 DB, V46-47 K.
[110] E.g. Gal. *Aff. Dig.* 21 DB, V30-31 K.

> Although we may not certainly be able to get [the soul] of a wise man, we *do* have a great hope of obtaining that, **if we take care of our souls from youth**.

While it may not be in the cards for everyone to beget the soul of a wise man and thereby become immortal, earned immortality is attainable if one begins in time with the proper taking care of one's soul – from youth, that is. The correct combination of philosophical and physical therapy as described above ensures the development and betterment of the human soul so that even a physical whole of body and soul can become, in a sense, immortal.

## III. CONCLUSION: CONTROLLING THE BODY, CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

On account of the exegesis and examination of *Affections and Errors* and *The Capacities of the Soul*, it can comfortably be stated that Galen operates under a deceptively simple Platonic model of the soul. Galen agrees with Plato that the human soul consists of three parts – the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive – all of which have their own specific capacities. Galen starts diverting from Plato when he includes capacities such as perception in the rational part of the soul, and even more so when it becomes clear that none of the parts of the soul, let alone the soul as a whole, can be immortal according to Galen's line of thinking.

Nevertheless, even though his physicalist approach makes an essentially immortal human soul nigh impossible, Galen's so-called psychosomatic model of the human soul does allow him to make strong arguments in favour of virtuous behaviour, which could eventually result in earned immortality, thereby allowing Galen to reconcile his medicine with a Platonic model of the human soul. Galen uses this structure of the human soul in order to make the argument in favour of the education and correction of respectively the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul, which is to be achieved through the training and the development of the rational part by the act of contemplation. If one does not exercise the rational part of the soul over the spirited and appetitive parts, these latter two will gain too much power and become vulgar and dangerous for the whole of the soul on account of their proneness to affections and errors such as anger and drunkenness. Given the fact that the body and the soul are so interconnected, Galen further states that one should adhere to a proper diet, and resist luxuries, particularly those of the body – that is, for example, lavish foods and mindless intercourse – as these have direct influence on the balance of the soul.

A methodology of psychological morality can thus be discerned in at least these two works by Galen. Galen's methodology, however, is certainly the most physicalist of the three examined in this thesis. Concrete matters relating to the body one can practice in daily life are high on Galen's list when it comes to practical ethics. A more abstract usage of the structure of the soul is nonetheless also visible: as we saw in the works by Maximus of Tyre as well, Galen uses the soul in order to argue in favour of the act of contemplation and the exercise of the rational part of the soul.

While Galen's psychological morality has strong physiological tendencies – more so even than Alcinous in the previous section, who focused solely on the relationship between the soul and the senses – it would be remiss to state that it is entirely body-centred: for Galen, the psyche and the body are one interconnected unit, meaning that anything that the soul does also affects the body, and vice versa. In a certain sense, the soul equals the body, which means that Galen's psychological morality, in short, comes down to the notion that, if one manages to control the body and its vehement desires, and if one manages to achieve the right physical balance, one will inevitably also act virtuously.

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# CONCLUSION
# A MIDDLE PLATONIC METHODOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MORALITY

This thesis commenced by asking several questions regarding the nature and methodology of Middle Platonic (moral) psychology, which were captured in the one overarching research question of how the Middle Platonists of the second century AD use the structure of the human soul in order to enforce practical ethics. On account of the fact that the Middle Platonic intellectual movement consists of very different thinkers who each take very different approaches to tackling, as well as presenting, philosophical conundrums, it behoved us to examine an array of diverse authors and works in order to gain a representative image of Middle Platonic (moral) psychology. Having explored the main research question through the thought of Maximus of Tyre, Alcinous, and Galen over the course of this thesis, now is the occasion to draw conclusions.

## I. REVIVAL AND INNOVATION

Chapter I of this thesis found itself in the rhetorical realm, as it examined how Maximus of Tyre's *Orations* structured the human soul, and used this soul in order to argue in favour of ideal moral behaviour. This chapter found that Maximus presents us with a highly complex and elaborate psychology – which is based on not only Plato's thought, but also, primarily, on Aristotle's ideas – which in turn is used to solidly demonstrate that one should train one's intellect, use prudence to keep one's passions in check, and employ one's perception to the benefit of the soul as a whole. The human soul is not only simply a mechanism of rhetorical persuasion for Maximus, but it is also a true and noble attempt at understandably exhorting his listeners to behave properly.

In chapter II, this thesis examined Alcinous' philosophical handbook *Didaskalikos*. This educational work too presented us with more intricate thought than initially meets the eye. Even though Alcinous is mainly building upon Plato's *Timaeus*, he comes up with a much more sensitive model of the human soul than Plato would have allowed for. On account of his inclusion of the senses, sense-perception, and sensory organs within the structure of the human soul, Alcinous is able to demonstrate that the human soul is both immortal *as a whole*, as well as partly mortal and partly immortal, and that we therefore have to act accordingly. In short, for

Alcinous this means that one has to most of all take care of the rational part of the soul by practicing liberal arts such as music and astronomy, and that one has to develop the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul in such a manner that these can act courageously and self-controlledly.

Finally, chapter III turned to the medical side of Middle Platonism, and examined the treatises *Affections and Errors* and *The Capacities of the Soul* by Galen. In this chapter it came to the fore that Galen presents a so-called deceptively Platonic model of the human soul, which shares many characteristics with Plato's ideas on the human soul, including its quintessential tripartition, but departs from those when it comes to immortality. For Galen, given his truly physicalist approach, the human soul has to be essentially mortal, but that does not stop him from using its structure in order to argue in favour of morally virtuous behaviour that could eventually lead to *earned* immortality. Connecting the soul closely to the body through his psychosomatic endeavours, Galen is able to show how physical matters such as a proper diet affect the balance of the soul, and vice versa.

This thesis has demonstrated that the Middle Platonic human soul is used manifoldly: namely as a mechanism of persuasion; in order to show that one has no choice but to behave well; to demonstrate both essential and earned immortality; and, in a decidedly non-Platonic manner, to exemplify the connections between body and soul. It has also ostensibly demonstrated that Middle Platonic thought regarding (moral) psychology is not necessarily coherent: there does not seem to have been a "Middle Platonic conclave" of some kind. As the material presented in the chapters above shows, similar sources of inspiration inevitably result in divergent material when the author mixes in their own creativity and thought. What we *do* see, however, is a similarity in methodology: Middle Platonic authors working in a broad range of intellectual contexts all apply psychological morality when it comes to enforcing practical ethics. The human soul is always being used as a mechanism of persuasion in some way: progressing from Plato's relatively simple demonstration of the soul and its parts, the Middle Platonists now use this as a form of true exhortation as well.

The Middle Platonists, then, indeed return to Plato's thought. However, given their philosophically, medically, and culturally evolved milieu, they have no choice but to innovate upon it as well. This, combined with their desire to amalgamate Plato's thought, as well as with their methodology of psychological morality, results in the fact that Middle Platonists are quite easily, elegantly, and effectively able to enforce what they deem to be good moral behaviour.

## II. THE VALUE OF MIDDLE PLATONISM

So what do the Middle Platonists' thoughts and methodological tendencies surrounding (moral) psychology tell us about the (in)coherence and (un)importance of the Middle Platonic intellectual movement as a whole? As noted above, Middle Platonism is not a movement of cohering doctrines: an author individually takes inspiration from Plato, as well as from other philosophical schools, and comes up with what they deem to be the most Platonic and satisfying conclusions in their own intellectual context. On the other hand, there seems to be the omnipresent desire to "make Plato work", as well as an apparently prevalent methodology of psychological morality.

Middle Platonism is present in many forms of literature: not only in rhetorical, educational, and medical texts as examined in this thesis, but also in philosophical treatises *pur sang*, the ancient novel, and so on. This literary diversity, along with its multiformity of philosophical ideas, should be seen as an asset rather than an obstacle. Every thinker has chosen their preferred medium and mode of communication purposefully: these are conscious decisions to address a certain audience and provide them with their Platonic thought. In turn, it demonstrates us nowadays the appeal, value, and presence of Middle Platonism in ancient society of the second century AD.

Neoplatonism did not come into existence in a vacuum. Plotinus is certainly not the pure exegete of Plato he professes to be. Middle Platonism is an essential precursor to later Platonic thought and the development of the school. The author of this thesis can therefore go on and on about the importance and interest of Middle Platonism. To remain brief, however, it suffices now to state that this thesis has shown that Middle Platonism proves itself to be of utmost value on account of it devising complex thought and subsequently repackaging it in understandable and thought-provoking literature. Looking into Middle Platonism provides key information regarding the elegance and success of Platonism *an sich*. While Middle Platonism may not be the most coherent of intellectual movements regarding doctrine, it indeed seems to be one of the most fruitful, prolific, and creative eras within ancient philosophy.

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