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## The Paths of the Soul in the Pseudo-Hippocratic *De victu*

### Summary

In my paper I propose a new interpretation of a notoriously difficult passage from the Pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *De victu*, which deals with the activities of the soul during sleep. The passage in question has been interpreted by many scholars as a kind of Orphico-Pythagorean journey of the soul, and thus as key evidence for body-soul dualism in *De victu*. However, as I attempt to demonstrate, the soul does indeed take a journey, but not a Pythagorean one: in my reading of the text, it travels from the periphery deeper inside the body, to a place the author calls the “*oikos* of the soul”. I argue that this *oikos* best corresponds to a kind of ‘cognitive center,’ located in the chest and/or heart-region. This type of soul-journey points not to a dualist but to a materialist interpretation of *De victu*’s psychology. Further, I argue that overall the treatise is closer to the materialist psychophysiology of such fifth century Presocratics as Diogenes of Apollonia.

Keywords: journey; *De victu*; Hippocrates; soul; Diogenes of Apollonia; dualism; materialism

In meinem Aufsatz schlage ich eine neue Interpretation einer notorisch schwierigen Stelle aus der Pseudo-Hippokratischen Schrift *De victu* vor, in der es sich um verschiedene Aktivitäten und Bewegungen der Seele während des Schlafens handelt. Die betreffende Passage wurde von vielen Forschern als eine Art orphisch-pythagoreische Seelenreise gedeutet und galt lange als Schlüsselbeweis für einen Körper-Seele-Dualismus in *De victu*. Wie ich jedoch zu zeigen versuche, unternimmt die Seele tatsächlich eine Reise, aber keine pythagoreische: Laut meiner Hypothese bewegt sich die *psyche* von der Peripherie tiefer in den Körper hinein, zu einem Ort, den der Hippokratische Autor als ‚*oikos* der Seele‘ bezeichnet. Ich behaupte, dass dieses *oikos* am besten als eine Art ‚kognitives Zentrum‘ zu verstehen ist, das sich in der Brust- und / oder Herzregion befindet. Weiter argumentiere ich, dass *De victu*’s Seelenlehre der materialistischen Psychophysologie solcher Vorsokratiker des 5. Jahrhunderts, wie Diogenes von Apollonia, näher steht.

Keywords: Reise; *De victu*; Hippokrat; Seele; Diogenes von Apollonia; Dualismus; Materialismus

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But then begins a journey in my head,  
To work my mind, when body's work's expired

The philosophical world of the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *De victu* is a strange one. It is a world largely defined by motion, yet it is not a random motion of atoms or flux of matter, but rather an eternal *poreia* of all its constituents. In an apparent imitation of the famous Presocratic philosopher Heraclitus, the author says that “Everything human and divine periodically travels back and forth. The day and the night go from maximum to minimum. The moon – from maximum to minimum. The sun goes from its longest to its shortest path.”<sup>1</sup> According to *De victu*, both the microcosm and the macrocosm are bound to a kind of back and forth path, a continuous oscillation of all things between two cardinal points. This peculiar cosmology seems to be at least partly based on a metaphorical model, which surprisingly is a ‘microcosmic’ one and comes from the world of human technology. A. Peck aptly calls it the “cosmic saw.”<sup>2</sup> We see this principle operate even at the most basic elemental level of *De victu*’s system. Fire and Water, the two cosmic masses out of which everything else is made, are locked in an eternal game of advance and retreat, always traveling down the same ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω (*De victu* I.3), just like two carpenters, who are pulling a saw forward and backward.

There is, however, one principal agent in this system of periodically shifting matter that seems to deviate from its prescribed upwards and downwards path. Namely, the soul, or to avoid unnecessary connotations, *psyche*; a term favored by the author of *De victu* but otherwise not very common in the Hippocratic collection. Now, this *psyche* is a genuinely puzzling entity. Firstly, it is essentially a ‘Jack-of-all-trades’ responsible for both mental phenomena, such as cognition, intelligence, and perception, as well as motor and even reproductive function. Secondly, it is described as a mixture of Fire and Water; that is, a material substance made of the same stuff the body consists of. Yet, despite this fact, *psyche* seems to be not fully bound to the body and capable of independent existence.

1 *De victu* I.5: Χωρεῖ δὲ πάντα καὶ θεῖα καὶ ἀνθρώ-  
πινα ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἀμειβόμενα. Ἡμέρη καὶ εὐφρόνη  
ἐπὶ τὸ μῆκιστον καὶ ἐλάχιστον· ὡς σελήνη ἐπὶ τὸ

μακρότατον καὶ βραχύτατον ... ἥλιος ἐπὶ τὸ μακρό-  
τατον καὶ βραχύτατον.

2 In Peck 1928, xiv.

Scholars have long been grappling with this rather enigmatic soul-doctrine in an attempt to pin it to some known type of ancient Greek psychophysiology. But so far, in this respect, the treatise seems to resist even the most basic categorization: it is unclear whether it has a purely Materialist concept of the soul or if it adheres to some form of body-soul Dualism. Many believe, as do I, that the solution to this challenging and important problem lies in the (correct) interpretation of one particular passage, which seems to describe a kind of emancipation, or even a journey, of the soul away from the body. The passage in question comes from the fourth book of *De victu*, which deals with dreams – or more precisely, a particular kind of medically prophetic dream – and even offers a system of medical diagnosis from them.<sup>3</sup>

In *De victu* IV.86, which is the object of our study, the author attempts to explain the underlying mechanism behind such dreams:

Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ ἐγρηγορότι μὲν τῷ σώματι ὑπερητέουσα, ἐπὶ πολλὰ μεριζομένη, οὐ γίγνεται αὐτῇ ἐωυτῆς, ἀλλ' ἀποδίδωσί τι μέρος ἐκάστῳ τοῦ σώματος, ἀκοῆ, ὄψει, ψαύσει, ὁδοπορίῃ, πρήξιει παντὸς τοῦ σώματος• αὐτῇ δ' ἐωυτῆς ἡ διάνοια οὐ γίνεται.

Ὅκοταν δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἡσυχάσῃ, ἡ ψυχὴ κινευμένη καὶ ἐγρηγορούσα\* διοικεῖ τὸν ἐωυτῆς οἶκον, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος πρήξιαι ἀπάσας αὐτῇ διαπρήσεται. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ σῶμα καθεῦδον οὐκ αἰσθάνεται, ἡ δ' ἐγρηγορούσα γινώσκει, καὶ ὀρῆ τε τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ ἀκούει τὰ ἀκουστά, βαδίζει, ψαύει, λυπεῖται, ἐνθυμεῖται, ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἐοῦσα, ὁκόσαι τοῦ σώματος ὑπηρεσίαι ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς, ταῦτα πάντα ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ διαπρήσεται.

\*ἐγρηγορούσα Diels, Jones, Joly; ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ σώματα M (Marcianus graecus 269 saec. X); ἐγρηγορούσα. τὰ πρήγματα θ (Vindobonensis medicus gr. 4 saec. XI); ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος Recentiores, Littré.

Thus, according to *De victu*:

During wakefulness the soul acts as a servant to the body, it is divided into many parts, and does not belong to itself, but gives a part of itself to each bodily function: hearing, sight, touch, locomotion, and all bodily tasks, and does not take itself into consideration. But when the body is at rest, the soul being in motion and awake<sup>4</sup> manages its own household and performs all the bodily

3 Or *prodiagnosis*, to be more exact, since according to *De victu* dreams of this kind signal diseases that are not yet manifest, which means that the dreams of both sick and healthy people should be studied by the physician. See Hulskamp 2008, 203.

4 'Awake' in my translation obviously renders ἐγρηγορούσα, a reading taken from the manuscript θ, and adopted by most editors and commentators including Joly and Byl 2003; Jones 1931, and more recently Bartoš 2015, 201.

tasks on its own. The body while asleep is devoid of sense, but the soul being awake remains conscious: it sees what is to be seen, and hears what is to be heard, it walks, touches, feels pain, deliberates, all while confined to a narrow space. How many functions there are of the soul and body, the soul performs all of them during sleep.

On first inspection, it would seem that *psyche*, while bound to the body during wakefulness, acquires a degree of autonomy during sleep.

Strangely enough, despite the intense scholarly attention this short paragraph has received in recent years, there still remain glaring textual and interpretative difficulties, which have been overlooked or glossed over by editors and commentators, and which need to be solved, if we are to make sense of what *psyche* actually does, how it acquires its autonomy, and how this autonomous state should be understood. Only after all this textological legwork is done, can we proceed to larger and ultimately more important questions about *psyche*'s material or non-material status and the philosophical origins of *De victu*'s 'psychology'.

*De victu* IV.86 has first been interpreted by A. Palm as a reflection of what he called an 'Orphic' doctrine.<sup>5</sup> What Palm meant was that *De victu*'s description of the soul becoming active during sleep and thus acquiring prophetic powers closely resembles the tradition associated primarily with such ancient Greek miracle workers as Aristeas and Hermetimos, who fell into a kind of trance, when their souls would leave their bodies and travel far and wide appearing in different places and foretelling epidemics and natural disasters.

Palm was later followed by E. R. Dodds,<sup>6</sup> who famously suggested that such doctrines are shamanistic in origin, and then by Marcel Detienne,<sup>7</sup> who attempted to strengthen Palm's and Dodds' thesis by adducing a fascinating parallel from an apparently 'Orphico-Pythagorean' passage in Plato's *Phaedo* about sleep and purification. In *Phd.* 67c 5–67d 1, *katharsis* is described as a retreat of the soul from the body (πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος) with the ultimate goal of achieving almost complete independence and liberation from the "bodily shackles".<sup>8</sup> On first glance, this description of *katharsis*

5 Palm 1933, 62–68.

6 Dodds 1951, 118–119.

7 Detienne 1963, 71–72.

8 Pl. *Phd.* 67c 5–67d 1: Κάθαρσις δὲ εἶναι ἄρα οὐ τοῦτο συμβαίνει, ὅπερ πάλαι ἐν τῷ λόγῳ λέγεται, τὸ χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἐθίσει αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος συναγείρεσθαι τε καὶ ἀθροίζεσθαι, καὶ οἰκεῖν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα μόνῃ καθ' αὐτὴν, ἐκλυομένην ὥσπερ

[ἐκ] δεσμῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος. In Harold Fowler's translation: "And does not the purification consist in this which has been mentioned long ago in our discourse, in separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body and teaching the soul the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body, and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as from fetters?"

does indeed look similar to *De victu* both in thought and in wording.<sup>9</sup>

This outward similarity was accepted unquestioningly by, among others, R. Joly in his seminal edition and standard commentary of the treatise,<sup>10</sup> and thus became received wisdom among modern scholars. Still, there were some dissenters, most notably G. Cambiano, who challenged Detienne's view and proposed an entirely 'Materialist' interpretation of the phenomenon of *enyprnia* in *De victu*.<sup>11</sup> He rightly observed that the parallel between *Phaedo* and our Hippocratic author is largely superficial: first, there is no mention of sleep in Plato, and second, *katharsis*, understood as a liberation of the soul from the body, is a desired permanent state and not just a condition that occurs when the body is inactive. Moreover, according to Cambiano, the 'Orphico-Pythagorean' idea that the soul becomes active and wanders away while the body lies in some state of unconsciousness (sleep or trance), is not present in *De victu* at all. In IV.86 it explicitly states that the soul remains active during both sleep and wakefulness.

It is unfortunate that scholars almost entirely overlooked this very valid criticism. Joly, for example, although he cites Cambiano in his commentary, still maintains that there are essentially two concepts of *psyche* in *De victu*, or rather, that the term is used in two basic senses: (1) a material substance and (2) an entity that is presumably immaterial, or at least – and Joly is not very clear on this point – somehow different from the body. This perceived dual nature of *psyche* has troubled scholars ever since. P. van der Eijk<sup>12</sup> tried to escape this conundrum by questioning – quite rightly, I believe – the entire Materialism vs. Dualism framework.<sup>13</sup> H. Bartoš, although he insists that *psyche* in *De victu* is indeed wholly material – it is a Fire/Water mixture that may be affected by digestion and other bodily processes – seemingly follows the same line of reasoning when he insists that *De victu*'s 'soul-doctrine' is essentially a Materialist interpretation of Pythagorean transmigration. Thus, the same goes for the liberation of the soul during sleep: it is a 'Pythagorean' *χωρισμός* but conceived in Materialist terms.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up: most current research seems to agree that the sleep-doctrine in *De victu* IV.86 should be understood as a separation of the soul from the body. It is important, however, to distinguish the two types of 'Orphico-Pythagorean' comparanda typically cited in this context. Detienne thinks that the author of *De victu* is talking about purification, which means that the soul aims to be independent of the body as much as possible

9 Cf. for example *Phd.*: τὴν ψυχὴν ... οἰκεῖν ... μόνην καθ' αὐτήν and *De victu*: (Οκόταν δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἡσυχάζῃ) ἡ ψυχὴ ... διοικεῖ τὸν ἔσωτῆς οἶκον, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος πρῆξις ἀπάσας αὐτὴ διαπρήσσειται. Also note the similarity of expression in the two passages: οἰκεῖν and διοικεῖν, ψυχὴν ... μόνην καθ' αὐτήν and ἡ ψυχὴ ... οὐ γίγνεται αὐτῇ ἔσωτῆς.

10 Joly and Byl 2003, 28: "Ce texte est le témoignage le

plus détaillé d'une doctrine d'origine chamanique: pendant le sommeil, l'âme est ramassée sur elle-même et plus active que pendant la veille?"

11 Cambiano 1980.

12 Van der Eijk 2005, 198.

13 Van der Eijk 2005, 199.

14 Bartoš 2015, 201–207.

and at all times. Others suggest that the closest analogy is not *katharsis*, but another related doctrine, namely the ‘extatic’ journey of the soul when it leaves the sleeping body and travels on its own, thus gaining its prognostic knowledge, as it were, *en route*.

Still, we should ask ourselves: Are both those parallels legitimate? If the soul in *De victu* does indeed make a journey, what is its ‘itinerary’? Besides, if it does indeed separate itself from the body, how exactly does this separation work? Finally, how does the soul become aware of the body’s coming afflictions, the early signs of which it shows us in dreams?

Recently, van der Eijk has proposed an alternative interpretative scheme, according to which the relationship of the soul to the body in *De victu* is that that of degrees of separation, without full separation ever occurring.<sup>15</sup> While I accept that this is indeed the right approach, in my estimation, it can be elaborated further.

If we take a close look at the text as it stands in our best editions we quickly notice that the reading ἐγρηγορέουσα (awake) is not an original manuscript reading but a partial emendation of an originally corrupt text. The tradition diverges in this particular place, and both our oldest and most important manuscript give mostly unintelligible readings. The eleventh-century Vienna codex, which goes by the siglum θ, reads ἐγρηγορέουσα. τὰ πρήγματα. While the earlier Marcianus Graecus (tenth century, siglum M) gives an equally difficult reading, ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ σώματα. Obviously both variants are incomprehensible as they stand, so neither can be fully accepted, but for some reason most scholars – including Joly, Jones, Diels,<sup>16</sup> and many others – have opted for the smoother and less problematic reading of the MS θ (ἐγρηγορέουσα), but without the incomprehensible τὰ πρήγματα.

I believe, however, that they chose the wrong reading: the form ἐγρηγορέουσα is indeed rare,<sup>17</sup> but the reading given by M, ἐπεξέρπουσα, is an absolute *hapax legomenon* found only in *De victu* IV.86 and nowhere else. Moreover, ἐπεξέρπουσα is supported by other passages from *De victu*: the author says three times that *psyche* ἐσέρπει (‘crawls; ‘creeps’) into the body (*De victu* I.6, 7, 25). Thus, overall, ἐπεξέρπουσα is not only the more difficult reading but also the better one.

But even if we adopt ἐπεξέρπουσα instead of ἐγρηγορέουσα, as I think we should, we are still facing a problem with the word τὰ σώματα, which comes directly after ἐπεξέρπουσα in the manuscript M. The famous editor of Hippocrates, E. Littré, was keenly

15 Van der Eijk 2012.

16 Diels 1910, 146–147; Jones 1931, 475; Joly and Byl 2003, 219.

17 Unlike the more common ἐγείρουσα (present participle of ἐγείρω), ἐγρηγορέουσα (from ἐγρηγο-

ρέω) occurs in the Hippocratic corpus only once (or twice if we accept it in this passage). According to LSJ it appears for the first time in Xen. *Cyn.* 5.11, but is likely a *lectio falsa*, and after that in Arist. *Pr.* 877 a 9.

aware of this difficulty and made the sensible decision to adopt the reading of the *recentiores* of the M family: ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος, which to my mind is a far superior editorial choice than the universally accepted ἐγρηγορούσα, especially since we find exactly the same form, ἐγρηγορούσα, directly in the next sentence: ἡ δ' ἐγρηγορούσα γινώσκει etc. Littré takes ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος to mean: “l'âme ...parcourant les parties du corps,” which is somewhat vague, because, first of all, ἔρω in ἐπεξέρπω is unlikely to have lost its original meaning of ‘to slither’ (the author deliberately uses the form ἐσέρπω, ‘creep into’, to describe the movements of the soul); and secondly, because it is unclear how Littré imagined the soul’s ‘trajectory’; when it runs or creeps through the extremities of the body, does it travel from periphery to center, or from center to periphery?

We obviously have no examples for ἐπεξέρπω, but the combination of ‘ἐπεξ- + verb of spatial motion + direct object’ is by no means rare. Littré, I think, was quite right in taking ἐπεξέρπω to be broadly synonymous with ἐπέξειμι/ἐπεξέρχομαι, both of which when used in their literal sense with an accusative seem to mean roughly speaking ‘to go entirely through and leave behind’: LSJ gives the following examples of this usage: Hdt. 7.166 τὸ πᾶν γὰρ ἐπεξελθεῖν διζήμενον Γέλωνα (Gelon has been everywhere – literally, has traversed all places – in search of him); Hdt. 4.9 πάντα δὲ τῆς χώρας ἐπεξελθόντα τέλος ἀπικέσθαι ἐς τὴν Ὑλαίαν (having traveled through every part of the country, he finally arrived at Hylaia); and Clearch. (FHG II 315) πάντας τοὺς ὄρειους ἐπεξήει δρυμῶς (went through all the mountain thickets).

These *comparanda* can give us a sense of the type of motion implied in ἐπεξέρπειν, but do not clarify in which direction psyche might be traveling. To solve this problem, we need to take a closer look at the rest of our passage:

(ἡ ψυχὴ) ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος διοικεῖ τὸν ἐσωτῆς οἶκον, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος πρῆξις ἀπάσας αὐτὴ διαπρήσεται. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ σῶμα καθεῦδον οὐκ αἰσθάνεται, ἡ δ' ἐγρηγορούσα γινώσκει, καὶ ὁρῆ τε τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ ἀκούει τὰ ἀκουστὰ, βαδίζει, ψαύει, λυπεῖται, ἐνθυμεῖται, ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἐοῦσα etc.

The soul ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος<sup>18</sup> manages its own household and performs all the bodily tasks by itself. The body while asleep is devoid of sense, but the soul being awake remains conscious: it sees what is to be seen, and hears what is to be heard, it walks, touches, feels pain, deliberates, all while confined to a narrow space.

18 I have intentionally left this short phrase untranslated. The meaning of ἐπεξέρπουσα will be discussed below.

Thus, the soul left to its own devices ‘manages its household.’ Scholars have understood the strange expression *διοικεῖ οἶκον* to mean something like ‘minds its own business’ or ‘becomes her own mistress.’ As Wilamowitz has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> *οἶκον οικεῖν* is a generic ‘Ionic formula’ (*Ionisches Sprichwort*); yet, I am convinced that in this particular case it is not generic at all but refers to something rather concrete, for in the next sentence the author says that *psyche* performs all the activities of the body (seeing, hearing, touching, walking, etc.), all while enclosed in an unspecified narrow space (*ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἐοῦσα*).

Scholars have been baffled by this remark as early as S. Mack, who promptly dealt with it by replacing *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* with *ἐνὶ λόγῳ*, thus simplifying and trivializing a perfectly transmitted and absolutely intelligible text. This unjustified emendation, unfortunately, made its way into Jones’ otherwise excellent Loeb edition of *De victu*.<sup>20</sup> It should be said in his and Mack’s defense, that at least they acknowledged the problem with *ἐν ὀλίγῳ*, which is more than can be said of modern commentators, who just seem to ignore it altogether. To my mind, the most natural interpretation of this passage would be that *psyche* is confined to a small enclosure, situated somewhere inside the body, and that the enigmatic *oikos* of the soul refers to the same thing. Thus, if during wakefulness the soul is spread throughout the organism and performs all its sensory and motor functions, but during sleep finds itself inside a narrow space or *oikos*, then I suggest it must have arrived there by traversing the extremities of the body (*ἐπεξέρπουσα τὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος*).<sup>21</sup>

Many have noted that the closest parallel to this doctrine is not Plato, but a much later text – a short tract on medical diagnosis from dreams attributed to Galen called *De dignotione ex insomniis*.<sup>22</sup> According to this treatise, medically relevant dreams – that is, dreams that signify disease or disturbance in the body – occur because the soul leaves the sensory organs and dives into its depths:

ἔοικε γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὑπνοῖς εἰς τὸ βάθος τοῦ σώματος ἡ ψυχὴ εἰσδύσα καὶ τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀποχωρήσασα αἰσθητῶν τῆς κατὰ τὸ σῶμα διαθέσεως αἰσθάνεσθαι.

It appears that the soul during sleep dives deep into the body, and having left behind the outward sensations, perceives the body’s disposition.<sup>23</sup>

This notion of sleep seems to be of Stoic origin or at least stoically influenced: if we are to trust our doxographic sources, the Stoics described sleep as a retreat of the soul from

19 In Fredrich 1899, 206.

20 Jones 1931, 475.

21 The present tense of the participle in this sentence need not be taken literally; that is, as describing an action simultaneous with *διοικεῖ*. For example, in *De victu* I.25 (ὅστις δύναται πλείστους ἀνθρώπους τρέφειν, οὗτος ἰσχυρός· ἀπολειπόντων δὲ τούτων,

οὗτος ἀσθενέστερος; whoever is capable of feeding the most people, is strong; but should they leave, he is weaker), the present participle *ἀπολειπόντων* seems to have both a temporary and a conditional sense and likely refers to a completed action.

22 Bartoš 2015; Hulskamp 2008, 202–204.

23 Gal. On Diagnosis from Dreams 6.833, 17.



the periphery to the *hegemonikon*.<sup>24</sup>

This similarity between an early Hippocratic text<sup>25</sup> and a much later Stoic doctrine is surprising indeed, but before we can attempt to explain it, there are other clarifications to be made. We have learned so far that the soul's journey in *De victu* is not a mystic or a Pythagorean one: the soul does not leave or liberate itself from the body in pursuit of prophetic knowledge but descends into its depths, where its 'home' is to be found. I would suggest that this 'retreat' or 'home' of the soul may cautiously be identified, although my argument is by no means conclusive and should be entertained only as a working hypothesis.

There is in *De victu* another, regrettably no less difficult, paragraph that describes an arrangement or *diakosmesis* of the human organism by a type of creative fire. This fire has arranged everything in such a way that "the large corresponds to the small and the small to the large"; this means that the human body is shaped in 'imitation' (*apomimesis*) of the macrocosm: the stomach corresponds to the sea; the flesh around it to earth; and then there are three concentric circuits, called *periodoi*, situated above the stomach, in the chest-region, and in the 'outer periphery,' which alternatively may be the skin or the head:

Ἐνὶ δὲ λόγῳ πάντα διεκοσμήσατο κατὰ τρόπον αὐτὸ ἐωυτῷ τὰ ἐν τῷ σώματι τὸ πῦρ, ἀπομίμησιν τοῦ ὄλου, μικρὰ πρὸς μεγάλα καὶ μεγάλα πρὸς μικρά· κοιλίην μὲν τὴν μεγίστην, ὕδατι ξηρῷ καὶ ὑγρῷ ταμεῖον, δοῦναι πᾶσι καὶ λαβεῖν παρὰ πάντων, θαλάσσης δύναμιν, ζώων συμφόρων τροφὸν, ἀσυμφόρων δὲ φθορὸν· περὶ δὲ ταύτην ὕδατος ψυχροῦ καὶ ὑγροῦ σύστασιν· διέξοδον πνεύματος ψυχροῦ καὶ θερμοῦ· ἀπομίμησιν τῆς γῆς, τὰ ἐπεισπίπτοντα πάντα ἀλλοιούσης.

καὶ τὰ [μὲν] ἀναλίσκον τὰ δὲ αὔξον σκέδασιν ὕδατος λεπτοῦ καὶ πυρὸς ἐποίησατο ἡερίου, ἀφανέος καὶ φανεροῦ, ἀπὸ τοῦ ξυνεστηκότος ἀπόκρισιν, ἐν ᾧ φερόμενα πάντα ἐς τὸ φανερὸν ἀφικνεῖται ἕκαστα μοίρη πεπρωμένη. Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ ἐποιήσατο πυρὸς περιόδους τρισσὰς, περαινούσας πρὸς ἀλλήλας καὶ εἴσω καὶ ἔξω· αἱ μὲν πρὸς τὰ κοῖλα τῶν ὑγρῶν, σελήνης δύναμιν, αἱ δὲ [πρὸς τὴν ἔξω περιφορὴν]\* πρὸς τὸν περιέχοντα πάγον, ἄστρον δύναμιν, αἱ δὲ μέσαι καὶ εἴσω καὶ ἔξω περαινούσαι <ἡλίου δύναμιν ἔχουσι>\*\*.

Τὸ θερμότατον καὶ ἰσχυρότατον πῦρ, ὅπερ πάντων κρατεῖ, διέπον ἅπαντα κατὰ φύσιν, ἄθικτον καὶ ὄψει καὶ ψαύσει, ἐν τούτῳ ψυχῇ, νοῦς, φρόνησις,

24 Compare for example the definition of sleep in another medical text of Stoic origin, the *Definitiones medicae* 19.381.15 "Υπνος ἐστὶν ἀνεσις ψυχῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἡγεμονικόν (Sleep is the naturally occurring retreat of the soul from the

periphery to the *hegemonikon*).

25 Scholars for the most part agree that *De victu* cannot be older than the end of the fifth or the beginning of the fourth century BCE. Cf. Joly and Byl 2003, 44–49.

αὔξησις, κίνησις, μείωσις, διάλλαξις, ὕπνος, ἐγρήγορις· τοῦτο πάντα διὰ παντὸς κυβερνᾷ, καὶ τάδε καὶ ἐκεῖνα, οὐδέποτε ἀτρεμίζον.<sup>26</sup>

\* [πρὸς τὴν ἔξω περιφορὴν] secl. Fredrich \*\* <ἡλίου δύναμιν ἔχουσι> add. Joly; πρὸς τὰς ἐτέρας ἡλίου δύναμιν Diels–Kranz. Cf. *De victu* IV, 89 ἄστρον μὲν οὖν ἡ ἔξω περίοδος, ἡλίου δὲ ἡ μέση, σελήνης δὲ ἡ πρὸς τὰ κοῖλα.

In a word, all things were arranged in the body, in a fashion conformable to itself, by ire, a copy of the whole, the small after the manner of the great and the great after the manner of the small. The belly is made the greatest, a steward for dry water and moist, to give to all and to take from all, the power of the sea, nurse of creatures suited to it, destroyer of those not suited. And around it a concretion of cold water and moist, a passage for cold breath and warm, a copy of the earth, which alters all things that fall into it. Consuming and increasing, it made a dispersion of fine water and of ethereal fire, the invisible and the visible, a secretion from the compacted substance, in which things are carried and come to light, each according to its allotted portion. And in this fire made for itself three concentric fiery circuits: those towards the hollows of the moist, the power of the moon; those towards the outer periphery, towards the solid enclosure, the power of the stars; the middle circuits, bounded both within and without <has the power of the sun>. The hottest and strongest fire, which controls all things, ordering all things according to nature, imperceptible to sight or touch, wherein are soul, mind, thought, growth, motion, decrease, mutation, sleep, waking. This governs all things always, both here and there, and is never at rest.<sup>27</sup>

There are numerous problems with this passage, such as, the macrocosmic and the anatomical identification of the three circuits, as well as their physiological function and connection to *psyche* and the ‘hottest and strongest fire’ mentioned at the end of the passage, where it is somehow located.

First, the middle circuit is not identified with the sun *expressis verbis*: the reading “the middle concentric circuits have the power of the sun” (αἱ δὲ μέσαι καὶ εἴσω καὶ ἔξω περαίνουσαι ἡλίου δύναμιν ἔχουσι) is, in fact, a long-accepted editorial emendation. Luckily, however, the exact macrocosmic correspondences of the circuits are established beyond doubt in *De victu* IV.89: ἄστρον μὲν οὖν ἡ ἔξω περίοδος, ἡλίου δὲ ἡ μέση, σελήνης δὲ ἡ πρὸς τὰ κοῖλα (the outer circuit is the circuit of the stars, the middle circuit – of the sun, and the one next to the cavity (of the stomach) is that of the moon).

<sup>26</sup> *De victu* I.10.

<sup>27</sup> The passage is extremely difficult, and I presently cannot touch on all its philological problems. I

quote the excellent translation by Jones 1931 with a few of my own very slight alterations.

As for their anatomical correspondences, they are even more difficult to pinpoint with any certainty. Hüffmeier infers from a parallel passage (*De victu* I.9. cf.) that they must be identified with the so-called ‘hollow vessels’ (φλέβες κοίλαι).<sup>28</sup> As for their physiological function, he describes them as a kind of ‘metabolic center’ (“Zentrum des Stoffwechsels”), since they are the carriers of blood, breath, digested nutrition, and also – it would seem – *psyche*. Although this is far from certain: while the anonymous author does mention a ‘circuit of the soul’ he never plainly equates it with one of the three *periodoi*.

Now, apart from being bound to a certain, not clearly identified circuit, *psyche* is also explicitly associated with a particular type of Fire, which the author calls ‘the hottest and strongest’;<sup>29</sup> thus, to understand the soul’s exact role and place in this convoluted scheme, we need to know exactly what this Fire is and where it is located. Joly apparently thinks that the θερμότατον καὶ ἰσχυρότατον πῦρ is the same creative fire mentioned at the beginning of the chapter; that is, the one that arranges the microcosm. He is also vague about its connection to the *periodoi*.<sup>30</sup> Jouanna, on the contrary, assumes that the hottest Fire must be placed in the middle circuit, making it thus the *periodos* of the soul.<sup>31</sup> Bartoš, who prefers to err on the side of caution, thinks this interpretation “certainly possible” but “not conclusive”, yet I suspect that it may be further strengthened if we could get a firmer grasp of the transmitted text.<sup>32</sup>

The universal assumption that the phrase that immediately precedes τὸ θερμότατον καὶ ἰσχυρότατον πῦρ is corrupt seems to me far from certain. The Latin translation, which represents a branch of tradition independent from both the manuscripts M and θ, in this case agrees with both of them and does not register a lacuna. It reads: *illi autem qui medii sunt et intus et foris agunt calidissimum (sic!) et fortissimus ignis, propter quod itaque omnia tenet et singula gubernat secus naturam*.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, I do not think that the text needs an extensive emendation such as ἡλίου δύναμιν ἔχουσι but can be read as it stands αἱ δὲ μέσαι καὶ εἴσω καὶ ἔξω περαίνουσαι [verb in the ellipsis] τὸ θερμότατον καὶ ἰσχυρότατον πῦρ etc., which is to be understood as ‘the middle circuits <contains> the hottest and strongest fire’. This, in turn, would correspond perfectly with the *periodos* of the sun – the strongest and hottest fire in the cosmos.

28 This identification is based on *De victu* I.9. cf. Hüffmeier 1961, 71). The expression φλέβες κοίλαι in the Hippocratic corpus refers to many different types of vessels and is of course not to be confused with the modern medical term *venae cavae*.

29 Despite the fact that the soul is regularly described as a mixture of Fire and Water, its identification with Fire is not surprising per se. After all, the soul’s ‘higher’ intellectual qualities seem to depend pri-

marily on its fiery component. Cf. *De victu* I.35.15 ff. For example, when Water dominates in the soul-mixture, the unfortunate owners of such souls are slow and unintelligent.

30 Cf. Joly and Byl 2003, 241.

31 Jouanna 2012, 205.

32 Bartoš 2015, 196.

33 I cite the Latin text according to Deroux’s and Joly’s 1978 edition Deroux and Joly 1978.

This suggests that Jouanna's initial interpretation is likely correct: the sentient and regulatory Fire that contains *psyche* is indeed confined to the middle circuit, which must, therefore, be its *periodos*. Hence, it seems plausible that the 'narrow enclave,' the *oikos* where *psyche* retreats during sleep, is also to be found in this middle *periodos*, which has been alternatively identified as the vessels in the chest region or, more speculatively, as the heart.<sup>34</sup> The notion that the chest-circuit is the mysterious 'home of the soul' is, of course, hypothetical; however, it does find some corroboration in a passage from *De victu* III.71 and IV.93 where it is implied that the 'circulation,' or *periodos*, of the soul continues during sleep.

To sum up what we have learned so far: we know that during wakefulness the soul is spread throughout the body. It is likely present in all three bodily circuits but is clearly not confined to them. From a passage in *De victu* I.35 we learn that the soul also travels through certain pathways or channels (*poroi*), which connect it to the bodily periphery and which may become blocked and, thus, hinder its movements. Therefore, I suggest that the psychophysiology of sleep and dreaming in *De victu* is best described as a type of journey or path: while the organism is awake, the soul is dispersed within the circuits and channels, but during sleep it creeps back into its proper home, which (hypothetically) is found in the μέση περίοδος, that is, the circuit blood vessels in the chest region.

The description of the soul's activities during sleep is thus, I believe, devoid of any 'Pythagorean' or 'Orphic' influences. What is described in *De victu* IV.86 is neither an out-of-body journey nor a χωρισμός, but something quite the opposite: the soul never loses contact with the body, neither during wakefulness nor during sleep, it just travels deeper inside the body to its proper 'home,' which I have (strictly hypothetically) placed in the middle circuit in the chest. This journey from the bodily periphery to the *oikos* provides the soul with data on the current state of the body, which are presented in dreams in an indirect form.

How does the soul acquire its knowledge about the state of the body and the not-yet-manifest disturbances, which it later communicates in dreams? The dream-theory in *De victu* is a complex one. The author distinguishes between different types of prognostic dreams according to their subject matter: from dreams that mimic a person's daily activities, to dreams about natural phenomena, or nightmares about misshapen bodies and monsters. Generally speaking, this theory is based on the same parallelism between the micro- and the macrocosmos that we have observed in *De victu* I.10: in dreams all the bodily organs are represented by their macrocosmic counterparts. For example, an irregular appearance of the sun, moon, and stars, is a sign of problems in their respective *periodoi* in the body.

34 Hulskamp 2008, 163; July 1960, 41–43.

Although these dreams are treated as an important diagnostic and prognostic tool, the physiological mechanism by which they occur, although the author tries to explain it in *De victu* IV.86, remains unclear. Most have thought that the soul separates itself from the body and thus somehow gains insight into future events (in this case looming maladies), just like in the tales of the journeys of Hermetimos' or Aristreas' soul. I suggest that the soul does indeed take a journey but a journey of a different kind: it is while traveling through the limbs and the other circuits (towards its home) that the soul amasses its knowledge about the body's current state. In a sense, it is also a 'cosmic journey' since the body is an 'imitation' of the macrocosm.

Bearing all this in mind, we can now touch upon the problem of Materialism versus Dualism in *De victu*. I believe, based on the evidence of *De victu* IV.86, that it is unnecessary to postulate any sort of Dualism or even a special Materialist interpretation of Dualism. On the contrary, *De victu*'s soul-doctrine shows some common traits with a certain type of Materialist psychophysiology, which, although its roots are sometimes traced back as early as Anaximenes, was first fully fleshed out by Diogenes of Apollonia in the fifth century BCE. Diogenes' theory, shared by the author of the Hippocratic tract *De morbo sacro*, postulates a material substance (in the case of Diogenes, warm air), which is the carrier of intellectual, sensory, motor, and to some degree even reproductive function. This air enters the body from without (with breath) and is then distributed inside it via special channels, while a certain 'higher', 'purer' portion of it settles in the brain, which thus becomes a kind of 'command center' within the body. This inner *aer* is also conceived as the actual 'organ of perception', while the eyes, ears, etc. are just its ducts, or channels through which it travels. Thus, I think that overall *De victu* is closer to Diogenes' model than it is commonly believed.<sup>35</sup>

To reiterate, according to *De victu*, *psyche* is a material substance with a variety of functions from mental to motor and reproductive, which is spread within the body but also has its own proper place, or 'home'. As I have speculated, this home is probably also the locus of higher intellectual and regulatory functions and is situated in the so-called 'middle circuit', that is, blood vessels in the chest/heart region. Also in *De victu* IV.86, the soul is described as exclusively responsible for perception, which echoes Diogenes'

35 Jouanna in Jouanna 2012 has famously and impressively argued that Regimen owes much of its *Seelenlehre* to Empedocles; especially the notion that the Soul's intelligence depends on the state of mixture of its primary constituents. While it is certainly true that there are Empedoclean influences in Regimen's psychology, some points of comparison outlined by Jouanna strike me as less persuasive. For example, *psyche* in both cases is a fluid substance but this is never made explicit in Regimen, on the contrary,

it is said to enter from the outside into every animal that breaths and into people of all ages (*De victu* I.25 ψυχή ... ἐσέρπει ἐς ἅπαν ζῶων, ὅ τι περ ἀναπνέει καὶ ... ἐς ἄνθρωπον πάντα καὶ νεώτερον καὶ πρεσβύτερον). I do not believe this passage can be naturally interpreted as dealing with reproduction, cf. Bartoš 2015, 209. Furthermore, the fact that *psyche* enters the organism, presumably, with breath, points to its gaseous rather than liquid nature.

notion that it is the *aer* and not the sense organs that ‘see and hear.’<sup>36</sup> Finally, the idea of the soul retreating inside the body during sleep also finds an interesting parallel in Diogenes: according to Ps.-Plutarch’s *Placita* 5.23, sleep is caused by the channels being filled with blood and the blood driving the *aer* from the periphery into the breast and belly, which thus become warm.

Now if *De victu*, as I suspect, does indeed follow this general outline (although with some obvious deviations), it would partially explain the surprising parallel between *De victu* and the Stoic notion of sleep as a retreat of the soul to the *hegemonikon*. This is not to say that *De victu*’s soul doctrine in general or its theory of sleep specifically is derived directly or exclusively from Diogenes. In fact, there are quite a few crucial differences that need to be emphasized: first of all, *psyche* in *De victu* is never identified with air, although the author does say in *De victu* I.25 that it enters the organism with breath. Second (if my interpretation of *De victu* I.10 is correct), the higher mental powers are associated with the fiery part of *psyche* and are located in the chest, not in the brain, like in Diogenes and *De morbo sacro*. Finally, in Diogenes’ view, the air does not return to the center of cognition (the brain) during sleep but seems to move away from it and proceed from the extremities into the chest and stomach. In *De victu*, on the other hand, the expression ‘the soul’s own home,’ where *psyche* retreats during sleep, suggests to me that what the author had in mind was a path precisely to the body’s cognitive center (just like in our Stoic parallels).

These are all important differences; important enough to suppose that Diogenes of Apollonia is almost certainly not, or not the only, source of *De victu*. I cannot speculate here about other possible influences,<sup>37</sup> because it would require a separate investigation, and this is not my primary purpose. I have attempted to show that *De victu*, in its views

36 Willy Theiler (Theiler 1965, 6–10) even suggested that the famous ‘windows-simile,’ which we find in Lucretius (*De rer. nat.* 3.359–361), Cicero (*Tusc.* I.20.46), and Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* VII.127) and which likens the sensory organs to windows, from where the soul, as it were, peeks out, may go back to Diogenes. It should be noted that ‘*oikos*’ of the soul in *De victu* seems to come from the same metaphorical vocabulary. Interestingly, Diller (Diller 1941, 376–378) thinks that it might be even earlier than that and our Skeptical tradition might be right in attributing this doctrine directly to Heraclitus.

37 Such as Heraclitus. There are in fact some intriguing similarities between some Heraclitean doxography (of Stoic and Peripatetic origin) concerning *psyche* and *De victu*. For example, there is one late but in-

triguing report (Hisdosus Scholasticus (Chalcid. Plat. *Tim.* cod. Paris. I. 8624 s. XII f. 2), according to which Heraclitus said that the souls ‘domicillium’ (*oikos*?) was in the heart, which operates in the body like the sun in the macrocosm (*cor mundi*) and occupies a position in the middle of the cosmos (μέσσαι περίοδοι?). Besides, Heraclitus’ own description of the soul in Fr. 117 DK as a material substance oscillating between a moist and a dry state (dryness being naturally associated with intelligence) shares some common traits with *De victu*’s description of the soul as a σύγκρησις of Fire and Water. Therefore, it would seem that the question of possible Heraclitean influence in *De victu*’s *Seelenlehre* is worth further investigation.

on the nature of the soul, follows a certain long-standing Materialist tradition; but ironically, an incorrect interpretation of the soul's journey as a 'spiritual' one, has led most researchers astray – if the reader will pardon the pun.

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