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# A New Distress: Galen's Ethics in *Περὶ Ἄλυπίας* and Beyond

P. N. Singer

In this chapter I consider how the new material from the *περὶ ἄλυπίας* (*Ind.*) contributes to our understanding of Galen's ethics. As is the case with Galen's discussions of his own books, I here suggest that helpful results are derived from the laying of the new text alongside the most relevant previously-known ones.

## 1 Position in Galen's *Oeuvre*

Where does *περὶ ἄλυπίας* sit within Galen's writings on ethics and moral psychology, and what does it add to the picture? Galen's contribution to moral psychology and ethics was previously known mainly from *Affections* and *Errors* (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1 and 2). There is also highly relevant information in the admittedly problematic (because both abridged and to some extent distorted in the Arabic version) *Character Traits* (*Mor.*), and in some passages from *The Soul's Dependence on the Body* (*QAM*) and *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (*PHP*). The latter two, however (to simplify two highly complex texts), are concerned mainly with certain theoretical propositions, and in particular with aspects of the relationship of soul to body. *Affections and Errors* and *Character Traits*, meanwhile – both of which he lists, in his own account of his writings, alongside *περὶ ἄλυπίας* in the category of works giving his views on ethical philosophy<sup>1</sup> – bear a much clearer affinity to that work. All three belong within a genre of practical or popularizing works of moral philosophy intended for a non-specialist audience; they offer both theory and practical advice in the areas of ethics, education and personal development.

1 *Lib. Prop.* 15 [12] (XIX.45 K. = 169,13–17 Boudon-Millot; for references to *Lib. Prop.* I print the new chapter number, resulting from the full text now available from Vlatadon 14, followed by the previous chapter number in square brackets). The three works, as well as a considerable number of others which are now lost, are introduced with the phrase *περὶ τῶν τῆς ἡθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ἐζητημένων ὅσα μοι δοκεῖ* (although an actual chapter heading, *Περὶ τῶν τῆς ἡθικῆς φιλοσοφίας βιβλίων*, was an addition of Müller's).

The closest similarity that *περι ἀλυπίας* has with another work in the Galenic corpus is, indeed, with *Affections*; and I should like now to spend a little time exploring both that similarity and what, specifically, *Peri alupias* adds to the other work. Both works are designed to help the reader or listener on the path to ethical improvement. According to ancient distinctions both of genre and of stage of personal development, works of ‘protreptic’ – encouraging the reader or listener to embark on the process of virtue acquisition in the first place – may precede a subsequent phase of instruction in which detailed guidance is given about the actual process.<sup>2</sup> Employing that broad categorization, one would have to situate *Peri alupias* in this subsequent phase too.

*Affections and Errors* has as its topic or aim the control of affections (*pathē*) and errors (*hamartēmata*) in general; *περι ἀλυπίας* has the specific focus of the elimination of distress (*lupē*). Some have linked *περι ἀλυπίας* to the genre of *consolatio*; and other recent work has explored both the philosophical and the literary relatives of the work, and aspects of Galen’s self-presentation within it. There are similarities between the text and others in the tradition of popular ethical writing; it has been suggested that Plutarch’s *De tranquillitate animi* provides the closest parallel.<sup>3</sup>

2 Galen explicitly puts *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* in the latter class: ‘For it [*sc.* the present argument] is not one designed to convert people (*προτρεπτικός*) to virtue, but rather to show (*ὀφρηγητικός*) those who are already converted the way by which it may be achieved’, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1.6 (v.34 K. = 23,14–16 DB). There may be a relevance here of a threefold scheme, ‘protreptic, therapy, advice’, which had been outlined by Philo of Larissa (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.39.20–41.25); see Singer, P. N. (ed.) (2013). *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 206–7 and 240 n. 13 for discussion of this distinction and further references.

3 See especially Gill, C. (2010). *Naturalistic Psychology in Galen and Stoicism*, who draws out the similarities between each of these ethical *opuscula* and other works of practical ethics in the Graeco-Roman tradition; also Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, esp. 205–32, for discussion of Galen in his ethical context. For *περι ἀλυπίας* as a *consolatio* see the introduction to Boudon-Millot, V. and Jouanna, J. (2010). *Galen, Oeuvres, 4: Ne pas se chagriner*, and contra Kotzia, P. (2012). ‘Galen *Peri alupias*: Title, Genre and Two Cruces’, in Manetti, D. (ed.) *Studi sul De indolentia di Galeno*, 69–91, pointing out specific differences between the content of *Peri alupias* and other ancient *consolationes* and drawing attention to a specific category of works, now lost to us, entitled *περι ἀλυπίας*. See also Rosen, R. (2012). ‘Philology and the Rhetoric of Catastrophe in Galen’s *De indolentia*’, in, Rothschild, C. K. and Thompson, T. W. (eds) *Galen’s De indolentia*, 159–74.; Asmis, E. (2012). ‘Galen’s *De indolentia* and the Creation of a Personal Philosophy’, in *ibid.*, 127–42; Kaufman, D. H. (2014). ‘Galen on the Therapy of Distress and the Limits of Emotional Therapy’, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 47, 275–96, highlighting features in Galen’s therapy of distress which he considers to be taken directly from Stoic and Epicurean sources. Kaufman’s paper appeared too late to be taken into consideration in the original version of the present chapter; but, without space to engage with all his interesting suggestions, a couple of points may be made. First, as well discussed by Gill, both Stoic and Epicurean therapeutic approaches may be seen as part of a shared repertory

There is, I believe, more to be said, both about the interesting overlaps and differences between *Affections and Errors* and *περι ἀλυπίας* and about the distinctive understanding of *lupē* that arises from a consideration of both texts in conjunction. Such an approach is attractive both because *Affections and Errors* is a fascinating but in many ways frustrating text, unclear in a number of aspects of its organization and in particular giving a quite uneven discussion, and no clear typological categorization, of the different *pathē* of the soul;<sup>4</sup> and also because it does, however, have quite a lot to say about *lupē* which may usefully be placed alongside the new material from *περι ἀλυπίας*.

## 2 *Lupē* in *Affections and Errors*

There are, in fact, passages in *Affections and Errors* which seem to present *lupē* as, not just as one *pathos* amongst many, but in some sense an overarching category. In chapter 7 of *Affections*, in what it is admittedly a not unproblematic passage textually, it is suggested that there are subspecies of distress, of which envy is one.

ονομάζω δὲ φθόνον, ὅταν τις ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἀγαθοῖς λυπῆται. πάθος μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ λύπη πᾶσα, χειρίστη δὲ ὁ φθόνος ἐστίν, εἴτε ἐν τῶν παθῶν εἴτε λυπῆς ἐστὶν εἶδος πλησιάζον δὲ πῶς αὐτῇ,

By envy I mean becoming distressed at what others enjoy. All distress is an affection, but envy is the worst distress, whether it is an affection in itself or a subspecies of distress, somehow approximate to it ...

*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1.7 (v.35 K. = 24,13–16 De Boer)<sup>5</sup>

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of techniques, also incorporated in this period by a Platonist author such as Plutarch; and such an analysis seems to me more convincing than that of a strong direct influence from Epicureanism. Secondly, while Kaufman's point (282) about the input from Posidonius, especially on Galen's view of the *praemeditatio malorum*, is well taken (on the passage in question see further n. 19 below), the relevance of the 'belief-based methods associated ... with the early Stoics' (283) seems less clear, since the importance of the rational component (corresponding to correct beliefs) alongside non-rational ones is well justified by Galen's own explicitly proposed Platonist theory of the soul. My own argument in what follows also suggests a clear connection with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophical alternatives, but in a somewhat different sense.

- 4 There are two short lists of *pathē*, which however do not seem to aim at exhaustiveness, and within them no clear principle of classification. The point is discussed at greater length by Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 220–1.
- 5 The translation of this text (here and subsequently) is that of Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, who also discusses the problems of the text ad loc.

Moreover, distress or grief assumes a central role for a major part of the text, chapters 7–9.

I digress for a moment to clarify a point of terminology. For the sake of consistency, I translate *ania* and cognates with ‘grief’ and cognates, and similarly *lupē* with ‘distress’; however, the two sets of terms seem, in the ethical context, to be regarded as virtual synonyms. Though it is arguable that the former gives, at times, a slightly intensified sense, it seems wrong to insist on a clear distinction. The verbal form *ἀνιώμενος* is used, for example, of the young man at *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1.7 (v.37 K. = 25,15 de Boer), and the verb is also used of Galen’s own mother who ‘would suffer grief at the smallest occurrence’ (*ἀνιωμένην ... ἐπὶ σμικροτάτοις*, 1.8, v.41 K. = 28,6 de Boer). But the progress of the discussion, in 1.8 (from v.43 K. = 29,15 de Boer), makes it clear that *lupē* is regarded as the relevant overall heading.<sup>6</sup> In what follows I shall therefore treat Galen’s discussion of cases of *ania* and *lupē* as referring to the same psychological–ethical phenomenon.

In chapters 7–9, then, we gain the impression that the eradication or lessening of *lupē* is an absolutely central strand in the fight against the affections. The discussion revolves around anecdotal reference to, quotation of and direct address to individuals amongst Galen’s most intimate circle of friends and family. First, at *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1.7 (v.37 K. = 25,15 de Boer), Galen introduces the character of a young man who came to him because of the excessive grief he suffered over small matters. The argument continues to be addressed to this individual’s problem up to the end of chapter 9 – albeit with some major digressions, in particular on the relationship between nature and nurture and on the ethical model offered by Galen’s own parents, and his own philosophical upbringing. But both the digressions and the material directly related to the young man serve to bring out the importance, and multifarious ramifications, of distress. First, Galen attributes to his father a contrast between universally admired virtues – justice, self-control, courage and discernment – on the one

6 A further note of caution should be sounded in relation to the temptation to see such words as ‘technical terms’, and so ignore their potential fluidity: it seems to me (*pace* Nutton) that Galen uses the verb *anian* in a passage of *De methodo medendi* (*MM*) in a completely different, non-technical sense. At *MM* 7.1 (x.456–7 K.) Galen is – in line with the ‘reluctant author’ persona discussed in my ‘New Light and Old Books’, in this volume – giving reasons for his not having written the work earlier. To his standard argument, that he never wrote to advance his reputation, he adds another: he was too busy. The words there, *ἡμᾶς ... πολλάκις ἀνιωμένους ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐνοχλοῦσιν οὕτω συνεχῶς ἐνίοτε χρόνον ἐφεξῆς πόλυν, ὡς μηδ’ ἄψασθαι συνηθῆναι βιβλίου*, in this context demand the interpretation that Galen is too pressed upon by urgent duties to be able to engage in literary activity as he would like, not that he is too depressed to read. One might here translate ‘troubled’, ‘bothered’, or even ‘irritated’ or ‘annoyed’; but surely the term carries none of the ‘technical’ sense of *ania* or *lupē*, with their problematic and dangerous ethical dimension, in *περὶ ἀλυπίας* and *Affections*.

hand, and freedom from distress, on the other. The point is that people wish to *appear* to have the former virtues, but they want actually to *be* free from distress:

... φαίνεσθαι γε πειρώνται τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνδρεῖοι καὶ σώφρονες καὶ φρόνιμοι καὶ δίκαιοι, ἄλυποι μέντοι κατ' ἀλήθειαν εἶναι, κἄν μὴ φαίνωνται τοῖς πέλας· ὥστε τοῦτο μὲν σοι πρῶτον ἀπάντων ἀσκητέον ἐστὶ τὸ σπουδαζόμενον ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις μᾶλλον τῶν ἀρετῶν.

... they wish to *appear* to others brave, self-controlled, discerning and just, while they actually want to *be* free from distress, even if it is not apparent to those around them. And this should therefore be what you cultivate first of all, since it is sought after by all people in preference to the virtues.

*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1.8 (v.43 K. = 29,8–12 de Boer)

The practice of freeing oneself from *lupē* is here presented as the practical, chronological starting-point of one's ethical progress, on the commonsense grounds that this absence of suffering is something that all people actually seek. We shall see how this perception of Galen's father's surfaces again in *Peri alupias*. Galen also talks of the model his parents provided specifically in terms of their experience of distress. His father 'never appeared distressed at any setback', while his mother 'would suffer grief at the smallest occurrence'. The terms 'distress' and 'grief' are here clearly being used to apply to one's reactions to a very wide range of everyday events which are liable to upset one: thus, *lupē* (or *ania*) here can be seen as to some extent co-extensive with irritation or anger, even though this, in its more violent manifestations, was dealt with explicitly earlier in the work.

In the part of the text addressed more closely to the young man who wishes to be freed from distress, too, the term turns out to have a very broad reference. One may, for example, suffer *lupē* not just as a result of personal loss, but in the anxiety over possible future loss, including not just of possessions but of status. Although, as mentioned, Galen does not explicitly give us any categorization of the *pathē* or account of which are the most fundamental, we are reminded of the fact that *lupē* is, indeed, an overarching category, an 'Über-*pathos*', in some Stoic sources.<sup>7</sup> Getting rid of *lupē*, then, begins to look rather like the Stoic drive for *apatheia*. Reference to the Stoic relatives of Galen's thought in

7 There is a Stoic division of *pathē* into four broad categories: distress (*lupē*), fear (*phobos*), desire (*epithumia*), pleasure (*hēdonē*); see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 7.110, Stobaeus, *Ecl.*

this area leads us to another relevant consideration: the absence of the tripartite soul at this point in the discussion. The earlier phase of discussion, based strongly on that Platonic distinction of the drives of the non-rational soul into those of spirited (*thumoeides*) and desiderative (*epithumētikon*), clearly implies that any *pathos* will be a *pathos* of one of these two – that this distinction will be of fundamental significance throughout. And, as already suggested, the examples that the text dwells on at length seem to be chosen as examples of the malfunction of the spirited – that is to say, of uncontrolled rage.

Yet the discussion of *lupē* which we have just been considering is interesting precisely because it seems to follow from this broader conception of *lupē* that it cuts across the spirited–desiderative distinction.<sup>8</sup> This is supported both by the range of examples of *lupē* – distress at financial loss, distress caused by fear of loss, distress at perceived lack of status – and by the subsequent argument that the cause of all susceptibility to *lupē* is – an even more over-arching category – acquisitiveness (*pleonexia*). For such acquisitiveness or greed may be directed at personal possessions or luxury (surely, in Platonic terms, aims of the desiderative soul), but also at status and perceived position in society (those of the spirited).

### 3 *Lupē* and Its Control in *περι ἀλυπίας*

The discussion in *περι ἀλυπίας* contributes to the same picture. Here the Platonic tripartite soul does not, in fact, appear at all. Rather, removing or reducing one's susceptibility to *lupē* appears as a procedure which is absolutely fundamental to ethical well-being. Much of the argument proceeds through models: the positive ones of Aristippus and of Galen's own father, the negative ones of his mother and of the literary man whose distress led to his ultimate demise. Again, *alupia* seems to amount to something very similar to what a Stoic might call being unaffected by externals – or at least, to being affected by them as little as possible (we shall return to this point).

We might like to say that the two works are complementary: *περι ἀλυπίας* continues, and develops in more detail, particular themes outlined in *Affections and Errors*.<sup>9</sup> But in drawing attention to this complementarity, it is important

2.7.10, Cicero, *Fin.* 3.35. Cf. also the detailed categorization of the probably Stoic text, pseudo-Andronicus, *Peri pathōn*, which lists 24 species of *lupē*.

8 On this point see also Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, esp. 220–1.

9 This formulation is not intended to imply anything about the relative dates of the two works, for discussion of which see Nutton in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 45–47, arguing (against Jouanna) for a dating of *Aff. Pecc. Dig.*, as well as *Mor.*, after *περι ἀλυπίας*. (But see

to re-emphasize the point: the more general work *Affections and Errors* is, to a considerable extent, itself a work about the reduction or elimination of distress. On the other hand, *περι ἀλυπίας* introduces perspectives on *lupē* that are not to be found in *Affections and Errors*, or found there much less clearly; and I turn to two of these now, before returning to a consideration of their complementarity and attempting to summarize the findings that accrue from considering the texts conjointly.

The first such 'new' feature of *lupē* in *περι ἀλυπίας* is its potentially severe physical consequences.

... Φιλίδης μὲν ὁ γραμματικὸς ἀπολλυμένων αὐτῶ τῶν βιβλίων κατὰ πυρκαϊᾶν ἀπὸ δυσθυμίας καὶ λύπης διέφθαρη συντακεῖς

... Philides the literary man, when his books were destroyed in the fire, wasted away as a result of low spirits and distress, and died.

*Ind.* 7 (4,6–8 BJP)<sup>10</sup>

In fact, this Galenic aspect of *lupē* is not by any means a finding new to *Peri alupias*, even if it is not mentioned in *Affections and Errors*. The medical, including potentially fatal, consequences of distress (as also of worry, *phrontis* and *agōnia*), as part of a disease pattern involving the connected phenomena of sleeplessness, dryness, heat and fever, is attested in a wide range of passages in Galen's medical writings.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the specific anecdote that Galen brings forward here about the literary man whose distress over losses similar to Galen's did indeed prove fatal appears elsewhere, in Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics VI*.

Such medical consequences are not the *direct* subject matter of *Peri alupias*, which is concerned rather with its prevention. The medical understanding of *lupē*, however, should be borne in mind as an important element in the

also Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 34–41, as well as 'New Light and Old Books', p. 123 n. 45 and p. 125, for methodological caution on the dating of Galen's works.).

- 10 Translations from *Peri alupias* are my own. On the identity between the person mentioned here and that referred to in *Hipp. Epid. VI* (discussed below), on the problem of the form of his name, and on the chronological relationship between *Peri alupias* and *Hipp. Epid. VI*, see Nutton in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 79 n. 15. I translate *γραμματικὸς* with the vague term 'literary man'; the term has a semantic range which includes a kind of secondary-level teacher and a person with broad expertise in the analysis of literary texts.
- 11 See now Singer, P. N. (2017). 'The Essence of Rage: Galen on Emotional Disturbances and their Physical Correlates', in Seaford, R., Wilkins, J. and Wright, M. (eds). *Selfhood and the Soul: Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill*, 161–96, drawing attention to a range of such texts.

intellectual background. For the medical context provides a framework within which *lupē* is, for Galen, a distinct and observable physical phenomenon. Whether someone is suffering from *lupē* is thus, in a sense, an objective fact – an affection of the *psuchē* which – just like those well-known affections of the *psuchē* in Galen's anecdotes in *Prognosis* – is accessible to medical diagnosis.<sup>12</sup> It is not irrelevant here, either, to consider the criterion of a pathological state given in *De sanitate tuenda*: so long as the person is not *distressed* by an imperfect physical state, that state still counts as healthy.<sup>13</sup> For Galen *lupē* is a concrete, distinct – and potentially a medical – state. It is not a vague characterization of the phenomenon of becoming slightly upset at events.

Another area in which *περὶ ἀλπιτίας* seems to depart from *Affections and Errors*, or at least to give greater clarity, is in relation to the question – already touched on – of how complete an elimination of *pathē* is required or desirable. As a number of previous discussions have highlighted, *Affections* seems practically to align itself with a Stoic approach whereby *pathē* are in their nature purely negative, and something very close to their complete elimination is the aim. It has also been pointed out that this appears to conflict with his Platonism, or to be more precise with what one might expect at this period from an author indebted strongly to both Plato and Aristotle in his ethical thinking, and in particular that the term *metriopatheia* – the ‘moderation of the *pathē*’ – which appears in some ‘Middle Platonist’ authors is not mentioned by Galen.<sup>14</sup>

It is, of course, true that, within the Platonic tripartite model which is of such importance to Galen, including in *Affections*, anger – the righteous indignation of the *thumoeides* which checks the wild desires of the *epithumētikon* – has a positive, indeed an important, role, in a way which is quite contrary to Stoic thinking. For Galen, however, though this internal dynamic within the soul is important to his analysis, anger when functioning in this way apparently does not come under the heading of *pathos*. *Pathos*, for Galen, seems, in the ethical context, to be a purely negative term: that much he has taken over from Stoic usage, however bitterly he opposes the broader intellectual framework within which that usage arose. That is to say: there is, for Galen, a legitimate role for the non-rational parts of the soul, but *pathos* arises only in these non-rational parts and only when they are *not* behaving legitimately; for

12 Relevant here is the analysis of Mattern, S. P. (2006). ‘Galen’s Anxious Patients: *Lypē* as Anxiety Disorder’, in Petridou, G. and Thumiger, C. (eds) *Homo Patiens – Approaches to the Patient in the Ancient World*, 203–23, which however in my view over-emphasizes one particular, medicalized interpretation of *lupē* throughout the corpus.

13 *San. Tu.* 1.5 (VI.13 K. = 8,19–20, Koch; VI.19 K. = 10,29–34 Koch).

14 On this point see Donini, P. L. (2008). ‘Psychology’, in Hankinson, R. J. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, 194; Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 208–9.

the Stoics, meanwhile, there is no such positive role for the non-rational parts of the soul, which indeed, properly speaking, do not exist: it is rather errors of rationality which lead to or constitute behaviour in *pathos*. Thus, Galen shares with Stoic thought the negative definition of *pathos*, while having a different understanding, not only of how *pathos* comes about and where it is located in the soul, but also of where *pathos* fits into the broader scheme of non-rational drives.

So we might say that even if Galen does acknowledge a positive role for some of (what the Stoics would call) *pathē*, this would not mean that he is advocating *metriopatheia*: for Galen, *pathē* are in their nature negative, and when anger (say) is functioning positively on behalf of the person that is not a case of *pathos*, not even of moderated *pathos*. Thus, an Aristotelian understanding of proper ethical/emotional response as consisting in some mean between opposites – that is, the exactly correct sort of *pathos* – seems to be absent from Galen's thinking in his ethical writings.<sup>15</sup>

But there is a further question, or complication. Even if Galen (a) takes there to be a positive role for some emotions, but (b) does not refer to positive manifestations of emotions as *pathē*, and therefore (c) does not advocate the concept of *metriopatheia*, there remains a further question: is the total elimination of those emotions which are regarded as purely negative – those ones which Galen and the Stoics would both call *pathē* – required? Galen's 'official' answer seems to be no – again, in keeping with a fundamentally Platonic–Aristotelian model (albeit one without the terminology of *metriopatheia*) – although, as discussed above, one can certainly gain the impression, throughout much of *Affections* and *Peri alupias*, that total elimination is indeed what is being advocated. In this context, it is also relevant to consider that Galen at least arguably (if one accepts a particular emendation of the text) allows also a moderate level of emotional attachment to societal status and political power, and even wealth. As elsewhere in Galen's work, excessive preoccupation with status or reputation is, to be sure, considered a great evil. But on Garofalo's emendation

15 A version of a theory of virtues as means does, however, appear in *Mixtures*, where the context is the assertion that a person with the best bodily mixture – conceived as a balance between extremes – will also have the right balance between ethical extremes: τῷ μὲν σώματι τοιοῦτος ὁ εὐκρατότατος ἄνθρωπος· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ μέσος ἀκριβῶς ἐστὶ θρασύτητος τε καὶ δειλίας, μελλήσμου τε καὶ προπετείας, ἐλέου τε καὶ φθόνου. εἴη δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εὐθυμος, φιλόστοργος, φιλάνθρωπος, συνετός (*Temp.* 2.1, 1.576 K. = 42,16–20 Helmreich). This seems to be clearly in line with Aristotle's approach to virtues in *Eth. Nic.*; but such an analysis of ethical response in terms of a mean is not followed through in his ethical work, except in the sense that there is emphasis on the diet, training and the best physical nature as preconditions for ethics (esp. in *QAM* and *Mor.*); certainly individual virtues are not, on the Aristotelian model, so analysed.

of sections 80–81 (see further below), freedom from distress is equated with the possession of only a *moderate* level of attachment to these aims.

The desirability of elimination of *lupē* again points to its special status. Unlike *thumos* or *epithumia*, for example, it has no positive role. One might indeed be tempted, following the analysis outlined above, to suggest that this is precisely what *lupē* is for Galen: the negative or *pathological* manifestation of non-rational drives which (as we have seen) are not in themselves necessarily *pathē*. *Lupē*, then, like *pathos* in general, has no positive role for Galen. Does that mean that we should aim for or require its complete removal? In spite of what I have referred to as hints of a Stoic-style *apatheia*, *Peri alupias* gives us something the other text does not, or at least gives us much less explicitly: a specific affirmation that one *cannot* always be unaffected by circumstances.

Addressing the issue directly (in sections 70–76), Galen explicitly denies the proposition that a person – or at least that he personally – can remain free from distress in every eventuality. In contradistinction to the extreme Stoic and Epicurean claims on unaffectedness, Galen prefers a more common-sense position. He knows his own limitations; he does not, like Musonius the Stoic, ask to be tested by every possible adversity; he does not accept that one can be happy inside that notorious philosophical example of torture, the bull of Phalaris; and he mentions specific circumstances that he knows *would* cause him distress (the destruction of his home city, the persecution of a friend by a tyrant). So, the text of *περι ἀλυπίας* makes it clearer and more explicit than that of *Affections* that, in spite of the desirability of freeing oneself from *lupē* as much as one can, total indifference to, or unaffectedness by, externals cannot in all circumstances be expected. It is just that we should aim for much higher expectations and achievement in this area than are normally the case. Quite how high a level of achievement he expects, or (for he is more explicit on this point) attributes to himself, is a somewhat complex question. A very high level of impassivity to the vicissitudes of fate will be termed *megalopsuchia*,<sup>16</sup> and Galen does indeed attribute this quality to himself. At other points he emphasizes that his failure to succumb to distress, at least in response to most of

16 Galen's use of *megalopsuchia* here seems to provide another point of contact with Aristotle, for the understanding of the term seems importantly similar to the Aristotelian one. Although there are also different aspects of Aristotle's analysis of *megalopsuchia* (in particular in regard to the level of honour enjoyed by its possessor), he takes it to be a virtue that involves indifference, or at least a moderate reaction, to extremes of good or bad fortune (*Eth. Nic.* 4.3, 1124a12–15) and, interestingly also one which is in some sense a crown or adornment to the other virtues, enhancing them but impossible without them (*Eth. Nic.* 4.3, 1124a1–2). I am grateful to Matyáš Havrda for pointing out to me this similarity; see also Kotzia, P. (2014). 'Galen, *De indolentia*: Commonplaces, Traditions, and Contexts', in Rothschild, C. K. and Thompson, T. W. (eds), *Galen's De indolentia*, 91–126.

his losses, was 'no big thing'. The argument of the text functions, of course, by constantly emphasizing the enormity of his losses in order to highlight the distinctiveness of his reaction – a reaction of refusing to consider those losses to be enormous.<sup>17</sup> He is 'not at all moved', 'not now distressed, cheerfully carrying out my usual tasks as before', 'bearing without distress', 'not distressed, even with all such things touching me'; 'I bore it very easily, not moved in the least', 'none of these things distressed me', 'I was not distressed as others, but bore the event very easily, after losing such a great variety of possessions, any one of which on its own would have been most distressing to others'.<sup>18</sup>

Before returning to a final consideration of the complementary nature of the text and of the overall picture of *lupē* that emerges, I consider one more specific area in which *περὶ ἀλυπίας* seems to diverge, or offer something distinct from, *Affections and Errors*, this time in the sphere of practical advice. First, the central policy recommended in the latter work – that of finding a neutral advisor to monitor and report to one about one's faults – does not appear in *Peri alupias*. Conversely, the main technique which the latter work *does* prescribe, the *praemeditatio malorum* – that is to say, a sustained daily practice of anticipation of the worst, a practice which may include the internal or actual repetition of certain texts or propositions – does not appear, at least not explicitly, in *Affections and Errors*. A regular mental practice, involving recitation – specifically, of the Pythagorean *Carmen aureum* – is recommended in *Affections*, along with a process of self-interrogation whose rational force will affect one's ethical behaviour. This practice, however, is based rather on the daily examination of one's *previous* actions. *περὶ ἀλυπίας* gives us a further dimension of the use of text recitation for ethical or psychological purposes. A quotation from Euripides is central to the text's message on the *praemeditatio malorum*. (Interestingly, the same text appears in *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, there in support of a theoretical argument about how to conceptualize the *process* of *praemeditatio* within the soul.<sup>19</sup>) It is perhaps noteworthy that there is no appeal here to the use of *philosophical* texts in one's daily exercise – a fact that one may relate to Galen's insistence that his father's successful moral

17 For a helpful discussion of the progress of Galen's argument in relation to this, and the consistency or otherwise of his view of *alupia* in the text, see Rosen, 'Rhetoric of Catastrophe'.

18 ἔφης αὐτὸς ἑωρακένας με μὴδὲ ἐπὶ βραχὺ κινήθεντα (2, 2,11–12 BJP); μὴδὲν νῦν ἀναθῆναι με φαιδρόν τε καὶ τὰ συνήθη πράττοντα καθάπερ ἔμπροσθεν... ἀλύπως ὤφθην φέρων (3–4, 3,1–6 BJP); τὸ γὰρ μὴδὲ τῶν τοιούτων πάντων ἀπτομένων ἀναθῆναι θαυμασιώτερον ἐδόκει σοι... πάνυ ῥαδίως ἤνεγκα τὸ πρᾶγμα, μήτε βραχὺ κινήθεις (11, 5,5–9 BJP); τοῦτων οὖν οὐδὲν ἠνίασέ με (29, 10,24–25 BJP); ἀπολέσας τοσαύτην ποικιλίαν κτημάτων ὧν ἕκαστον αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ λυπηρότατον ἂν ἐγένετο τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις, οὐκ ἠνίαθην ὡς ἕτεροὶ τινες, ἀλλὰ πάνυ ῥαδίως ἤνεγκα τὸ συμβᾶν (38, 13,4–8 BJP).

19 *PHP* 4.7 (V.417–18 K. = 282,11–23 De Lacy).

education, described as similar to his own, was achieved ‘without arguments from philosophy’ and that he ‘did not frequent philosophers in youth’.<sup>20</sup> One may, indeed, connect this with Galen’s sceptical attitude towards the discipline of philosophy, certainly as generally practised in his own time.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4 Practical Ethics and Life Aims in *περι ἀλυπίας* and *Affections and Errors*

But let us consider some further aspects of the complementary nature of *περι ἀλυπίας* and *Affections and Errors*. In *Peri alupias*, we again meet Galen’s father, and in a similar context. It is not just that his father was a model in his freedom from distress – that is, his ability not to be affected by adverse events. Rather, here too a specific perception is attributed to his father, one which matches that reported in *Affections and Errors*. Let us look at the passage, which may be compared with that cited above. (I follow the text of BJP, and excerpt what seem to me the most relevant phrases from a fairly long passage.)

οὐ γὰρ ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων τις οὕτως ἀκριβῶς ὡς καὶ οὗτος ἐτίμησε δικαιοσύνην τε καὶ σωφροσύνην... οἶδα δέ μου τὸν πατέρα καταφρονούντα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ὡς μικρῶν... τοὺς ἥδιστα βεβιωκότας οὐδὲν ἔσχε πλείω τῶν οἰωνῶν τούτων οὓς κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων πόλιν ὀρώμεν ὑπὸ τῶν δεσποτῶν περιαγομένους ἔνεκα τοῦ τὰς θηλείας ὀχεύειν ἐπὶ μισθῷ· τοὺς δὲ τῶν τοιοῦτων ἡδονῶν καταφρονούντας, ἀρκουμένους δὲ τῷ μῆτε ἀλγεῖν μῆτε λυπεῖσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐδέποτε ἐπήνεσεν ἀπομαντευόμενος μεῖζον τι καὶ κρείττον ὄν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἰδίαν ἔχον φύσιν, οὔτε ἐν μόνῳ τῷ μῆτε ἀλγεῖν μῆτε λυπεῖσθαι περιγραφόμενον. ἀλλ’ ἐὰν καὶ τούτων τις ἀποχωρήσας ἐπιστήμην θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ἡγήσῃται τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὑπάρχειν, ἐλαχίστου μορίου τούτου ὀρῶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους μετέχοντας... ὁ γὰρ ἐν τῷ καθόλου μὴ γινώσκων ὅποια τὰ τε θεία καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματά εἰσιν, οὐδ’ ἐν τῷ κατὰ μέρος οὐδ’ ἐπιστημονικῶς τι ἐλέσθαι καὶ φυγεῖν δύναται.

20 χωρίς τῶν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας λόγων. οὐ γὰρ ὠμίλησε φιλοσόφοις ἐν νεότητι, *Ind.* 58–9 (19,2–3 BJP).

21 On this point see further Singer, P. N. (2014). ‘Galen and the Philosophers: Philosophical Engagement, Shadowy Contemporaries, Aristotelian Transformations’, in Adamson, P., Hansberger, R. and Wilberding, J. (eds) *Philosophical Themes in Galen*, 7–38. Kaufman, ‘Galen on the Therapy’, argues that *διαλεχθῆναι* at 78, 24,7 BJP means ‘philosophical conversation’, but this seems to me a considerable over-translation, supported only by the doubtful contention that Galen is here echoing a specific passage of Epicurus. A more natural reading is surely that Galen is simply referring in a general way to conversations with friends.

For no other man esteemed justice and self-control as completely as he ... I know that my father despised human affairs as trivial things ... he valued those who live a life devoted to pleasure no more highly than those birds we see being taken round Rome by their masters to service females for a price. But those who despise such pleasures, and are content with neither experiencing pain nor distress in their souls, he never praised. He declared that the good was something bigger and more powerful than that, something which possessed its own nature rather than being defined only in terms of not suffering pain or distress. But if someone departs from these and holds that the good is a knowledge of matters both human and divine, I see that human beings possess only a very small part of this ... For someone without even general knowledge of matters human and divine cannot choose scientifically in individual matters, either, what to choose and what to avoid.

*Ind.* 58–64 (18,22–20,10 BJP)

The refusal to praise those who are *satisfied* with being free from distress can surely be placed alongside the remark in *Affections* suggesting the attempt to attain *alupia* as a crucial, but not sufficient, stage in ethical progress.<sup>22</sup> This feature of the *Peri alupias* argument – that it does not present a straightforward *rejection* of Epicurean *aochlēsia* and/or Stoic *apatheia*, but rather a statement of their *insufficiency* – seems to me a vital one. The two passages are, in fact, of a piece: both are suggesting the drive towards *alupia* as a practical starting-point in the attempt at ethical self-improvement; and both are asserting that *alupia* is necessary, but by no means sufficient, for virtue. If we wish to talk of ends or goals, we must mention ‘knowledge of things human and divine’ – however imperfectly we may attain to that.<sup>23</sup>

As both this passage and that immediately following makes clear: (a) human affairs are to be despised; (b) freedom from distress is valuable; but (c) it is not sufficient, as there are higher human aims. These are reasserted a few lines later

22 The caution should be made that the verb ‘praised’ in the above text represents a conjecture (BJP’s ἐπῆνεσεν for the MS ἔπεισεν); it is, however, a very plausible one, and it seems that the text must in any case be advancing *some* contrast between mere satisfaction with *alupia* on the one hand and higher goals on the other.

23 The precise progress of the argument in this passage is not straightforward, and it is possible to interpret differently the attitude towards the notion of ‘knowledge of the human and divine’ that Galen is here presenting. I take it that Galen is expressing the extreme difficulty of gaining knowledge in this area, but not rejecting such knowledge altogether as a goal; rather, *some* effort in this direction will be of ethical value. See the discussions of this same passage in this volume by both Chris Gill and Jim Hankinson.

in the words ‘wishing to be actively engaged in both mind and body’, πάντα ... ἐνεργεῖν ... βουλόμενα καὶ κατὰ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ ψυχὴν, 68, 21,7–8 BJP. (One must acknowledge, here, that this is presented as not merely a human aim, but in fact also that of ‘all animals’, the word πάντα here referring back to οὔτε ἑμαυτὸν οὔτε ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον οὔτε ζῶον τι – and in doing so one must also acknowledge that there an anti-Epicurean rhetoric at work here which has arguably taken Galen to a slightly unusual place in his argument, as made clear by the pejorative mention of *aochlēsia* and, indeed, by the explicit reference to other writings in which he attacks Epicurus.)<sup>24</sup> There is also a similarity between the two texts in the way in which these ‘higher-level’, or intellectual, aims are presented – and perhaps above all in the vagueness with which they are presented. If we turn to the relevant discussion in *Errors* – the part of that text devoted to the rational soul as opposed to the non-rational – two things seem striking in this context. One is Galen’s apparent slipperiness when it comes actually to defining ‘the goal of life’;<sup>25</sup> the other is that, whatever the precise answer on that, he is more interested in persuading one to engage in rational training and rational scientific activity than in any goal which would more obviously be defined as ethical.

One might even say that rational or intellectual activity of the correct kind, in that text, provides an answer that seems to stand in place of the answer to ‘the goal of life’; and that, perhaps, corresponds (at least as far as human beings are concerned) to what Galen describes here as ‘being actively engaged in both mind and body’. Galen (or his father) seems to have developed an interesting practical-ethics approach here. We might summarize the two-step approach as follows:

- (i) Ethical improvement must start with the identification of something that causes one actual distress, *lupē*. Once one has achieved that identification, the desire to make a change allows the possibility, at least, that one will make ‘some progress’. One is no longer in denial, at this stage, and may seek practical interventions to lessen one’s susceptibility. If one then succeeds in radically reducing one’s susceptibility to *lupē*, this is a necessary, but by no means sufficient, condition of virtue.

24 A list of nine works engaging with Epicurean philosophy is given at *Lib. Prop.* 19 [16]; it is, relatedly, interesting to speculate, though we can do no more, as to how important this emphasis on ‘active engagement’ may have been in these lost works.

25 On this point see the discussion of Donini, P. L. (1988). ‘Tipologia degli errori e loro correzione secondo Galeno’, in Manuli, P. and Vegetti, M. (eds) *Le opere psicologiche di Galeno: Atti del terzo Colloquio Galenico internazionale, Pavia, 10–12 settembre 1986*, 65–116 and Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, 229–32.

- (ii) While it is difficult to define precisely the goal in this higher realm – that of the rational soul – some things are clear. In particular, (a) the aims pursued by most people – political ambition, accumulation of wealth – are to be despised; and (b) some kind of mental engagement, or directed activity, is essential to human life. Fairly clearly, too, the type of such activity strongly preferred by Galen (and his father) is that aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, especially (as far as possible) knowledge of a mathematically reliable kind.

In relation to step (ii), and in particular the definition of ‘the goal’, there is, as already suggested, some vagueness – though we should here acknowledge the limitations of our sources, since a considerable list of Galen’s ethical writings is lost to us. But it also seems at least possible that Galen is deliberately vague in this context, preferring a strong argument in favour of intellectually rigorous and mathematically-based mental activity to a conventional definition of virtue of the sort approved by any of the established philosophical schools. The above talk of a two-step approach should not, however, be taken to deny the interconnectedness of the phases. The removal, or reduction, of one’s liability to distress is for Galen intimately related to the adoption of appropriate life aims, or to which things in life we take to be valuable or not valuable. The early education mentioned above simultaneously instils appropriate notions of what counts as good *and* habituates one to appropriate reactions and behaviour: the rational (evaluative) and non-rational (habituated) responses go hand in hand. This connectedness is particularly reinforced, in *περι ἀλυπίας*, in sections 80–81, where the absence of distress is closely correlated with an appropriate assessment of the aims of honour, wealth, reputation and political power. (And especially so if we adopt the reading of this passage suggested by Garofalo, whereby ‘those who do not suffer distress as the many do’ are equated with ‘those who have a moderate attachment to honour, etc.’)<sup>26</sup> Here again, it seems, the taking of the two texts, *Affections and Errors* and *περι ἀλυπίας*, alongside each other, has helped to form a picture of Galenic thinking in this area.

A final point is worth our consideration: what range of emotional reactions is admissible within *alupia*? For Galen, as we have already suggested, *lupē* is a quasi-medical category. The usual context for its mention is in consideration of predisposing causes that can lead to physical ailments of various kinds. The example of the literary man dying of grief should not, perhaps, from this perspective, be seen as an extreme one. This, Galen seems to suggest, is within normal medical experience: it is the sort of thing that *lupē* can do, or rather lead to. Galen’s boast is that he was seen to be ‘not moved at all’, ‘not

26 See in this volume Singer, ‘Note on MS Vlatadon 14’, text (t).

distressed; that he 'bore it easily'; and scholars have not been slow to point to both the boastfulness and the apparently unrealistic nature of the claim. But what exactly is meant here? It seems to me that Galen is not, in fact, presenting some other-wordly, saint-like behaviour. The point rather is that he is able to go about his daily business; he does not succumb; he does not allow his life to be ruined.

The terms used for what does *not* happen to Galen – *kinēthenta, aniathēnai* – seem to me perfectly consistent with the notion that one experiences *some* negative emotional reactions; what is crucial is that they are controlled, not allowed to dominate. And such control is a perfectly possible – Galen quite plausibly argues – as a result of the right kind of training in childhood in combination with ethical discipline, involving a consideration of how small such setbacks are in the scheme of things, in adulthood. The social aspect of one's reaction, too, is relevant to this discourse. Galen uses a range of expressions to describe the visual or outward aspect of his behaviour: you *saw* that I was not moved, I was *observed* bearing it easily; the reaction is described as wonderful; it is compared with that of others; the term *phaidron*, too (literally 'bright', 'radiant'), refers to an outward demeanour or impression. The observable, outward aspect must be considered; self-control includes a competitive element: one is judged by one's ability publicly to rise above the normal reaction. But there must, surely, be a range of negative emotions which a person may experience without being defined as falling into *lupē*.

By *lupē*, in short, Galen means something more dramatic and more specific – and, in medical terms, far more dangerous – than a controllable feeling of sadness or annoyance. It is a negative emotion whose control is central to the ethical project of self-improvement, and which if uncontrolled can have disastrous medical consequences. In both contexts, the ethical and the medical, Galen develops the concept in a distinctive and original way. A way which, above all, attempts to do justice to the realities, the challenges and the dangers of lived experience.

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### *Texts: Editions, Translations and Abbreviations*

ps.-Andronicus

*Peri pathōn*

Aristotle

*Eth. Nic.* = *Nicomachean Ethics*

Cicero

*Fin.* = *De finibus*

Diogenes Laertius

*Vit. Phil.* = *Vitae Philosophorum*

Galen

Texts of Galen are cited by volume and page number in Kühn's edition, followed where available by page and line number in the most recent critical edition.

K. = C. G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 22 vols. Leipzig, 1821–1833.

CMG = *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1908–.

*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1 and 2 = *De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione* and *De animi cuiuslibet peccatorum dignotione et curatione* (*Affections and Errors of*

- the Soul*). [K. v]. Ed. W. de Boer. Berlin and Leipzig: Teubner, CMG v 4,1,1, 1937; trans. in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*.
- Hipp. Epid. VI* = *In Hippocratis Epidemiarum librum VI (Commentary on Hippocrates 'Epidemics VI')*. [K. xviiA–B (partial)]. Ed./German trans. E. Wenkebach and E. Pfaff. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, CMG v 10,2,2, 1956.
- Ind.* = *De indolentia (Peri alupias)*. [Not in K.] Ed. V. Boudon-Millot and J. Jouanna, with the collaboration of A. Pietrobelli: *Ne pas se chagriner*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010 (BJP); trans. by V. Nutton in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*.
- Lib. Prop.* = *De libris propriis (My Own Books)*. [K. xix]. Ed. V. Boudon-Millot. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007; trans. in Singer, *Galen: Selected Works*.
- MM* = *De methodo medendi. (The Therapeutic Method)*. [K. x]. Trans. I. Johnston and G. H. R. Horsley. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (Loeb), 2011.
- Mor.* = *De moribus. (Character Traits)*. [Not in K.]. Ed. Kraus, 'Kitāb al-Akhlaq', trans. D. Davies in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*.
- Ord. Lib. Prop.* = *De ordine librorum propriorum (The Order of My Own Books)*. [K. xix]. Ed. V. Boudon-Millot. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007; trans. in Singer, *Galen: Selected Works*.
- PHP* = *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis (The Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato)*. [K. v]. Ed. and trans. P. De Lacy, 3 vols. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, CMG v 4,1,2, 1978–84.
- Praen.* = *De praenotione ad Epigenem. (Prognosis)*. [K. xiv]. Ed. and trans. V. Nutton. Berlin: Akademie Verlag (CMG v 8,1), 1979.
- QAM* = *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur. (The Soul's Dependence on the Body)*. [K. iv]. Ed. I. Müller, in *C. Galeni Scripta Minora*, 2. Leipzig: Teubner, 1891; trans. in Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings*.
- San. Tu.* = *De sanitate tuenda. (Matters of Health)*. [K. vi]. Ed. K. Koch. Berlin and Leipzig: Teubner, CMG v 4,2, 1923.
- Temp.* = *De temperamentis. (Mixtures)*. [K. i]. Ed. G. Helmreich. Leipzig: Teubner, 1904.

### 'Pythagoras'

Ed. J. C. Thom, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses*. Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1995.

### Stobaeus

*Ecl.* = *Eclogae*