Heraclides' *On Soul* (?) and Its Ancient Readers

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The doxographical tradition attributes to Heraclides a theory of light-like, *phōtoeidēs*, soul. The source of this doctrine is usually considered to be the dialogue which contains a story of cosmic vision experienced by Empedotimus of Syracuse. The details of the story preserved in a handful of fragments were variously interpreted as parts of a cosmological picture endowed with eschatological significance, and there has been a tendency among scholars to regard Heraclides’ position as some sort of middle ground between the mind-body dualism underlying the theories of soul in Plato’s Academy and the naturalism of Aristotle’s later psychological doctrine.

In this paper I review the extant fragments, in an attempt to assess the evidence for the content and method of the work, and discuss a number of questions that have been raised with regard to Heraclides’

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theory of soul. The paper falls into three parts. In the first, I discuss the number and length of the fragments, the title, the main character(s) and the plot. The second is devoted to the content of Empedotimus' vision and its interpretation in later sources, with a view to establishing the doctrinal implications of the myth. Finally, in the third part, I discuss the texts regarded as evidence for the theory of light-like soul in an attempt to reconstruct Heraclides' theory of soul.

1. On Soul: The Sources

1.1 Fragments

The fragments collected by Wehrli in the section Seelenlehre can be divided into three groups: (a) testimonia: the mention of the title occurs in Plutarch (49) and could be surmised perhaps from Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Republic (54A); (b) the story of Empedotimus (52-8); (c) the doctrine of soul as light-like body (46-50).

Before Wehrli, Voss printed these fragments in a different arrangement, and Wilamowitz published the Empedotimus fragments in an appendix to his book Der Glaube der Hellenen.3  

Wehrli's collection was supplemented by Gottschalk who added a passage from Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4, 59 (= 95B)1 and supplied contexts to fr. 96 Wehrli (= 52, Philoponus On Aristotle's Meteorology 1.8, 117.10-13)6 and 46 (A, C, D).6

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1 Generally, I use the concept as defined in Kidd 1997 (i.e. only the passages where a given author is mentioned by name qualify as fragments), but assume that passages where just Empedotimus is mentioned are also fragments of Heraclides.

2 On Soul, 26-33 (28 = 49 29 = 46A; 30 = 46C; 31 = 46B, 32 = 47; 33 = 48); dilation Ahaiei è Peri tôn en Haidou + Empedotimus è Peri tôn en Haidou (vel ex oraculis); 34-48 (Ahaei: 34 = 80; 35 = 130; 36 = Proclus In Plat. Tim. 2.8.8-10 (not in Wehrli or this collection); 37 = 86; 38 = Schoil. Od. A 571 (s.n.); 39 = 131 and DL 8.21; 40 = 132; Empedotimus: 41 = 54A; 42 = 57; 43 = Plut. De laetere vis. 7, cf. Plut. Consol. ad Apoll. 55; 44 = 50; 45 = 52; 46 = 53; 47 = DL 1.25; 48 = DL 8.72.

3 Wilamowitz, 1932, 535-9, includes fragments 54A, 56, 50, 53 (noting the reference to Kpóvè as mistaken); 55, 57. He attributes these fragments to Peri tôn en Haidou (so too Biede 1945, 54; Dieterich 1895, 129, 3); see discussion in Gottschalk: 1980, 59 n. 35.


5 Gottschalk 1980, 149-54.


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In an important article,2 Whittaker added an epigram by Gregory of Nazianzus (95C),3 a passage from Pseudo-Nonnus' Scholia mythologica (95D), and, significantly, a passage in Psellus (Or. 24, 87, 93 Littlewood = 54B), which is also a fragment of Poseidonius not in Theiler or EK and an uncollected fragment of Iamblichus. I have added here Psellus' Court Speech 1.898 (= 54C).

Wehrli's fr. 95 (= 58) is now attributed to Damascius in the light of Westerink's work on Alexandrian commentators.4

Wehrli's fr. 100 (= 48) does not mention Heraclides, and although it is likely that Heraclides is referred to as the author of the doctrine, there is no way to attest the argument as his with any certainty.5 Fr. 103 W. is attributed to Heraclides Lembus.6

Fr. 101 Wehrli (= 51) does not seem to contain anything concerning soul explicitly, but Wehrli hypothesises that Heraclides' advice could be interpreted in the light of his doctrine of light-like soul.7

1.2 Title

In the list of Heraclides' works in Diogenes Laertius,8 we find the following two titles: On Soul and On Soul Specially (kat' idían). The meaning of kat' idían is not clear, and the text was suspected early on.9 Wehrli tentatively assigned all his fragments under the heading

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1 Whittaker 1997.

2 Noted also by Capelle 1917, 42 n.2.


5 See p. 96 and nn. 21, 22 below.

6 On Democritus's suggestion and tradition of burial in honey, see Cèbe ad loc.

7 Going back to an early Peripatetic source (Moraux 1951 argues for Hermippus, Wehrli for Sotion as its source). See Wehrli 1969, 64-3; Gottschalk 1980, 6 n. 20; Moraux, 1951, 220-1; Meijer 1978; Sollnerberg 1992, 3551-5. The titles of Diogenes' list do not coincide with the titles preserved by other authors, such as Plutarch.

8 Voss 29 prints the text with Reiske's emendation, i.e. inserting soi instead of comma after vo giving: πω τωι και πωι ζηνοι και πω τινι ζηνοι πω τινι. The emendation is printed in the apparatus by most modern editors, including Wehrli and most recently Marcovich. There is a lot to be said for it, because it helps to make sense of πωτι ζηνοι, which Voss correctly cites in parallel with πινους τε πωι ζηνοι (after the list of titles devoted to particular virtues) as an evidence of editorial activity of the compiler of the list. On Reiske's readings of DL, see Diels 1889, 302-5. This would not make it easier to decide where the theory of light-like soul and the story of Empedotimus belong, but would at least eliminate one textual obscurity.
Seelenlehre to these two works, although only one fragment (102 W. = 49) has an explicit reference to the title—and regrettably nothing but the title; the content has no direct connection with the subject. Hirzel suggested, on the basis of the reference made in Justin’s epitome of Trogus, that Heraclides’ wording (specifically, the identification of the suckers as Hyperboreans) reflects the Delpthic oracle through which the ambassador of Massilia learned about the capture of Rome, but this does not seem to be borne out by the text. The fragment confirms the broad date for Heraclides, placing him in the generation of Aristotle; reference to the Hyperboreans and Plutarch’s comment about the mix of fact and fiction suggest the kind of plot usual for Heraclides, but there is nothing more specific. Wehrli prints his fr. 103 (= Servius In Aeneiden 1 273, rejected in this edition) as a tentative parallel to 102 (= 49), on the basis of the fact that in both passages there is an assumption of the Greek origin of Rome. But already Jacoby attributed the text of fr. 103 to Heraclides Lembus, and this attribution has been defended recently by Frascetti.

1.3 Empedotimus

This group of fragments goes back to one original work, whatever its title. In modern scholarship, before the details of the story became available from Proclus (54A, 56), the question seems to have been whether Empedotimus was some famous historical character, e.g. a local cultural hero obliterated in later tradition. After the publication of Kroll’s edition of Proclus’ Republic commentary in 1899, the prevailing tendency was to deny any historicity behind Heraclides’ anecdote. It was suggested by a number of scholars that Empedotimus is a fictional name, based either on Empedocles or Empedocles + Hermotimus. But in fact there is independent evidence for this name, both epigraphical and literary, so even if the name of Empedotimus is a conscious literary allusion made by Heraclides, it is still based on the choice of an existing name rather than a poetic invention.

The main reason for common scepticism about historicity is that we do not have any extant tradition about Empedotimus apart from Heraclides. This does not mean that such a tradition did not exist: arguments ex silentio are difficult to sustain; but there is no evidence to work with.

The earliest authors reported to mention Empedotimus are Posidonius (54B) and Varro (57). It is likely that both read the dialogue. Heraclides’ writings were influential in Cicero’s time: Cicero himself and Varro are attested as professing to imitate him; Asclepiades of Bithynia is reported to have developed in his physiological the

23 Hirzel 1895 (I), 327 and n.2.
24 The text does not say that the embassy learnt about the sack of Rome from the Oracle, rather that the embassy heard this news on their way back from Delphi. (just. Phil. hist. 43.5.8; partes pacis et superstitiae fandata, reverentiae a Delphic Massiliaeiam legati, qui mihi munera Apollini itineri, audientem urbem Romanam a Gallis captam incesantario. Here reverentia surely modifies audientem.) The Gauls are not called Hyperboreans in this passage, and even assuming that the original oracle (granting that it had been given) was so interpreted by the Massilian people on the basis of their better knowledge of local terrain, further details of the story (collecting gold and silver, 43.5.8–10) are perhaps more in line with Roman than with Delpthic tradition.
25 Other contemporary references to the sack of Rome include Aristotle F 703 Gigon and Thespisopera FGrH 118 F 317.
28 So Wehrli ad 103.
29 FGrH (840 F 400).
idea of anarmon onkoi which he might have found in Heraclides. It is likely that Cicero draws on Heraclidian material in the Dream of Scipio. Posidonius, who is probably familiar with several works by Heraclides, is said to have “athetized” the story of Empedotimus (54B). Psellus’ report about this is extremely short, and the exact target of Posidonius’ criticism is not clear; it can be (especially by contrast with Iamblichus’ approval) the fanciful tale itself, or perhaps some details of the cosmological picture with which Posidonius disagrees, or both. In any case, it seems clear that he takes either the whole story or a certain part of it (specified further by the lost context) to be a literary fiction.

Other sources which mention the name of Empedotimus include Clement (55), Iamblichus ap. Psellus (54B); Proclus On Plato’s Republic (54A, 56); Damascius On Plato’s Phaedo (58); Damascius quoted by Philoponus in his commentary on Aristotle’s Meteorology (52 and Gottschalk 1980, 149–54). It is hard to tell whether any of these authors had direct access to Heraclides’ work.

Bolton has argued, on the basis of circumstantial evidence, that Clement’s passage which lists the pagans who had the power of foreknowledge (55) ultimately goes back to Heraclides. The excerptor or the compiler of this list appears to be taking all the literary figures as historical, but this may be dictated by his goals rather than the tradition with which he works.

Iamblichus, Julian, and their Christian opponents present Empedotimus as a historical character (the “neo-pagans” as a true case, the Cappadocians as a charlatan). Iamblichus’ enthusiastic acceptance of the story is understandable in the light of his interest in theurgy, since the real existence of Empedotimus would give him a trump card in his polemic against its critics. Ironically, it seems that Christian opponents of paganism, such as Gregory, also preferred real charlatans to mere literary characters, because the former could be more impressively exposed in their folly and thus indirectly testify to the Christian cause. On the other hand, the fact that Empedotimus is spoken of as the author of his own story indicates that Empedotimus is given a narrator’s part in Heraclides’ dialogue. It seems useful to expand Webri’s citation of the Suda in 53 to include the line about Iamblichus, because it may shed some light on the source of this fragment. The sentence may also suggest that Iamblichus was familiar with Heraclides’ dialogue, or at least its plot.

Proclus’ agenda in his Republic commentary (defence of Plato’s myth of Er against the criticisms of Colotes) also makes Empedotimus’ historicity highly desirable. Proclus’ text suggests that Empedotimus’ vision was told in the first person—and Proclus knew that Heraclides was the author. Damascius has not recorded any views concerning the dramatic framework of the story, being more interested in some of its ideas; but he also refers to this work as “the account of Empedotimus” (δ ᾿Εμπεδότημος λόγος), thus also suggesting a first-person account.

1.4 The Plot

The dramatic setting of the dialogue is described by Proclus who tells us that Empedotimus was part of a hunting group. Around noon...
he fell behind the group and had a vision of Pluto and Persephone who appeared to him in a halo of light. 39 Through this light, or “by means of it,” 40 he saw “the whole truth about the soul in direct visions (ἐπιτόκτονος ἀπόθεμα).” As Reiche points out citing as a parallel Phaedr. 246C–247C, on Plato’s view, the spectacles would include the Forms, but for Heraclides they will contain a cosmological and eschatological picture of the soul’s journey in Hades. 41 Other sources tell us of three gates and three roads to heaven (57), mention three heavenly realms (58), and the Milky Way, which is identified as a path of souls in the afterlife (52, 50).

It is hard to say how much of the content of the dialogue is covered by the fragments: it is usually assumed that the missing parts were devoted to the elaboration of the doctrine of the light-like nature of soul. 42 Radermacher suggested that an episode with Hecate in Lucian’s The Lovers of Lies 22–4 might be a parody of Heraclides’ dialogue, 43 and conjectured on this basis that Empedotimus’ story contained a part about the underworld proper. 44 Lucian’s dialogue mocks the superstition and a related genre of storytelling, making the participants of the conversation compete in telling the most incredible ghost stories that involve someone they know. One of the stories shows some affinities with the Empedotimus myth: a man goes out hunting with his son; falling behind the group in the forest he runs into Hecate, who is holding a torch and leads him to the underworld where he gets to see all the unseizable sights. The case of Empedotimus is only a part of a more general argument in which Radermacher seeks to establish the antecedents of the plots to several of Lucian’s dialogues in the earlier literary or mythological tradition, by tracking some core elements of the narrative which remain unchanged in the process of literary borrowing. He bases his argument on a number of verbal and structural parallels between the two stories, but the parallels are not striking. 45 Even assuming that Radermacher is right, it is not clear whether Lucian’s text can help to reconstruct Heraclides’ story: the ‘heavenly’ part is absent in Lucian’s account and we cannot be sure of the precise scope of the intended parody.

If Clement’s report which credits Empedotimus with a power of foreknowledge is accurate, one might imagine that the lost parts contained some related episode in which it would be displayed, in a way similar to the prophecy given to Scipio by Scipio the Elder in Cicero’s Dream 10–12, or even some of Lucian’s maverick prophets. 46

Proclus (56) contrasts Empedotimus’ vision with the vision of Cleonymus of Athens, a character of the dialogue by the Peripatetic Clearchus of Soli (fr. 8 Wehrli). Cleonymus’ vision is “catlectic,” i.e. taking place when he is in a state “between life and death.” Proclus describes it as a mental process which takes place “without a body,” whereas Empedotimus’ vision does not transcend the category of embodied sensible experience. 47

39 Wilamowitz, 534: “dem schlafernden Jager”; Reiche 1993 argues that he is awake.
40 Festugière, loc.
43 Radermacher 1902, 202–5; cf. Wehrli, loc.
44 About Empedotimus he says: “Aber er hat sicherlich noch mehr [vgl. than extant fragments tell us] gesehen; sonst könnte Proclus sich nicht auf die Geschichte berufen, um zu beweisen, dass Menschen von den Dingen im ‘Hades’ Kenntnis zu erringen imstande seien. Darunter kann unmöglich die Milchstrasse, wenigstens nicht die Milchstrasse allein, verstanden werden. Also wird man wohl annehmen, dass auch andere Beispiele als Umbiegungen einer und derselben Anekdote fassen dürfen. Sie sind durchaus Berichte, charakteristisch für die Art, mit der man solche Schwergeschichten im Altertum weitergegeben und nannte ohne viel Veränderung; dagegen werden einzelne Zeile nach Belieben ausgestaltet. Was vor allem wohltun muss, sind die beteiligten Personen; denn auf ihnen beruht die Glaubwürdigkeit der ganzen Sache, dass man nicht gerade selber der Augenzeuge gewesen sein will” (Radermacher 1902, 203).

45 The description of Hecate and Hades may be intended as a parody, but it is hard to say whether its target is the specific plot of the Empedotimus myth rather than a certain literary genre; details involved suggest the latter (199, 4–6): ἑνώτερον δὲ πατρόφρασσώ τὴν ἐπικεφαλίαν ἐνδοτοῦσαν ὑπὸ φωτός παγεῖας, ἔμφανεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ ἱερὸν ἔνα πεποτινὸς ἀπόθεμα; εἰς τοὺς δὲ φυτεύουσαν οὐκ ὄρος ἀποθεμάτως, οὐκ ἀληθεύουσαν οἰκεῖον ὑπό οἰκείων ἐνδοτοῦσαν ὑπὸ καλέσσαν, εἰς τὰ ἔργα ἐν τῇ θάνατον ἐκβάλει, τοῖς Κεβρίσιοιν, τοῖς νόμοις, οἳς γεγονόσαν ἐνων γοητείας.
46 Cicero De rep. 6.10.12. For the argument (based on circumstantial evidence) that the Clement passage ultimately goes back to Heraclides, see Bolton 1962, 157. Voss (60), followed by Bolton (132), suggests on the basis of the Suda (53) that Pythagoras might be Empedotimus’ interlocutor in this dialogue, but Julian’s reference may be to a later source.
47 56, cf. Bolton 1962, 153. Reiche’s translation of the penultimate sentence of this fragment as referring only to the disembodied kind of experience seems to me to
The case of Cleonymus is interesting also because in Clearchus' dialogue the place of punishment seems to be not the traditional underworld, but some location in the heavens. Bolte suggests that this may be a Heraclidian influence, since in Empedotimus' story the two chthonic deities appear in heaven. Thus Heraclides is thought to have adopted the concept of "heavenly Hades," which would include a place of punishment. This might reflect a contemporary tendency to treat Hades, the deity of the underworld, as equal in rank to the Olympian gods, witnessed also by Plato, who in Laws 7 introduces a month sacred to Pluto and the chthonic gods. A direct link between Plato's calendric reform and Heraclides' fragment is hard to attest on the basis of the meager textual evidence that we have, but the reason

overstate the distinction drawn by Proclus between the two cases (which is clear from the end of this chapter, where Proclus says that "Empedotimus and Cleonymus are rare").

Varro quoted in 'Servius' mentions the "three gates and three roads" as parts of Empedotimus' vision. They are situated "towards the sign of Scorpio, ... at the limit which is between Leo and Cancer, and between Aquarius and Pisces" (57). Servius' quotation comes from his commentary on Georgics 1.32-5, where Virgil, addressing August as the thirteenth god, mentions the sign of Scorpio as allowing space for a new deity. The details about the other two gates of Empedotimus' myth are omitted by Servius, even if Varro had them (possibly because Scorpio is the focus of the commentary), and no obvious interpretation of these locations is found in other ancient sources.

Varro's fragment is tentatively assigned by scholars to his Menippean satire called At the Cross-Roads before the Three Gates or On Acquiring Virtue. The satire has to do with questions of nurture vs. nature, moral education, and possibly the role and form of religious beliefs. Varro scholars, interpreting Heraclides' fragment, conclude that the three roads have to do with moral choice of some sort. This

Plato gives in the Laws of why "warlike men" should not shun this god but honor him instead — namely that "he is the best for the human race since there is no way in which (oik esin heli) the communion is better for soul and body than their dissolution" (828D-3) — might be relevant to the rationale behind the mythological setting of Heraclides' dialogue as a treatise on the soul.

2. Empedotimus' Vision

2.1 Cosmic Topography

Varro quoted in 'Servius' mentions the "three gates and three roads" as parts of Empedotimus' vision. They are situated "towards the sign of Scorpio, ... at the limit which is between Leo and Cancer, and between Aquarius and Pisces" (57). Servius' quotation comes from his commentary on Georgics 1.32-5, where Virgil, addressing August as the thirteenth god, mentions the sign of Scorpio as allowing space for a new deity. The details about the other two gates of Empedotimus' myth are omitted by Servius, even if Varro had them (possibly because Scorpio is the focus of the commentary), and no obvious interpretation of these locations is found in other ancient sources.

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21 On the role of developing astronomy and geography in "secularization" of traditional sacred resting places of virtuous souls, such as the underworld and the Isles of the Blessed, see Burkert 1972, 363 n. 70.

22 anne noum tods sidis to mesinis addas / qui locus Ergionen inter chaletia sequientes paludem — ipse tibi iam braclia contrahit ordinis? Scorpios et caeli lusta plus parte relinquat.

23 Τρομακτικός τραγούδιος (Περί ἄριστης έπειγής). The first attribution seems to have been made by Riese (cf. Wilamowitz 534: "wegen dieses Titels"). Maass 1895, 225, suggested that Varro imitated Heraclides' dialogue (224, and n. 25), but the other fragments of the satire do not seem to be related to the plot of Heraclides' dialogue. Wahrli is sceptical. In the recent editions the fragment is printed with Πραβλιτις, but scholars are aware that it may come from elsewhere (see Cébe 1997; Kenkel 2002; cf. Lehmann 1997).

24 Fr. 257-61 Aubury, Cébe 1997, 2067-70.
interpretation suggests itself in the light of the known descriptions of soul’s afterlife in the literary sources. More specific links between the fragment and the main ideas of the satires were conjectured, but no agreement has been reached. The problem is that too little of the plot of the satire can be deduced from the fragments. Generally, for the interpretation of Heracleides’ — as opposed to Varro’s — fragment, the context of Servius’ commentary seems to be more relevant.

Rohde, followed by a number of scholars, interpreted the roads and gates on the basis of chapter 7 of Plutarch’s *On “Live Unknown.”* In this treatise, devoted to the criticism of the Epicurean motto (λάθε βρισκόσε), Plutarch invokes a definition of soul as light, whose source is generally believed to be Heracleides (1130B = 48), and then goes on to describe the afterlife, emphasizing the pastimes of the virtuous in recovering the memories of their past deeds and citing Pindar’s now lost *Θρέσισ (1130C/E).* On this reading, the three roads lead to the three different places of retribution, of which only two are mentioned

(continued as the second and third): the Meadow of the Blessed and hell proper. The difficulty with this view is that Plutarch is supposed to be using Pindar’s text to elucidate Heracleides’ cosmological picture, no single known detail of which is mentioned in his explanation, the only link with Heracleides being the alleged provenance of the thesis of “soul-light” and the supporting argument.

Damascus in his commentary on the *Phaedo* 110B5–111D2 (= 58), mentions the “three realms” as a part of Heracleides’ picture of the cosmos. Heracleides’ division of the cosmos is cited after the tripartite division of the earth by the sons of Cronos in Homer II. 15, 189–93. In Homer, Poseidon gets the sea, Zeus the heavens and Pluto the underworld, the earth being common to all. Heracleides’ exegetical innovation (and the reason why he is quoted separately along with the traditional Homeric division) consists in assigning each sphere an astronomical rather than a traditional “elemental” cosmological location: Zeus rules over the sphere of fixed stars, Poseidon over the planets as far as the sun, while Pluto is given everything under the sun.

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27 Wehrli follows Rohde, Bignone and Voss. For discussion see 3.1 below.
28 And perhaps de-emphasizing the moment of oblivion provided by the Lybian water. Plutarch’s argument here does depend on the goal of his polemic. For the opposite line of argument, cf. De sera nomina vinctica, 565A9–566A10.
29 Fr. 114 B–c Bovara. Rohde takes the third (second) state to be the neutral state (like that of Homeric ἠνδοξα λεγόμενον) and cites as further parallels of a triple βεβαιωτήται are sent to the Elysian meadows: the pious are given to the Etnyan, omphalos και γενόμενον και τοῦ τῆς ἑβδομαδῆς ἄνθρωπος [MacLeod]
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, An. Rom.; and εἰ αἱ τοις ἄνθρωπος καθηκόντων παθήσεως καθαροὺς καὶ ἀθάνατους [MacLeod] ἡμείς παραδόντος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ υποδέχεται τός, οὐκ οὖ καταβασθεῖται τὴν θάνατον, ἐν ὧν φοβοὶ τοῖς κακοδιαμόνοις σκέψεις, αὐτὴ τῷ ἔνθα μένος οὐκ ἔχει τοῖς ἀδικήσεως καὶ τοῖς καθαροῖς.”
30 204, 4–8 Jacoby. Wilamowitz 1922, 500, suggests, differently, that the trikotomi included the roads for the good, the bad, and those who joined the gods. Cumont 1949, 280 n.5 says that the *tríodos* in question is made up by two roads, for the good and bad respectively (citing *Tusc.* 1.72; *Consol.* fr. 12 Mueller = *Lact.* 3.15.6).
Whether the earth as a common territory is excluded from the division
is not entirely clear from the fragment.65
Burkert has drawn attention to the fact that according to Macro-
bius’ commentary On the Dream of Scipio 1.12.4, the road towards
incarnation passes through Cancer to Leo, with the sun moving down-
wards.67 On this basis, he has explained the location of the gate between
these two signs.68 This is perhaps the only other reference to the func-
tion of a passage between Cancer and Leo in the ancient sources. On
Burkert’s interpretation, the three kinds of souls that travel along the
three routes are those of the good (who are bound for Heraclides’ gate to
Zeus), the bad (presumably going to Pluto), and those travelling back
towards incarnation (through the gate from Cancer to Leo). The ref-
ence in Macrobius is ultimately derived from Numenius,69 through
Porphyry’s commentaries on Plato.70 Burkert’s suggestion is that this
interpretation of the gate between Cancer and Leo (and much else)
goes back to the ancient Pythagorean tradition, to which Heraclides’
story is also a witness.

I think there are reasons to believe that Numenius and Porphyry
may be dependent on later sources. The same tradition going back to
Numenius attributes to Pythagoras the interpretation of the Milky Way
as an abode of souls very similar to the one we find in Heraclides. The
attrition is found in Porphyry On the Cave of the Nymphs 28, Macro-
bius On the Dream of Scipio 1.12.3 (= fr. 34 des Places), and Proclus

65 This is important for the location of Hades. For Radermacher’s argument, see p. 100 above; cf. Wilamowitz 1932, 555.
67 Burkert 1972, 367, n.91.
68 ergo descensurae cum adiuvi in Canerno sunt, quotiam illic postea sequi-
lactum reliquerunt, adhibi in numerum sunt deorum, cum uestro ad Leonem labendo
peremittere. illic condicionis futurae ostensorum exordium. et quia in Leone sunt
raimenta assensendi et quaedam humanae naturae frivolis, Aquarius autem adversus
Leoni est et illic oriente novi occidit, ideo, cum sol Aquarium tons, Maribus parent-
ines, utpote in signo quod humanae voce contrarium vel adversum feratur. Presum-
ably the descent starts with souls still forming a part of the Milky Way, but when the
souls are sliding towards Leo, they are already partly detached from their heavenly
abode. Otherwise there would be a difficulty understanding the spatial orientation of
69 This text is included by des Places in his fr. 34; for a detailed argument with
Quellenforschung and bibliography, see de Ley 1972.

describes the realm of Pluto as beginning at the level of the Milky Way71 which is apparently located above the seven planetary spheres and not beneath the sun as in Heraclides.72 Proclus, on the other hand, reports that Numenius (not Pythagoras) uses the Homeric epithet “the folk of the dreams” (downos onetron, Od. 24.12) to refer to the Milky Way and that it is according to Numenius that Pythagoras in his secret language calls the Milky Way “Hades” and “the place of souls”. This might suggest that Numenius may have supplied the interpretation of Hades as the Milky Way himself rather than finding it in his Pythago-
rean source, whatever that was. Earlier tradition going back to Aristot-
le does not mention this interpretation of the Milky Way among the
others that it attributes to Pythagoreans.73 In fact, Wilamowitz sug-
ggested that Heraclides is Numenius’ source for the new construction of the cosmos in general and for the attribution of this view of the Milky Way to Pythagoras in particular.74

Needless to say, the attribution of this material to Pythagoras by
Numenius and later tradition should be treated with caution.75 As was
already mentioned, the Empedotimus story retold by Proclus is prob-
bly coming from Porphyry,76 who may depend on Numenius. So, Burk-
ert’s parallel is valid to the extent that there is a common tradition, and
Heraclides plays a certain role in it. What role exactly, whether that of
a conscientious exponent of ancient Pythagorean doctrines, artistically
inspired witness to the same doctrines, or just a parallel source used by
later Neoplatonic authors along with other Pythagorean sources, we
cannot say with assurance. Most probably it is some combination of

71 hinc et Pythagorases pasat a lacteo circulo deorum incipere Ditis imperium, quia
animae inde laeuae velatiae valdeatiam superam recessisse.
72 In Somn. Scip. 1.12.13.
73 See below 2.2.1.
74 Wilamowitz 1932, 535. His opinion that De an. nymph. 28 is the source of
Proclus In Remp. was corrected by more recent scholarship, but his remark: “den
Neoplatonikern zu glauben und Heraclides von äldern Pythagoreen abhängen zu
lassen ist dieselbe antikes historische Methode, die den Platon bei Orpheus oder äldern
Orphikern borgen läß” may still be valid. Of course, it is possible that Heraclides
himself attributed this view to Pythagoreans; there clearly is room for more research.
Cf. Diels 1879b, 449.
75 On his tendency to “Pythagoreanise” Platonic tradition, see Frede 1987, 1044–50;
6.19.8 and Stob. Ecl. 2.14.17 W.
76 See above (p. 106 and nn. 69, 70).
the three. In any case, we have here evidence that some eschatological motifs found in Heraclides’ myth are adapted and developed in a tendentious way by the nascent Platonist-Neoplatonist tradition from the second century C.E. onwards. The recurrence of the “gates” in this tradition is probably dependent on this adaptation, and cannot tell us much about Heraclides’ source.

2.2 Milky Way and Soul-vehicles: Evidence in Damascius and Iamblichus

2.2.1 Damascius

While Alexander and Olympiodorus make no mention of this myth in their commentaries on Meteorology, Philoponus discusses it at some length. His source is Damascius who approved of the view of the Milky Way as located in the heavenly (not sublunary) realm and upheld it against Aristotle’s theory. According to Aristotle, the Milky Way is formed as a result of dry exhalation being heated by the motion of heavenly bodies; the mechanism is similar to the one Aristotle uses to explain comets. In support of his explanation Aristotle cites the fact that the brightest stars are located in the area of the Milky Way.

Both Damascius and Philoponus are inclined to place the Milky Way higher up, in the region of fixed stars. Damascius argues that the Milky Way neither has exhalation as its matter nor is formed in the sublunary realm. He cites approvingly the story of Empedotimus, which he calls a “fact” and not a “tale.” It is not clear whether he had any access to Heraclides’ text, as we have seen. The plot of the dialogue was known to late Platonists, including Proclus. Here are some doctrinal points which Damascius establishes as germane to the description of heaven in the Empedotimus story:

(i) The Milky Way is the road of the souls going through the Hades in the heavens.
(ii) In their progress the souls get cleansed.
(iii) The heavenly circle is a divine structure (explanation of the myth of Hera’s milk: no soul will ascend until it draws in some of Hera’s milk).
(iv) The Milky Way is a certain disposition of the heaven, imperishable, starry, and owes its milky appearance to the density of small stars.

In fact, the view according to which the Milky Way is located on the fixed sphere is attributed to Theophrastus in Macrobius’ *In Somn. Scip. 1.15.4* (= fr. 116 FItS&G, with the parallel in Philo Prov. 2.89, Achill. Isag. 55.17–8 Maass, Manilius, Astron. 1.723–8). On the significance of the issue in the tradition, see Mansfeld 2005, 53–4, n.110.

Philoponus, in Meteor., 116, 36–117, 8. Philoponus cites two objections made by Damascius (which he himself takes over in his critique of Aristotle’s arguments): (i) none of the effects formed in the exhalation can hold for a very long time without change, but the Milky Way does not undergo any visible changes at all; (ii) if the Milky Way is formed in the aether, and aether in its motion lags behind the circular motion of heavenly bodies (the point made by Aristotle himself in his discussion of comets), then the Milky Way should be lagging behind the fixed stars as well; but this does not happen.

117, 12–2 Haduck: φιλός για ημέρας (sc. Ἐμπεδότημος) ὑδόν εἶναι ψυχής τῷ γάτῳ των Αθηνῶν ἐν ἑρατί διαφοροποιημένοις.
117, 12–1: καὶ ἐν Θεσποροποιημένη, φαίνει οἱ Δαμασκίνους, εἰ καὶ ψυχάδει ημέρας τὸ τούτου τῷ κύκλῳ τῆς γενεσίας. Τὸ τοῦτο ἐν οἰδapia after κύκλῳ, suggested by Haduck, is not necessary, cf. Philop. In GC 248, 6; 313, 13, also 298, 16 (the image seems to be standard).
117, 19–21 (καὶ ἐν οἰδανοί νων οὐκέτι διάφορον ἐν οἰδανοί νων, ἀστέρυξι, μικρὸν αὐτέρξιν πυκνότητα γαλακτικήν).
Heraclides of Pontus

(i) indicates that the state of souls in the Milky Way is transitory. Damascus holds that the Milky Way is a permanent astronomical phenomenon: whatever transformations the souls might undergo, they should not interfere with this status of the "Milk." (ii) says that it has the function of purgatory. Gottschalk points out that this may come not from the Empedotimus story, but from a Neoplatonic theory of soul’s descent, although as we have seen in the Cleonymus story, the idea of heavenly purgatory had some currency in Heraclides' time.87 (iii) The myth of Hera’s milk also occurs in the "Pythagorean" version of the myth reported by Numenius, although the function of milk seems to be presented differently by Damascus.88 This seems to be Damascus’ elaboration of some Platonist readings of Heraclides, although the view of heaven as a divine arrangement is certainly supported by Heraclides’ fragments.

Damascus’ definition of the Milky Way (iv) displays a number of affinities with the definition attributed to Democritus by the doxographical tradition:

Δημώτης μόνον καὶ μικρὸν καὶ συνεχών ὁστέων
συμφορτιζόμενον ἄλλοις συναντησομένοι διὰ τὴν πύκνοναν.

Democritus [holds that the Milky Way is] a meeting of rays because of the density of many small continuous stars which give light together (Plut. Epist. III 1 893A 4–6 (cf. Stob. EcI. 1.27 1) = "Αἰτία " 3.1.6).89

87 See Clearchus fr. 8 W. above p. 102 and n. 48.
88 Damascus, ap. Philop. In Meteor. 117, 14–9. Numenius seems to be saying that the souls are enticed into the descent by milk and honey: δῆμος δ' ὀνείρων προσκόμισαν αἱ ψυχαι, ἃς συνεγερσάθησα φθοήν εἰς τῶν γαλακτῶν τῶν σῶματος δ' εἰς συνέκρηται αὐτῶν τοῖς ψυχικοῖς μέλι καιρούμενοι γύλακες ὡς ἐν διπύκνωσι 32 des Places), cf. Proclus, In Remp. 128 Kroll (= fr. 35 des Places), Macrobius In Somn. Scip. 1.12.3 (cf. fr. 34 des Places). In all three fragments milk is taken to be a milder and more agreeable kind of corporeal nourishment used to attract the soul naturally averse to generation. Damascus also refers to generation, but takes it to be "the generation in the soul" (n. 84 above). The role of milk, on Damascus’ view, consists in cleansing αὔξησιν ἀνακρίνοντας καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ μεταβολομένου, ὡς σὺ ἀνείπου ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου ψυχὴ μὲ σάρκος τοῦ "Ραῶν χαλκιόνας, ὃ ὦν ἐν μὲ τρίχη τῆς ἐν τῷ γύλακε τούτῳ κεχυμένης προνείοις αὐτοῦ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ".

89 The source is Aristotle Meteor. 1.8, who attributes this view also to Anaxagoras.

Heraclides’ On Soul (?) and Its Ancient Readers

Unlike Numenius, Damascus gives a physicalist interpretation of the animate constituents of the Milky Way describing them as small stars. One would like to know whether he found any of this in his source for the Empedotimus story; unfortunately, our sources do not tell us. Heraclides’ view is not mentioned in the ‘Aetius’ chapter on the Milky Way. The view that the Milky Way is made of souls does not occur in Aristotle’s discussion of earlier views in Meteorology 1.8.90 It is not found in Macrobius, who, however, notes in the beginning of his exposition that he has omitted mythological accounts.91 This view occurs in Cicero’s The Dream of Scipio 16, whose source could be Heraclides,92 and it is mentioned, anonymously, by Manilius last in his list which otherwise largely coincides with that of Macrobius.93 In these later sources, the "souls’ view is not linked with any specific cosmological theory: it is either invoked in an explicitly mythological context, as in Cicero, or contrasted with the naturalist accounts, as in Manilius.

With regard to the precise place of the stuff of the Milky Way in the hierarchy of being, Damascus disagrees with “Empedotimus,” and presents it differently: “Anaxagoras and Democritus hold that the Milky Way is the light of certain stars. The sun, they say, in its course beneath the earth, does not shine upon any of the stars; the light of those upon which the sun does shine is not visible to us, being obscured by its rays, while the Milky Way is the direct light of those stars which are screened from the sun’s light by the earth” (345a5–23). Cf. Manfald 2005, 33–4.

90 Aristotle mentions two mythological accounts: “The so-called Pythagoreans give two explanations. Some say that the Milky Way is the path taken by one of the stars at the time of the legendary fall of Phaethon: others say that it is the circle in which the sun once moved. And the region is supposed to have been scarred or affected in some other such way as a result of the passage of these bodies” (345a14–9). Both views are reproduced in ‘Aetius’ 3.1.2, contrasted with a third ‘Pythagorean’ account, naturalist but sceptical; see Manfald 2005, 29–44 for discussion.

91 In Somn. Scip. 1.15.5: sed nos fabulosa reiecteas ex tarnum quae ad naturam eius visa sunt pertinere dicemus. Macrobius does not mention the Pythagorean stories of the sun’s old road and Phaethon which most probably were in his source. On the doxographies dependent on Posidonius, see Kiiid 1988, 487–8.

92 Wilamowitz points out the possibility of Neo-Pythagorean influence on Cicero (Wilamowitz 1932, II, 535).

93 Astrom. 1.758: un fortis animae dignissique numina casto il corporibus resolvite suis terraque remissa ilia locum migrat ex arbo saepeque habitantis caelest / inter eos vivunt amos mundique fruanse? On Manilius’ sources, cf. Diels 1879a 229, 1876 489. Wilamowitz cites as parallel Ovid. Met. 1.168: est via sublimis, caelo manifesta sereno, lactea nomen habet, condor notabilis ipso, hac tuer est superis ad magni tota Tonantis.
saying that it is unlikely to be the made of soul-vehicles: because its constitution is so bright and star-like, and always in the same state, it must be higher, perhaps composed of divine beings.\(^9\)

Philoponus seems to have had no direct access to the text of Heraclides: his discussion closely follows Damascius’ paraphrase adding no independent information about Heraclides’ theory.\(^9\) In the course of his criticism of (iv),\(^9\) replying to his objection on behalf of those who take the Milky Way to be constituted by souls, he corrects Damascius’ presentation of their view, explaining that they do think that the souls which constitute the Milky Way are of the same stuff as heavenly bodies, and are so called “star-like” and “radiant.”\(^9\) Philoponus’ source for this is not revealed. Gottschalk tentatively suggested that he might

\(^9\) 117, 21-6: φυσικά δὲ χάρισμα, φορά, λέγων οὐκ εὐλόγην τής αοιδάσσῃς αὐτοῦ λαμπράς ὅπως καὶ ἀστρονομίας φανερόμενης, καὶ καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ἱκανότας ἐξούσιας, διὰ τί δὲ μὴ βασικὸν διαμορφωμένην φύσιν, διὰ τί δὲ μὴ πρώτον θεῶν, ἀπὸ θεῶν γὰρ ἀνέκοψα, ἀνὴρ καὶ ταύτα τῆς ἀοιδάσσῃς. ἀλλὰ τις τε ἐνεχθήσθη μᾶραν τοῦ σωματικίου, τοῦ ὧν ἄνεκα θεῶν καὶ θεῶν λείπει, ἀπὸ τοῦ φυσικοῦ, συμπεριλαμβανομένου. “And it is not reasonable, he says, to call [it] the vehicles of the souls, since it is obviously so bright and star-like, and always is disposed in the same way. And why, indeed, not of the divine souls, why not gods, in the first place? For this specialty, too, must have its beginning from gods. Particularly since it has been shown to be the part of heaven, how would it fail to be god and full of gods, seeing that it fills the invisible heavens?” On the basis of this criticism, Gottschalk concludes that the notion of soul-vehicle was present in Heraclides’ text (Gottschalk 1980, 153), but the issue should be treated with caution, as we have a third-hand report in the tradition where the notion of soul-vehicle has become a common technical term.

\(^9\) Elsewhere in this commentary, using a secondary source, such as Alexander’s In Meteor., when he encounters Alexander’s citation from Aratus, he gives his readers a fuller version (cf. Alex. 42, 2 with Philop. 112, 36-9). Olympiodorus, a later scholar, does not even mention Heraclides’ theory in his commentary on this chapter (although he is familiar with both Ammonius’ and Alexander’s treatments of the subject).

\(^9\) 118, 5-10: καί αὐτὸς γόνον τοῦ πλασμάτος τῆς ἄοιδας θεολογίας αἰσθητῶς εἰς φύσιν εὑρήκατο εἰς αὐτὸν αὐθόμον καὶ αὕτης εἶναι γάρ σημάδη τῶν γεγονότων τοῦ σωματικίου ταῦτα διάθεσεν διάθεσιν, ὀστρακόν, μερός οτέρων συνάντησε γελοίτως ὑπολογίζωσαν.

\(^9\) 118, 14-20: τοῦτο δὲ σοί αναγιγνάτας καὶ ἀπὸ χάρισμα τῶν ἡμετέρων φυσιῶν ὑπολόγισαν τὸ γάλλα τῆς ὑσωτάς τῶν σωματικίων αὐτόχροως, ἄκορες ἀστρονομίας καὶ αἰσθήματα, ταῦτα καλοῦσιν, αἴσθωμα ἦς τῶν ἡμετέρων εἴδους συναντών ταῦτα αἰσθήματα, εἰ δὲ καὶ ψυχή τοις κατ’ αὐτὸν διάδοσις πάνως τῆς ὀμοίως εὐθύνης τριήμερος.
described as an abode of the rational souls, as yet another of Philo-ponous’ texts tells us. 103 Philoponus seems to be using this theory to attack the Heraclidies/Damascius view of the Milky Way as the dwelling place of souls, pointing out that the latter view fails to explain why souls thus understood have to gather in the Milky Way, since they could travel everywhere. 104 Philoponus closes on a sceptical note, berating Damascius for buying into such a cheap myth where one ought to use the method proper to natural science, or withhold judgement if the subject transcends the scope of natural phenomena. 105 He does not seem inclined to relate the vehicle theory to Heraclidies’ theory of soul (perhaps because he does not know it).

2.2.2 Iamblichus

The only fragment to link the soul’s constitution with the Milky Way comes from Iamblichus’ On Soul preserved by Stobaeus (50). It is possible that Iamblichus draws on some unknown doxographical tradition, and it is likely that he does more than simply copy his sources.

The context of 50 is the discussion of different Platonic theories of the soul’s descent. Iamblichus presents the views of three groups of Platonists on the starting point of descent and on the status of descended souls. 106 The first group (1), which includes Plotinus, Porphyry and Amelius, holds that (a) souls descend to bodies from the transcendent region; (b) this descent all souls have equal status in entering the bodies. According to the second group (2), which claims affinity with Plato’s view in the Timaeus and contrast with (1): (a) the souls descend from both transcendent and intracosmic regions, as determined by divine lots; 107 and (b) bodies are assigned to the descending souls commensurately to their respective rank, in the process of descent. (3) The third group of Platonists differs from (1) and has in common with (2) (a) that the souls descend from intracosmic places as well; 108 but differs in (b) not recognising divine lots as playing a role in such descents. The mechanism of descent on this third view is not further specified, but Iamblichus indicates that there are several types, of which the main two involve either (i) a transfer from some special body of fine texture (coming from the Milky Way, or heavenly spheres, or around the moon); or (ii) a transfer from another solid body. 109

Heraclidies’ view according to which souls constitute the Milky Way is appended to this third tenet, represented by the two shadowy figures of Eratothenes and Poltemly the Platonist, 110 and still more mysterious “others,” according to whom soul “is always a body,” transferring (at birth) from a lighter, finer body into the hard, earthy one. 111 Apparently, according to this theory, the soul is somehow distinct from its bodily receptacle (the word okhëma, “vehicle,” is never used in this passage), so that its ascents and descents are construed as the processes in which it leaves one kind of receptacle only to enter another one, but is distinct from both. This kind of theory would have been a target of the argument developed by Alexander of Aphrodisias against soul’s movement cited by Simplicius in his commentary on Physics 6.4.

Alexander here, pulling everything to his own doctrine of the soul which says that the soul is inseparable from body, says that this is clear also from the present argument: (1) if the soul is incorporeal and partless, (2) what is partless does not move, if something of a moving thing is that from which it moves, and something, into

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103. See 290, 7-9 Rabe: πεύεις γονίν τῶν παρὰ ἄνδρος θεολόγων καὶ τῶν γαλαξίων καλώμενον κάθεν λαγών εἰναι καὶ χώραν πολὺ ποιμὴν λαγών λαμβάνειν.
104. The following objection stated by Philoponus earlier in the discussion might be another allusion to the same Neoplatonic theory of soul-vehicles: οὐκ ἔσσει τῶν φυσών ἀμφότεροι ἄριστοι τοῖς ἄνθρωποις τοῖς καταξιώμαται οὐκ ἔσσει τοῖς ὄντοις ἄνισθα χεῖρα τοῖς πολλοῖς μὲτα τοῖς πολλοῖς πάντωσι (115, 21-4 Haydock).
106. For a detailed analysis of the Neoplatonic doctrines, see Finanore & Dillon, 2002, esp. 149-53. Our 50 is a part of Iamblichus’ De an. sec. 26, Finanore & Dillon.
107. "Descent" proper (σαβαθότης) is the last stage of soul’s downward process. The whole process includes its transcendent being (θεολόγως) and its "sowing" (σπέρμος),
108. coming to be associated with the cosmic god, and finally its embodiment in the world of generation. (See Finanore & Dillon 2002, 150-1).
109. Iamblichus De anima 25 (54, 8-14 Finanore & Dillon).
110. Both types are anticipated by Plotinus in Enn. 4,3,9,1-8, who may be Iamblichus’ source.
111. On this Poltemy, see Dihle 1957 (the argument is that this Poltemy is identical with Poltemy the Gharib); on Eratothenes, see Solmsen 1942, who argues that this is the Alexandrian scientist of the second century B.C. Cf. also Haese 1965, 351 n.54 ("der unbekannte Poltemosios, wohl ein Iamblichus nahestehender alexandrianischer Platoniker des 4. Jh. n. Chr.").
which it moves, (3) and what is not moving is not separated. (4) Some philosophers, he says, trying to avoid this incongruity, fit around it some body as a vehicle, unaware that by virtue of this they either (4a) say that body goes through body, seeing that the soul enters every body while being with a body, or (4b) separate it even from this [body] and make it move by itself as it enters into bodies. (964, 14–23 Diels)

On Alexander's own theory, soul is incorporeal, inseparable from body and immobile.112 The argument he presents here shows that it is inseparable from body if it is incorporeal and partless, the intermediary step being that it is immobile since it is partless. The opponents to whom he refers supply a bodily vehicle in order to make the soul mobile. Probably his information about the nature of the vehicle was not specific, because Alexander sketches two refutations of this move, one (4a) for the version according to which the soul itself is corporeal, another (4b) for the version according to which it is not corporeal. As we can see, Alexander does not make any allowance for a special status of "fine-textured" vehicle: for him it is either "corporeal," i.e. on a par with a "shell-like" body (with the paradox of two bodies occupying the same place ready at hand), or incorporeal, in which case the move does not actually salvage the argument of the opponents, but only postpones his conclusion by one step. It is clear that his opponents are Platonists, and that they adopt some version of a corporealistic theory of soul similar to the ones described by Iamblichus.

Iamblichus does not mention light as a specific stuff of which the soul is made according to Heraclides. The soul-stuff is captured by a more general description, i.e. a "finer-textured" body.

3. Light-like Soul: Concept and Arguments

The theory of light-like soul is attributed to Heraclides in several doxographical sources, in a very similar, terse wording in each case. The sources include Tertullian, Macrobius, Ps.-Plutarch, Theodoretus and Philoponus. The first four (probably going back to the same source)113 use "light" or "light-like" as a key term in the definition of soul; Philoponus uses "etheral."114

Doxographical fragments give us very little information about the motives behind this definition of the soul. It is significant that Heraclides' tenet is grouped together with the views of "materialists" and "corpoarealists." There are no ostensible links with the eschatological or ethical motifs of the story of Empedotimus (and vice versa, the extant fragments of the Empedotimus story have little to say about the background theory of the soul). The closest we get to an argument in favour of this definition is the text of Plutarch's On "Live Unknown" 6 (48).

3.1 "Epistemological" Argument: The Evidence of Plutarch

In 48, the light-like nature of the soul is connected with the thesis that knowledge is the object of soul's natural desire. This latter thesis is not found in any extant fragment of Empedotimus' story, but the attribution of Plutarch's anonymous doctrine to Heraclides is accepted by most scholars, and many (though not all) consider the argument from knowledge to be a likely part of Heraclides' theory.115

Bignon took the argument to be a part of Heraclides' anti-Epicurean polemic and traced it back to the etymology sophia—sapheia attributed to early Aristotle (On Philosophy, fr. 8 Ross). The Aristotelian origin of this fragment has been convincingly called into question by W. Haase, who has shown that the etymology comes from the late Neoplatonic exegesis of Aristotle's Metaphysics 2.116 Even if the argument in Plutarch preceded the Neoplatonic one, the problem with it is that it is not specific enough to provide good grounds for an exact attribution.

Plato uses the parable of the Sun after the discussion of knowledge and doxa (474B3–480A10) underscoring the difference between

112 On the terminological discrepancy, see below. Diels 1879a, 214; Moraux 1963, 1194; cf. Untersteiner 1963, 266. Moraux expresses doubts whether Heraclides used the term "ethereal," and regards it as a Neoplatonic modification of the original definition. Moraux 1963, 1194: "die Neuplatoniker hielten bekanntlich den Äther für eine leuchtartige, flüssige Substanz. Es ist daher möglich daß der von Joh. Philoponos bezeugte Ausdruck nur eine neuplatonische Übertragung der genauen definition ist." On this assumption, the Neoplatonists would be assimilating Heraclides' definition to their own doctrine of soul-vehicles.
113 Cf. In favor of this attribution: Moraux 1195–6; Dalfino 1998, 69; Gottschalk 1980, 105–6 points out that this argument does not commit its proponent to the belief in light-like soul.
the former and the latter. The similarity between *philosophoi* and *philothemones* initially pointed out by Socrates (475E1) is obliterated in the rest of the argument, and the parables emphasize a distance between the two cognitive states. Aristotle, in the beginning of *Metaphysics* 1.1, argues that the love of sense perceptions is an indication that “all humans desire knowledge” (980a21–7). Aristotle wants to stress the continuity where Plato emphasizes the difference, so that the love of sense perception is still regarded as a proof, and the common ground, of the desire for knowledge.

In Alexander’s commentary on *Metaphysics*, Aristotle’s argument is presented in terms of Hellenistic discussions of *telos*:

> Since knowledge is a perfection of the soul which possesses unqualified cognition, and particularly of rational soul, and still more of the rational soul whose end is contemplation; and since the perfection of each particular thing is the good, and each thing has its being and preservation in the good, therefore he [Aristotle] added that generally “all people by nature desire knowledge,” i.e. naturally *(autoaphos*) they love knowledge since it is their perfection. *(1, 4–9 Hayduck)*

The love of sense perceptions, itself an indication of the love of knowledge, is explained by a natural tendency towards the proper *telos*, in a way which is characteristic of discussions of the human end in the Hellenistic schools.

The argument reported by Plutarch displays some structural affinities with this latter type of reasoning. Light and knowledge are made parallel because they are both agreeable to the soul; and it is this character of pleasure common to both that is supposed to clinch the argument.

A version of this argument, couched in terms of the Stoic theory of “appropriation” is found in Hierocles’ *Principles of Ethics* as a part of a series of proofs of the innateness of self-love:

> For nature is well capable of instilling a strong love for themselves even in such [viz., little and simple beings]. Therefore, it seems to me, the young children do not bear it easily when they are locked up in houses that are dark and deprived of any sound. For intensifying their sense-organs and not being able to hear and see they get an impression of self-destruction, and are therefore disturbed. Therefore nurses aptly tell them to close their eyes: for the fact that the privation of sights happened voluntarily and not by force soothes fear. *(Principles, 7.3–13)*

Here we have the states of darkness and acoustic deprivation that are naturally disagreeable and thus indicate that we are in our “natural” state when our sense-organs are active, this in turn being further evidence for our innate self-love. The fear of darkness is explained by the impression of self-destruction produced by an active sense organ when it is deprived of its proper objects. In Plutarch’s argument, it was assumed that soul itself is light, and thus it seeks light and shuns darkness.

Who would be Plutarch’s “philosophers,” apart from Heraclides? De Lacy and Einarson give a useful reference to *Roman Questions* 281, where Plutarch tries to explain why Roman augurs customarily have their lanterns open. He comes up with the following suggestion:

> Were they like the Pythagoreans, who made small matters symbols of great matters, forbidding men to sit on a peck measure or to poke a fire with a sword; and even so did the men of old make use of many riddles, especially with reference to priests; and is the question of the lantern of this sort?

For the lantern is like the body which encompasses the soul; the soul within is a light and the part of it that comprehends and thinks should be ever open and clear-sighted and should never be closed nor remain unseen. *(281A8–B5, trans. Babbitt)*

Here the view is invoked in the Pythagorean context; but it is not clear that Plutarch has in mind any specific source: this argument looks like...

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a rationalization. This passage is valuable because it shows us the ease with which Plutarch invokes philosophers' views, adjusts them to fit the tasks of his own argument, and does not hesitate to improvise the details and links when necessary. The point about soul-light is needed here to fit the simile of "lantern" — and it is readily available along with the argument, according to which the part that corresponds to light should be kept open.

It might be that in On "Live Unknown" 6 we are also dealing with Plutarch's rationalization of the point being proved rather than a precise report of Heraclides. The analogy between light as a physical state and an "enlightened" cognitive or moral state is commonplace in Plutarch. Plutarch's general reference to "philosophers" need not exclude Heraclides. However, as such, it does not provide enough evidence for any specific attribution.

### 3.2 The Fifth Element?

It has been pointed out by scholars that a feature of Heraclides' definition of the soul which makes it distinct among the theories developed in the circle of Plato and Aristotle is its direct appeal to a certain cosmological principle as the main physical constituent of the soul. There has been a tendency to regard this cosmological principle, namely light or light-like body, as some sort of a counterpart to Plato's fifth regular solid. It may be useful to summarise the main points of Plato's theory of elements which may be thought to have parallels in Heraclides' doctrines.

Plato describes the forms of five regular solids (Tim. 53C–55C) and assigns four of them to the four elements of traditional (post-Empedoclean) cosmology: tetrahedron (pyramid) to fire, hexahedron (cube) to earth, octahedron to water and icosahedron to air (Tim. 55D–56A). Each of the planes that make up a solid figure is further analysed into its basic constituents, right-angled triangles (of which there are two types: isosceles, for the cube, and scalene for pyramid, octahedron and icosahedron). These triangles are the basic constituents of the processes of generation and destruction. Plato says that they are the principles of the elements, to the extent to which these can be captured by the account based on likelihood and necessity. The fifth solid figure, dodecahedron, is not subject to this analysis (in fact, it cannot be), but Plato says that god used it when "painting" the whole. Plato considers the question whether the number of the worlds constructed in this way could be unlimited or at least plural: the latter suggestion is pondered and then dismissed without an argument. There are three types of elemental transformation: (i) the particles of earth can only be transformed into the particles of earth; (ii) the particles of water (more complex) are broken down into "lighter" ones of air and fire; (iii) the lighter particles (air, fire) combine to yield a more massive figure of an icosahedron (water). The mechanism of transformation is the same in all three types: the elemental solids that are changed are broken up by the pressure of the solids of a different shape, so that their constituent planes become free to enter a new geometric structure, which has to be one of the solid bodies. Thus the elements are present in a body in the form of solid particles which are changeable; Plato points out that solids come in different sizes.

Plato's "geometrical" theory of elements was clearly a subject of lively discussion in the Academy. Some early sources suggest that Plato also assigned the dodecahedron to a fifth cosmic element. Speusippus is reported as mentioning the "five figures assigned to the cosmic elements" in his work On Pythagorean Numbers, among other topics, whose sequence suggests a close dependence on the Timaeus.

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118 Tim. 53D–4–6.
119 Tim. 55C: ἐπὶ δὲ όσης ουσίας μᾶς πάντως, ἐπὶ τὸ πάν ὁ θεός αὐτῇ καταχρησίματο εἶναι διαλογισμόνοις. Cf. Wintlebach's reference to Phaedo 110B (ἐνώνα ἢ γαῖ ...) καταχρησίματον διαλογισμοῦς cited by Conard 1937, 219 n.1, who explains that διαλογισμοῦ means "making a pattern of animal figures" with reference to all the constellations.
120 Tim. 55C–D.
121 Tim. 56D1–6.
122 Tim. 56D6–E2.
123 Tim. 56E2–7.
125 Speusippus, fr. 122 Inardi Parente.
126 Moraux 1963, 1192 thinks that Speusippus himself developed the theory of the
The report on Xenocrates cited by Simplicius says that this element is aether.120 The only evidence for this view in the Platonic corpus comes from the Epinomis (now agreed to be by Plato's student Philip of Opus): the five solid bodies, viz. fire, water, air, earth and ether,121 are contrasted with the soul which belongs to a "different kind" that is incorporeal.122 It should be noticed that aether, although described as the "fifth" element (in addition to Plato's four), is not the "divine" element in this system: divine bodies are said to be composed predominantly of fire; and aether is the layer between fire and air.123 This in fact is in agreement with Plato's description of aether as the brightest and clearest kind of air in Tim. 58C-D and Phd. 111B. Philip's doctrine develops Plato's view of the particular structure of matter and extends it to the fifth element.

A different version of the "fifth element" theory is found in Aristotle, who does not accept the geometrical construction of the elements, and develops instead his own qualitative theory, while sharing the view that the four elements form the material basis of the subsular cosmos.

fifth element, although admits that it is impossible to say whether this element was unaequor or as in Aristotle or fully intracosmic as in the Epinomis. Cf. Isndari Parenz 1980 ad loc.


122 Epin. 9813B: αὔθεντος ἐν καὶ ἁρμηνευτικῇ ἐν καὶ παντοδαφοὶ ἀποτελεῖσθαι.

123 Cf. Isndari Parenz 1980 ad loc.
by Plato in the *Timaeus.* In a recent study by Dalfino, the affinities between Heraclides and Plato are also emphasized. The fragment regarded as evidence for Heraclides’ theory of the fifth element comes from Plutarch’s *On the E at Delphi* 390A:

> Nevertheless, even if this world of ours is the only one ever created, as Aristotle also thinks, even ours, he says, is in a way put together through the union of five worlds, of which one is of earth, another of water, a third of fire, a fourth of air: and the fifth some call the heavens, others light, and others aether, and others call this very thing a fifth substance, which alone of the bodies has by nature a circular motion that is not the result of any compelling power or any other incidental cause. Wherefore also Plato, apparently noting the five most beautiful and complete forms among those found in Nature, pyramid, cube, octahedron, icosahedron, and dodecahedron, appropriately assigned each to each (trans. Babbitt modified).

It has been suggested that “others call light” must refer to Heraclides. This attribution does raise several questions.

Plutarch’s list is supposed to include the doctrines of those who believe in the oneness of our world; this view is contrasted with Plato’s suggestion of the plurality of the *kosmoeis* in *Tim.* 55C–D6 (discussed by Plutarch immediately before this passage). Heraclides with his belief in the infinite cosmos might seem to be the odd-one-out in this list. But perhaps his belief in infinity is compatible with the postulate of oneness. The report that we have (74) goes back to the same doxographical source as the reports about the soul; it says that “Seleucus the Erythrean and Heraclides of Pontus [believe] that the world is infinite.” This view is distinguished from the view according to which “there are infinite worlds” attributed to Anaximander, Anaximenes, Archelaus, Xenophanes, Diogenes, Leucippos, Democritos and Epi- curus in ‘Aetis’ 2.1.3b10–14. Another group of doxographical fragments (75A–D) tells us that “each of the stars is a world”: there are minor differences in the way the physical constitution of such a world is described in different fragments, but it seems clear that each star is supposed to consist of the traditional elements, of which three are mentioned, in different combinations: earth, air and aether.

It is tempting to associate souls with the element of the intermundia. Notably, astronomical fragments (75A–D) mention aether rather than light. Philoponus’ *fr.* 47, where soul is defined as *aitheron zōna,* if accurate, would provide a bridge between the two groups of fragments. It might be relevant that our Greek sources for 46 describe soul not exactly as “light,” but as “light-like” (*phōiotēdēs*).

In any case, there is a question what theory of light Heraclides adopted. According to Plato’s explanation in *Tim.* 45B–D, daylight

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124 ‘Aet.’ 2.1.5 b4–6. Σέλευκος ὁ Ἐρυθρεύς καὶ Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Πόντιος ἄπειρον τῶν κόσμων. (Plutarch mentions Seleucus alone.)

125 The argument attached to the fragment of Seleucus cited by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī in his *Metaphysics* (Maqālih fi ma bd al-tabi‘iyyah): “If the world is limited, is it limited by something or by nothing? If by something, this agrees with my claim. If by nothing, it must be able to be impressed against the nothing and touch it, in the same way as it is limited by it” (113, 13–6 Krae) appears to deny the existence of void and argue for the infinity of one cosmos. For discussion see Pines 1966, on Heraclides ibid., 216.

126 75A: “earth, air and aether in the unlimited aether”; B: “aether in the unlimited”; C: “earth and aether in the unlimited air”; D: “earth and air.” Diels excluded the first “aether” in 75A (as an error from scribal correction of ditography of “air”). On this reading, a star-world will comprise earth and air in the unlimited aether: a plausible but not sufficiently proven picture. In any case, it is clear that the traditional elements constitute all the stars: the nature of intermundia is not entirely clear. Cf. 75A–D, where the moon is said to be ‘earth surrounded with mist’.

127 The term is present in 75A and C.

128 See pp. 113–4 above.


130 This is the Latin translation, 46B (lax) and 46C (lumiens).
is akin to the “mild” kind of fire within us: coalescing together, these two form the organ of vision. In his discussion of the elements at 58C, Plato distinguishes the kind of fire “which does not burn but provides the light to the eyes.” Ultimately, light consists of particularly fine pyramid-shaped particles. Thus the idea that the heavenly element should be directly present in one of its forms within the soul is familiar from Plato himself: that is the role of fire in his theory of vision. According to Aristotle, light is not a body, but a state of the transparent when a source of light (fire or aether) is present. Aristotle’s theory of light in the *On the Soul* is contrasted with two, or possibly three, rival “corporealist” theories:

Now, what the transparent and the light is, has been stated, namely, that it is (i) neither fire, (ii) nor body in general, (iii) nor yet an emanation of any body (for this way it would still be a body), but the presence of fire or something like that in the transparent: for neither is it possible for two bodies to be in the same place (2.7, 418b13–7).

While (i) is most probably Plato’s, it would be interesting to know the identity of the proponents of the (ii) and/or (iii). There is no way to tell, but this description would fit with what we know of Heraclides and the way he was understood by the compiler of the ‘Aetius’ who grouped his doctrine of light-like soul with corporealist theories. Immediately after this passage, Aristotle goes on to criticise the corporealist theory of light put forward by Empedocles, “or anybody else.” This latter addition might indicate that corporealist theory of light did have some following in the Academy.

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127 See Comford 1937, 247.
128 Some terminological parallels between this story and the fragments of Empedocles’ vision were pointed out by Reiche, who compared the description of Empedocles’ vision which takes place “at high noon” (ἐν μεγαλίας εὐρύσκεσιν, 54A), with the υποθαλάσσων φοῖν of Tim. 45C3 (Reiche 1993, 166–8), cf. also Crat. 418C5–6.
129 An. 2.7, 418b11–3: τὸ δὲ φῶς ἄλλο χρῶμα ἢ ἀλλοί τοιούτοις: ὅταν ἡ θελεγαμία διαφανοῖς ὑπὸ πυρὸς ἢ πυρετοῦ ὁμοῦ τὸ ἄνω σῶμα καὶ γὰρ τούτῳ ἐν τοιούτῳ ὑπέρχει ἐν καί τούτῳ.
130 τι μὲν οὖν τὸ διαφανὲς καὶ τὸ φῶς, ἐξήζει, ὡς οὐκέτι όιδ’ ὅλος σῶμα συν’ ἀφορμὴ σώματος σύνεσιν (ἐπὶ γὰρ ἐν σώμα τι καὶ σύνεσις, ἄλλα πυρὸς τοιοῦτοι τὸν παρασαμινὸν ἐν τῷ διαφανὲς ὑπὸ γὰρ ὄς σώματα ἄμα διεστάλα ἐν τῇ σωμίᾳ εἶναι.

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In placing his aether after all sublunary elements and (possibly) describing it as “light-like,” Heraclides is close to Aristotle. But he most probably does not adopt Aristotle’s distinction between the luminous body and light itself as the state of the transparent medium. 63 63 list Heraclides among those who explained the mechanism of sense perception by the theory of pores. 64 claims that Heraclides is no different from Democritus in postulating έιδόλα, presumably in the theory of perception. Although both reports are very short and general, it is clear that the mechanism of sense perception does involve some sort of corporeal agent which enters the sense organ. What could be the nature of this agent, according to Heraclides, we do not know. That such a theory would be conceivable in the circle of Plato is clear from Plato’s own explanation of the mechanism of sense perception in terms of the elemental particles in *Tim. 65B–68D*.

There is a further question about the relation between this theory of soul and the theory of matter attributed to Heraclides in the sources. Heraclides is reported to have put forward a corpuscular doctrine, whose main theoretical objects were “disjointed masses,” described as “qualitatively unlike” their compounds, but “subject to affection” and “breakable” (61, 62). The fact that the particles are breakable and changeable probably has to do with their loss and acquisition of new structure, but we are not informed about the sort of structure in question. The idea may owe something to Plato’s theory of particles of different size constitutive of different kinds of sensible bodies. 65 There certainly is a question about the relation between the “masses” and the elements.

Heraclides’ theory can be compared with the theory of Xenocrates, to whom the sources attribute a theory of partless minimal elements of physical structure, 66 and at the same time a traditional theory of four elements. 67 According to Plutarch’s report in *On the Face in the Moon*, various combinations of these elements constitute heavenly bodies:

65 In 50 discussed above, Heraclides’ view of the Milky Way is supposed to illustrate the view of those who thought of soul as a “fine-textured body.”
66 The process of dissolution of elemental solids is described by Plato with the verbs διολοθετήναι, μετεξετάσειν, κατεθέσθηναι (*Tim. 56D2, 3, 6, 56E4–5*).
67 *Tim. 57C–D.
68 Fr. 148–51 Insardi Parente.
69 Fr. 152 Insardi Parente.
Xenocrates says that the stars and the sun are composed of fire and the first density, the moon of the second density and air that is proper to her, and the earth of water [and air] and the third kind of density, and that in general neither density all by itself nor subtility is receptive of soul (trans. Cherniss).\footnote{943Bb–944A5: ὁ δὲ ἑκατονάρχης τὸν ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστήσατο καὶ τὸν ἵλιον ἐπὶ σκότος· ἐπιστήσατο καὶ τοῦ περιτοιοῦ πυρὸς· συγκεκριμένοι τὴν δὲ εἰκόνα ἐπὶ τοῦ δευτεροῦ πυρὸς· καὶ τοῦ ὄρους ἀνείπωτο τὴν δὲ γῆν ἐπὶ ἔκμετλος τῷ ἔκμετλος καὶ τοῦ τρούτο τὸν πυρὸν· διόλος· ἐπὶ τὸ πυρὸν αὐτὸ· αὐτῷ· διόλος· τὸ πυρὸν· εἰς· διέκτειν.\footnote{See e.g. Cassius Aurelianus, De morbis acutis 1.14.115; Anon. Lond. XXV 24 Diels; for a general survey, Vaillancourt 1990.}}

Xenocrates apparently distinguishes between the rarefied elements, which include fire, air and water, and “the density” which includes the earth and the corresponding dense material of which the heavenly bodies are composed. It seems that there are three “degrees” of density. It is not entirely clear in what way the minimal particleless particles are connected with the traditional elements, but the fact that the latter are described in terms of states, namely dense and rarefied, suggests that this may have to do with the way the particles are “packed” in the aggregates. This option will have been available for Heraclides.

Since ancient sources frequently cite Heraclides and Asclepiades together for the theory of anarmoi ὄντα, it may be useful to note Galen’s report in his account of the state of the breathless woman (ΕΑ). According to Galen, in Heraclides’ dialogue On the Woman Not Breathing, the body of the woman who is alive in a coma state is said to differ from the dead only in that “it has a small amount of heat in the middle parts of the body.” The reference to heat is meant to relate to the cause of the woman still being alive. We would like to hear more about the nature of this heat: according to Asclepiades, it would be adventitious upon the motion of bodily particles,\footnote{See e.g. Cassius Aurelianus, De morbis acutis 1.14.115; Anon. Lond. XXV 24 Diels; for a general survey, Vaillancourt 1990.} but our report stops here, thus leaving the question open.

3.3 Heraclides and ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΑΙΔΟΥ [ΚΑΘ’ ΑΙΔΗΝ] (ΕΑ)

A further difficulty of reconstructing Heraclides’ theory of soul is that we know virtually nothing about the functions of the embodied soul. The text known as Tyrwhitt’s fragment 1, attributed in the MSS to Plutarch, entitled Desire and Grief—Physical or Bodily Phenomena? contains a reference to Heraclides’ work On the Things in Hades which has become a subject of debate in recent discussions of Peripatetic philosophies of mind.\footnote{See Caston 1997 and 2001; Sharpley 2001.} The “fragment” is transmitted in three manuscripts of the fifteenth century, probably going back to the same archetype.\footnote{Hart, 5612 (b), Laur. 56.4 (i), Laur. 80.28 (b).} The question of authorship has been debated by early editors, but the current consensus seems to be that it is safe to attribute this text to Plutarch.\footnote{See Sandbach 1960 and 1969; Pettit 1991, 5–13.} The passage from sec. 5 that mentions Heraclides — 80 in the present edition — runs as follows (the six divisions, a–f, are my own):

(a) ἔννοι δ’ ἀντικειμένων καὶ δόξων· καὶ διαλογισμὸν εἰς τὸ σώμα κατατίθεντον, ἐν σώματι, ἔννοιαν· λέγοντις ἐκδικήσεις τοῖς σώματα διαφόρως· καὶ συνέπεται τὸ σώμα·
(b) τὸ τέλος γὰρ Περὶ τῶν ἐν Αἰδοῦς βιβλίων ἐπιγραφόμενον, (c) ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει· τῶν· παραπάνω· ἐπιπλάσιαι· καὶ δύναμις·
(d) οἱ μὲν οὖν· ἔννοιαν· τῶν· ἡμεῖς·
(e) οἱ δὲ συνθέταις· ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει·
(f) οὗτος· 

(a) Some, on the contrary, squeeze the opinion and calculation into the body, saying that there is absolutely no cause on the part of the soul, but such things are accomplished jointly by the variation and quality and power of body. (b) For the book entitled On the Things in Hades (c) in which the argument has it that the soul is co-present with the substance, (d) some think is not by Heraclides at all, (e) while others think that he composed it for the sake of a counter-attack against what others said about the soul; (f) now, written in this way, it completely destroys its substance, by maintaining that the body has in itself all the said powers.
The text of (a) is problematic, and did not satisfy any of its editors. The MSS reading θυσίης can be translated meaningfully (e.g. as suggested above), but stylistically this is highly unlikely. The reading θυτησε is preferred by Wehrli because it makes it easy to keep the MSS reading οἰκίαν where Pohlenz conjectured οἰκίαν. This reading certainly makes better sense than Pohlenz’s conjecture. The main claim seems to be quite general, namely that of the two contenders, it is body, not soul, that wins the day with the “some,” who, on our reading, should include Heraclides.

The title of the book mentioned in (b) is also mentioned by Plutarch in *Reply to Colotes* 1115A (79), along with two others, namely Zoroaster and Περί τῶν φυσικῶν ἀποροσύμνων in the list of works where Xenocrates, Aristotle and the Peripatetics are said “constantly to differ with Plato, contradicting him about the most fundamental and far-reaching questions of natural philosophy.”

In (c) we probably find the particular point on which Heraclides was disagreeing with Plato. The claim that the soul is “present along with” the body is ambiguous in more than one way. The first and obvious difficulty is the scope of the concept of soul. The word οὐσία in the phrase τὴν θυσίην τῆς οὐσίας παραιτάρχειν can refer either (i) to the substance of a living body or (ii) to the bodily mass (if we take the term in its later sense dependent on the Stoic usage). The context (bodily powers are mentioned twice in the passage) lends support to (i), but (ii) would be also be accurate according to what we know of Heraclices, and may be taken as generalizing (ii) to say that soul can only be present in a body of some sort. The rare verb παραιτάρχειν is most frequently used to explain the verb παραβιάζειν.

In (d) we have a report that Heraclides’ book was regarded by some as spurious. *Reply to Colotes* 1115A makes no such suggestion; so Plutarch himself does not necessarily share this view. Others, (e), considered it to be written as an *antiparēxagōgē*, as a *reductio ad absurdum* of what others say about the being of the soul. Gottschalk sketched two possibilities: (i) this dialogue was “a rhetorical exercise advocating a view Heraclides did not really believe”; and (ii) “pseudo-Plutarch had an incomplete copy of Heraclides’ dialogue and the authorities whom he consulted could not resolve his difficulties.” But (i) would not do full justice to the report of Plutarch in *Reply to Colotes* 1115A (whether or not he is taken to be the same as the author of Tyrwhitt fr. 1), who seems to take this dialogue as a serious work in which Heraclides disagrees with Plato. The “incompleteness” suggestion (ii) is on the slippery slope to an argument *ex silentio*. The unpalatable statement to which a reduction must lead presumably is that soul is not a real cause of the mental processes within the body: this is the interpretation given to (c) in (f), in agreement with (a).

We can take a closer look at the claims attributed to Heraclides in (a), (c) and (f).
Heraclides of Pontus

(a) Soul does not cause mental processes; mental processes are caused by bodily powers.

(c) Soul is co-present with the being (presumably of a living bodily substance).

(f) Soul has no being (ousia) (of its own, apart from that mentioned in [c]).

The claims (a) and (c) could be a fair (if somewhat dry) description of the state of the soul in the traditional Greek underworld: the souls in Homer's Hades lose pretty much all their mental properties. If Heraclides' dialogue for some reason focuses on this description and makes no reference to the concept of light-like soul and the soul-journey of the Empedotimus story, someone (especially if familiar with that concept and that story) could raise doubts about its authenticity. A reader with a dualistic agenda could also construe the claims (a) and (c) as (f), i.e. as a denial of "real" (separate, i.e. disembodied) existence to the soul.

Nonetheless, there is a way for Heraclides to be consistent in his views even in the light of this report. He could still believe in the light-like soul without making it the only cause of body's properties, including mental properties, if he assumed that there is a difference between its incarnate and incarnate state. This would not be out of line with the way Plato thought about these matters. In Plato's theory, the "embodied" tripartite soul, which is the seat of the main functions of a living body, is distinguished from the one that exists separately from the body. This "embodied" soul is its handicapped and subordinate state, where it can be described as "dependent" upon the body — temporarily. Heraclides could hold both that our thoughts and opinions in this life are products of our embodied faculties, with the corporeal soul perhaps playing some contributory role (no clear evidence for this),

and that the soul in the absence of perishable body does not produce the same kind of mental states. This analysis inevi-


178 Cf. the argument in the tenth book of the Republic (608Dff.); the dialogue where the doctrine of tripartite soul is otherwise quite central to the main argument. According to Heraclides, of course, transcendental soul itself has a special corporeal status; in this he differs from both Plato and the Epinomis (983D–984B).

In Plato's psychology, separate soul seems to have the function of providing our beliefs and actions with the qualities of truth and intrinsic correctness (cf. Republic 611B5–614A3), whereas generating beliefs and actions is a function of embodied soul.

179 In this respect, the claim of soul's lack of causal power could be derived by reduction from the assumption that soul is incorporeal.

180 Wehrl in Fr. 72 (= 80); Caston 2001, 185–9; cf. Sharples 2001, 157 (Sharples discusses the passage as Diacenechian, but says that the attribution is not certain). Caston argues that Heraclides' work is a polemical imitation of Dicaearchus, on the basis of the analogy of the report with Fr. 19 of Dicaearchus. But there is a question whether this resemblance is owed to the respective original sources or to the reporting source(s). As indirect evidence for this polemic, Caston cites 1 (sec. 92) which says that Chamaeleon accused Heraclides of plagiarism (Caston mistranslates it as saying that Heraclides was the accuser [Caston 2001, 186 n. 25]). But this is hardly relevant to the alleged philosophical debate. Plut. Adv. Col. 1115A on polemic against Plato would also need to be reconciled with this hypothesis.
Works Cited


Heraclides’ *On Soul* (?) and Its Ancient Readers

“Unjointed Masses”: A Note on Heraclides’ Physical Theory

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Our evidence for Heraclides’ physics is scanty in the extreme; any interpretation must be highly speculative. The present discussion will be no exception. It does not aim to break new ground, but rather to review existing scholarship as a contribution to making the essays collected in this volume a more complete commentary to the testimonia relating to Heraclides.³

An issue that arises at the outset concerns the relation between Heraclides’ physical theory and the theory of the structure of the human body adopted by the medical writer Asclepiades of Bithynia in the second century B.C.² Both are reported as having held a theory

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¹ I am particularly grateful to Sylvia Berryman and to Liz Pender for comments which have helped me to improve the necessarily rather tortuous presentation of the arguments in this paper. The discussion by Svitou (2005), which covers some of the same ground, only came to my attention after this paper was substantially complete, and I have unfortunately not been able to take it fully into account.

² On Asclepiades’ date cf. Rawson 1982, 360–3 (arguing that he died before 91 BC), and, more speculatively, Polito 1990, arguing that he may have lived c.216–120 BC and may have studied in Alexandria.