

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHIC BACKGROUND OF FOURTH MACCABEES

I. *The Problem*

The so-called *Fourth Book of Maccabees* is a philosophic discourse which has come down to us both in some MSS of the Greek bible (notably in the famous codices *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus*), where it bears the title *Μακκαβαίων δ'*, and in the majority of MSS of the Jewish historian Josephus, to whom the work was often falsely ascribed. Our oldest witnesses (Eusebius and Jerome) cite it under the title *περὶ αὐτοκρατοροῦ λογισμοῦ*, a title which appears in some MSS¹). This discourse is sometimes described as a "diatribe" composed on Cynic or Stoic models. Whether it was ever actually delivered or not is disputed, as is its date. A. D. Nock pronounced *Fourth Maccabees* "a speech given in a Jewish community of the Dispersion on the festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple, probably delivered in Paul's lifetime"²). Pfeiffer believes the author lived "shortly before Philo (about the beginning of our era)"³); Dupont-Sommer regards 117/118 A. D. as the most probable date of composition⁴). Most recently, Hadas has come out in favor of the reign of Caligula (37-41 A. D.)⁵).

The author, "a Jew addressing Jews" as Pfeiffer describes him⁶), is steeped in Jewish tradition; this is manifest on almost every page of the work and has never been questioned. However, Pfeiffer makes the further observation "Although the author was a zealous orthodox Jew trained in 'the Law and the

The following works are cited in the notes by last name of author only:

A. Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrième Livre des Machabées* (Paris 1939).

J. Freudenthal, *Die Flavius Josephus beigelegte Schrift Ueber die Herrschaft der Vernunft* (Breslau 1869).

M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York 1953).

R. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York 1949).

H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*² (Cambridge 1948).

For further bibliography the reader is referred to these works.

1) On the title(s) see Freudenthal, pp. 117ff.

2) *St. Paul*, p. 71.

3) Pfeiffer, p. 215.

4) Dupont-Sommer, p. 81 n. 45. 5) Hadas, p. 96.

6) Pfeiffer, p. 219.

Prophets' (18 : 10; cf. the quotations from the LXX in 18 : 13-19), he must have attended Greek schools" 7). Controversy centers around the precise nature of his Greek cultural background. It is universally admitted that the author has received a training in Greek rhetoric and that he can write artistic Greek prose of the "Asiatic" style 8). The points of disagreement are two: 1) Has the author actually made a formal study of Greek philosophy or is the philosophical content of the discourse to be dismissed as superficial coloration, the sort of philosophical jargon which could be easily picked up in the rhetorical schools? 2) *If* the author is admitted to be a genuinely philosophical writer, to what school of Greek philosophy does he adhere?

To both questions various and contradictory answers have been proposed. There is no need to rehearse here each several opinion that has been put forward on these two questions 9). The following views may be taken as representative. On the first question Heinemann writes "Der Verfasser ist in erster Linie Rhetor ... Weit schwächer ist der Verfasser vom Gehalt der griechischen Kultur berührt. Bezeichnende Anführungen aus griechischen Philosophen, wie sie selbst im Buch der Weisheit vorkommen, fehlen ... so wird man fragen dürfen, ob unser Verfasser die philosophische Bildung, auf die er freilich sehr stolz ist, nicht völlig der Rednerschule und ihren Übungen dankt ... Die Scheidung der vier Haupttugenden ... und den Leitgedanken, daß die Vernunft die Lebensführung beherrschen soll, konnte er aus Reden jeder Richtung kennen..." 10). With this contrast Pfeiffer: "The Fourth Book of Maccabees discloses a deeper knowledge of Greek philosophy than all other Hellenistic-Jewish writings, except Philo's works. It likewise strives to find philosophical ideas in the Old Testament (cf. 1 : 15-17). Thus, for instance, in 5 : 23-24 the Law of Moses is said to teach the four cardinal virtues of Plato and the Stoics..." 11)

On the second question, that of the philosophical affinities of the work, I quote again Pfeiffer: "The general theme of the book (the supremacy of reason over the passions) as well as many of the special arguments and views presented are clearly Stoic.

7) Pfeiffer, p. 218.

8) See, e.g., I. Heinemann in *RE s. v. Makkabäerbücher*, col. 803 (quoting E. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa* pp. 418 ff.).

9) For full details see the works listed above.

10) *RE s. v. Makkabäerbücher*, col. 803.

11) Pfeiffer, p. 215.

The famous Stoic paradox 'The sage is not merely free but also a king' is echoed in 7:23 and 14:2; the martyrs behave with true Stoic apathy (9:17f.; 11:25; 15:11, 14); wisdom (1:16) is defined in the Stoic manner...¹²). That the work is fundamentally inspired by Stoic teaching may be regarded as the orthodox view. There have been dissenters. Wolfson in his *Philo* states "By the time of Philo, the question whether virtue means the extirpation of the emotions or only their control seems to have been a subject of discussion among Hellenistic Jews who had a knowledge of philosophy. In the Fourth Book of Maccabees this question is the principal topic of discussion. Guided by Jewish tradition the author comes out in opposition to the Stoics...¹³). Most recently, Hadas has argued that the author was a Platonist: "... Plato is not merely an armory of adventitious arguments to confute the pagans with their own weapons, but a way of thought espoused by our author and presumably by his audience. From Plato comes such specific doctrine as the four cardinal virtues, the two parts of the soul, the destiny of human beings after death, the question of the animality of the stars. *These things, it is clear, our author drew directly from Plato and not from secondary sources* (my italics) ... If we look for a single Platonic treatise which might have been in his mind as a model, we should choose the *Gorgias*¹⁴) ... Against the background of Socrates' attitude and moral position in the *Gorgias* much that is in our book falls into focus, not only with regard to the similar posture of Eleazar confronting an actual tyrant but also in individual details. There can be no doubt that our author was a consistent Platonist. He knew Stoicism, of course, and at many points uses Stoic language and echoes Stoic views; but the general opinion that he is himself predominantly Stoic is quite mistaken ... The Stoics insisted that the sage must extirpate his emotions; Eleazar (following Jewish tradition and Aristotle) says that they must not be extirpated but controlled and directed...¹⁵).

These specimen judgments may serve to give some notion of the radical diversity of opinion which *Fourth Maccabees* has

12) Pfeiffer, p. 219.

13) Wolfson, vol. 2, pp. 270-271.

14) Hadas is here following J. Gutman who argues that the *Gorgias* was the model for *Fourth Maccabees* in a paper published in Hebrew in *Commentationes Iudaico-Hellenisticae in Memoriam Iobannis Lewy*, ed. M. Schwabe and I. Gutman (Jerusalem 1949), 25-37. See Hadas, p. 116 n. 54.

15) Hadas, pp. 116-118.

engendered. (There is, curiously, an exactly parallel problem of *Quellenforschung* in the history of classical Roman literature. I refer to the *proemia* to Sallust's two historical monographs, the *Catilina* and the *Iugurtha*. These *proemia* also have been assessed most diversely by the critics. Some regard them as instinct with profound philosophy, others as stock rhetorical introductions full of *loci communes*. Most would place them somewhere between these two poles. In Sallust, as in *Fourth Maccabees*, the immediate sources of the philosophic content are a matter of some controversy).

II. *A Clarification*

We have seen that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* has been generally, though not universally, thought to be a "Stoic". Those who deny this point out that certain "Stoic" doctrines are not accepted by this writer; in particular, it is asserted that the "Stoics" believed that the emotions or passions (*τὰ πάθη*) could be completely extirpated, whereas in *Fourth Maccabees* the Peripatetic (and Platonic! and Jewish!) doctrine that man may master, but not totally uproot, his passions is advocated. The reality is that the Stoic philosophy, like any great philosophical system, did not remain static; nor was a particular doctrine which might be widely held by individual Stoics necessarily held by all Stoics. Arthur Darby Nock once observed "In Stoicism substantial individual divergences were common"¹⁶). The practice of using the term "Stoic" without further definition or qualification has been especially mischievous in the case of *Fourth Maccabees*. Some Stoics, including the redoubtable Posidonius, had abandoned the orthodox Stoic teaching on the passions; E. R. Dodds states the case clearly:

"... [according to Zeno and Chrysippus] the so-called passions were merely errors of judgement, or morbid disturbances resulting from errors of judgement. Correct the error and the disturbance will automatically cease... This fantastic psychology was adopted and maintained for two centuries... Posidonius, we know, rebelled against it and demanded a return to Plato, pointing out that Chrysippus' theory conflicted both with observation, which showed the elements of character to be innate, and

¹⁶) *JRS* 49. 1959. 1. This was recognized in antiquity; see the remarks of Numenius ap. Eusebius' *Praep. Ev.* XIV, p. 728a.

with moral experience, which revealed irrationality and evil as ineradicably rooted in human nature and controllable only by some kind of 'catharsis'. But his protest did not avail to kill the theory; orthodox Stoics continued to talk in intellectualist terms, though perhaps with diminishing conviction...¹⁷⁾

The last great *Stoic* systematizer of antiquity, therefore, (and the one whose *floruit* most nearly preceded *Fourth Maccabees*, whatever date one posits for that work) agrees with our author that the passions cannot be eradicated. Posidonius discussed his theories about the passions in a famous treatise entitled *περὶ παθῶν* which has not survived; we owe our knowledge of this work in good part to Galen, who knew and drew directly upon the *περὶ παθῶν* of Posidonius, especially in his *De Placitis Hippocraticis et Platonis*¹⁸⁾. (The significance of this will become apparent below. I call attention now to the format of the *περὶ παθῶν*: "Das Werk war eine Schulschrift wie das des Chrysipp über das gleiche Thema, in der Form einer Vorlesung ... die Hörschaft wird angeredet (my italics) ..." ¹⁹⁾ Posidonius was a Stoic who did not hesitate to be innovative and eclectic – it is notable that he borrowed much specifically from Plato and Aristotle – but he remained a Stoic. If it is legitimate to call Posidonius a Stoic, it is surely wrong to argue that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* is not a Stoic on the grounds that he does not accept this one doctrine of Zeno and Chrysippus that the passions can be eradicated.

By the first century B. C. a general eclectic tendency had come to characterize much philosophic thought (I except Epicureanism) and some may prefer to use Festugière's vague term "philosophic *koinē*" to describe the philosophic content of *Fourth Maccabees*²⁰⁾. Certainly, with regard to many of the philosophic commonplaces in the work it is impossible to be more precise and such a general description can be a useful one, provided that one does not thereby intend to deny the presence

17) *The Greeks and the Irrational*, pp. 239–240. It is not certain that Zeno and Chrysippus were in agreement here. For this question and for the attitude of the Stoics in general (including Posidonius) on *τὰ πάθη*, the passages are conveniently collected by C. J. DeVogel *Greek Philosophy. A Collection of Texts*, Volume III *The Hellenistic-Roman Period* (Leiden 1959), numbers 951–956, 1051–1064, 1184–1190.

18) For exact references to Galen and the modern literature, see Dodds, *loc. cit.*, p. 256, notes 14–16.

19) K. Reinhardt in *RE* s. v. *Poseidonios*, col. 734.

20) This term is quoted by Nock in *JRS* 49. 1959. 1, n. 2.

of some specifically Stoic notions in the work. To derive, with Hadas, everything philosophic in the discourse directly from Plato seems to me to be a case of special pleading which seriously fails to account for the clear affinities to and echoes of post-Platonic philosophy in the work. To write, as Hadas does, “He knew Stoicism, of course, and at many points uses Stoic language and echoes Stoic views” and then maintain that “our author drew directly from Plato and not from secondary sources” is, in the homely phrase, to have one’s cake and eat it too.

I choose one example to illustrate that one cannot always draw a hard and fast line between what is specifically Stoic in the discourse and what is philosophic *koinē*. The following definition occurs in *Fourth Maccabees* 1. 16: σοφία δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν γνῶσις θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν. This definition is often adduced as a proof that *Fourth Maccabees* is Stoic: “... wisdom (1. 16) is defined in the Stoic manner” (Pfeiffer, p. 219²¹). As a proof of this, Pseudo-Plutarch *Placita Philosophorum* 1. *prooem.* 2 (= H. Diels *Doxographi Graeci*, p. 273. 11–13) is compared: οἱ μὲν οὖν Στωικοὶ ἔφρασαν τὴν μὲν σοφίαν εἶναι θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπιστήμην. Despite this explicit testimony, a little investigation reveals that the matter is not quite so simple. There is no reason to doubt that the Stoics used this definition, but, given its so general nature, it ought not surprise us to find others besides Stoics using it; there is nothing *specifically* Stoic about it. This definition became a philosophical commonplace and occurs frequently in both Greek and Latin authors. An anonymous writer preserved in Cramer’s *Anecdota Graeca e codd. mss. Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis* 4.400 goes so far as to attribute it specifically to Pythagoras. (ἄλλος ὀρισμὸς τῆς φιλοσοφίας ... καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς Πυθαγόραν ἀναγόμενος, ὁ λέγων “γνῶσις θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων”.) Others who quote it include Cicero, Quintilian, Apuleius, Maximus of Tyre and Origen²²). Albinus in his *Introductio in Platonem* (p. 152 Hermann) gives it: σοφία ... ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων. According to Sir David Ross²³), this work is “an amalgam of Platonism with Peripatetic and Stoic elements (my italics); specifically Neoplatonic doctrines are merely hinted at.” That is

21) Even Wolfson (vol. I, p. 22) and Hadas (p. 149) pronounce it Stoic.

22) These and other references may be conveniently found in Heibei’s Teubner edition of Maximus Tyrius, p. 308. 20.

23) *OCD s. v. Albinus* (1).

to say, the work is a good example of philosophic *koinē*. Seneca the Younger in one of his epistles (89. 5) reveals a knowledge of this definition: “*sapientiam quidam ita finierunt, ut dicerent divinorum et humanorum scientiam. quidam ita: sapientia est nosse divina et humana et horum causas. supervacua mihi haec videtur adiectio, quia causae divinorum humanorumque pars divinorum sunt.*” Seneca therefore, a “professional” Stoic, knows this definition – but he knows it only as a definition of wisdom (note *quidam*), not as the Stoic definition. Furthermore, he rejects as superfluous the phrase *et horum causas*; Pseudo-Plutarch in his Stoic definition also omits this addition. The author of *Fourth Maccabees* includes it (καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν). I also call attention (no one seems to have done so) to the fact that for ἐπιστήμη/scientia (the usual terms in this definition) *Fourth Maccabees* has γνώσις (as does the anonymous *Christian* writer quoted above from Cramer’s *Anecdota Graeca Par.*). I am reluctant to read too much into this, but nevertheless, if one recalls the pregnant meanings γνώσις had come to have in Hellenistic Jewish circles, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this is a conscious and deliberate (philosophic!) change on the part of the author of *Fourth Maccabees*. The foregoing survey thus shows clearly that scholars were not justified in adducing this definition in this form as a proof of “Stoic” influence in *Fourth Maccabees*. The extant evidence suggests that, even if this definition of σοφία is Stoic in origin, nevertheless a) it was current in a different version (without the added phrase) among orthodox Stoics and b) it did not remain an *exclusively* Stoic definition²⁴).

There is another source of confusion which has hindered a proper evaluation of the Greek philosophical influences in *Fourth Maccabees*. Hadas, in arguing for a direct Platonic influence, comments in part: “... The Stoics allowed no gradations in sin – a miss, in their sight, being as bad as a mile. Eleazar follows the opponents of Stoicism (and Jewish tradition) in distinguishing between grave and light transgressions.”²⁵) Hadas is here following Wolfson who had written: “... in the

24) Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 79 repeats the definition with the added phrase: σοφία ... ἐπιστήμη θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν. K. Reinhardt, *Poseidonios* (München 1921), p. 58, conjectures that this expanded form of the definition is the work of Posidonius. If he is correct, this is of course further confirmation of the thesis which I shall propose below.

25) Hadas, p. 118.

Fourth Book of Maccabees there is a reference to a distinction between a ‘small sin’ and, by implication, a great sin, or between a ‘transgression of the law’ in ‘small things’ and that in ‘great things’, though in accordance with the teachings of Judaism, it adds, both are to be equally avoided. The emphasis in this book is as much on the distinction between grades of laws as upon their equality with reference to the observance of them, and it is therefore not in agreement with the Stoic view of the equality of sins, but rather in disagreement with it.”²⁶) Wolfson and Hadas here represent a departure from the “orthodox” position, which is that in *Fourth Maccabees* the Stoic doctrine of the equality of transgressions is espoused²⁷). Pfeiffer, writing after Wolfson, rejects his contention that “guided by Jewish tradition the author comes out in opposition to the Stoics”²⁸). The passage in question is *Fourth Maccabees* 5. 19–21: (19) μὴ μικρὰν οὖν εἶναι νομίσης ταύτην, εἰ μικροφαγήσαιμεν, ἁμαρτίαν (20) τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μέγалоις παρὰνομεῖν ἰσοδύναμόν ἐστιν, (21) δι’ ἑκατέρου γὰρ ὡς ὁμοίως ὁ νόμος ὑπερηφανεῖται. I myself cannot comprehend how the clear statement in verse 20 can be construed as anything but general agreement (intended or not) with the Stoic teaching. (Wolfson’s reasoning that “there is a reference to a distinction between a ‘small sin’ (verse 19) and, by implication, a great sin” is fallacious: The reference to a μικρὰ ἁμαρτία implies a possible distinction *on the part of the person addressed* (king Antiochus); it implies, if anything, quite the reverse *on the part of the speaker* (Eleazar), as verses 20–21 explicitly and conclusively prove). The posture here assumed for the author of *Fourth Maccabees* can be paralleled within Jewish tradition without any reference to Greek philosophy at all (though I consider this unlikely). Consider *LXX. Deuteronomy* 27. 26: ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐκ ἐμμενεῖ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι

26) Wolfson, vol. 2, pp. 271–272.

27) See, for example, Dupont-Sommer, p. 55: “La thèse stoïcienne de l’égalité des fautes est nettement formulée [in *Fourth Maccabees* 5. 19–21].” For references to this Stoic doctrine in Greek and Roman authors, see Dupont-Sommer’s note to *Fourth Maccabees* 5. 19–21 (p. 107). Wolfson himself refers to “... Townshend’s note on IV Macc. 5:20 in Charles’s *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, where he tries to show that these verses in IV Macc. reflect the Stoic view as to the equality of sins.” (Wolfson, vol. 2, p. 272, n. 27).

28) Pfeiffer, p. 219, n. 23. Pfeiffer remarks (against Wolfson) “C. L. W. Grimm has shown (in his commentary to IV Maccabees, p. 288) how pervasive Stoic teaching is in this book.”

αὐτούς. Saint Paul in *Galatians* 3. 10 used this verse for his own purposes: ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι “ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμενεῖ πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά”. Similar is the *Epistle of James* 2. 10: ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ, πταισῆ δὲ ἐν ἐνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος. A. D. Nock in his *St. Paul* alludes in passing to such a Jewish tradition: “Modern students of Judaism have drawn attention to Paul’s misrepresentation of Pharisaism – and in particular to his statement that any man under the Law who failed to keep the whole Law was accursed. Although it was said [*sc.* in Jewish circles] that the breach of one commandment was the breach of all and the keeping of one was the keeping of all, this statement is certainly misleading...²⁹⁾”. The statement is indeed misleading and suggests how the author of *Fourth Maccabees* could write what he did: 1) Jewish tradition taught that small and great transgressions of the Law were to be equally avoided, a teaching which some distorted to mean that a transgression of one law was a transgression of them all; 2) the Stoics taught that all transgressions are equally serious; they do not admit of degrees. These are distinct but *potentially cognate* ideas; our author *combines* them when he states that breaking the Law in small and great matters is *ισοδύναμον*.

What has been lost sight of by Hadas is that even if one admit Wolfson’s and Hadas’ thesis that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* disagrees with Stoic doctrines, he will have done so *specifically to stay in agreement with Jewish teaching*. The man who wrote *Fourth Maccabees* was first and foremost an orthodox Jew, not a Greek philosopher. If he belonged to a particular school of philosophy, Stoic or otherwise, he would not have hesitated to reject any dogmas of that school which were in conflict, real or apparent, with Jewish beliefs. Such an eclectic attitude would in fact be quite in keeping even with the philosophical tendencies of the time. It therefore follows that a few doctrinal deviations from “normal” Stoicism in *Fourth Maccabees* cannot be used to prove that the author was not a Stoic, much less can they be adduced in positive support of the thesis that the author was a Platonist, *if these doctrinal deviations are in harmony with Jewish tradition*. Nevertheless, as I have tried to suggest above, a “Stoic” reading of *Fourth Maccabees* 5. 19–21, can be reconciled with certain tendencies already present, in embryo at least, in contem-

29) pp. 29–30.

porary Jewish thought. There is no need to abandon the obvious interpretation of these verses on the grounds that they are not in keeping with Jewish tradition. Nor does it follow from the fact that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* was primarily an orthodox Jew that he has not "philosophized" to some extent his Jewish beliefs. He clearly has.

III. *A Clue*

The attentive reader will have observed that in the preceding section I have anticipated myself somewhat by tacitly assuming 1) that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* was a philosophical writer and 2) that his immediate source was not (at least exclusively) Plato. *ἀπερ ἔδει δεῖξαι*. That our author has had some formal training in philosophy seems to me in the last analysis to be proved by the whole tone of the work. Neither the amount of philosophic content nor the degree of philosophic language can be explained as mere rhetorical coloration. (This is admittedly a subjective judgment, but one with which most who have studied the problem seem to concur.) Here I wish to call attention to a positive piece of evidence which has a bearing on both questions.

The third chapter of *Fourth Maccabees* begins as follows:

... οὐ γὰρ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς ἐπικρατεῖν φαίνεται, ἀλλὰ τῶν σωματικῶν. (2) οἷον ἐπιθυμίαν τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ μὴ δουλωθῆναι τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ δύναται ὁ λογισμὸς παρασχέσθαι. (3) θυμὸν τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ὑμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ τῷ θυμῷ δυνατὸν τὸν λογισμὸν βοηθῆσαι. (4) κακοθήειαν τις ἡμῶν οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ καμφθῆναι τῇ κακοθείᾳ δύναται ἂν ὁ λογισμὸς συμμαχῆσαι. (5) οὐ γὰρ ἐκριζωτῆς τῶν παθῶν ὁ λογισμὸς ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ ἀνταγωνιστῆς.

This passage proves conclusively that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* did not accept the orthodox Stoic teaching that the passions can be completely uprooted. The language is obviously carefully chosen for rhetorical effect; note the anaphora: ... *τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ἡμῶν ... τις οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι ὑμῶν ... τις ἡμῶν οὐ δύναται ἐκκόψαι* ... This language deserves close examination. The first feature to be observed is the phrase *τις οὐ* (*not τίς οὐ!*) with the force of *οὐδεὶς*. So far as I can discover, this usage is not recognized by the lexica and grammars. One immediately suspects that it is a Semitism. For a comparable expression compare the Septuaginta passage *Tobias* 3. 8: *καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Οὐ*

συννείεις ἀποπνίγουσά σου τοὺς ἄνδρας; ἥδη ἑπτὰ ἔσχεες καὶ ἐνὸς αὐτῶν οὐκ ὠνάσθης. Here ἐνὸς ... οὐκ is a Semitism for οὐδενός³⁰). Freudenthal, however, states that *Fourth Maccabees* is almost totally free of Hebraisms³¹). To establish τις οὐ = οὐδεὶς as a native Greek idiom it is necessary to cite only one example of it from a Greek work in which Semitic influence cannot reasonably be assumed; I have noticed such an example in Plutarch, *Moralia* p. 69 B: ... αὐτίκα γοῦν ὑγιαίνων μὲν τις οὐ χαλεπός ἐστιν οὐδ' ἄγχιος παντάπασιν ἀνδρὶ φίλω κτλ. (For a second example, see below.) τις οὐ = οὐδεὶς is, therefore, correct Greek; what should be noted now is that it is *uncommon Greek*.

I consider next ἐκκόψαι. The verb ἐκκόπτειν had become a quasi-technical philosophical term; it was used especially of the extirpation of vices and passions (compare ἐκρίζωσις in verse 5). The word was not exclusively Stoic. Plato in the *Charmides*, p. 155 C 5–6 writes ... καὶ μου ἢ πρόσθεν θρασύτης ἐξεκέκοπτο. The Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda in his famous inscription (2) has τῶν γε λυπῶν τὰς μὲν τινὰς [κενὰς αὐτῶν] ἐξεκόψαμεν εἰς τέλειον. Plutarch, whose “philosophy was an eclecticism which grafted on to the Academy shreds from the middle Stoa and Pythagoras”³²) knows the term: ... τὸν θυμὸν ἐκκόψαι παντάπασιν μὴ δυνήθεις, ὁμῶς πρὶν ἀνήκεστόν τι δοῦσαι μετέστησε καὶ κατέσχευεν εὐπειθῆ τῷ λογισμῷ γεγόμενον (*Moralia*, p. 26E); in his treatise *de virtute moralī* he writes μέτεστιν οὖν αὐτῷ [*sc. τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ*] καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου, καὶ σύμφυτον ἔχει τὴν τοῦ πάθους ἀρχήν, οὐκ ἐπεισόδιον ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίαν οὔσαν, οὐδ' ἀναιρετέαν παντάπασιν ἀλλὰ θεραπείας καὶ παιδαγωγίας δεομένην. ὅθεν οὐ Θράκιον οὐδὲ Λυκούργειον τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἔργον ἐστί, συνεκκόπτειν καὶ συνδιαφθείρειν τὰ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς βλαβεροῖς τοῦ πάθους κτλ. (*Moralia*, p. 451C). Earlier in this same treatise Plutarch has rejected the possibility of total extirpation of the passions: ... τοῦ λόγου ... οὐ βουλομένον τὸ πάθος ἐξαιρεῖν παντάπασιν (οὔτε γὰρ δυνατόν οὔτ' ἄμεινον) ... (*Moralia*, p. 443C). An excellent parallel for this verb used in a comparable religious document roughly contemporary with *Fourth Maccabees* is to be found in Clement of Rome's *Letter to the Corinthians*, chapter 63. 2: ... εἰάν ... ἐκκόψητε τὴν ἀθέμιτον τοῦ ζήλους ὑμῶν ὀργὴν ... (I remind the reader that “Stoic” influence has long been recognized in the *Klemensbrief*.) For ἐκκόπτειν in Galen see below.

There is still extant an ethical treatise in two books by the great second-century physician Galen; it bears the somewhat

30) Pfeiffer, pp. 272–273.

31) Freudenthal, pp. 26–27.

32) F. W. Walbank in *OCD s. v. Plutarch*, p. 707.

ungainly title *περὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἐκάστῳ παθῶν καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων τῆς διαγνώσεως β'* (sometimes referred to more concisely as *περὶ ψυχῆς παθῶν καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων*)³³).

In this treatise the following sentence occurs: *ἀόργητος μὲν γὰρ εὐθέως ἅμα τῷ βουληθῆναι γενέσθαι τις οὐ δύναται, κατασχεῖν δὲ τὸ τοῦ πάθους ἄσχημον δύναται*³⁴). The resemblances of this sentence to the opening of the third chapter of *Fourth Maccabees* are striking. Most obvious is the uncommon *τις οὐ* = *οὐδεὶς* coupled, as in *Fourth Maccabees*, with *δύναται*. The thought of the first half of the sentence is identical with that of the first half of *Fourth Maccabees* 3. 3; *ἀόργητος γενέσθαι* amounts to the same thing as *θυμὸν ἐκκόψαι*. In the second half of the sentence the thought is a *variatio* on the basic theme to be found in the second halves of verses two, three, and four respectively of *Fourth Maccabees*, chapter three: passions cannot be eradicated, *but they can be controlled*. Finally, the rhetorical balance of the sentences is the same in both Galen and *Fourth Maccabees*; Galen achieves this balance by a *μὲν* – *δέ* construction, the author of *Fourth Maccabees* by beginning each second half of verses 2–4 with *ἀλλά*. This variation between *μὲν* – *δέ* and *ἀλλά* is incidental; that all the sentences are constructed with the same fundamental balance is shown clearly by the verbs which appear in the second halves: to Galen's *δύναται* there responds in *Fourth Maccabees* successively *δύναται* (verse 2) ... *δυνατόν* (verse 3) ... *δύναιτ' ἄν* (verse 4). How are these resemblances to be explained? Coincidence is at best a remote possibility; the concurrence of the same unusual language (*τις οὐ δύναται*), the same technical philosophical doctrine, and the same rhetorical balance surely makes such a coincidence quite improbable, *especially since we know that both Galen and the author of Fourth Maccabees are derivative writers*. That Galen would have borrowed directly from a Jewish work such as *Fourth Maccabees* is not worth considering³⁵). The likelihood is rather that both authors ultimately derive from a common source. If we can discover Galen's source, it should shed some light on the philosophical background of *Fourth Maccabees*.

33) Kühn V. 1–103; a separate edition by I. Marquardt in the Teubner *Claudii Galeni Scripta Minora*, I, 1–81. The best and most recent edition is by W. De Boer in *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* V. 4. 1. 1 (Leipzig and Berlin 1937).

34) p. 16 Kühn.

35) I write this fully aware that Galen had some familiarity with Jewish beliefs; see Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London 1949).

In the case of Galen the problem of *Quellenforschung* is complicated by the fact that he is an eclectic who borrows from many authorities in his writings. Furthermore, this particular treatise contains a number of autobiographical details cited in illustration of various ethical points; it is by no means a wholly derivative work. However, Galen makes his fundamental dependence on earlier authors quite clear near the beginning of the treatise: *γέγραπται μὲν οὖν καὶ Χρυσίππῳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς τῶν φιλοσόφων θεραπευτικὰ συγγράμματα τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς παθῶν, εἰρηται δὲ καὶ πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ τῶν ἐταίρων αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸ τούτων ὑπὸ Πλάτωνος, καὶ ἦν μὲν βέλτιον ἐξ ἐκείνων μαθάνειν αὐτά, ὡσπερ κἀγὼ ...* (p. 3 Kühn). (Note that Galen does not actually say that he is using directly Chrysippus, Aristotle, or Plato; derivative writers in later antiquity were fond of mentioning the great writers of the past – *οἱ παλαιοί* – even where they were making no direct use of them. Such references were designed to lend a kind of vicarious authority to derivative works. Galen, to be sure, unlike many later authors, really had read these “ancients” whom he mentions here, but we shall see that his ethical theories are based chiefly on a more recent writer whom he – no doubt deliberately – does not mention). Let us take as our point of departure Galen’s attitude towards the doctrine of total eradication of the passions. There is no doubt that he was aware of the controversy; he is our chief source for Posidonius’ lost treatise *περὶ παθῶν*, as was indicated above. The verb *ἐκκόπτειν* occurs several times in Galen’s treatise and at times he writes as if he believes that the passions can be completely uprooted: *πῶς οὖν ἂν τις ἐκκόψειε ταῦτα, μὴ γνοὺς πρότερον ἔχων αὐτά;* (p. 8 Kühn); *ἔστι δ’ ὡσπερ τὸ πᾶν τῷ ἄκοντι ἐκκόψαι δύσκολον, οὕτω τὰ μεγάλα τῷ βουλευθέντι ῥᾶστον* (p. 26 Kühn); *παρακαλέσεις τε μάτην ἡμᾶς ὡσαύτως ἐκείνῳ τῷ δεομένῳ βοηθῆσαι καὶ τὸ πάθος ἐκκόψαι* (p. 29 Kühn), ... *ἐκκόπτειν τε πειρωμένους τὸ πάθος, οὐκ ἄχρι τοῦ μὴ φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἄλλοις μόνον, ἀλλ’ ὥστε μηδὲ ῥίξαν ἐγκαταλιπεῖν αὐτοῦ τῆ ψυχῆ ... ἐκκοπτέον γὰρ αὐτὸ φνόμενον ἔτι, πρὶν ἀξήθην ἀνίατον γενέσθαι* (p. 36 Kühn). This last example especially would seem to indicate that Galen advocated total extirpation of the passions. In reality Galen seems to have believed with Posidonius that the sources of the *πάθη* are innate and cannot be uprooted. Some apparent inconsistencies of language in Galen’s treatise may be in part due to an imperfect assimilation of several contradictory sources. Galen’s position is that we must overcome our irrational impulses by reason and

constant ἄσκησις. In one passage in this treatise he explicitly states that we ought not destroy but use these irrational impulses: λέλεκται δ' ἐπὶ πλέον ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἡθῶν ὑπομνήμασιν ... ὡς τὴν μὲν ἰσχὺν οὐ χρὴ καταβαλεῖν αὐτῆς [sc. τῆς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ δυνάμεως ἀλόγου], ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τῶν ἵππων τε καὶ κυνῶν, οἷς χρῶμεθα, τὴν δ' εὐπειθεῖαν ὡς ἐκείνων οὕτω καὶ ταύτης ἀσκεῖν. (p. 27 Kühn).

The treatise referred to here, Galen's *περὶ ἡθῶν*, survives only in an Arabic summary; a passage from the introductory section helps to clarify Galen's attitude: "It is necessary in an adult to look at his actions and their causes. For you find that the cause of some is ἦθος, and of others thought. The cause of what results from nature or habit is ἦθος, but the cause of what springs from reflexion and deliberation is thought. When you have shown by reasoned explanation the falsity of evil opinions, you have uprooted them from the soul. *But if they spring from nature or habit, such arguments will break but scarcely uproot them* (my italics)." 36) Walzer has argued cogently that Galen's *περὶ ἡθῶν* goes back to Posidonius; he concludes "It is now evident that Galen's whole theory of ἦθος and its implications is based on Posidonius' restoration of Plato's psychology in the face of Chrysippus' denial of the irrational in man. His theory is coherent in itself, and having established Posidonius' authorship in various cardinal points we are entitled to draw the obvious inference..." 37). If Galen, relying on Posidonius, believed that ἦθη cannot be uprooted and Posidonius further taught that πάθη cannot be uprooted, then presumably Galen, strictly, held that πάθη could not be uprooted. Elsewhere Walzer writes "(Galen) neither looks for rudiments of intelligence and virtue in animals ... nor uses, like Chrysippus, the rich material at his disposal in order to show that animals are simply irrational while man as a rational being should extirpate from his soul all that he has in common with animals. Galen's conception of the human soul is more adequate, and while demanding the mere control (not the elimination) of its irrational elements he can quote the observation of animals for support, and thus strengthen his case considerably. The same attitude towards animals can be seen in Posidonius, and it is very tempting to connect Galen's view with his teaching. We know that Galen appreciated and, within limits, accepted the *περὶ παθῶν* of Posidonius..." 38).

36) Translated by R. Walzer in his paper "New Light on Galen's Moral Philosophy", *CQ* 43. 1949. 93.

37) *CQ* 43. 1949. 95.

38) *CQ* 43. 1949. 89.

Long before Walzer adduced the new and impressive evidence from the Arabic, Hermann Ringeltaube made a special study of ancient theories on the emotions. He too concluded that Galen was inspired in this treatise by Posidonius: „In commentariolo enim quem scripsit *περὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἐκάστῳ παθῶν* nihil aliud nisi curationem affectuum tractavit. In quo quamquam satis libere Galenum egisse apparet ... lineamenta tamen a Posidonii ingenio aliena non sunt. Neque mirum est eum curationem pariter atque illum instituisse, cum et ipse affectus irrationalibus propriis facultatibus attribuat ... neque irrationalem facultatem extirpari sed rationi subici velit: [there follows the passage beginning *τὴν μὲν ἰσχὺν οὐ χρὴ καταβαλεῖν αὐτῆς* (p. 27 Kühn) cited above.]”³⁹) To sum up: despite some inconsistencies and innovations on Galen’s part, it is beyond reasonable doubt that Galen’s moral treatises derive in good part from Posidonius. I have no wish to succumb to the now all-too-familiar disease of “Panposidonianism”, but in the case of Galen the evidence for dependence is abundant and convincing. I remind the reader of Reinhardt’s remark: “Der größte sospitator Posidonii ist indessen Galen geworden.”⁴⁰) Returning to *Fourth Maccabees*, we have seen that that work is characterized by a) pronounced Stoic coloration and b) emphasis on the doctrine that the passions can be mastered by reason but not utterly eradicated. This combination fits Posidonius exactly *and no philosopher before him* (with the possible exception of his teacher Panaetius who is not Galen’s source). In the opening chapters of *Fourth Maccabees* the author repeatedly states that reason (*λογισμός*) controls the passions (*τὰ πάθη*). There *ὁ λογισμός* is linked with such verbs as *κρατεῖν*, *κρυβεῖν*, *ἐπικρατεῖν* and *δεσπόζειν*. Is it coincidence that when Galen comes to the conclusion of the first book of his treatise (i. e. the book dealing with *πάθη* in contrast to *ἁμαρτήματα*, the subject of the second book), he writes: ... *τὰ πάθη ... ὅπου γὰρ ἔτι μεγίστων ὄντων ἐκράτησεν ὁ λογισμὸς ἀγύμναστος ὢν, εὐδηλον ὡς μᾶλλον κρατήσει διττῆς ὑπεροχῆς ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ προσγενομένης αὐτῷ* (p. 56 Kühn)?

That Galen and *Fourth Maccabees* each contain echoes of Posidonius’ language must of course remain a conjecture only. What I hope to have demonstrated is that both Galen and *Fourth*

39) H. Ringeltaube, *Quaestiones ad veterum philosophorum de affectibus doctrinam pertinentes* (Göttingen 1913), p. 31.

40) *RE s. v. Posidonios* col. 820.

Maccabees go back in part to *some* common writer (not necessarily to the same work), whether that writer be Posidonius or someone else. (The borrowings may have occurred *via* one or more intermediate sources; still *τις οὐ δύναται* argues against such intermediate steps: The uncommon phrase would have been converted to commoner coin.) Galen, such being his method, without doubt drew upon an original and prominent formal philosopher, Posidonius more likely than not. In any event it was not Plato or Aristotle (who do not use *τις οὐ* = *οὐδεὶς*) and probably no one earlier than Chrysippus (compare Galen's remarks quoted above, page 235). Chrysippus himself seems excluded by *Fourth Maccabees* which is clearly anti-Chrysippean in doctrine.

If it is granted that Galen and *Fourth Maccabees* used this common source, we are now in a position to answer the two questions set forth in the first part of this paper: 1) The author of *Fourth Maccabees* has indeed studied and used formal philosophical literature; 2) His philosophical opinions are not all (if any) derived directly from Plato; he has rather drawn on at least one more recent source.

I close with one final observation. Reinhardt (see above, footnote 24) has concluded (for quite different reasons) that the expanded form of the definition of *σοφία* discussed above, that is to say the form containing the addition *καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν*, is the creation of Posidonius. Since *Fourth Maccabees* contains the definition in this form, this is in perfect agreement with our conjecture that the author of *Fourth Maccabees* has used Posidonius. (Our author will, incidentally, thus have borrowed from an eclectic Stoic; this confirms our characterization of the work as "philosophic *koinē*" containing strong Stoic coloration.) Since *Fourth Maccabees* is in no sense an original piece of philosophical writing, the possibility exists that it contains some fairly "pure" Posidonian content. The presence of at least one almost verbatim definition and of an apparently close verbal echo would support this. Nevertheless, the work in part smacks of "*placita*" and I am inclined to think that little could be recovered. But I leave this to the Posidonian specialists⁴¹).

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