

**CHAPTER 10**  
***Galen and Middle Platonists on Dialectic and Knowledge***  
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*Abstract*

This article focuses on Galen's views on dialectic against the background of post-Hellenistic philosophical debates. More specifically, Galen's position is set in parallel with those of the Platonist philosophers of his time (the so-called Middle Platonists). The first section focuses on Galen's use of the term 'dialectic'. Three senses of the term can be discerned in his works. 1: Dialectic as logic, i.e. the discipline that furnishes analysis and techniques of arguments. 2: Dialectic as a part of logic that focuses on certain kinds of arguments characterised by the status of their premises, i.e. dialectical premises insofar as they are different from scientific ones. 3. Dialectic as the analysis of names or words and their meanings in ordinary language. Galen's account of logic and dialectic presents both similarities and differences with respect to the school debates of his time (Alcinous, Alexander of Aphrodisias) and is distinctively connected to his views about the epistemic status of medicine. The second section focuses on Galen's discussion of Aristotle's eternalist cosmology, in book 4 of his lost treatise *On Demonstration* (see Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 599.22-601.16). Galen's argument against Aristotle is actually similar to that of the Platonist Atticus (fr. 4 des Places). Despite Galen's indebtedness to previous sources, his treatment of the topic is highly original and can plausibly be seen as a discussion *pro et contra* the eternity of the cosmos, which aims to show the limits and fallacies of speculative knowledge (as opposed to scientific and demonstrative knowledge). The third section focuses on Galen's account of common notions (*ennoiai*) and definitions (see in particular *Diff.Puls.* 704-706 K.). Galen's position is compared with that of Stoic and Platonist philosophers (Epictetus, Alcinous, the anonymous commentator of Plato's *Theaetetus*). Once again, Galen's account appears to be distinctively connected to his views about the characteristics and scope of scientific knowledge.

*Keywords*

Galen, Platonism, Post-Hellenistic philosophy, dialectic, ancient epistemology

**1. The meanings of 'dialectic'**

The present contribution focuses on Galen's views on dialectic against the background of post-Hellenistic philosophical debates. This topic raises some interesting issues from both a philosophical and a historical point of view. More than any other author of his time, Galen makes it possible to shed light on the debates about the nature and status of dialectic that involved Stoic, Platonist and Aristotelian philosophers. His accounts on dialectic and his multiple doctrinal references provide crucial evidence to understand the philosophical options available in the post-Hellenistic era, as well as their differences and mutual interactions. In addition to that, the passages on dialectic are of intrinsic interest,

since they make it possible to assess some aspects of Galen's distinctive philosophical and epistemological project and, more precisely, of his sophisticated approach to the analysis of ordinary language.

Here Galen's views on dialectic will thoroughly be set in parallel with those of the Platonist philosophers of his time. From Karl Praechter onwards, the expression 'Middle Platonism' has been used to describe the stage of Platonism after the Academy and before Plotinus. This category is artificial and controversial, but I would still keep 'Middle Platonism' as a useful (albeit debatable) expression in order to characterise Platonism in Galen's time, insofar as this kind of Platonism is different from Plotinian and post-Plotinian Platonism<sup>1</sup>. Galen's philosophical project is certainly closely related to Plato and Platonism, to the extent that Galen has sometimes be taken to be a Platonist or Middle Platonist author. This conclusion is, in my view, wrong. Whatever we might think of 'Middle Platonism', this label (and indeed the very label 'Platonist') cannot be used in relation to Galen – at least, not without serious qualifications. Galen takes Plato to be his principal philosophical authority (see *PHP* V.478 K.)<sup>2</sup> and the Platonists certainly did the same. If we broadly define 'Platonism' as an allegiance to Plato's doctrines, then Galen was as much of a Platonist as Atticus, Alcinous or Plutarch. Yet Galen defines himself as an eclectic (*Lib.Prop.* XIX.13 K.; *Aff.Dign.* V.41-3 K.) and his attitude to school philosophers (including Platonist philosophers) is far from favourable (see *Pecc.Dig.* V.91-2 K.). What is more, Galen's extensive use of Plato and his acceptance of Plato as his main philosophical authority are crucially different from anything we find in post-Hellenistic school Platonism. Even if we grant that there were different types of school Platonism at that time, Galen's agenda is too unique (and too uniquely connected to his views about philosophy and medicine) to be equated with one of the various kinds of Platonism we find in the second century. Suffice it to say that Galen never refers to the theory of Ideas and is agnostic on such issues as the nature of God, the generation of the world and the immortality of the soul (see *Prop.Plac.* 2-3).<sup>3</sup> Therefore we are faced with two possibilities: (A) If we assess Galen against the background of the Platonism of his time and trust Galen's self-representation as an eclectic, then we should come to the conclusion that Galen cannot be seen as a Platonist – and this despite both Galen's reverence for Plato and the presence of a common philosophical background that links Galen to some (Middle) Platonist philosophers.<sup>4</sup> (B) If, instead, we take 'Platonism' as a philosophical category, then Galen can indeed be seen as supporting an (indeed somewhat idiosyncratic) kind of Platonism that removes metaphysics from the picture and gives full emphasis to theories such as dialectic and division, the teleological account of nature and the soul's tripartition *cum* trilocation. Both options are legitimate; yet since the focus of this contribution is on Galen and the Platonist philosophers of his time and since, as we shall see, Galen's philosophical stance is crucially different from that of his Platonist colleagues, though certainly connected to it, I will generally refrain from calling him a Platonist.

I first wish to focus on Galen's use of the term 'dialectic'. Certainly, this is not Galen's favourite term and Galen's attitude to 'dialectic' is somewhat ambivalent. There are some 90 occurrences of 'dialectic' and cognate words in

Galen's *corpus*.

1. This term can sometimes very well be translated as 'logic' (see e.g. *Sect.Int.* I.77 K.; *Ord.Lib.Prop.* XIX.59 K.; *Diff.Puls.* VIII.624 K.), i.e. the discipline that furnishes analysis and techniques of arguments.<sup>5</sup> This sense has an obvious Stoic origin, but Galen does not regard it as distinctively Stoic (for example, dialectic is connected not only with the Stoics, but also with Theophrastus and 'Herophilus the dialectician' in *MM* X.28 K.). This was probably the current meaning of 'dialectic' in Galen's time. From this perspective, dialectic is a crucial part of Galen's scientific method, since he takes logic to be the art of discerning the true and the false, the consistent and the inconsistent (e.g. *MM* X.9 and 18 K.; *Art.Med.* I.245 K.; *Ord.Lib.Prop.* XIX.50 K.). Furthermore, Galen claims that logic, and logic alone, can lead to the discovery of truth (*MM* X.28K.; *Simp.Med.* XI.462 K.; *Ord.Lib.Prop.* XIX.53 K.). This explains his distinctive view that good doctors should be competent logicians and that logic is crucial for all aspects of medicine (including clinical practice).<sup>6</sup> Things, however, are slightly more complicated than this. It is worth focusing on Galen's praise of ancient doctors (Hippocrates, Diocles and Praxagoras) against the Methodist Thessalus at *MM* X.9 K. Galen commends those men of old who were

skilled in dialectic, wise men, trained in discerning the true from the false, men who know to distinguish logical consequence and inconsistency in the proper manner, people drilled from childhood in the demonstrative method.<sup>7</sup>

Here dialectic is one of the logical skills of good doctors, yet it does not stand alone on Galen's list. Rather, Galen regards dialectic as part of a set of skills that are crowned by the 'demonstrative method'. 'Demonstration' (*ἀπόδειξις*) (and not dialectic) is the key notion of Galen's scientific method. He famously wrote an extensive 15-book work *On Demonstration*, which he was particularly proud of and which he took to be indispensable reading for properly scientifically trained doctors (see *Ord.Lib.Prop.* XIX.53 K.).<sup>8</sup> It is very important to note that Galen's philosophical masterpiece was a work *Περὶ ἀποδείξεως*, not a work *Περὶ διαλεκτικῆς*. As Jonathan Barnes has shown in several contributions, Galen's attitude to logic is in fact a radically utilitarian one, as he firmly believes that logic should be studied not in itself, but only insofar as it provides a method for demonstration.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, those aspects of logic that are not useful for this purpose should simply be ignored (on this attitude see, esp., *Lib.Prop.* XIX.39-40 K.). Galen's approach to dialectic, then, is not one-sided: dialectic is both praised as a crucial part of proper medical training (one which Methodist doctors are eminently bereft of) and criticised, insofar as dialectic can become self-referential – so to speak – and practised in a way that is of no use to science.

2. A second and more restrictive sense of 'dialectic' is well attested in Galen, who clearly connects it to Aristotle's *Topics* (*PHP* V.222 K.). 'Dialectic' is now regarded as a part of logic that focuses on certain kinds of arguments characterised by the status of their premises. Dialectical premises are different from scientific and demonstrative ones: from this perspective, 'dialectic' is not a genus term standing for 'logic' and demonstration is not a further specification of

dialectic. Rather, dialectic and demonstration are seen as different and opposed to one another. Galen famously distinguishes four kinds of premises (scientific or demonstrative, dialectical, rhetorical and sophistic: *PHP* V.221-2 K.). This distinction certainly confirms Galen's interest in Aristotle's view of dialectic (and, conversely, Galen's dissatisfaction with the Stoic one). It is worth noting from the outset, however, that Galen ascribes two main features to dialectical premises and that these features are only partly similar to those of Aristotelian dialectical arguments: (A) Dialectical premises are removed (ἐξωθεν) from the essence of things, but they are nonetheless useful for a kind of dialectical training or exercise (*PHP* V.221 K., note Galen's reference to Socrates' maieutic method).<sup>11</sup> (B) These premises mirror a sort of pre-scientific knowledge based on our grasping of the properties or attributes of things (*PHP* V.273 K.). Unlike Aristotle, in the relevant passages of *PHP* Galen does not connect dialectical premises to *endoxa* or reputable opinions; nor does he connect dialectical premises to the property of being 'convincing' (*pithanon*, which according to Galen is a property of rhetorical premises: see, for a different view on dialectic and the concept of *pithanon*, Alex. Aphr. *In Top.* 3.18).<sup>12</sup> Rather, according to Galen, dialectical premises correspond to a kind of pre-scientific knowledge of things and their attributes. Dialectical premises are, therefore, neither false nor merely persuasive. They are instead derived from actual properties or attributes and, from this point of view, they have exactly the same status as scientific premises (see *PHP* V.227 K: ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων; V.273 K.: ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων τε καὶ συμβαινόντων). Indeed, scientific and dialectical premises are both subsets of what we might call 'actual' premises (i.e. premises derived from actual properties of things). The difference between the two lies in the fact that scientific premises *select* those actual attributes that are essential, i.e. pertinent to the very thing under discussion, whereas this does not happen with dialectical premises, which simply enumerate each factual attribute without providing a reason to divide those which are essential from those which are real but external (therefore, dialectical premises are more numerous than scientific ones).<sup>13</sup> Of course, this can help explain why Galen takes dialectical premises as a starting point for discovery (*PHP* V.221 K.): listing the real attributes of a thing is a preliminary step towards discovering which of those attributes are essential. While dialectical premises merely enumerate factual attributes of things, scientific premises provide a reason to select essential or explanatory properties. For example, the position in the middle of the thorax is indeed a real or actual attribute of the heart, but it should not be selected as pertinent for establishing scientifically whether the heart is the ruling part of the whole animal (*PHP* V.229 K.). The same holds true of the brain, whose actual position in the head or on the 'acropolis' of the body is no scientific evidence that the brain is the seat of the rational faculty (*PHP* V.230 K.). Note that Galen famously adheres to the Platonist view on the seat of reason: what he denies is that one can argue scientifically in favour of it merely on the basis of the position of the brain, i.e. by selecting for this purpose the position of the brain among its actual attributes.

3. Another issue, which I will later discuss in more detail, is the connection between 'dialectic' and the analysis of names or words and their meanings in

ordinary language.<sup>14</sup> In *Diff.Puls.* Galen counts the pneumatic doctor Archigenes (whom he criticises for his artificial use of language) among the ‘pseudo-dialecticians’ and he mentions the view that dialectic starts from the interpretation of the ‘conception of names’ (see *Diff.Puls.* VIII.629-30 K.). Furthermore, Galen complains about those doctors who engage in dialectical disputes concerning the ‘correctness of names’ (see *Di.Dec.* IX.788-9 K.).<sup>15</sup> Galen often emphasises the limits of language and clearly opposes the knowledge of words to that of the nature of things (e.g. *MM* X.44 K.; *Diff.Puls.* VIII.496 K.).<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, language is nothing but an indispensable yet imperfect and risky tool for communication, given the character (and limits) of human knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Yet Galen also suggests that the analysis of meanings of words in ordinary language *is* necessary for scientific research, since those meanings are connected to our common notions, which are by no means misleading or stipulative. Rather, common notions are a basic set of concepts shared by all human beings that provide a pre-theoretical knowledge of things (see *MM* 40-1 K.). Such pre-scientific knowledge should be taken as a starting point for appropriate knowledge (as is the case with dialectical premises). Galen regards ‘conceptual definitions’ (i.e. definitions of terms that make our common notions clear) not only as the starting point for genuine knowledge, but also as the criterion against which one should assess scientific definitions (see *Diff.Puls.* 704-8 K. and, below, Section 3).

Galen once again has a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the analysis of language, comparable to his attitude to logic. Language should not be studied for its own sake: for a study of this kind runs the very concrete risk of becoming a self-referential and misleading verbal exercise. Yet Galen does not in any way infer from this that ordinary language should be neglected. He seems rather to suggest that ordinary language has a crucial position, since words have meanings that, *if appropriately explored*, can be seen to correspond to our common notions. The crucial problem lies in analysing (ordinary Greek) language in such a way as to select those features that reflect this genuine kind of knowledge (e.g. what Galen takes to be the genuine ordinary meaning of the word ‘disease’ in *MM* X.40 K.) and to emend those features which can prove potentially misleading (e.g. the ambiguity of the preposition ‘*apo*’ meaning both ‘out of’ and ‘by’ in Zeno’s argument about the seat of reason: see *PHP* V.258-9 K.).<sup>18</sup> Galen’s emphasis on linguistic ambiguity and its analysis (see *Soph.* XIV.586-9 K.) reflects an attitude that R. J. Hankinson describes through Austin’s slogan: ‘ordinary language is not the last word; but it is the first word’.<sup>19</sup>

The previous remarks may help to shed some light on what seem to be the three principal contexts in which Galen refers to dialectic, i.e. logic as a whole, the part of logic that focuses on arguments with ‘dialectical premises’ (as distinct from scientific/demonstrative premises) and the study of names or words and their meanings. These parts are certainly connected and in part overlap, but it is difficult to single out a univocal meaning of ‘dialectic’ in Galen’s works, or even a single attitude towards it. By contrast, Galen’s attitude to demonstration is quite unambiguous, and unambiguously positive.

I now wish to consider a well-known parallel between Galen and Middle Platonism, i.e. the listing and discussion of logical methods. Galen often refers to

‘logical’ or ‘demonstrative’ method(s) (the two expressions are interchangeable).<sup>20</sup> Such methods are the different parts of logic that are necessary for scientific reasoning. In *PHP* V.796-7 K. Galen groups the various methods under three headings: (a) that which pertains to division and synthesis; (b) the knowledge of entailment and incompatibility; (c) methods which deal with the relative change of things in respect to more and less, equally, similarly and analogously (this includes the knowledge of sameness and difference). In this passage Galen credits Plato with having stated the methods with brevity and having trained us in each of them (Galen refers to Plato’s proof of the soul’s tripartition in *Resp.* 4).

Galen’s account of logical or demonstrative methods has sometimes been set in parallel with Alcinous’ list of the parts of ‘dialectic’. In his *Didaskalikos* Alcinous actually provides two lists. At *Did.* 2.153.30-7 he mentions division, definition, induction, syllogism (divided into demonstrative, epicheirematic, rhetorical and, finally, sophisms). Another slightly different list can be found at 5.156.30-3: division, definition, analysis, induction and syllogism.<sup>22</sup> These views were certainly not peculiar to Alcinous: for according to Sextus, ‘some of the Dogmatics say that dialectic is a science of syllogism, induction and definition’ (*PH* 2.213, trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes with slight changes).<sup>23</sup> The parallels are clear. Alcinous’ parts of logic at least partly overlap with those of Galen’s logical/demonstrative method. Both lists open with division and both lists mention the method of analysis and synthesis (note that Galen mentions division and synthesis, while Alcinous mentions division and analysis.). Unlike Galen, Alcinous adds definition to division. The connection between division and definition is, however, so close that Galen’s reference to division can be seen to include definition.<sup>24</sup> Alcinous’ classification of syllogisms closely recalls Galen’s classification of premises in his *PHP* (and Sextus’ generic heading συλλογιστική can obviously be seen as covering Galen’s and Alcinous’ subdistinctions).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, both Alcinous and Galen credit Plato with having first established the logical methods: this was a current practice in Imperial Platonism and Galen certainly relies on a Platonist reading of logic (see Alc. *Did.* 6.158.17-18 and 39-40; 159.43; Gal., *PHP* V.796-7 K.; *Inst.Log.* 15.10 and 18.2).<sup>26</sup> Two further features separate Galen and Alcinous. Galen’s third heading (methods which deal with the relative change of things in respect to more and less, equally, similarly and analogously) is unique and probably refers to relational syllogisms, which are a distinctive aspect of his logic (see *Inst.Log.* 16.1-13). Finally, unlike Alcinous and Sextus, Galen does not mention induction, which he dismisses as inappropriate for demonstration (see *Thras.* V.812 K.).<sup>27</sup>

That said, it is worth focusing on some further differences. Alcinous’ discussion of dialectic and its parts is full of references to Plato’s metaphysics, references that are absent in Galen. A parallel between Alcinous’ and Galen’s accounts of analysis provides sufficient evidence of this fact (see Alc., *Did.* 5.157.11-43 vs Gal., *Pecc.Dig.* V.80 K.).<sup>28</sup> Twice in his *Handbook* Alcinous mentions Plato’s dialectic as having as its purpose either ‘the examination of every thing whatsoever and then of its accidents’ (*Did.* 4.156.25-7) or the ascent ‘from the hypotheses of geometry to primary principles not subject to hypotheses’ (*Did.* 7.162.10-12, trans. J. Dillon).<sup>29</sup> Unsurprisingly enough, Galen does not refer

to this metaphysical sense of dialectic. He certainly finds the logical methods in Plato's demonstration of the soul's tripartition, but this aspect of Plato's philosophy is carefully distinguished from speculative philosophy (e.g. cosmology: more on this in Section 2), which cannot in any way attain demonstrative rigour.

There is a further distinction. Both Alcinous and Sextus talk about 'dialectic' and its parts. Here 'dialectic' should certainly be understood according to its general meaning of 'logic', which is well known to Galen. Yet it is significant that Galen talks about a 'logical' (*logikê*) or 'demonstrative' (*apodeiktikê*) method, whereas there is no mention of any 'dialectical method' or 'methods' in his works. Certainly, Alcinous' inclusive account of dialectic and its parts (including epistemology and the theory of the criterion) is similar to Galen's agenda in his lost treatise *On Demonstration*.<sup>30</sup> According to Galen, however, this agenda does not pertain to dialectic, but to demonstration. Again, Galen seems to treat dialectic as a suspect word and usually refrains from describing his method as a 'dialectical' one, even if he was indeed familiar with the current meaning of 'dialectic' as 'logic'. It may be interesting to recall that Galen was familiar with Epicurean anti-dialectic polemics, since he wrote a work on Metrodorus' book *Against the Sophists* (see *Lib.Prop.* XIX.48 K.). What is 'dialectical' runs the risk of turning into a formalistic or verbal exercise, whereas according to Galen genuine logic, in essence, means applied logic. The fact that this view is different from Alcinous' account emerges not only from Alcinous' use of the term 'dialectic', but also from Alcinous' limited use of 'demonstrative', which he merely applies to demonstrative arguments in the proper sense (as distinct from epicheirematic, rhetorical and sophistic arguments: *Did.* 3.153.33; 6.158.28). Therefore, Alcinous' usage of 'dialectic' is replaced by Galen's usage of 'demonstration' and this is no mere coincidence. Rather, this terminological shift reflects Galen's distinctive views about the utility of logic.

Galen's utilitarian attitude deserves some further comments. Certainly, his view was not unique: it is also found among philosophers such as Alexander of Aphrodisias (e.g. *Alex. Aphr. In Apr.* 164.25-165.2). As Jonathan Barnes puts it, both Galen and Alexander think that 'logic is estimable to the extent, and only to the extent, that it provides a method and a structure for scientific proof'.<sup>31</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Galen's approach is not exactly the same as that of Alexander. Again, his attitude illustrates his distinctive way of incorporating school views and arguments into his personal approach to science and philosophy. According to Galen, logic is a part of philosophy and a tool for scientific reasoning, whereas according to Alexander logic is not a part, but a tool of philosophy. Alexander argues that demonstration should be applied to the object of speculative philosophy, i.e. 'what is divine and honourable' (*In Apr.* 3.19; see also 4.33). The usefulness of logic is strictly connected to its auxiliary role with regard to speculative philosophy, the contemplation of true beings. Galen's utilitarian view is different. He is perfectly happy to characterise logic as a part of philosophy (see *Lib.Prop.* K. XIX 39 K.). This part is, in addition, a tool for medical knowledge (*Opt.Med.* I.60 K.). Note that in *In Apr.* 2.22-33 Alexander mentions and *rejects* such a view (regardless of whether Galen is his polemical

target – as I am inclined to think – or not). According to Alexander, logic cannot be regarded as both a part of philosophy and a tool for sciences that employ syllogisms and demonstrations. This view would entail that sciences and arts have a more eminent status than philosophy: a conclusion that Alexander apparently regards as patently false. Galen adopts the opposite attitude: in his view, medicine, and not speculative philosophy, has the status of a hegemonic science that is able to satisfy the model of demonstrative rigour established by Euclid's geometry. School philosophy, by contrast, cannot attain this privileged cognitive status: speculative philosophers focus on useless problems (such as God's essence), which exceed our cognitive faculties and whose investigation cannot lead to any manifest knowledge verifiable through our experience.<sup>33</sup>

The doctrine according to which logic is a part of philosophy is generally regarded as Stoic and Galen's overall view about the status and usefulness of logic can interestingly be compared to that of the Stoics.<sup>34</sup> That said, Galen certainly appropriated this doctrine in a highly original manner that was closely connected to his view about the scientific foundation of medicine. To sum up: Galen conceives of logic as a part of philosophy, which serves to construct demonstrations (the parts of logic that are useless for this purpose should be dismissed); demonstration is, in turn, the method leading to rigorous (medical) knowledge and to an effective practice of (the medical) science. According to Galen, the use of logical or demonstrative methods extends to all aspects of the medical science (diagnostics, prognostics, therapy).<sup>35</sup> It is in virtue of his mastery of logic that a doctor will find the correct remedies for each patient, since he can infer the right therapy from the knowledge of the causal connections behind observable phenomena. Logic, epistemology and scientific practice are thus strictly interconnected: logic is valuable only when it is integrated within an epistemology that is, in turn, 'an epistemology for the practicing scientist' (as A. A. Long remarks with regard to Ptolemy, who certainly provides the best parallel to Galen's approach).<sup>36</sup> Galen's limited references to dialectic should be understood against this background.

## **2. Cosmology and its arguments: Atticus and Galen on the generation of the world.**

The present section deals with 'dialectic' in a general sense. I will compare Atticus' and Galen's discussions of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's cosmology, in order to shed further light on Galen's scholastic background, on his distinctive method of argumentation and on the relation between Galen's method and that of the Platonist philosophers of his time.<sup>37</sup> In his late work *On My Own Opinions* Galen claims to be agnostic on whether the world was created or not (*Prop.Plac.* 2.1). Indeed, the generation of the world is a typical example of the sort of useless questions of speculative philosophy which cannot be tested against experience and hence cannot be given any appropriate answer (see *PHP V.780 K.*).<sup>38</sup> And this was famously the main question discussed by Platonist philosophers in Galen's day. We may thus infer that Galen was simply not interested in this issue, but this



would be a misleading conclusion. We find a number of references to cosmology in his extant works and certainly Galen focused extensively on the generation of the world in book 4 of his *On Demonstration*. In his treatise *On the Eternity of the World Against Proclus* (599.22-601.16), John Philoponus reports an argument from *DD* 4, where Galen rejects Aristotle's criticism of the account of the world's generation in the *Timaeus* (*Cael.* 1.10-12) by showing that our world can both have been generated from the Demiurge and be incorruptible, since the Demiurge perpetually preserves it from destruction.<sup>39</sup> The argument is not only interesting in itself, but is strikingly similar to one fragment of Atticus (fr. 4 des Places).<sup>40</sup> To the best of my knowledge, this is the most extensive parallel between Galen and a Middle Platonist philosopher. It is crucial, then, to focus on it closely. I have displayed in parallel columns the sections from Atticus in Eusebius and from Galen in Philoponus (see *Appendix*); parallels between the two texts have been underlined).

Both Atticus and Galen reject Aristotle's thesis that whatever is generated must undergo destruction (or that whatever does not undergo destruction must be ungenerated) (Atticus fr. 4.44-48; 67-71; Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 600.17-19 and 601.15-16: see Arist. *Cael.* 1.10).<sup>41</sup> Both Atticus and Galen claim that God can preserve from destruction what he has generated just as an artisan will preserve artefacts by restoring them (Att. fr. 4.84-89; Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 601.6-14). Both Atticus and Galen support this view by quoting or paraphrasing the Demiurge's speech to the lesser gods in Plato's *Timaeus* (*Ti.* 41 b) and the cosmological myth from the *Statesman* (*Plt.* 270 a ff.). The situation is different with the two dialogues however. Both Atticus and Galen quote Plato's *Timaeus* 41 b (Att. fr. 4.93-95; Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 600.26-601.4). Galen refers to the *Statesman* too and borrows the expression 'restored immortality' (ἐπισκευαστὴ ἀθανασία) directly from this dialogue (Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 600.23-24; 601.4-5), whereas Atticus does not explicitly mention the *Statesman*, but possibly alludes to this dialogue when he extends the artisan's power to restore his products to God, who has produced the whole cosmos (Att. fr. 4.88-90). Further parallels outside Atticus and Galen could easily be found, since arguments of this kind were widely used in the debates concerning Plato's cosmology.<sup>42</sup> To the best of my knowledge, however, only a small group of philosophers spoke in defence of Plato's account of the generation of the world and its imperishability against Aristotle's criticism in *Cael.* 1, namely Atticus, Harpocration (a student of Atticus) and Galen.<sup>43</sup> Parallels between Galen and Atticus are not limited to this issue and – although the relative chronology of the two authors remains uncertain, since they were active during the same decades – it can plausibly be assumed that Galen's reading of Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus*, both in his lost *On Demonstration* and in his synopsis of the dialogue, was influenced by that of the Platonist philosopher.<sup>44</sup> Atticus famously claimed (like Plutarch) that Plato's account of the generation of cosmos in the *Timaeus* should be read literally (i.e. as referring to a real generation and not merely to a metaphysical relation of sempiternal dependence of our cosmos from God). Furthermore, Atticus was sharply critical of Aristotle and attacked those who made use of Aristotle when interpreting Plato (the identification of Atticus' polemical target is controversial, but this issue is not

relevant to the present account).<sup>45</sup> Galen certainly did not refrain from criticising Aristotle, but he apparently did not share at all Atticus' quasi-personal polemical attitude. Furthermore (and most importantly), Galen was agnostic about the generation of the world and he counted this issue among those questions of speculative philosophy that cannot be settled demonstratively through a combined use of reason and experience. We are thus left with an open question: why did Galen follow Atticus' rejection of Aristotle's criticism of the *Timaeus*?

Whereas scholars have pointed to the existence of similarities between the two passages, it seems to me that a number of interesting differences should also be mentioned, since they help understand Galen's peculiar way of incorporating Platonist material within his philosophical masterpiece.<sup>46</sup> There is a first patent difference between Atticus' and Galen's arguments. While Atticus develops a genuine invective against Aristotle's misleading criticism of Plato, the very name of Aristotle does not appear in Galen. This might well be a sheer coincidence: the name of Aristotle might certainly have occurred in the missing parts of the text. Yet this is not an isolated situation. A parallel is provided by the famous discussion about the location of the regent part of the soul in *PHP* V.230 K. Here Galen adduces a number of arguments in support of the cardiocentric position and in particular Aristotle's view that takes the midmost position of the heart as evidence in support of cardiocentrism (*PA* II.4.665b18-20; 666a14-15). Aristotle's name, however, is not mentioned and the same holds for Plato, whose argument that the head is the seat of the ruling part of the soul in virtue of its position is rejected as well Galen's silence can hardly depend on some diplomatic scruple. Rather, it seems to me that T. Tieleman is right when he says that Galen's discussion is not primarily polemical and is concerned with arguments rather than opponents.<sup>47</sup> From this perspective, Galen's argument can be seen as being 'dialectical, in the sense that he scrutinises available arguments with a view to finding and testing basic concepts and principles'.<sup>48</sup> Here 'dialectical' should indeed be taken in a broad sense: Galen would have rather described his method as demonstrative, insofar as it allows us to choose genuine principles or first premises for scientific proofs. Be that as it may, it is certainly worth asking if Galen in *DD* 4 is engaged in defending Plato's cosmology against Aristotle by following Atticus' path or if he is incorporating Atticus' criticism of Aristotle for a different purpose, which is connected to his views on dialectic and demonstration.

Apart from their general difference in tone (invective against Aristotle vs the rational scrutiny of arguments), Atticus' and Galen's discussions follow different lines. Atticus opens his argument by rejecting the claim that if something is generated, then it must undergo destruction or that if something will not undergo destruction then it must be ungenerated. This can be seen as a rejection of Aristotle's anti-Platonic stance in *Cael.* 1.10.279b17-21. Atticus specifies his position: we should not see the fact of being ungenerated as the only cause for something not to undergo destruction; nor should we think that what has been generated will ineluctably undergo destruction (Att. fr. 4.46-48). In the whole passage Atticus does not really discuss the relation between being generated and being destructible and he does not even clearly point out that according to

Aristotle the relation between the two is not a mere implication, but a mutual entailing (*Cael.* 1.12.282b8-9). Atticus is mainly interested in blaming Aristotle for having failed to grasp the genuine nature of divine causal power. God is the craftsman *par excellence* and he therefore has the power to both bring his products into existence and preserve their being from destruction. Human craftsmen can both produce and restore their products and it is absurd to deny that God has the same capacity (Att. fr. 4.71-90). In this invective one can easily recognise Atticus' usual polemical approach against Aristotle's philosophy. Atticus famously compares Aristotle's rejection of providence in the sublunary region to Epicurus' position (fr. 3 des Places) and is severely critical of Aristotle's theory of the soul (fr. 7 des Places). Atticus' criticism of Aristotle's demonstration in the *On the Heavens* is part of this overall approach that aims to reject Aristotle's impious views on God, providence and the soul.

Galen takes a different starting point, i.e. the definition of *eternal* (*aidion*) as a compound of the property *agenêton* and the property *aphtharton*, properties that are mutually entailing (Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 600.3-5):

*agenêton* ↔ *aphtharton*

Here the reference seems to be to *Cael.* 1.11.282a31-b1, where Aristotle states that *agenêton* and *aphtharton* are mutually entailing and that the property *aidion* is entailed by each of the two properties. Despite the similarities noted above, Galen's discussion is different from that of Atticus both in tone and in content: Galen does not discuss the limits and characteristics of God's causal power at all. Rather, he aims to show that Aristotle's account is based on an undetected ambiguity of the term '*aphtharton*'. One can easily recognise Galen's usual approach, which detects the presence of fallacies by analysing the ambiguity of the terms employed by his opponents (see, again, his celebrated discussion of the ambiguity of '*apo*' against the Stoic argument in favour of cardiocentrism).

Galen accepts that *agenêton* entails *aphtharton* (indeed, this echoes Plato, *Phdr.* 245d). He takes this to be a primitive truth that needs no demonstration and is confirmed by another evident axiom, namely that 'If something has absolutely no *logos* of generation, neither will this sort of thing have a *logos* of destruction' (Gal. in Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 600.12-14). Here I would suggest we should translate '*logos*' as 'account' (i.e. the account that describes a thing's nature); for Galen seems to argue that nothing can be ungenerated (i.e. have no *logos* of generation) without satisfying certain conditions which make it at the same time necessary for it to be free of destruction, i.e. to have no *logos* of destruction.<sup>50</sup> The easiest way to make sense of this view is to assume that what is defined as ungenerated must be exempt from all substantial change, something which, in turn, entails that what is ungenerated is free of destruction. At II. 38-39 Galen provides an example of what should be regarded as not admitting any *logos* of destruction, i.e. 'what is completely simple and impassive'. Although this expression remains somewhat obscure, it is similar to Plutarch's description of the indivisible *ousia* of the Soul (see Plu. *An.Procr.* 1022 E) and I would suggest that Galen is referring to something of this kind. Therefore, Galen regards

*agenêton* → *aphtharton*

as a primitive axiom evident to reason. The world, then, cannot in any way be

both ungenerated and destructible. The situation is different, however, when it comes to the entailment between *aphtharton* and *agenêton*. Here, according to Galen, some supplementary ‘specification’ or ‘test’ (*diorismos*) is needed.<sup>51</sup> This test makes it clear that *aphtharton* has two different meanings:

*aphtharton* 1: that which does not admit the principle of destruction at all

*aphtharton* 2: that which has gained a restored immortality, i.e. that which can be destroyed, but is preserved from destruction by an external cause.

While

*aphtharton* 1 → *agenêton*

the same does not hold for *aphtharton* 2. This is further explained through the quotations from Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Statesman* and the example of the city of Sparta, which can perpetually be preserved from destruction by being restored little by little.

In conclusion, Galen rejects Aristotle’s idea of a mutual entailment: ‘it is rational then that if something is ungenerated, it is also entirely free of destruction; but if it is free of destruction, it is not necessarily ungenerated’. While Atticus’s critical discussion of *Cael.* 1.10-12 fits well his overall attitude towards Aristotle’s philosophy and theology, Galen’s argument is perfectly consistent with his usual approach: he scrutinises available arguments, tests basic concepts and principles, detects (if necessary) fallacies and ambiguities. Despite the presence of unmistakable parallels, the two agendas are very different. Certainly, Galen was not the first to distinguish different meanings of the terms employed by Aristotle. In fact, Aristotle himself was the first to do so, by listing the meanings of ‘*agenêton*’, ‘*genêton*’, ‘*phtharton*’ and ‘*aphtharton*’ in *Cael.* 1.11. And before Galen the second century AD Platonist philosopher Taurus had based his allegorical exegesis of the *Timaeus* on a careful distinction of different meanings of the term ‘*genêton*’ (see Phlp. *Aet.Mun.* 121.18-21; 145.1-147.25; 148.7-25 = 22T.; 23F. Gioè).<sup>52</sup> Again, Galen is certainly drawing upon his scholastic background. Yet, as noted above, the emphasis on ambiguity as a source of fallacy and the analysis of the different meanings of a term in order to refute his opponents is typical of Galen’s approach. It may be significant, therefore, that Galen neglects crucial aspects of Aristotle’s proof in *Cael.* 1.10-12 (e.g. Aristotle’s famous and controversial argument that possibilities of being/non-being are defined by reference to temporal maxima) and focuses merely on the meaning of terms employed in his demonstration.

In his treatise *On Marasmus*, Galen (*Marc.* VII.671 K.) cursorily refers to the argument made in *DD* 4 and claims that the proposition that whatever is generated is subject to destruction has no scientific or necessary ‘consequence’, but only one which extends as far as the *pithanon*. The expression ‘ἄχρι τοῦ πιθανοῦ’ has an almost technical sense in Galen and means that a proposition is merely subjectively plausible or convincing, but carries no demonstrative power.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, Galen lends emphasis to Plato’s own claim that the cosmological account in the *Timaeus* is merely a plausible or likely one (*PHP* V.791-2 K.). Plato, then, cannot be blamed for developing a dogmatic cosmology, for he simply does not intend his arguments to be demonstrative. According to Galen, it is rather Aristotle who mistakenly aims to develop a demonstrative speculative

cosmology that conceives of our cosmos as both ungenerated and indestructible.<sup>55</sup> Showing that *incorruptible* does not necessarily entail *ungenerated* is all the more crucial here, since Galen claimed that it is an unmistakable truth confirmed by observation that the world is unperishable. This might be suggested by another fragment from *DD* 4 preserved in Arabic by al-Rāzī (*Doubts on Galen*, 3.18-21 Mohagheh):

If the universe were corruptible, then the [celestial] bodies, the distances between them, their magnitudes and their motions would not persist in one and the same state and, moreover, the waters of the oceans, which preceded us, would have to cease existing. But not a single one of these ever departs from its state or changes, as the astronomers have observed for thousands of years. Therefore, it necessarily follows that, since the universe does not age, it is not susceptible to corruption.<sup>56</sup>

That said, we can grasp something more about Galen's agenda in *DD* 4. The whole section might have contained a discussion *pro et contra* the eternity of the world, a discussion whose aim was to show that this issue is impossible to settle through demonstrative methods. This would not be an uncommon feature of Galen's *DD* where, as recently shown by Havrda discussions *pro et contra* possibly played an important role and were part of Galen's strategy against scepticism. In his argument Galen would be opposing the evidence drawn from experience, which speaks in favour of the world's sempiternality, to that drawn from reason, which shows that Aristotle's demonstration of the world's sempiternality is unsound. This unsolvable conflict between reason and experience would suggest that this issue is impossible to settle; hence Galen's agnosticism.<sup>57</sup> In connection to this, Galen investigated the question of how to distinguish genuine axioms evident to reason from premises that are only apparently such, but do not preserve this status after some rational scrutiny or testing.<sup>58</sup> This agenda is not only different from, but also incompatible with the various interpretations of Plato's cosmology developed in Middle Platonism. Again, Galen's interest in this problem is rather that of a practicing scientist with a serious philosophical background, who tests philosophical theories against his criteria for evidence and demonstration.

### 3. Common notions and definition

Galen's views on language and definition have often been discussed against the wider background of the Hellenistic debates on language and epistemology.<sup>59</sup> Here I will adopt a different approach and try to make sense of Galen's views within the context of his stance on language and knowledge. As in the previous sections, I will compare Galen's view with those of other post-Hellenistic authors, but I will definitely *not* explore how this later debate affects or alters the genuine philosophical meaning of the theories previously developed in the Hellenistic age.

Galen often refers to 'common notions / conceptions' (*koinai ennoiai*), i.e.

basic concepts shared by all human beings and he takes common notions to be the starting point for attaining scientific knowledge, whose proper object is the essence of things.<sup>60</sup> This is clearly stated, e.g., in a passage from *On the Method of Healing* where Galen focuses on the appropriate definition of ‘disease’.

According to Galen, the principal indication of the appropriate therapy a physician must adopt in each case comes from the scientific understanding of the ‘essence’ (*ousia*) of the disease (*MM* X.128; X.157-9 K.; *Fac.Nat.* II.127 K.). Diseases are divided into genera and species and each specific disease further determines its *summum genus*. Generally speaking, a disease involves the impairment of some natural function or activity and can appropriately be defined as the disposition (*diathesis*) that impedes this activity (see *MM* X.41; X.81 K.; *Sympt.Diff.* VII.43; 50-1 K.). Common notions are the starting point leading to this definition (*MM* X.40-1 K., see also, on the transition from common conception to essential definition, *Opt.Corp.Const.* IV.739 K.; *PHP* V.593 K.)

Galen, then, claims that essential definitions should take common conceptions agreed upon by all human beings as their starting point and this is indeed a vital aspect of his attitude to ordinary language. Galen certainly does not suggest we focus on the actual word itself (e.g. ‘*nosein*’) and its grammatical properties; what matters instead is what the word refers to, i.e. what condition this word is generally used to mark out. In the case of disease, this condition entails that the activity of a part of the body is impaired. As Hankinson puts it, Galen’s common conceptions are therefore ‘generally agreed, non technical, basic descriptions of certain types of sortal terms’ (my italics).<sup>62</sup> Hankinson’s account is certainly correct, but some further remarks are necessary. It is crucial to note that Galen in no way suggests that everyone agrees on the same description or definition of disease (as e.g. ‘impairment of the activity of a part of the body’). Galen merely mentions what human beings actually refer to when they become aware of a disease and accordingly employ the term ‘disease’. Instead, he makes no mention at all of the definition or description that people adopt when talking of health or disease. It is perfectly conceivable, then, that different human beings will provide different descriptions of disease and it would even be conceivable that none of these descriptions would be identical to the common conception of disease actually shared by all human beings.<sup>63</sup> Having a common conception, behaving and using our language in accordance to it, is in fact something different from providing a correct description of the *ennoia*.

In the passage from *MM* quoted above, Galen avoids talking of a common definition or description of disease. Rather, he talks about a common conception of disease that determines the way in which human beings become aware of a disease and use the terms ‘health’ and ‘disease’. Whether human beings are aware of the *ennoia* or not, whether they describe it with the same words or not, it is the *ennoia* that determines the way in which we refer to health and disease in our behaviour and common parlance. One might indeed suppose that all human beings, after proper scrutiny, would come to share the same definition of ‘disease’, but this entails a further maieutical step, which cannot be equated with the mere possession of common conceptions; rather, as we shall see below, this further step entails that the common conception be interpreted or clarified. This

might help to identify Galen's solution to a well-known predicament implied by the Stoic theory of common conceptions, i.e. that common conceptions, while being common, are not actually available to all human beings. Scholars diverge on how this issue should be solved within the framework of the original Stoic theory.<sup>64</sup> While this is a very controversial issue, Galen's position is reasonably clear in itself and holds that human beings actually have a common conception of disease and agree in their actual use of it. In using the term 'disease', they all refer to the same thing or *pragma* (one might talk of a 'shared extension' of the term). Thus, according to Galen, *koinai ennoiai* are not merely basic, but shared by all human beings – or rather by all human beings that are in normal conditions and rely on their natural criteria (more on this below). However, this by no means entails that all human beings are actually capable of correctly describing their *koinai ennoiai* (it is then perfectly possible that there is no consciously shared intension of the term 'disease': and this is indeed what ordinarily happens).

References to *koinai ennoiai* are actually ubiquitous in Imperial and Late Antique philosophy. The Stoic origin of this theory is unmistakable, but further qualifications are needed. For example, Galen is not inclined to incorporate the two crucial Stoic terms 'preconception' (*prolepsis*) and 'articulation' (*diarthrosis*) in his account of common conceptions. Accordingly, Galen starts not from inarticulate *prolēpseis*, but from common conceptions.<sup>65</sup> That said, there certainly is an interesting analogy between Galen's position and Epictetus' distinction between a kind of innate tacit knowledge in the moral domain shared by all human beings (that of inarticulate *prolēpseis*) and a fully developed or articulate knowledge (e.g. *Diss.* I.22; II.11.1-12 and II.17.7-13).<sup>66</sup> Again, this is not a perfect parallel, for Galen apparently assumes that all human beings agree in applying their common notions (all human beings refer the term 'disease' to conditions of the same kind), whereas Epictetus emphasises that everybody agrees on a very general *prolēpsis* (e.g. the *prolēpsis* of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy': II.17.8-9; or that the good is something profitable and to be chosen and that in every circumstance we ought to seek and pursue it: *Diss.* I.22.1), but people disagree on the application of *prolēpseis* to individual instances. Despite the differences in terminology and details, both Galen and Epictetus agree in recognising the existence of some kind of latent ordinary knowledge of basic features of the world shared by all human beings. Knowledge develops by unfolding or articulating this preliminary condition, thus making it fully clear. It is worth emphasising this parallel, since we know that Galen was interested in Epictetus and wrote in defence of his views against Favorinus (see *Lib.Prop.* XIX.44 K.). It is at least plausible to suppose, then, that Galen took inspiration from the Stoic philosopher and that the parallel between their views about knowledge may not be a sheer coincidence.<sup>67</sup>

The existence of common conceptions is proved by the very fact that all human beings are able to successfully identify some basic conditions of the world and this comes about independently of any technical learning. Here Galen's view is certainly closely connected to his famous account about natural criteria (see, e.g., *Opt.Doc.* I.48-49 K., *PHP* V.723 K.), which are – as Hankinson puts it – 'certain physical and psychological capacities possessed by human beings in

virtue of which they can come to an understanding of the world they inhabit'.<sup>68</sup> Galen is notoriously keen to extend the presence of natural criteria to animals other than human beings, so that he does not refrain from ascribing to them cognitive capacities that we would characterise as 'propositional' (e.g. the ability to identify essences, thus distinguishing between things which are one in form and things which are one in number: *MM* X.133-4 K.). Certainly, animals are different from humans, for they cannot further articulate that recognition, nor reflect on its content. And yet Galen is as clear and explicit as possible in drawing a parallel between their capacities and those of human beings: the donkey's ability to recognise the essence or form of the camel in several individuals is indeed something very close to the human being's ability to recognise the essence or form of disease in several particular instantiations in virtue of common conceptions. This is, in turn, connected to Galen's well-known views about nature and providence, which endow living creatures with an innate drive towards self-preservation coupled with an instinctive ability to distinguish between different objects and choose what is appropriate (see, e.g., *UP* IV.248-9 K.).<sup>69</sup>

From this perspective, it is extremely interesting to compare Galen's references to common conceptions to those in Middle Platonist works such as the *Anonymous Commentary on the Theaetetus* and Alcinous' *Handbook*, both of which connect the idea of natural conceptions to the Platonist theory of recollection. Despite some minor differences, both Alcinous and the anonymous commentator identify natural conceptions with the inborn memories of the Ideas, memories that should be properly awakened or articulated in order to attain proper knowledge (Alc., *Did.* 4.155.27 and 32; 156.19-23; 5.158.4; [Anon.], *In Tht.* col. XLVI.43-XLVIII.11).<sup>70</sup> The analogies with Galen are evident. First of all, there is an interesting parallel in terminology. Both Galen and the Platonist authors incorporate a theory about innate common (*koinai*) or natural (*phusikai*) conceptions / notions (*ennoiai*). The Stoic echoes are clear, but interestingly enough none of the three authors adopts the term *prolēpsis*. What we find is rather a theory about common or natural conceptions and their articulation or interpretation. 'Preconceptions' are not mentioned and consequently the issue of how preconceptions are related to common conceptions does not emerge in their writings. Rather, what emerges in these authors' texts is a distinction between the mere possession of natural/common conceptions (*ennoiai*) and their conscious or full activation (*anakinein*: see Alc. *Did.* 5.158.4; cf. Plato, *Men.* 85c) or articulation (*diarthrōsis*: [Anon.] *In Tht.* XLVI.44; XLVII.45). We can just speculate about the reasons for this absence, but a plausible guess is that *ennoia* had, after all, a solid Platonic pedigree (see, in particular, *Phd.* 73c, where the term *ennoia* occurs in Socrates' account of recollection). The Stoic view about common or natural conceptions, then, was probably felt to be naturally compatible with Platonism (if, indeed, appropriately supplemented by the distinctively Platonic view about recollection). Plutarch provides further evidence of this fact, in a famous and controversial fragment where he presents common conceptions as the Stoic answer to Meno's paradox (see Plu. fr. 215f Sandbach). The situation was different with *prolēpsis* and this term was probably felt to be too closely and distinctively connected to the views of Epicurus (see, again, Plut. fr. 215f



Sandbach). Plotinus too is perfectly happy to incorporate ‘common conceptions’ in his philosophy (see esp. VI.5.1.2), but he never talks about *prolēpseis*. Certainly, *whatever they may have made of the original Stoic theory*, Galen and the Platonist authors of his time all bear witness to a (mis)interpretation of common conceptions as innate concepts. For common or natural conceptions are clearly set out as a kind of inborn and tacit or latent knowledge. The anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus* famously provides evidence of this fact, for he adopts the unmistakably Stoic vocabulary of common conceptions and their articulation when he describes Socrates’ maieutic method. The commentator, therefore, presents *ennoiai* as the inborn memories of ‘beings’ in our soul (memories that apparently are common to all human beings, although they are not equally accessible to everybody).<sup>71</sup> Through his dialectic method, Socrates is able to articulate and unfold the inborn conceptions, thus triggering reminiscence in his disciples, so that they may attain proper knowledge (col. LVII.43-5). In a way, of course, Galen’s approach is similar to this overall account; for in Galen, too, common conceptions are the inborn starting point that, if correctly developed, leads to knowledge in the proper sense. Yet here, too, a distinctive approach emerges on Galen’s part. His version of nativism has nothing to do with recollection or pre-natal knowledge and is instead connected to his view about inborn natural criteria. What are inborn, according to Galen, are the natural capacities that make it possible for human beings to form their common conceptions starting from what they perceive. Galen’s common conceptions are not inborn *contents*.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Galen’s account of common conceptions is part of his highly peculiar theory of language and definition, whose significance can, again, only properly be assessed against his distinctive views about scientific knowledge.

In his work *On the Difference of Pulse*, Galen supplements the account of *MM* and dwells on the progression from the ordinary use of a common notion to the fully developed knowledge of the essence. Galen links progression in knowledge to the distinction of different kinds of definitions, whose two principal types (*Diff.Puls.* 704 K.) are the conceptual (‘*ennoematic*’) and the ‘essential’ one.<sup>73</sup> The very term ‘*ennoematic*’ links the first kind of definition to the theory of common conceptions. Galen states in *Diff.Puls.* VIII the following:

The *ennoematic* definition provides a clear interpretation of the ordinary conception of a thing possessed by those who are capable of ‘naming’ it (704 K.: ἐξηγούμενον σαφῶς τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ἐννοίαν, ἣν ἔχουσιν οἱ ὀνομάζοντες αὐτὸ; see also 707-9 K.; 712 K.).

The *ennoematic* definition is accepted by all those who speak the same language and has nothing to do with the essence of things, but remains fixed to their ‘bare’ conception (704 K.: οὐδὲν ἀποφαίνεται περὶ τῆς τοῦ πράγματος οὐσίας, ἐπὶ ψιλῆς καταμένων τῆς ἐννοίας).

The *ennoematic* definition gains acceptability by itself, for it provides an interpretation of evidently apparent things, i.e. things that are evident to perception (705 K.: τὸν πρῶτον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πιστεύεσθαι, φαινομένων ἐναργῶς πραγμάτων ἔρμηνείαν ἔχοντα; see also 707 K.: ἐναργῶς αἰσθανομένων and Galen’s remarks about the evident perception of pulse at 706 and 709 K.). Galen

also specifies that Aristotle called the ‘ennoematic’ definition a ‘nominal definition’, as if he were calling it a definition that expresses the meaning of a ‘noun’ (705 K.: ὡς εἰ καὶ λόγον ὀνόματος ἐρμηνευτικὸν εἰρήκει; see Arist. *APo.* II.10.93b30-1). Furthermore, according to Galen’s *Aristoteles interpretatus* the ennoematic definition goes with the ‘proper accidents’ of a thing (τὰ συμβεβηκότα δὲ ἰδίως αὐτῷ συνδιέρχασθαι τὸν ἐννοηματικόν: 705 K.). The ennoematic definition is a starting point for reaching the essential definition that makes the essence of a thing clear. Therefore the ennoematic definition should be taken to be the criterion of the essential definition (708 K.). The essential definition must agree with the ennoematic one (704 K.). It would be wrong to put forward an essential definition without having first established the ennoematic one.

Galen’s discussions about ‘disease’ in *MM* X.40-1 K. and ‘pulse’ in *Diff.Puls.* VIII.706ff. K. run along similar lines. The starting point is that all human beings agree in applying the same term to a certain condition in the world that is evident to perception (the impairment of a part of the body, or a certain kind of movement perceptible in several parts of the body and especially in the wrist). However, Galen’s account in *Diff.Puls.* makes it clear that some further work is necessary to attain a description that is adequate to the conception commonly shared by everybody. Here Galen’s vocabulary is revealing: for he constantly associates the ennoematic definition to some kind of exegesis or interpretation that clearly expresses our common conceptions (ἐξηγεῖσθαι: *Diff.Puls.* VIII.630 K.; ἐξηγουμένον σαφῶς: 704 K.; ἐρμηνεύοντος: 704 K.; ἐρμηνείαν ἔχοντα: 705 K.; ἐρμηνεύειν: 708 K.).

Note that Galen mentions the view of some people, whom he calls ‘pseudo-dialecticians’, according to which dialectic starts with the ‘interpretation of the conception of names’ (*Diff.Puls.* VIII.630 K.).<sup>74</sup> Galen does not reject this position at all, but argues that his opponents’ actual practice runs against it: for they do not provide any such interpretation, but aim instead to ‘legislate’ on names (this remark is part of Galen’s polemic against Archigenes’ artificial use of language). Galen’s account of definition aims instead to provide the correct version of this ‘hermeneutical’ approach to language. An ennoematic definition, then, is a clear expression / interpretation of the conception shared by those who refer to a given thing by a certain term. As noted above, having a common conception and correctly applying it to certain things in the world by no means implies that people actually share the same description or definition of the thing in question (a shared extension does not necessarily entail a consciously shared intension).<sup>75</sup> This transition (i.e. the transition from the mere usage of a common conception to the clear description of it) entails that we not only successfully identify a certain condition in the world, but that we are furthermore capable of correctly expressing in words the common conception that provides the basis for our successful identification.

This helps explain Galen’s problematic claim that the ennoematic definition provides an interpretation of things evident to perception. Here it is crucial to note that ‘evident’ retains its objective meaning, typical of Hellenistic philosophies.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, things that ‘appear evidently’ to us are not things which

we are subjectively conscious of, but things which appear to us in a way that is immediately indicative that something is the case. This kind of objective evidence, granted by our natural criteria, is the basis for our successful identification of certain things in the world (and Galen takes this successful and unanimous identification to be simply a matter of fact). Conceptual definitions mark a further step: for they clearly express the common conception derived from evident phenomena. It is through the conceptual definitions, then, that we pass from latent to clear knowledge. Basically, a conceptual definition makes our common use of a term clear and, so to say, transparent to us. Thus we can not only identify successfully states of disease, but are capable of associating a correct description to the relevant term. This description is not strictly identical to the common conception: rather, it is the exegesis of our common conception – so to speak – that makes it consciously accessible to us.

Galen repeatedly claims that a conceptual definition does not make the essence of a thing clear, but merely provides an interpretation of the meaning of a certain term. So it is a nominal definition, not an essential one. Here, however, some qualification is called for. It is crucial not to be misled by Galen's emphasis on the nominal character of the definition. Through his sharp distinction between conceptual (ennoematic) and essential definitions, Galen possibly aimed to counter the view that we can grasp the essence of things by merely conceptually analysing or articulating our common conceptions of them (it might be significant that Galen does not mention any 'articulation' of common conceptions). Galen certainly does not reject this kind of dialectical analysis, but he regards it as the first step in a longer and more complex process that moves from the ennoematic definition to the essential one. And this transition entails that we do not merely conceptually analyse our linguistic practice, but rather discover the very essence of things through a combined use of reason and experience (see *Diff.Puls.* 706-8 K. where Galen extensively discusses the transition from the ennoematic to the essential or scientific definition of pulse). Galen does not at all suggest that such genuine knowledge can be attained by merely articulating our common conceptions. However, Galen in no way suggests that nominal definitions are merely stipulative definitions with no connection to reality. Instead, he holds that conceptual definitions should be taken as criteria for essential definitions and that it would be wrong to put forward an essential definition without first agreeing on the conceptual one.<sup>77</sup> Therefore Galen criticises those physicians who do not respect these distinctions and, accordingly, provide arbitrary definitions (see *Diff.Puls.* VIII.704 K. and, again, Galen's polemic against Archigenes' artificial use of language in *Loc.Aff.* VIII.115-7 K.).<sup>78</sup>

Galen's view might seem contradictory: for how can a nominal definition, which has nothing to do with the essence of a thing, at the same time be the criterion by which to assess its essential definition? It seems to me, however, that Galen's position proves to be sufficiently clear and consistent as soon as we realise that 'nominal' or 'conceptual' (ennoematic) definitions are by no means stipulative, but reflect (or rather make clear) the basic ordinary knowledge of things attained through our natural perceptual capacities. Evident perceptual properties are in fact by no means conventional: they are perfectly objective

features of the world that appear to us under normal conditions and are captured by our common conceptions. Such properties are certainly external to the essence of things (hence, as noted above, genuine essential knowledge cannot be attained through the conceptual analysis of common conceptions). External and perceptual properties, however, are as actual and real as essential ones. They are the first to be accessible to us and, although the essence is distinct from such perceptual properties, it cannot in any way be unconnected to or in contradiction with them. Rather, the essential definition of, e.g., pulse explains precisely the very essence that underlies evident perceptual properties (*Diff.Puls.* VIII.708 K.). This explains why according to Galen the knowledge of essence cannot merely be derived from the articulation of common conceptions, but is nonetheless connected to the interpretation of common conceptions and should agree with the conceptual definition. From this perspective, the distinction between ‘conceptual’ and ‘essential’ definitions is analogous to that between ‘dialectical’ and ‘scientific’ premises. We might say that dialectical premises and scientific premises are the propositional counterpart of conceptual and scientific definitions. Here it is worth recalling again that Galen connects dialectical premises not with *endoxa*, but with some kind of pre-scientific knowledge based on the perceptual properties or attributes of things.

All this can help shed some light on Galen's complex attitude towards the analysis of ordinary language. As noted above, Galen subscribes to the view that dialectic is based on the interpretation of the conceptions of names. Basically, Galen takes dialectic to be a study of ordinary language that aims to clarify our current linguistic practice based on common conceptions. It is through dialectic that we come to connect our current linguistic practice, consisting in calling a certain condition ‘disease’, with a description which can in principle be shared by all those who employ the term ‘disease’ correctly. And through dialectic it is also possible for us to detect those features in ordinary language that are potentially misleading (i.e. ambiguity). The interpretation of ordinary language is thus the first step in scientific inquiry. From this perspective, Galen incorporates genuine dialectic into his epistemology and it is tempting to contrast his approach to that of Alcinous and (later) Plotinus, who instead incorporate dialectic into their Platonist metaphysics. Scientific inquiry, however, certainly cannot stop at that according to Galen: for language and common notions reflect a first real access to reality, but no adequate or essential knowledge of it. The transition from the conceptual to the essential definition is thus identical to the transition from dialectic to demonstration.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the numerous parallels with philosophical works of his age, Galen's position appears, once again, to be an original one, distinctively connected to his views about the characteristics and scope of scientific knowledge. As I see it, Galen offers a highly original incorporation of philosophical tenets within the distinctive perspective of the practicing scientist. Dialectic and philosophy are incorporated insofar as they provide a successful method of knowledge acquisition. As I have aimed to show, it is within this general framework that we should address the issue of Galen's relation to the philosophy of his times and the parallels between Galen and other (especially

Middle Platonist) philosophers.

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I am grateful to all those who took part in the discussion of this paper at Pont-au-Mousson. I am especially indebted to Thomas Bénatouil, for a number of written comments. Thanks are also due to Matyáš Havrda, Anna Maria Ioppolo and James Wilberding, who were kind enough to read a draft of this paper and make several valuable remarks.

<sup>1</sup> For a defence of this category, see Donini 1990 (*contra* Frede 1987b). In this article I will refer mainly to Atticus, Alcinous and the anonymous commentator on Plato's *Theaetetus*, whose views can interestingly be compared to those of Galen. Atticus is known to have lived in the second century AD. The situation is less clear with Alcinous, as the chronology of his *Handbook of Platonism (Didaskalikos)* is dubious and no conclusive evidence can be found that this work was composed in the second century. I am inclined to regard an early dating of the *Didaskalikos* (to the first century BC or the first AD) as less plausible than a later dating (to the second or early third century AD). However, this is not crucial to my argument. The same applies to the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus*: whatever its exact date of composition may be – Sedley (1995: 254-6 and 1997) suggests an early date for this work (first century BC), but his arguments are critically discussed in Brittain 2001: 249-54 and Bonazzi 2003 – this work certainly contains some interesting parallels with Galen, which point to a common background.

<sup>2</sup> References to Galen's works are given in Roman and Arabic numerals according to Kühn's 'edition' (with the exception of those works not included in Kühn). More recent editions, such as those by *CMG* and *Les Belles Lettres*, also follow Kühn's pagination. For the list of the abbreviations used for Galen's works, see Hankinson 2008: 391-97.

<sup>3</sup> On Galen's agnosticism in *Prop.Plac.*, see now Pietrobelli 2013; Vegetti 2013: 168-74.

<sup>4</sup> Further discussion in Chiaradonna 2009a and Vegetti 2015.

<sup>5</sup> This is also the sense of 'dialectic' in the title of Galen's *Institutio logica* (Εἰσαγωγή διαλεκτική), if indeed this title comes from Galen himself.

<sup>6</sup> On this, see the fundamental discussion in Barnes 1991 and 1993.

<sup>7</sup> ἄνδρας παλαιούς, διαλεκτικούς, ἐπιστημονικούς, ἀληθῆς καὶ ψευδῆ διακρίνειν ἡσκηκότας, ἀκόλουθον καὶ μαχόμενον ὡς χρῆ διορίζειν ἐπισταμένους, ἀποδεικτικὴν μέθοδον ἐκ παίδων μεμελετηκότας. The translation of *MM* 1 and 2 is that of Hankinson 1991 (with some slight changes). For the Greek text, see Johnston and Horsley 2011.

<sup>8</sup> On Galen's *DD*, see Müller 1895. Recent contributions include Chiaradonna 2009b; Havrda 2011; Havrda 2015; Havrda 2017; Koetschet 2015. According to Havrda, Galen's *DD* can plausibly be seen as the source of Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VIII (at least of some sections of the book, see in particular *Strom.* VIII.3.1-15.1). This is an attractive hypothesis, but material from Clement will not be discussed in the present article.

<sup>9</sup> See Barnes 1993.

<sup>10</sup> On this, see the remarks in Gourinat 2013: 45-6.

<sup>11</sup> See Tieleman 1995: 18. For further discussion on the concepts of *endoxon* and *pithanon*, I refer to Tobias Reinhardt's article in this collection.

<sup>12</sup> See *PHP* V.273 K.: τὰ δὲ γυμναστικά πάμπολλα· καθ' ἕκαστον γὰρ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων τε καὶ συμβαινόντων τῷ πράγματι συνίσταται. Here Galen seems to suggest that dialectical and scientific premises can have the same content: for dialectical premises are drawn from all of the attributes of a thing, while scientific premises provide a reason to select, *among these attributes*, those which are pertinent to the matter investigated. However, Galen claims elsewhere that scientific and dialectical premises focus on different classes of attributes: for, unlike scientific premises, dialectical premises are drawn from those attributes which are external to the matter investigated (see *PHP* 221 K. and V.250 K. χρῆ γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ὑπαρχόντων τῷ προκειμένῳ πράγματι τὰληθῆς λαμβάνειν ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μόνου τοῦ συνημμένου τῷ προβλήματι). According to the first reading, the same premise can count as both dialectical and scientific, since a premise drawn

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from the actual property of a thing is dialectical when the presence of this attribute is merely recorded, whereas it is scientific when in addition to that one provides a reason to select that attribute as relevant or essential for the investigation. According to the second reading, dialectical and scientific premises are drawn from different classes of attributes and dialectical premises are merely drawn from external attributes (as opposed to essential or so to speak ‘intrinsic’ ones).

<sup>14</sup> See Barnes 1991: 73; Hankinson 1994; Morison 2008a.

<sup>15</sup> See, again, Morison 2008a: 130, who discusses extensively Galen’s view on the correctness of names.

<sup>16</sup> Further references and discussion in Morison 2008a: 139.

<sup>17</sup> On the limits of language according to Galen, see now Reinhardt 2011 and below n. 78.

<sup>18</sup> See Morison 2008b: 81-2. On Galen’s attitude to ordinary Greek, see Morison 2008a: 146: ‘The true reason why Galen thinks that philosophical and medical writers should follow the usage of the Greeks must be this: successful communication involves clarity of expression, and clarity is achieved when people come to agreements as to how words are to be used. Since communicating is the point of using language in the first place, words should always be used as people have agreed they should be used. If you don’t use words in the way those around you use them, you will fail to get your message across.’

<sup>19</sup> Hankinson 1994: 180.

<sup>20</sup> Demonstrative method (ἀποδεικτική μέθοδος): *CAM* I.266 K.; *UP* IV.21 K.; *Pecc.Dign.* V.64 K.; *PHP* V.220, 590, 592 K.; *MM* X.113 K.; demonstrative methods: *Pecc.Dign.* V.64 K.; logical method (λογική μέθοδος): *Hipp.Elem.* I.486 K.; *Pecc.Dign.* V.88 K.; *MM* X.28 K.; logical methods: *Art.Sang.* IV.729 K.; *Pecc.Dign.* V.89 K.; *Diff.Feb.* VII.280 K.; *MM* X.38 K. Sometimes Galen regards ‘demonstrative’ and ‘logical’ as synonymous: see *Pecc.Dign.* V.91 K.: χωρίς ἀποδείξεως καὶ μεθόδου λογικῆς.

<sup>22</sup> *Did.* 2.153.30-7: Διαίρεται δὲ αὕτη εἰς τε τὸ διαιρετικὸν καὶ τὸ ὀριστικὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπαγωγικὸν καὶ τὸ συλλογιστικόν, τοῦτο δὲ εἰς τὸ ἀποδεικτικόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν ἀναγκαῖον συλλογισμόν, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐπιχειρηματικόν, ὃ θεωρεῖται περὶ τὸν ἔνδοξον συλλογισμόν, καὶ εἰς τρίτον τὸ ρητορικόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ περὶ τὸ ἐνθύμημα, ὃ καλεῖται ἀτελής συλλογισμός, καὶ προσέτι τὰ σοφίσματα. 5.156.30-3: ὡς κατὰ λόγον εἶναι τῆς διαλεκτικῆς τὸ μὲν διαιρετικόν, τὸ δὲ ὀριστικόν, τὸ δὲ ἀναλυτικόν, καὶ προσέτι ἐπαγωγικόν τε καὶ συλλογιστικόν. Prantl suggested to supply καὶ τὸ ἀναλυτικόν at 153.31 after τὸ ὀριστικόν so that the first list is identical to the second, but this does not seem necessary to me. A valuable survey of Middle Platonist views on logic can now be found in Boys-Stones 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Ἐπεὶ δὲ τινες τῶν δογματικῶν τὴν διαλεκτικὴν εἶναι φασὶν ἐπιστήμην συλλογιστικὴν ἐπαγωγικὴν ὀριστικὴν [...].

<sup>24</sup> On division and definition in Galen, see Chiaradonna 2013, 402-13 and, below, Section 3.

<sup>25</sup> For further details, see Gourinat 2013: 35-47.

<sup>26</sup> On this distinctive Middle Platonist approach to Aristotle’s logic, see Baltes 1993: 259-61.

<sup>27</sup> Further references in Barnes 1991, 76. Alcinous connects *epagōgē* to the process of awakening of the ‘physical conceptions’ (*physikai ennoiai*), i.e. to recollection (see *Did.* 5.158.1-4 and below Section 3).

<sup>28</sup> Further details in Chiaradonna 2009a. Galen actually refers to the method of (geometrical) analysis, but the question remains open of the extent to which Galen incorporates it into his account of demonstration (on analysis in Galen see now Hankinson 2009). Sometimes Galen seems to regard analysis and division as interchangeable terms (*Diff.Puls.* VIII.601 and 609 K.), whereas elsewhere he treats analysis as a method for the resolution of problems (*Pecc.Dig.* V.80ff. K.). According to Alcinous, instead, analysis comprises three types. 1: an ascent from sense-objects to the primary intelligibles; 2: an ascent through what can be demonstrated and indicated to propositions which are indemonstrable and immediate; 3: that which advances upwards from a hypothesis to non-hypothetical first principles: see Alc. *Did.* 5.157.11-15; on Middle Platonist and Neoplatonist conceptions of analysis see Schrenk 1994 and Sorabji 2005: 268-71. Alcinous, in short, conceives of analysis against the background of Plato’s metaphysics and hypothetical method.

<sup>29</sup> Plato’s *Sophist* is probably the source of the first definition (although Alcinous’ vocabulary is clearly Aristotelian), whereas Plato’s *Republic* is obviously the source of the second one.

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Interestingly enough, this metaphysical ‘Platonic’ sense of dialectic is infrequent before Plotinus’ treatise I.3 *On Dialectic*. See Gourinat 2016, who provides an overview of the meanings of ‘dialectic’ in Imperial philosophy.

<sup>30</sup> More details in Chiaradonna 2009a and 2009b.

<sup>31</sup> Barnes 1993: 36.

<sup>33</sup> On Galen’s views on the status of medicine, see Vegetti 1994.

<sup>34</sup> On this I would refer to Bénatoüil 2006: 130–5.

<sup>35</sup> I would refer again to Barnes 1991.

<sup>36</sup> See Long 1988.

<sup>37</sup> The present account is intended to replace that in Chiaradonna 2014, which is more cursory and mistaken in some details.

<sup>38</sup> It is crucial to note that Galen’s agnosticism is limited to the speculative issue of the generation of the world. His agnosticism definitely does not extend to propositions concerning the effects of God and the Soul in the world of experience: see *Prop.Plac.* 2 and 3; *PHP* V.780-81 K. On this, see Frede 2003: 86-101 and Sedley 2007: 239-44 on Galen’s ‘creationism’ and design theology.

<sup>39</sup> English translation in Wilberding 2006.

<sup>40</sup> See des Places 1977. English translation in Gifford 1903.

<sup>41</sup> Here I will not focus on Atticus’ and Galen’s usage of modal expressions. This usage does not appear to be completely consistent (see Gal. 1. 23: ἅπαν ἀγένητον εὐθὺς καὶ ἀφθαρτὸν ἐστίν; 29-30: πᾶν ὅσον ἀφθαρτὸν ἐξ ἀνάγκης τοῦτο καὶ ἀγένητον εἶναι; 63-6: εἰ μὲν ἀγένητόν τι, πάντως καὶ ἀφθαρτὸν, εἰ δὲ ἀφθαρτὸν, οὐκ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀγένητον) and this is a famous predicament of Aristotle’s discussion too (see *Cael.* 1.11, 281a5 vs 1.12, 282a27-30: a recent discussion can be found in Broadie 2009: 39-40). On Galen’s views on modality, see Barnes 2007: 465ff.

<sup>42</sup> A survey can be found in Baltes 1998.

<sup>43</sup> See Baltes 1998: 114 and 414-7 = *Bst.* 137.7. On this Middle Platonist debate, see Petrucci 2014.

<sup>44</sup> See *Galenii Compendium Timaei Platonis*, II.11-13 and IV.1-13 in Baltes 2002: 88-91 and 309-12 (= *Bst.* 162.1). According to Baltes 2002: 312: ‘Es scheint, daß Attikos den Galen vor allem durch seine präzisen philologischen Interpretationen überzeugt hat’. The dossier ‘Atticus vs Galen’ is discussed in Baltes 1976: 63-5.

<sup>45</sup> On Atticus and Aristotle, see Karamanolis 2006: 150-90.

<sup>46</sup> Here I would disagree with Baltes 1998: 421, who claims that the fragment from Galen’s *DD* shows ‘Wie die beiden Platonikern (i.e. Atticus and Harpocration) dabei argumentiert haben’.

<sup>47</sup> See Tieleman 1996: 55.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Wilberding renders *logos* as ‘principle’, while Baltes translates *logos* at 600.21 (where it obviously must have the same meaning) as ‘Gedanke’: see Baltes 1998: 118-21 (= § 137.10).

<sup>51</sup> In Greek geometry, a *diorismos* is a subsidiary condition that must be added to the statement of a problem in order to guarantee its solvability in general terms. Galen is familiar with this notion and makes use of it. It is usually translated as ‘qualification’, ‘distinction’ or ‘specification’. For discussion, see van der Eijk 1997 (2005): 282-91.

<sup>52</sup> On Alexander of Aphrodisias’ discussion of this issue, see Coda 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Further details in Chiaradonna 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Atticus’ and Galen’s objections probably prompted Alexander of Aphrodisias’ reply (see *Quaest.* II.19). For according to Alexander the world is eternal *by its own nature* and there is no need of some external cause to exercise providence over it.

<sup>56</sup> English translation in McGinnis and Reisman 2007: 49-53; see now the extensive discussion in Koetschet 2015. This passage has a clear Peripatetic tone (see Arist. *Cael.* 1.3.270b11-16; *Mete.* 1.14.352a18-352b15), but I could find no precise parallel for it. Interestingly, Galen’s remarks on astronomers recall Diodorus Siculus’ report on the Chaldaeans at 2.30. Also, see *Simpl. In Cael.* 117.20-31.

<sup>57</sup> It is worth recalling that Galen’s cosmological agnosticism does not concern teleology. Galen constantly claims that positive, unquestionable evidence exists for a natural order, which cannot but depend on a divine Demiurge. ‘Nature’ and ‘demiurge’ are often interchangeable terms in Galen.

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<sup>58</sup> The status of axioms according to Galen's demonstrative foundation of medicine indeed raises several problems. Here I cannot go into this issue: for further discussion (and criticism of Galen), see Lloyd 1996. For a slightly different hypothesis about the structure of *DD* 4, see Koetschet 2015.

<sup>59</sup> See Hankinson 1994 and 1997; Brittain 2005; Morison 2008a.

<sup>60</sup> On common conceptions, see *Opt.Corp.Const.* IV.739 K.; *PHP* V.593 and 778-9 K.; *Plen.* VII.551 K.; *Loc.Aff.* VIII.191 K.; *Diff.Puls.*, VIII.684; 739 and 742 K.; *MM* X.40-1; *Ven.Sect.Er.* XI.168 K.; *Cur.Rat.Ven.Sect.* XI.255 K.; *Purg.Med.Fac.* XI.340 K.; *Hipp.Epid.* XVIIa.872 K.; *Adv.Lyc.* XVIIIa.203 K.; *Adv.Jul.* XVIIIa.252 K.; *Lib.Prop.* XIX.44 K.

<sup>62</sup> Hankinson 1991: 131.

<sup>63</sup> On what Galen argues with regard to the best constitution of our bodies, see *Opt.Corp.Const.* IV.739 K.

<sup>64</sup> See Obbink 1992; Brittain 2005.

<sup>65</sup> This fact makes Galen's view on definition different from that of the Stoics, who claim that when we have definitions we are able to articulate our preconceptions in such a way that they become more likely to be successfully applied or withheld. See, on the Stoic theory, Crivelli 2010: 383-392. Unlike the Stoics, Galen claims that we *do* successfully apply our common conceptions even if we are not able to express their definitional content correctly. Furthermore, according to Galen merely explicating or interpreting our common conceptions is just the first step for attaining a full-fledged scientific definition.

<sup>66</sup> This is but a very sketchy summary. On Epictetus' theory, see Long 2002: 67-96 ('The Socratic Paradigm'); Dyson 2009: xvii-xix and *passim*; Crivelli 2010: 383-90. A classical account can be found in Bonhöffer 1890: 187ff.

<sup>67</sup> For further details, see Bénatoüil forthcoming.

<sup>68</sup> Hankinson 1997: 164.

<sup>69</sup> See Hankinson 1997: 198.

<sup>70</sup> Helmig 2012: 147-54 and 282-6 provides an updated discussion of these passages. Alcinous refers to natural conceptions in his account of induction. As is the case with analysis, Alcinous provides a Platonist account of this logical theory and presents it as leading to the intellectual grasping of the Ideas. See Boys-Stones 2018: 395: 'Both procedures [analysis and induction] have long histories of their own: the roots of "analysis" lie in geometrical proof, and "induction" is an important part of Aristotelian epistemology. But Alcinous makes something quite different, and distinctively Platonic, of them. In his account of induction, for example, its purpose is to "stir up the common concepts" – and this [...] is the beginning of recollection [...]. He thinks that analysis too provides ways of converting empirical habits of thought to the contemplation of forms'. On common conceptions in Middle Platonism, see also the extensive discussion in Bonazzi 2017.

<sup>71</sup> See Sedley 1995: 536 *ad* XLVII.19-24.

<sup>72</sup> See Long 2002: 82 on Epictetus: 'Further, in claiming that these preconceptions are 'innate', his point is not that newborn infants are fully equipped with them but that our basic evaluative and moral propensities are hardwired and genetically programmed, as we would say today'.

<sup>73</sup> This section has recently been discussed in Kotzia-Panteli 2000 and Brittain 2005: 191-6; Hood 2010. Galen's distinction finds several parallels in the later tradition and, most notably, in Porphyry (see fr. 70 Smith). I shall not dwell on this issue here.

<sup>74</sup> διὰ τοῦτ' ἐγὼ νῦν οὐ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων τὰ σημαίνόμενα τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀναμνήσκω, ῥᾶστον ὄν μοι παρὰ πάντων λαβεῖν, ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτῶν τούτων τῶν ψευδοδιαλεκτικῶν. τοὺς γὰρ ἐπαγγελλομένους μὲν ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὰς ἐννοίας τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ταύτην ἀρχὴν τῆς διαλεκτικῆς θεωρίας τιθεμένους, οὐκ ἐξηγουμένους δὲ, ἀλλὰ νομοθετοῦντας μόνον, οὕτως ὀνομάζειν εἴωθα. There is, unfortunately, no critical edition of Galen's *Diff.Puls.* The Greek text, then, is that of Kühn's 'edition'. The identity of these 'pseudo-dialecticians' is rather mysterious. Certainly they were linked to the pneumatic doctor Archigenes and we may also infer a close connection with the Stoics. Note that in *Diff.Puls.* VIII.579; 631 K., Galen scorns the Stoics for legislating about linguistic usage. On this, see Crivelli 2010: 369-70, who suggests that Galen is here rejecting Chrysippus' account of stipulative definitions in his work *On Dialectical Definitions* (D.L. 7.65). According to Crivelli, this collection of definitions was possibly about names whose usage would



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otherwise have been obscure, i.e. technical terms. The parallel with *PHP* V.385 K. (see below, fnt. 77) further confirms the anti-Stoic character of Galen's remarks.

<sup>75</sup> I owe this distinction to James Wilberding.

<sup>76</sup> For a recent discussion, see Ierodiakonou 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Galen's famous criticism to Chrysippus' use of '*alogon*' at *PHP* V.382-6 K. is relevant here. According to Galen, Chrysippus uses the word 'irrational' as meaning 'rejecting reason' and this is *opposed* to the ordinary usage of the term ('irrational' can be used ordinarily in two different senses: 'lacking reason' or 'reasoning badly'; neither is compatible with Chrysippus' usage): see Morison 2008a: 148-9. By doing so, the Stoics do not make ordinary linguistic practice clear (as they claim to do), but alter it artificially: ἄλλο δὲ τρίτον ἢ καὶ νῆ Δία τέταρτον, ὡς οὗτοι βιάζονται, σημαίνονμενον οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἔθει τοῖς Ἑλλησιν, ὧν ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὴν φωνὴν ἐπαγγέλλονται (*PHP* V.385 K.). Note the presence of ἐξηγεῖσθαι, 'expounding' in De Lacy's translation: see De Lacy 1977-1984 (*CMG* V 4, 1, 2). Galen applies the same verb to conceptual definitions in *Diff.Puls.*

<sup>78</sup> It is worth noting again that according to Galen language is a necessary condition for establishing correct classifications, but not a sufficient one. Galen also recognises the existence of 'ineffable' *differentiae*, i.e. *differentiae* that can be perceived and are relevant for medical knowledge, but for which there is no corresponding word. This happens, e.g., with certain types of pain (*Loc.Aff.* VIII.117 K.), with certain types of pulse (*Diff.Puls.* VIII.517 K.) or discolourations of the skin (*Loc.Aff.* VIII.355K.). Galen acknowledges that many perceptual experiences cannot be expressed in words (*Dign.Puls.* VIII.773-4K.). Furthermore, he also seems to recognise the existence of a subset of unsayable properties that can only be perceived in a way which does not make them fully and consciously available to us (*Loc.Aff.* VIII.339-40K.). On this, see the discussion in Reinhardt 2011. It is however extremely important that Galen's emphasis on unsayable properties does not lead him to disqualify language as a means for understanding reality. Rather, he suggests that an *approximate* linguistic description can successfully be applied even when complete precision is impossible (*Dign.Puls.* VIII.774 K.).

<sup>79</sup> Indeed, one very unwelcome consequence of Galen's stance is that science cannot ultimately be counter-intuitive.