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Studia philosophica. 2023, vol. 70, iss. 1, pp. 31-47

ISSN 1803-7445 (print); ISSN 2336-453X (online)

Stable URL (DOI): https://doi.org/10.5817/SPh2023-1-3
Stable URL (handle): https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/digilib.78518
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Access Date: 17. 02. 2024
Version: 20230811

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Studia **philosophica** 70 / 2023 / **1**
https://doi.org/10.5817/SPh2023-1-3

The Stoic Cosmos, The Freedom of the Stoic and the Akrasia

Stoický kozmos, sloboda stoika a akrasia

Andrej Kalaš

Abstract

The paper attempts to introduce the Stoic concept of a deterministic universe and the centrality of the Stoic sage in it, using selected parts of Stoic philosophy (physics of the elements, psychology, causality and hierarchization of causes). The basic line of interpretation is to prove the thesis that the freedom of the sage is based on the autonomy of his manifestations justified by the sovereignly rational disposition of his soul. The author of the paper argues in support of the thesis that akrasia as acting against the order of reason and nature is not possible in the Stoic sage.

Keywords

Stoicism – Stoic sage – autonomy – freedom – akrasia

The paper was supported by the project "APVV-18-0103 Paradigmatic Changes in the View of the Universe and Man from Philosophical, Theological and Physical Perspectives". We cite ancient sources according to the edition of Stoic fragments by Hans von Arnim (*Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*...), for which we use the established abbreviation (SVF). In references to them we give (whenever possible) the complete Latin title of the ancient work, the most accurate pagination (from the Musaios project), and the number of the Stoic fragment in Arnim's edition. The paper offers a significantly elaborated version of the sketches I presented at the conference Ethical theories – unethical practice, organized by the Slovak Philosophical Association in Stará Lesná in the High Tatras on 19–21 October 2022.

Abstrakt

Príspevok sa na vybraných častiach stoickej filozofie (fyzika živlov, psychológia, kauzalita, hierarchizácia príčin) snaží predstaviť stoický koncept deterministického univerza a ústredné postavenie stoického mudrca v ňom. Základnou líniou výkladu je dokazovanie tézy, že sloboda mudrca sa zakladá na autonómii jeho prejavov zdôvodnenej zvrchovane racionálnou dispozíciou jeho duše. Autor príspevku preto argumentuje na podporu tézy, že akrasia ako konanie proti poriadku rozumu a prírody u stoického mudrca nie je možná.

Kľúčové slová

Stoicizmus – stoický mudrc – autonómia – sloboda – akrasia

Introduction

> Chrysippos, with sweat on his face, tries his best to explain that although everything happens according to fate, there is also something in our power [...].[1]

This is how the late antique doxographer Aulus Gellius (2nd century A.D.) aptly reports the efforts of the leading representative of the ancient Stoa, Chrysippus (3rd century B.C.), to reconcile human freedom with determinism. Our paper aims to introduce briefly the Stoic conception of determinism of the dynamic Stoic universe and the peculiar kind of freedom of the Stoic sage.

Our considerations should result in a resolution of the question whether akrasia, i.e. unrestrained action, is possible in the Stoic sage. Our task is not an easy one, especially since the Stoic picture of the world and of man in it is a model example of a dogmatic[2] Hellenistic philosophical system characterized by a wide complexity, elaboration and coherence of all parts of the doctrine. Our account of the Stoic cosmos, freedom,[3] autonomy, and akrasia

1 GELLIUS. *Noctes Atticae* 7, 2, 15, 4–7, 2, 15, 6 (= *SVF* II 976).

2 The dogmatic character of philosophy in Hellenism simply means that it gives, in an epistemological sense, a "positive" picture of the world, which takes the form of a philosophical system. Besides Stoicism, another dogmatic Hellenistic school is Epicureanism.

3 Bobzien very appropriately says that the theme of determinism and freedom is at the heart of Stoic philosophy in the sense that it is the real link between its three parts: ethics, physics, and logic (BOBZIEN, S. *Determinism...,* p. 2). As for the topic of freedom and determinism in Stoicism, two works written in Czech deserve attention: MIKEŠ, V. Stoická

must therefore take an imaginary arc through the basic areas of Stoic doctrine (physics of the elements, psychology, causality, theory of causes) that are relevant[4] to our topic.

We shall attempt to sketch a grand picture of the Stoic universe and the monumental image of the superrationalist sage within it, setting aside for the moment the burning question of whether such a man is merely an idealized fiction and the wishful thinking of the Stoics or whether he really exists.

Stoic physics of the elements, Stoic psychology and the hierarchy of the cosmos

It turns out that Stoic physics provides a very interesting, some scholars say even very modern, picture of the world[5] in terms of contemporary physics and ecology. In fact, the Stoic conception of the cosmos organically combines some aspects that are difficult to reconcile from a traditional point of view: the Stoic cosmos is on one hand materialistic, on the other hand ruled by the divine; furthermore, it is strictly deterministic, but the Stoic sage finds in it a kind of "Stoic" freedom; and finally, although it is ruled by fate, this fate takes the form of a benevolent providence that cares for man's good. Our brief exposition gives the physico-cosmological views of the representatives of the old Stoa (Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Diogenes of Babylon, Antipater of Tarsus) and disregards the modifications that Stoic physics underwent in the later period.

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teorie jednání: pojem ctnosti a svobody... and ŠÍMA, A. Péče o svobodu... However, neither of them connects the phenomenon of free action with the Stoic physics of elements and the theory of division and hierarchization of causes, which is one of the goals of our study.

4 The "organic" coherence of all the parts of Stoic philosophy is intended to be demonstrated by the well-known simile dividing philosophy into three integrated and organically connected parts, cf. SEXTUS EMPIRICUS. *Adversus Mathematicos* 7, 16, 6–7, 18, 1 (= *SVF* II 38); *ibidem*, 7, 18,1–7, 19, 6); DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 40 (= *SVF* II 38); CICERO. *De finibus* 3, 74, 9–3, 75, 1.

5 Cf. e.g. the interpretation of Long, who reflects on the ecological aspects of the Stoic world picture and also refers to some modern authors (LONG, A. A. *Hellenistic Philosophy*..., p. 163). For further analogies between the Stoic pneuma (see below) and modern scientific concepts, the reader is referred to the chapter Pneuma and Force in the earlier work *Physics of the Stoics* (SAMBURSKY, S. *Physics of the Stoics*..., p. 29–44).

Stoic physics is, in contrast to the "competing" atomistic interpretation of the world (Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius), a continuity theory of a dynamic universe.[6] It adopts the traditional four elements found still in the pre-Socratics: earth (γῆ), water (ὕδωρ), air (ἀήρ) and fire (πῦρ).[7] The important point is that the elements of earth and water are passive, inert (παθητικά), and constitute the passive principle of the cosmos, the Stoic matter (ὕλη, τὸ πάσχον). The elements of air and fire are active, non-inert (δραστικά). Their activity consists in their being able to permeate the first two and thus unite and integrate into the whole world both these inert elements and themselves. The two non-inert elements mentioned above constitute the pneuma (τὸ πνεῦμα[8] = breath), which is the active principle of the cosmos (τὸ ποιοῦν). For the sake of simplicity and our purpose of interpretation, this principle may be said to be identical with the world-reason (Λόγος, "Logos"), fate (εἱμαρμένη), the providence of the cosmos (πρόνοια), the world-designing fire (πῦρ τεχνικόν), God (Θεός), and the nature of the cosmos (φύσις).[9]

For the purposes of our interpretation, it is important that the active principle – whatever synonym from above we call it by – gives the cosmos and the entities in it all their dynamic characteristics. However, the degree of dynamism[10] of these entities, and hence their autonomy and freedom, depends on the quality of the pneuma. The key to understanding the Stoic conception of the freedom of the sage and why his actions and decisions

6 GAHÉR, F. *Princípy*..., p. 218. The adjective "continuity" here means that the Stoics, unlike the competing Epicurean philosophy, recognized the division of matter infinitely. Thus, the void (κενόν) has no place in the cosmos, which is entirely made up of space fully filled with body (τόπος). Incorporeal entities such as time, the aforementioned void and lekta ("sayables", meanings) are thus located outside the cosmos.

7 PLUTARCHUS. *De communibus notitiis* 1085c 8–1085d 5 (= *SVF* II 444).

8 NEMESIUS. *De natura hominis* 5, 186–5, 188 (= *SVF* II 418); GALEN. *De plenitudine* 7, 527, 13–7, 527, 16 (= *SVF* II 440).

9 To identify the meaning of these terms, compare the interpretation of F. Copleston (*Dějiny filosofie I*..., p. 516–517) and also A. A. Long (*Hellenistic Philosophy*..., p. 108). For detailed source definitions of the above Stoic terms, whose meanings are almost identical, the reader is referred to Volume IV ('indices') of Arnim's Collection of Stoic Fragments (*SVF* IV).

10 See: NEMESIUS. *De natura hominis*, 2, 44–2, 47 (= *SVF* II 451); SIMPLICIUS. *In Aristotelis categorias* 8, 269, 14–8, 269, 16 (= *SVF* II 452); ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS. *De mixtione* 224, 15–224, 17 (= *SVF* II 442).

do not admit akrasia is to understand the hierarchical dynamics of the Stoic universe as expressed in Stoic psychology.[11]

Pneuma as an active principle thus both integrates the world as a whole and incorporates its individual components into the whole world,[12] thus forming a unified organic whole out of them. The "partial" pneumas of the cosmos (ἕξις, φύσις, ψυχή) differ in quality according to the content of the fiery element they contain. A higher fire content will imply for them a higher degree of mobility or dynamism, which they impart to the passive matter of the cosmic entity in question. The degree of content of the fiery element is therefore determinative of the fundamental dynamic characteristic of the pneuma, which is its tension (τόνος). This tension determines not only the intensity of the dynamic manifestations of a given body constituted by a given pneuma, but also the degree to which a given body "integrates" into the totality of world events, that is, the degree to which it becomes an integrated element of a holistically conceived globalized Stoic universe. Already now we must convey to the eager reader the information that a higher degree of integration of an entity into world events implies – perhaps paradoxically, but from the point of view of the Stoic system quite legitimately – also a higher degree of autonomy or freedom of that entity.

According to the Stoics, the least degree of dynamism is exhibited by inanimate bodies, whose pneuma is called "holding", "hexis" (ἕξις),[13] and ensures only their physical compactness, coherence. Examples are stones, human artifacts, or a snow high in the mountains. Higher up are plants with a pneuma called "physique", or "nature" (φύσις), which, in addition to cohesion, provides plants with a kind of movement, especially growth, to a limited extent. Interesting is the distinction that Galen makes between the pneuma of plants and the pneuma of animals called "soul" (ψυχή): the pneuma of animals is, according to him, drier (ξηρότερον), the pneuma of plants wetter (ὑγρότερον).[14] On the ground of the Stoic physics of the elements, this

11 Our best ancient source for knowledge of the psychology of the ancient Stoa is Galen's *On the doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*. Our brief treatment of Stoic psychology is exclusively concerned with the Old Stoa and ignores the important modifications that the doctrine underwent in the period of Middle Stoicism (Panaetius, Posidonius).

12 The Stoics often liken the world to a living creature (κόσμον ... εἶναι ... ζῷον; Arius Didymus apud Eusebium, *Praeparatio evangelica* 15, 15, 1, 1–15, 15, 1, 3 (= *SVF* II 528).

13 From verb ἔχω (= have, hold together).

14 GALEN. *In Hippocratis librum VI epidemiarum* 17b 251, 1–17b 251, 5 (= *SVF* II 715).

can be explained by the fact that the pneuma of animals is drier because it is "warmer", since it has more of the fiery (life-giving)[15] element in it, which provides the animal pneuma with a higher tension (τόνος)[16] compared to the plant pneuma.

The above principle of increasing dynamism is also valid for the pneumas, which constitute the human soul. The human soul is a specific type of animal pneuma (ψυχή) which, in the case of the sage, possesses reason and thought (ψυχὴ λόγον καὶ διάνοιαν ἔχουσα).[17] Diogenes Laertius[18] mentions that, according to Chrysippus, only the souls of the wise people survive after death until the burning up of the cosmos, the so-called ekpyrosis. Arius Didymus, on the other hand, says that the soul of the good man lives after the death of the man until everything is consumed by fire, but that the soul of the unwise lives only for a limited time.[19]

The active principle of the cosmos (identified with God, the Logos, or fate) completes this hierarchy of pneumas in the cosmos by being an absolutely autonomous cause which needs nothing else, nothing external, for its dynamism. It is thus a cause that is endowed with self-movement.[20] It is a cause which is to the greatest possible extent "self-sufficient" (αὐτοτελής) and is endowed with self-movement. The self-movement of the supreme cause, the Logos, is attested by another Stoic fragment,[21] in which it is shown that what

15 It is likely that the Stoic concept of pneuma as vital breath and its philosophical modifications in Stoicism were inspired by the contemporary physiology of medical writers. More on the subject is discussed in the work of F. Solmsen, who argues in favour of the thesis that Chrysippus was much more influenced in his conception of the pneuma by medical writers (e.g., Praxagoras of Cos) than by Aristotle's esoteric works (SOLMSEN, F. *The Vital Heat*..., p. 122).

16 This reminds a fragment from Heracleitus: αὐγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη ("a flash of light – a dry soul, wisest and best"). Viz. STOBAEUS, *Anthologium* 3, 17, 42, 34 (= *DK* 22 B 118). The relationship between the Stoics and Heracleitus is a famous story of the ancient philosophy to which Long devotes an entire chapter (LONG, A. A. *Hellenistic Philosophy*..., p. 145–147). In the ancient context, however, it must always be borne in mind that doxographers deliberately anachronistically attributed many Stoic doctrines to Heracleitus to give them the appearance of greater antiquity.

17 PLUTARCHUS. *De virtute morali* 451b 8–10 (= *SVF* II 460).

18 DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 157, 4–7, 157, 5 (= *SVF* II 811).

19 ARIUS DIDYMUS. *Physica (fragmenta)* fr. 39, 28–31 (= *SVF* II 809).

20 AETIUS. *De placitis reliquiae* (Stobaei excerpta) 310, 12–310, 13 (= *SVF* II 338).

21 SEXTUS EMPEIRICUS. *Adversus mathematicos* 9, 75, 2–9, 76, 12 (= *SVF* II 311).

moves the immovable matter must be from eternity (ἐξ αἰῶνος, ἀίδιος) the self-moving potency (καθ' ἑαυτὴν αὐτοκίνητος δύναμις) which is God.[22] The Stoic God is thus the ideal of sovereign dynamism, autonomy, and freedom, to which the Stoic sage aspires, though he never reaches its level.

The mentioned scale of constitutive elements of Stoic pneuma emphasizes the differences between various cosmic entities. However, it is equally important to recognize what unites the various degrees. The unity of the cosmos is ensured throughout its complexity by the uniform composition of cosmic pneuma (fire + air) at all its levels. The distinction between these degrees is purely "quantitative", i.e., differing in tension (amount of fire), differing in levels of complexity, and differing in levels of integration of a particular part within the whole. In this way, Stoics can directly justify, at the ontological level, the analogy between the macrocosm (macro-pneuma, Logos) and the microcosm (human soul).[23] Human beings are essentially divine beings, even though they can never truly reach the level of the gods.

The freedom of the sage as autonomy of rational thought, decision and action. The hegemonicon of the soul as the primary cause in the Stoic hierarchy of causes

It is evident from our previous exposition that the Stoic sage participates, to a considerable extent, in the active principle of the cosmos precisely because the governing principle of his soul (ἡγεμονικόν)[24] is rational to the highest

22 The immortality of the soul derives from its self-movement Plato in his dialogue *Phaedrus* (PLATO. *Phaedrus* 245 c–e). Aristotle, in turn, in Book VIII of the *Physics*, proves the necessity of the existence of a first immovable mover from the impossibility of an infinite series of movers, similarly to the Stoic fragment *SVF* II 311, to which we refer in the previous note.

23 A similar view is also held by V. Mikeš (MIKEŠ, V. Stoická teorie jednání: pojem přitakání..., p. 9, note 7).

24 The human soul consists of a governing principle located centrally in the chest (ἡγεμονικόν) and peripheral branches leading to the sensory and executive organs. The Stoics thus speak in general of eight parts of the soul, which are the five senses, the faculty of speech, the faculty of procreation, and the faculty of thought (DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 110, 3–7, 110, 5 (= *SVF* II 828); CHLACIDIUS. *Ad Timaeum* 220 ff. (= *SVF* II 879)). The last part is the most important for our interpretation and is localized in the hegemonikon. The ability to think will constitute a kind of core of man's personality, his most proper self.

degree possible for man. The sage thus becomes a significant, integral, and indispensable part of the cosmic action. By his thinking, deciding and acting he becomes a significant (co-)cause determining the corporeal processes in the cosmos. In his case, it is the corporeal effects of complex causal interactions (ideas, consent, catalepsy, thoughts, decisions, actions) in which the governing principle of his soul, residing in his chest, is the primary (sunektikon, "coherent") cause of these causal processes. Given the limited scope of our paper, we cannot discuss in detail the Stoic theory of knowledge, causality, and the hierarchization of causes, and therefore we will limit the following exposition to the necessary principles.[25] Before briefly explaining in what sense the governing principle of the rational man's soul, with its rational virtues and cognitive dispositions, is the principal cause of the sage's thinking, knowing, deciding, and acting, let us devote a few more reflections to the Stoic conception of the soul.

According to the Stoics, then, the quality of a man's being depends precisely on the state of the governing principle of his soul (ἡγεμονικόν) responsible for the rational powers and rational virtues. We have already said that the soul will be the better in quality the greater the content of the fiery element it contains within itself, that is, the greater the tension (τόνος) of its constitutive pneuma is. The soul thus approaches more closely to its ideal model, to the active principle of the cosmos as such, to the Logos or Stoic God who gives dynamism to the cosmos as a whole. The quality of the soul, which is accounted for by the degree of its "fieriness", will be manifested both in a greater degree of its dynamism and self-sufficiency in causal action, and – on the mental level – in a greater degree of rationality in any processes of cognition, decision, and action.

Finally, the moment has arrived when it is appropriate to explain Stoic freedom in terms of the causal theory of causes.[26] At the outset, it should

25 All these concepts belong to Stoic epistemology, which is part of the Stoic logic. For the Stoics, the object of logic is one and the same Logos – that by which we speak, i.e., speech, then that by which we think, i.e., rationality, as well as that which governs nature, i.e., the law of nature. A. A Long aptly observes: "[...] it is the universal logos which is at work both in the connection between cause and effect and between premises and conclusions" (LONG, A. A. *Hellenistic Philosophy*..., p. 144). Cf. KALAŠ, A. *Elementy*...; KALAŠ, A. *Kataleptická fantázia*...; KALAŠ, A. *Úloha pudu*... For Stoic logic and semantics cf. GAHÉR, F. *Stoická sémantika*...

26 We deal with this issue in detail in a separate article (KALAŠ, A. Stoické chápanie kauzality...).

be emphasized that the Stoics analyze the processes of thought, cognition, decision, and action as any other corporeal interactions in the cosmos, that is, they seek and classify their corporeal causes.[27] It probably need not be particularly emphasized that the Stoic cosmos is consistently deterministic, although the beautiful and quite correctly coined modern Greek term for determinism (αἰτιοκρατία) is not found in the Stoic fragments, or even in ancient sources. Thus, the Stoics believe that every event in the cosmos is definitely determined by prior causes, and that knowledge of all causes would allow us to predict the future.[28] Despite radical Stoic determinism, the Stoic sage is (in some specific sense) "free". It is the Stoic hierarchization of causes that allows us to understand in what sense his freedom is realized. The Stoic classification of causes is lucidly given by the Christian doxographer Clemens of Alexandria in fragment *SVF* II 351, where he divides the Stoic causes into the following four kinds:[29]

1. The primary or "sustaining" (συνεκτικόν sc. αἴτιον, i.e. "cohesive") cause is the pneuma of the body itself. It is an internal cause due to which the effect of the constitutive pneuma of a body is externally manifested. It is in varying degrees self-sufficient (αὐτοτελές), and this property increases with

27 For the Stoics, causal action occurs only between the corporeal entities of the cosmos, see our study (KALAŠ, A. Stoické chápanie kauzality..., pp. 109–113) for a more detailed discussion. The void (τὸ κενόν) does not exist within the cosmos because it would disturb the causal integration of the whole world (τὸ ὅλον), the Stoic universe is thus a continuum (συνεχές), and even God is corporeal, see STOBAEUS. *Eclogae* I p. 138, 23 W. (= *SVF* II 336); AETIUS. *Placita* I 11, 5, (= *SVF* II 340); SEXTUS EMPEIRICUS. *Adversus mathematicos* 8, 263 (= *SVF* II 363).

28 Cf. e.g., the Stoic statement: "[...] everything that happens is followed by something else which is necessarily dependent on it as its cause, and everything that happens has something before it on which it is dependent as its cause. For in the cosmos nothing is, nor does anything happen without a cause. For nothing in the cosmos is or happens without a cause, since none of its constituent parts is separated or dissociated from anything that precedes it." (ALEXANDER, *De fato* 192, 6–11.) "[...] if any mortal could have overlooked with his spirit the interweaving of all causes, he certainly could not have been mistaken about anything. [...] For future things do not arise at once, for the passing of time is like the unwinding of a cord. For it does not create anything new, but only unwinds what was in the beginning." (CICERO. *De divinatione* 1, 127, 2–11.) Cicero's *De fato*, though preserved to us in a woefully incomplete state, is of fundamental importance for the understanding of the Stoic conception of fate and freedom. Its Slovak translation, together with a critical scholarly reflection, has been brought to the Slovak reader in his book by P. Fraňo (*(Bez) mocný osud*...).

29 CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. *Stromata* 8,9,32, 7, 1–8,9,33, 9,7 (= *SVF* II 351).

increasing tension of the pneuma. Examples of this type of cause are the value system of man, the Stoic virtues or our cognitive disposition residing in the governing principle of the soul or the shape of the cylinder or cone determining the direction of its rolling initiated by a push.[30]

2. The secondary or "preliminary" (προκαταρκτικόν sc. αἴτιον, i.e. "initiatory") cause represents the initiation which initiates the action of the primary cause. It is non-self-sufficient because it cannot produce an effect without the presence of the primary cause. But even this "non-self-sufficiency" is relative: if it cooperates with the primary cause with little tension, it can force the effect of the causal interaction in a significant way. An example of this type of cause is a sensory stimulus initiating in man some decision or action, a cataleptic ("grasping", i.e. cognitive) impression initiating the "grasping" of true knowledge (κατάληψις), the pushing of a cylinder or cone by a mechanical stimulus.

3. The auxiliary cause (συνεργόν sc. αἴτιον) is a cause which co-operates and assists in strengthening the effect achieved in the causal process. As a rule, it is a continuation of the action of the secondary cause prolonged in time. Examples are a long-acting sensory stimulus, the continuation of the pushing of a cylinder or cone, the prolonged gaze upon an object which initiates in us a certain type of decision or action, e.g., its theft.

4. The joint-causes (συναίτια) represent the whole complex of other causes which are necessary conditions (τὰ ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ), but not sufficient causes, of the causal process. Examples for joint-causes may be not only pneumatic, but also non-pneumatic agents of the causal process, such as time or space.

From the above overview of the classification and hierarchization of Stoic causes, it is evident that they can be divided into two types – internal and external. The first type is the primary cause, i.e., the pneuma of that body whose change of state represents the effect of the causal process.[31] The ex-

30 CICERO. *De fato* 42–43. A detailed analysis of Cicero's example with the cylinder and the cone is given in Long's earlier article (LONG, A. A. *Freedom and Determinism*...).

31 The effect (ἀποτέλεσμα) is thus a corporeal change of state (διάθεσις). For example, the pupil's acquisition of knowledge is a change (increase) of the tension (τόνος) of the pneuma of pupil's *hegemonikon* in a causal process in which the father (secondary cause), the teacher (primary cause), the pupil's nature (auxiliary cause) and other causes as time (συναίτια, τὰ ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ) enter as causes (CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. *Stromata* 8,9,25,4,1–8,9,25,4,4 (= *SVF* II 346)); the sharp knife (secondary cause) and the meat with a certain texture (primary cause) are the causes of its change of state, that is, of its becoming from the unsliced

ternal causes (secondary, auxiliary, joint-causes) are, in turn, those which initiate or assist this process, intensifying its realization. If the freedom of the Stoic sage[32] consists in the high degree of autonomy of his manifestations (thinking, knowing, deciding, acting), in causal analysis it turns out that the freedom of man consists in a favourable ratio of the causal share of the internal towards the external determination[33] of these manifestations (thinking, knowing...), which are the effect of this determination.

A man is free, in the Stoic conception, simply if his action depends to a decisive degree on himself, that is, if the most determinative cause of that action is the governing principle (ἡγεμονικόν) of his soul, which can quite well be identified with a kind of core personality of the acting, thinking, knowing, and deciding subject. However, this is only possible, from the point of view of Stoic physics and the theory of the hierarchization of causes, if the hegemonikon as the primary cause of action displays a significantly higher degree of self-sufficiency compared to sensory stimuli (secondary, preliminary cause).

The key to Stoic freedom is thus not the abolition of determinism, but its full preservation and the setting of a favourable ratio between the internal and external determinism of man's actions. This is achieved only if the soul of man contains a higher degree of the fiery element, if it has a higher tension, which is outwardly manifested in the fact that man has a higher degree of cognitive faculties and possesses rational ethical virtues.[34]

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to the sliced state (effect). For this and more other examples, see, e.g.: CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. *Stromata* 8,9,30,1,1–8,9,30,3,5 (= *SVF* II 349).

32 Freedom is defined by the Stoics in three ways: 1. as acting on the basis of rational ethical virtues (GELLIUS. *Noctes Atticae* 7, 2, 8, 1–7, 2, 9, 1 (= *SVF* II 1000)); 2. as that which is in our power (ἐφ' ἡμῖν, lat. *in nostra potestate*), i.e., that of which the causes are in us (EPIPHANIUS. *Panarion (Adversus haereses)* 3, 508, 20–3, 508, 21 (= *SVF* I 177)); 3. as an occasion of independent action (ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας) (DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 121, 11–7, 122, 1 (= *SVF* III 355)).

33 An interpretation that sees the distinguishing of external and internal causes as crucial for understanding the Stoic conception of freedom is suggested by P. Fraňo (FRAŇO, P. *Otázka slobodnej vôle*..., p. 3) in his short article on free will in Hellenism. Similar conclusions regarding the crucial importance of distinguishing between external and internal causes for Stoic freedom are also reached by A. Šíma, who, however, relies only on a single testimony from Cicero's *De Fato* and does not consider the more detailed classification of Stoic causes (ŠÍMA, A. Péče o svobodu..., p. 57).

34 Plutarch explicitly says that the Stoics regarded virtue (ἀρετή) as the state and potency of the governing principle of the soul (τοῦ ἡ ἡγεμονικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς διάθεσις καὶ δύναμιν), which

The bottom line is that the ethical scale of values, together with man's rational cognitive ability, will constitute the primary cause of the processes of (free) decision-making and action. This means that the axiological value system of the stoic sage enters into the aforementioned material causal processes of decision and action not as an ideal non-corporeal entity (e.g., as a Platonic idea or a non-corporeal soul) but as a specifically tensed (corporeal) pneuma, representing the material correlate of the ethical values and cognitive processes taking place in the soul of the man.[35]

To conclude our reflections on Stoic freedom, it will be appropriate to give at least two pairs of illustrative examples of free and unfree human action (decision-making). The first pair we find in Stoic doxography, the second example we have adopted from the authors Long and Sedley.

In the Stoic fragments we could find several examples of Stoic-conceived freedom and unfreedom in decision and action. According to the doxographer Clement, beauty (κάλλος, sensory perception as a secondary cause) gives the unrestrained people (ἀκόλαστοι, vice as a primary cause located in the hegemonikon) the opportunity for carnal love (ἔρως) because the object seen causes, or rather enforces, in them an erotic state of mind leading to sexual intercourse. In the case of the Stoic sage, this type of action is not at all a necessary and immediate consequence of the sensory perception of bodily beauty, because the Stoic's decision will not be forcibly determined by an external cause but will be determined to a dominant degree by an in-

is produced by reason (γεγενημένη (sc. διάθεσις) ὑπὸ λόγου), PLUTARCHUS. *De virtute morali* 441c1–441c3 (= *SVF* III 459). A remarkable conceptual analysis of the Stoic concept of virtue is offered by V. Mikeš in his chapter "Ctnost jako soulad" (Stoická teorie jednání: pojem ctnosti a svobody..., p. 578–582). In conclusion, he states that Stoic virtue is the harmony (ὁμιλογία) of the Stoic sage with the entirety of physis, which is realized through the selection of preferred indifferents (προηγμένα) and "virtue itself is accomplished in the insight into oneself as a part of the whole and its order" (p. 581). The "rationality" of Stoic virtue thus lies in the specific awareness of the world as a whole and the harmonious placement of individuals and their actions within it.

35 We offer an interesting proposal for how to solve the psycho-physical problem in the Stoics in an earlier study (KALAŠ, A. Vzťah netelesných lekta..., p. 406–407). On the key distinction between the meanings of the Greek verbs for the different types of existence of lekta and physical entities (εἶναι, ὑπάρχειν, ὑφίστασθαι), see, in addition to our study (ibidem, 405), the work of F. Gahér (GAHÉR, F. *Stoická sémantika*..., p. 19).

ternal rational value system (Stoic rational virtues), which in turn commands him to restraint (ἐγκράτεια, σωφροσύνη).[36]

Sedley does not refer to any Stoic fragment in giving the following example, though his illustration helps us very nicely to see both the nature of the auxiliary cause and the distinction between free and unfree action. The author says that "a sight of a stealable purse may be the preliminary cause of the thief's pursuit of it, but the continued sight of it can intensify the pursuit". Thus, the sensual impression of the purse can become a secondary cause of theft for the thief. However, staring at the wallet may become an auxiliary cause intensifying the action.[37] Regarding this unhistorical Stoic example, we add that in the case of the Stoic sage's fleeting – but even in the case of the Stoic sage's prolonged – glance at the "stealable" purse, this man would never commit theft. His rational value system (first, the virtue of justice) embodied by the high tension of the pneuma of his hegemonikon guarantees that he returns the found thing that does not belong to him to its owner in the just manner.[38] The action of the thief compelled by sensory impression is thus, according to the Stoics, unfree; the action of the sage, determined by the intrinsic value of the virtue of justice, is autonomous and free.[39]

Why is akrasia not possible in a sage?

All our exposition so far has been intended to be a brief probe into Stoic philosophy to show that Stoicism offers a super-rationalist picture of the Stoic sage, for whom decision and action are exclusively a matter of the rationalistic potency of his own soul. The emotions[40] are divided by the ancient Stoics

36 Example according to CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. *Stromata* 8, 9, 25, 2, 2–8, 9, 25, 2, 3 (= *SVF* II 346).

37 LONG, A. A. – SEDLEY, D. N. *The Hellenistic Philosophers. Volume I.*..., p. 342.

38 Compare the somewhat similar example in CICERO. *De finibus* 3, 59, 5–3, 59, 11 (= *SVF* III 498).

39 Concurring with Mikeš, we can therefore state that Stoic virtue and Stoic freedom are *de facto* two different descriptions of the same thing (MIKEŠ, V. Stoická teorie jednání: pojem ctnosti a svobody..., p. 585–586).

40 The scope of our paper does not allow us to analyse the interesting Stoic conception of emotions.

into good (εὐπάθειαι) and bad (πάθη). The former appears as a consequence of the right use of reason (λόγος), the latter are wrong (literally "unworthy", "worthless") opinions and judgments (δόξαι καὶ κρίσεις πονηραί).[41] From the foregoing it is evident that in the soul of the sage, whose hegemonikon is perfectly rational, only good emotions (joy – χαρά, vigilance (caution) – εὐλάβεια, and will – βόυλησις) can arise, while their evil pendants (pleasure – ἡδονή, fear – φόβος, and desire – ἐπιθυμία)[42] appear only in the unreasonable, corrupt, and unvirtuous soul of the unreasonable (ἄφρονες). For they are violent impulses (ὁρμὴ σφοδρά)[43] exceeding measure (ὁρμὴ πλεονάζουσα) which disobey reason (ὁρμή ἄλογος, ἀπειθής τῷ αἱροῦντι λόγῳ), and a movement of the soul against nature (κίνησις ψυχῆς παρὰ φύσιν).[44]

If akrasia (ἀκρασία), that is, "unrestraint", is a quality of the unrestrained man (ἀκρατής), we must learn from the Stoics what such a man is like, and whether he can be the Stoic sage whom we have so far tried to approach. The Stoic fragments are rather sparse on answering this question. In Galen we learn that the states of unrestrained men are somehow related to their inability to keep themselves under control, their succumbing to the passions[45] – and they run through life like runners who, during a race, cannot keep a straight course and run out further than they are meant to go.[46] In another fragment, akrasia as a characteristic of such unrestrained people is defined as one of the evils (κακίαι), but hierarchically, along with the other vices (slowness of understanding – βραδύνοια, inability to give advice – κακοβουλία), it is an evil of only a secondary category, i.e., subordinate to others.

41 PLUTARCHUS. *De virtute morali* cp. 7 p. 446 f (= *SVF* III 459).

42 DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 115 (= *SVF* III 431).

43 Impulse (ὁρμή) and assent (συγκατάθεσις) are key concepts in Stoic epistemology: the former represents a kind of inner dynamism in the soul that leads to assent to meanings derived from cataleptic (cognitive) and non-cataleptic impressions. At the same time, the impulse is a dynamism that subsequently leads us to act. For a detailed account, together with references to ancient sources, see the first chapter of our study (KALAŠ, A. Úloha pudu..., p. 163–166).

44 See especially the fragments: DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 110 (= *SVF* I 205); ASPASIUS. *In ethica Nichomachea commentaria* 44, 12–14 (= *SVF* III 386).

45 The word πάθος is not directly used by the doxographers in this place, but the verb ἐκφέρομαι, for which the *LSJ* dictionary does indeed list uses meaning "to be carried away by passion" (*LSJ*, s.v. ἐκφέρω).

46 GALEN. *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 4, 4, 24, 1–4, 4, 25, 1 (= *SVF* III 476).

The doxographer goes on to make the important observation for us that all these evils are ignorance (ἀγνοῖαι).[47]

What does this imply? Simply that the Stoic sage, whose soul possesses all the rational dispositions available to man, simply cannot indulge in akrasia, which is synonymous with unreason and vice. His decision and action will never be dictated by an impulse (ὁρμή) which is in any way out of measure (ὁρμὴ πλεονάζουσα) and out of harmony with the nature of the cosmos (παρὰ φύσιν). The sage's emotions would not be repressed by reason (ἀπάθεια), but neither would they be fed by wrong judgments (πάθη), for in the former case the sage would lose the dynamism of decision and action, and in the latter case he would be committing akrasia. The freedom, autonomy, and above all the non-akratic character of all sage's manifestations will consist in the fact that his psychic functions will be thoroughly dynamic, being determined by the rational disposition of the governing principle of his sovereignly virtuous soul.

Conclusion or subversive question to the Stoics

In the present paper we have tried to peer into the secrets of the philosophy of the ancient Stoa to show, by the physical workings of the cosmos and the position of man within the totality of nature, the exceptional and privileged position of the Stoic sage in the universe thus conceived.

We have shown that Stoic determinism is not an obstacle but rather a justification of the freedom of the Stoic sage. Given that his soul possesses to the highest possible degree rational cognitive powers and rational ethical virtues, simply the Logos (the same in the form of the law of nature, in the form of (human) speech, and in the form of the principle of thought) – all his manifestations are essentially different from those of ordinary men. The latter are divided into the unwise (ἄφρονες), who in all their activity manifest themselves inconsistently with the Logos, and the adepts of wisdom (προκόπτοντες), who, though outwardly behaving like wise men, have not yet internalised the rational virtue.

Clearly, this is because they have not reached the level of Stoic virtue (see note 34). However, their actions and decisions can be in accordance with

47 DIOGENES LAERTIUS. *Vitae philosophorum* 7, 92 (= *SVF* III 265).

nature (κατὰ φύσιν), as their motivation is driven by impulses (ὁρμή) that have not yet acquired a rational insight and rational motivation. This rational level can presumably be acquired by those who aspire to wisdom (προκόπτοντες) through education and overall care for the development of their character,[48] although even this goal must not contradict the Logos and the providential plan of the cosmos.

A sage will never have a conflict between emotions and reason, for even emotions are constituted in him by reason and correct, true judgments. His decisions and actions are free in the sense of autonomy and self-determination and do not admit akrasia in the sense of unrestraint caused by unreason or false judgments.

The provocative and subversive question for the Stoics is whether such a Stoic sage exists anywhere or ever lived on earth.

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48 ŠÍMA, A. Péče o svobodu..., pp. 58–59.

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