

# Does the Stoic Body Have a Head? On Stoicism as an Interpretive Background for Colossians 1:18a

καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας

In his seminal essay “Eine urchristliche Taufliturgie,” first published in 1949,<sup>1</sup> Ernst Käsemann advanced the thesis that the epexegetical syntagma τῆς ἐκκλησίας in Col 1:18a must be a gloss affixed to a pre-Christian hymn and that the religious-historical background of the term σῶμα in such an antecedent hymn ought to be understood in a cosmic sense rather than a soteriological one.<sup>2</sup> If σῶμα in the latter case would refer to the church, then it would refer in the former case to the entire cosmos in one way or another. For his part, Käsemann suspected the religious-historical background of the pre-Christian *Vorlage* of Col 1:15–18a to be the Gnostic “myth of the Archetypal Man/Redeemer” and in this case, σῶμα would be reminiscent of primal man, Adam, who represents not only the human as a microcosm but also is himself the “macro-anthropos” whose body is the entire world, an entity ruled by Adam as its soul or head.<sup>3</sup> That Käsemann’s conjunction of a redactional analysis with a religious-historical analysis proved to be so influential can be gleaned from the twofold fact that the mention of his essay is nearly ubiquitous in scholarly literature on Col 1:15–20 and that even a cursory reading of that literature reveals that almost all subsequent critical scholars have attempted

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<sup>1</sup> E. Käsemann, “Eine urchristliche Taufliturgie,” in *Festschrift Rudolf Bultmann: Zum 65. Geburtstag überreicht* (Kohlhammer: Stuttgart 1949) 133–148.

<sup>2</sup> E. Käsemann, “Eine urchristliche Taufliturgie,” in E. Käsemann, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (2 vols., 6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 34–51, 36–37.

<sup>3</sup> Käsemann, “Taufliturgie,” 39, 42.

to account for whether τῆς ἐκκλησίας is a gloss and, further, what sources might have influenced the author of the hymn<sup>4</sup> now presented to us in Col 1:15–20 and what the phrase ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος might originally have meant.

Though some have proposed locating the interpretive background of Col 1:18a in Jewish traditions<sup>5</sup> or in the undisputed Pauline letters,<sup>6</sup> a significant trend in Colossians-research has pursued the possibility of a Stoic influence. Long after the highly influential argument from Eduard Norden's *Agnostos Theos* (1913) that a Stoic doxological formula had been appropriated in Col 1:16,<sup>7</sup> Eduard Schweizer provided yet another of the key

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<sup>4</sup> That a rigorous argument can be made against the designation of Col 1:15–20 as a “hymn” can be seen in the examples of R. Brucker, “Christushymnen” oder “epideiktische Passagen”? *Studien zum Stilwechsel im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (FRLANT 176; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), and C.H. Cosgrove, “The Syntax of Early Christian Hymns and Prayers,” *EC* 9 (2018) 158–180. Nevertheless, the designation “hymn” is retained here due to the doxological and didactic functions of the passage, functions which hymns certainly exercise. On the topic, see S. Vollenweider, “Hymnus, Enkomion oder Psalm? Schattengefächte in der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft,” *NTS* 56 (2010) 208–231, and I. Männlein-Robert and C. Riedweg, “Hauptsächliche literarische Gattungen philosophischer Wissensvermittlung und Methoden der Textinterpretation in historischer Perspektive,” in *Die Philosophie der Antike 5/1: Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike* (ed. C. Riedweg, C. Horn, and D. Wyrwa; Basel: Schwabe, 2018) 64–83, 74–76.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. P.T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco: Texas, 1982) 39–40, 48–50); C. Stettler, *Der Kolosserhymnus* (WUNT 2.131; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 220, 222.

<sup>6</sup> P. Benoit, “Leib, Haupt und Pleroma in den Gefangenschaftsbriefen,” in P. Benoit, *Exegese und Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1965) 246–279. Benoit states that vis-à-vis attempts to locate the antecedents of the motifs of Col 1:18a outside the biblical tradition, he views Col 1:18a rather as an “inner development of Pauline thought” (262). He does, however, admit that Hellenistic influences could have played a minor role (264–265). Benoit is followed by M. Barth and H. Blanke, *Colossians* (AB 34B; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 207: “It is more reasonable to presume that Paul himself employed the same imagery [sc. of head and body] in different contexts” (cf. also n. 54).

<sup>7</sup> E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913) 240–254. Norden's analysis focuses first and foremost on Rom 11:36 and 1 Cor 8:6 before proceeding to consider Colossians as well. For a detailed counterargument which locates the background of the phrase in the philosophical writings of figures located in Egypt (i.e. the Philonic, alchemistic, and Hermetic corpora), see V. van Zutphen, *Studies on the Hymn in Romans 11,33–36: With Special Emphasis on the History of the Prepositional Formula* (Würzburg: Dissertationsdruck Schmitt & Meyer, 1972). J.D.G. Dunn (*Romans 9–16* [WBC 38B; Waco: Texas 1988] 698) and D.J. Moo (*The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996] 743) both state that while a superficial similarity to Stoic thought is discernible, the phrase is more directly informed by Hellenistic Judaism.

presuppositions for the view of Stoic influence in his 1964 *TWNT* article on the term *σῶμα*. There, he claimed that the Stoicism of the 1st centuries BC and AD considered the head to be the most important part of the body and that it was considered the location of the *λογικόν*, the rational faculty.<sup>8</sup> Although Schweizer's analysis of Colossians later on in the same article<sup>9</sup> and in his 1976 commentary would also attribute influence to the traditions of Platonism and Hellenistic Judaism, it is clear that his interpretation of Col 1:15–18a assumes the influence of the Stoic concept of a cosmic body *and* a cosmic head and that this notion was applied to Christ.<sup>10</sup> A more recent example of what I will call the "Stoic thesis" is George H. van Kooten's 2003 monograph *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School*, in which he argues for Stoic influence not only in connection with Col 1:15–18a but also with the argument against the author's opponents in chapter 2.<sup>11</sup>

The interpretation of the Christology of Colossians in modern scholarship, therefore, has depended to a certain extent upon an analysis of Stoic philosophy as a potential conceptual background for Col 1:15–20. Yet perhaps the thesis of a Stoic influence on Col 1:18a is not as unproblematic as the review of Stoicism in Schweizer's *TWNT* article might suggest. If the notion that the Stoic cosmic *σῶμα* has a *κεφαλή* seems unproblematic to anyone who consults the exegetical literature on Colossians, it is likely due to the fact that this key

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<sup>8</sup> E. Schweizer, "σῶμα κτλ," *TWNT* 7 (1964) 1024–1091, 1035.

<sup>9</sup> E. Schweizer, "σῶμα κτλ," 1072.

<sup>10</sup> E. Schweizer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser* (EKKNT 12; Zürich/Braunschweig: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976) 52–53, 60.

<sup>11</sup> G.H. van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School: Colossians and Ephesians in the Context of Graeco-Roman Cosmology, with a New Synopsis of the Greek Texts* (WUNT 2.171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). Commenting on Col 2:10, where Christ is said to be the "head of every power and authority," van Kooten claims that "to a considerable extent, the cosmological theory of the author of *Col* is paralleled by the Stoic doctrine of the world ..." (24).

component of the Stoic thesis is largely taken for granted in that literature.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the question which requires further discussion is this: does the argument that ἡ κεφαλή τοῦ σώματος might derive from a Stoic background work on Stoicism’s own terms? In other words, does the Stoic body have a head? In order to propose an answer to this question, a detailed yet concise review of the relevant tenets of Stoic physics and anthropology is necessary, as is an examination of the two chief sources cited by Schweizer, namely the allegorist Heraclitus and Cornutus.

## 1 The Stoic Cosmic Body

Since the time of the Pre-Socratics, the question of the corporeality of the divine and the proper form of a divine body—if one were to grant that the divine is indeed corporeal—was a commonplace among the philosophical schools, albeit a contentious one.<sup>13</sup> Whereas the Platonic tradition maintained that the divine is incorporeal,<sup>14</sup> the Stoic tradition affirmed

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<sup>12</sup> Benoit, “Leib, Haupt und Pleroma in den Gefangenschaftsbriefen,” for example, gives with one hand what he takes with the other: although he sees Col. 1:18a as an “inner development of Pauline thought” (262), he also suggests that Stoicism might have exerted influence, for according to him, the Stoics affirmed the notion that the guiding principle of the soul resides in the head (265). That Benoit offers no citations for this viewpoint, but rather merely assumes it, is indicative of how influential the Stoic thesis can be.

<sup>13</sup> That this question animated the Greek philosophical tradition for centuries can be seen in the example of the second century AD rhetor Maximus of Tyre. Roughly seven centuries after the Pre-Socratics, he dealt with the topic of divine images in *Dissertationes* 2.3, where he asserts that the Greeks portrayed the gods anthropomorphically because they were convinced that the human form is the best of all possible earthly forms, and that the gods would consequently be given more honour in this manner than if they had been portrayed as animals.

<sup>14</sup> The deepest reason for this is the affirmation that “the One” or “the Good” is “beyond being” (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) and therefore cannot be commensurate with any human manner of existence, including the material (C. Marksches, *Gottes Körper: Jüdische, christliche und pagane Gottesvorstellungen in der Antike* [München: C.H. Beck, 2016] 61, citing Plato, *Resp.* 509b). Although Marksches points out that Plato never said *expressis verbis* that the divine is incorporeal (63) and that the possibility of a divine corporeality might be suggested by *Timaeus* 34a–b, 92c (i.e. the cosmos as a σώμα and simultaneously a θεὸς αἰσθητός [67–69]), he does admit that such a view would contradict some of the “basic premises” of Plato’s theology (61).

divine corporeality. To be sure, they firmly rejected anthropomorphism.<sup>15</sup> Yet the notion that the divine is corporeal is entailed by the basic tenets of their physics<sup>16</sup> and was remembered as such by later generations.<sup>17</sup> The Stoics did not maintain that a duality of matter and non-matter underlies the universe, as the Epicureans had done,<sup>18</sup> but rather held that the universe consists of an active principle and a passive principle, otherwise known as God and matter (ὕλη), both of which are σώματα.<sup>19</sup> The necessity of considering each of these to be a σώμα is grounded in the notion that only corporeal entities can act and be acted upon and that the universe owes its existence to the interplay of the active and the passive principles.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.45, 59, 70, Diogenes Laertius 7.1.147, and Lactantius, *Ir.* 8.13 (= *SVF* 2.1057) on the rejection of anthropomorphism by the Stoics. See also the fragment of Seneca's *De superstitione* in Augustine, *Civ.* 6.10 (Markschies, *Körper*, 67).

<sup>16</sup> The equation of physics with theology which was latent in Zeno of Citium's threefold division of philosophy into logic, ethics, and physics was made explicit in Cleanthes' six-fold division into (a) dialectic and rhetoric, (b) ethics and politics, and (c) physics and theology (Diogenes Laertius 7.1.39, 41).

<sup>17</sup> For the recollection of the antithesis between the Platonists and the Stoics in this regard in the doxographical tradition, cf. Galen, *Hist. Phil.* 16.241 (= *SVF* 1.153), and Tertullian, *Apol.* 47 (= *SVF* 2.1034).

<sup>18</sup> According to Diogenes Laertius 10.39, the Epicureans maintained that the universe consisted only of bodies (σώματα) and void (τὸ κενόν). Needless to say, this precluded the possibility of an incorporeal deity.

<sup>19</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.134 (= *SVF* 1.85): Δοκεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι τῶν ὄλων δύο, τὸ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ πάσχον. τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἄπειρον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν θεόν ... ἀλλὰ καὶ σώματα εἶναι τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ ἀμόρφους. On the reading of σώματα, as opposed to ἀσωμάτους, in this passage, see Markschies, *Körper*, 73 and 483, n. 166. Markschies, following M.D. Boeri, "The Stoics on Bodies and Incorporeals," *The Review of Metaphysics* 54 (2001) 723–752, 725 n. 5, and M. Marcovich's Teubner edition (1999), argues in favor of reading σώματα. See also J.B. Gourinat, "The Stoics on Matter and Prime Matter: 'Corporealism' and the Imprint of Plato's Timaeus," in *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (ed. R. Salles; Oxford: Oxford University, 2009) 46–68, 55, and M. Forschner, *Die Philosophie der Stoa: Logik, Physik und Ethik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2018) 105.

<sup>20</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.56 (= *SVF* 2.140): πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ποιοῦν σώμα ἐστὶ· ποιεῖ δὲ ἡ φωνὴ προσιοῦσα τοῖς ἀκούουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν φωνούντων. See also Aetius, *Placita* 4.20.2 (= *SVF* 2.387): Οἱ δὲ Στωικοὶ σώμα τὴν φωνήν [εἶναι φασι]· πᾶν γὰρ τὸ δρῶν ἢ καὶ ποιοῦν σώμα. See also Cicero, *Acad. post.* 1.39 (= *SVF* 1.90): *nec vero aut quod efficeret aliquid aut quod efficeretur, posse esse non corpus*. Cf. Forschner, *Stoa*, 105, and M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa: Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (2 vols., 6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 1:64–65.

Prime matter, which is ὕλη as a principle rather than the ὕλη of discrete objects,<sup>21</sup> is bereft of reason and life, immobile of its own account, and simply waits upon the active principle to pervade it and give it shape. Yet while one can say that Stoic matter is passive and remains lifeless and amorphous without the vivifying and fashioning force of the active principle, the separation of the two principles from one another is merely an act of abstraction; in reality, the two principles do not exist in isolation from one another.<sup>22</sup> Instead, one must conceive of God, the active principle, existing *within* the passive principle, rather than being an external causality which exists for itself in isolation from the cosmos.<sup>23</sup> For this reason, Jean-Baptiste Gourinat proposes to characterize Stoic thought as “vitalistic” rather than “materialistic.” As he points out in this connection, the Stoics preferred biological metaphors for their physics—e.g. the well-known turn of phrase *σπερματικὸς λόγος*<sup>24</sup>—and rejected the merely mechanical motions of the “inert matter” of Epicureanism and abandoned the “technological model of the craftsman” from Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>25</sup> That such an understanding of physics entails the equation

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<sup>21</sup> The passive principle can be designated as ἡ πρώτη ὕλη (Diogenes Laertius 7.1.150; cf. Forschner, *Stoa*, 105, and Gourinat, “Prime Matter,” 48).

<sup>22</sup> Gourinat, “Prime Matter,” 68. Cf. Forschner, *Stoa*, 107–108: “Die Welt entsteht aus einer ewigen göttlichen Substanz, die die (realen, jedoch nur in Gedanken trennbaren) Momente des Aktiven und Passiven, des Tuns und Erleidens an sich hat, und vergeht wieder in diese Substanz. [...] Um Missverständnisse ... zu vermeiden, gilt es zu beachten, dass ... die beiden kosmologischen und kosmogonischen Prinzipien untrennbare, nur über Abstraktion isolierbare, in permanenter kausaler Interaktion befindliche Konstituenten und Faktoren des einen kosmischen Seins und Geschehens darstellen und als die beiden elementaren ‘Teile’ der einen göttlichen Universalsubstanz anzusehen sind ...”

<sup>23</sup> Forschner, *Stoa*, 106, citing *SVF* 2.306 (*apud* Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Comm. Metaph.* 133, lines 12–19, ed. M. Hayduck [Berlin: Reimer, 1891]): God is not *τι καθ’ αὐτὸ αἴτιον παρὰ τὴν ὕλην*, but rather *ὡς τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς ἔδοξεν ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ ποιητικὸν αἴτιον ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ εἶναι*.

<sup>24</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.136.

<sup>25</sup> “By introducing an active principle, which is identical with a seed, the Stoics depart from materialism, and tend towards vitalism, even if this seminal principle is always blended with matter and inherent in it” (Gourinat, “Prime Matter,” 68).

of God with the cosmos<sup>26</sup> and that the cosmos therefore might be considered to be God's body is almost self-evident. Indeed, as the Christian apologist Hippolytus tells us, Zeno and Chrysippus held God to be the "purest body," for as the beginning/principle of all things, God's providence extends through all things.<sup>27</sup> The divine Reason, on this account, might be conceived of as a force which holds the cosmos together as do bones and tendons in the human body.<sup>28</sup>

Another way of reaching the conclusion that the cosmos is a divine σῶμα is to argue *a minore ad maius*, applying the understanding of the nature of a discrete σῶμα to the cosmos as a whole. Even though God and prime matter can each be called a σῶμα, and the four elements along with them,<sup>29</sup> the term σῶμα may also be applied to discrete objects such as a tree or a fish. That is, discrete bodies made of matter<sup>30</sup> are the result of the mixture (κράσις) of the four elements caused by the divine, active principle.<sup>31</sup> In this particular sense, σῶμα is not synonymous with a cosmic principle (ἀρχή) but rather with a compound (σύγκριμα) fashioned by the active principle. For the Stoics, then, a discrete σῶμα is the result of divine activity: it is vivified ὕλη, an entity which the divine Reason has animated. On this approach, it is easy to

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Diogenes Laertius 7.1.137, where the first of three meanings of κόσμος is said to be "God himself."

<sup>27</sup> Hippolytus, *Haer.* 21.1 (= *SVF* 1.153): Χρύσιππος καὶ Ζήνων οἱ ὑπέθεντο καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀρχὴν μὲν θεὸν τῶν πάντων, σῶμα ὄντα τὸ καθαρῶτατον, διὰ πάντων δὲ διήκειν τὴν πρόνοιαν αὐτοῦ.

<sup>28</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.139: ὡς διὰ τῶν ὀστέων καὶ τῶν νεύρων.

<sup>29</sup> Forschner, *Stoa*, 107, and Gourinat, "Prime Matter," 49, both point out that the Stoics were careful to distinguish the two principles from the four elements, even though, as Forschner indicates, they drew on terminology from existing doctrines concerning the elements to describe the two antithetical principles and this led to some confusion.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an.* p. 17.15 (ed. Bruns) (= *SVF* 2.394): ἀλλ' οὐδὲ κατὰ τοὺς λέγοντας πᾶν σῶμα ἢ ὕλην ἢ ἐξ ὕλης εἶναι (ὡς τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς δοκεῖ) εἶη ἂν τὸ εἶδος σῶμα.

<sup>31</sup> Justin Martyr, *De res.* 6 (= *SVF* 2.414): Ἀλλὰ μὴν κατὰ τοὺς Στοϊκοὺς, ἐκ τῆς τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων κράσεως γινομένου τοῦ σώματος, καὶ διαλυομένου τούτου εἰς τὰ τέσσαρα ...

understand how the cosmos as the result of the interplay of the two cosmic principles might be considered God's σῶμα.

In the same way that the human body could be used to argue that the cosmos is a body, the human soul, too, provided the basis for an analogy with the soul of the cosmos. A particularly clear example of this can be found in Cornutus, *De natura deorum* 2.1:

And just as we are governed by our soul, so too does the cosmos have a soul which holds it together, and this soul is called Zeus, chiefly because it lives on and on and is the cause of life for all living beings.<sup>32</sup>

This insistence that the cosmos has a soul reveals one intention of the affirmation that the cosmos is a σῶμα: it is a living being pervaded, animated, and guided by divine Reason. Much the same is relayed by Diogenes Laertius as he reports on Chrysippus, Apollodorus, and Posidonius:

And that the cosmos is a living being (ζῶον), rational (λογικόν) and ensouled (ἔμψυχον) and intelligent (νοερόν), is said by Chrysippus in the first book of his *On Providence* and Apollodorus in his *Physics* and by Posidonius. It is alive in the sense that it is an ensouled substance capable of sense-perception. For it is better to be a living being than to be a non-living being; yet nothing is better than the cosmos. Therefore, the cosmos is a living being. And it is ensouled, as is clear from the fact that our soul is a fragment of it.<sup>33</sup>

The latter figure, Posidonius, was influential in articulating another intention of the affirmation that the cosmos is a σῶμα: as an organic body is a unity and all its members suffer

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<sup>32</sup> Ὡςπερ δὲ ἡμεῖς ὑπὸ ψυχῆς διοικούμεθα, οὕτω καὶ ὁ κόσμος ψυχὴν ἔχει τὴν συνέχουσαν αὐτὸν, καὶ αὕτη καλεῖται Ζεὺς, πρῶτως καὶ διὰ παντὸς ζῶσα καὶ αἰτία οὖσα τοῖς ζῶσι τοῦ ζῆν.

<sup>33</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.142–143 (= *SVF* 2.633).



and prosper together, so too does the cosmos exist as an organic body with an inherent “sympathy” (συμπάθεια) of its members.<sup>34</sup> Yet having a human form is not necessary for this to be the case, for Posidonius himself affirmed that the cosmos is spherical, as did Antipater, the sixth Stoic scholarch.<sup>35</sup> This makes perfect sense when one considers the aforementioned Stoic rejection of anthropomorphism.

If the cosmic body is a spherical, organic unity, then where would the cosmic soul be located? Indeed, while the soul itself extends through all the parts of the cosmic body, various answers were provided concerning the location of the commanding principle of the cosmic soul, the ἡγεμονικόν. Cleanthes proposed the sun, Chrysippus the aether, and Posidonius the sky (οὐρανός).<sup>36</sup> Of course, from the human perspective, all these items are located “up there.” While it is possible that an equation of elevation with dignity, similar to Plato’s description of the head in *Timaeus* 44d, 90a–b, 91e,<sup>37</sup> is at play in the Stoic localization of the cosmic ἡγεμονικόν, I suspect that the chief reason is the understanding of the soul as a fiery or airy substance. The soul was considered by Zeno of Citium, Antipater, and Posidonius to be a “hot breath” (πνεῦμα ἔνθερμον).<sup>38</sup> According to Eusebius, Zeno also identified it as a “vapour capable

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<sup>34</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 9.78–80 (= *SVF* 2.1013): ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἡνωμένων συμπάθειά τις ἐστίν, εἴ γε δακτύλου τεμνομένου τὸ ὅλον συνδιατίθεται σῶμα. ἡνωμένον τοίνυν ἐστὶ σῶμα καὶ ὁ κόσμος.

<sup>35</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.140: “Ἐνα τὸν κόσμον εἶναι καὶ τοῦτον πεπερασμένον, σχῆμ’ ἔχοντα σφαιροειδές ... καθά φησι Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ τοῦ Φυσικοῦ λόγου καὶ οἱ περὶ Ἀντίπατρον ἐν τοῖς περὶ κόσμου.

<sup>36</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.139 (= *SVF* 2.644). Diogenes Laertius, an Epicurean, is happy to point out that Chrysippus contradicted himself insofar as he also designated the οὐρανός, rather than the αἰθήρ, as the location of the ἡγεμονικόν of the cosmos.

<sup>37</sup> Of course, the more basic reason is because the head lodges the intellect. Yet the comment regarding the possibility of being either oriented towards heaven by fostering reason or, instead, being “drawn towards the ground” by neglecting reason and thus devolving into an animal suggests that the equation of elevation with dignity is operative here as well (*Timaeus* 91e).

<sup>38</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.157 (= *SVF* 1.135). Cf. also Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.9.19: *Zenoni Stoico animus ignis videtur.*

of sense-perception” (αἰσθητικὴ ἀναθυμίασις).<sup>39</sup> The well-known Stoic dictum that “Nature (φύσις) is an artistically creative fire proceeding forth to create” is followed by the affirmation that the soul is a φύσις capable of sense-perception and with which we are born,<sup>40</sup> and thus the fiery nature of the soul is implied. If the human soul is of a fiery or airy nature, then it makes sense to conclude that the cosmic soul must be so, too, and one could therefore locate its guiding principle in that region to which fire and hot air ascend.

Yet regardless of the precise location of the cosmic ἡγεμονικόν “up there,” and regardless of later attempts to clarify the relation of the two cosmic principles as σώματα to the four elements as σώματα and what this might entail for the understanding of God’s being<sup>41</sup> and to what extent the elements themselves might be considered to be cosmogonic principles,<sup>42</sup> one thing is certain: the notion that God, who might be called “Reason, Fate, or Zeus,”<sup>43</sup> is the

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<sup>39</sup> Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.20 (= *SVF* 1.141).

<sup>40</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.156 (= *SVF* 2.774): Δοκεῖ δ’ αὐτοῖς τὴν μὲν φύσιν εἶναι πῦρ τεχνικόν, ὁδῶ βαδίζον εἰς γένεσιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πνεῦμα πυροειδές και τεχνοειδές τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αἰσθητικὴν φύσιν. ταύτην δ’ εἶναι τὸ συμφυές ἡμῖν πνεῦμα.

<sup>41</sup> The Peripatetic Alexander of Aphrodisias attacked the Stoics on precisely this point, criticizing the logical entailment of the mixture of two corporeal principles, “body moving through body” (διήκων σώμα διὰ σώματος). He concludes that there are two equally problematic options: (1) the active principle—here referred to as πνεῦμα—will either be one of the four elements or a mixture (σύγκριμα) of them, or (2) the “divine body will be for them [sc. the Stoics] some fifth essence, [yet] without proof or persuasion ...” (ἔσται τὸ θεῖον αὐτοῖς σώμα πέμπτη τις οὐσία χωρὶς ἀποδείξεώς τινος και παραμυθίας ...) (*De mixtione* 225.3–10).

<sup>42</sup> Zeno maintained that there are two kinds of fire, τὸ ἄτεχνον and τὸ τεχνικόν (Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 1.25.3 [= *SVF* 1.120]). The latter kind came to be equated with God; Aetius, *Placita* 1.7.33 (= *SVF* 2.1027): Οἱ Στωικοὶ νοερόν θεόν ἀποφαίνονται, πῦρ τεχνικόν, ὁδῶ βαδίζον ἐπὶ γένεσιν κόσμου ... Cf. also Diogenes Laertius 7.1.147, where the phrase πῦρ τεχνικόν, ὁδῶ βαδίζον ἐπὶ γένεσιν is applied to φύσις. Cf. Aetius, *Placita* 1.7.23 (= *SVF* 1.157): Ζήνων ὁ Στωικός νοῦν κόσμου πύρινον (this νοῦς, of course, can be nothing other than God). Cf. also Augustine, *Civ.* 8.5 (= *SVF* 2.423), where fire, the “maker of the world,” is said to be God himself: *Nam Stoici ignem, id est corpus, unum ex his quattuor elementis, quibus visibilis mundus hic constat, et viventum et sapientem et ipsius mundi fabricatorem atque omnium, quae in eo sunt, eumque omnino ignem deum esse putaverunt* (cf. Augustine, *Acad.* 3.17.18 (= *SVF* 1.157)). Cf. Forschner, *Stoa*, 108–109. He asserts that the Stoics themselves always exercised caution to avoid confusing the principles with the elements; he therefore attributes the confusion of the principles with the elements in such later interpretations of the Stoics to: (1) their appropriation of physical and biological metaphors, and (2) their use of classical mythology to explain their physics.

<sup>43</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.137.

animating principle and soul of the cosmos and that the cosmos might be considered God's body is a firmly established component of the Stoic theological legacy. What is utterly striking for our purposes, however, is that although the cosmos is understood to be God's σῶμα, no metaphorical use of the term κεφαλή can be found in a theological context in Stoic writings. In fact, Seneca uses the Stoic rejection of such anthropomorphism to satirize Emperor Claudius in *Apocolocyntosis* 8, saying that the latter represents the Stoic God insofar as he "has neither heart nor head."<sup>44</sup>

Of course, the affirmation of a spherical cosmos and the rejection of anthropomorphism make the conspicuous lack of κεφαλή in a theological context quite intelligible. Yet what about the possibilities offered by the allegorical interpretation of mythical figures, such as Zeus? Would that not provide ample opportunity to advance the notion of a "head of the cosmic body"? Is it not the case that the two allegorical works cited by Schweizer in his influential *TWNT* article make such a reference? While these sources must be dealt with, it would be helpful to examine first what role the head played in Stoic anthropology, generally.

## 2 The Cartography of the Soul

If the Stoics could argue *a minore ad maius* from the concepts of a human body and soul to the conclusion that the cosmos is a body and has a soul, why did they not do so with the concept of a head? Aside from their anti-anthropomorphic stance and the fact that the notion of a cosmic body aimed to affirm the vitality and cohesion of the universe rather than the possession of a particular bodily form, the answer might lay in how the Stoics "mapped" the

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<sup>44</sup> (= *SVF* 2.1059): *Est aliquid in illo Stoici dei, iam video: nec cor nec caput habet.*

soul in the human body. With only three unnamed exceptions, the Stoics did not locate the rational part of the human soul in the head. Instead, it seems to have been the *communis opinio* of the Stoics that while the (octopartite) soul pervades the entire body,<sup>45</sup> the “most sovereign” part of the soul, which is the ἡγεμονικόν (alternatively, the διανοητικόν, διάνοια, or λογικόν),<sup>46</sup> is located in or around the heart.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.1 *The Heart as the Locus of the Governing Principle of the Soul*

According to Galen, the reason offered by Zeno of Citium, the founder of the Stoic school, was this: the explanatory, articulate voice (ἡ σημαίνουσα ἔναρθρος φωνή) which proceeds from the human body is a rational utterance (λόγος). Because every λόγος proceeds from the intellect (διάνοια), and because the voice exits the body by traveling upwards through the throat, then the intellectual faculty of the human cannot reside in the head but must derive from the same place as the voice, i.e., the chest.<sup>48</sup> For this reason, Zeno located the ἡγεμονικόν of the human soul in the heart. This basic conclusion against the head as the locus of reason was shared by Chrysippus,<sup>49</sup> the prolific author<sup>50</sup> and third Stoic scholarch. Yet what about possible exceptions to this view?

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<sup>45</sup> Aetius, *Placita* 4.4.4 (= *SVF* 2.827).

<sup>46</sup> Aetius, *Placita* 4.4.4 (= *SVF* 2.827); τὸ διανοητικόν in Diogenes Laertius 7.1.110 (= *SVF* 2.828). Cf. also *SVF* 2.830–832.

<sup>47</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.1.159 (= *SVF* 2.837): ἡγεμονικὸν δὲ εἶναι τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς ψυχῆς ... ὅπερ εἶναι ἐν καρδίᾳ.

<sup>48</sup> Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* 2.5.7–13 (= *SVF* 3.2.29). Galen reports that the 3rd/2nd century BC Stoic Diogenes of Babylon said much the same thing, albeit with different words. The conclusion of Diogenes' statement is as follows: καὶ ἡ διάνοια ἄρα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς κατωτέρω τόποις, μάλιστα πῶς περὶ τὴν καρδίαν.

<sup>49</sup> Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* 3.8 (= *SVF* 2.908). He was followed in this by Diogenes of Babylon (ca. 240–152 BC), the fifth Stoic scholarch (cf. Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* 2.8.110 [= *SVF* 3.2.30]).

<sup>50</sup> Diogenes Laertius 7.7.180.

There exist only three explicit references to the head as the location of the ἡγεμονικόν. One of these occurs in the work *On Athena* by Diogenes of Babylon (*apud* Philodemus, *De pietate*), the fifth Stoic scholarch. Diogenes claims that whereas “some” Stoics located the ἡγεμονικόν in the head, Chrysippus located it in the breast (στῆθος).<sup>51</sup> The allegorical interpretation of the birth of Athena provided the opportunity to locate the intellect in the head, seeing that Athena herself was born from Zeus’ head. Although Diogenes himself most likely did not accept this view,<sup>52</sup> the fragment demonstrates one avenue through which such a view might be construed. The second reference occurs in the *Placita* of the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD doxographer Aetius:

Aside from the governing principle, there are seven parts of the soul which have been engendered and which extend into the body, just like the tentacles of the octopus ... yet the governing principle itself, just like the sun in the cosmos, resides in our own spherical head.<sup>53</sup>

Just as the tentacles of an octopus grow from the head outwards, the seven “inferior” parts of the soul are understood to extend throughout the body from a starting point in the ἡγεμονικόν, which is in the head. Max Pohlenz characterizes this as a “false generalization” on the part of Aetius, one which might derive from the possibility that Cleanthes, the second Stoic scholarch, might have departed from his teacher concerning the localization of the ἡγεμονικόν

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<sup>51</sup> Philodemus, *Piet.* 15 (= *SVF* 3.2.33): τινὰς δὲ τῶν Στωϊκῶν φάσκειν, ὅτι τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἐν τῇ κ(ε)φαλῇ ... Χρῦσιππον δὲ ἐν τῷ στῆ(θ)ει τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν (εἶ)ναι ...

<sup>52</sup> Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* 2.5, 8 (= *SVF* 3.2.29, 30). Further, it seems that Diogenes would have refused the application of this “cartography of the soul” to his conception of God, for he held anthropomorphism to be “childish”: ὁ Βαβυλωνίος ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ... γράφει ... π(αι)δ(αριῶ)δες εἶν(αι) θε(ο)ὺς ἀ(ν)θρωποε(ι)δεῖς λ(έγει)ν καὶ ἀδύνατον (Philodemus, *Piet.* 15 [= *SVF* 3.2.33]).

<sup>53</sup> Aetius, *Placita* 4.21.2, 4 (= *SVF* 2.836.25–27, 38–39): Ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ ἑπτὰ μέρη ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκπεφυκότα καὶ ἐκτεινόμενα εἰς τὸ σῶμα καθάπερ αἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ πολυπόδου πλεκτάναι ... αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ὡσπερ ἐν κόσμῳ [ἥλιος] κατοικεῖ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ σφαιροειδεῖ κεφαλῇ.

due to the discovery of the nervous system by his contemporary, the Alexandrian physician Herophilus.<sup>54</sup> Pohlenz explains his conjecture in the following manner: according to later testimony, Cleanthes located the ἡγεμονικόν of the universe in the sun.<sup>55</sup> The false representation of Stoic orthodoxy in Aetius likely derives from at least one major Stoic figure expressing this idea and Cleanthes would be a likely candidate. Further—and this brings us to our third and final reference—Chrysippus introduces his argument against the localization of the ἡγεμονικόν in the head with the phrase, “But I hear that some say” (ἀκούω δέ τινας λέγειν).<sup>56</sup> This is taken by Pohlenz to be a veiled reference to Cleanthes, for it is unlikely that Chrysippus would have outrightly attacked his predecessor.<sup>57</sup> While I suspect that Pohlenz is therefore correct to call this reference in Aetius a “false generalization,” it should be noted in addition that elsewhere in the *Placita*, Aetius himself offers a contradictory report. There, he undergirds the *communis opinio* by claiming that *all* Stoics located the ἡγεμονικόν in or near the heart.<sup>58</sup> Any reading of Aetius needs to take this into account.

As it concerns our estimation of the claims of Chrysippus, Diogenes, and Aetius, it is not unreasonable to propose that we exercise the same critical concern toward their reports as we would toward one another as scholars: where we read that “some” thinkers held this or that notion to be true and the citation remains vague, naming neither a thinker nor a

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<sup>54</sup> Pohlenz, *Stoa*, 1:67. Pace G. van Kooten, it seems that this is a more prudent way of evaluating this report by Aetius than taking it as proof that the Stoics of the Imperial period “adjusted themselves to the Platonic view that the head is the most divine part of the human body and reigns over all its parts” (cf. van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology*, 19).

<sup>55</sup> SVF 1.499 (apud e.g. Cicero, *Acad. pr.* 2.126; Diogenes Laertius 7.1.139; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.15.7).

<sup>56</sup> Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis decretis* 3.8 (= SVF 2.908).

<sup>57</sup> Pohlenz, *Stoa*, 2:51–52.

<sup>58</sup> Aetius, *Placita* 4.5.6 (= SVF 2.838): Οἱ Στωϊκοὶ πάντες ἐν ὄλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ ἢ τῷ περὶ τὴν καρδίαν πνεύματι (sc. εἶναι τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) [φασιν]. This report of Aetius concurs with Diogenes Laertius 7.1.159 (= SVF 2.837).

particular work, then we probably should not invest the claim with the same value as a specific claim. This does not mean that the claim must be false, but rather that it might present us merely a thin thread on which to hang a theory. Further, as Pohlenz suggests, we must reckon with the possibility that the vagueness of the reference in Chrysippus—and by extension, Diogenes—might derive from the wish of a later scholarch to veil his criticism of one of his predecessors. In the end, these references to “some” Stoics professing a particular view might be nothing more than a reference to one figure: Cleanthes. If this is true, it is hard to imagine that Cleanthes’ view concerning the location of the ἡγεμονικόν would have become widespread in the Imperial period after two succeeding scholarchs had already rejected it.

What this means for the interpretation of the Stoic use of σῶμα to characterize the cosmos and the lack of the term κεφαλή when doing so, is this: because the human soul pervades the entire body and because the ἡγεμονικόν is located in or around the heart, a Stoic could safely identify God with the soul or ἡγεμονικόν of the universe without needing to employ the metaphoric use of κεφαλή.

## ***2.2 Two Possible Exceptions: Heraclitus and Cornutus***

If the *communis opinio* of the Stoics located the ἡγεμονικόν in or near the heart, then what should we make of Schweizer’s claim that some Stoics of the Imperial period—i.e., contemporaries with the author of Colossians—considered the head to be the most important part of the body because it houses the intellect? To this end, Schweizer cites the *Allegoriae Homericæ* of Heraclitus and Cornutus’ *De natura deorum*. However, do the passages cited by Schweizer truly present exceptions to the traditional Stoic view?

In his allegorical interpretation of Homer, the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD allegorist Heraclitus<sup>59</sup> certainly does locate the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογικόν) in the head “as in an acropolis.”<sup>60</sup> Yet this appears in the larger context of the argument that Plato stole his theory of the tripartite soul from Homer<sup>61</sup> and that Homer himself located the ἡγεμονικόν in the head.<sup>62</sup> The exegesis of Homer which follows must be seen in this light; i.e., that it supports a *Platonic* rather than a Stoic view. In fact, in his interpretation of the encounter of Athena and Achilles in Book I of the *Iliad*, it is clear that Heraclitus adjusts the text so as to make it conform to Plato’s philosophy. In the encounter between Athena and Achilles, the enraged hero considers drawing his sword to attack Agamemnon, but then thinks better of it. As Heraclitus tells it:

For after Achilles, filled with rage, went for his sword—the reason in his head having been darkened by the raging spirit around his breast—his mind came back to its senses after a little while, away from its vexing stupor, turning towards the better course. [Thus] in the poems, the change of mind transpiring with prudence is rightly considered to be “Athena.”<sup>63</sup>

The problem with this representation is that in *Iliad* 1.188–222, there is no mention of νοῦς or λογικόν or ἡγεμονικόν. In 1.188, it is Achilles’ heart (ἤτορ) which is troubled, and as Athena

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<sup>59</sup> While any dating of this author remains speculative, educated guesses place him and his work around 100 AD (cf. Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems*, ed. and trans. D.A. Russell and D. Konstan [Atlanta: SBL, 2005] xii–xiii).

<sup>60</sup> Heraclitus, *All.* 17.8. The θυμός lives near the heart and the appetites of the desires in the liver (αἶ δὲ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ὀρέξεις ἐν ἥπατι).

<sup>61</sup> Heraclitus, *All.* 17.4: Πάλιν οὖν ὁ πρὸς Ὅμηρον ἀχάριστος ἐν τῇ πολιτείᾳ Πλάτων ἐλέγχεται διὰ τούτων τῶν ἐπῶν τὸ περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δόγμα νοσφισάμενος ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ (“Therefore, Plato, who is uncharitable toward Homer in the *Republic*, is again refuted through these words, having filched from him the dogma concerning the soul”). Cf. also *All.* 18.1.

<sup>62</sup> *All.* 19.1–9. In *All.* 19.9, Heraclitus references Athena’s birth from Zeus’ head.

<sup>63</sup> *All.* 19.6–7: Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὑπόπλευς ὀργῆς γενόμενος ὥρμησεν ἐπὶ τὸν σίδηρον, ἐπισκοτουμένου τοῦ κατὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν λογισμοῦ τοῖς περὶ τὰ στέρνα θυμοῖς, κατ’ ὀλίγον ἐκ τῆς ἀγανακτοῦσης μέθης ὁ νοῦς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἀνένηψεν. Ἡ δὲ σὺν φρονήσει μετάνοια δικαίως ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν Ἀθηνᾶ νομίζεται.



arrives, he is deliberating “with his understanding and spirit” (κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν).<sup>64</sup> Of course, φρήν (lit. “midriff”) does signify the seat of reason in Homer’s understanding, but it is clearly not located in the head. The only commonality between Heraclitus’ re-telling and the text of Homer is the function and location of the θυμός; any parallel concerning the rational and appetitive parts of the soul, such as one finds in Plato’s theory, is manufactured by Heraclitus himself.

Anyone who reads the *Allegoriae* and doubts just how “Stoic” Heraclitus might be is in good company. Félix Buffière, the editor of the 1962 edition, called this very characterization into question. In his view, the use of allegorical interpretation might make Heraclitus somewhat Stoic in his exposition, but not in substance,<sup>65</sup> and it is “an error to imagine that his entire treasure of allegories is Stoic property.”<sup>66</sup> Instead, he resembles more the pre-Socratic natural philosophers and any “tint” of Stoicism in his writings might be likened to a “recent varnish on an old piece of furniture.”<sup>67</sup> Although Schweizer considered Heraclitus a Stoic, as did others before him,<sup>68</sup> a more proper designation for Heraclitus would be “eclectic.”<sup>69</sup> As can be gleaned from the beginning of his treatise, his aim is to defend Homer from charges of

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<sup>64</sup> In *Il.* 1.207, Athena tells Achilles to put off his “fighting-spirit” (τὸ μένος) and in 1.217, Achilles mentions having been angered in spirit (θυμός).

<sup>65</sup> F. Buffière, “Introduction,” in Heraclitus, *Allégories d’Homère*, ed. and trans. F. Buffière (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1962) xxxi: “[Héraclite est] plus ou moins tributaire du stoïcisme dans son exposé, n’a pas de position personnelle bien définie.”

<sup>66</sup> Buffière, “Introduction,” xxxii: “Héraclite a peut-être puisé sa documentation chez quelque écrivain du Portique: mais c’est une erreur d’imaginer que tout son trésor d’allégories est propriété stoïcienne.”

<sup>67</sup> Buffière, “Introduction,” xxxix: “Il s’exprime au contraire comme les anciens ‘physiciens’ antérieurs à Socrate et Platon. La teinte de stoïcisme, qu’il offre par endroits, n’est rien de plus, chez lui, qu’un vernis récent sur un meuble ancien.”

<sup>68</sup> K. Meiser, “Zu Heraklits Homerischen Allegorien,” *SBAW* (1911/7) 3–36, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Buffière, “Introduction,” xxxviii.

impiety by demonstrating that Homer wrote allegories.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, it seems that his goal is not to prop up the theories of this or that philosophical school, but rather to demonstrate how the various schools derived one or another of their opinions from Homer.<sup>71</sup> Even in the case of the Platonic tripartite soul, Heraclitus embraces the theory *subversively*; i.e., to defend Homer against Plato's charge of impiety by arguing that Plato stole his theory from the great poet.

What of Cornutus' *De natura deorum*, the other text cited by Schweizer? Though Schweizer and Buffière held Cornutus' Stoic identity to be certain,<sup>72</sup> doubts can be raised concerning both the attribution of authorship to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD Stoic Lucius Annaeus Cornutus<sup>73</sup> and just how doctrinaire the treatise is as a whole.<sup>74</sup> Be that as it may, let us assume the Stoic credentials of Cornutus and accordingly ask: what are we to make of Cornutus' reference to Athena in *De natura deorum* 20.1–2? Here, she is called the intelligence (σύνεσις) of Zeus and is equated with providence (πρόνοια) itself, and this is grounded in the story of her birth from Zeus' head:

It is said that she was born from Zeus' head, perhaps because the ancients assumed that the guiding principle (ἡγεμονικόν) of our soul is situated there, just as other thinkers who succeeded them opined, or perhaps because the highest part of the human body is the head, and the highest

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<sup>70</sup> Heraclitus, *All.* 1.1: Μέγας ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καὶ χαλεπὸς ἀγῶν Ὅμηρῳ καταγγέλλεται περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ θεῖον ὀλιγωρίας· πάντα γὰρ ἠσέβησεν, εἰ μὴδὲν ἠλληγόρησεν.

<sup>71</sup> D. Lanzinger, *Ein "unerträgliches philologisches Possenspiel"? Paulinische Schriftverwendung im Kontext antiker Allegorese* (NTOA 112; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016) 53.

<sup>72</sup> Buffière, "Introduction," xxxi: "Cornutus est nettement stoïcien."

<sup>73</sup> Cf. the exposé by F. Berdozzo, "Einführung," in Cornutus, *Die griechischen Götter*, ed. H.G. Nesselrath, trans. F. Berdozzo (*SAPERE* 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 3–28, 3–22;

<sup>74</sup> F. Berdozzo, "Einführung," 20–21, and A.V. Zadorojnyi, "Das Feuer lesen: Stoische Pädagogik in Cornutus' *Epidrome*," trans. B. Bäbler and H.G. Nesselrath, in Cornutus, *Die griechischen Götter*, 163–178. Zadorojnyi speaks of a "cannibalized" Stoicism which merely serves the interpretive needs of the author (168) and he also points out the lack of a clear declaration of loyalty to the Stoic school (169).

part of the cosmos is the aether, wherein its guiding principle and the essence of understanding exist.<sup>75</sup>

On the face of it, it certainly seems that Cornutus is advancing just the theory that Schweizer supposed; namely, that a Stoic held the head to be the locus of the intellect and that this formed the basis of the analogy with the cosmic soul. Yet is the appearance deceiving us?

In a 2009 essay, George R. Boys-Stones argues that one ought to read Cornutus' treatise in the context of Stoic polemic against the renewal of Platonism. One of the chief points of the argument is that Stoic writings of the post-Hellenistic period seem oddly unphased by and uninterested in the attacks of their philosophical opponents, which marks a stark contrast to the anti-Stoic polemic of the Middle Platonists.<sup>76</sup> Yet rather than attacking the Platonists openly, Stoic authors "ignored' the Platonists on the surface of their texts, while under the surface they advanced serious arguments against them."<sup>77</sup> Had the Stoics openly engaged the Platonists, then it would have implied that Platonism ought to be taken seriously as an intellectual threat; this would be hard to reconcile with the view that the older Stoics had definitively dismissed Plato's ideas and that Plato is nothing more than an "object of historical

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<sup>75</sup> Cornutus, *Nat. d.* 20.2: γενέσθαι δ' ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς κεφαλῆς λέγεται, τάχα μὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑπολαβόντων τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν ἐνταῦθ' εἶναι, καθάπερ καὶ ἕτεροι τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ἐδόξασαν, τάχα δ' ἐπεὶ τοῦ μὲν ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἀνωτάτω μέρος τοῦ σώματος ἡ κεφαλὴ ἐστὶ, τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ὁ αἰθήρ, ὅπου τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ τῆς φρονήσεως οὐσία ... The reference to Pan in *Nat. d.* 27.1 will not be considered in this connection. Though the localization of the cosmic ἡγεμονικόν in the aether is argued on the basis of the upper part of Pan's body being human, the passage does not specify whether the ἡγεμονικόν in Pan's "upper part" is located in his chest or in his head.

<sup>76</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, "Cornutus und sein philosophisches Umfeld: Der Antiplatonismus der *Epidrome*," trans. B. Bäbler, in Cornutus, *Die griechischen Götter*, 141–161, 145–148.

<sup>77</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, "Cornutus," 148: "Das scheinbare Schweigen über den Platonismus in unseren Texten ist Teil einer hochgradig erfolgreichen Anpassungsstrategie der Stoiker: Sie 'ignorierten' die Platoniker an der Oberfläche ihrer Texte, während sie darunter ernsthafte Argumente gegen sie vorbrachten."

interest.”<sup>78</sup> For his part, Boys-Stones reads *De natura deorum* as a veiled critique of Plato’s *Timaeus* and Plato’s epistemology, seeing the most striking evidence for this view precisely in Cornutus’ treatment of *Athena*.<sup>79</sup> For our purposes, it suffices to point out that Boys-Stones supposes that the “modern” thinkers who followed the ancients in their view of the head as the locus of reason (καθάπερ καὶ ἕτεροι τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ἐδόξασαν) is a cipher for Plato.<sup>80</sup> If Cornutus, like Heraclitus, supposes that poets like Homer and Hesiod located the ἡγεμονικόν in the head and that Plato followed them, then Cornutus’ report of this view in *De natura deorum* 20.2 is likely to be just that: a report. As Boys-Stones points out, Cornutus mentions this theory but makes no constructive use of it,<sup>81</sup> and therefore it is not implausible to suppose that Cornutus merely mentions the viewpoint without attempting to advance it as Stoic orthodoxy.

In the final analysis, it seems that neither of Schweizer’s citations from Heraclitus and Cornutus can be taken to represent the Stoic viewpoint, for they can only be understood this way when taken out of context. What this means for the issue at hand is that neither of these authors presents us with a true exception to the *communis opinio* of the Stoics which located the ἡγεμονικόν in or near the heart.

### 3 Conclusion

The Stoic use of σῶμα to refer to the cosmos is concerned primarily with denoting its vitalistic materiality and cohesion, rather than affirming a particular bodily form. Not only because of

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<sup>78</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, “Cornutus,” 148–149.

<sup>79</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, “Cornutus,” 149–159.

<sup>80</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, “Cornutus,” 149, n. 25.

<sup>81</sup> G.R. Boys-Stones, “Cornutus,” 149, n. 25.

the Stoics' principled rejection of anthropomorphism, but also due to their localization of the ἡγεμονικόν of the human soul in the heart, there is no reason at all to suspect that a Stoic would have spoken of a "head of the cosmic body." This seems sufficient to explain the lack of a constructive use of κεφαλή in a theological context in Stoic writings. The Stoic cosmic God, therefore, is the ψυχή or ἡγεμονικόν of the cosmos, but not its κεφαλή. Even though Stoic philosophy may have influenced Colossians in other regards, it cannot satisfactorily function as an interpretive background for the term κεφαλή in Col 1:18a.