



Basic Anthropological Concepts in the Macarian Corpus

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Abstract: The study analyzes the Macarian corpus of homilies from an anthropological perspective. As the author of these parenetic discourses relies on imagery rather than on terminology, his vocabulary is highly unsystematic. The aim of this article is to highlight the key anthropological concepts of the Macarian corpus and elucidate their meaning. The article consists of three parts: the first explores the Macarian use of anthropological terms such as body, soul, mind, and heart; the second focuses on the interrelation of these concepts, and the third considers the type of anthropology the author of the corpus developed. The analysis is based on the three main Greek collections: I (63 *logoi*), II (50 homilies), and III (43 discourses). It shows that the meanings of basic anthropological terms are blurred and cannot be determined by definition, but only through context. While their different aspects and nuances are revealed in their interplay, Macarian anthropology should be seen as a holistic one, in which basic anthropological terms usually imply the whole person. The study has also revealed the incomplete character of Macarian anthropology.

Keywords: the Macarian corpus; anthropology; body; soul; mind; heart; dichotomy; trichotomy; holism

Reading the Macarian corpus² introduces us to the original spiritual atmosphere that derives from the fierceness and austerity of the desert,

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² On the Macarian corpus in general, its author and the problems Messalianism, see: H. Dörries, *Symeon von Mesopotamien. Die Überlieferung der messalianischen 'Makarios'-Schriften*, TU 55, Leipzig 1941; H. Dörries, *Die Theologie des Makarios/Symeon*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge 103, Göttingen 1978; M. Canévet – V. Desprez, *Macaire (Pseudo-Macaire; Macaire-Syméon)*, DSP X 20-43; also: Desprez's *Introduction* to the critical edition of Macarian discourses: Pseudo-Macaire, *Oeuvres spirituelles: Homélie propre à la Collection III*, v. 1, ed. V. Desprez, SCh 275, Paris 1980, p. 13-67; C. Stewart, 'Working the Earth of the Heart'. *The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431*, Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, Oxford 1991; K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimesalianismus. Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzer Geschichte*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 71, Göttingen 1998; M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy. The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition*, Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, Oxford

on the one hand, and the solace of a quiet cell and the mystical joy of the Spirit, on the other. These discourses, most probably delivered by the 4th-century spiritual leader of a small community of ascetics, inspire many in our times to strive for spiritual ideals of perfection. The author of these homilies remains unknown to us and hidden under the name of Macarius, and we will name him so here. Though written in Greek, his homilies considerably differ from other Greek ascetic texts of that time. They communicate the teaching, which is based mostly on the spiritual experience deriving from diving into the inner self. Even the Scriptures, however important and inspiring they may be, fade into the background before the priority of spiritual experience³.

One of the central topics of these homilies is the human being. It focuses not so much on human nature as such, its structure and the faculties of the soul, but on the appreciation of the great dignity of man and the destination of humanity to salvation, which is divinisation and God's sonship. Macarius elevates man above all visible and invisible creatures, for it is only with man that God was pleased to enter into fellowship and to rest in him. However, a reader will not find in the Macarian corpus a systematic doctrine on a human being, as these discourses generally lack consistency in terminology and vocabulary. Moreover, these homilies appeal more to the richness of human imagery than to discursive reasoning. Macarius employs several words to indicate different aspects of humanity: body, soul, mind or intellect, and heart. Yet, the very words play a secondary role for him, and he often uses them inconsistently, sometimes interchanging them as rough equivalents, sometimes distinguishing between them. Such inconsistency, however, does not mean that the author's thought lacks coherence. If we follow the spirit rather than the letter of these texts, we will find that the author's thinking is clear, consistent, and easily communicated through vivid images.

Nonetheless, to understand Macarius's thought correctly, one needs to establish the meaning of the key terms in his discourses, which is

2004. For recent research on Egyptian substratum in the Macarian homilies, see: Wadid el Macari, *La Balance du cœur: un substrat égyptien aux homélies macariennes*, *Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica* 19, Zürich 2022.

³ This does not mean that Macarius denies or underestimates Scripture. The Macarian corpus is permeated with references and allusions to Scripture but Macarius's use and approach to Scripture is heavily determined by his spiritual experience. On Macarian method of interpreting Scripture see my article: M. Horyacha, *The Spiritual Interpretation of the Pauline Writings in the Ascetic Writings of Pseudo-Macarius*, in: *Asceticism and Exegesis in Early Christianity: The Reception of New Testament Texts in Ancient Ascetic Discourses*, ed. H.U. Weidemann, Göttingen 2013, p. 300-319.

the aim of this paper. First, we will highlight and discuss the main anthropological concepts in the Macarian corpus, such as body, soul, mind, and heart. Then, we will find out how these concepts function and interrelate with each other. Finally, we will analyze a human being in its integrity and determine the type of Macarius' anthropology according to dichotomies and trichotomies he uses in his homilies. This analysis will be based on three of four main Greek collections of the Macarian corpus: Collection I, comprising 63 *logoi*⁴, Collection II, more commonly known as *Fifty Spiritual Homilies*⁵, and Collection III, contain-

⁴ In this paper I will basically rely on Greek tradition of the Macarian corpus, which consist of four main collections. Since the material of Collection IV is fully present in Collection I, this paper will be based on Collection I, II and III. For the first homily of Collection I, known as the Great Letter (*Epistula magna*), see a critical synoptic edition with the parallel text of Gregory of Nyssa's *De Instituto Christiano*: Makarios/Symeon, *Epistola magna: eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa "De instituto christiano"*, ed. R. Staats, Göttingen 1984. For other *logoi* of this collection (2-63), see Makarios/Symeon, *Reden und Briefe; die Sammlung I des Vaticanus Graecus 694 (B)*, ed. H.H. Berthold, GCS 55, Berlin 1973, v. 1: *Einleitung und Tabellen. Die Logoi B 2-29*; v. 2: *Die Logoi B 30-64*. This collection is not available in the English translation. Only separate *logoi* are translated. See, for example, the translation of the *Great Letter*: Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, tr. G.A. Maloney, CWS, New York 1992; or translation of *Logos 52* in A. Golitzin, *Hierarchy versus Anarchy? Dionysius Areopagita, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, and their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition*, VTQ 38 (1994) p. 131-179. It is also available in the French translation: M. Kniewasser, *Deux homélies inédites du Pseudo-Macaire sur la 'subtilité' physique de l'Esprit, "Istina"* 19 (1974) p. 343-349. The full translation of Collection I is available in German: Pseudo-Macarius, *Reden und Briefe*, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 52, tr. K. Fitschen, Stuttgart 2000; and in Russian: Pryepodobniy Makariy Yegipyetskiy, *Dukhovniye slova i poslaniya. Sbornik Tipa I (Vatic. Graec. 964)*, tr. and ed. A. Dunaev, Moscow 2002; reprinted on the Mont of Athos with parallel Greek text and Greek, Slavic and Georgian supplements: *Sancti patri nostri Macarii Aegyptii (Symeonis Mesopotamiae), Sermones ascetici et apistuloe. Collectio I*, ed. A. Danuvius – V. Desprez, Sancti montis Athou, Moscve 2015. The English translation of the original material from Collection I here is my own.

⁵ For Collection II, see: *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, ed. H. Dörries – E. Klostermann – M. Kroeger, PTS 4, Berlin 1964 (with some corrections and amendments in: W. Strothmann, *Textkritische Anmerkungen zu den Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios-Symeon*, Göttinger Orientforschungen 23, Göttingen 1981). There are two English translations of this collection: one older and more precise: *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian*, tr. A.J. Mason, London 1921; another more recent and spiritual: *Intoxicated with God: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies of Macarius. Introduction and Translation by G.A. Maloney*, Denville 1978. The latter translation (used here) was republished together with the translation of the *Great Letter* in 1992: Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, tr. G.A. Maloney, CWS, New York 1992.

ing 43 discourses⁶. Since the material of all these collections partly overlaps, and all the material of the unpublished Collection IV⁷ is fully present in Collection I, we will not use Collection IV for this analysis⁸. Let us start with the basic anthropological concepts.

1. Body (σῶμα)

Macarius never depreciates the human body, nor speaks of it negatively. The human body is in no way a source of sin, and it has no evil in itself. Sin derives not from the body but from the suggestions of the devil. When Macarius speaks of sin, he refers to fleshly and irrational reasoning (σαρκικὴν καὶ ἄλογον φρόνησιν)⁹, implying by this expression not the human body but the creeping serpent that entices to evil-doing. The body does not oppose the soul but forms with it one whole. Usually, Macarius applies two images to the body: that of clothes and that of a house.

The body is a house for the soul¹⁰ but not only for the soul, because the soul does not abide in this house alone but shares it with its (the soul's) master, namely the one to whom the soul attaches itself and welcomes to this house of the body: either God or the Evil One. This image is based on the Pauline idea of the body as a temple of God (1Cor 6:16-19)¹¹. The body is meant to be the house of the heavenly bridegroom, the Lord, and his bride, the soul. However, if the Lord does not abide in this house, the body becomes a settlement of evil passions, which co-abide there together with the soul as a second soul¹².

⁶ For Collection III, see: *Neue Homilien des Makarios/Symeon aus Typus III*, ed. E. Klostermann – H. Berthold, TU 72, Berlin 1961; for more recent critical edition with French translation, which includes only the original material of this collection see: Pseudo-Macaire, *L'œuvres spirituelles. Homélie propre à la Collection III*, v. 1, ed. V. Desprez, SCh 275, Paris 1980. The English translation of this collection is lacking.

⁷ The critical edition of Collection IV together with a new edition of the great Letter is being prepared by Vincent Desprez in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series. See V. Desprez, *Vers une nouvelle édition de le Grand Lettre et de la Collection IV du Pseudo-Macaire*, in: *Liturgia et Cultus, Theologica et Philosophica, Critica et Philologica, Nachleben, First Two Centuries*, ed. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, StPatr 40, Leuven 2006, p. 261-265.

⁸ The references to each collection will be given in an abbreviated form: I, II and III for Collections I, II and III respectively.

⁹ Macarius, *Epistula magna* 1, 1 (1); I 22, 1 (10); I 27, 2 (5). Compare Rom 8:7.

¹⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* I 10, 2 (4).

¹¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 7, 18 (3).

¹² *Corpus Macarianum* I 29, 2 (4); II 33, 3; II 49, 4.

Pointing to the temporal and corruptible nature of the body, Macarius also describes the body as clothes of the soul, a chiton¹³, which the soul wears during its earthly life and will receive it transformed by the Holy Spirit on the day of the resurrection¹⁴. When the body dies and perishes, the human soul loses its clothes and becomes naked. In order not to appear naked on the day of departure, the soul has to acquire the glory of the Holy Spirit that will cover its nakedness in the heavenly kingdom and the power from above that will raise the dead body on the day of the resurrection. Though dissipated for some time, the bodies of the saints will rise again in glory, for they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit¹⁵.

Even though the body is corruptible and mortal, man is meant for immortality. The inner link between body and soul still remains even after death. Therefore, Macarius often speaks of the future resurrection and glorification of the body. He firmly believes that on the last day the soul will be reunited with its body, raised, transformed, and glorified by the power of the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, between the physical death and resurrection of the bodies, the faithful souls remain clothed in the glory of the Holy Spirit, while the unfaithful souls, which have not acquired the heavenly garment of the Spirit, appear in shameful nakedness and remain in darkness¹⁶.

Macarius does not reduce the body to a merely material reality. Like the soul, the human body participates in the sanctification of man and his union with God. Therefore, he can say that we should become members of the undefiled and unblemished body of Christ¹⁷. However, considering the topic of human salvation and sanctification, he prefers to describe the union of man with God in terms of the soul, as in his psychology, the soul is naturally closer to the spiritual reality¹⁸.

2. Soul (ψυχή)

The notion of soul is the most frequent anthropological term in the corpus (it is used more than 1000 times). Though Macarius usually

¹³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 1 (4); II 4, 3.

¹⁴ *Corpus Macarianum* I 48, 6 (1, 5); I 49, 1 (4); II 4, 3; III 2, 1.

¹⁵ *Corpus Macarianum* I 45, 3 (1).

¹⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* II 20, 1.

¹⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* I 26, 14; I 7, 10; II 27, 1.

¹⁸ A. Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality. The Macarian Homilies and Symeon the New Theologian*, *Analekta Vlatadon* 54, Thessalonikē 1991, p. 60-61.

does not define his theological terms, the meaning of which is determined by the context, he does give a clear definition of the soul, and he does so more than once¹⁹. In these definitions, he describes the soul in lofty words as the most precious vessel among all creatures²⁰ that by nature has a penchant for beauty and always seeks after the better²¹. Macarius elevates the soul so highly for three reasons. First of all, the soul is so valuable because it is made according to the image and likeness of God²². Second, the dignity of the soul lies in the fact that it is the only creature that God has favoured to be united with him and to become his dwelling place²³. Third, it is because God personally came down from heaven to save the soul from the tyranny of the Evil One and renew it to its former glory²⁴.

Macarius is aware of the complexity of the soul's nature and structure. We cannot find in the corpus a clear explanation of the composition of the soul, its division and parts, as it can be found in the philosophical systems (Neo-Platonism, Aristotelian school, Stoicism, etc.) or some works of the Church Fathers (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa). Macarius likens the intellectual creation of the soul in its subtlety and depth to the abyss, which nobody can grasp in full, except those to whom it was revealed from above²⁵. He says: "Neither the wise ones by their wisdom nor the prudent ones by their prudence were able to understand the subtlety of the soul, nor to speak about it what it is, but only those to whom through the Holy Spirit comprehension is revealed and exact knowledge about the soul is known"²⁶.

The soul is incomprehensible and uncontrollable like the breath of the wind and the flow of the river, since no one can prevent the flowing of thoughts in the mind, nor know their source and direction save God alone²⁷. That is why Macarius believes that "he who is capable of knowing the dignity of his soul is able to know the power and the mysteries of the Godhead"²⁸. This knowledge is available only to perfect and spiritual

¹⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 9, 2 (8); II 1, 7; I 18, 7 (2); I 39, 1 (3); I 49, 2 (7-8); II 26, 1; 46, 5; III 15; 18, 1; 19; 25, 4; 26, 4.

²⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 29 (1); II 15, 43; III 19, 1.

²¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 1, 1 (1).

²² *Corpus Macarianum* II 16, 13.

²³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 29 (1, 6); II 15, 43.46; II 26, 1; II 45, 5.

²⁴ *Corpus Macarianum* II 16, 12; II 26, 22.25.

²⁵ *Corpus Macarianum* I 18, 1 (1). Compare Eccl 42:18.

²⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* II 49, 4; III 26, 8.

²⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* III 15.

²⁸ *Corpus Macarianum* I 7, 10; II 27, 1.

people²⁹. Since the soul is such a complex creation of God, Macarius describes its nature and structure through different images, which are far from being exhausted, but give us an idea of various elements and members that constitute the soul.

2.1. The Image and Likeness of God

Describing the nature of the soul, Macarius appeals to a biblical idea. He teaches that the soul is neither of a divine nature, nor of an evil one, but a beautiful and intelligent substance created in the image and likeness of God³⁰. For him, “the soul is the image of the Creator as a child is the image of a mature man”³¹. It is because of this divine image implanted in it that the soul appears so precious and worthy of love and honour above all other creatures³². Like all other intellectual substances (angels and demons), it was created pure and simple even before the fashioning of the body³³. God did not put any evil in its nature but implanted in it the laws of virtue, knowledge, chastity, faith, love, intelligence, thought, will, and ruling mind. He made it to move with ease, to be volatile and inexhaustible, to come and go in a flash, and to serve him in its thoughts wherever the Spirit wishes. God made the soul such as to be his bride and to „become one spirit with him” (1Cor 6:17)³⁴. The destination of the soul is determined by its nature. As the image and likeness of God, the soul has to grow in grace and enter into union with God.

2.2. The Interior Man

Another popular image of the soul in the corpus is that of the invisible interior man who lives within the visible body. The soul is a subtle body³⁵ that penetrates the solid body and mingles with all its members.

²⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 18, 7 (2).

³⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* II 46, 5-6; III 26, 7. See Gen 1:26.

³¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 3, 5 (6).

³² *Corpus Macarianum* III 25, 4.

³³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 46, 1 (1).

³⁴ *Corpus Macarianum* III 26, 7; II 46, 5-6.

³⁵ Macarius believes in the corporeality of the soul and created spirits (angels and demons). See, for example, *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 24; II 7, 7. The materiality of the soul is understood in relation to the immateriality of divine nature, but in relation to the human body, it can be regarded as immaterial, since its corporeality is subtle and not

It rules over its members and accomplishes all actions through them³⁶. Macarius teaches that the interior man resembles the exterior man in their members and senses of perception³⁷. However, in its essence, the soul differs from the body and is more similar to other spiritual substances, namely angels or demons, and because of this similarity, it can enter into communion with them and grow even more similar to them.

2.3. The Soul as a Tree

The complexity of the interior man is demonstrated in the image of a great tree with many branches, twigs, offshoots, and other components twined among themselves. The roots of this tree go deep into the ground and form an even more complex plexus than the branches above. In the same way, the soul has its invisible and incomprehensible depth, which is like a plexus of roots, and many members, which are as numerous as branches on the tree³⁸.

2.4. The Soul as a City

To better portray the complex structure and the interior life of the soul, Macarius employs the image of a city or eparchy with many

visible for human eyes. The idea of the corporeality of the soul derives from Stoicism. See Chrysippus' treatise *De anima hominis*, in: *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, ed. J. von Arnim, v. 2: *Chrysippi fragmenta logica et physica*, 780, 785, Leipzig 1903, p. 218. It was characteristic of many Patristic writers influenced by Stoic philosophy, particularly Justin the Martyr (*Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* 1, 5-6; PG 6, 473, 485-489), Irenaeus of Lyon (*Adversus Haereses* II 34, 1, ed. L. Doutreleau – A. Rousseau, SCh 294, Paris 1982), Tertullian (*De anima* 8, 5, ed. J.H. Waszink, CCL 2, 790-791; see also: P. Kitzler, *Tertullian's Concept of the Soul and His Corporealistic Ontology*, in: *Tertullianus Afer: Tertullien et la littérature chrétienne d'Afrique*, ed. J. Lagouanère – S. Fialon, *Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia* 70, Turnhout 2014, p. 43-62), Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* VII 16 and VII 12, PG 9, 360.509), John Cassian (*Collationes* VII 13, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 13, 192-193). For other examples, see E.A. Davids, *Das Bild vom Neuen Menschen: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Corpus Macarianum*, *Salzburger Patristische Studien* 2, Salzburg – München 1968, p. 33, n. 18. See also M. Spanneut, *Le stoïcisme des pères de l'Église de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie*, *Patristica Sorbonensia* 1, Paris 1957, p. 133-174.

³⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 1 (4); II 4, 3; II 52, 4; I 4, 2 (2); II 40, 3.

³⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 2 (7); II 4, 9.

³⁸ *Corpus Macarianum* I 18, 1 (3).

subject areas and regions³⁹. He teaches that the constitution of the soul resembles the life of a big city with its laws, customs, organisation, coins, army, fortifications, buildings, houses, streets, roads and alleys, citizens, robbers and judges⁴⁰. Similarly, the soul has its own will, its laws, and its works⁴¹. It appears as a great and intelligent city of God with the citizenship of its thoughts, and the robbers, which are evil spirits⁴².

2.5. The Soul as the Church

The structure and organisation of the visible Church represent one more image that reflects the inner constitution of the soul. The reason why Macarius likens the soul to the Church lies in his understanding of both terms as assemblies for worshipping God. For as the Christians assembled together at the liturgical celebration represent the Church of God, so also the soul that gathers (συνάγει) all its dispersed and multiple thoughts for prayer is also the Church of God⁴³.

2.6. The Chariot in the Vision of Ezekiel

The image of the Church as a type of the soul finds a further development in the Macarian exegesis of Ezekiel's vision (Ez 1:4-28)⁴⁴. While the image of the Church points to the task of the soul, the image of the chariot from Ezekiel's vision reveals its final destination and glory. According to the Macarian exegesis, "Ezekiel beheld the mystery of the soul that is going to receive its Lord and become his throne of glory"⁴⁵. Having prepared itself for the Lord as a dwelling place and throne

³⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 8, 4 (1).

⁴⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* I 61, 1 (1-7).

⁴¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 63, 2 (1).

⁴² *Corpus Macarianum* III 19, 1.

⁴³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 36, 4 (1); II 37, 8 and I 52. Cfr. *Corpus Macarianum* II 21, 5; III 27, 6. On the parallels of Macarius's idea of the visible Church as the image of the invisible soul in Syriac and Greek ascetic literature, see: Golitzin, *Hierarchy versus Anarchy?*, p. 160-166, with his translation of *Logos 52* on p. 176-179.

⁴⁴ For a detail analysis of the Macarian exegesis of Ezekiel's vision, see A.R. Christman, "What Did Ezekiel See?" *Christian Exegesis of Ezekiel's Vision of the Chariot from Irenaeus to Gregory the Great*, *The Bible in Ancient Christianity* 4, Leiden – Boston 2000, p. 128-135.

⁴⁵ *Corpus Macarianum* I 9, 1 (2); II 1, 2.

(κατοικητήριον καὶ θρόνος), the soul becomes the chariot of the cherubim on which the throne of God is set.

All these images underline different aspects of the human soul: the idea of the soul as the image of the Creator as well as the interior man point at the nature of the soul with regard to God and other created substances respectively; the images of the tree and the city imply the complex structure of the soul as an ensemble of numerous members; the soul presented as the Church, as well as a chariot from the vision of Ezekiel, reflect the Macarian understanding of the arrangement of the soul and its ultimate destination. Yet, all these images are more hints and allusions than clear definitions of the soul. They allow our author to give a basic idea of the soul and, at the same time, to preserve room for its mystery and incomprehensibility. Much more essential to Macarius is the idea that the soul can live only when it acquires something alien to it, namely the divine power of the Holy Spirit. As the soul animates the body, so also the Holy Spirit, gives life to the soul⁴⁶. Without the Spirit the soul is idle and unable to bear fruit pleasing God.

3. Mind/Intellect (νοῦς/διάνοια)

The notion of the mind is another *passim* in the Macarian anthropology. Macarius does not discern between mind (νοῦς) and intellect (διάνοια) and employs both terms interchangeably⁴⁷. Though he uses them as rough equivalents, there is still some difference. If the meaning of “νοῦς” can be interchanged with that of the soul, the term “διάνοια” is primarily used to indicate the intention and disposition of the soul, its thoughts and the capacity of comprehension. It is a collective term for “λογισμοί” or “νοήματα”⁴⁸. Macarius also employs the latter, referring to God’s mind and thought. On the one hand, the mind of the Lord (or the Spirit) is contrasted to the thought of the Evil One (λογισμός)⁴⁹ and human understanding (εἰδότες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ)⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* I 9, 3 (5); I 14, 19; I 50, 1 (1f); II 52, 4; II 12, 14; II 24, 5-6.

⁴⁷ See, for example, *Corpus Macarianum* I 11, 1 (8); I 35, 6; I 40, 1 (8); II 47, 5 (νοῦς) and I 49, 6 (4); II 4, 25 (διάνοια).

⁴⁸ *Corpus Macarianum* I 1, 3 (2).

⁴⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 36, 5 (3): “We easily subdue to the hostile thought (λογισμός), but we should rather know Him who induces and leads us according to his mind/thought (διάνοια)”.

⁵⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* I 63, 1 (2).

While Macarius makes little difference between mind and intellect, he does distinguish between two different states of mind: earthly and celestial. The earthly or carnal mind remains under the influence of passions. The spiritual or celestial mind differs from the carnal one as birds differ from reptiles. It walks on the ways of pure thoughts and has its citizenship in heaven⁵¹. Contrary to the earthly mind, which is oppressed and infertile, the celestial mind prospers and brings forth spiritual fruits⁵².

Sometimes the mind is interchanged with the soul, or at least the difference between them is blurred⁵³. Yet, Macarius seems to identify them intentionally, for he knows that the mind is the ruling faculty of the soul that governs and reigns over all its members united in one soul⁵⁴. Moreover, it is primarily through the mind that the soul exercises the divine characteristics reflecting its dignity and creation according to the image and likeness of God. This is especially true with regard to the soul's ability to be, like God, present everywhere: it dwells in a small body and is entirely within it, yet it also goes outside the body in remote countries in the frame of mind and in thoughts. Wherever it wishes, there it goes, into the future and into the past. The faithful soul is on the earth with its body, but its mind is in heaven. Similarly, the soul of the sinner remains in the body and is far away committing sins⁵⁵. This demonstrates that the activities of the body and the mind can often be diverse⁵⁶. To show the role and functions of the mind within the soul, Macarius uses several images, which compare the mind to the eye of the soul, a charioteer, and a warrior.

3.1. The Eye of the Soul

He frequently refers to the mind as the eye of the soul, that is, the main organ that distinguishes between things that come from Satan and those that come from grace. It functions as a gatekeeper that guards the gates of the city, which is the soul. In order to secure them well, it has to be equipped with a shell and a weapon, that is, the word of

⁵¹ *Corpus Macarianum* III 4, 2. Cfr. *Corpus Macarianum* III 18, 2.

⁵² *Corpus Macarianum* I 18, 6 (11).

⁵³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 7 (1); I 4, 16; II 6, 5; I 5,2 (5); I 18, 7 (1-3).

⁵⁴ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 25; II 7, 8.

⁵⁵ *Corpus Macarianum* III 15; 18, 2; 26, 4.

⁵⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* II 27, 18; 46, 3-4; III 26, 3.

commandments and hope for God, and to put at the doors of the soul a sergeant, namely a pious thought⁵⁷.

3.2. A Charioteer

As a ruling faculty of the soul, the mind is likened to the charioteer who leads the chariot of the soul into the heavenly city. To get to the city, this chariot needs a charioteer to drive animals harnessed to the chariot, for without him, it will soon lose its way and crash.

3.3. A Warrior against the Adversary

The image of the charioteer reveals still another dimension. A chariot can be harnessed not only for the purpose of reaching a certain destination but also for contests and war. The same is true for the mind: it appears as a warrior that leads a constant struggle against sin⁵⁸. It harnesses the chariot of the soul and competes against the chariot of Satan. Its main weapon in this contest is prayer and the refutation of evil thoughts.

All these images point to the primary task of the mind as the ruler of the soul to seek God and emphasise the necessity for the mind to receive some power and direction from above, without which it is unable to lead the soul rightly toward God. That is why Ps-Macarius, speaking of the rider of the chariot, can easily replace the mind with the Lord or the divine Spirit. In the vision of Ezekiel, it is not the mind but the Lord who is the charioteer, because the mind is the throne of the Godhead, and the Godhead is the throne of the mind⁵⁹. While acknowledging the mind to be the ruling faculty of the soul that guides all other members, Macarius, nevertheless, denies any exceptional privilege of the mind in the knowledge of God and union with him. Contrary to Evagrius, who considered the mind to be the *only* element of the soul

⁵⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* I 25, 1 (17).

⁵⁸ *Corpus Macarianum* III 13, 3; III 11, 2.

⁵⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 16; II 6, 5. Cfr. Evagrius Ponticus, *De malignis cogitationibus* 41, ed. A. Guillaumont – C. Guillaumont – P. Géhin, SCh 438, Paris 1998, p. 292: “For it is said that God is sitting there, where he is comprehended. That is why the pure mind is called the throne of God” (ἐκεῖ γὰρ λέγεται καθέζεσθαι ὁ θεὸς ἔνθα γινώσκεται· διὸ καὶ θρόνος λέγεται θεοῦ νοῦς καθαρός·).

capable of the perception of the uncreated beings⁶⁰, Macarius believes that the mind is only a necessary instrument through which the entire human person can perceive the divine realities and enter into communion with God⁶¹. He often uses the expression “in full perception and assurance” (ἐν πάσῃ αἰσθήσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ), which implies both the intellectual and sensory perception⁶².

4. Heart (καρδιά)⁶³

Macarius considers the heart to be an all-embracing aspect of human nature⁶⁴. It can often be interchanged with the soul or the mind. Yet, sometimes it can acquire a specific meaning that differs from that of the soul or mind, and, nevertheless, is closely related to both of them.

The Macarian idea of the heart reflects a double influence: the Semitic anthropology and the Stoic philosophical ideas. On the one hand, Macarius employs this term in a metaphoric sense to imply the core of spiritual and moral life and the most intimate part of human life, where a human person is in contact with the divine realm. Sometimes it is associated with the soul (*nefesh*) and more often with the spirit (*rûach*). In

⁶⁰ Evagrius Ponticus, *De malignis cogitationibus* 3, 12-14, SCh 438, p. 156-162, 192-202; Evagrius Ponticus, *De oratione* 53, 62, PG 79, 1177D-1180A, 1180D; Evagrius Ponticus, *Practicus* 61, 79, ed. A. Guillaumont – C. Guillaumont, SCh 171, Paris 1971, p. 642, 666. For English translation, see Evagrius Ponticus, *The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, tr. R.E. Sinkewicz, Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford 2003. See also G. Bunge, *Paternité spirituelle. La gnose chrétienne chez Evagre le Pontique*, Spiritualité orientale 61, Beaufortaine 1994, p. 77-88.

⁶¹ Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality*, p. 81-82.

⁶² On the use of the terms “αἰσθησις” and “πληροφορία” in the Macarian corpus, see Desprez, “Plèroforia” chez le Pseudo-Macaire, p. 89-111 (or his article in DSp XII 1813-1821) and Stewart, ‘Working the Earth of the Heart’, p. 97-167.

⁶³ The term “heart” (καρδιά) occurs in the Macarian corpus almost 450 times in Collection I, more than 200 times in Collection II and more than 100 times in Collection III. For a comparison it is worth pointing out that the notion of soul (ψυχή) occurs more than 1500, 2000 and 300 times in Collection I, II and III respectively. In this section I mostly relied on the study of Antoine Guillaumont and its elaborated reconsideration by Christine Mengus, to which I am much indebted: A. Guillaumont, *Le “coeur” chez les spirituels grecs à l’époque ancienne*, DSp II 2281 (reprinted in *Le sens du coeur dans l’antiquité*, in: *Études carmélitaines: Le Coeur*, Paris 1950, p. 41-81); C. Mengus, *Le coeur dans les ‘Cinquante homélies spirituelles’ du pseudo-Macaire*, CCist 58 (1996) 3-18; 59 (1997) 32-43, 118-131.

⁶⁴ Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality*, p. 87.

a more specific sense, it signified the place of intelligence and wisdom. It is the heart from whence human ideas, thoughts, plans, intentions, and decisions originate. On the other hand, the Macarian idea of the heart is influenced by Stoic ideas of the heart as the seat of the intellect, the *hegemonikon* (ἡγεμονικόν), the place of thoughts, memory, imagination, and inclination⁶⁵. Like the Stoics, Macarius also places the mind within the heart.

5. Heart in Relation to Body, Soul, and Mind

In Macarian images of the heart, especially those of a dwelling place of God and of the universe with all its elements, the heart is understood in terms of the soul. However, it can also acquire a broader meaning, and the best way to show this it is through its relation to the three other elements of the human being: the body, the soul, and the mind.

5.1. Heart and Body

In relation to the body, the heart can mean not only the interior man in contrast to the exterior one, but the bodily organ that communicates God's grace to all the aspects of the human being. Several times Macarius uses the expression "the members and the heart" (τὰ μέλη καὶ ἡ καρδιά)⁶⁶, which implies the whole person, similarly to expressions such as "body and soul" or "the outer and inner man". This expression is also used with regard to the operation of grace in man. In this context, the heart becomes a separate part, distinct from the body and the soul. Macarius teaches that "the heart directs and governs all the other organs of the body". Therefore, when grace pastures the heart, it penetrates throughout all parts of the body and rules over all the members and the thoughts⁶⁷. Here, the heart appears closely connected (interrelated) to the body. As the seat of the mind, it functions as a medium through which grace governs and reigns over the entire soul and body. If the body is the temple of God (1Cor 3:16), the heart represents the altar of the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁵ Guillaumont, *Le "coeur" chez les spirituels grecs*, p. 2281.

⁶⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* I 4, 10; II 8, 6; I 4, 20 (2); II 7, 3; I 53, 4 (2); II 11, 14.

⁶⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* I 32, 3 (5); II 15, 20; II 16, 13.

5.2. Heart and Soul

In connection with the soul, the “heart” can acquire a broader meaning, which includes a moral and religious connotation⁶⁸. While the soul tends to preserve a more profane meaning and denotes the human interior’s natural activities, which can be disposed to grace or sin, the heart is *par excellence* the place where grace and sin are sensibly manifested, when the soul is disposed to them. It is the organ responsible for perceiving grace. It functions as a medium through which grace touches a person and penetrates the entire soul and the body. It is from the fullness of the heart that the soul speaks to the Lord⁶⁹. So, the heart is the place of prayer⁷⁰ and the contact with God. In the same way, Macarius speaks with regard to the experience of sin and its influence on the heart. Sin penetrates the heart, takes charge of the whole being, and captures the entire person⁷¹. As divine grace is manifested within the heart, so also is the evil serpent creeping in the heart and carries on the dialogue with the soul⁷². In this sense, the heart appears to be the primary space of the spiritual experience of both grace and sin, the place of contact with the spiritual realities. It becomes a field of asceticism, on which the soul labours over the virtues⁷³, like a farmer, or a battlefield where the spiritual struggle takes place⁷⁴.

5.3. Heart and Mind

The heart’s connection with the mind is even closer and more important than that with the soul. If the heart is a principal place of faith and contemplation, the ruling principle of the soul (ἡγεμονικόν or διάνοια), the mind is its instrument. It is through the mind that the heart reigns over the entire soul and body, contemplates God, and performs all its activities. Situated in the depth of the heart, the mind drives the heart, like the pupil in the eye⁷⁵. It is precisely because of this location of the mind that the religious and moral

⁶⁸ Rom 7:22-25; 2Cor 4:16; Eph 3:1.

⁶⁹ *Corpus Macarianum* III 3, 3; 7, 2.

⁷⁰ See C. Mengus, *Le coeur dans les ‘Cinquante homélies spirituelles’ du pseudo-Macaire (II)*, CCist 59 (1997) p. 32-43.

⁷¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 53, 2 (1); II 11, 5. Cfr. *Corpus Macarianum* I 48, 1 (8); II 5, 3; I 4, 29 (13); II 15, 50.

⁷² *Corpus Macarianum* I 32, 3 (2); II 15, 14; I 53, 4 (3); II 11, 15; II 12, 17; II 14, 3.

⁷³ *Corpus Macarianum* I 7, 6 (3); II 26, 10; I 11, 2 (1); II 47, 6.

⁷⁴ *Corpus Macarianum* II 6, 1.

⁷⁵ *Corpus Macarianum* I 14, 10; II 43, 7.

connotation of the heart extends up to the word “thoughts”⁷⁶. The mind as a captain and the conscience within the heart tests the thoughts, both “excusing and accusing” (Rom 2:15)⁷⁷. When the heart is teeming with the thoughts of different origins, the soul has no integrity, “yet the Spirit, coming into the heart, makes one thought and one heart”⁷⁸.

Summarising the Macarian idea of the heart, it can be said that in general the term “heart” is understood in the corpus in two basic senses. On the one hand, the heart signifies the place of intellectual, moral, and spiritual life. On the other hand, it can have a more specific meaning as the bodily organ and the place of the intellect. These two meanings are so closely intertwined that it is hard to distinguish between them⁷⁹. Yet, this definition does not exhaust all the meanings of the heart in the corpus. Macarius uses the term “heart” every time he wants to describe God’s presence within a person. The heart is not only the deepest centre of the psychosomatic unity that unites all elements of the human being into one whole. It is a sphere of the mystical union between the human and the divine, which surpasses all categories of our comprehension⁸⁰.

6. Dichotomies, Trichotomies, and the Holism of Macarius

The interrelation with the above-discussed concepts is a rather complicated issue. Some scholars (Kern) argue that Macarius is a dichotomist in his understanding of man (as body-soul unity, exterior and interior man, fleshly and spiritual man)⁸¹. Others (Plested) are convinced that the bipartite and materialist anthropology of Collection II is balanced by the virtually tripartite and immaterial treatment given in other collections, where the human being appears as a body-soul unity centred on the complementarity of heart and mind⁸². Still others (Hatzopoulos) point out that Macarius proposes completely different tripartite divisions

⁷⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 1 (6); II 4, 4; I 36, 2 (2); II 37, 1.

⁷⁷ *Corpus Macarianum* I 33, 1 (3); II 15, 33.

⁷⁸ *Corpus Macarianum* II 32, 3.

⁷⁹ C. Mengus, *Le coeur dans les ‘Cinquante homélies spirituelles’ du pseudo-Macaire (I)*, CCist 58 (1996) p. 18.

⁸⁰ C. Mengus, *Le coeur dans les ‘Cinquante homélies spirituelles’ du pseudo-Macaire (III)*, CCist 59 (1997) p. 129-130.

⁸¹ K. Kern, *Antropologiya sv. Grigoriya Palamy*, Moscow 1996, p. 221.

⁸² M. Plested, *Macarius and Diadochus: An Essay in Comparison*, in: *Biblica et Apocrypha, Ascetica, Liturgica*, ed. E.F. Livingstone, StPatr 30, Leuven 1997, p. 238-239; also see his monograph: Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 133-175.

of the soul, which echo Stoic anthropology⁸³. All these points of view are complementary and do not exclude one another. I will briefly discuss these different anthropological schemas with regard to the interplay of the different aspects of the human being.

6.1. Dichotomies in the Macarian Corpus

Usually, Macarius employs the traditional body-soul dichotomy. Even if he speaks in terms of a trichotomy “body – soul – Spirit (σῶμα – ψυχή – πνεῦμα)”, he is still consistent, since the Spirit does not constitute a substantial part of the human being but is rather grace or a gift. Macarius adheres to a widespread Jewish tradition of the unity of soul and body, which cannot be seen otherwise than as interconnected⁸⁴. Yet, it should not be understood in terms of matter and form where the body represents the material part of man and the soul appears to be the form of an individual substance, for in the Macarian thinking, both the body and the soul can be material as well as spiritual. Besides the traditional body-soul division, Macarius often uses other dichotomies that echo the Pauline anthropology. He speaks of a fleshly and a spiritual man, an old and a new one. Referring to the corporal and spiritual dimensions of the human being, he uses the Pauline terms such as exterior and interior man.

6.2. The Macarian Trichotomies

In the corpus, we can also find some trichotomic structures. Recently, Marcus Plested considerably narrowed the gap between Evagrius and Macarius and revealed a more intellectual, more Evagrian aspect of Macarian anthropology⁸⁵. He argued that the Macarian concept of the heart is not entirely given to emotions and affections but governed by the mind. Yet, the author of the corpus is still far from the Evagrian schema “body-soul-nous” (σῶμα-ψυχή-νοῦς), for even if the mind is warmed by the heart, and the heart is governed by the mind, neither the heart nor the mind are considered to be the third element of the human being, complementary to the body and the soul, but rather appear to be equivalent to the soul.

⁸³ Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality*, p. 76-77.

⁸⁴ Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality*, p. 63.

⁸⁵ Plested, *Macarius and Diadochus*, p. 238-239.

Neither does Macarius use the Platonic tripartite division of the soul into appetitive, irascible, and rational parts or the trichotomy “body – soul – God” (σῶμα – ψυχή – θεός). The latter, however, found its echo in the Macarian teaching concerning two souls. Instead of the tripartite structure, which was widely used in Patristic literature, the homilist advances his idea of a double human being, composed of human and divine elements. He teaches that the human being as a psychosomatic unity is incomplete and imperfect and needs to be supplemented by the divine component to become double. In his view, man is a composite being, in which human nature constitutes only one part. The other part of this double being is formed by divine nature. As two substances (πρώσοπα) that belong to a pair work to effect one perfect thing only when they are joined together, so also human nature is a part of the pair. In order to be complete and perfect, it needs to become double and united with divine nature; it has to acquire something alien to it, which the author of the corpus calls the second heavenly soul, the soul in the soul, or the spirit in the spirit⁸⁶. This second or new soul signifies divine grace, the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, the union of the soul with Christ. Macarius applies the idea of two souls not only to denote the union between man and God but also to indicate the human conversion to the Evil One. The human soul has to choose which of the two spirits it wants to cling to.

The Macarian teaching on two souls is consistent with the ideas of Irenaeus of Lyon, who, though being a dichotomist, sometimes speaks of the lower and higher soul, identifying the latter with the Spirit of God or the redemptive grace. He teaches that a complete man is composed of three things: flesh, soul, and spirit. When the soul sympathises with the flesh, it falls into carnal lusts, and when it follows the spirit, it is lifted up by it⁸⁷. Referring to 1Cor 2:6, he acknowledges that man becomes spiritual and perfect only with the infusion of the Spirit. Though Irenaeus says that the soul is one element of man, he can also easily say that the soul and the spirit form one part of man, though he knows that the Spirit does not belong to man but exists in God⁸⁸.

John Chrysostom is another example for comparison. He teaches about three different states of human existence: unnatural or perverted, natural, and supernatural (irrational beast, human, angel, or son of God

⁸⁶ *Corpus Macarianum* II 1, 10-11; 12, 16; 52, 5; I 9, 3 (4-8); I 23, 1 (4).

⁸⁷ Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses* V 6, 1-2, ed. L. Doutreleau – B.C. Mercier – A. Rousseau, SCh 153, Paris, 1969, p. 72-84. See also E. Klebba, *Die Anthropologie des heiligen Irenaeus*, Münster 1894, p. 15-26.

⁸⁸ Spanneut, *Le stoïcisme des pères de l'Église*, p. 143-149.

according to grace), among which the first and the last states are not of human nature but acquired through the human choice between good and evil⁸⁹. In a similar manner, Macarius' teaching of two souls expresses the idea that a human being acquires something alien to his own nature, either grace or sin, which he specifies as the second soul.

The Macarian corpus also contains other trichotomic schemas, which, nevertheless, have nothing to do with the interrelation between soul and body. The author of the corpus speaks of the "intellectual, discerning and ruling faculty of the soul" (τοῦ διανοητικοῦ καὶ διακριτικοῦ καὶ ἡγεμονικοῦ μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς)⁹⁰. A few lines later, he again writes that "the soul possesses, as the eye, the faculty of knowing, understanding, and discerning, which directs the whole soul along with the body" (ἔχουσα δὲ ὡσπερ ὀφθαλμὸν τὸ γνωστικὸν καὶ διανοητικὸν καὶ διακριτικόν, εὐθύνων ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ σῶμα)⁹¹. In fact, both tripartite schemas imply the same reality. Cyprien Kern and Athanasios Hatzopoulos see here the echo of Stoic anthropology, which distinguished three faculties of the soul, namely knowing, thinking, and discerning⁹². Acknowledging the influence of the Stoic ideas, it is necessary, however, to point out that Macarius does not speak of three faculties of the soul but of a single component with cognitive, intellectual, and discerning ability that guides the soul together with the body. In fact, both triads appear to be important characteristics of the ruling role of the mind among the other members of the soul.

6.3. The Holistic Anthropology of Macarius

The analysis of the different collections shows that apart from the dichotomies and trichotomies in the corpus, the Macarian anthropology is profoundly holistic. Macarius in no way separates body from soul, soul

⁸⁹ Johannes Chrysostomos, *Homiliae in Matthaem* 1, 5-6, PG 57, 19-20; Johannes Chrysostomos, *Homiliae in epistulam ad Romanos* 11, 3, PG 60, 470.

⁹⁰ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 1 (1); II 4, 1.

⁹¹ *Corpus Macarianum* I 49, 1 (4). A parallel text in II 4, 3 mentions only "the faculty of discernment" (ἔχουσα διακριτικὸν μέλος). Compare I 49, 1 (6): "cognitive, intellectual and discerning eye of the soul" (τοῦ γνωστικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ καὶ διακριτικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμματος) and II 4, 4: "through the ability/will to know, understand and discern" (διὰ τοῦ γνωστικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ καὶ διακριτικοῦ θελήματος).

⁹² See Kern, *Antropologiya sv. Grigoriya Palamy*, p. 219-222; Hatzopoulos, *Two Outstanding Cases in Byzantine Spirituality*, p. 76-77.

from heart, mind from soul. They are always interrelated and cannot be thought of separately. Usually, he speaks of the whole person in the unity of all aspects of human nature. The entire human being (not only mind or soul) is involved in the relation with God and in the process of deification. This holistic anthropology is centred on the biblical concept of the heart, which “designates the human person as a whole, regarded as a spiritual subject”⁹³. It is remarkably expressed in the eschatology of Macarius with his firm belief in the resurrection of the bodies and the final reintegration of the souls with their bodies on the last day.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the basic anthropological concepts in the corpus has shown that Macarius is inconsistent in his use of terminology. He easily interchanges basic terms so that their meaning cannot be determined by definition but only by context. Macarius in no way separates body from soul, soul from heart, mind from soul but shows them as closely interconnected. Apart from the various dichotomies and trichotomies in the corpus, Macarian anthropology should be viewed as holistic. Usually, he speaks of the whole person in the unity of all aspects of human nature. The entire person (not only mind or soul) is involved in the relation with God and in the process of deification. This holistic anthropology is centred on the biblical concept of the heart, which designates the whole human person as a spiritual subject. Moreover, in his description of human nature, Macarius is intentionally incomplete to emphasize that the human being, created in the image and likeness of God, is ultimately a mystery beyond human understanding.

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⁹³ K. Ware, *Preface*, in: Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, tr. G.A. Maloney, New York – Mahwah 1992, p. XLV.

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