

Silvana Vecchio (trans. Hilary Siddons)<sup>1</sup>

## Passions and Sins

The *Summa Halensis* and John of La Rochelle

**Abstract:** The *Summa Halensis* contains no systematic treatment of the passions of the soul and the role they play in the dynamics of sin. However, the analysis of the structure of the soul, contained in the *De homine* section of *Summa*, and largely based on the *De anima* of John of La Rochelle, highlights the role that *sensualitas* plays in the moral act. As an expression of human *passibilitas*, which is a consequence of original sin, *sensualitas*, which in turn includes the concupiscible (the appetite of good and the escape from evil) and the irascible (the impulse to obtain or reject something of arduous), represents the irrational part of the soul in which the affective impulses are rooted, and from which the virtues and vices originate.

It might seem rather strange to observe that there is no specific space in the *Summa Halensis* devoted to an analysis of the passions. Not only is there nothing in the *Summa* that can be compared to the long treatise on the passions that Thomas Aquinas put into is *Summa theologiae*, but more generally, the *Summa Halensis* seems to devote very little space to a theme that from the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards gradually imposed itself on philosophical and theological reflection, and from the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards found a place in the works of the scholastics. Theologians like William of Auvergne and Phillip the Chancellor tackled the debate on affectivity more or less systematically, examining the relationship between psychology and ethics and the morality of the passions, and outlining one or more classifications of the affective impulses.<sup>2</sup> In the same period, John of La Rochelle, who made a decisive contribution to the writing of the *Summa Halensis*, in Parts I and II above all, gave the affective powers a certain amount of space in his *Summa de anima*, putting forward various classifications of the passions, which derived from sources that had re-

---

1 The translations from the Latin were provided by Mark Thakkar.

2 For a reflexion about passions in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, see Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 226–55; in particular, for William of Auvergne, see Silvana Vecchio, 'Passio, affectus, virtus: il sistema delle passioni nei trattati morali di Guglielmo d'Alvernia,' in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne († 1249)*, ed. Franco Morenzoni and Jacques Yves Tilliette (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 173–87; Carla Casagrande, 'Guglielmo d'Auvergne e il buon uso delle passioni nella penitenza,' *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne († 1249)*, 189–201; Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *Passioni dell'anima: Teorie e usi degli affetti nella cultura medievale* (Firenze: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), 93–112, 327–42; for Philip the Chancellor, see Silvana Vecchio, 'Passions et vertus dans la *Summa de bono*,' in *Philippe le Chancelier: prédicateur, théologien et poète parisien du début du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Gilbert Dahan and Anne-Zoé Rillon-Marne (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 169–83.

cently been made available.<sup>3</sup> This material came to be included in part at least in the *Summa Halensis*, but only, as we have said, in a partial, asystematic, and episodic way. Despite this, it is still worth attempting to create a rough outline of a discourse on the passions in the *Summa Halensis*, bringing together and connecting the fragments which are spread throughout the various parts of the work and, in the light of this material, attempting to focus on the problem of the relationship between the passions and the sins. At the end of this it will perhaps be possible to consider the reasons for the relative lack of interest of the authors of the *Summa Halensis* in the theme of the emotions.

The problem of the emotions in general is dealt with very briefly in the treatise *De homine*, in the course of an analysis of the various faculties of the soul; after the cognitive faculties, in fact, the *Summa Halensis* analyses the motive faculties. It deals rapidly with *phantasia* and the Avicennian *aestimativa* faculty; these are in reality both cognitive faculties, but they are placed together with the motive faculties because, thanks to the perception and the evaluation of that which appears to be useful, they predispose us to the impulses of the soul. The text then concentrates on *sensualitas*, on one hand, and the concupiscible and the irascible, on the other, which constitute the lower part of the soul, an irrational part, but one that is *suadibilis ratione*, susceptible, that is, to being convinced and guided by reason.<sup>4</sup>

The classification put forward in the *Summa Halensis* is the synthesis of discourses from various sources, all of which, however, substantially derive on one hand from the 'Augustinian' model, as it is presented not so much in the works of Augustine himself, as in the pseudo-Augustinian treatise *De spiritu et anima* written in a Cistercian environment in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but systematically attributed to Augustine,<sup>5</sup> the circulation of which profoundly influenced reflection on the soul and its faculties. The other source is the *De fide orthodoxa* by John of Damascus, which was translated in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and, as from the first years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, became an obligatory point of reference for a new approach to psychological

---

<sup>3</sup> Alain Boureau, 'Un sujet agité: Le statut nouveau des passions de l'âme au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,' in *Le sujet des émotions au Moyen Âge*, ed. Piroška Nagy and Damien Boquet (Paris: Beauchesne, 2008), 187–94; Silvana Vecchio, 'Passions de l'âme et péchés capitaux: les ambiguïtés de la culture médiévale,' in *Laster im Mittelalter/Vices in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christof Flüeler and Martin Rohde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 45–64; Casagrande and Vecchio, *Passioni dell'anima*, 165–85.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica (SH)*, 4 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924–48), Vol II, In4, Tr1, S2, Q2, Ti2 (nn. 362–7), pp. 439–45.

<sup>5</sup> *De spiritu et anima* (PL 40:779–832); for the irrational parts of the soul see PL 40:789–790. For the attribution of the treaty and an analysis of the psychological doctrines contained in it, see Bernard McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 63–74.

themes.<sup>6</sup> These two sources, together with Avicenna's work, were also the main references for John of Rupella's treatise *De anima*.<sup>7</sup> In the pseudo-Augustinian model John found the outline for a system of the passions made up of love, hope, pain, and fear—the first two rooted in the concupiscible and the latter two in the irascible—which incorporated the entire range of the emotions.<sup>8</sup> John of Damascus' model was more complex and, following Aristotle, it distinguished between a part of the irrational soul which does not follow the advice of reason and can be substantially identified with the vegetative and the nutritive faculties, and a part that is ready to follow reason and which is in turn divided into the concupiscible and the irascible faculty; the former, which is directed towards the good, includes desire and joy, while the latter includes the emotions which are directed towards evil, that is, fear and pain.<sup>9</sup> In the *Summa de vitiis* too, Rupella developed a long and complex analysis, presenting four different classifications of the faculties of the soul. The first, attributed to the *magistri*, distinguishes between five faculties: *sensualitas*, *sensus*, *ymaginatio*, *ratio*, and *intellectus*; the second, attributed to the theologians, corresponds to the one in the *De spiritu et anima* and includes a tripartite division of the soul into rational, concupiscible, and irascible; the third derives from the natural philosophers and distinguishes between a vegetative, a sensitive, and a rational faculty; and the fourth classification is common to both the natural philosophers and the theologians and includes three powers – animal, vital, and natural – each of which is then further subdivided into parts.<sup>10</sup>

**6** John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications, Text Series, 8 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute; Louvain: Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1955); for the motive faculties see p. 119.

**7** John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, ed. Jacques Guy Bougerol, Textes philosophiques du Moyen Âge, 19 (Paris: Vrin, 1995); cf. Denise Ryan, 'An Examination of a Thirteenth-Century Treatise on the Mind/Body Dichotomy: John of La Rochelle on the Soul and its Powers' (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2010); Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 226–36.

**8** John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* 2.2.67 (Bougerol, 196).

**9** John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* 2.3.74 (Bougerol, 207–8).

**10** John of La Rochelle, *Summa de vitiis* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16417, fols 78va-79vb): 'Assignantur autem quinque potentie anime a magistris: sensualitas, sensus, ymaginatio, ratio, intellectus. (...) Sequitur divisio potentiarum anime secundum quod comparantur ad suum finem et hoc secundum theologos. Quidam enim assignant tres fines, scilicet verum, bonum, eternum; dicunt autem eternum continuationem veri et boni, et isti dividunt per tres potentias animam: per rationabilem que tendit in verum, per concupiscibilem que tendit in bonum, per irascibilem que tendit in eternum. (...) Sequitur tertia divisio potentiarum anime secundum naturales, et hoc est secundum quod ipsa comparatur ad actus: tres sunt actus anime primi, vegetare, sentire, ratiocinari, et secundum hoc distinguitur triplex anime potentia: vegetabilis, sensibilis, rationalis, immo triplex anima: vegetabilis que est in plantis, sensibilis que est in brutis, rationalis que est in hominibus. (...) Sequitur quarta divisio potentiarum anime secundum theologos et naturales. Potentiarum anime alia est corporalis idest corporis regitiva, alia spiritualis, et illa que est corporalis idest corporis regitiva dividitur in animalem, vitalem, naturalem. Secundum enim has vires corpus regitur et motus conservatur. (...) Illa vero que spiritualis est dividitur in cognitivam et operativam, sive intellectum et affectum' [Now, the masters credit the soul with five powers: *sensualitas*, perception, imagination,

The classification of the *Summa Halensis* re-elaborates and summarizes the options put forward by Rupella. The winning model seems to be a tripartite one, which is the result of a synthesis of the classifications of John of Damascus and that of the *De spiritu et anima*; as we have seen, however, the *Summa Halensis* adds *sensualitas* to the three faculties (rational, concupiscible, and irascible), and this is subject to a lengthy analysis which takes up the whole of Chapter 2. The addition of *sensualitas* is based on the reference to Augustine, that is, to the *De spiritu et anima* once again, and it represents the necessary completion of the theories of the philosophers, who, ignorant of the doctrine of original sin and its consequences, were not able to formulate a correct conception of the soul and assimilated the sensible part of the human soul *tout court*, with that of the beasts.<sup>11</sup> An observation of this kind shows the peculiarity of the theological approach to the faculties of the soul and is an indicator of the anthropological reflection that ran through medieval culture and intertwined with the results of the psychological analysis deriving from the recently translated Greek works.

In effect, the term *sensualitas*, used above all from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, covers a range of different meanings. Sometimes it is simply used as a synonym of sensibility, that is, it is identified with the attitude rooted in the body to feel and judge through the five senses.<sup>12</sup> More often it indicates a motive faculty, which presides over the movements which lead to sensation, that is, the appetites and the emotions of the soul. In both cases, although it comes from the body, *sensualitas* is in reality situated in the intersection between the body and the soul, but it concerns that part of the soul which, as it is foreign to reason, does not constitute a specifically human characteristic, and is common to men and to animals. According to Peter Lombard, *sensualitas* seems to coincide with that irrational part of the soul, which, according to

---

reason, intellect. (...) Next comes a division of the soul's powers by matching them up to their respective aims, as per the theologians. For some people specify three <such> aims, namely the true, the good, and the eternal, though by 'the eternal' they mean the perpetuation of the true and the good. And these people divide the soul in accordance with its three powers: the rational, which aims at the true; the concupiscible, which aims at the good; and the irascible, which aims at the eternal. (...) Next comes a third division of the soul's powers, this time due to the natural philosophers, namely by matching it up to its acts. The soul has three first acts, vegetation, sensation, and reasoning, and accordingly we may distinguish three powers of the soul, vegetative, sensory, and rational – or rather, three souls, the vegetative (found in plants), the sensory (found in brute animals) and the rational (found in humans). (...) Next comes a fourth division of the soul's powers, due to the theologians and the natural philosophers. Of these powers, some are corporeal (i.e. they regulate the body) and others are spiritual. The powers that are corporeal (i.e. that regulate the body) are divided into the animal, the vital and the natural, for it is in accordance with these forces that the body is regulated and <its> motion is conserved. (...) And the powers that are spiritual are divided into the cognitive and the operative, or into the intellect and the emotions].

11 SH II, In4, Tr1, S2, Q2, Ti2, M1, C2, Ar4 (n. 366), p. 444.

12 See, for instance, Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale (Libri I -V)* 1.52, ed. Claudia Heiman and Stephan Ernst, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 241 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 59; *De spiritu et anima* (PL 40:789–90).

the philosophers, it is the task of reason to rule and govern;<sup>13</sup> it is a concept that is confirmed in the Bible, where the term *sensualitas* is mostly used to designate the *inferior pars rationis*, that is, the irrational part which is subject to the control of the reason. The long debate on the first movements of sensibility (*primi motus*) which runs through the theological literature of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries revolves in fact around the definition of the nature of *sensualitas*;<sup>14</sup> regardless of the different positions, the discussion on the ethical status of the *primi motus* tends to stress the ‘animal’ quality of *sensualitas*, but for the theologians this characteristic had to be framed and read in the context of the event that indelibly marked the destiny of humanity: in the story of original sin in fact, *sensualitas* played the leading role, as personified in the figure of Eve, woman as the prototype of naturalness as opposed to male rationality, or even in the serpent, an expression of the basest of human appetites which lead to sin.<sup>15</sup> The primary scene of the sin of our ancestors thus stands out against the background of psychological reflection and represents the specific place in which the ‘nature’ of the different faculties of man is played out: the lower part of the soul, destined to be subjected to the dictates of reason, by now seems rebellious and irreducible and bears in it the mark of sin: the impulses that originate in a *sensualitas* which is no longer controlled by reason show the consequences of sin in man, which has made him similar to the beasts.<sup>16</sup>

In the *Summa Halensis*, too, the dual nature of *sensualitas*—before and after sin—determines the relationship of analogy and distance of the human soul with that of animals:<sup>17</sup> unlike animals, whose soul is totally irrational and inevitably follows natural impulses, in man the sensible faculty had been predisposed to be subject to reason, but the corruption of sin replaced the dominion of reason with the *impulsum*

---

**13** Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* II, d. 24, 4–5, 2 vols, Ignatius C. Brady, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4–5 (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1971–81), 1:453–4.

**14** On this debate, see Odon Lottin, ‘Les mouvements premiers de l’appétit sensitif de Pierre Lombard à saint Thomas d’Aquin,’ in Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vol. 2 (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1948), 493–589; Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 178–195; Damien Boquet, ‘Des racines de l’émotion: Les préaffects et le tournant anthropologique du XIIe siècle,’ in *Le sujet des émotions au Moyen Âge* (see above, n. 3), 163–86.

**15** Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in omnes D. Pauli apostoli Epistolas: In Epistolam I ad Corinthios*, c. 11 (PL 191:1633); Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis christianae Christianae fidei* VIII, c. 13 (PL 176:315); William of Auvergne, *Sermones de tempore* 74, vol. 1, ed. Franco Morenzoni, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 230 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 282.

**16** William of Saint-Thierry, *De la nature du corps et de l’âme*, ed. and trans. Michel Lemoine (Paris: Les belles Lettres, 1988), 159. Cf. Michel Lemoine, ‘Les ambiguïté de l’héritage médiéval: Guillaume de Saint Thierry,’ in *Les passions antiques et médiévales*, ed. Bernard Besnier, Pierre-Francois Moreau, and Laurence Renault, *Théories et critiques des passions*, 1 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003), 297–308; Silvana Vecchio, ‘Passioni umane e passioni animali nel pensiero medievale,’ in *Summa doctrina et certa experientia: Studi su medicina e filosofia per Chiara Crisciani*, ed. Gabriella Zuccolin (Firenze: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017), 257–61.

**17** *SH* II, In4, Tr1, S2, Q2, Ti2, M1, C2, Ar1 (n. 363), p. 440.

*fomitis*, the disordered tendency to fulfil the pleasures of the senses: *sensibilitas* was transformed into *sensualitas*, a specifically human impulse which shows the anomaly of man's psychological condition and determines his moral status. This means that, if reason cannot prevent the *primi motus* from arising, but can only block their path by denying them the permission of the higher part of the soul, these movements are in any case structurally disordered and are the sign of sin and the punishment that follows on from it. If it is true, therefore, that sin always derives from the will, that is, from the rational part of the soul, it must also be said that *sensualitas*, which carries with it the consequences of original sin, is structurally 'disordered'; hence the impulses that constitute it are always sinful, at least in a venial form.<sup>18</sup> Situated within that crucial event that was original sin, *sensualitas* manifests itself as an aspect of the *passibilitas* that now characterises the whole of humanity and that indicates all the negativity that befell Adam as a result of sin: death, illness, weakness, and hardship, but also the subversion of the faculties of the soul and the insubordination of *sensualitas*. John of Rupella and Alexander of Hales tackled the theme of *passibilitas* in all its scope, analysing the consequences of original sin both for the body and the soul.<sup>19</sup> The *Summa Halensis* takes up these reflections in the long question *De passibilitate naturae*, which also tackles the problem of the emotions before and after sin. If the psychological structure of man has remained unchanged, what was modified was the disposition of the soul of Adam and his descendants, by now inevitably subject to unregulated emotional impulses which manifest themselves as disturbances.<sup>20</sup>

It is in the light of this image – which any reflection on *sensualitas* inevitably refers to – that the *Summa Halensis* carries out a detailed analysis of the motive faculties and defines the nature of the impulses of the concupiscible and the irascible. Placed at the intersection between the rational part and the sensible part, the emotions that derive from the concupiscible and the irascible move on their own on the basis of the impulse of *sensualitas*, and only exceptionally can they be guided by reason, as happens in the case of some of the 'rational' or rather the 'mixed' passions,

**18** *SH* II, In4, Tr1, S2, Q2, Ti2, M1, C2, Ar3 (n. 365), p. 443; see also the analysis of *primi motus* in *SH* III, In3, Tr1, S1, Q2, M1 (nn. 287–96), pp. 301–8.

**19** Alexander Halensis, *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Quaestiones disputatae "Antequam esset frater"*, q. 16, 3 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1960), 1:224–36: 'De passibilitate animae Christi et Adae'; John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* 1.8.46–9 (Bougerol, 147–60). About the notion of *passibilitas* in the *Summa de anima* see Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, 'Les théories des passions dans la culture médiévale,' in *Le sujet des émotions au Moyen Âge* (see above, n. 3), 120; Bourreau, 'Un sujet agité,' 187–94.

**20** *SH* II, In4, Tr3, Q1, Ti1 (nn. 469–73), pp. 631–45. Cf. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, 'Les passions avant et après la Chute: Modèle thomasiens et tradition augustinienne,' in *Adam, la nature humaine, avant et après: Epistémologie de la Chute*, ed. Gianluca Briguglia and Irène Rosier Catach (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2016), 153–71; Casagrande and Vecchio, *Passioni dell'anima*, 69–91.



such as intellectual pleasure, mercy, or some kinds of fear or anger.<sup>21</sup> The *Summa Halensis* does not dwell on the peculiarity of the mixed emotions and the characteristics that distinguish them from the emotions of the concupiscible and the irascible, nor, as we have said, does it create a structured system of the passions; it does however go back to some of the themes examined by the theologians and the masters of the previous generation to illustrate the difference between the concupiscible and the irascible. This distinction, which derived from Plato and was taken up again in the works of John of Damascus and Avicenna, constitutes in effect one of the fixed points that recurs throughout all reflection on the theme of the emotions which developed from the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards and represented the basis for constructing a system of passions. In the *Summa Halensis* this debate is briefly summarized in the three ways of understanding the distinction between the two faculties of the soul. In the first place, the concupiscible and the irascible can be related to the impulses of the appetite for the good and the flight from evil respectively; this classification, which is attributed to the philosophers, allows the author to identify the main four passions: joy and desire in the concupiscible, and pain and fear in the irascible. This is in effect the model which is most widely used, put forward in different forms by the *De spiritu et anima*, by Damascene, and by Avicenna.<sup>22</sup> One variant of this distinction is what the *Summa Halensis* describes as the third way of distinguishing between the concupiscible and the irascible, which is based on the contrast between present and future. This model, which the *Summa Halensis* takes from that of John of Damascus, places the passions linked to the present in the concupiscible—pain and joy—and those which look to the future—hope and fear—in the irascible. The second distinction presented by the *Summa Halensis* is even more interesting. It defines the concupiscible as the impulse of the appetite directed towards that which is pleasurable, while the irascible is the impulse which aims to attain something arduous or honourable. This distinction refers to that re-definition of the irascible which, from the 1220s onwards, imposed itself as the most important novelty in the classification of the affective impulses and which was broadly shared by most theologians, including those who collaborated on the writing of the *Summa Halensis*.<sup>23</sup> It was on

21 SH II, In4, Tr1, S2, Q2, Ti2, M2 (n. 367), p. 445.

22 *De spiritu et anima* (PL 40:728); John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*, c. 26 (Buytaert, 24–5); Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de anima seu Sextus de naturalibus* I, c. 2, 2 vols, ed. Simone Van Riet (Louvain: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1968–72), 1:56–7.

23 William of Auvergne, *De virtutibus* XVIII, in *Guilielmi Alverni Opera Omnia* (Paris: Apud Andream Pralard, 1674; repr. anast. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 1:175–8; Phillip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono* IV, q. 2, 1, 2 vols, ed. Nicolaus Wicki (Bern: A. Francke, 1985), 1:164; John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* 2.4.107 (Bougerol, 257–60); Alexander of Hales, *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* III, d. 34, n. 20, IIIb, vol. 3, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 14 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1954), 419. For the ‘new’ definition of the irascible, cf. René Antoine Gauthier, ‘Le traité *De anima et de potenciis eius* d’un maître ès arts (vers 1225): introduction et texte critique,’ *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982): 47; Knuutila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 230.

the basis of this distinction that John of Rupella was able to complete his complex system of the passions, modelled on that of Avicenna, which came to classify eight passions in the concupiscible and 15 in the irascible.<sup>24</sup> And it was on this basis too that Thomas Aquinas was to build his system of the passions, basing the possibility of grafting the impulses of the irascible onto the impulses of the concupiscible on the definition of the irascible as arduous, in order to create a dynamic framework based on the circularity of the emotions.<sup>25</sup> In the *Summa Halensis* the re-definition of the irascible in relation to the arduous does not serve to create a taxonomy of the passions, but it is linked rather to the cardinal virtues: temperance is related to the search for pleasure and fortitude to the appetite for everything that presents itself as arduous and honourable. In this aspect too, the *Summa Halensis* acknowledged the most recent debate, which involved theologians from Stephen Langton onwards, on the relationship between the parts of the soul and the individual virtues. Phillip the Chancellor in particular constructed an entire classification on this theme, which he used in the *Summa de bono*, establishing a correspondence between the parts of the soul and the virtues, not only for the cardinal virtues (fortitude, temperance, and justice), but also for the theological virtues (faith, charity, and hope).<sup>26</sup> In the *Summa Halensis* the treatise on the virtues is mostly incomplete, since it is limited to an analysis of faith; we can, however, imagine that the correspondence between the individual virtues and the parts of the soul put forward by Phillip the Chancellor would have constituted its supporting framework. In effect, the theme, which is only touched on in the analysis of the *vires animi*, is explicitly discussed concerning faith, where it provides an opportunity for outlining a brief framework of the psychological model which is at the basis of the classification of the virtues; the rational faculty presides over faith and prudence, while it is the irascible faculty that orders the appetite of the will that determines the other virtues: in tending towards the end which characterises the theological virtues the irascible supports hope, while the concupiscible animates charity; in an analogous way, in the choice of the means to realise the end (the cardinal virtues), the irascible appetite informs fortitude, and the concupiscible temperance.<sup>27</sup> It is impossible to know whether the treatise on the virtues would have developed this classification, and we cannot rely on the treatise *De virtutibus* by John of Rupella either, which, however,

<sup>24</sup> John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* 2.4.107 (Bougerol, 256–62).

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-IIae, qq. 22–48 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P.M. edita*, vol. 6 (Rome: Ex Typographia Poliglotta, 1891), 168–308. For a bibliography about Aquinas and passions, see Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of 'Summa Theologiae' 1a2ae 22–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 300–7; Casagrande and Vecchio, *Passioni dell'anima*, 147–72.

<sup>26</sup> Phillip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono* III, B, II, q. 3; III, C, q. 3 (Wicki, 2:665, 755). Cf. Vecchio, 'Passions et vertus,' 172; Carla Casagrande, 'Les vertus chez Philippe le Chancelier, théologien et prédicateur,' in *Philippe le Chancelier* (see above, n. 2), 114–5.

<sup>27</sup> SH IV, P3, In 2, Tr1, M8, C1 (n. 691), pp. 1098–1100.



has so far not been found, but was certainly part of the general plan of moral theology.<sup>28</sup> In the absence of any references, we can only hypothesize that the treatise on the virtues would have perhaps been the ideal place for analysing the passions in a more systematic way; but this is only a hypothesis, and, as it has come down to us, the *Summa Halensis* forces us to limit our investigation to the relationship between the passions and the sins.

In the *Summa Halensis* the analysis of sin takes up the entire second part of Book 2, where, after a discussion of evil in general, the problem of the sin of the rebellious angels is tackled, followed by original sin and present-day sin in succession, subdivided according to the different forms of classification. The various classifications of sin are analysed in extreme detail starting with that provided by Peter Lombard and used by both Alexander of Hales in his *Glossa* on the *Sentences*, and by John of Rupella in his *Summa de vitiis*.<sup>29</sup> In Book 2 of the *Sentences* Peter Lombard discussed the problem of classification, after devoting a series of distinctions to the definition of the nature of sin, listing not only the authoritative definitions found in the works of the Fathers, but also the various opinions that underpin these definitions and the problems that were debated as arising from them.<sup>30</sup> Only after this analysis does the Master of the *Sentences* review the main classifications of the sins, that is, the distinction between mortal and venial, the contrast of psychological origin between sins that derive from fear and sins that derive from desire, the distinction based on the against whom the sins are committed (God, one's neighbour, oneself), the difference between the evil committed (*peccatum*) and the good omitted (*delictum*), and finally the classification of the seven capital vices.<sup>31</sup>

In the *Summa Halensis*, too, the various classifications of the sins are related to the different definitions, which have increased in number with respect to those of the Lombard, and are placed in a single framework modelled on Aristotle's four causes, which illustrate and rationalize the way they are organized.<sup>32</sup> This model, which takes up the analogous system used by Rupella in the *Summa de vitiis*, summarises a series of systems of different provenance, used not only in the theological tradition, but also in pastoral literature, which had already created a series of possible systems, destined above all to be used in the questioning of the penitent during confession. The multiplication of the forms of classification, which served to 'catch' the greatest

<sup>28</sup> John of La Rochelle, *Summa de articulis fidei* (Milan, Biblioteca Universitaria Brera, AD IX.7, fol. 75ra: 'Summa theologice discipline in duobus consistit in fide scilicet et in moribus (...) Mores vero dividuntur in duo, in peccata et in remedium peccatorum.'

<sup>29</sup> Silvana Vecchio, 'The Seven Deadly Sins between Pastoral Care and Scholastic Theology: The *Summa de vitiis* by John of Rupella,' in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), 104–27.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* II, dd. 30–44 (Brady, 1:496–580).

<sup>31</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* II, d. 42 (Brady, 1:569–72). Cf. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, 'Péché,' in *Dictionnaire Raisoné de l'Occident Médiéval*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean Claude Schmitt (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 884–7.

<sup>32</sup> *SH* III, In1, Tr3, Q3 (nn. 259–68), pp. 274–82.

number of sins and prevent even the smallest of faults from getting through the net of an excessively general taxonomy, created a series of different approaches to the subject of sin, which at times stress its nature, at others its phenomenology or psychological or sociological dimension.<sup>33</sup> Within this extremely rich panorama of sins there are at least three classifications that can be related to the affective component of the soul: one that refers to the two passions of fear and love as the origin of the various sins, one based on the three *concupiscentiae* of Augustinian derivation (*concupiscentia oculi, concupiscentia carnis, superbia vitae*), and one which sees the traditional septenary of the capital vices as a series linked to the various faculties of the soul.<sup>34</sup>

In reality, more than identifying specific typologies of the sins, the distinction between *ex timore* and *ex amore* shows the nature common to all the sins, which is identified in the two opposing impulses of the tendency towards that which appears good and advantageous and the flight from that which appears as evil. But more than opposing, these two impulses often reveal themselves to be present together, and though it is a passion which is qualitatively distinct from love, fear ends up by being re-absorbed within love and is made to be a form of distorted it. Love, in fact, gives rise to the principal impulses of the soul: joy and pain, fear and hope, defined here as *perturbationes*, a term which, even from a lexical point of view, signifies a total dependence on Augustine's model of the passions, which are none other than an expression of the will. To talk therefore of sins *ex timore* or *ex amore* simply means remembering that, just as Augustine maintained, sin is in any case a form of love which has deviated and is deviant.<sup>35</sup> The series based on the three *concupiscentiae* is also only apparently a classification of a psychological type: to speak of *concupiscentia* in fact does not in this case imply a specific reference to the concupiscible component of the soul, but shows once again all those forms of deviated love that can be rooted in the different faculties of the soul, including of course the concupiscible, but also the irascible and the rational part.<sup>36</sup> In prac-

---

**33** On the various ways of classifying sins, cf. Carla Casagrande, 'La moltiplicazione dei peccati: I cataloghi dei peccati nella letteratura pastorale dei secoli XIII-XV,' in *La peste nera: dati di una realtà ed elementi di una interpretazione: atti del XXX Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 10-13 ottobre 1993* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), 253-84; Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, 'La classificazione dei peccati tra settenario e decalogo (secoli XIII-XV),' *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 5 (1994): 331-95.

**34** SH III, In1, Tr3, Q3, C3 (n. 268), pp. 281-2.

**35** SH III, In3, Tr6, Q2 (nn. 702-716), pp. 688-704. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14.6, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 421. For the Augustinian theory of passions, see Carla Casagrande, 'Agostino, i medievali e il buon uso delle passioni,' in *Agostino d'Ipbona: Presenza e pensiero: La scoperta dell'interiorità*, ed. Alfredo Marini (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2004), 65-75; Casagrande and Vecchio, *Passioni dell'anima*, 19-41.

**36** SH III, In3, Tr7, C1 (n. 717), p. 706. On the system of the three *concupiscentiae*, cf. Donald R. Howard, *The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali: Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Torino: Einaudi, 2000), 210-3.

tice the only classification that takes into consideration the psychological origin from which the sins derive is that of the seven capital vices.

Here the *Summa Halensis* acknowledges the debate that had developed in the early decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to give a ‘scientific’ structure to the Gregorian system that had for centuries been accepted and which enjoyed immense success thanks to the strength of two powerful metaphors. On one hand the image of the battle which lined up the different vices in the context of an incessant psychomachia; with extensive use of military vocabulary, in fact, in the *Moralia* Gregory speaks of commanders and simple soldiers who make up the army of the vices, and he describes the different phases of the battle, from the attack to the victory and the final devastation. On the other hand, in Gregory’s work this image is interwoven with the image of the tree, which strengthens the hierarchical model and completes it by referring to the generation of the vices, linked to each other by a family relationship which can be represented by a sort of family tree in which the root—pride—represents both the origin of all the sins and the principal sin.<sup>37</sup> Theologians had long reflected on the possibility of translating these images into an organic and coherent system, and they attempted to find in Gregory’s septenary a rational structure that could demonstrate its ‘sufficiency’ and strengthen its solidity and power, as it was too important to be rejected or replaced by other models. In the course of this debate, the psychological structure present in Gregory’s work, and in that of Cassian before it, which had served simply to describe the impulses of the soul underlying the various sins, became the structure which supported the system, based by now on solid scientific ground allowing the various sins to be derived from the different parts of the soul.<sup>38</sup> The most obvious example of this new attitude towards the septenary is John of Rupella’s *Summa de vitiis*: here Gregory’s system is interpreted at the intersection between the series of the different parts of the soul (*vegetabilis, sensibilis, rationalis*) and the threefold type of good against which the sinner acts: lower good (*bonum carnis*), exterior good (*bonum mundi*) and interior good (*bonum domini*).<sup>39</sup>

---

37 Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 31.45.87, ed. Marcus Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 143B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 1610. For the enormous success of the septenary, cf. Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1952); Casagrande and Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali*, 181–224.

38 Sigfried Wenzel, ‘The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research,’ *Speculum* 43 (1968): 1–22; Casagrande and Vecchio, ‘La classificazione dei peccati,’ 334–54.

39 John of La Rochelle, *Summa de vitiis* (Paris, BnF, lat. 16417, fols 113rb-va): ‘Secundum ergo inordinaciones amoris boni in primis actibus virium anime est numerus septem capitalium viciorum. Nam inordinacio amoris boni inferioris scilicet carnis secundum actum nutritive est gula. Inordinacio amoris boni inferioris [scilicet carnis] secundum actum generative est luxuria. Inordinacio <amoris> boni exterioris secundum actum concupiscibilis est avaritia. Inordinacio amoris <boni> exterioris secundum actum irascibilis est ira; nisi enim inordinate diligeremus prospera numquam impacienter insurgeremus contra adversa quod fit per iram. Inordinacio amoris boni interioris secundum ordinem

The *Summa Halensis* takes up Rupella's classification, adding another two ways of rationalizing the septenary: in the first one the vices are distributed within the two irrational powers of the soul: rooted in the dual function of the concupiscible of desiring the good and finalizing the impulses of the flesh to it, are in fact the two pairs of sloth/avarice and gluttony/lust, while the irascible has the task of approving the good, which envy opposes, and detesting evil which feeds anger. The second classification distinguishes between the seven capital vices on the basis of two opposing impulses: the 'disordered' appetite for that which presents itself as a good nurtures pride, avarice, greed, and lust, and the equally 'disordered' flight from that which appears as evil translates into sloth, envy, and anger.<sup>40</sup> In the *Summa Halensis*, however, all three classifications are subject to a series of criticisms that undermine their coherence and importance and they are replaced by a further three models: the first, which is more anthropological than psychological, is based on the three-fold division of man into spirit, soul, and body. The distinction between spirit and soul, which comes from the pseudo-Augustinian treatise of the same name, allows us to isolate from the group of spiritual vices those vices which refer to the very essence of the soul regardless of its link to the body and are therefore common to men and separate spirits (pride and envy), from the vices which affect the soul incarnated in a body, and which translate into a disorder of its concupiscible and irascible faculties (avarice, sloth, and anger); the two carnal vices, on the other hand, (gluttony and lust) are rooted in the body. The second and third model, which are in part identical, distribute the septenary between the irascible (pride, envy, and anger) and the concupisci-

---

rationis ad id quod supra se est, est superbia que non vult subesse superiori deo. Inordinatio amoris boni interioris <secundum ordinem rationis> ad id quod iuxta se est, est invidia que tristatur de bonis proximorum cum deberet gaudere, quod fit ex hoc quod non diligitur ordinate proximus habens ymaginem dei quod est bonum interius. Inordinatio amoris boni <interioris> secundum ordinem rationis ad se ipsam est accidia, que est tedium interni boni, quod fit ex hoc quod homo minus diligit bonum interius quo factus est ad ymaginem dei quam bonum inferius quo factus est ad similitudinem brutorum' [The number of the seven capital sins therefore corresponds to inordinate loves for the good in the first acts of the powers of the soul. For inordinate love for a lower good (i.e. a carnal good) with respect to the act of the nutritive power is gluttony. Inordinate love for a lower good with respect to the act of the reproductive power is lust. Inordinate love for an external good with respect to the act of the concupiscible power is greed. Inordinate love for an external good with respect to the act of the irascible power is wrath; for without an inordinate love for prosperity we would never rise up intolerantly against adversity, which comes of wrath. Inordinate love for an internal good with respect to the ordering of reason towards what is above it is pride, which does not want to be subject to God above. Inordinate love for an internal good with respect to the ordering of reason towards what is adjacent to it is envy, which laments the goods of neighbours when it ought to rejoice; this comes of not appropriately loving one's neighbour, who has God's image, which is an internal good. Inordinate love for an internal good with respect to the ordering of reason towards itself is listlessness, which is being weary of an internal good; this comes of a man having less love for the internal good by which he was made in God's image than for the lower good by which he was made to resemble brute animals].

<sup>40</sup> SH III, In3, Tr4, S1, C3 (n. 498), pp. 484–6.

ble (greed, lust, avarice, and sloth).<sup>41</sup> The attempt to force the seven capital vices into the framework of the faculties of the soul appears to a certain extent to be forced and is open to infinite variants, as is shown by the analysis of the individual sins that the *Summa Halensis* develops at length in the pages that follow: pride and envy are unequivocally rooted in the irascible;<sup>42</sup> avarice, greed, and lust derive from the corruption of the concupiscible;<sup>43</sup> the very definition of anger, as *vindex concupiscentiae*, demonstrates the fact that it belongs both to the irascible and the concupiscible;<sup>44</sup> and the melancholic nature of sloth confirms its dependence on a fear which is nothing other than a form of distorted love.<sup>45</sup> What seems to be important here, besides placing the individual vices in a particular part of the soul, is to stress the psychological background to the sins, opening a window onto the tangle of passionate impulses which give rise to them.

The various ways of rationalizing Gregory's septenary on the basis of psychological frameworks of various kind merely strengthen the operation systematically carried out by the authors of the *Summa Halensis*, which tends, as we have seen, to multiply the possible ways of classifying the sins. Even though it is important, the septenary of vices is not the only way of cataloguing sin, and perhaps it is not even the most important; besides the psychological framework proposed by Gregory's system there are other just as authoritative systems that show an equal if not greater ability to describe the universe of sin. And if it is true that in some cases the various classifications contain the same sins and make it possible to refer from one to the other, it is equally true that none of them seems to include all the sins, and each one identifies at least one category of sin that risks being left out of all the others. This is the case, for example, of the triad *peccatum cordis, oris, operis*, which allows us to isolate on one hand the 'hidden' sins which are difficult to recognise such as suspicion or *personarum acceptio*, and the category of the sins of speech on the other, which in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century represented a sort of moral emergency pointed out by many.<sup>46</sup> But it is also the case of the sins against God, against

41 SH III, In3, Tr4, S1, C3 (n. 498), pp. 486–7.

42 SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti1, C4 (n. 502), p. 494; SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti2, C 7, Ar1 (n. 540), p. 533.

43 SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti5, C3 (n. 574), pp. 563–4; SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti6, D1, C3 (n. 588), pp. 574–5; SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti7, C1 (n. 613), p. 592.

44 SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti3, C3 (n. 549), pp. 541–2.

45 SH III, In3, Tr4, S2, Q1, Ti4, C4 (n. 562), pp. 554–5.

46 SH III, In3, Tr3 (nn. 350–495), pp. 357–480. On the sins of the heart, Silvana Vecchio, 'Peccatum cordis,' *Micrologus* 11 (2003): 325–42. On the sins of the tongue, cf. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I peccati della lingua: Disciplina ed etica della parola nella cultura medievale* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1987); Edwin D. Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity in Medieval English Literature: Pastoral Rhetoric and the Deviant Speaker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Edwin D. Craun (ed.), *The Hands of the Tongue: Essays on Deviant Speech* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007); Bettina Lindorfer, *Bestraftes Sprechen: Zur historischen Pragmatik des Mittelalters* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2009); Martine Veldhuizen, *Sins of the Tongue in the*

one's neighbour, and against oneself, which had been widely used by John of Rupella and which re-appears in the *Summa Halensis* to group together all the very serious sins that involve a direct attack on the divinity, from heresy to divination and sacrilege, which were not given proper space in the other forms of classification.<sup>47</sup>

This sort of classificatory frenzy which characterizes the *Summa Halensis* and which was widespread in pastoral literature, is, however, unique in the theological and moral *summae*, and responds, as we have said, to the practical need to create an ideally complete review the infinite variety of sin on the basis of a solid foundation. In reality the multiplication of different forms of classification ends up by demonstrating the futility of the very attempt and confirms the inadequacy of every form of classification, each of which is useful for pointing out new typologies of sin, but none of which is able on its own to contain and explain all the sins. In this overall panorama of the universe of sin, the psychological viewpoint certainly appears to be important, but it is neither unique nor resolute, and other forms of classification may be equally valid for describing the sins, and the framework that supports them is perhaps less problematic.

What might appear strange is the absence from the various frameworks classifying the sins of the one which, in hindsight, would seem to be the most obvious, that which defines the individual vices and their overall structure starting from the system of the virtues, a framework adopted by Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*. But the centuries-old difficulty of establishing a precise correspondence between the system of the vices and that of the virtues which could go beyond their simple numerical identity (seven vices—seven virtues) is more than an adequate historical reason to explain the absence of such a form of classification.<sup>48</sup> What is more, the almost complete lack of a treatise on the virtues prevents us from formulating any kind of hypothesis on the correspondence between the vices and the virtues in the *Summa Halensis*. And the lack of any description of the link between the virtues and the passions, which is only just outlined, as we have seen in the case of faith, can only give us a partial answer to the original question of the relative lack of interest in a systematic analysis of the universe of the emotions. On this theme, more than a coherent and structured doctrine, the *Summa Halensis* offers in fact a series of materials of various provenance, accompanied by debates and discussions which incor-

---

*Medieval West: Sinful, Unethical, and Criminal Words in Middle Dutch (1300–1550)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

<sup>47</sup> *SH* III, In3, Tr8 (nn. 731–870), pp. 715–831; John of La Rochelle, *Summa de vitiis* (Paris, BnF, lat. 16417, fols 133va-165rb). Cf. Vecchio, 'The Seven Deadly Sins,' 126–7.

<sup>48</sup> On the difficulty of establishing a correspondence between the system of the vices and that of the virtues, cf. Casagrande and Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali*, 190–4; Silvana Vecchio, 'L'albero delle virtù,' in *La parola alle virtù per riedificare un nuovo mondo*, ed. Elena Modena (Vittorio Veneto: Stamperia Provincia di Treviso, 2015), 13–33; Carla Casagrande, 'Multa sunt questiones de divisionibus peccatorum: vizi, virtù e facoltà dell'anima in alcuni testi teologici del secolo XIII,' in *Responsabilità e creatività: Alla ricerca di un uomo nuovo (sec. XI-XIII)*, ed. Giancarlo Andenna and Elisabetta Filippini (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2015), 89–106.



porate the novelties that were circulating in the scholastic environments just before the large-scale arrival of Aristotle's ethics and psychology. But the reading of the 'new' works on the passions, such as that of John of Damascus and Avicenna, was grafted onto an anthropological background of an Augustinian nature, which ended up by annulling the richness and the novelty of the psychological analysis contained in it. More than the phenomenology and the dynamics of the different passions of the soul, what was important for the authors of the *Summa Halensis* was to stress the notion of *passibilitas*, in which the individual impulses sank their roots, and to underline the role of *sensualitas*, prey after sin to that *lex fomitis* thanks to which the affective impulses manifest themselves in the form of turmoil in the soul. The structural node that links *passibilitas*, *sensualitas*, and sin, and which is at the basis of any discourse on the emotions not only renders a detailed analysis of the impulses of the soul in some way superfluous, but it also transforms the many attempts to investigate the psychological origin of the individual sins into a sort of scholastic exercise which can be infinitely replicated.

