NEOPLATONIC QUESTIONS

EDITED BY

José María Zamora Calvo

λογος

Die Open-Access-Stellung der Datei erfolgte mit finanzieller Unterstützung des Fachinformationsdiensts Philosophie (https://philportal.de/)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.30819/3663

NEOPLATONIC QUESTIONS

EDITED BY
JOSÉ MARÍA ZAMORA CALVO

BERLIN
LOGOS VERLAG

2014

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de .

The cover image: Pellegrino Tibaldi, Scuola Atheniensium, 1587-1592. Library of El Escorial Monastery, Madrid.

ISBN 978-3-8325-3663-3

Logos Verlag Berlin GmbH
Comeniushof, Gubener Str. 47,
10243 Berlin
Tel.: +49 (0)30 42 85 10 90
Fax: +49 (0)30 42 85 10 92
INTERNET: http://www.logos-verlag.de

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The nine essays in this volume were presented at the Eighth Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies (ISNS), hosted and sponsored by Autonomous University of Madrid, and held in Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid / Spain) on June 17-20, 2010. They were part of the "*Stromata*. Neoplatonic Questions" panel, whose general coordination was my responsibility. ISNS Conferences, annually held, bring together scholars from all over the world interested in Plato's philosophy and its tradition. This time, the selected articles deal with the interpretations of Plato by authors like Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, and Damascius, as well as with the romantic English poetry reception of this hermeneutic tradition. They include perspectives as wide as philosophic, historical, or literary, and in different contexts; like pagan, Christian, Jewish, etc. All of them aim to give a new appreciation of Neoplatonic Philosophy and a better understanding of what Platonism and Neoplatonism may be.

"Plotinian Motifs in the pseudo-Galenic *De Spermate*", by Svetla Slaveva-Griffin, opens this collection. This paper examines the relationship between Plotinus' treatise *On the Immortality of Soul* (*Enn*. IV 7 [2]) and the pseudo-Galenic *De Spermate* –a rather unlikely pair. The former is one of the earliest treatises in the *Enneads* (the second in the chronological arrangement in *Vita Plotini* 4), while the latter is of an unknown time period and provenance, but most likely related to the Neoplatonic school in Alexandria. The composition of *De Spermate* consists of three parts of unequal length (10 medical chapters, 2 philosophical chapters, and 13 astrological chapters). This thematic imbalance has forced scholars to consider the medical and the astrological parts irrelevant and even unrelated, and to disregard the philosophical section as a later interpolation. Slaveva-Griffin claims that this dismissal is done rather lightly. The fact that the two philosophical chapters (chs. 10-11) contain most of the specific references in the text can be used, from her point of view, as a lead to unpack the philosophical background of the work if not the context of the entire treatise.

The author underlines the fact that Porphyry is the name of the philosopher whom *De Spermate* mentions most frequently (7 times) and with an emphasis

on his view of the soul's immortality. Grudzen[1] has identified some sections of the work with Nemesius of Emesa's *De Natura Hominis*. While Nemesius does not mention Porphyry as profusely as *De Spermate*, he refers to Plotinus on two occasions in his discussion of the philosophical debate on soul and body. More important, Plotinus is the first philosopher he mentions *(DNH* 1.7) who distinguishes between the immortality of the soul and the corporeality of the body and that "the body is moved by soul as a tool" (*órganon*, *DNH* 2.9).

Plotinus wrote *Enn*. IV 7 [2] in direct response to the Stoic and Epicurean claims of soul's corporeality. According to Armstrong, the tract is the most "scholastic"[2] among his works and its thematic progression resembles the philosophical argument in *De Spermate*. In *Enn*. IV 7 [2] 1, Plotinus clearly draws the distinction between the immortal soul and the mortal body: "Man could not be a simple thing, but there is in him a soul, and he has a body as well, whether it is our tool (*órganon*) or attached to us in some other way." *Enn*. IV 3 [27], 4 [28] and 7 [2] lay out Plotinus' view of the immortality of soul and its descent into the body. The soul's descent originates in the intelligible realm and passes through the heavens, the planets, and the stars until it reaches its earthly body. Every soul is proportional to the capacity of the body it ensouls and its size is predetermined by the rational principles embedded in the heavens. For Plotinus, the descent of soul is just another expression of the one-in-many universe. Plotinus' discussion of the subject also intertwines philosophy and astrology (taking into account Plotinus' qualification). This discovery supports Slaveva-Griffin's examination of *De Spermate* which reveals important conceptual and thematic similarities with Plotinus' treatise *On the Immortality of Soul* (*Enn*. IV 7 [2]) and *On the Difficulties about the Soul Parts I and II* (*Enn*. IV 3 [27] and 4 [28]).

The discussion of the perennial problem of whether the soul is corporeal and thus mortal or not, in many ways, has propelled the development of ancient philosophy from Pythagoras to the Alexandrian Neoplatonic school. In this light, it is not a surprise that the two seemingly disparate texts share the same philosophical interest. In search for answers, or at least hypotheses, about the origin and the context of the pseudo-Galenic treatise, this essay attempts to relate it to texts which are better known to us and whose influence on future conceptual developments can be found in later authors.

The second essay, "Plotinus on *Sophist* 248e6-249a2", by Atsushi Sumi, departs from Pierre Hadot's –and many other scholars– belief that Plotinus' conception of the intelligible world as alive owes its historical origin to *Soph*.

---

1. See G.J. GRUDZEN, *Medical Theory about the Body and the Soul in the Middle Ages: The First Western Medical Curriculum at Monte Cassino*, Lewiston, 2007, 280 p., p. 201 and 237.

2. A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus. Ennead IV*, Cambridge, 1984, 441 p., p. 336.

248e6-249a2. In previous works Sumi has explained this belief concretely, and has brought forth the hypothesis that his doctrine of the intellect-intelligible identity can be a solution to the problem left unanswered in this Platonic text[3]. While he obviously has deep reflection on the query in the text (*Enn*. III 6 [26] 6, 21; VI 9 [9] 2, 22-24), Plotinus, in *Enn*. VI 7 [38] 39, 32-34, reads the contrast of the-One-standing-still-in-majesty with real-being-having intellection between the lines of it. Many commentators point out that Plotinus himself seems conscious that this is an odd interpretation. Instead of explaining it away as an aberrant reading, the Japanese scholar attempts to clarify reasons why Plotinus dares to, or is forced to, read the transcendent Good in such a dialogue like the *Sophist*. In the light of this study, once it turns out that Plotinus is justifiably enchanted with an explicit distinction, between being and activity, expressed in the Platonic text, it seriously challenges John Bussanich's position of the One's quasi-being[4].

This is related to what Whitehead calls "the ontological principle". Careful reading of *Adventures of Ideas* shows that Whitehead associates this principle with *Soph*. 248e6-249a2, though he names it "the general Aristotelian principle". In *Process and Reality* he introduces instances of the principle applied in Descartes and Locke. In addition, the author examines whether or not it applies to God in such Neoplatonic thinkers like Nicholas of Cusa and Leibniz whom Whitehead does not mention. Sumi had proposed in earlier works that the Neoplatonic One must be beyond the scope of the ontological principle which may govern Intellect and lower entities[5]. This urged him to clarify what is the criterion of actuality for Plotinus, while it is definiteness for Aristotle and decisiveness for Whitehead. Moreover, he assumes that the discussion about the ontological principle and *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 influences a dispute among ancient Neoplatonists and problems considered by contemporary Neoplatonic students in France: the harmony between Plato and Aristotle, and the question of whether or not henology is compatible with ontology. In this way, Plotinus' exegesis of the Platonic text in focus is part of the gigantic and complex inquiry into the definition of actuality.

"Plotinus Exegesis of Plato's *Timaeus:* An Analysis of the Relationship between the Demiurge and the second Hypostasis", by Malena Tonelli, aims to elucidate, with respect to the Plotinian exegesis of the demiurge of the *Timaeus*, how Plotinus forces the Platonic text to establish correspondences that are not

---

3. See A. SUMI, "The One's Knowledge in Plotinus", PhD dissertation, Chicago, 1993.

4. See J. BUSSANICH, "Plotinus on the Being of the One", in *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism*, J. Finamore and R. Berchman eds., New Orleans, 2007, 275 p., p. 57-71.

5. See A. SUMI, "The Psyche, the Forms, and the Creative One: Toward Reconstruction of Neoplatonic Metaphysics", in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, R.B. Harris ed., Part I, Albany, 2002, 425 p., p. 221-169.

such in the light of an interpretation that seeks to be faithful. Certainly, the differences between this figure of *Timaeus* and Plotinus' Intelligence are not easy to reconcile, to the extent that the effectiveness of its inclusion in the Plotinian organization of reality –as analogous to the second hypostasis– has been questioned by many experts because of the deep contrasts between them. An example of this fact is that the artificialist character of the demiurgic generation –which involves a calculation, deliberation or reasoning (*Tim*. 30b1-4, 34a8)– distances itself from the generation mode of the second hypostasis, since Plotinus insists on clarifying that this cosmos *ouk ek logismoû genoménou* (*Enn*. III 2 [47] 3, 4).

However, in order to determine in what sense the characterization of the demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus* is akin to Plotinus's notion of the second hypostasis, Tonelli suggests that a clue can be found in the response Timaeus offers to the question about the cause of the maker's doing: the goodness of the demiurge (29e). What this Good is about, in what sense the demiurge is good, are questions that could be clarified by the famous passage of Plato's *Republic* VI, 509b5-10, to which Plotinus refers, for example, in the *Ennead* V 1 [10] 8, 4-14. Already Numenius had interpreted that passage of the *Timaeus* with relation to the idea of the Good of Plato's *Republic* (Fr. 20 des Places). So, according to this author, it would not be an error to claim that Plotinus had linked what is beyond being and knowledge to the cause of the making of the demiurge. Indeed, paraphrasing what Plato claimed in *Timaeus* 28c3, Tonelli dares to say that, as cause of the demiurge, to discover the good –or, in Plotinian terms, the One-Good–, is difficult and, if it is discovered, it is impossible to notify others.

In this paper, Tonelli convincingly demonstrates how the inclusion of the figure of the Demiurge in the Plotinian reality has to do with a doctrinal need rather than to a simple exegetical concern. She establishes also what might have been the philosophical reasons –taking into account the influence of previous thinkers the Plotinian reading of the *Timaeus*– which led the Neoplatonic to introduce the demiurge in his system.

Judith Omtzigt takes us to consider "The Moral Status of the Plotinian Artist". Until recently, the Plotinian artist was generally considered to be fundamentally inferior to the Plotinian sage in ethical achievement and status[6]. The unimpeded identification of the sage with his true Self on the level of *Noûs* was assumed to imply an exclusive focus of attention on the intelligible

---

6. See E. DE KEYSER, *La signification de l'art dans les Ennéades de Plotin*, Louvain, 1955, 124 p., p. 90; A.H. ARMSTRONG, "Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus", in J. Mansfeld & L. De Rijk eds., *Kephalaion. Studies in Greek philosophy and its Continuation offered to Professor C.J. de Vogel*, Assen, 1975, 234 p., p. 156-157; O. KUISMA, *Art or Experience: a Study on Plotinus' Aesthetics*, Helsinki, 2003, 207 p., p. 59.

realm of Forms and a more or less complete neglect of the material realm of practice and social interacting.

The artist, dealing so intensively with matter, was clearly not of this kind, even though his moral status had improved substantially since Plato. Taking into account that recent studies in Plotinian ethics have changed our view of the Plotinian sage –he is no longer seen as a totally unpractical and self-absorbed person[7]–, the author calls attention to the moral status of the Plotinian artist and its need of reconsideration. If the contemplative life of the sage has a practical side as well –emanating from his perfect inner peace–, postulates Omtzigt, we can start to wonder why artistic creation could not be part of it. Consequently, the essential differences between the concept of the Plotinian sage and that of the artist cease to exist. Only if within the creative process there would necessarily occur a weakening of the contemplative wisdom –to be able to transfer the artistic Ideas to matter– would there still be a ground to fundamentally deny the artist a full ethical status.

Several fragments in the *Enneads* though show, as Omtzigt points out, that Plotinus did not happen to think that way about the creation of art: it can co-exist next to an unimpeded contemplation of *Noûs*. Therefore, the creation of art does not seem to really differ from the moral-practical activities that have already been ascribed to the sage. From her perspective, one even might consider the creation of art to be a *form* of moral action, because of the uplifting character art has according to Plotinus. It can be thought of as a didactic activity just as teaching philosophy, fitting in perfectly in the Plotinian sage's life, where concern about others flows automatically from inner purity and happiness. So, though the creation of art –just as other forms of *prâxis*– is not a constituent of the Plotinian good life, it might very well be a by-product of it. And so it is possible that one can no longer principally deny the Plotinian artist a full moral status.

"Contexts of *sympátheia* in Plotinus", the following essay, was my own contribution to the panel. In his *Enneads*, Plotinus uses the notion of *sympátheia* in different contexts; thus, when he explains the efficacy of magic and prayers, the influence of celestial bodies, or visual and acoustic transmission (cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 26, 1-20; IV, 5 [29] 2, 15-23; IV, 9 [8] 3, 1-21). The Cosmos is an animal, both one and multiple, in sympathy with itself; its similar parts, even when they are not proximate, "vibrate" together like the strings of a lyre, in such a way that one part resounds in another through sympathy (cf. *Enn*. IV 4 [28] 8, 56-57; 41, 1-6). Plotinus' notion of *sympátheia*, however, is different from that of Stoicism. According to Plotinus, we can only find *sympátheia* in the structure

7. See, for example, D.J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2003, 249 p., p. 80; A. Schniewind, *L'éthique du sage chez Plotin. Le paradigme du spoudaios*, Paris, 2003, 238 p., p. 112.

of an organism; yet, unlike the Stoicism, for him the soul is not bodily and belongs to the transcendent world.

On the other hand, there is a strong similarity between the notions of *sympátheia* and *synaísthe̲sis*. First, the notion of self-consistency of the multiple –the unit which is based on a more radical self-identity and unity– corresponds to an awareness of itself as a multiplicity-in-unity, and second, the continuity with the source through self-consistency is achieved through a sympathetic consciousness of the source. The continuity of the source with the product will be a kind of science of the product of a part of the source which is aware of its own productive action. Thus, according to our approach, *synaísthe̲sis* and *sympátheia* relate to self-consciousness, as both show the source on which they are dependent –poor self-identity that obscures multiplicity under a veneer of unity.

Jean-Michel Charrue, with "Providence or Freedom: Porphyry", leaves Plotinus behind and focuses on Porphyry. Three fragments of his *Commentary on Timaeus* deal directly with Providence. Of these, the first seems the most interesting, as it explains Porphyry's originality of seeing in it a moral dialogue: the prayer, in an excerpt from Proclus (F. XXVIII, *In Timaeum,* I, 207, 23-29), shows that recognition of Divine Providence, from virtue, participating in the entire cosmos. The second (F. LXVI), from Macrobius (*In Somnium Scipionis*, II, 1, 14-20), on the composition of the world soul, suggests the association, which does not happen in other interpreters, of mathematical composition with the harmony of the spheres, of Pythagorean inspiration. The third (F. LXXVI), common to Iamblichus, considering the two circles of the Same and the Different, sets the relationship of the intelligible and the sensible. For its part, the *Letter to Anebo* has to do primarily with the issue, mainly in the question at the end, where it is asked whether this providence, in its part of destination (*heimarméne̲*), chains our freewill to the movement of the stars.

Charrue considers that the pages of Stobaeus' *Tò eph'he̲mîn* constitute the climax of the Porhyrian reflection, wondering, at the beginning, whether Plato runs the risk of doing away our freedom, if the choice has been guided by the above routes. Indeed, in these ten pages of Stobaeus we find both the school commentator, in this case of the myth of Er, and the philosopher, with this powerful problem: "Does the soul possesses itself before falling on the bodies?" Skepticism will increase with the influence of the myth of the Egyptians horoscopes and the astrological determinism. The author underlines that "men absolve the gods" of responsibility for their evils, as long as "they set the souls free and transmit the choice of lives".

Proclus has his moment with Antoni Bordoy's "Orphic Influences on Proclus' Exegesis of Plato: The Goddess Necessity and the Descent of Souls into Bodies". Inheritor of the platonic dualism –for which the man is formed by a double beginning–, the Neoplatonism agrees and defends –in opposition to other

traditions, like Stoics or Epicureans– the existence of an immaterial and immortal soul. This soul has a divine origin and is born in an intelligible world, from which descends crossing the different parts of the cosmos and, depending of its powers, being personified in one or another entity. Nevertheless, this unit, Bordoy asserts, turns in a discussion when it is a question of interpreting which is the Plato's authentic doctrine, generating important confrontations between the theories of the school of Rome and the schools of Syria and Athens. The main objective of this paper has been the analysis of the orphic influence on the Neoplatonic theological theory of soul and its consequences on the interpretation of Plato's doctrines. With this purpose, first he identifies the differences between the Plotinus' and Proclus' conceptions of individual soul and the explanations on its origins, including on this analysis the determination of the main points of this differences and its intermediate stadiums; and second, he delimits the contents corresponding to the Orphic doctrines that can be considered the causes of the differences or, at least, elements that intervene in the process.

The next essay, "Whitehead and Damascius on Time", by Michael Chase, examines different philosophies of time. Many contemporary theorists of quantum mechanics consider the ontological scheme of Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) to be the most adequate to account for recent developments in science. Chase notices Whitehead's is a non-substantialist philosophy, in which, according to Michael Epperson, "nature's most fundamental constituents are considered to be quantum actual events occurring in four-dimensional spacetime". His philosophy of time, although highly complex and in a state of evolution throughout his career, holds that time is atomic. The late, post-Plotinian Neoplatonist philosophers such as Iamblichus and Damascius developed a theory of time that, as the author reminds us, is comparable to Whitehead's views on the subject in several important respects. Damascius, in particular, unites his own form of temporal atomism with a distinction between static and mobile forms of time. Chase assumes that if Whitehead eventually arrived at views on time comparable to those of Iamblichus and especially Damascius, it was because he, like those last Neoplatonists, felt the need to confront and overcome the paradoxes concerning the reality of time that had been put forth by Zeno and transmitted by Aristotle's *Physics*.

José Miguel Vicente Pecino, with "The Neoplatonic Tradition on the English Romantic Poetry, 1757-1850", closes this volume. This paper analyses the way in which the English Romanticism, as philosophical thinking, has deep sources in ideas such as antimecanicism, pantheism, mysticism and alchemy. All of them arise form Neoplatonism and they already formed the worldview of the previous centuries to Romanticism. Vicente Pecino emphasizes that scholars of the eighteen century persist in writing about the Enlightenment as a coherent body of ideas and attitudes shared by the intellectual vanguard of Europe. These opinions and concepts attached as rational, classical, liberal and neo-pagan, thus

obscure the profound religious and philosophical concerns which many men had and many groups professed, giving the century its tremendous vitality. This work constitutes a different way of approaching to the English Romanticism, trying to disentangle the threads of the Eighteen Century complex culture, and at the same time searching for the liveliest qualities.

I would like to thank the Autonomous University of Madrid for hosting the 8th Annual ISNS Conference. I am grateful to John Finamore and Gary Gurtler for their permanent expertise assistance and Sonsoles Costero, Diego Garrocho and Claudia Fernández for help in organizing the event. My sincere gratitude to all members of the panel; this volume is just a small token of their honest studies, knowledge and passion.

José M. Zamora Calvo
Miraflores de la Sierra

TRACING THE UNTRACEABLE: PLOTINIAN MOTIFS IN THE PSEUDO-GALENIC *DE SPERMATE*[1]

SVETLA SLAVEVA-GRIFFIN

Plotinus is commonly credited as the founder of Neoplatonism and the influence of his thought is easily recognizable in the works not only of his immediate Neoplatonic successors but also of the philosophers in late antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. It is rather uncommon, however, to trace Plotinian motifs in the medical literature of these times, and especially in a treatise on the conception of life such as the Pseudo-Galenic *De spermate* (*DS*), one of the least known tracts in the extant medical corpus[2].

---

1. My gratitude goes to José M. Zamora for making the 2010 ISNS Meeting in Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid) unforgettable success and for editing this volume. I am also grateful to the audience for its inquisitive interest in the subject, especially to Luc Brisson and John Finamore. Having benefitted from many conversations, I must individually acknowledge those with Lucas Siorvanes, Peter Lautner, Stefania Fortuna, K.-D. Fischer. Above all, I am in debt to Vivian Nutton for setting me on the path of the *DS*. The initial stage of this project was funded by a grant from the Wellcome Trust to work on the treatise at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL in 2008.

2. Also known as *Duodecim Portae* and *Microtegni*, respectively deriving from the translation of the Arabic *bab* as "chapter/gate" and from the confusion with Galen's famous *Micrē Technē*. C. BURNETT, "Physics Before the *Physics*: Early Translations from Arabic of Texts Concerning Nature in Mss British Library, Additional 22719 and Cotton Galba E iv", *Medioevo*, 27, 2002, p. 53-109, especially p. 68, note 49. An additional confusion is created by Galen's authentic *Peri spermatos*, conventionally referred to as *De semine*, but also occasionally as *De spermate*, see P. PAHTA, *Medieval Embryology in the Vernacular: The Case of DS*, in *Mémoires de la société néophilologique de Helsinki*, 53, Helsinki, 1998, 328 p., p. 97. Portion of the text in *DS*, col. 141-142 is inserted in Constantine the African's *Pantegni*. On the relation between the two texts, see C. BURNETT, "The Chapter on the Spirits in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African", in *Constantine The African and 'Alī Ibn Al-'Abbās Al-Maǧūsī. The 'Pantegni' and Related Texts*, C. Burnett and D. Jacquart eds., Leiden, 1994, p. 364, p. 99-120. For a discussion of the *DS* in thematic relation to Galen's works, V. NUTTON, "Greek Medical Astrology and the Boundaries of Medicine", in *Astro-*

With Galen's ardent attempt at presenting medicine and philosophy as genuinely symbiotic disciplines, medicine progressively acquires greater significance in the works of the Neoplatonists, starting with Plotinus. In the *Enneads*, as has been recently argued[3], he benefits from the increasing presence of medicine in the intellectual environment of his time and judiciously interweaves contemporary medical views in developing his understanding of the relationship between soul and body. Nevertheless, while later Neoplatonists, such as Porphyry, explicitly deal with medical questions from philosophical perspective, Plotinus is tantalizingly subtle, and yet persistent, in fusing medical motifs in his discussions[4]. Regardless of its subtlety, the influence of medicine on his views is tangible and affords one of the most promising new lines of research today. It is not difficult to foresee how medicine could sharpen the points of Plotinus' philosophical argumentation on the nature of soul and its relationship to body, but it is rather difficult to trace or explain his own influence on the formulation of the conceptual debates in the medico-philosophical literature from supposedly much later period, as in the *DS*[5]. Although the generic characteristics of the treatise have not been examined yet, nor has the treatise been formally classified as part of this literature, a working evaluation of its themes points in this direction.

In this paper, I will address two questions: first, how relevant Plotinus' treatment of the concept of soul is for later texts such as the *DS*; and second, how insurmountable, at least for now, are the difficulties in reconstructing the historical and philosophical context of the treatise. More specifically, I will examine the thematic relationship between Plotinus' *On the Immortality of Soul* (*Enn*. IV.7) and the text of the philosophical section of the pseudo-Galenic *DS* which summarizes the debate on the nature of soul and its relation with body.

Medicine: Astrology and Medicine, East and West, A. Akasoy, C. Burnett, and R. Yoeli-Tlalim eds., Florence, 2008, p. 277, p. 17-31.

3. T. TIELMAN, "Plotinus on the Seat of the Soul: Reverberations of Galen and Alexander in 'Enn.' IV.3 [27], 23", *Phronesis*, 43.4, 1998, p. 306-325; J. WILBERDING, "Porphyry and Plotinus on the Seed", *Phronesis*, 53, 2008, p. 406-432; and S. SLAVEVA-GRIFFIN, "Medicine in the Life and Works of Plotinus", *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar*, 14, 2010, p. 93-117.

4. Porphyry's πρὸς Γαῦρον περὶ τοῦ πῶς ἐμψυχοῦται τὰ ἔμβρυα (*Ad Gaurum*) is the first example of overtly merging philosophical and medical themes in the Neoplatonic literature. This tendency later becomes predominant feature of the works of Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa, Meletius of Tiberiopolis, and a few of the Alexandrian Neoplatonists.

5. Burnett (above, note 2, 1994, p. 101) takes the work to be "probably written in Greek in Late Classical Times." PAHTA (above, note 2, p. 95) suggests the fourth and the fifth centuries as a likely period of its composition; NUTTON (above, note 2, p. 29) broadly attributes it to "Late Antiquity." For a discussion of the historical and intellectual context of the work, see below p. 6-12.

There are both immediate and long-term benefits from this investigation. Among the former are to demonstrate the vitality of Plotinus' treatment of the soul-and-body question in *Enn*. IV.7 in the medical and philosophical thought at the crossroads of pagan and early Christian writing and to initiate the process of eliciting the philosophical content of the *DS*[6]. Among the latter are to extend the study of Plotinus' reception in later literature not only in terms of particular concepts but also in terms of particular *Enneads*. In doing so, I hope to place the *DS* on the intellectual map of late antiquity and to include it in the scholarly dialogue about the growing relationship between medicine and philosophy at that time. These benefits, I admit, are far more complex in scope and require significantly greater effort and length than the expanse of this article. My practical goal, thus, is not to offer definitive answers but to broach the question of the *DS*'s relation with the extant Neoplatonic literature or at least to introduce it in the philosophical context, conducive for further investigation.

Aside from representing two of the largest single author collections in antiquity, respectively Plotinus' *Enneads* and Galen's corpus, *Enn*. IV.7 and the *DS* form, *prima facie*, a rather unlikely pair[7]. The former is one of the earliest treatises in the *Enneads* (the second in Porphyry's chronology in *VP* 4) and contains Plotinus' rebuttal of the non-Platonic views of soul. The latter is a Latin translation of unknown period and provenance, which, going back to Hippocrates and the *Hippocratic Corpus*, compiles medical, philosophical, and astrological ideas on the biological conception of life. So what does, one may ask, a medical treatise on sperm, most likely dating to the fringes of late antiquity, have to do with Plotinus' refutation of the Stoic and Aristotelian concepts of soul?

The inability to find direct textual references between the *DS* and either Porphyry's commentary on the *Categories* or Plotinus' *Enneads* leads Grudzen to conclude that the treatise has nothing to do with the works of Porphyry and Plotinus. Characterizing it as a venue of "oriental philosophy", he focuses on the traces of similarity between Nemesius' *De natura hominis* (*DNH*) and the work[8]. It is time to reassess his position and to attempt to construe a more

---

6. This article is a part of a larger project studying the philosophical content of *DS*. Its first installment, presented at the 2009 ISNS meeting in Krakow and now under revision, examines the place of Porphyry's *Isagoge* in the treatise.

7. On Galen's unlikely authorship of the text, see below p. 38, note 130.

8. G.J. GRUDZEN, *Medical Theory about the Body and the Soul in the Middle Ages: The First Western Medical Curriculum at Monte Cassino*, Lewiston, 2007, 280 p., p. 201 and 237. Grudzen inconsistently treats the mentions of the *Isagoge* in the *DS* as referring either to Porphyry's *Isagoge* (p. 126, note 74) or to his commentary on the *Categories* (p. 237). Although both remarks to the *Isagoge* are in the plural (*Isagogas* in *DS*, col. 141 and *in Isagogis, DS,* col. 142), this form of the title is not documented in the extensive literature on

satisfactory explanation of the marked presence of Porphyry and his *Isagoge* in the tract. As with most Neoplatonic pursuits, Porphyry's references will take us to Plotinus and in this case to the subject of *Enn*. IV.7. It turns out Plotinus' refutation of the non-Platonic views of soul has to do quite a bit with expounding the theories on the conception of life in the mind of the late antique medical philosopher[9].

For reasons of simplicity, it is more practical to introduce *Enn*. IV.7 first. Unlike the *DS*, the treatise has a well-established text critical edition as a part of the Plotinian corpus[10] and has long attracted scholarly attention with its extensive, for Plotinus, refutation of the Stoics' postulates about soul's corporeality and Aristotle's understanding of soul as entelechy[11]. The emphasis of the work lies overtly on disproving the views that reject soul's immortality rather than on proving any aspect of his position. The latter, which gives the title of the treatise, comes at the very end of the tract to provide some general background for the preceding discussion and does not show the conceptual depth and ingenuity with which he treats the subject elsewhere in the *Enneads*[12].

Commending on Plotinus' rare systematic approach of examination in the treatise, Armstrong rightly defines it as the most "scholastic" among the

---

Porphyry's commentary of the *Categories* in antiquity. At this point, I think the reference is to the former.

9. The scholarship on the interaction between medicine and philosophy in late antiquity is steadily growing. Some of the most influential works are: L.G. WESTERINK, "Philosophy and Medicine in Late Antiquity", *Janus*, 51, 1964, p. 169-177.; J. MANSFELD, "Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text", in *Philosophia Antiqua*, 61, Leiden, 1994, 246 p., p. 117-176; V. NUTTON, *Ancient Medicine*, London, 2004, 486 p.; P. VAN DER EIJK, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge, 2005, 404 p.

10. In comparison to the *DS*, as we will discuss later, the text of *Enn*. IV.7 also has a peculiar manuscript history. Chapters 8^{1}-8^{5} are not preserved in the MSS archetype of the *Enneads* (thus not translated in Ficino's edition), but come from Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, XV, 22 and 10. See P. HENRY and H.-R. SCHWYZER, *Plotini Opera*, vol. 2, Oxford, 1977, p. vii. Henceforth the text of *Enn*. IV.7 and all references to the *Enneads* are according to P. HENRY and H.-R. SCHWYZER, *Plotini Opera*, vols. 3, Oxford, 1964-1983; all translations, with my alterations, are according to H.A. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus, Enneads*, vols. 7, Cambridge, 1966-1988.

11. P. HENRY, "Une comparaison chez Aristote, Alexandre et Plotin", in *Les sources de Plotin*, Genève, 1960, 463 p., p. 427-449; F. DE CAPITANI, "Platone, Plotino, Porfirio e Sant'Agostino sull immortalità dell'anima intesa come vita (*Phaed*. 102a ss.; *Enn*. IV.7, 7, 11; *Σ*. ζ. apud Nem. Em., *De nat. hom*. 3, ed. Dörrie p. 58; *De imm*. IX, 16 / *De trin*. X, 7, 9)", *Rivista di filosofia neoclassica*, 76, 1984, p. 230-244; R. CHIARADONNA, *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, Naples, 2005, 412 p.

12. *Enn*. IV.1; IV.3-5; IV.7; IV.8-9; V.1; VI.9.

Enneads[13]. Apparently, at the onset of his writing career, Plotinus is very keen on straightening the record on soul before he engages with its philosophical essence and certainly before he expands it into the pervasive multi-layered concept in his ontological system. To illustrate his teacher's philosophical acumen and studiousness, Porphyry reports, in *VP* 13, a three-day long session Plotinus held to answer all of his questions about soul. This remark only enhances the notion that Plotinus was already working on the concept before Porphyry joined his school[14]. The paradigmatic significance of the concept in Plotinus' system makes his concentrated effort in disproving the latest views in the history of its development noteworthy.

According to Porphyry's chronology, *Enn*. IV.7 (*On the Immortality of Soul*) is one of the earliest treatises in the *Enneads*, composed second only to *Enn*. I.6 (*On Beauty*). According to his thematic organization of the corpus, the treatise falls in the fourth *Ennead* that deals with topics related to soul: the tri-partite tract dedicated to "*Difficulties of Soul*" (*Enn*. IV.3-5), the treatises on sense perceptions (*Enn*. IV.6), and on the soul's descent in the body (*Enn*. IV.8). The treatment of soul's immortality is not an odd fit to these topics, complements the comprehensiveness of the fourth *Ennead* as a whole, and even provides a conceptual prelude to Plotinus' famous account of his extracorporeal experience in the beginning of *Enn*. IV.8. But what makes the work stand out among its neighbors, and from most of the *Enneads*, is its quasi-doxographical attempt at discussing the different philosophical views on soul[15].

Plotinus is notoriously known for his impatient off-handed way of referring to his predecessors or to his sources, *Enn*. IV.8.1-3 and *Enn*. V.1.8-9 are the most characteristic examples of it. *Enn*. IV.7 provides a somewhat notable exception to this method. Although in it he does not indulge in compiling a long list of names and philosophical schools, as is typical in the doxographical tradition after Aristotle, he still systematically examines and rejects all current views opposing the Platonic understanding of soul. From this perspective, the treatise

---

13. A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus. Ennead IV*, Cambridge, 1984, 441 p., p. 336.

14. Especially since *Enn*. IV.7 is one of the twenty-one treatises Plotinus wrote before Porphyry arrived at his school (*VP* 4).

15. For most recent discussion of Plotinus' doxographical remarks, D.J. O'MEARA, 'Plotin "historien" de la philosophie', in *Philosophy and Doxography in the Imperial Age*, A. Brancacci ed., Florence, 2005, p. 186, p. 103-112. On Plotinus as Platonic exegete, see J.M. CHARRUE, *Plotin lecteur de Platon*, Paris, 1978, p. 284, p. 19; M.L. GATTI, "Plotinus: The Platonic Tradition and the Foundation of Neoplatonism", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, L.P. Gerson ed., Cambridge, 1996, 462 p., p. 10-37; P. HADOT, *Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision*, M. Chase trans., Chicago, 1993, 127 p., p. 17-18; E.R. DODDS, "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus", *JRS*, 50, 1960, p. 1-7, especially p. 1-2; on Plotinus' originality independent of the Platonic tradition, J.M. RIST, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge, 1967, 280 p., p. 169-187.

is rather unusual for Plotinus' introverted style of presenting. From another prospective, the doxographical hue of *Enn*. IV.7 paradoxically conforms to the trends of its time. What is less common for Plotinus, in fact, is rather common for his contemporaries and successors who produce in abundance summaries (*epitomes*), introductions (*isagoges*), and commentaries of particular works in the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition. The affinity of *Enn*. IV.7 with the doxographical taste of its period makes the treatise, I would argue, more accessible than most of the *Enneads*, for reception in later authors and works, as will be shown in the rest of this paper.

And now to *De spermate*. In comparison to *Enn*. IV.7 and for that matter to all ancient texts published today[16], the treatise needs a long introduction since it is virtually unknown in the scholarship, save a few pioneering efforts[17]. There is no critical edition of its text yet[18]. Therefore to introduce the tract is at the same time difficult and easy, for it is easy to list all the questions surrounding it but it is difficult to answer even one of them. Let me emphatically list what we do not know about the work in order to draw a preliminary sketch of the issues surrounding it. We do not know who translated it in Latin; when and where the translation was made; what the original source(s) was; who composed it, when and where; whether the source(s) was genuinely Greek or deriving from Arabic compilation(s), or from any other language in the Greek translation movement in the East in late antiquity; and finally, in regards to the *DS* itself, it is difficult to make sense of its thematic composition.

---

16. Serendipitously *Enn*. IV.7 has its own manuscript complications, see above, note 10.

17. The works of Burnett (above, note 2, 1994 and 2002) are preceded by V.T. PASSALACQUA, "*Microtegni* seu *DS*. Traduzione e commento", *Corpus Scriptorum Medicorum Infimae Latinitatis et Prioris Medii Aevi*, A. Pazzini ed., Rome, 1959, 82 p. More recently P. PAHTA, above, note 2 and "Medieval Andrology and the Pseudo-Galenic *De Spermate*", *Medicina nei secoli arte scienza*, 13.3, 2001, p. 509-21; GRUDZEN, above, note 8; O. MERISALO and P. PAHTA, "Tracing the Trail of Transmission: The Pseudo-Galenic *De Spermate* in Latin", in *Science Translated. Latin and Vernacular Translations of Scientific Treatises in Medieval Europe*, M. Goyens, P. De Leemans, and A. Smets eds., *Mediaevalia Lovaniensia*, 40, Leuven, 2008, 478 p., p. 91-104; O. MERISALO, "Transition and Continuity in Medical Manuscripts (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries)", in *Continuities and Disruptions Between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, C. Burnett, J. Meirinhos, and J. Hamesse eds., Leuven, 2008, 191 p., p. 25-35; and Nutton, above, note 2.

18. The text is still unpublished, aside from two selections: one is on the properties of *pneuma* in the *DS* according to MSS British Library, Add. 18210 fol. 124^{r} , Cotton Galba E.IV, fol. 235^{r}, London, Wellcome Institute 538, fol. 10^{r}, and *Galeni Opera*, Basel, 1549, VIII, cols. 140-141 in BURNETT, above, note 2, 1994, p. 118-120; the other is a selection of passages from the *DS* manuscript at the New York Academy of Medicine, translated by GRUDZEN, above, note 8, p. 243-245. Cf. *Galien. Operum Hippocratis Coi, et Galeni Pergameni, medicorum omnium principum, III*, Paris, 1638, cols. 233-234. Pursuing her lasting interest in the *DS*, Outi Merisalo and a team of Finnish scholars are currently preparing a critical edition of the text.

In this labyrinth of unknowns, we will not be in a position to find out any answers on the above questions before some light is shed on the content of the work itself. In the current lack of knowledge about the tract, our only source, and best ally, for understanding it is the text itself. We will have to do the best we can with what the text has to offer: composition, themes, concepts, and especially doxographical references[19].

Starting from the more general to the more specific item on the list above, let us briefly look at the composition of the *DS* first. The treatise, like a three-headed mythical hydra, brings together medicine, philosophy, and astrology into an eclectic essay on the origin of life, to top it all, with a Christian spin. The treatise is truly *sui generis* in the extant medical and philosophical literature of late antiquity. The composition as a whole does not make sense and presents a major obstacle for understanding the context of the work. The treatise can be thematically divided roughly in three parts[20]. The first one (cols. 135-140) discusses the nature of the human seed, the formation of the fetus, and the relation between conception and the four humors. It is followed by a summary of the philosophical debate of whether soul is corporeal in defense of the Platonic view of soul's immortality (cols. 140-143). The philosophical theme is reintroduced at the end of the treatise (cols. 152-155) with a discussion of the relation between the four humors and the four primary elements. The last part (cols. 143-152) describes the sex and the character of the embryo depending on the time of conception in relation to the hours of the humors, the stars, the twelve zodiac signs, the seven planets, and the climate. The lack of balance in

---

19. The majority of the manuscript copies of the *DS* date to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For a complete MSS catalogue, see PAHTA (above note 2, p. 94 and Appendix 1) and MERISALO and PAHTA ("Tracing the Trail of Transmission: The Pseudo-Galenic *DS* in Latin", above, note 17, 2008, p. 91). MERISALO also lists 44 manuscripts as "currently known" ("Transition and Continuity in Medical Manuscripts [Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries], above, note 17, 2008, p. 25). I have consulted Wellcome MS 538 (*Miscellanea medica* VIII; late 15th century), Wellcome Historical Medical Library, London; Cotton Galba E.iv (12-13th century), British Library, London; Additional MS 18210 (13-14th century), British Library, London; Balliol MS 231 (13-14th century), Balliol College, Oxford; *Galeni Pergameni opera quae ad nos extant omnia*, vol. 8, cols. 135-156, Basel, 1542; *Operum Hippocratis Coi, et Galeni Pergameni, medicorum omnium principum*, vol. 3, cols. 228-239, Paris, 1638. The last two are available online through *Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de medicine et d'odontologie* (BIUM). I am grateful to Stefania Fortuna for bringing the Paris edition to my attention. But to help the reader who is already familiar with the scholarship on the treatise, throughout this article, I decided to use the Basel 1542 version of the text to which most scholars refer. See Burnett and Nutton, above, note 2.

20. Since the chapter division in the Basel and Paris editions, as also in the other manuscripts, is different, it is best to refer to the three sections *in toto* until the structure of the text is established in a critical edition. Henceforth, the text of the *DS* is cited by the column numeration of the Basel edition (1542), with notations of different readings in the Paris edition (1638).

the composition is striking. The medical and astrological sections are compatible in length and flank the brief philosophical discussion on the immortality of soul. The treatment of the four primary elements in the conclusion of the work, although it mentions Plato and Aristotle profusely, does not have distinct philosophical tone to it but it is subsumed by the Hippocratic view of the four humors.

This thematic imbalance has forced scholars to consider the medical and the astrological parts unrelated, and the philosophical section irrelevant to either one, especially since it is not directed by a medical topic like the discussion of the four primary elements. Logically the interpolation of the latter has been speculated[21]. Currently we are not in a position to prove this hypothesis and perhaps it is preferable for now to keep an open mind about the fluid incorporation of disparate sources in compiling summaries in late antiquity. Since the section contains almost all of the references in the treatise, it can be at least used to unpack the philosophical background of the work, if not its entire context. We should not judge the text by its seemingly disjointed composition. The doxographical material in the philosophical section should not be considered, based solely on the lack of such material in the rest of the treatise, as a structural anomaly and evidence for tempering with whatever the original(s) may be. But instead, the specific generic characteristics of each section should be borne in mind. While the philosophical literature, especially in late antiquity, typically teems with references to names, sources, and ideas, the medical and astrological texts do not. In medical works, the mentions of Hippocrates and the Hippocratic corpus traditionally are the predominant references regardless of the period the work is written in, while references in astrological texts, although abundant, serve more of a rhetorical purpose than doxographical[22]. Based on these generic differences, we should not deem the doxographical section of the *DS* as not genuine and thus not useful for understanding the text. On the contrary, it should be regarded as crucial because it is our only source for reconstructing the conceptual background of the philosophical section of the work in particular and perhaps for providing some clues about the treatise as a whole. Since there are so many unknowns about the content of the work, we

---

21. BURNETT, above, note 2, 1994, p. 107; PAHTA, above, note 2, 1998, p. 96 and 101.

22. Hippocrates is referred by name twice in the medical section (col. 137), twice in the astrological section (col. 143 and 146), and five times in the discussion of the four humors/primary elements (cols. 153-154). The Hippocratic *Airs, Water, and Places*, according to Burnett (above, note 2, 2002, p. 68), is quoted under the title of *Physics* (col. 153). The opening line of *DS* (col. 135) cites, without attribution, the beginning of the Hippocratic *On the Seed and the Nature of Child*. See below, note 52. For the nature of astrological texts and their relation to medicine, see T. BARTON, *Ancient Astrology*, in *Sciences of Antiquity*, R. French ed., London, 1994, 245 p., p. 57-62 and 185-191.

should start solving its puzzle with the features that are best known to us—the names, works, concepts, and themes revealed in the philosophical section.

The doxographical method also affords the first parallel between *Enn*. IV.7 and the philosophical section of the *DS*. Both works present their position in contrast to their opponent views. *Enn*. IV.7 refutes the Stoic and Aristotelian concepts of soul on strong Platonic background, while the *DS* emphatically asserts the Platonic view of soul's immortality in opposition to any corporeal interpretation. *Enn*. IV.7, on the one hand, addresses a wide range of opinions—from the Epicurean theory of the atomic composition of soul (*Enn*. IV.7.3) to the Aristotelian idea of soul as entelechy (*Enn*. IV.7.8[5]). Each opinion is presented in significant detail, but without personal attribution. *DS*, on the other hand, focuses on three specific questions: how is human nature more agile than any other; how is immortal substance joined to visible and mortal substance; and what is *pneuma* (*spiritus*)[23]. The answers are given rather schematically and the opposing views are divided simply in two camps: the corporeal and the incorporeal. Unlike *Enn*. IV.7, each camp is personally identified.

Thus Ammonius and Democritus are listed on the corporeal side (*Dicunt Ammonius, Democrtitus, et alii complures, quod ille spiritus est corporeus*, *DS*, col. 142), while Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Theodorus, Andronicus, and Porphyry on the incorporeal (*Socrates, Plato, Aristoteles, et Theodorus platonicus, et Andronicus peripateticus, et Porphyrius et alii complures unanimiter affirmant quod nec [sc. anima] corporea est*, *DS*, col. 142). A few lines further down, the text mentions one Empernomos (Basel and Paris) or Emnoinos (Cotton Galba E.iv) whom we will discuss last in our prosopographical analysis[24]. This list of names is marred with serious problems of identification, affiliation, and chronology the solution of which, although crucial for understanding the work, remains outside our current scope. For now it should suffice to make some preliminary observations in order to sketch a possible chronological framework in relation to Plotinus' life and works.

The fact that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Theodorus, Andronicus, and Porphyry are all mentioned on the incorporeal side of the debate shows an explicit reconciliatory effort to bring Plato and Aristotle in agreement. Further if we take into account how often the text invokes Porphyry's authority in the *Isagoge*, which is an essential part of his work on Aristotle's categories, we can understand how Plato and Aristotle can be placed on the same side of the debate[25]. Porphyry's major goal of his extensive work on Aristotle's *Categories* is to show the agreement between Plato and Aristotle on the issue that has been

23. Respectively cols. 140, 141, and 142.

24. Below, p. 6-17.

25. Porphyry is mentioned 7 times and the *Isagoge* twice.

a divisive factor for most philosophers since Andronicus' publication of the Aristotelian corpus in the first century B.C.E.[26], and especially for his teacher, Plotinus[27]. This notion is further enhanced by the interwoven discussion of Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle in the section on the four humors/primary elements (cols. 153-155)[28]. Although the kernels of this trend are already detectable in Aristocle's Peripatetic school in the second half of the second century, this effort becomes emblematic of the Neoplatonists after Porphyry, especially Dexippus and Ammonius[29]. This association could plausibly place the historical context of the *DS* in the Neoplatonic milieu of the fourth and fifth centuries[30].

The rest of the names on the list could be identified with different degrees of certainty. It is unclear which Ammonius, not to be confused with the aforementioned Ammonius, and Democritus are cited on the corporeal side. If their names are the only ones mentioned on the list, apparently both of them held signature views on the corporeal nature of *pneuma* and soul. Longinus, in his effusive letter in Plotinus' defense, as reported by Porphyry in *VP* 20.49, talks about one Ammonius, a Peripatetic and a great scholar of his time[31]. In addition, we know he is a follower of Alexander of Aphrodisias and his *floruit* is sometime in the third century. The case of Democritus is even more difficult. If we assume that he lived after Ammonius, since he is mentioned after Ammonius

---

26. All dates are in the Common Era, except otherwise noted.

27. The significance of Porphyry's contribution can be measured by his two commentaries on the work (one brief and extant, the other detailed but fragmentary) and the *Isagoge*, a preparatory introduction to the study of philosophy in general and the *Categories* in particular. With Barnes and pace Evangeliou, I consider Porphyry's *Isagoge* as an introduction to the *Categories*. J. BARNES, *Porphyry. Introduction*, Oxford, 2003, 415 p., p. xiv-xv and C. EVANGELIOU, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry*, in *Philosophia Antiqua*, 48, Leiden, 1988, 215 p., p. 4-14.

28. Andronicus is the only other name from the discussion of the immortality mentioned in the section on the four humors/primary elements (*DS*, col. 152). The two discussions remain rather independent of each other.

29. Very little is known of Dexippus aside from his relation with Iamblichus, see J.M. DILLON, *Dexippus, On Aristotle's Categories*, Ithaca, NY, 1990, 155 p., p. 7-15. As Proclus' student, Hermias' son, and Syrianus' son-in-law, Ammonius is of distinguished philosophical pedigree. R. SORABJI, "Introduction" in *Ammonius, On Aristotle's Categories*, S.M. Cohen and G.B. Matthews trans., Itaca, NY, 1991, 170 p. 1-6. A.H. ARMSTRONG, *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1970, 715 p., on Ammonius, p. 316; on Aristocle, p. 116.

30. PAHTA, above, note 2, 1998, p. 95; E.J. WATTS, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*, Berkeley, 2006, 288 p., p. 143-231.

31. *VP* 20.49-51: Περιπατητικῶν Ἀμμώνιος καὶ Πτολεμαῖος φιλολογώτατοι μὲν τῶν καθ᾽ ἑαυτοὺς ἄμφω γενόμενοι μάλιστα ὁ Ἀμμώνιος. *Paulys RE*, vol. I, 2, col. 1862-1863.

on the list[32], and that he is either a contemporary or lives shortly after Ammonius, we can place him sometime in the third century as well. In Porphyry's *VP*, we hear about one Democritus who wrote "nothing except compilations or transcriptions" (*VP* 20.58-61), but this must be the wrong Democritus since he is earlier identified as a Platonist, in the same group with Eucleides and Proclinus (*VP* 20.30-31)[33]. Finally, it could be a reference to Democritus, the legendary founder of atomism, whose views about soul very much align him with the corporeal camp if not even make him one of its earliest forbearers[34]. But this also seems unlikely because the text is not interested in recreating the complete history of the philosophical debate on soul from its inception to the present times, but only in offering a precursory listing of some proponents on each side, with a heavier emphasis on the incorporelists.

Finally, let us revisit the corrupted reading of Empernomos or Ennoios (*DS*, col. 142) we mentioned in the introduction of the list of names[35]. Burnett suggests Eunomius as a possible reading on the basis of Nemesius' reference to Eunomius together with Theodorus (*DNH* 35)[36]. Since the latter is the only name on the list in the *DS* that is also featured in Nemesius' work, he proposes the reading of Eunomius, one of the early Christian theologians, a student of Aetius, who lived in the late fourth century[37]. To this, I would add the curious observation that both works specifically identify Theodorus as Platonist[38]. Since it is established that Theodorus lived in the fourth century, it is logical to

---

32. This inference, however, is not absolutely certain because the incorporealists' list does not follow a strict chronological line. Theodorus of Asine, dated to the third century, is mentioned before Aristotle's first major editor, Andronicus of Rhodes, dated to the first century B.C.E.

33. Both times Democritus is mentioned with Eucleides and Proclinus. ARMSTRONG (above, note 13, p. 57) concedes the philosophers who were contemporaries of Plotinus are "only names to us". *Paulys RE*, vol. V, 1, col. 140.

34. G.S. KIRK, J.E. RAVEN, and M. SCHOFIELD, *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1983, 501 p., p. 428-429. W.K.C. GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, Cambridge, 1965, 555 p., p. 430-436; also on Democritus' medical interests and works, *ibid*., p. 465-471.

35. Above, p. 14.

36. See NEMESIUS, *On the Nature of Man*, R.W. Sharples and P.J. van der Eijk trans., in *Translated texts for Historians*, 49, Liverpool, 2008, 273 p., on Eunomius, p. 69, note 332; on Theodorus, p. 73, note 356. There is no other evidence to connect Eunomius to Theodorus who was oftentimes listed in the chain of succession after Plotinus, Amelius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. The epithet *Platonicus* reflects his clout. *Paulys RE*, V A, 2, cols.1833-1838.

37. BURNETT, above, note 2, 1994, p. 108; ARMSTRONG, above, note 29, p. 434; This is the only Eunomius listed in *Paulys RE*, VI, 1, col. 1131-1132. Cf. *Hist. eccl*. IV 7.13-14, 482.10-14.

38. Respectively πλατωνικός, *DNH* 2.35.5 and *Theodorus Platonicus*, *DS*, col. 142.

suppose the same timeframe for Eunomius. We can even speculate with more certainty that Eunomius must have lived before Nemesius' composition of the treatise ca. 390[39]. More recently Nutton has broadened Burnett's hypothesis by admitting a possible corruption of one Ammonius[40]. This is also viable hypothesis requiring a future investigation.

If we put together the different chronological markers from the list in *DS* and if we assume a single composition for the work, we can broadly define the immediate historical context of the work in the period between the third and the fifth centuries. This is precisely the time in which Plotinus' influence shapes the course of later philosophical thought. There is insufficient evidence for us to deduce anything more concrete about the relation between the *VP* and the *DS* from the fact that seven of the nine philosophers mentioned in *DS*, col. 142 may dubiously appear in Porphyry's account of Plotinus' life in the *VP*, and especially in Longinus' letter[41]. I am not arguing for a direct textual connection between the two works but for a probable chronological point of reference. If we take into account that Porphyry published the *Enneads* in the beginning of the fourth century, it is logical to conclude that he composed *Vita Plotini* as an introduction to the edition shortly before it[42]. Porphyry's *VP* and the Greek philosophical material from which the *DS* draws could be dated approximately to the same period and the philosophers in Longinus' letter (*VP* 20) among whom Plotinus stands high, belong to the same intellectual milieu.

The names of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle do not bear any chronological significance upon the original of the *DS*, their role is to highlight the long tradition and authority of the incorporeal view of soul. From the unknown names of the corporealists, Ammonius and Democritus, the philosophical allegiance of the text starts to emerge. First, perhaps the text itself expresses the incorporealists' position or at least exhibits greater familiarity with its tradition. And second, the text explicitly downplays the corporealists' views by mentioning the names of just two of their proponents who most likely belong to the more recent history of the concept and thus their opinions carry less clout. There is a trace of tendentiousness in the choice of names and the imbalance of

---

39. ARMSTRONG, above, note 29, p. 302.

40. Above p. 16. NUTTON (above, note 2, p. 27, note 55).

41. Only Theodorus and Eunomius, if this is the correct reading of the name, are not mentioned in *VP*.

42. Porphyry published his edition of the *Enneads* "somewhere between 301 and 305", A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus. Porphyry on Plotinus. Ennead I*, vol. 1, rev., Cambridge, 1989, 325 p., p. ix. On Porphyry's edition, see M.-O. GOULET-CAZÉ, "L'Édition Porphyrienne des Ennéades. État de la question", in *Porphyry: La Vie de Plotin*, L. Brisson, M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, R. Goulet, D. O'Brien eds., vol. 1, Paris, 1982, 280-287 and 294-307.

attention, given to each side, which right now only suggests, but soon will reveal, a strong anti-Stoic and more specifically anti-pneumatic stand.

The doxographical account in the *DS* shows the shift of emphasis, in the later literature, in the debate about the nature of soul from exact attribution to specific schools and doctrines, such as Stoic or Aristotelian, as found in *Enn*. IV.7, to general division of opinions into corporeal and incorporeal. Consequently this generalization produces the eclectic and even perfunctory presentation of the ideas in the treatise. In this situation, *Enn*. IV.7, with Plotinus' detailed analysis of the issues at stake, proves to be of invaluable help, although Plotinus is not mentioned on the incorporealists' list in the *DS* nor in the entire treatise.

Plotinus is mentioned in a questionable fragment of the treatise, preserved in Mss. Vat. Lat 2383, which, according to Passalacqua, contains the original ending[43]. In the beginning of the last section of the text, Plotinus is listed together with Archigenes and Heraclitus to hold the view that fire is generated from air and water[44]. The fact that this portion of the text is not preserved in any of the other manuscripts casts substantial doubt on its authenticity[45]. Nevertheless, the remark still reinforces the notion of how much relevant Plotinus' ideas are to the *DS*, at least in the mind of its later audience. Plotinus' absence from the text of the rest of the manuscripts should not be taken deterministically. One of the enduring qualities of his thought is exactly the subtle but salient ways in which it underlies future conceptual developments. His interests reflect the philosophical debates of the third century and thus can be further used to explain the missing conceptual context of the *DS*, especially if the tract, as was just established, refers to philosophers who lived in direct proximity to his time.

Plotinus' refutation of the Stoic corporeal views of soul in *Enn*. IV.7 conceptually answers the three main questions raised in the philosophical section of the *DS* (cols. 140-143). The first one, formulated in col. 142, inquires how human nature is more active than any other animal nature[46]. The answer begins with a reference to the vexing problem medical philosophers (*philosophi medici*)[47] have examined, i.e., why the disposition of animals does not follow the nature of the four humors nor is influenced by the seasons, the zodiac signs, and

---

43. Passalacqua, above, note 17, p. 79.

44. It is true that Plotinus is familiar with Heraclitus' theory of cosmic fire and he refers to it explicitly (*Enn*. II.1.2.11), but it is not true that he shares the opinion that fire is generated by air and water. If nothing else, he is quite eloquent in objecting the presence of air and water in the body of the universe (*Enn*. II.1.6). J. WILBERDING, *Plotinus' Cosmology. A Study of Ennead II.1 (40). Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Oxford, 2006, 269 p., 188-190.

45. As cogently argued by Nutton, above, note 2, p. 28-29.

46. *DS*, col. 141: *De natura humana, cur cunctis sit agilior?*

47. The term is further discussed below, p. 21.

the planets (*DS*, cols. 140-141). The reference offers a peculiar thematic transition from the end of the medical section describing the dependence of the embryo's nature on the predominant humor at the time of conception to the philosophical section examining the nature of soul and its relation to body[48]. It also foreshadows the end of this section which specifically emphasizes Porphyry's disagreement with the proponents of "nature" (*omnes physici*, *DS*, col. 143) and his insistence that soul discriminately migrates from animal into animal, from man into man, and then in heaven[49]. Apparently this thematic bracketing of the philosophical discussion is intended to highlight the uniqueness of human nature, in comparison to animal nature, in that it is more active and capable of pursuing things contemplatively or imaginatively. This is a common motif for philosophers and physicians alike[50].

The opening remark also contains thematic elements from all three sections of the treatise. While the relation between conception, the humors, and the stars can be considered somewhat logical and appropriately included in the same statement, the insertion of the philosophical note about the ability of human mind to think abstractly is somewhat less sequential and, at first sight, perhaps even forced[51]. But the common element between physiology of conception and early embryonic development, and astrology is precisely the question of the relation between soul and body. If seed, as the cause of conception, is secreted from all parts of the body, it makes sense that it will also affect the development

---

48. The cyclical dominance of the four humors in the change of seasons is a well-established principle in Hippocratic medicine: "And just as the year is governed at one time by winter, then by spring, then by summer and then by autumn; so at one time in the body phlegm preponderates, at another time blood, at another time yellow bile and this is followed by the presence of black bile", *De natura hominis* 7.43-47 (Littré, trans. Chadwick and Mann).

49. The question of human soul's reincarnation into animal's soul does not make most ancient philosophers uncomfortable. Pythagoras (DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Vit. phil.* 8.4), Empedocles (DK 117), Plato (*Ti.* 91d-92c), and Plotinus (*Enn.* 3.4.2) all accept it. But Porphyry is more cautious about the issue. Augustine (*Civ. dei* 10.30) attests to Porphyry's rejection of the idea who conspicuously avoids it in *De abst.* I.3.4. See G. CLARK, *Porphyry, On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, Ithaca, NY, 2000, 222 p., p. 9 and 125-126; A. SMITH, "Did Porphyry Reject the Transmigration of Soul into Animals", *RhM*, 127, 1984, p. 277-284.

50. For the Stoic view, ORIGEN, *Princ.* 3.1.2-3 (*SVF* 2.988) and AETIUS 4.21.1-4 (*SVF* 2.836); for the Platonic view, PLATO, *Ti.* 91a-92c; PORPHYRY, *Sent.* 16; GALEN, *De usu part.* I.1-2.

51. The thematic discontinuity is further supported by the actual splitting of the work into two separate treatises in the Balliol manuscript (Balliol College, Oxford, MS 231). Based on this and "text-internal considerations", PAHTA (above, note 2, p. 99-100) adopts the Balliol division in referring to the text. NUTTON (above note 2, p. 29) cogently argues against it. In my opinion, the decision to follow the only manuscript that deviates from the prevalent unitary edition of the treatise seems strained.

of all parts of the body, including soul as far as soul relates, in some non-physical way, to body[52]. From this viewpoint, the ensuing philosophical discussion is suitable, if not necessary. It defines the relation between soul and body with an emphasis on the role of body:

> *"Homo enim theologus in virtute sapientiae cum vi rationis suae ad universalitatem progreditur: et ideo corpus subtile et agile suscipit, ut facile rationem speculatricem sequatur, et imaginetur omnia[53]; sic denique sit perfectum hominis organum in theorica et practica."* (*DS*, col. 141)
>
> "A philosopher, with his faculty of wisdom and the power of his intellect, advances toward universality; he takes a refined and active body so that it easily follows his contemplative reasoning and imagines everything. Thus at the end, the body becomes a perfect instrument (*organum*) in theoretical and practical matters."[54]

The heavy presence of Greek vocabulary in the passage is notable: *theologus*, *organum*, *theoretica*, and *practica*. The preceding sentence also has *harmonia* and *phantasia*. In addressing the question of a possible translator or translation centers that may have produced the text, Burnett cautiously but valiantly points out the fluent use of Greek and Arabic texts in the scriptoria at Salerno and Monte Casino[55]. The Greek vocabulary of the passage and in the rest of the philosophical section[56] could be deemed not only as a vestige of the original

---

52. *De semine, de natura pueri, de morbis* 1.1-3: ἡ δὲ γονὴ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἔρχεται ἀπὸ παντὸς τοῦ ὑγροῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐόντος τὸ ἰσχυρότατον ἀποκριθέν (Littré). Cf. *ibid*. 3.1-3. A. PREUS, "Galen's Criticism of Aristotle's Conception Theory", *JHB*, 10.1, 1977, p. 65-85.

53. ARISTOTLE, *De an*. 431a16-17: διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἡ ψυχή (Ross).

54. I am in debt to Luc Brisson and Peter Lautner for their suggestions on the translation of this passage. All translations from the *DS* are mine unless otherwise noted.

55. BURNETT, above, note 2, 1994, p. 109-110.

56. The most flagrant example of this "Greek dress" is found in the list of Aristotle's parts of the soul at the end of the philosophical section. In the Basel edition, it reads *dicit Aristoteles in physica esse quinque partes animae, phyticon, id est nutricem, aestheticon, id est sensualem, cineticon kata topon, id est vim ad omnia loca progrediendi, noeticon, id est rationem* (*DS*, col. 143). In the Paris edition, published almost a century later, the Greek terminology is properly translated as *quinque animae facultates, nutritivam, sensitivam, appetentem, loco motivam, et intellectivam* (*DS*, col. 234). The reference is apparently to Aristotle's division of soul's parts in the *De anima*. Aristotle himself is not consistent with the number of parts and the order in which he lists them: ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχὴ τῶν εἰρημένων τούτων ἀρχὴ καὶ τούτοις ὥρισται, θρεπτικῷ, αἰσθητικῷ, διανοητικῷ, κινήσει (*De an*. 413b11-13); δυνάμεις δ' εἴπομεν θρεπτικόν, αἰσθητικόν, ὀρεκτικόν, κινητικὸν κατὰ τόπον, διανοητικόν (*De an*. 414a31-32). The reference to Aristotle's *Physics* in place of his *De anima* as the source of the division is correct if one has in mind that the *De anima* succeeds the *Physics* in the organization of the Aristotelian corpus. I owe this insight to Lucas Siorvanes.

language from which the translation is made but also as a display of erudition on the side of multilingual translators such as Constantine the African, as speculated by Burnett[57]. The "Greek dress" of the section, even if it is affected on the translator's part, suggests that the translator or the original text(s) from which the translation is made are directly influenced by Greek philosophical sources[58].

This philosophical context is further evinced by the use of the puzzling and yet informative phrases of *philosophi medici* (*DS*, col. 140) and *homo theologus* (*DS*, col. 141). Although of obscure origin, both phrases are freshly coined and capture the spirit of conflating philosophy and medicine in Plotinus' times. One of the guiding principles of Galen's work is to show the infused relation between the two disciplines, as he defends it most eloquently in *The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*. In *My Own Books*, he underlines his studious training in solving both medical and philosophical problems[59]. In many ways, he is the model after which the type of the medical philosophers, i.e. *philosophi medici*, is fashioned by the later generations of philosophers and physicians, especially figures such as Stephanus at Alexandria and Nemesius of Emesa. Regarding the use of *homo theologus*, which I translate specifically as "a philosopher", we enter the dynamic territory of the early Christian writers who arduously work at adapting and transforming the ancient philosophical content to suit their new set of religious beliefs[60]. *Homo theologus* is a Christian synthesis of the Platonic understanding of the philosopher's work as a search for the divine and a likening to the divine (*Theaet*. 176a-b). Of course, for the Neoplatonic mind, not just any philosopher is worthy of such calling, but only "the godlike", in Plotinus' words, followers of Plato[61].

The philosophical content of the passage exhibits an original interplay between medicine and philosophy. While the medical focus of the first part of the treatise designates the body to be the center of the second part, it collides with the Platonic conventions in dealing with the body. In Empedocles, Plato,

---

57. BURNETT, above, note 2, 1994, p. 110.

58. Emblematic of the tone of explicit translation in the entire work is the statement, found in the discussion of Plato's view of the composition of the body from the four elements that this composition is *praxis enim graece, operatio latine* (*DS*, col. 153).

59. GALEN, *De lib. prop*. 19.19.15: ἔγραψα πολλὰ γυμνάζων ἐμαυτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς προβλήμασιν ἰατρικοῖς τε καὶ φιλοσόφοις. Also both expressions ἰατροὶ καὶ φιλόσοφοι and φιλόσοφοί τε καὶ ἰατροί are rather common in Galen. Cf. *De temp*. 1.556.6, *De nat. fac*. 2.8.2, 2.10.17, 2.131.4; *De usu part*. 3.17.7, 3.21.9.

60. GREGORY NAZIANSEN, *Funebris oratio in patrem* 35.1005.22 ὁ μέγας ἐκεῖνος ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀληθῶς Θεολόγος, See ARMSTRONG, above, note 29, p. 438-447.

61. *Enn*. V.9.1.16: γένος θείων ἀνθρώπων.

and Aristotle the relation between soul and body is predominantly examined in terms of soul, not of body[62]. The Stoics, on the contrary, make the compound of soul and body one of their primary philosophical interests[63]. Since body is the subject of the first, medical, part of the treatise, one would expect the philosophical section to side with the corporealists' camp, and particularly with the Stoics. But, in fact, it criticizes their views in favor of the Platonic ideas, represented by the names in the incorporealists' camp. As result, the text interweaves its medical and philosophical content in a unique way. While the emphasis on the role of body in relation to soul accentuates the medical background of the work, it discusses the philosophical concept of body in Platonic terms and thus it acquires a specific ideological persuasion.

In this Platonic light, it only makes sense that the *DS* views the role of body in relation to soul as instrumental: "the body is a perfect instrument of man in theoretical and practical matters" (*perfectum hominis organum in theorica et practica*, *DS*, col. 141). This view does not degrade body as harmful encumberment to the philosopher's search for knowledge, but promotes it as a useful, if not necessary, part of it[64]. We already remarked on the preference of the Greek *organum* to the Latin *instrumentum* in the text[65]. This preference is mediated by important philosophical and medical connotations. On the one hand, *organum*, with its Greek equivalent ὄργανον, is a keyword, especially after Aristotle, in the instrumental view of body[66]. On the other hand, considering that, above all, the *DS* begins as a medical text, *organum*, then, represents a key medical concept. While the use of *organum* perfectly suits the medical discussion on the conception of life, it acquires a new meaning in the philosophical part of the treatise. This transition suggests the composer(s) of the original text(s) is aware of the dual meaning of the term and perhaps implicitly notes that the philosophical meaning supersedes the medical[67]. The double

---

62. Especially in Plato's *Phaedo* and Aristotle's *De anima*.

63. A.A. LONG and D.N. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, vol. 1, Cambridge, 1987, 512 p., p. 313-323. Especially, ZENO fr. I.137, 138; CHRYSIPPUS fr. II.879.

64. The motif is a well-established *topos* in ancient philosophy after Parmenides.

65. Above, p. 20-21.

66. See below, note 70.

67. Galen himself frequently uses both meanings of the term. He also defines ὄργανον as "a part of the animal that is the cause of a complete action, as the eye is of vision, the tongue of speech, and the legs of walking; so too arteries, veins, and nerves, are both ὄργανα and parts of animals" (*Meth. meden.*, I, 6, trans. May). Cf. *De usu part*. IV, 12. More significantly, he begins his comprehensive work on the usefulness of the parts of the body by explicitly relating their use to soul and their differences to the differences of various souls, *De usu part*. I, 1 – I, 2. The opening section of the philosophical part of the *DS* contains interesting conceptual similarities and differences which merit further pursuit.

connotation of the word illustrates the contextual interplay between medicine and philosophy in the *DS*.

Despite the strong Aristotelian resonance of the term, for Plotinus the instrumental view of body ultimately goes back to Plato and more specifically to the discussion of soul's use of the body (*Alcib*. 129c-130c), soul's wearing the body as a disposable cloak (*Phaed*. 87b4-c5), and soul's use of the body as its vehicle (*Ti*. 69c5-8)[68]. Plato's position is engaged in *Enn*. IV.7: "Man could not be a simple thing, but there is in him a soul, and he has a body as well, whether it is our instrument (ὄργανον) or attached to us in some other way" (σῶμα εἴτ᾽ οὖν ὄργανον ὂν ἡμῖν, εἴτ᾽οὖν ἕτερον τρόπον προσηρτημένον, *Enn*. IV.7.1.4-7). The question of whether body is instrument of soul or attached to body in any other way is strangely phrased in a reverse order from the more specific to the more general topic. This reversal suggests that the second half of the question is only rhetorical. Plotinus' emphasis is on its first half because it also contains his answer: body is instrument of soul[69]. Soul's use of body is the main premise of his understanding of the relation between soul and body.

The Aristotelian overtones of the instrumental view of body do not pose a problem either for *Enn*. IV.7 or for the *DS*[70]. As far as the latter is concerned, Aristotle's presence is not problematic because the text lists him on the incorporealists' side (*DS*, col. 142). It is not problematic for Plotinus either on the grounds of the agreement, in principle, between Plato and Aristotle that soul governs body. The bone Plotinus picks with Aristotle later in *Enn*. IV.7, and elsewhere in the *Enneads*, is the concept of entelechy, i.e., soul is the actuality of body[71]. But in the beginning of his discussion in *Enn*. IV.7, he is not interested in the details of Aristotle' view but in establishing that "soul is related to the body as form to matter or user to instrument" (κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ὡς πρὸς

---

68. The latter perhaps alludes to Empedocles' line: "[she] dressed [him/it with an alien robe of flesh" (σαρκῶν ἀλλογνῶτι περιστέλλουσα χιτῶνι), Inwood's trans.

69. The scholarly attention on Plotinus' concept of soul runs deep from early studies such as A.N.M., RICH, "Body and Soul in the Philosophy of Plotinus", *JHPh*, 1.1, 1963, p. 1-15, H.J. BLUMENTHAL, "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus", in *Le Néoplatonisme*, P.-M. Schuhl and P. Hadot eds., Paris, 1971, p. 496, p. 56-63 to the latest installment of R. CHIARADONNA, ed., *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, Naples, 2005, p. 412.

70. *De an*. 416b18-20: πάντα γὰρ τὰ φυσικὰ σώματα τῆς ψυχῆς ὄργανα, ὡς ἕνεκα τῆς ψυχῆς ὄντα (Ross). *Eth. Eudam*. 1241b22-24: τό τε γὰρ σῶμά ἐστιν ὄργανον σύμφυτον, καὶ τοῦ δεσπότου ὁ δοῦλος ὥσπερ μόριον καὶ ὄργανον ἀφαιρετόν, τὸ δ᾽ ὄργανον ὥσπερ δοῦλος ἄψυχος. Cf. *Eth. Eudam*. 1161a35-36, *Protrep*. 59.1.

71. *De an*. 412a27-28: ἡ ψυχή ἐστιν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζωὴν ἔχοντος. Considering the discussion in the *DS*, it is a rather peculiar coincidence that Plotinus misquotes φυσικοῦ as ψυχικοῦ as attested in Eusebius' edition of the text. But this replacement does not really make logical sense and I do not think it can yield any fruitful results. ARMSTRONG, above, note 2, p. 374. Aristotle's definition discussed below, p. 9-30.

ὕλην τὸ σῶμα ἢ κατὰ τὸ χρώμενον ὡς πρὸς ὄργανον, *Enn*. IV.7.1.23-24). Tracing Aristotle's influence on Plotinus' understanding, we should note that Plato does not use ὄργανον in articulating his idea in preference to cognates of χράομαι (*Alc*. 130a1) or the straightforward expression of ὄχημα (*Ti*. 69c7)[72]. Plotinus formally articulates the transition from Plato's χράομαι to Aristotle's ὄργανον in the phrase κατὰ τὸ χρώμενον ὡς πρὸς ὄργανον (*Enn*. IV.7.24). If we consider that *Enn*. IV.7 is only the second treatise in the chronological sequence of the *Enneads*, then, the above statement is the earliest instance of Plotinus' use of the term and Plotinus is the first among the Neoplatonists to adapt Aristotle's term to the Platonic understanding of soul. Furthermore it is reasonable to conclude that *Enn*. IV.7 has programmatic significance for the future development of the Neoplatonic concept and ultimately for its later permutations in medico-philosophical texts such as the *DS*.

With the use of ὄργανον, *Enn*. IV.7 also acquires programmatic significance for the *DS*. Both works approach the topic of the relation between soul and body in the same way, but the focus of their answers differs. While Plotinus embarks onto detailed refutation of specific Stoic and Aristotelain views, without paying due credit to personal identification, the *DS* provides proper doxographical summary, with names and particularly with titles, at least on the surface of the text. The first example is the second question of investigation in the *DS* which corresponds to the second half of Plotinus' question in the beginning of *Enn*. IV.7—how body is attached to soul[73]:

> "*Perscrutati sunt alii philosophi porphyrici*[74] *quo modo substantia incorporea possit vel esse vel iungi in substantia mortali. Sed non sicut quatuor elementa coniunguntur in constitutione alicuius substantiae, sed animae spiritualis virtus sensuum corporis qui sunt virtus corporis iungitur verbum (aut verbo Dei* [Paris])[75] *… illa substantia tenet se in sua proprietate … et eius differentia diffinit omnem accidentalem differentiam corpoream … Hoc dicit Porphyrius ad ostensionem coniunctionis animae cum corpore; et per hoc affirmat verbum dei in sapientia hominis esse ad quod ostendendum fecit Isagogas in quibus ostendit*

---

72. Even Iamblichus prefers χρῆσις τοῦ σώματος, *In de an*. 382.

73. The question in *DS*, col. 141 reads *De immortali substantia, qualiter visibili et mortali copuletur*. The question in *Enn*. IV.7.1.5-7 is cited on the previous page.

74. Appropriately but unconventionally called *philosophi porphyrici*. Cf. PROCLUS, *In Plat. Ti*. 3.234: οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον. The locution is not attested in the patristic literature. There is juxtaposition between *philosophi medici* at *DS*, col. 140 and *philosophi porphyrici* in the beginning of the next section at *DS*, col. 141. The former may be a reference to Galen. On this, see above, note 59.

75. I am grateful to Luc Brisson and Peter Lautner for their insight on *verbum* in relation to *logos*. The Basel edition reads *verbum*, while the Paris one has *verbo Dei*. Both readings convey the same idea, the latter is more canonical.

> *differentias animae firmas et immortales* (*del*. Paris) *et differentias corporis esse mortales*." (*DS*, col. 141)[76]
>
> "Other philosophers who follow Porphyry have examined how incorporeal substance can either be present in or be joined to mortal substance. But not like the four elements are joined in the constitution of any substance, but the power of the senses of the body which senses are power of the body, is joined to the pneumatic soul (*anima spiritualis*) as a rational principle (*verbum*) [as the rational principle of god, (*verbo Dei*)] … The incorporeal substance remains in its entity … Its difference defines every accidental corporeal difference… Porphyry says this in order to show the joining of soul with body. And through this he ascertains that the rational principle of god (*verbum dei*) is in man's intellection. To show this, he wrote the *Isagoge* in which he demonstrates the differences of soul to be permanent and immortal and the differences of body mortal".

I will discuss the meaning of the terms *anima spiritualis* and *verbum (Dei)* second[77]. First let us examine the puzzling logic of the propositions in the first two sentences. While the first poses the question of how incorporeal substance can join corporeal one, the second insists that the joining of *anima spiritualis* with the body is not like the joining of the four primary elements in the formation of other substances. The train of thought between the two is not immediately obvious unless we suppose that the second sentence uses *anima spiritualis* as an example for the incorporeal substance, mentioned in the first one. This solution, however, is also not so obvious as the phrase *anima spiritualis* presents, from a philosophical viewpoint, a major conceptual obstacle. If the text treats soul (*anima*) as incorporeal substance, then, we can safely assume it sides with the Platonic tradition in the debate. But *anima*'s qualifier *spiritualis* should give us pause, for it implies *spiritus* (the Greek πνεῦμα and its adjective πνευματικόν) which is certainly not considered incorporeal in any Platonic terms. Instead, some corporealistic and medical notions emerge: the Stoic corporeal concept of soul as *pneuma* as well as the physiological debate on the nature of the so-called 'psychic pneuma' (ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα) from Asclepiades to Galen[78].

More puzzling is the use of the term *anima spiritualis* which does not have a literal Greek counterpart but must be an inverted rendition of πνεῦμα ψυχικόν which, in its turn, draws attention to the corporeal connotation of the concept. Before we look for more clarification outside the treatise, let us see what help

---

76. The passage in the manuscript of the *DS* at the New York Academy of Medicine varies significantly from the readings of the manuscripts I have consulted so far. Because I have not examined it, I am not in a position to form an opinion about it and I have not included it in my analysis here. For details on the New York manuscript, see Grudzen, above, note 8, p. 243.

77. Below, p. 32-26.

78. Unsurprisingly the best source for the history of the concept is Galen, especially *De util. resp*. 1.470-473, 5.502; *PHP* V.281; *De nat. fac*. I.4. All references to Galen are according to Kühn's edition.

the rest of the passage has to offer. Incorporeal substance, the text continues, does not change its property and its difference is not accidental but always retains its character and defines every accidental difference as corporeal. Next, it explains, Porphyry "says this in order to show the joining of soul with body (*hoc dicit Porphyrius ad ostensionem coniunctionis animae cum corpore*) and through this he confirms that *verbum (Dei)* is in man's intellection (*et per hoc affirmat verbum dei in sapientia hominis esse*)[79]. To demonstrate this, he wrote the *Isagoge* (*ad quod ostendendum fecit Isagogas*) in which he shows the differences of soul to be unchangeable and immortal, and the differences of body to be mortal." Maintaining the parallel that is established in the first half of the passage, the text delineates the opposing characteristics of the differences between the two kinds of substance. To connect this parallel with the original idea of *anima spiritualis* as *verbum Dei* of the body, the text calls the authority of Porphyry and his *Isagoge*.

I tried my luck in tracing this lead to the *Isagoge*. The closest to it comes Porphyry's discussion of the kinds of differences in genus and species:

> Τριῶν οὖν εἰδῶν τῆς διαφορᾶς θεωρουμένων καὶ τῶν μὲν οὐσῶν χωριστῶν τῶν δὲ ἀχωρίστων καὶ πάλιν τῶν ἀχωρίστων τῶν μὲν οὐσῶν καθ' αὐτὰς τῶν δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, πάλιν τῶν καθ' αὐτὰς διαφορῶν αἱ μέν εἰσι καθ' ἃς διαιρούμεθα τὰ γένη εἰς τὰ εἴδη, αἱ δὲ καθ' ἃς τὰ διαιρεθέντα εἰδοποιεῖται. οἷον τῶν καθ' αὐτὰς διαφορῶν πασῶν τῶν τοιούτων τοῦ ζῴου οὐσῶν ἐμψύχου καὶ αἰσθητικοῦ, λογικοῦ καὶ ἀλόγου, θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου, ἡ μὲν τοῦ ἐμψύχου καὶ αἰσθητικοῦ διαφορὰ συστατική ἐστι τῆς τοῦ ζῴου οὐσίας, ἔστι γὰρ τὸ ζῷον οὐσία ἔμψυχος αἰσθητική, ἡ δὲ τοῦ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου διαφορὰ καὶ ἡ τοῦ λογικοῦ τε καὶ ἀλόγου διαιρετικαί εἰσι τοῦ ζῴου διαφοραί· δι' αὐτῶν γὰρ τὰ γένη εἰς τὰ εἴδη διαιρούμεθα. ἀλλ' αὗταί γε αἱ διαιρετικαὶ διαφοραὶ τῶν γενῶν συμπληρωτικαὶ γίνονται καὶ συστατικαὶ τῶν εἰδῶν· τέμνεται γὰρ τὸ ζῷον τῇ τε τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἀλόγου διαφορᾷ καὶ πάλιν τῇ τε τοῦ θνητοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀθανάτου διαφορᾷ. ἀλλ' αἱ μὲν τοῦ θνητοῦ καὶ τοῦ λογικοῦ διαφοραὶ συστατικαὶ γίνονται τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, αἱ δὲ τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀθανάτου τοῦ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ τοῦ ἀλόγου καὶ τοῦ θνητοῦ τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων. (Porphyry, *Isagoge* 10 [Busse])

> "Three species of differences, some observable and some being separable, and some being inseparable, and again of the inseparable some being in their own right and some accidental, again of differences in their own right some are those in virtue of which we divide genera into species and some those in virtue of which the items divided are specified. For example, given that all the following are differences in their own right of animal–animate and percipient, rational and non-rational, mortal and immortal–the difference of animate and percipient is constitutive of the substance of animal (for an animate percipient substance),

79. On the problematic absence of the term for "joining" or "mixing" of soul with body in Porphyry and Plotinus, see J.M. RIST, "Pseudo-Ammonius and the Soul/Body Problem in Some Platonic Texts of Late Antiquity", *AJPh*, 109.3, 1988, p. 402-415.

> whereas the differences of mortal and immortal and of rational and non-rational are divisive differences of animal (for it is through them that we divide the genera into species). But these very divisive differences of genera are found to be completive and constitutive of species. For animal is split by the difference of rational and non-rational, and again by the difference of mortal and immortal; and the differences of rational and mortal are found to be constitutive of man, those of rational and of immortal of god, and those of non-rational and of mortal of the non-rational animals". (trans. Barnes)[80]

At the end of the section, Porphyry concludes that the highest kind of difference is the one between the animate and the inanimate, in other words, the difference between soul and body. If this is the only passage in the *Isagoge* which exhibits some similarity with the passage in the *DS*, col. 141, the conceptual communication between the two texts is incomplete. The discussion of the difference between man and animal in respect to rationality in the *Isagoge* could be considered as a distant complement to the opening discussion of the difference of the (in)dependence on the humors, planets, and stars between animal and man in the *DS*[81]. I have dealt with this issue and the bigger question of Porphyry's role in the *DS* on another occasion[82]. Here is important to observe that the *Isagoge* does not seem to fit quite well the conceptual framework of the philosophical section of the *DS*, and, above all, there is one major problem. The *Isagoge* discusses the differences between genus and species, not between substances as the *DS*[83]. Now where do we go from here?

Even though the *DS* credits Porphyry's *Isagoge* with explaining the difference between mortal and immortal substance while, in fact, as mentioned above, the text does not really do so, the reference suggests two possible options for interpretation. First, since this is the earliest of six direct references to Porphyry in the text, aside from the general expression of "the philosophers around Porphyry" (*philosophi porphyrici* in the beginning of the answer to the second question in *DS*, col. 141), the explicit insistence in the text on Porphyry should direct our attention to the reception of Porphyry's *Isagoge* to the fourth and fifth centuries. And second, because the reference to the *Isagoge* does not completely support the claims in the *DS* passage, while Plotinus' treatment of soul as substance in *Enn*. IV.7 is the only Neoplatonic example before Porphyry and, in

---

80. A. BUSSE, "Porphyrii isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium", in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 4.1, Berlin, 1887; BARNES, above note 27, p. 15-16.

81. Porphyry's definition of human in the *Isagoge* is mortal rational animal (*Isagoge* 2.4). See Barnes, *ibid*., p. 108-112.

82. See above, note 6.

83. The confusion in the division between genus and substance was already noted in antiquity. SIMPLICIUS (*In cat*., p. 83, 20-29) reports Iamblichus' criticism of Alexander for promoting the division of substance into corporeal and incorporeal. EVANGELIOU, above, note 27, p. 77, note 34.

fact, in the foundation of Porphyry's own views on soul, we should, once again, direct our attention to Plotinus in search of conceptual answers for the text[84].

At any rate, if the *DS*, reliable with its reference or not, uses Porphyry as the principal source of the view of soul's immortality and if Porphyry himself draws from Plotinus to formulate his position, it follows that Plotinus' thought on the matter still deserves to be reckoned with[85]. In addition, although the phrase *philosophi porphyrici* most likely refers to those who either study or accept Porphyry's views, it could be argued that it still indirectly includes Plotinus himself who, as a teacher to Porphyry, may seem, to a more distant audience, to be a part of Porphyry's circle, just as the text presents Aristotle, together with Plato, to be on the incorporealists' side[86].

Since the reference to the *Isagoge* leaves more to be desired, a close examination of Porphyry's other works yields more fruitful results. In the *Sentences*, he frequently expounds on the relation between soul and body. In them, he delineates the polarity between corporeal and incorporeal (*Sent*. 1-4)[87] and introduces soul as "a sort of intermediary" between indivisible and divisible essence (*Sent*. 5)[88]. He further asserts that "soul binds itself to body" by paying attention to the affections which derive from the body (*Sent*. 7 and 8). He also specifies the incorporeal is contained in the body not like liquid or air (πνεῦμα) but by its own faculties which direct themselves towards what is external to it (*Sent*. 28). He postulates that "soul is neither body or in body, but the cause of body" (ἡ ψυχὴ οὐ σῶμα οὔτε ἐν σώματι, ἀλλ' αἰτία σώματος, *Sent*. 31). In *Sent*. 17, he defines soul as substance without size and immortal (ἡ ψυχὴ οὐσία ἀμεγέθης, ἄυλος, ἄφθαρτος, ἐν ζωῇ παρ' ἑαυτῆς ἐχούσῃ τὸ ζῆν κεκτημένη τὸ εἶναι). And most important for our examination, in *Sent*. 16, he explains that "soul contains the rational principles of all and acts according to them" (ἡ ψυχὴ ἔχει μὲν πάντων τοὺς λόγους, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ κατ' αὐτούς). Among Porphyry's extant works, the *Sententiae* comes closest to the opinions expressed in the *DS*. The issue of soul's presence in body is of primary interest to Porphyry, as is for Plotinus, and it is one of the predominant themes in the work. If we follow the line of reasoning, suggested by Smith, that the *Sentences*, in addition to providing "at first sight a summary of Plotinian doctrines", "may

---

84. As discussed below, p. 29-31.

85. For Plotinus' influence on Porphyry's concept of soul, see A. SMITH, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition. A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism*, The Hague, 1974, 173 p., p. 1-19.

86. Above, p. 14-15.

87. Also *Sent*. 33.

88. Henceforth the text and translation of *Sententiae* are according to L. BRISSON ed., *Porphyre, Sentences*, vols. 2, Paris, 2005, 870 p. and J.M. DILLON's translation in this volume, with my adaptations.

have served as introduction to philosophy", we could be able to explain our inability to indentify the sources of the puzzling references to the *Isagoge* in the *DS*[89]. Perhaps the *DS* refers to the *Sententiae* as the *Isagoge* or reflects the fact that the former were a part of the *Isagoge* at some later point[90]. I will further pursue this matter in another venue. For the sake of our current goal to uncover the Plotinian motifs in the section on soul's immortality in the *DS*, it should suffice to reinforce the idea that the *Sentences* themselves retrospectively serve as introduction to the *Enneads*.

If we relate these findings to the passage in *DS*, it turns out that they answer the questions the parallel with the *Isagoge* leaves open. The soul/body relation is presented as an example of the relation between incorporeal and corporeal and soul as substance is explicitly distinguished from body and *pneuma*. The *Sententiae* also support the reading of *verbum dei* as "rational principle" in the *DS*. This meaning is crucial for explaining the relation between soul and body both in *Enn*. IV.7 and the *DS*, col. 140-143. *Anima spiritualis* is *verbum dei* in the sense that soul is the ordering principle of body but it does not belong to body itself. This interpretation is further supported by Plotinus' explanation at the end of IV.7 that Soul, "desiring to impart order and beauty according to the pattern which it sees in Intellect, is as if pregnant by the intelligibles and labouring to give birth, and so is eager to make, and constructs the world" (*Enn*. IV.7.13.5-8)[91]. The metaphor moves us with its hypercosmic vividness, but it also, like Plato's myths, conveys an ontological truth. Soul, with its intelligible origin, is the ordering principle of physical reality. As such, it is the λόγος and *verbum* of corporeality. As λόγος, soul is an underlying rational principle which, as *verbum*, expresses the intelligible paradigm of existence in the material world. For Plotinus, the concept of soul, in its ontological core, concerns the origin of body and thus the conception of life. In this light, his understanding of soul finds its natural continuation in the topic of the *DS*. The Christian overtones of the expression *verbum dei* remain on the surface and cannot overwhelm or conceal the Plotinian content of the concept.

---

89. A. SMITH, *Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, London, 2004, 151 p., p. 91-92; more recently opposed by R. GOULET who has suggested, in "Le titre de l'ouvrage", in *Porphyre, Sentences*, L. Brisson ed., vol. 1, Paris, 2005, 379 p., p.14, that the *Sententiae* play the role of spiritual exercise, in comparison to the doctrinal style of the introductory literature such as the *Isagoge*. The latter work would suit better the style of the *DS*.

90. This hypothesis would also better explain the plural number of *Isagogae* which the *DS* persistently uses as opposed to the singular number of *Isagoge* which is documented in all ancient commentaries and later editions and translations of the work. See BARNES, above, note 27, p. 367-368.

91. *Enn*. IV.7.13.5-8: ὸ δ' ἀν ὄρεξιν προσλάβῃ ἐφεξῆς ἐκείνῳ τῷ νῷ ὄν, τῇ προσθήκῃ τῆς ὀρέξεως οἷον πρόεισιν ἤδη ἐπιπλέον καὶ κοσμεῖν ὀρεγόμενον καθὰ ἐν νῷ εἶδεν, ὥσπερ κυοῦν ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὠδῖνον γεννῆσαι, ποιεῖν σπεύδει καὶ δημιουργεῖ.

Enn. IV.7 further proves instructive in untangling the text of the *DS*. After discussing the Stoic concept of soul's corporeality, next Plotinus rejects Aristotle's idea of soul as form to body[92] and, in its place, defines soul as "a substance which does not derive its existence from its foundation in body, but exists before belonging to any particular body" (ἔστιν οὐσία οὐ παρὰ τὸ ἐν σώματι ἱδρῦσθαι τὸ εἶναι λαμβάνουσα, ἀλλ᾽ οὖσα πρὶν καὶ τοῦδε γενέσθαι *Enn*. IV.7.8[5].40-42)[93]. His main argument is that soul is neither corporeal nor a form to the body but a substance that is present in the body in such a way that it uses the body as a tool[94]. As Rist points, Plotinus does not answer the question of how exactly soul attaches to body aside from ascertaining soul's presence in it[95]. But this deficiency does not pose a problem for Plotinus' Christian audience who is interested in establishing, or confirming, soul's supremacy over the body. The details he omits from the discussion in *Enn*. IV.7 would not necessarily surface in an eclectic text such as the *DS*. Plotinus' discussion of soul as immortal substance guides Porphyry's categorization of mortal and immortal kind of difference in the *Isagoge*. If soul is immortal substance for Plotinus, and in turn for Porphyry, as shown in the *Sententiae*, then, Plotinus' treatment of the question in *Enn*. IV.7 lies in the foundation of the division between mortal and immortal substances in the *Sententiae* and ultimately in the text(s) from which the *DS* draws.

Enn. IV.7 also helps elucidate the distinction between the joining of the four primary elements in the constitution of any substance and the joining of soul with the body in *DS*, col. 141:

> "Πῦρ γὰρ καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γῆ ἄψυχα παρ᾽ αὐτῶν· … Εἰ δὲ μηδενὸς αὐτῶν ζωὴν ἔχοντος ἡ σύνοδος πεποίηκε ζωήν, ἄτοπον· … μᾶλλον δὲ ἀδύνατον συμφόρησιν σωμάτων ζωὴν ἐργάζεσθαι … Οὐ γὰρ ὅ τι σύνθετον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἁπλοῦν ἂν εἴη σῶμα ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἄνευ ψυχῆς οὔσης ἐν τῷ παντί, εἴπερ λόγος προσελθὼν τῇ ὕλῃ σῶμα ποιεῖ, οὐδαμόθεν δ᾽ ἂν προσέλθοι λόγος ἢ παρὰ ψυχῆς". (*Enn*. IV.7.2.11-25)
>
> "For fire and air and water and earth are lifeless of themselves … But if, when no single one of them had life, their coming together produced life, it would be absurd … or rather impossible for a drawing together of bodies to produce life … This is not only because body is composite, but not even a simple body could be in existence without soul being in the universe, if it is the coming of a formative

---

92. For Aristotle's view of entelechy, above, note 71.

93. By Nemesius' time, the instrumental view of the body is firmly established: "the soul is in any case agreed by all men to be superior to the body; for the body is moved as a tool by soul" (κυριωτέρα τοῦ σώματος ἡ ψυχὴ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εἶναι καθωμολόγηται· ἀπὸ ταύτης γὰρ ὡς ὄργανον κινεῖται τὸ σῶμα, *DNH* 1.2.9-11).

94. Above, note, 79, p. 402-403. Plotinus makes the same point in one of his latest treatises, *Enn*. I.1.1 [53].

95. Rist, above, note 79, p. 403. Cf. *Enn*. IV.7.4.

> principle to matter which makes body, but a formative principle could not come from anywhere except from soul"[96].

The passage comes early in the treatise and fittingly illustrates the philosophical background of the reference in the *DS*. It contains Plotinus' initial rebuttal of two primary Stoic views that the creation of life is result from the "joining" or "mixing" of the four primary elements and that soul's nature is *pneuma*. He counterargues them by explaining that "the coming together" or "mixing" of the elements lacks an ordering or formative principle (λόγος) which, "when arriving at matter, makes body" (λόγος προσελθὼν τῇ ὕλῃ σῶμα ποιεῖ, *Enn*. IV.7.2.24)[97]. The premise that "body acquires immaterial and body-less rational principles" (λόγους ἀύλους καὶ ἀσωμάτους εἶναι, *Enn*. IV.7.8[1].31) is in the center of his principal objection to any corporeal understanding of soul and thus it is persistently repeated throughout the treatise.

As explained earlier, Plotinus' view of soul as the formative principle of body contextualizes the meaning of *verbum Dei* in *DS*, col. 141, cited earlier[98]. This translation also clarifies the meaning of *theologus* as an attribute of *homo* (*DS*, col. 141). *Theologus* is a literal rendition of the Greek expression θεοῦ λόγος the explication of which is one of the leading goals of Platonism[99]. Consequently it acquires the meaning of "philosopher"[100]. Following Plato's footsteps[101].

---

96. Further on Plotinus' distinction between the primary elements and soul, see *Enn*. VI.7.11.

97. On Stoic cosmogony, CHRYSIPPUS, *SVF* 2.473; See LONG and SEDLEY, above, note 63, vol. 1, p. 292-294. On Stoic views of soul, LONG and SEDLEY, *ibid*., p. 313-323. J. LACROSSE, "Trois remarques sur la reception de la κρᾶσις stoïcienne chez Plotin", *RPhA*, 25.2 (2007) p. 53-66.

98. Above, p. 14-25. The expression θείου λόγος has few sparing occurrences in the philosophical literature (PLATO, *Phaed*. 85d3 and *Ti*. 38c3; PLUTARCH, *De Isid. et Osir*. (381b4, 568d5); CHRYSIPPUS, *SVF* 760.4; PLOTINUS, *Enn*. I.6.2.15). Its later modifications ὁ λόγος θεῖος or ὁ θεῖος λόγος are first attested in Philo (*Quod deus sit immutabilis* 134.1, 180.4; *De somn*. I.62.2, I.119.3, I.147.5) and later becomes a signature phrase in the patristic literature, for example, in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Naziensis, Eusebius. But interestingly it is not attested in Nemesius' *De natura hominis*, the only text which shows some similarities with the *DS*. BURNETT, above, note 2, 2002.

99. But not exclusive to it. On the Platonic side, as R. LAMBERTON (*Homer the Theologian. Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition*, Berkeley, 1986, 363 p., p. 16, note 45) points out, Philo's conception of Moses as θεολόγος predates the Neoplatonists' interpretation of Homer as such. Porphyry applies θεολόγος to Homer, Empedocles, Plato, and the composers of the *Chaldean Oracles*. On the non-Platonic side, Origen reports that the Stoics consider ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ to be nothing else but corporeal *pneuma* (οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ πνεῦμα σωματικόν, *Contra Celsum* VI.7, vol. II p. 141, 6). For further discussion of the Stoic view, see below, p. 27.

100. Porphyry calls the philosopher "a priest of the god who rules" (*De abst*. 2.49). On the kinship between *theologia* and *philosophia*, see G. SHAW, *Theurgy and the Soul. The*

Plotinus concludes the long evolution of the term λόγος from denoting the person who is engaged in the study of *divine logos*, to express the metaphysical concept of a underlying rational principle. In this Platonic background, the *DS* intricately renders the double meaning of *logos* in its literal transliteration as *homo theologus* and in the conceptual translation of its metaphysical meaning in *verbum dei*. The *homo theologus* or "the philosopher", as I translate it[102], is someone who knows the *verbum dei*, i.e., understands that the body and the senses are governed by higher metaphysical reality.

In this light, the answer to the second philosophical question of the *DS*—how body attaches to soul—presents *anima spiritualis* as the rational principle of the senses. Although the question enquires about the role of body, its answer interweaves the concepts of body and soul in introducing the hybrid term *anima spiritualis*[103].

Unlike Plotinus, the *DS*, as far as it is a text on the conception of life, maintains its focus on body. The answer of the second question anticipates the third and last subject of our investigation: what is *pneuma* and how it works in every part of the body[104]. It shifts the focus of discussion from the relation between soul and body to the relation between soul and *pneuma*.

On the philosophical side, as the essence of the Stoic understanding of soul, the concept of *pneuma* is the main object of Plotinus' criticism in *Enn*. IV.7[105]. After consecutively dismissing air and fire as possible sources of the origin of soul, since not one of them has *logos* (*Enn*. IV.7.3), he rejects the Stoic view of soul as "a certain kind" of *pneuma* on the same count[106]:

> "Εἰ οὖν οὐ πᾶν μὲν πνεῦμα ψυχή, ὅτι μυρία πνεύματα ἄψυχα, τὸ δέ πως ἔχον[107] πνεῦμα φήσουσι, τό πως ἔχον τοῦτο καὶ ταύτην τὴν σχέσιν ἢ τῶν ὄντων τι φήσουσιν ἢ μηδέν … Εἰ δὲ τῶν ὄντων ἡ σχέσις … λόγος ἂν εἴη τις καὶ οὐ σῶμα καὶ φύσις ἑτέρα". (*Enn*. IV.7.4.11-21)

Neoplatonism of Iamblichus, University Park, PA, 1995, 268 p., p. 4-5. Also Porphyry, *De abst*. 2.43 (CLARK, above, note 49).

101. Specifically *Ti*. 30b7, 32b5, 37b3.

102. Above, page 20.

103. In essence, the term derives from the Stoic understanding of soul's nature as *pneuma*. Above, note 97.

104. *DS*, col. 142: *De spiritu quid sit et qualiter operetur in tota parte?*

105. As listed above, note 97. G. VERBEKE, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du Stoicisme à S. Augustin*, in *Greek and Roman Philosophy*, L. Tarán ed., vol. 43, repr., New York, 1987, 569 p., p. 352-362.

106. CHRYSIPPUS, *SVF* 745: τὴν δὲ πνευματικὴν εἰς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις τήν τε θρεπτικὴν καὶ τὴν αἰσθητικήν. Cf. *Enn*. VI.7.11.

107. For Chrysippus' "certain kind" (πως ἔχοντα), Galen, *PHP* 3.5.27-28.

> "If, then, not every breath is soul, because there are innumerable soulless breaths, but they are going to assert that the breath "with a certain character" is soul, they will either say that this character and this condition belongs to the class of real beings or that it does not … But if the condition belongs to the class of real beings … then it would be a rational principle, and not a body, and so a different kind of nature".

Contrary to the Stoic conception of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as πνεῦμα σωματικόν, the passage conveys Plotinus' insistence that, only if *pneuma* is different from matter, *pneuma* can be "a rational principle" (λόγος, *Enn*. IV.7.4.19-20)[108]. His insistence is ultimately concerned with soul, not with *pneuma*. Because *pneuma* is not different from matter, *pneuma* is not a rational principle and therefore *pneuma* is not soul. If soul, then, is not *pneuma*, soul is a rational principle and consequently incorporeal and immortal. To prove his point, he adduces the strictly corporeal meaning of the term πνεῦμα ψυχικόν to reject the Stoic view of gradual transmission of pain perception from one corporeal part to another. Plotinus persistently separates soul from *pneuma* and blood, the two physical properties of the body the departure of which, like that of soul, induces death (*Enn*. IV.7.8[1].34-35)[109]. The background of this discussion is both philosophical and medical. While subduing the Stoic conception of soul, Plotinus inevitably has to engage with the ongoing medical debate on the relation between soul and *pneuma* between Galen and the pneumatists[110]. For Plotinus as well as for Galen, πνεῦμα *ψυχικόν,* just like blood, is only a corporeal entity and not soul.

Surprisingly the *DS*, as a text on the biological conception of life, transforms the medical debate on whether *pneuma* is soul into philosophical and further conforms to Plotinus' anti-Stoic position in *Enn*. IV.7:

> *"Spermatici spiritus virtutes sunt tres: quarum prima est necessitas, secunda virtus, tertia organum. Necessitatis duo sunt opera: nam et calorem custodit et spiritum animalem nutrit. Virtus vero est complementum. Organum vero discernit*

---

108. Plotinus' position is later elaborated by the early Christian theologians who deny any other explanation of soul in favor of the view that soul is body's form, cf. GENNADIUS, *Epitome* 2.7.1, Οὐ γὰρ ἀνάγκη τιθέναι μέσον ὥσπερ ἐνοῦν, ἢ φαντάσματα κατὰ Ἀβερόην, ἢ δυνάμεις κατ' ἄλλους, ἢ πνεῦμα σωματικόν, ὡς ἕτεροι· ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ ἑνοῦται τῷ σώματι ὡς εἶδος.

109. And even more emphatically in *Enn*. VI.7.11.55-65.

110. Alexandrian medicine is credited with developing the theory of *pneuma* as the source of soul, especially in the names of Erasistratus and his followers, the pneumatists, the atomists, and Asclepiades of Prusa, see GALEN, *De util. resp*. 1.471. Galen himself believes that *pneuma* is nourished through the blood. He also mentions the doctrine that *pneuma* is nourished from the vapor rising from the blood, GALEN, *De util. resp*. 5.502; *PHP* V.281; *De nat. fac*. I.4. On theories of respiration in antiquity, see D.J. FURLEY and J.S. WILKIE, *Galen on Respiration and the Arteries*, Princeton, 1984, 289 p., p. 3-46. On πνεῦμα ψυχικόν, see J. ROCCA, *Galen on the Brain. Anatomical Knowledge and Physiological Speculation in the Second Century AD*, in *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, 26, Leiden, 2003, 313 p., p. 201-237.

> *omnia ex opere animae … Clarificatus [spiritus] vadit per duas arterias in nervos, qui sunt harmonia trium ventriculorum capitis usque ad animam, cui ex nimia subtilitate sui connexa est anima per qua(m) anima ministrat phantasiam suam harmoniae totius corporis … Dicunt Ammonius, Democritus, et alii complures, quod ille spiritus est corporeus, et ipse idem est anima … Porphyrius non considerat quidem animam, sed considerat spiritum animatum rationalem, ostendens spiritum hunc in isagogis corporeum esse ad opus animae: non ipsam animam"*. (*DS*, col. 142)
>
> "The faculties of the *pneuma* of seed are three. The first of them is necessity, second power, and third instrument. The functions of necessity are two: it guards the heat and nourishes the *psychic pneuma* (*spiritum animalem*)[111]. [The faculty of] power is indeed only complementary. [The faculty of] instrument (*organum*) distinguishes everything from the work of soul … The purified *pneuma* goes through two arteries into the nerves, which form the attunement of the three ventricles of the head, then to the soul through which [*pneuma*] soul provides its impression to the attunement of the whole body … Ammonius, Democritus, and many others say that *pneuma* is corporeal and it itself is soul … Porphyry certainly does not consider it soul, but he considers the *psychic pneuma* (*spiritum animatum*) rational[112]. He shows in the *Isagoge* that this *pneuma* is corporeal, of service to soul; it is not soul itself".

The passage answers the question of soul's use of body more concretely than *Enn*. IV.7 by explaining the physiology of the different kinds of *pneuma*. The *seminal pneuma* (*spermaticus spiritus* or σπερματικόν πνεῦμα)[113] has three faculties—necessity, power (*virtus*), and instrument (*organum*)[114]. The instrumental faculty distinguishes everything from the work of soul and it is the source of the *psychic pneuma* (*spiritus animalis* or πνεῦμα ψυχικόν). The *spiritus spermaticus* originates and nourishes *spiritus animalis*. It starts in the heart as *spiritus vitalis* and through multiple purifications is refined in the brain as *spiritus animalis*. In the brain, the soul, by its utmost lightness, is joined to

---

111. The end of the passage demonstrates the rough translation quality of the text which inconsistently uses *spiritus animalis* and *spiritus animatus*.

112. Porphyry still distinguishes between *pneuma* and life (πνεῦμα καὶ ζωήν, *De abst*. 3.19).

113. The Greek original of *spermaticus spiritus* would be σπερματικὸν πνεῦμα, but the term is not attested in the medical or medico-philosophical literature. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos*. 136.2-5 mentions the σπερματικὸς λόγος of the Stoics. Galen does not talk about anything σπερματικόν aside from anatomical and physiological descriptions, Nemesius, perhaps under stronger philosophical influence, refines the use of σπερματικόν by calling the generative faculty σπερματικὴ δύναμις (*DNH* 1.2.17; 15.72.9-10; 25.86.1) and σπερματικὴ φυσική (*DNH* 26.87.24).

114. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 3.53.2.2: Ἔσχεν δὲ ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἀδήλως αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῆς Σοφίας ἐνσπαρὲν τὸ σπέρμα τὸ πνευματικὸν εἰς τὴν ψυχήν.

pneuma. Through this *pneuma*, now called *spiritus animalis*, soul "provides its impression to the attunement of the whole body" (*DS*, col. 142)[115].

Next the text makes the distinction between the corporeal and incorporeal camps I mentioned in the beginning of the paper and singles out Porphyry's support of the latter[116]. Porphyry, the *DS* specifies, does not consider *spiritus animalis* "as soul but the *psychic pneuma* to be rational and he shows in the *Isagoge* that this *pneuma* is corporeal of service to the soul; it is not soul itself" (*corporeum esse ad opus animae; non ipsam animam*). There is no mention of *pneuma*, or body, as a tool of soul either in the *Isagoge* or in the *Ad Gaurum*. Perhaps it is even more peculiar that neither the concept of πνεῦμα ψυχικόν or πνεῦμα σωματικόν can be found in the latter, Porphyry's work which seems thematically closest to the *DS*[117]. Instead there are possible leads to two of his other works. In a fragment from his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, we read "soul ensouls, brings life, and moves [the body] as its tool" (ἡ ψυχὴ ψυχοῖ καὶ ζῳοποιεῖ καὶ κινεῖ τὸ ὄργανον ἑαυτῆς fr. 2, lines 54-59 [Sodano])[118]. In the *On Abstinence*, discussing the unique nature of *daimones*, he describes their ability to be visible or invisible as an imprint or stamp "upon their *pneuma*" (ἀλλ'ἐν σχήμασι πλείοσιν ἐκτυπούμεναι αἱ χαρακτηρίζουσαι τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν μορφαί, *De abst*. 2.39.1). "The *pneuma"*, he further clarifies, "insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible" (τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ᾗ μέν ἐστι σωματικόν, παθητικόν ἐστι καὶ φθαρτόν, *De abst*. 2.39.2)[119]. The above

---

115. The concept of *phantasia* (φαντασία) is a Stoic signature (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil*. 7.49-54; *SVF* 2.54; 2.65; 2.83; LONG and SEDLEY, above, note 63, p. 239-241) which is further developed by later Neoplatonic adaptations. A. SHEPPARD, "*Phantasia* and Inspiration in Neoplatonism", in *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition*, M. Joyal ed., Aldershot, 1997, 332 p., p. 201-210.

116. Above, p. 14-17.

117. Porphyry specifically rejects the view of "the theologian of the Hebrews" that god embeds *pneuma* in the living soul: ὁ τῶν Ἑβραίων θεολόγος σημαίνειν ἔοικεν, ὅταν πεπλασμένου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου σώματος (καὶ) ἀπειληφότος πᾶσαν τὴν σωματικὴν δημιουργίαν ἐμφυσῆσαι τὸν θεὸν αὐτῷ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν λέγῃ τὸ πνεῦμα (*Ad Gaurum*, 11.1.8-2.1 [Kalbfleisch]).

118. The authenticity of the fragment is dubious and it is not included in A. SMITH, *Porphyrius. Fragmenta*, Stuttgart, 1993, 653 p.

119. The term πνεῦμα σωματικόν does not occur outside of the later doxographical reports of the Stoic views. Galen does not use it, it is not found in Plotinus either. As it is clear from the fragment of the commentary on the *Timaeus*, Porphyry prefers to talk about it in a round about way. For him, the concept of *pneuma* does not have much significance aside from the theory of the vehicle of the soul (ὄχημα-πνεῦμα), as presented in his *De regressu animae* (frs. 2-4; fr. 7). Unlike Iamblichus, he conceives of this vehicle as "created from portions of the bodies of the visible gods and perishes when these bodies are sloughed off", as J. FINAMORE concludes in *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul*, in *American Classical Studies*, 14, Chico, CA, 1985, 173 p., p. 4 and p. 27. For the Platonic origins of the

instances fittingly complement his description of the incorporeal nature in the *Sentences*. Although all references explicate Porphyry's position on soul, outside the *Isagoge*, they still do not offer a complete conceptual match for the views presented in the *DS*. The main shortcoming is that, aside from the spurious fragment of the commentary on the *Timaeus*, Porphyry, unlike Plotinus, does not refer to soul's use of body or *pneuma* as ὄργανον. In fact, he is in favor of the prevalent Neoplatonic understanding of body or *pneuma* as soul's vehicle (ὄχημα)[120]. Porphyry's deficiency, however, only strengthens the case of Plotinus' relevance to the *DS*, especially considering that Plotinus does not use the term ὄχημα in the *Enneads*[121].

As result, *Enn*. IV.7 sheds more light in contextualizing the reference to Porphyry's *Isagoge*[122]. The *DS* explains the relation between soul and *pneuma* not as "a mixture", the term which Plotinus thoroughly rejects, but as "a joining" (*connecta est*) and transfers Plotinus' instrumental understanding of body as tool of soul to *pneuma* as tool of soul[123]. If body is tool of soul, as he suggests, then, *pneuma*, the most refined element of body, should also be tool of soul. This reasoning determines the meaning of *anima spiritualis* in *DS*, col. 141 as inverted rendition of the established philosophical and medical term πνεῦμα ψυχικόν to denote the part of soul which uses *pneuma* as its tool[124]. The phrase conflates the Plotinian understanding of soul as rational principle of the body and the Galenic view of soul as user of *pneuma*. I think Plotinus would have approved of this rendition because it presents *pneuma* as subordinate to soul.

The physiological description of *pneuma* in the *DS* shows close familiarity with the respiratory theories of the second and third centuries[125]. The examination of the relation between *pneuma* and blood underlies Galen's

---

term, see R. SORABJI, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD. Sourcebook*, vol. 1, Ithaca, NY, 2005, 430 p., p. 221.

120. Cf. PROCLUS, *In rem publicam* II, 196, 24 and 197, 12. Verbeke, above, note 105, p. 364-366.

121. SORABJI, above, note 119, p. 224.

122. Perhaps Porphyry himself is working out Plotinus' idea in the fragment.

123. Plotinus's position may be further strengthened by the Hippocratic theory of *crasis* or balanced blending of the four primary elements and the four humors in producing health, widely promoted by Galen. See M.T. MAY, *Galen, On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, vol. 1, Ithaca, NY, 1968, 461 p., p. 45. *Enn*. IV.7.8-8[2] and IV.7.8[3]. Nemesius takes the same stand in *DNH* 2.23-26.

124. Cited above, p. 24-25.

125. In *De util. resp*. 5.501.17, Galen concedes our ignorance about the substance of soul (ἀγνοεῖν ὁμολογοῦντες οὐσίαν ψυχῆς). According to him, Erasistratus believes *pneuma* travels from the heart through the arteries to the membranes of the brain (*ibid*. 5.502.7-9).

approach to the study of the relation between soul and body[126]. While documenting his anatomical observations of the brain and investigating the parts of the brain responsible for the loss of motion and sensation, he slips into a brief discourse on *pneuma* and its relation to the brain. Following the Stoic tradition, he directly connects the concept of *pneuma* with soul and his discussion of *pneuma* is couched in terms of two hypotheses both of which suppose *pneuma* to be corporeal: "if the soul is incorporeal, the *pneuma* [my emphasis] is, so to speak, its first home; or if the soul is corporeal, this very thing is the soul."[127] Galen rejects either hypothesis based on his observation that, after closing the ventricles of the brain, the animal regains sensation and motion. His reasoning is that the ventricles, and not the soul or the *pneuma*, are responsible for sense perception and locomotion. Based on this, he draws up two important conclusions 1) "it is better to assume that the soul dwells in the actual body of the brain" and 2) "soul's first instrument for all the sensations of the animal and for its voluntary motions as well is *pneuma*"[128].

> "τὸ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὰς ἀρτηρίας πνεῦμα ζωτικόν ἐστί τε καὶ προσαγορεύεται, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ψυχικόν, οὐχ ὡς οὐσία ψυχῆς ὑπάρχον, ἀλλ' ὡς ὄργανον πρῶτον αὐτῆς οἰκούσης κατὰ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον, ὁποία τις ἂν ᾖ τὴν οὐσίαν. ὥσπερ δὲ τὸ ζωτικὸν πνεῦμα κατὰ τὰς ἀρτηρίας τε καὶ τὴν καρδίαν γεννᾶται τὴν ὕλην ἔχον τῆς γενέσεως ἔκ τε τῆς εἰσπνοῆς καὶ τῆς τῶν χυμῶν ἀναθυμιάσεως, οὕτω τὸ ψυχικὸν ἐκ τοῦ ζωτικοῦ κατεργασθέντος ἐπὶ πλέον ἔχει τὴν γένεσιν· ἐχρῆν γὰρ δήπου μᾶλλον ἁπάντων αὐτὸ μεταβολῆς ἀκριβοῦς τυχεῖν". (PHP VII.3.27-28)
>
> "Now the breath (πνεῦμα) in the arteries is and is called vital, and that in the brain is called psychic (ψυχικόν), not in the sense that it is the substance, but rather the first instrument of the soul that resides in the brain, whatever its substance may be. Just as vital pneuma is generated in the arteries and the heart, getting the material for its generation from inhalation and from the vaporization of

126. With his primary focus on the relation between *pneuma* and blood, on the one hand, Galen continues the long medical tradition of the conception of πνεῦμα ψυχικόν established by Diocles of Carystus. On the other hand, by considering the brain as the seat of the *psychic pneuma*, he dramatically steers away from this tradition. A synopsis of Galen's view is found in *Meth. med.* XII, 5: "I have shown clearly that the brain is the fount, so to speak, of the *psychic pneuma* [my emphasis], which is refreshed and nourished by inspiration and by what is supplied from the retiform plexus" (May trans.). On the history of the concept, see Verbeke, above, note 105.

127. Henceforth translation and text numeration are according to P. DE LACY, *Galen, On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, vols. 2, 2nd ed., Berlin. *PHP* VII.3.19 (de Lacy): Μὲν ἀσώματός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή, τὸ πρῶτον αὐτῆς ὑπάρχειν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, οἰκητήριον, εἰ δὲ σῶμα, τοῦτ' αὐτὸ [πνεῦμα] τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι.

128. *PHP* VII.3.21 (de Lacy): Βέλτιον οὖν ὑπολαβεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ μὲν τῷ σώματι τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου τὴν ψυχὴν οἰκεῖν, ἥτις ποτ' ἂν ᾖ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν (οὔπω γὰρ περὶ τούτου σκέψις ἥκει), τὸ πρῶτον δ' αὐτῆς ὄργανον εἵς τε τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἁπάσας τοῦ ζῴου καὶ προσέτι τὰς καθ' ὁρμὴν κινήσεις τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα.

> the humors, so does the psychic pneuma is generated by a further refinement of the vital. For it was necessary for this pneuma, more than anything else, be changed in precisely the right way".

The passage contextualizes the view of the *DS* that *pneuma* is the instrument of soul and that *spiritus animalis* is a further refinement of the *vital pneuma* (*spiritualis vita*, *DS*, col. 142). Galen explicitly leaves aside the question of the substance of soul and admits once again, among many other instances, that "the inquiry has not yet reached this question"[129]. Perhaps, in his mind, the question is of pure philosophical value and, although this would not be a sufficient reason to inhibit him from pursuing it further, as with most other matters, here he elects to avoid it. He is comfortable only to discuss the anatomical aspect of the relation between soul and *pneuma*. He leaves the philosophical question about the substance of soul to the philosophers, and this is what Plotinus and his successors do. In fact, if we take into account Plotinus' repetitive insistence on the instrumental view in *Enn*. IV.7, he seems to be surprisingly comfortable to use an Aristotelian term for such a Platonic conception, unless we suppose that he is eased into adopting it through Galen's use of it. In this case, Galen's adoption of Aristotle's term would be acceptable for Plotinus because Galen himself rejects the corporeal interpretation of soul as *pneuma*.

The irony, of course, is that Galen is more helpful in understanding Plotinus' position in *Enn*. IV.7 than the text of the *DS*. In fact, he is not mentioned in the *DS* at all and thus the influence of his thought is not immediately apparent. Based on the lack of reference to Galen in the medical section of the text, Nutton rightfully speculates that the original of the work might have been written before Galenism became "universally pervasive" in the fifth century[130]. Perhaps the first trace of Galenic influence on the text could be found in the promotion of the instrumental view of body. This influence, however, does not come directly through the medical literature but through its Neoplatonic adaptation. This speculation does not seem outrageously bold if we consider that the discussion of *pneuma* in *DS*, col. 142 does not delve into the medical debate on the nature of *pneuma* between Galen and Erasistratus but into the philosophical debate on the nature of soul between corporealists and incorporealists, between the Stoics and the Platonists. Thanks to Galen, it makes sense, in this debate, Aristotle to be sided with the Platonists.

---

129. For example, *De foetuum formatione* 6. Galen's position on the existence of soul is debatable. For opposing views, see V. NUTTON ed., *Galen. On My Own Opinions*, *CMG* 5.3.2, Berlin, 1999, 247 p., p. 204 and P. DONINI, "Psychology", in *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, R.J. Hankinson ed., Cambridge, 2008, 450 p., p. 184-185.

130. Nutton, above, note 2, p. 28, note 63. If we relate the chronological framework, proposed earlier in p. 14-17, to Nutton's *terminus ante quem* for writing the original(s), we can further narrow down the period of their composition or coalescence to the fourth century. The proof of this hypothesis deserves to be the next subject of investigation.

So what does *Enn*. IV.7 do for the *DS*? *Enn*. IV.7 contextualizes the Neoplatonic background of the philosophical section of the *DS* better than the references to Porphyry and his *Isagoge* in the text. It elucidates the answers to all three philosophical questions posed in the treatise. Plotinus' elaboration of the idea of body as soul's *organon* explains the philosophical foundation of the presentation of *pneuma* as the corporeal instrument of soul in the *DS*.

And, in turn, what does the *DS* do for *Enn*. IV.7? It demonstrates the importance of Plotinus' concept of body as instrument of soul in the development of the later medico-philosophical thought. The use of ὄργανον in the treatise reveals Plotinus at work on Plato, Aristotle, and Galen. The *DS* transforms *Enn*. IV.7 from an elongated quasi-doxographical lecture, with no particular originality, to exciting evidence for the making of a new concept.

Chasing *De spermate*'s loose ties with Porphyry's *Isagoge*, *Enn*. IV.7 proves to be more useful and informative in understanding the "Platonism" of this enigmatic text, especially after even Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum* is of no help. It is not clear yet what is the exact path, if any, of conceptual communication between *Enn*. IV.7 and *DS*. The Greek original(s) most likely belong to the same wave of composing medico-philosophical literature as Nemesius' *De natura hominis*, Gregory of Nyssa's *De anima*, or Priscian's *Solutiones ad Chosroen*. This is the period in which medicine and philosophy begin the last stage of their conflation into the new discipline of medical philosophy, especially in the Eastern regions of the Late Roman Empire[131]. Plotinus implicitly stands at the forefront of this process. Appropriating medical motifs in the philosophical discussion of soul and body, he provides a working example for his immediate successors, in Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum*, and for the later medical philosophers[132]. *Enn*. IV.7, in its turn, becomes programmatic for later texts such as the *DS*.

131. J. SCARBOROUGH, "Symposium on Byzantine Medicine: Introduction", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38, Baltimore, 1984, 282 p., p. ix-xvi.

132. Above, note 4. Also E. PEROLI, *Il Platonismo e l'antropologia filosofica di Gregorio di Nissa con particolare riferimento agli influssi di Platone, Plotino e Porfirio*, Milan, 1993, 348 p.

PLOTINUS ON *SOPHIST* 248e6-249a2

ATSUSHI SUMI

I. – INTRODUCTION: *SOPHIST* 248e6-249a2 AND THE ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

Plotinus' exegesis of Plato's dialogues is often regarded as unhistorical and metaphysical. I have elucidated his anomalous interpretations of the *Phaedrus* myth[1] and of three fragmentary passages from late dialogues[2].

Plotinus' reading of Plato certainly reminds us of Whitehead's famous statement that the European philosophical tradition "consists of a series of footnotes to Plato"[3]. I have discussed one of the most sharply contrasted "footnotes" to a section of the *Sophist* dealing with the interweaving of Forms, those by Plotinus and Whitehead himself[4]. Now it is no exaggeration to say that another Platonic text which precedes the passage on the interweaving of Forms has led the most checkered life in the history of philosophy. It is *Sophist* 248e6-249a2, which reads in Cornford's translation:

> "But tell me, in heaven's name, are we really to be so easily convinced that motion, life, soul, understanding have no place in that which is completely real (τῷ παντελῶς ὄντι)—that it has neither life nor thought, but stands immovable in

---

1. A. SUMI, "Plotinus on *Phaedrus* 247d7-e1: The Platonic *Locus Classicus* of the Identity of Intellect with the Intelligible Objects", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 71, 1997, p. 404-420.

2. SUMI, "The *species infima* as the infinite: *Timaeus* 39e7-9, *Parmenides* 144b4-c1 and *Philebus* 16e1-2 in Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.2.22", in *Reading Plato in Antiquity*, H. Tarrant and D. Baltzly eds., London, 2006, 268 p., p. 73-88.

3. A.N. WHITEHEAD, *Process and Reality*, New York, 1978, p. 39. Hereafter this work is referred to as PR for brevity.

4. SUMI, "Plotinus and Whitehead on the Interweaving of Forms", in *Perspectives sur le néoplatonisme*, M. Achard, W. Hankey and J.–M. Narbonne eds., Québec, 2009, 280 p., p. 241-252.

> solemn aloofness (σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον … ἀκίνητον ἑστὸς εἶναι), devoid of intelligence?" (adapted).

This is the Eleatic Stranger's critical remark on the position of the "friends of Forms" which represents Plato's own theory in the middle period[5]. My position is that the passage in question reflects Plato's self-examination that his metaphysical scheme may leave the ontological status of cognitive subject, soul and intellect, unexplained when it is misconstrued as exhausted by the distinction between intelligible being and visible becoming[6]. But what the passage means gives rise to a lot of controversy.

Not a few scholars since Hadot have maintained that Plotinus' conception of the intelligible world as alive owes its historical origin to *Soph*. 248e6-249a2[7], whereas Cornford claims that the Stranger does not urge that the Forms must be represented as living and thinking entities[8]. Part of the text's "checkered life" becomes visible as soon as we know that in VI 7 (38), 39, 28-34 Plotinus reads the contrast of the One standing still in majesty with real being having intellection between the lines of the passage.

Whitehead's reading of *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 makes its "varied life" fully obvious. First of all, his theory of conceptual realization of eternal objects in God's primordial nature is a counterpart to Plotinus' doctrine of presence of intelligible objects in Intellect[9]. This intramental realization is the only answer

---

5. For adherents of this view, see A. SUMI, "The Omnipresence of Being, the Intellect-Intelligible Identity and the Undescending Part of the Soul: An Essay on the Dispute about Indian Influences on Plotinus", in *Neoplatonism and Indian Philosophy*, P. M. Gregorios ed., Albany, 2002, 275 p., p. 62, n. 16.

6. A. SUMI, "The One's Knowledge in Plotinus", PhD dissertation, Chicago, 1993, p. 30-32. R. HACKFORTH regards the Platonic text as the beginning of Plato's theism which is a complement to his theory of Forms and observes that these "two factors of his ontology are left imperfectly adjusted in his writings" (*Plato's Examination of Pleasure*, Cambridge, 1945, p. 123-124). This remark is fully compatible with my position. See also W.D. ROSS, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, Oxford, 1951, p. 107. But I cannot accept ROSS' view that "both unchanging Ideas and changing minds are perfectly real" (*ibid*., p. 110); for he seems to confuse change and movement, the latter being compatible with immutability. K.M. SAYRE has a similar view to ROSS' (*Plato's Analytic Method*, Chicago and London, 1969, p. 167, n. 26).

7. P. HADOT, "Être, vie, pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin", in *Les sources de Plotin*, Geneva and Vandoeuvres, 1957, 463 p., p. 108-120. See also H.J. BLUMENTHAL, "On soul and intellect", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, L. P. Gerson ed., Cambridge, 1996, 462 p., p. 93; H. TELOH, *The Development of Plato's Metaphysics*, University Park, PA and London, 1981, p. 194-195. G.P. KOSTARAS brings forth another interpretation that Plotinus appeals to the Platonic text for his notion of life as Intellect's movement and activity (*Der Begriff des Lebens bei Plotin*, Hamburg, 1969, p. 92).

8. F.M. CORNFORD, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, London, 1935, p. 244-245.

9. L.S. FORD believes that "Whitehead moves from Plato to middle Platonism, locating the totality of the forms in the mind of God" ("Process and Eternity: Whitehead Contemplates

consistent with the "ontological principle" or its corollary called the "general Aristotelian principle" (PR 40, 256-257) which is also termed as the "principle of efficient, and final, causation" (PR 24). The principle is basically the affirmations that some entities are fully existent, and secondly, that all other types of existence are derivative and abstracted from them. Therefore the eternal objects as pure potentials must be located in God which is the non-temporal actuality to be relevant to the temporal process of becoming[10]. Apart from orderings by the primordial actuality, there is "a complete disjunction of eternal objects unrealized in the temporal world" (PR 40) or "mere isolation indistinguishable from nonentity" (PR 257).

Whitehead's denomination of the "general Aristotelian principle" is accurate. It will be justified by Aristotle's own statement that "if imperishable things which exist actually did not exist, nothing would exist" (*Met*. 1050b19), the statement applied to his theology (1072b13-14)[11].

The general Aristotelian principle is distinct from the so-called Parmenidean canon, the premise of Parmenides' Way of Truth that "that which is, is, and cannot not-be, whereas that which is not, is not, and cannot be"[12]. Allowing a single fully existing entity and rejecting any degrees of being, Parmenides' premise amounts to the basic affirmation of the Aristotelian principle only. On the one hand, Neville maintains that in Whitehead's philosophy the ontological principle "should be called the *cosmological* principle, since it deals with the constitution of the particularities of this cosmos"[13]. On the other hand, the Parmenidean canon eliminates becoming and change, and so the possibility of cosmology.

In *Adventures of Ideas* Whitehead focuses on *Soph*. 248e6-249a2, which he quotes in Jowett's translation with minor changes: "Can we imagine being to be

---

Plotinus", in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, Part I, R. B. Harris ed., Albany, 2002, 407 p., p. 209). In connection with the conceptual realization, however, FORD maintains that Whitehead is "definitely an Aristotelian and not a Platonist" ("Afterword: A Sampling of Other Interpretations", in *Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy*, L. S. Ford and G. L. Kline eds., New York, 1983, 353 p., p. 312).

10. Eternal objects are not created by God (PR 257). FORD stresses that in *Process and Reality* they "were not conceived to be dependent upon actuality for their existence" ("Perfecting the Ontological Principle", in *Metaphysics as Foundation: Essays in Honor of Ivor Leclerc*, P. A. Bogaard and G. Treash eds., Albany, 1993, 358 p., p. 133).

11. There is a hostility between Proclus and Iamblichus' pupil Dexippus in relation to responsibility of Aristotle's God for the world's existence. See R. SORABJI, "The transformation of Plato and Aristotle", in *Reading Plato in Antiquity*, p. 190-191.

12. CORNFORD, *Plato and Parmenides*, London, 1937, p. 33-34. See Parmenides, Frs. B2 and B6, DK.

13. R.C. NEVILLE, "Whitehead on the One and the Many", in *Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy*, p. 260.

devoid of life and mind, and to remain in awful unmeaningness an everlasting fixture?"[14]. Whitehead believes that Plato abides by the criterion of being which is the power of acting and being acted on (*Soph*. 247d8-e4)[15] and considers Forms to be affected in being known. The eternality of Forms which are acted on is connected with the fluency of becoming by the mediation of "life and mind". Whitehead then ascribes "life and motion" of "that which is completely real" of the *Sophist* to the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* when he maintains that Plato's Forms obtain efficiency by their entertainment in the living intellect (AI 147). This is unmistakably the post-systematic expression of his systematic idea that eternal objects must be conceptually realized in God to be relevant to the temporal process of becoming. Notice that Whitehead never says that Plato prefigures the general Aristotelian principle. Rather, he consistently relates the Platonic text in discussion to his post-systematic counterpart to his systematic idea to which that principle must be applied.

When we compare Whitehead with Plotinus, we have no choice but to say that *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 has led a checkered life or passed through strange vicissitude of fortune in the history of philosophy because of their unimaginably variable *modi interpretandi* of the text. Plotinus does not apply the ontological principle to the presence of Forms in Intellect[16], but appeals to the Platonic text to warrant his conception of Forms as living, the conception inseparable from this presence. Yet Whitehead would repudiate it because it transforms the Form into a self-sustaining actuality[17]. In addition, Plotinus anomalously refers to the same Platonic text to explain hyper-noetic intuition of the One, to which the ontological principle as the affirmation about actual entities or real beings is inapplicable[18].

In my article in *Perspectives sur le néoplatonisme* I announce that abstract principles, including the ontological principle, relevant to Plotinus' and Whitehead's revisions of Plato's interweaving of Forms will be examined for another occasion[19]. According to Leclerc, the recognition of the ontological principle "has been characteristic of all the great metaphysicians", but it "has

---

14. WHITEHEAD, *Adventures of Ideas*, New York, 1967, p. 120. Hereafter this work is referred to as AI.

15. For more details about this criterion, see SUMI, "The Psyche, the Forms, and the Creative One: Toward Reconstruction of Neoplatonic Metaphysics", in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, Part I, p. 261, n. 55.

16. SUMI, "Interweaving", p. 251.

17. SUMI, "Interweaving", p. 243-244.

18. Creativity which I correlate with the Plotinian One lies beyond the scope of the ontological principle. See SUMI, "Psyche", p. 269, n. 115; FORD, "Process and Eternity", p. 215.

19. SUMI, "Interweaving", p. 252.

been departed from or ignored as often as it has been adhered to"[20]. In fact, Whitehead himself believes that Descartes and Locke abide by the principle (PR 40, 57-58)[21]. On the other hand, as Hartshorne points out, renouncing it "leads to proliferation of basic 'modes of being, ' none really telling what makes truth true"[22]. Hence some philosophers retain "extraterritorial" zones which are beyond the scope of the ontological principle in their metaphysical systems, but none of them totally abandon it. For instance, Leibniz, in his version of the ontological argument, grounds a reality in the eternal truths on God or the necessary being[23], but he conceives God to be a consequence of possible being[24]. Nicholas of Cusa would transcend the scope of the ontological principle in considering God to be *possest* or the actually existent possible[25].

It is in this context of the scope of the ontological principle that the philosophical import of *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 will be sufficiently elucidated. As for Plotinus who is the focus of attention in this article, the following questions would deserve consideration. How does the One, for which he anomalously refers to the Platonic text, transcend the scope of the ontological principle? What is the criterion of actuality for the One's status as the hyper-ontic activity? The aims of this article are therefore to defend his reading of the Platonic text and to discuss a couple of related problems.

---

20. I. LECLERC, *Whitehead's Metaphysics: An Introductory Exposition*, London and New York, 1958, p. 25.

21. Whitehead's reference to Descartes' *Principle of Philosophy*, Part I, 52 in PR 40 suggests that the ontological principle has an inclination toward the substance-attribute metaphysics. Plotinus' theory of matter's participation in the Forms, as well as Plato's paradeigmatism, can be viewed as his endeavor to defend the ontological principle and at the same time to avoid its inclination toward the substance-quality metaphysics. See SUMI, "Plotinus on Matter's Participation in the Forms", *Dionysius*, 25, 2007, p. 55-75. In addition, Whitehead maintains that in one of its applications the ontological principle "issues in the doctrine of 'conceptualism'" (PR 40). Insofar as Plotinus does not apply the principle to the presence of Forms in Intellect, his theory of this presence is immune from any inclination toward the Middle-Platonic doctrine of Forms as God's concepts. See SUMI, "Psyche", p. 237-239; CORNFORD, *Plato's Cosmology*, London, 1937, p. 41.

22. CH. HARTSHORNE, "Ontological Primacy: A Reply to Buchner", in *Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy*, p. 299.

23. G.W. LEIBNIZ, *Monadology*, cols. 43-44. According to LOEMKER, the argument here "depends upon the principle . . . that the reality of essences or possibilities must be founded upon existence". See LEIBNIZ, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, L.E. Loemker ed., Dordrecht, 1969, p. 653.

24. LEIBNIZ, *Monadology*, cols. 44-45.

25. NICHOLAS OF CUSA, *De possest*, sec. 7; *De visione Dei*, sec. 62.

II. – PLOTINUS ON *SOPHIST* 248e6-249a2

As has been mentioned, several scholars maintain that *Soph*. 248e6-249a2, with *Tim*. 31b1 and 39e8 where the Demiurge's paradigm is characterized as the Living Being, is the source of Plotinus' conception of the intelligible world as alive. The Platonic text, however, is not an affirmation but a rhetorical question, so my own position in my dissertation is stated in a slightly subtle fashion; Plotinus' theory of the identity of intellect with intelligible objects can be viewed as a solution to the problem, raised in the Platonic text, but not answered by Plato himself, of what relation between intellect and Forms insures the Forms' complete intelligibility without compromising their immutability[26]. I here do not go into details about this issue. It suffices to show that Plotinus deeply reflects on the Eleatic Stranger's query. First of all, the expression τὸ παντελῶς ὄν does not occur in the *Enneads*. Nevertheless, both τὸ ὅλον ὂν in VI 9 (9), 2, 22-24 and πάντη ὂν in III 6 (26), 6, 21 are said to embrace life and intellect, insinuating Plotinus' rumination of the Platonic text[27].

Let us move to our key passage in the *Enneads*. Plotinus devotes a substantial portion of the final chapters of VI 7 (38) to extensive arguments for the absence of intellection from the One. In this context he briefly describes the One's simple intuition toward itself (39, 1-4)[28]. On the other hand, he poses a question of how we can characterize the One which has no intellection: "Well then, will he know other things or himself? If he does not, he will stand still in majesty (ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται)" (39, 20-21, trans. A. H. Armstrong, adapted)[29]. Plotinus here invokes *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 and replies to the question in our key text as follows:

> "But what is his intuition toward himself, if he does not think himself? But he will stand still in majesty (ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται). Plato did say, speaking of real being, that it will think, but would not stand still in majesty, meaning that real being thinks, but that which does not think will stand still in majesty; he used 'will stand still (ἑστήξοιτο)' because he could not explain what he meant in any other way, and he considered more majestic and truly majestic that which transcends thought". (39, 28-34, trans. A. H. Armstrong, adapted).

Plotinus refers to the Platonic text to contrast the One standing still in majesty with real being having intellection. He identifies the Stranger's παντελῶς ὄν with Plato's οὐσία. Armstrong comments on this passage by saying that

---

26. SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 113-118, 127-128.

27. SUMI, "*Phaedrus* 247d7-e1", p. 411.

28. For a full discussion about this issue, see SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 273-301.

29. Henry and Schwyzer propose to delete ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν ἑστήξεται, and Armstrong follows this proposal. But we do not accept this deletion.

Plotinus "seems conscious that his interpretation will seem rather odd"[30]. We can justifiably say that Plotinus would be aware of his peculiar reading, because, as has been mentioned, there are a couple of passages indicating that he deeply reflects on "that which is completely real". Therefore we must carefully examine whether the key text can be explained away as Plotinus' aberrant exegesis.

What, then, drives Plotinus to read *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 in the way above? He seems to be urged toward this interpretation for four major reasons.

First, with the above reading of the Platonic text, Plotinus can dismiss a misconception that the One may lack in majesty because of its having no intellection. He elsewhere envisages such a possible misinterpretation:

> "Well, if that which is beyond Intellect is thinking it will be an Intellect, but if it is unthinking (ἀνόητον) it will be ignorant of itself; so what will be majestic (σεμνόν) about it?" (III 8 [30], 9, 15-16, trans. A. H. Armstrong, adapted).

The supposition that that which does not think may not be majestic is definitely rejected in the key text[31]. Notice that in *Rep*. 509b9-10 dignity in respect of which the Good transcends real beings will not be associated with the absence of intellection even if this text is speculatively interpreted. In addition, higher majesty (VI 7 [38], 39, 33) can be attributed to the One by virtue of the affirmation about its cognitive activity rather than the denial of intellection.

Second, Plotinus' belief that the One may be implicitly mentioned in the *Sophist* is supported by the character of the Eleatic Stranger. In VI 8 (39), 18, 44-45 Plotinus considers "due occasion (καιρός)" in *Pol*. 284e6-7 to refer to the One, and it is pronounced by the Stranger. This way of interpretation seems to be based on Plotinus' basic position that Plato's *Parmenides* is the source of his doctrine of the One and Intellect (V 1 [10], 8, 23-26). From his viewpoint, this position would be consistent with Plato's own claim, in the *Sophist*, to be the true heir of Parmenides[32]. The Stranger is said to "belong to the school of Parmenides and Zeno" (*Soph*. 216a3-4).

Third, the Platonic text can be a warrant for rest closely related to the One's hyper-intellective knowledge, when it is assumed that it is covertly referred to in

---

30. A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus*, Text with an English Translation, 7 vols., Cambridge, MA and London, 1966-1988, vol. 7, p. 208-209, n. 1. But K.–H. VOLKMANN-SCHLUCK simply considers Plotinus' interpretation to be "auf eine überraschende Weise" (*Plotin als Interpret der Ontologie Platos*, Frankfurt am Main, 1966, p. 130). According to F. FRONTEROTTA, Plotinus here simply means that movement, thought and intelligence are situated in Intellect (Plotin, *Traités 38-41*, Traduction sous la direction de L. Brisson et J.–F. Pradeau, Paris, 2007, p. 167, n. 281).

31. See also *Enn*. VI 9 (9), 6, 46-50, where we are urged to recognize that the One is immune from ignorance though having no intellection.

32. A.E. TAYLOR, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, London, 1926, p. 375; CORNFORD, *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 170.

the text. Plotinus' doctrine of the One's knowledge, consistently in both earlier and later treatises, consists of three basic theses[33]. The One's knowledge or consciousness is totally indistinguishable from the One itself in virtue of its absolute simplicity[34]. It is always at rest[35]. And it is the specialization of the One's reversion toward itself[36]. Of course, this rest is distinct from one of the so-called Platonic genera. Since the Stranger does not mention any hyper-noetic knowledge whatever, the Platonic text can be simply an indirect warrant for the One's knowledge's being at rest. This indirectness seems to be marked by the optative ἑστήξοιτο.

Finally, the Platonic text insinuates the possibility of separating or abstracting activity from real being. Plotinus could possibly find no other text for this possibility in Plato's dialogues. But Plotinus and the Stranger proceed in different directions from each other. Whereas the Stranger suggests that the realm of real being must not be devoid of activity, Plotinus insists that there is pure activity which is distinct from the fusion of real being and activity. Notice that Plotinus cannot affirm the One's majesty by appealing to the absence of intellection from it but to its unique knowledge or consciousness based on its hyper-ontic activity[37]. It is because we are not recommended to attribute any value to that from which such a splendid activity as intellection may be absent.

In an early treatise Plotinus explains the One's transcendence in terms of the primacy of noetic activity over intellective agent (VI 9 [9], 6, 52-54)[38]. He here entertains the possibility of abstracting activity from being, but he admits some

---

33. SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 343. Incidentally, Whitehead could not accept the One's hyper-noetic consciousness because he holds that, without the consequent nature which weaves his physical feelings upon his primordial concepts, God is deficient in consciousness (PR 343, 345). Yet the One's unique awareness will be defended by Ken Wilber with his notion of unity consciousness in his theory of the spectrum of consciousness. See D. KEALEY, "Neoplatonism and Transpersonal Psychology: The Thought of Ken Wilber", in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, Part II, 406 p., p. 76-77.

34. *Enn*. V 4 (7), 2, 17; VI 7 (38), 39, 2-4; VI 8 (39), 16, 31-32; 16, 35.

35. *Enn*. V 4 (7), 2, 18; VI 8 (39), 16, 25. See also G.M. GURTLER, *Plotinus: The Experience of Unity*, New York, 1988, p. 58; J. BUSSANICH, *The One and Its Relation to Intellect in Plotinus*, A Commentary on Selected Texts, Leiden, 1988, p. 25-26; idem, "Plotinus on Inner Life of the One", *Ancient Philosophy*, 7, 1987, p. 167, and p. 185, n. 15.

36. *Enn*. V 1 (10), 6, 18; VI 8 (39), 16, 24. See also J. IGAL, "La génesis de la Inteligencia en un pasaje de las *Enéadas* de Plotino V.1.7.4-35", *Emerita*, 39, 1971, p. 135-136; F.M. SCHROEDER, "Plotinus and Interior Space", in *Neoplatonism and Indian Philosophy*, p. 90; BUSSANICH, *The One and Its Relation*, p. 217; HADOT, "Review of H-S[1], vol. 2", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 164, 1963, p. 94; idem, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols., Paris, 1968, vol. 1, p. 320-321, n. 4.

37. SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 343-346; idem, "Psyche", p. 250-251.

38. For more details about this passage, see SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 216-217.

looseness in his terminology. Although we are not justified in concluding some hyper-noetic knowledge of the One from this passage, we can find Plotinus' tendency to consider the One's transcendence in terms of the abstraction of pure activity from substantiality. Now the following passage in a middle treatise reveals us Plotinus' hierarchy of abstraction relevant to our present inquiry:

> "We must not be afraid of positing the primary activity without real being, but must posit this itself as a kind of hypostasis. If someone were to posit a hypostasis without activity, the originative principle would be deficient and the most perfect of all would be imperfect. And if he added activity (to the hypostasis), he would not preserve unity. If, then, activity is more perfect than real being, and the First is the most perfect, he (i.e. the One) will be in the first place activity". (VI 8 [39], 20, 9-15, trans A. H. Armstrong, adapted).

We here do not discuss the problem of whether the One is justifiably called a "hypostasis". As the One's status as the οὐσία-less ἐνέργεια is fully compatible with its absolute oneness, the primacy of activity over real being, or the possibility of abstracting the former from the latter, coheres with the principle of henology. On the other hand, real being is coextensive with intellection. Hence the hyper-ontic activity goes well with the absence of intellection from the One. In the key text, the One is said to "stand still in majesty" and real being not.

III. – The One as the hyper-ontic activity

There has been a serious dispute about whether the One is an ἐνέργεια. Felix Ravaisson, a teacher of Bergson, inadvertently jumps from the One's having no intellection to a pejorative conception that it may be like a non-thinking, insensible and inert plant[39]. Buchner maintains that the One is not considered to be an activity in VI 8 (39) for two reasons; actualization excludes absolute simplicity, and the One does not work on anything else[40]. This view is misleading. First, although actualization is always that of something, the One's activity is not actualization of anything. Plotinus himself distinguishes activity from that which is in actuality (II 5 [25], 1, 28-29). Actualization belongs to the latter. Buchner confuses activity and actualization. Second, that the One does not work does not necessarily mean that it is not activity. Rather, the One's not working, Plotinus writes, is based on its being pure activity:

> "So the Good is without activity (ἀνενέργητον). And why should activity be active? For in general no activity has yet another activity. But even if some philosophers are able to attribute yet another activity to the other activities which are directed to something else, yet the first one of all, on which the others depend,

---

39. F. Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, 2 vols., Paris, 1837-1846, vol. 2, p. 465. See also Sumi, "The One's Knowledge", p. 292-293, n. 4.

40. H. Buchner, *Plotins Möglichkeitslehre*, Munich and Salzburg, 1970, p. 99.

> we must let be what it is, adding nothing further to it. So an activity of this kind is not thinking; for it has nothing to think: it is itself the first". (V 6 [24], 6, 3-9, trans. A. H. Armstrong, adapted).

Buchner confuses being-activity and having-activity. His confusion seems to result from his overlooking of the above passage where we are told that the Good as pure activity does not need to work[41].

The identification of the One as the supreme activity without real being is textually warranted by V 6 (24), 6, 3-9 and several passages in VI 8 (39), and philosophically supported by one crucial reason. If the One were not an activity, the double-activity theory, in terms of which the hypostatization of Intellect was explained, would lose its ground[42]. Furthermore, with our view that V 6 (24), 6, 3-9 is regarded as a relevant textual warrant, we can dismiss the objection that the One might not be properly identified as activity since Plotinus' positive descriptions of it in VI 8 (39) are nothing more than "for the sake of persuasion" (13, 1-5)[43]. Not compromising its absolute simplicity, this identification is perfectly consistent not only with the One's unique knowledge but with the absence of intellection from it[44].

The One's status as the hyper-ontic activity is compatible with and logically prior to Plotinus' frequent characterization of it as the productive power of all things (δύναμις τῶν πάντων)[45]. According to Atkinson, the One is the

---

41. For more details about my criticism of Buchner, see SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 321, n. 27.

42. For the close connection between the One as the primary activity and the double-activity theory, see BUSSANICH, *The One and Its Relation*, p. 31, 213. See also SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 321, n. 26. The objection will be made that the double-activity theory portrays the One as activity constitutive of real being and so entails its quasi-being. We can dismiss this objection. In his explanation of Intellect's hypostatization in terms of this theory in V 4 (7), 2 Plotinus does not identify the One with ἐνέργεια ἡ . . . τῆς οὐσίας (line 27), but with τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τελειότητος καὶ συνούσης ἐνεργείας (lines 34-35). Indeed activity constitutive of real being, because of its duality, is inconsistent with the One's absolute simplicity. But the double-activity theory is an explanation of how Intellect proceeds from the One, but not of what the One is in itself. The description of the latter must be logically prior to the former. The double-activity theory cannot be a precise explanation which is perfectly harmonious with the One's status, insofar as it inescapably brings duality into the One. Nevertheless the theory must be grounded on the One's being activity, since activity is the key notion in it.

43. BUSSANICH connects *Enn*. VI 8 (39), 20, 9-13 with *Enn*. V 6 (24), 6, 8-11 ("Plotinus' metaphysics of the One", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, p. 48).

44. For more details about this issue, see SUMI, "The One's Knowledge", p. 311-315.

45. *Enn*. III 8 (30), 10, 1; V 1 (10), 7, 9-10; V 4 (7), 1, 36; 2, 38. I cannot understand why G. AUBRY maintains that Plotinus designates his First Principle no more as activity but as the productive power of all things and contrasts him with Aristotle (*Dieu sans la puissance: Aristote et Plotin*, Paris, 2006). J. DILLON too entertains the ultimacy of the productive power

productive power in the sense that "it contains the objects of Intellect *potentially*" and in the sense that "it is an immensely *active* power responsible for the very existence of the procession from the One"[46]. The "productive power of all things" is a causal and relational notion, and so presupposes the absolute or non-relational notion of the pure activity.

In V 1 (10) Plotinus moves from his explanation of the genesis of Intellect in terms of the double-activity theory in the sixth chapter to that in terms of the inchoate Intellect's reversion to the One in the seventh chapter, where it is described as the productive power of all things. In this transition he states: "we must speak more clearly" (7, 1-2). But we must not argue that the productive power is more precise characterization of the One, by appealing to this sentence, because the increase in clarity here pertains to the use of the word "image"[47]. Neither must we bring forth the primacy of potentiality over activity, in Plotinus, which may lead to the unwarranted belief that he relinquishes the ontological principle altogether.

In my article in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought* I argue that the Plotinian One's status as the hyper-ontic activity is a consequence of his radicalization of the general Aristotelian principle[48]. By the term "radicalization" I simply mean that activity is made metaphysically more fundamental than real being. In other words, pure activity is abstracted as superlatively basic from actual beings which are the very focus of the ontological principle. But this does not entail his abandonment of the principle. Radicalization is distinct from relinquishment, and the former does not necessarily mean the latter. In fact, Plotinus' statement in III 6 (26), 6, 10-14 is definitely his version of the principle, which governs his metaphysics except the "extraterritorial zone" of the One.

With this understanding, we can now spell out the final reason why Plotinus is enchanted with *Soph*. 248e6-249a2. The reason for his view that Plato could not explain the One's intuition in any other way than using the verb ἱστάναι (VI 7 [38], 39, 32-33) is that this verb intransitively marks completeness in motion and goes well with stillness attributed to the One's knowledge.

The verb "to stand still" nicely applies to the One's being pure activity. In light of *Met*. 1048b18-36 where Aristotle distinguishes activity from movement, the action "to stand still" turns out to include its end in itself and so to be

---

of all things ("Intellect and the One in Porphyry's *Sententiae*", *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 4, 2010, p. 29-30).

46. M. ATKINSON, *Plotinus: Ennead V.1*. A Commentary with Translation, Oxford, 1983, p. 165, italics mine.

47. ATKINSON, *Ennead V.1*, p. 250.

48. SUMI, "Psyche", p. 250.

complete. The One is standing still and at the same time has stood still. This coincidence of the present progressive and the present perfect seems to be the—rather than a—criterion of regarding the One as an activity.

Rorty contrasts Aristotle's and Whitehead's criteria of actuality as definiteness and decisiveness respectively[49]. He points out Aristotle's inability "to avoid the Platonic mastery of λόγος, ἰδέα, and μορφή over φύσις—of the terms which are necessary to discuss actualities over the actualities themselves"[50]. But it must be untenable to conclude that Plotinus inherits the inability of Aristotle and accepts eidetic definiteness as the criterion of actuality from the fact that the One is called "shapeless form" (VI 7 [38], 33, 4) or the "form of all things" (V 5 [32], 6, 3-4).

Completeness in action cannot be reduced to eidetic definiteness. Aristotle distinguishes ἐνέργεια-in-reference-to-movement from ἐνέργεια-in-the-broad-sense (*Met*. 1046a1-4)[51], the latter being connected with ἐντελέχεια (1047a30-31). The term "activity" will be appropriate to the former and the one "actuality" to the latter. A major difference between Aristotle and Plotinus is that the former tends to assimilate two senses of ἐνέργεια to each other (1050a21-29), in spite of his distinction of the analogical relation of activity to potency from that of form to matter (1048b8-9), and the latter does not. The Plotinian One is therefore activity, but not entelechy[52]. In addition, two criteria of ἐνέργεια, completeness in action and definiteness, pertain neither to activity-as-related-to-active-potency and activity-as-related-to-passive-potency in Aristotle's distinction (1019a12-26, 1046a9-19) nor to that which is in actuality and activity itself in Plotinus' distinction aforementioned.

The verb "to stand still" is intransitive and so does not infringe on the One's absolute unity. Notice that the verb νοεῖν is transitive though being "not-incomplete activity" (VI 2 [43], 21, 25). Furthermore, the verb "to stand still" is apparently harmonious with rest associated with the One's knowledge.

In this way, Plotinus seems to consider the verb "to stand still" in *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 to square with the hyper-ontic activity of the One and its knowledge which substantiates this activity. In fact, however, the Platonic text does not make reference to the Good. Therefore we have to regard the text as

---

49. R. RORTY, "Matter and Event", in *Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy*, p. 68-103.

50. RORTY, "Matter and Event", p. 83.

51. For more details about this distinction, see ROSS, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary, 2 vols., Oxford, 1924, vol. 1, p. cxxvii; *ibid*., vol. 2, p. 327; J.L. ACKRILL, "Aristotle's Distinction between *Energeia* and *Kinesis*", in *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, R. Bambrough ed., London, 1965, 176 p., p. 121.

52. Although the term ἐντελέχεια occurs several times in the *Enneads*, Plotinus does not employ it to develop his own metaphysical system. He is fully aware of distinctness of ἐνέργεια from ἐντελέχεια in *Enn*. IV 7 (2), 8[5], 16-18.

Plotinus' indirect or circuitous *locus classicus* of the One's hyper-intellective activity. This is somewhat similar to his reading of *Phdr.* 247d7-e1 in which he infers the presence of Forms in Intellect from the simple but enigmatic phrase "that which is not a knowledge different from that in which it is"[53]. Consequently, we must not explain away his exegesis of the Platonic text in question as aberrant.

The One's hyper-ontic activity is not refuted by Bussanich's insistence that its infinite quasi-being serves as the ground for Plotinus' experiential language[54]. This position is supported by his observation that a kind of hyper-paradeigmatism holds for the One and Intellect[55]. But our present discussion disclaims Bussanich's view. And I disagree with him for three more reasons. First, he fails to clarify how "hyper-paradeigmatism" differs from normal Platonic one. Second, as regards the Plotinian One, being does not go with infinity, because it is always determined by form and so finite[56]. Finally, a textual warrant to which he appeals, stating that "the One's perfection derives from its οὐσία" (V 6 [24], 2, 13-14), is problematic. Although it is accepted by Henry-Schwyzer and Armstrong, this reading must involve an abrupt change in subject from Intellect to the One. Indeed Plotinus describes the One as οὐσίας καθαρῶς νοητοῦ in line 8. But he mentions his looseness in terminology (οὔτε νοητὸν κυρίως, line 9)[57]. Even though Intellect is regarded as the subject, Plotinus' argument for the absence of intellection from the One is here validated[58].

---

53. SUMI, "*Phaedrus* 247d7-e1", p. 412-420.

54. BUSSANICH, "Plotinus on the Being of the One", in *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism*, J. Finamore and R. Berchman eds., New Orleans, 2007, 275 p., p. 57-71.

55. BUSSANICH, "Being of the One", p. 63.

56. *Enn.* V 1(10), 7, 19-26; V 5 (32), 6, 1-6. See also J.M. RIST, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 24-25; L. SWEENEY, "Infinity in Plotinus", *Gregorianum*, 38, 1957, p. 521.

57. Our proposed reading that Intellect, before thinking, has perfection from its reality will be supported by *Enn.* II 4 (12), 15, 20-23, where Plotinus defends reality of intelligible matter.

58. When Intellect is regarded as the subject of ἔχῃ in line 13, we can explain the argument in lines 13-17 as follows:

A. Intellect must, before thinking, have a perfection derived from its reality.

B. That to which perfection belongs, in general, will be perfect before thinking.

C. That which is perfect and so self-sufficient will have no need of thinking.

D. Therefore the One which is self-sufficient does not think.

In the move from A to B, the subject in the argument is generalized from Intellect to that to which perfection belongs; this generalization seems to be signaled by the shift in tense from imperfect ἔδει to gnomic future ἔσται. In our proposed reading, the One is mentioned

IV. – Epilogue

I would like to conclude my inquiry by mentioning three related issues.

First, our discussion concerns the most abstract level of the classical problem of how Plato and Aristotle harmonize with each other[59]. We hold that Plotinus places the One beyond the scope of the ontological principle without abandoning it. This view certainly instantiates the Neoplatonic perception of the consonance of the two philosophers that, according to Gerson, "Aristotelian principles could be subsumed under the more capacious and, ultimately, true Platonic system"[60].

Second, our inquiry creates a stir in contemporary French philosophers' discussion about the general character of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Their discussion tends to conceive ontology and henology to be opposed to each other[61]. But it is naïve and arbitrary to regard a metaphysical system whose ultimate principle is hyper-ontic as exclusively henological. As our discussions about Plotinus' exegesis of *Soph*. 248e6-249a2 and about the harmony of Plato and Aristotle indicate, henology and ontology are compatible with each other in one metaphysical system. Introducing the ontological principle as a yardstick must, at least methodologically, eliminate arbitrariness in their discussion.

Finally, the hyper-ontic activity will attract some followers of post-modern spirituality. Gregorios believes that one of its marks is a "conception of the universe as permeated by Divine energy" rather than a "belief in a personal

---

implicitly in line 16 τὸ μὲν ἄρα οὐ νοεῖ and explicitly in line 17 τὸ πρῶτον. A weakness of this reading, if any, will be that the neuter ᾧ τὸ τέλεον ὑπάρξει (line 14) does not agree with the masculine αὐτάρκης (line 15). But the competing reading which accepts the subject change to the One runs into a similar difficulty so that the adherent of it is forced to appeal to V 1 (10), 6, 40-49 (*Plotini Opera II*, P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer eds., Oxford, 1977, p. 258). Hence it is a superiority of our reading that it can avoid the abrupt change in subject.

59. For more details about this problem, see Sorabji, "Transformation", p. 185-193; L.P. Gerson, "The harmony of Aristotle and Plato according to Neoplatonism", in *Reading Plato in Antiquity*, p. 195-221.

60. Gerson, "Harmony", p. 196.

61. Such a view goes back to Hadot's research. See W. Hankey, "Neoplatonism and Contemporary French Philosophy", *Dionysius*, 23, 2005, p. 173. I agree with R. Schürmann's view that for Plotinus ontology is his "penultimate word" ("The One: Substance or Function?", in *Neoplatonism and Nature: Studies in Plotinus' Enneads*, M. F. Wagner ed., Albany, 2002, 338 p., p. 159). Although I agree with his position that the One itself is act rather than substance, I cannot accept his claim that it is "altogether unification" (*ibid*., p. 162), the claim which eventually leads him to say that for it "I find no better term than Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis*" (*ibid*., p. 163), because of lack of textual warrants and Heidegger's rejection of the Platonic distinction between being and becoming.

God"[62]. In other words, the answer is "yes" to his question of whether Neoplatonism has anything to say to post-modern spirituality.

62. P.M. GREGORIOS, "Does Neoplatonism Have Anything to Say to Post-Modern Spirituality?", in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, Part II, p. 309. See also SUMI, "The Primordial Tradition of the World's Religions and the Reconstruction of Neoplatonic Metaphysics", in *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism*, p. 273, n. 56.

LA EXÉGESIS DE PLOTINO DEL *TIMEO* DE PLATÓN.
UN ANÁLISIS DE LA RELACIÓN ENTRE EL DEMIURGO Y LA SEGUNDA HIPÓSTASIS

MALENA TONELLI

Acerca de la lectura que Plotino realiza del *Timeo*[1] cabe preguntarse hasta qué punto el neoplatónico fuerza el texto de Platón para establecer correspondencias que no son tales a la luz de una interpretación que pretende ser fiel. En el caso de la exégesis plotiniana del demiurgo platónico este interrogante se acrecienta puesto que resulta difícil establecer, en el marco de su metafísica, no solamente cuál es la función que esta figura del *Timeo* cumple sino también cuál era la necesidad por parte de Plotino de insertarlo en su propio sistema. En efecto, con respecto a la primera dificultad, advertimos que el rol del demiurgo se manifiesta arduo ya en el mismo texto platónico[2] y Plotino intentará ofrecer una solución a partir de sus propios supuestos. En relación con la segunda, el problema radica en que en el contexto de una especulación que explica la realidad en términos de un despliegue gradual y sucesivo, cuál sería la necesidad de utilizar la figura del demiurgo en tanto vínculo entre lo inteligible y lo sensible[3].

---

1. La edición utilizada en este trabajo del texto griego del *Timeo* platónico ha sido la de J. BURNET, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 4, Oxford, 1901 (rpr. 1968).

2. Ciertamente, tanto la generación del universo, como el status del demiurgo y su relación con el alma del mundo y con las Ideas son objeto de desacuerdo aún entre los estudiosos modernos.

3. Cf. J.M. CHARRUE, *Plotin lecteur de Platon*, Paris, 1978, 279 p., p. 126; R. DUFOUR, "Tradition et innovation: Le *Timée* dans la pensée plotinienne", dans *Études Platoniciennes 2*, J.-F. Pradeau ed., Paris, 2006, 464 p., p. 207-236, p. 215. OPSOMER ofrece esta cita de O'MEARA: "La filosofía de Plotino está situada en el punto de encuentro de dos tradiciones y dos modelos mediantes los cuales el mundo es explicado: el modelo mediante el cual el orden

¿Es una inquietud exegética la que movilizó a Plotino[4] o se trata de una convicción filosófica a partir de la cual construye su edificio metafísico? Es sabido que el punto de partida de la reflexión plotiniana era la filosofía de Platón[5], ¿esto implica que el neoplatónico se esforzó por insertar todas y cada una de las figuras que en los diálogos platónicos aparecen con cierta relevancia? Nos proponemos examinar el modo y la razón por la cual Plotino adopta y adapta nociones del *Timeo* y las inserta en su propio sistema. Qué fue lo primero: la convicción de que la letra platónica expresa la inquietud filosófica de Plotino o la necesidad del neoplatónico de incluir una figura importante del sistema de Platón en su propia explicación, cueste lo que cueste. Consideramos, tal vez, que es poco probable hallar una respuesta definitiva a este interrogante. Con todo, intentaremos examinar a la luz, fundamentalmente, del primer capítulo del tratado III, 9 de las *Enéadas*[6], el modo en que Plotino incorpora la noción del demiurgo a la hora de explicar la causa del mundo sensible.

Ciertamente, la eficacia de la inclusión de esta figura del *Timeo* en la organización plotiniana de la realidad, en tanto análoga a la segunda hipóstasis, ha sido puesta en duda debido a los marcados contrastes que entre una y otra podemos encontrar en las *Enéadas*. Por nuestra parte, atenderemos a una característica en particular que Platón atribuye al demiurgo y que resulta discordante, al menos en principio, con la caracterización plotiniana de la Inteligencia.

En efecto, el carácter artificialista de la generación demiúrgica que implica un cálculo, deliberación o razonamiento[7], se distancia del modo en que la segunda hipóstasis genera, puesto que Plotino insiste en aclarar, por ejemplo en III, 2, (47) 3, 4-5, que "este cosmos existe por necesidad, y nació no como resultado de un cálculo (οὐκ ἐκ λογισμοῦ γενομένου)". Además, en V, 8 (31), 7, Plotino niega que el Hacedor de este universo hubiera planificado en su mente la tierra, el agua, y todo lo que existe en el mundo y que, una vez que planificó, se dispusiera a poner manos a la obra (1-12). Si la segunda hipóstasis produjera

---

es impartido dentro de un caos preexistente y el modelo de derivación. El primero es el modelo del demiurgo del *Timeo*, el segundo se deriva de fuentes neopitagóricas y en última instancia desde la Academia y las doctrinas no escritas. Plotino claramente favoreció el modelo de derivación y el demiurgo devino en una triste figura." (J. OPSOMER, "A craftman and his handmaiden. Demiurgy according to Plotinus", en *Plato's* Timaeus *and the foundations of cosmology in late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Th. Leinkauf and C. Steel eds., Leuven, 2005, 492 p., p. 67-102, p. 68).

4. Cf. DUFOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

5. Cf., por ejemplo, *En.* V 1 (10) 8, 9-14.

6. La edición del texto griego de las *Enéadas* utilizada en este trabajo ha sido la de P. HENRY y H.R. SCHWYZER, PLOTINI, *Opera*, Paris, 1951-1973, 3 vols. (*editio maior*).

7. Cf. *Timeo* 30b 1-4; 34a 8.

como lo hace un artesano, su producto sería contingente –puesto que podría no haberlo hecho[8]– y no necesario como afirma en el tratado 47. Por otra parte, razonar involucra un proceso temporal en el que una etapa sigue a otra conforme a principios anteriores, cosa que atenta claramente contra el carácter atemporal de la Inteligencia plotiniana[9]. Esta divergencia entre el demiurgo del *Timeo* y la segunda hipóstasis ha sido puesta de manifiesto en el tratado III, 9 (13), 1, en el que Plotino explica de qué modo entiende el texto platónico. Su propuesta consiste en desdoblar las funciones del demiurgo del *Timeo* asignando su aspecto intelectivo al Intelecto y su aspecto productivo al Alma[10]. Esto no significa, sostenemos, la postulación de más de un demiurgo, sino que algunas características que Platón le atribuye, Plotino las desplaza a otro estadio de lo real[11].

Intentaremos ilustrar esta propuesta a partir del análisis de este tratado que comienza con la lectura que Plotino ofrece de un pasaje del diálogo platónico en el que se encuentra caracterizada la actividad demiúrgica: en 39 e, Timeo relata el modo en que las cuatro especies de seres vivientes –el género de los dioses celestes, el género alado, el terrestre y el acuático– han sido engendradas. En su labor productiva, el demiurgo

> "Pensó, pues, que este mundo debía tener en sí especies de una cualidad tal y en tanta cantidad como el intelecto ve que hay en el ser viviente ideal."[12]
>
> ἧπερ οὖν νοῦς ἐνούσας ἰδέας τῷ ὅ ἔστιν ζῷον, οἷαί τε ἔνεισι καὶ ὅσαι, καθορᾷ, τοιαύτας καὶ τοσαύτας διενοήθη δεῖν καὶ τόδε σχεῖν. (39e 7-9)

En el comienzo de III 9, 1[13] encontramos, entonces, una cita –no estrictamente textual– de estas líneas en los siguientes términos:

> "La Inteligencia –dice Platón– ve las Ideas contenidas en el Animal esencial (*esti zôon*). Luego, el demiurgo –dice– planificó (*dienoéthe*) que las cosas que la

8. Cf. DUFOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 213-14.

9. Cf. *En.* VI 7 (38) 3, 1-15.

10. Cf. DUFOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

11. OPSOMER afirma que Plotino rechazó cualquier distinción dentro de las hipóstasis primarias. Así él hizo equivaler el demiurgo al intelecto pero transfirió muchas de sus actividades como pudo al alma. Además, Plotino no menciona un demiurgo doble, sino dos principios ordenadores. Sólo el primero es llamado demiurgo. El segundo es designado como el principio regulador del universo, y parece ser equivalente al alma del mundo (el alma del mundo es el alma individual más alta -que no coincide con el Alma Hipóstasis- y su modo de actividad es superior a la de las almas individuales). Cf. OPSOMER, *op. cit.*, p. 69-70 y 81.

12. Para este pasaje del *Timeo* hemos utilizado la traducción de F. LISI, *Platón. Timeo*, en *Diálogos*, vol. VI, intr., trad. y notas, Madrid, 1992.

13. La traducción de este capítulo de *En.* III 9 aquí utilizada, con alguna modificación, es la de J. IGAL, *Plotino. Enéadas*, vol. II, intr., trad. y notas, Madrid, 1985.

> Inteligencia ve en el Animal esencial, las contuviera también este universo (*to pân ékhein*)."
>
> Νοῦς, φησιν, ὁρᾷ ἐνούσας ἰδέας ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστι ζῷον· εἶτα διενοήθη, φησίν, ὁ δημιουργός, ἅ ὁ νοῦς ὁρᾷ ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστι ζῷον, καὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἔχειν. (III, 9, 1, 1-3).

Lo que en este capítulo se examinará de este pasaje es el problema acerca de si nos encontramos con tres tipos de entidades diferentes –la inteligencia, aquel que discurre o planifica y el animal esencial– o si se trata de una o, finalmente, de dos entidades. En primer lugar, Plotino se ocupará de evaluar la relación entre la Inteligencia y las formas contenidas en el Viviente en sí y, en un segundo momento, atenderá a la tercera entidad que él cree leer en el texto: aquella que planifica, calcula o delibera[14] lo que la Inteligencia contempla; puesto que, como hemos advertido, aquel que delibera no puede ser, para el neoplatónico, el demiurgo.

En una primera instancia, entonces, Plotino se pregunta si debemos interpretar que las Formas (*tà eíde*) existían antes que la Inteligencia, puesto que parecería que las ve cuando ellas ya existían. Y, en este sentido, si acaso deberíamos concluir que el Animal esencial no es Inteligencia, sino un inteligible diferente. Ahora bien, si aceptamos que se trata de entidades diferentes, debemos acordar que los inteligibles que la Inteligencia contempla están fuera de ella (puesto que el Animal esencial es diferente de ella y en él están contenidas las Ideas) entonces la Inteligencia no contendría los originales sino las copias, hecho que contrasta con la propia caracterización plotiniana de la segunda hipóstasis[15].

Precisamente, en el sistema metafísico que él propone, la segunda hipóstasis se identifica con su contenido eidético. Es decir, mientras que la simplicidad absoluta es propia de la primera hipóstasis -que se encuentra más allá del pensamiento y del ser- aquello que conviene a la segunda es su carácter de uno-múltiple. Los siguientes pasajes ayudan a comprender esta noción: en V 9 (5), 5, 4-6 leemos:

> "… Puesto que la facultad de pensar (*phrónein*) no es en la Inteligencia un añadido, si ella piensa algo lo piensa por sí misma y si posee algo lo posee por sí misma. Si piensa por sí misma y a partir de sí misma, ella es lo que piensa."

Y en V 6 (24), 1, 3-6

> "… Lo que se piensa a sí mismo, en razón de su propio ser, no está separado de lo pensado, sino que, por estar unido a sí mismo, se ve a sí mismo. Ambos términos resultan, en consecuencia, una unidad (…) Si, en cambio, lo pensante y lo

---

14. Términos que podrían expresar el significado de *diánoia*.

15. Cf., por ejemplo, los dos primeros capítulos del tratado V, 5 (32). Los tratados de la V *Enéada* aquí citados siguen la traducción de M.I. SANTA CRUZ y M.I. CRESPO, *Plotino,* Enéadas: *textos esenciales,* Estudio preliminar, selección de textos, traducción y notas, Buenos Aires, 2007.

> pensado fuesen una unidad, pero no fuesen, además, dos términos, lo pensante no poseería lo que él piensa y, en consecuencia, tampoco sería pensante. Simple y no simple, entonces, ha de ser lo que se piensa a sí mismo."

Esta entidad una y múltiple es, para Plotino, el verdadero demiurgo[16] que contempla su propio contenido. No parece haber dificultad aquí en establecer conexiones entre la actividad noética de la segunda hipóstasis y la actividad contemplativa del demiurgo platónico, siempre y cuando se entienda –en el contexto del *Timeo*– que aquel modelo contemplado no se distingue del sujeto contemplante. Hasta este punto, la letra platónica no se encuentra necesariamente forzada[17], no –al menos– en comparación con las formulaciones acerca del carácter de la producción demiúrgica.

En III, 9, 1, entonces, aunque Plotino reconoce una diferencia conceptual entre la Inteligencia y el Animal –en tanto uno es inteligente y el otro inteligible, entiende que esto no implica que haya una separación real entre ambos:

> "… <Platón> no quiere decir que lo que la Inteligencia ve esté en otro completamente distinto, sino que está en ella misma por el hecho de que ella contiene el inteligible en sí misma…"
>
> ὅ γὰρ καθορᾷ οὔ φησιν ἐν ἑτέρῳ πάντως, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ νοητὸν ἔχειν. (14-15).

De este modo Plotino lee el pasaje del *Timeo* a la luz de su propia concepción metafísica. Es decir, de acuerdo a cómo concibe a su segunda hipóstasis, el neoplatónico interpreta que el demiurgo de Platón, siendo uno, se equipara con las Ideas que están en el Animal y, por tanto, contiene en su seno la duplicidad que implica lo que intelige y lo inteligido (*nooûn-noetón*) y que, en última instancia, será el principio de la multiplicidad.

Ahora bien, queda pendiente el arduo problema acerca de la caracterización platónica de un demiurgo que planifica o que calcula. Respecto de esta cuestión, Plotino alude a una interpretación, algo más compleja, que afirmaría la existencia de dos tipos de Inteligencia: una inteligible, identificada con el Animal y caracterizada como una inteligencia en reposo y en unidad; y otra que intelige, que ve y que planifica y se identificaría con el demiurgo, dice Plotino:

> "…La naturaleza de la Inteligencia que ve a aquella Inteligencia autosubsistente es una actividad que proviene de aquella y ve a aquella, y viéndola se asemeja: Inteligencia de aquella porque intelige a aquella, e inteligiendo a aquella es ella misma Inteligencia e inteligible de un modo distinto: por ser imitativa de aquella. Esta es, pues, la que planificó (*dianoethén*) crear (*poiêsai*) en este mundo las cuatro especies (*géne*) de animales que ve allá."

---

16. Cf. *En*. V 1 (10) 8, 4-5.

17. En efecto, especialistas modernos han ofrecido interpretaciones del *Timeo* en consonancia con esta línea hermenéutica: Cf., por ejemplo, O. VELÁSQUEZ, *Platón. Timeo*, intr., trad. y notas, Santiago de Chile, 2004, p. 30-31.

> ... τὴν δὲ τοῦ νοῦ φύσιν τοῦ ὁρῶντος ἐξεῖνον τὸν νοῦν τόν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνέργειάν τινα ἀπ' ἐκείνου, ἢ ὁρᾷ ἐκεῖνον· ὁρῶντα δὲ ἐκεῖνον οἷον ἐκεῖνον εἶναι νοῦν ἐκείνου, ὅτι νοεῖ ἐκεῖνον· νοοῦντα δὲ ἐκεῖνον καὶ αὐτὸν νοῦν καὶ νοητόν ἄλλως εἶναι τῷ μεμιμῆσθαι. Τοῦτο οὖν ἐστι τὸ διανοηθέν, ἅ ἐκεῖ ὁρᾷ, ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ ποιῆσαι ζῴων γένη τέσσαρα. (17-22)

Esta última lectura, aunque Plotino la acepta como una interpretación plausible del texto platónico, no la encuentra satisfactoria[18] puesto que, como veremos inmediatamente, el neoplatónico considera que Platón no identificaba al "planificador" (*tó dianooúmenon*) con la Inteligencia y el Animal[19]. En este sentido, Plotino se estaría distanciando de aquellos que conciben una naturaleza doble del demiurgo, en tanto *noûs-noetón* por una parte y *dianooúmenon* por otra, pues el neoplatónico interpreta que en el relato de Timeo hay una referencia a otra entidad, diferente del demiurgo[20].

> "…pero, ¿quién es ese tercero, el que planificó (*dienoéthe*) producir (*ergásasthai*), crear (*poiêsai*) y dividir (*merísai*) él mismo las cosas que la Inteligencia vio que estaban en el Animal?"
>
> ... τὸ δὲ τρίτον τί, ὅ διενοήθη τὰ ὁρώμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦ ἐν τῷ ζῴῳ κείμενα αὐτὸ ἐργάσασθαι καὶ ποιῆσαι καὶ μερίσαι; (27-29).

Sobre este punto, Gurtler observa que lo que Plotino está indicando es que la dificultad está en el *Timeo* mismo: el Intelecto no sólo planifica lo que está hecho en el universo físico, sino que lleva a cabo el hacer y dividir, que son funciones claramente inapropiadas para su naturaleza eterna e indivisible. Plotino intentará resolver esta cuestión argumentando que si bien es la

---

18. DODDS, por ejemplo, ha detectado en aquel pasaje una alusión al segundo dios de Numenio, caracterizado como un demiurgo doble (f. 21) a quien se le asigna tanto la actividad noética cuanto las operaciones dianoéticas que dan lugar al devenir. (E.R. DODDS, "Numenius and Ammonius", in *Les sources de Plotin*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique, Ginebra, t. V, 1960, p. 1-61, p. 19-20). A partir de esta alusión por parte de Plotino, el especialista lo encuentra en contradicción con *En*. II, 9 (33), 6, 14-24, en el que el neoplatónico sostiene que pensar que hay un doble intelecto, uno en reposo y otro en movimiento, es producto de una mala lectura del pasaje 39e del *Timeo* de Platón (se refiere a la lectura gnóstica). En relación con Numenio, Plotino –ya maduro- rechaza caracterizar al primer principio como *noûs*, por una parte, y prefiere concebir al demiurgo no como doble sino como uno-múltiple en tanto *noûs-noetón*, separándolo definitaivamente del ámbito del devenir. Dodds sostiene, en suma, que mientras en el tratado 13, Plotino se encontraba muy cerca de las doctrinas de Numenio, en el tratado 33 la distancia entre uno y otro se encuentra más acentuada. Sin embargo, la idea de la proximidad entre el Plotino de *En*. III, 9, 1 con Numenio comienza a debilitarse si, como Opsomer, se considera que en este tratado temprano la posibilidad de un intelecto doble (uno en reposo y otro en movimiento) también se encuentra rechazada (tal como en el tratado 33) puesto que el demiurgo del *Timeo* no deja de equivaler a la segunda hipóstasis, ni el Alma hipóstasis ni el alma del mundo pueden ser denominadas demiurgo ya que su tarea, a los ojos de Plotino, depende de éste sin por eso identificarse con él. Cf. OPSOMER, *op. cit*., p. 91-96.

19. Cf. *En*. III 9 (13) 1, 23-24.

20. Cf. n. 17 *supra*.

Inteligencia quien dividió, puesto que las cosas divididas provienen de ella; sin embargo, en tanto ella permanece indivisa y lo dividido es otra cosa que ella -es decir: las almas- no es ella misma quien divide en almas sino que el Alma, la tercera hipóstasis, las dividió en una multiplicidad de almas. De este modo, Plotino está forzado a concluir que debe haber un tercero, otro que el Intelecto y el Viviente en sí, que sea capaz de hacer la división necesaria en la generación del mundo sensible[21].

Es decir, el cálculo o planificación (*he diánoia*) no es una actividad de la Inteligencia, sino que es propia del Alma, que es quien divide en una naturaleza divisible (*en meristêi phýsei*)[22]. Finalmente, en las líneas 34-35 leemos:

> "Por eso dice <Platón> que la división es propia del Tercero y que se da en el Tercero por razón de que planificó (*hóti dienoéthe*)…"
>
> Διὸ καὶ φησι τοῦ τρίτου εἶναι τὸν μερισμὸν καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ, ὅτι διενοήθη...

Ahora bien, en rigor, el Alma hipóstasis en tanto tal tampoco presenta como actividad propia la deliberación; ¿qué entidad está, entonces, representada por ese Tercero? Ciertamente es la tercera hipóstasis quien, contemplando las Formas inteligibles, organiza la materia para generar los cuerpos a través del alma del mundo.

Sobre el modo en que esto se realiza, explica Brisson:

> "… la organización a la que somete a la materia resulta de la acción de las fórmulas racionales (*lógoi*) que, en el Alma hipóstasis, corresponden a las formas inteligibles, y se hallan en estado de dispersión y no de simultaneidad como las formas inteligibles en el Intelecto. Y porque el Alma del mundo utiliza esas fórmulas racionales que se hallan en ella de un modo aun inferior, ella llega a organizar la materia de modo de hacer que todos los cuerpos lleguen a ser."[23]

Entonces, el universo es generado mediante la parte inferior del alma del mundo[24] que se orienta siempre hacia la parte superior que se mantiene próxima a lo inteligible[25]; y estas fórmulas racionales o *lógoi* (a las que acabamos de

---

21. Cf. G.M. GURTLER, "Providence: The Platonic Demiurge and Hellenistic Causality", in *Neoplatonism and Nature, Studies in Plotinus'* Enneads, M.F Wagner ed., New York, 2002, 346 p., p. 99-124, p. 104.

22. Cf. *En*. III 9 (13) 1, 29-37.

23. Cf. L. BRISSON, "La oposición *phúsis* / *tékhne* en Plotino", *Synthesis* [on line] 10, trad. cast. Santa Cruz-Crespo, 2003, p. 11-29. Consultado en http://www.scielo.org.ar/pdf/synth/v10/v10a02.pdf, p. 20; Cf. OPSOMER (*op. cit., p*. 89-91) quien analiza detenidamente –a partir de varios pasajes de las *Enéadas*- el proceso de generación de lo sensible.

24. Nos referimos a la Naturaleza que, en términos de Brisson, podemos definir como una potencia que corresponde a la parte inferior del Alma del mundo, la parte que entra en contacto con la materia. Cf. BRISSON, *art. cit*., p. 20.

25. Cf. *En*. II 3 (52) 18, 10-21.

hacer referencia en la cita de Brisson) serían imágenes de las Formas Inteligibles que el Alma hipóstasis contempla. Así, el papel de la segunda hipóstasis deviene central en la producción de lo sensible puesto que ella es quien posee en sí misma las Formas inteligibles y se identifica, como observamos más arriba, con ellas. En términos de Dufour:

> "…Este demiurgo transmite las Formas al Alma, que sólo puede recibirlas en tanto que ellas se fraccionan en *lógoi*. Estos *lógoi* pasan al alma del universo, más precisamente a su parte inferior, la que los transmite a la materia."[26]

Hasta aquí hemos observado que, a diferencia de la caracterización platónica del demiurgo, la Inteligencia plotiniana no calcula ni delibera; pero, ¿es correcto afirmar que el Alma sí lo hace? En V, 1, 3 Plotino define: "… Por proceder de la Inteligencia el Alma es, pues, intelectual y su inteligencia se ejerce en los razonamientos…" (líneas 12-14). Y en V, 1, 7, 42 y ss., leemos: "…la prole de la Inteligencia es una cierta Razón y una Subsistencia, la Potencia dianoética…"

A este respecto Gurtler advierte que Plotino usa términos como *logismós* y *lógos* para describir su conocimiento en contraste con el *noûs* y *nóeta* (actividad intelectual) que caracterizan al Intelecto en sí mismo. El significado de estos términos viene directamente del carácter discursivo del razonamiento humano, pero tal discursividad es imposible en el caso de la hipóstasis del Alma que está completamente dentro del mundo inteligible[27].

Más aun, es claro que Plotino rechaza atribuirle al demiurgo un tipo de generación artificialista. Sin embargo, es preciso recordar la cita de III, 2, 3 (οὐκ ἐκ λογισμοῦ γενομένου): es el cosmos el que no es producto de un cálculo. Quien haya sido su progenitor (llámese demiurgo, alma del mundo, naturaleza) no ha recurrido a un razonamiento o planificación al engendrarlo. En este sentido Opsomer, por ejemplo, asegura que hay "hacedores" en todo el descenso a la naturaleza, y todos los agentes en la línea de producción producen sin movimiento y sin esfuerzo. Desde la perspectiva del *Timeo* esto es sorprendente[28]. No obstante, este especialista concluye que Plotino no parece rechazar que el alma del mundo sea demiúrgicamente activa –aunque él normalmente reserva el término "demiurgo" para el Intelecto y al alma la llama "hacedora" (*poietés*). Este autor, habiendo analizado el tratado IV, 4 (28), sostiene que Plotino distingue entre dos principios de producción del cosmos: el demiurgo y el alma del mundo. Además, diferencia varios estadios de producción del cosmos dentro del ámbito del alma: el alma del mundo y la naturaleza. Su actividad es llamada *poieîn*, aunque ambas sean sin movimiento, como puede concluirse de III, 8. Lo que Plotino niega es la idea del alma como

---

26. Cf. DUFOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

27. Cf. GURTLER, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

28. Cf. OPSOMER, *op. cit*, p. 90.

demiurgo real, actuando desde su propia iniciativa, después de haberse alejado de la estable contemplación del intelecto y habiéndose apoyado, en cambio, en la deliberación[29].

Para elucidar esta cuestión, será preciso establecer qué entiende Plotino por *logismós* y *diánoia*. A este respecto Gurtler –a propósito de su análisis de los pasajes del tratado V, 1 citado más arriba– propone una solución: sostiene que Plotino pone el énfasis en la naturaleza y función intermediarias del alma -puesto que sirve como un vínculo ontológico entre el mundo inteligible y el sensible-. Así, el Alma tiene una planificación en sí misma anterior a la división de los cuerpos realizada por el alma del mundo, aunque el alma del mundo tampoco delibera cuando divide. Entonces, concluye Gurtler, los términos *logismós* y *diánoia* (y sus cognados) que Plotino usa no pueden tener el carácter discursivo propio del razonar humano en la hipóstasis del Alma y en el alma del mundo. Su utilización responde, arriesga este autor, a la distinción de dos aspectos del ser y del conocer del alma, en conformidad con su teoría de los dos actos: el acto intelectual mediante el cual se identifica con el Intelecto y este acto mediante el cual su propia identidad como alma se revela generando el cosmos sensible. Este segundo acto toma el nombre de lo que produce, pero debe tener una naturaleza más compatible con lo inteligible. Así, cuando se atribuye "razón" o "planificación" a esas acciones más altas, no pueden ser entendidas en sentido discursivo, sino como indicando su subordinación a otro nivel más alto[30].

En nuestro intento de determinar cuál es la función que la figura del demiurgo platónico cumple en la estructura de la realidad que Plotino desarrolla, nos hemos encontrado con grandes dificultades: en primer lugar, hallamos una contraposición entre la caracterización de la actividad demiúrgica en el *Timeo* en términos de fabricación artesanal y el modo en que Plotino niega la generación del universo sensible como el producto de un razonamiento o planificación, características propias del proceder del artesano. En segundo lugar, es difícil conciliar con el texto de Platón la idea de desdoblamiento que Plotino propone de la labor creadora: el neoplatónico distingue, según hemos observado, un demiurgo que contempla los inteligibles que él mismo contiene, de un alma que -mediante el alma del mundo- divide, cumpliendo todos una función esencial en la generación del ámbito de devenir.

Ahora bien, consideramos que el motivo de la inserción de la noción de demiurgo en el sistema plotiniano no se encontrará si lo concebimos como un intento forzado del neoplatónico de ver representadas en su filosofía toda noción a la que Platón haya hecho referencia. Ciertamente, Plotino forma parte de una tradición en la que la figura del demiurgo ya había penetrado profundamente.

---

29. Cf. OPSOMER, *op. cit*, p. 97.

30. Cf. GURTLER, *op. cit*., p. 107-108; Cf., además *En*. VI 7 (38) 1, 28-43.

No solamente el demiurgo sino el *Timeo* mismo en su conjunto eran objeto de discusión ineludible y fuente de inspiración[31]. Concebir que la Teoría de las Ideas, la Idea del Bien, o –incluso– la figura del demiurgo fueron nociones que filósofos posteriores a Platón insertaron en sus reflexiones a pesar de sus propias convicciones filosóficas es, tal vez, olvidar el diálogo que entre un pensador y otro se establece en el marco de inquietudes comunes. En efecto, recurrir a la noción del demiurgo para analizarla o reelaborarla no fue una novedad plotiniana. Es el caso de Numenio, quien utiliza nociones y términos del *Timeo*, pero también de Atico, Plutarco, Alcinoo, Apuleyo, quienes han debatido acerca de la función del demiurgo en la creación del mundo.

Plotino, entonces, no sólo contrasta su tesis con el texto de Platón sino que también dialoga con otras interpretaciones. En su afán por descubrir qué es exactamente aquello que Platón intentó transmitir en sus diálogos, Plotino construye su propio sistema. Mencionaremos, muy brevemente, un ejemplo del modo en el que el neoplatónico desarrolla su exposición acerca de su realidad gradual y derivativa a la luz de su lectura de los textos platónicos. En el tratado V, 1 (10), 8, 4-14 aclara

> "... Dice también <Platón> que hay un "Padre de la Causa", llamando "Causa" a la Inteligencia, pues para él la Inteligencia es el Demiurgo. Y de éste dice que crea el Alma en la cratera aquella. Y como la causa es la Inteligencia, por Padre entiende el Bien, o sea, el que está allende la Inteligencia y allende la Esencia. Y en varios pasajes identifica Ser y la Inteligencia con la Idea. De donde resulta que Platón sabía que del Bien procede la Inteligencia y de la Inteligencia el Alma, y que estas doctrinas no son nuevas ni han sido expuestas hogaño, sino antaño, no de forma patente, es verdad, pero la presente exposición es una exégesis de aquella porque demuestra con el testimonio de los escritos del propio Platón que estas opiniones nuestras son antiguas."

Ahora bien, es cierto que el neoplatónico encuentra que sus reflexiones metafísicas poseen como antecedente directo aquello que Platón ha sugerido en el libro VI de su *República*. Sin embargo, esta interpretación de la causa del demiurgo en términos de la Idea de Bien –caracterizada por Platón en *República* 509b como más allá del ser– no es patrimonio exclusivo de Plotino. Numenio ya había combinado aquel pasaje de *República* con la caracterización del demiurgo en *Timeo* 29e. En efecto, en el libro VI del su obra *Acerca del Bien*, Numenio afirma: "…si el demiurgo es bueno por participación en el primer bien, la idea de bien será el primer *noûs* por ser el bien en sí." (Fr. 20). Es probable que Plotino -en consonancia con la interpretación de Numenio- haya encontrado en *Timeo* 29e una indicación acerca de la posición metafísica de Platón, pues cuando Timeo pregunta acerca de la causa del hacer del hacedor, responde que

---

31. Cf. F. FERRARI, "Interpretare il *Timeo*", en *Plato's* Timaeus *and the foundations of cosmology in late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Th. Leinkauf & C. Steel eds., Leuven, 2005, 492 p., p. 1-13, p. 1-4.

se trata de la bondad del demiurgo. De qué se trata este bien, por qué el demiurgo es bueno, son interrogantes que tal vez Plotino pretende esclarecer desde el famoso pasaje del libro VI de la *República*. Y, asimismo, si se tratara de este Bien incognoscible, podría entenderse, tal vez, el motivo por el que Timeo afirma, en en 28c 3: "Descubrir al hacedor y padre de este universo es difícil, pero, una vez descubierto, comunicárselo a otro, es imposible."

Creemos que es posible sostener que Plotino leyó estas líneas a la luz del Bien caracterizado en *República*, y, en este sentido, podría decirse que esto que está más allá del ser y del conocimiento es la causa del hacer del demiurgo. Entonces, parafraseando aquello que Platón afirmara acerca del demiurgo en 28c 3, podríamos decir que en tanto su causa descubrir al Bien es difícil[32] y si se lo descubre, comunicarlo a otros es imposible. De modo que Plotino, a partir de su propia lectura de la metafísica platónica se presenta en V, 1 (10) 8 como deudor de la estructura gradual de la realidad que Platón habría formulado.

Finalmente, quisiéramos concluir planteando que a partir de las dificultades que resultan a la hora de establecer conexiones simétricas entre los componentes de un sistema filosófico y otro (un caso ejemplar es el carácter artificialista de la producción demiúrgica), podemos advertir que justamente son esas dificultades las que llaman a la reflexión que posibilita una reconsideración y reelaboración. Es cierto que Plotino no ha ofrecido de modo conclusivo una interpretación correcta y acabada de la letra platónica; no obstante, dialogando con ella y con toda la tradición histórico-filosófica de la que forma parte, ha permitido repensar a Platón en función de su lectura. Es en este sentido que creemos correcto afirmar que la inclusión de la figura del demiurgo en su sistema metafísico se acerca más a una necesidad doctrinal que a una simple inquietud exegética.

32. Cf. PLATÓN, *República* VI 506 e: "...dejemos por ahora, dichosos amigos, lo que es en sí mismo el Bien; pues me parece demasiado como para que el presente impulso permita en este momento alcanzar lo que juzgo de él."

THE MORAL STATUS OF THE PLOTINIAN ARTIST

JUDITH OMTZIGT

Until recently, the Plotinian artist was generally considered to be fundamentally inferior to the Plotinian sage in ethical achievement and status. The unimpeded identification of the sage with his true Self on the level of Nous was assumed to imply an exclusive focus of attention on the intelligible realm of Forms and a more or less complete neglect of the material realm of practice and social interacting. The artist, dealing so intensively with matter, was clearly not of this kind, even though his moral status had improved substantially since Plato.

Now recent studies in Plotinian ethics have changed our view of the Plotinian sage. He is no longer seen as a totally unpractical and self-absorbed person. As a result of this, the moral status of the Plotinian artist is in need of reconsideration. Because if the contemplative life of the sage has a practical side as well –emanating from his perfect inner peace– we can start to wonder why artistic creation couldn't be part of it. It seems that essential differences between the concept of the Plotinian sage and that of the artist have ceased to exist.

I. – INTRODUCTION

Whereas Plato considered the average artist to be inferior to the craftsman and denied him a place within his ideal state on moral and epistemological grounds, since the Hellenistic-Roman era, his status in society has increased significantly. He is being valued at least as much as the craftsman[1] and is sometimes even credited with an outstanding personality[2]. Yet he is being

1. In Plutarchus (*Life of Périkles* 2) the value of the artist - though his work is being admired – doesn't go beyond that of the craftsman.

2. E. PANOFSKY, *Idea,* Berlin, 1960, p. 6.

regarded inferior to his work, which in this period is highly admired, albeit on mostly instrumental grounds[3].

As for Plotinus, we can say, first of all, that he considers the artist to be more lofty than his work, because the artist can make the transcendent Ideas immanent to his own mind, while in his work there can be present no more than just a reflection of the Ideas. Since the artist creates out of true knowledge and wisdom, he is also superior to the craftsman, who is intellectually more limited[4]. It may be clear, then, that Plotinus displays a, for his time and certainly compared to Plato, pronouncedly positive attitude towards the artist. Until now, it has been assumed, though, that the Plotinian artist cannot be assigned the moral status of the wise man. A.H. Armstrong states in *Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus*: "However philosophic Plotinus may make the contemplative creation of the artist sound, he is not likely to have put the artist on the level of the true philosopher[5]." This opinion is highly based on the image of the Plotinian wise man as someone completely turned away from the physical world. The unimpeded identification of the wise man with his true Self on the level of Nous would imply an exclusive focus of attention on the intelligible realm of Forms and a more or less complete neglect of the material realm of practice and social interacting[6].

But recent studies in Plotinian ethics have changed our view of the Plotinian wise man[7]. He is no longer seen as a totally unpractical and self-absorbed person. Although the *core* of the concept of the Plotinian wise man consists of a permanent contact with the intelligible reality, it has turned out that this in no way excludes social-practical activities. On the contrary, because of the emanating character of the Good, practical activities flow spontaneously from intellectual activities. As by-products of contemplation, practical activities form an undeniable part of the good life. It has been claimed that the social

---

3. O. KUISMA, *Art or experience: a study on Plotinus' aesthetics*, Helsinki, 2003, p. 21.

4. PLOTINUS, *The Enneads,* III.8.4.45-48. Translated by A.H. ARMSTRONG, London, 1966-1988.

5. A.H. ARMSTRONG, "Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus", in J. Mansfeld & L. De Rijk eds., *Kephalaion*. Assen, 1975, p. 156-157.

6. ARMSTRONG, "Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus", p. 157.

7. For example D.J. O'MEARA, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity,* Oxford, 2003, p.80; A. SCHNIEWIND, *L'éthique du sage chez Plotin. Le paradigme du spoudaios*, Paris, 2003, p. 112; J. BUSSANICH, "The invulnerability of goodness: the ethical and psychological theory of Plotinus", *Proceedings of the Boston Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 6, 1992, p. 184; P. REMES, "Plotinus's Ethics of Desinterested Interest", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 44, 2006, p. 1-23; A. SMITH, "The Significance of Practical Ethics for Plotinus", in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honor of John Dillon,* J. Cleary ed., Alderhot, 1999, p. 227-236.

engagement of the wise man could even take the form of political leadership. In any case, we can see the wise man being engaged in educational activities, to guide his fellow man towards the good life.

This change in our conception of the Plotinian wise man forces us to reconsider the moral status of the Plotinian artist. If in the life of the wise man, next to intellectual activities, practical activities have a place as well, then why could these practical activities not consist of the creation of artistic images of the intelligible? Why could the Plotinian wise man not be an artist at the same time? The Plotinian concepts of the wise man and that of the artist don't seem to be incompatible any longer, so that there doesn't seem to be any ground left on which we can fundamentally deny the artist a full moral status.

II. – THE ARTIST AS A WISE MAN

Thus, based on recent results within the field of Plotinian ethics, we may be forced to adapt our moral judgement of the Plotinian artist. The difference between him and the Plotinian wise man does not seem to be essential any longer.

Let's first of all realise that, in any case, nowhere in the *Enneads* is the wise man explicitly denied the creation of art[8], nor is the artist denied true happiness. We know that the artist is attributed with the capacity to transcend himself to the level of Nous, which forms the basis of his art. Even though Plotinus may claim in his treatise 'Dialectic' that the musical person represents a phase within the moral development of human kind, which comes before the real conversion to the Intelligible[9], the real *musician* or whatever *artist* is never assigned this imperfect moral status.

Of course, there are some text passages in which the arts are described as imitation of just the physical world and thereby portray the artist as little elevated and spiritual. But from later treatises[10] it is clear that Plotinus left that pessimistic view on art behind him. That there may be a few purely horizontally oriented art forms, and that in bad art the relation with the intelligible is not present, does not change the fact that the Plotinian artist is *in principle* a seer and transferrer of the higher and perfect reality.

Now, it is important for us to find out whether the practical activity of the artist, just as that of the wise man, can be regarded as a pure by-product of his contemplative activity. Or that it is inherent in the creation of art that the final

---

8. In *Enn*. V.8.6.1 Plotinus talks about the carving of symbols in temples by Egyptian wise men. This activity is at least similar to that of the artist.

9. PLOTINUS, *Enn*. I.3.2.

10. *Enn*. V.8.1.18-22; V.8.1.38-40; V.8.2.14-16.

process of creation contains an element of *weakening* of the initial contemplation. In this last case, the artist could not, although blessed with moments of true insight, be attributed with a *permanent* exercise of the cathartic virtues: his moral status would be fundamentally inferior to that of the wise man.

At the beginning of *Enneade* V.8.5, pieces of art are initially described as directly issuing from wisdom. There is no mentioning of a weakening of the initial, higher wisdom before it emanates in a creation in the physical world:

> Πάντα δὴ τὰ γινόμενα, εἴτε τεχνητὰ εἴτε φυσικὰ εἴη, σοφία τις ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡγεῖται τῆς ποιήσεως πανταχοῦ σοφία. ἀλλ᾽ εἰ δή τις κατ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν σοφίαν ποιοῖ, ἔστωσαν μὲν αἱ τέχναι τοιαῦται. (V.8.5.1-4)

> Some wisdom makes all the things which have come into being, whether they are products of art or nature, and everywhere it is a wisdom which is in charge of their making. But if anyone does really make according to wisdom itself, let us grant that the arts are like this. (Armstrong)

The statement with which Plotinus then continues, though, seems to contradict the previous one completely. It all of a sudden *does* seem to be the case that, in order to create in matter, to a lower level of wisdom – lower than that of the wise man – needs to be descended:

> ἀλλ᾽ ὁ τεχνίτης πάλιν αὖ εἰς σοφίαν φυσικὴν ἔρχεται, καθ᾽ ἣν γεγένηται.... (V.8.5.4-5)

> But the craftsman goes back again to the wisdom of nature, according to which he has come into existence.. (Armstrong)

The way in which Plotinus then describes this wisdom of nature actually reminds more of the wisdom of the World Soul, contemplating the Ideas in Nous, than that really the weakest form of wisdom, *the contemplation of nature,* would be discussed here:

> οὐκέτι συντεθεῖσαν ἐκ θεωρημάτων, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλην ἕν τι.... (V.8.5.5-6)

> a wisdom which is no longer composed of theorems, but is one thing as a whole... (Armstrong)

Indeed, Eugéne de Keyser claims in *La Signification de l'Art dans les Ennéades de Plotin* that in this specific context we should understand σοφίαν φυσικὴν as the wisdom of the World Soul. Plotinus would have wanted to show the similarity between the artist and the always perfectly contemplating World Soul here[11]. A similarity that of course also exists between the World Soul and the wise man.

In treatise IV.3.18, we can read once more that the artist in principle creates directly and without deliberation out of his higher contemplation and thus creates a by-product. Only when difficulties arise within the creative process does he use an inferior kind of wisdom –discursive reasoning–:

> ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τέχναις ὁ λογισμὸς ἀποροῦσι τοῖς τεχνίταις, ὅταν δὲ μὴ χαλεπὸν ᾖ, κρατεῖ καὶ ἐργάζεται ἡ τέχνη. (IV.3.18.5-7)

> .. just as in the crafts reasoning occurs when the craftsmen are in perplexity, but, when there is no difficulty, the craft dominates and does its work. (Armstrong)

A great artist will thus keep his contemplation directed at the level of Nous and can therefore be attributed with an uninterrupted practice of the cathartic virtues, just like the Plotinian wise man.

So, just as is the case with the moral actions of the wise man, for the creation of art, too, there is no need to descend to a lower level of being. Artistic activity can accompany a permanent exercise of the cathartic virtues – the essence of happiness – without any problem. We can consider the creation of art to be a by-product of perfect contemplation, just as the moral activities that are attributed to the wise man. We could even consider the creation of art to be a *kind* of moral action. It seems that the creation of art can be placed quite properly under the heading of educational activities – the main type of moral action of the wise man. We know how excellent beauty, including art, is able to help people make a start in their ethical development and to make them aware of their true, spiritual Self, according to Plotinus. We could even say that the artist with his thorough association with the relation between intelligible and material beauty is able to guide the spiritual ascend by beauty better than anyone else.

---

11. E. DE KEYSER, *La signification de l'art dans les Ennéades de Plotin*, Louvain, 1955, p. 44-45.

Of course, the creation of art is not a *self-sufficient* activity and can therefore never form the *core* of the Plotinian good life. The degree to which the material accepts the artistic Form is not to be decided by the artist. In this respect, he depends on outer circumstances[12]. But a similar dependence plays a role in the moral actions of the wise man. Whether, for example, his educational activities will be effective or not is not entirely within his own hands. This dependency is, however, in no way relevant for the fullness of his happiness, as long as these actions do not form a *constituent* but only a *by-product* of his happiness. In the same way, the dependency on the material within the creative process doesn't have to affect the fullness of the happiness of the artist. As long as his creative activity is but a by-product of an essentially contemplative existence, its impassivity is not being decreased.

Although the creation of art is thus not itself the *summum bonum* of human life, artistic activity can *accompany* the *summum bonum* of human life, permanent intellectuality, very well and in a very fruitful way. To have proven this, suffices to no longer consider the Plotinian artist to be essentially different from the Plotinian wise man. There isn't a ground to fundamentally deny him a full moral status any longer.

12. *Enn*. V.8.1.21-22.

CONTEXTS OF *SYMPÁTHEIA* IN PLOTINUS

JOSÉ M. ZAMORA CALVO

We can explain the ideological opposition between Plotinus and the Stoics as an ideological "divergence" pointed out by P. Aubenque, located at the basis of the two systems. If to the members of the Stoa the purpose of physics belongs to the moral-political field, the theory of universal sympathy is considered on the basis of its social implementation in cosmopolitanism. By contrast, for Plotinus, the universal sympathy of the Unitarian whole, sensitive to itself, is reflected in the tangible world, by means of the intermediary of the *lógoi*, the harmony of intelligible forms in the intelligible world.

The notion of *sympátheia* has been one of the least addressed by Plotinian researchers, as evidenced by the low number of bibliographical references. The first book dedicated specifically to the subject, K. Keiling´s thesis, *Über die bei Sympathie bei Plotin* (1916), interprets the Enneads from the point of view of nineteenth century hermeneutical paradigm, thus viewing Plotinus' system as an idealistic monism[1].

---

1. K. KEILING, *Über die Sympathie bei Plotin*, Diss. Jena, 1916. Other, more recent studies of the notion of *sympátheia* in Plotinus are: A. LÓPEZ EIRE, "Plotino frente a sus fuentes", *Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Helénicos*, 7, 1973, p. 65-77; G.M. GURTLER, "Sympathie in Plotinus", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 24, 1984, p. 395-406; F.M. SCHROEDER, "*Synousia, synaisthaesis* and *synesis*: presence and dependence in the plotinian philosophy of consciousness", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt,* Berlin-New York, 1987, Vol. 36.2, p. 677-699; I. HADOT, "Aspects de la théorie de la perception chez les néoplatoniciens: sensation *(aísthesis)*, sensation commune *(koinè aísthesis),* sensibles communs *(koinà aisthetá)* et conscience de soi *(synaísthesis)*", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 8, 1997, p. 33-85; and A. PIGLER, "La réception plotinienne de la notion stoïcienne de sympathie universelle", *Revue de philosophie ancienne*, 19, 2001, p. 45-78.

When interpreting Plotinus' work, W. Theiler already clearly indicates the importance of referring to a Platonised Stoa, represented by Posidonius[2]. The fragments of this philosopher of the Stoa, collected by L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd[3], allow us to analyze the composition of this period of middle Stoicism, radically influenced by Plato. As regards the notion of *sympátheia*, though Posidonius was not its discoverer, he was the first to use it in a systematic way. The stoic from Apamaea states that all things are necessarily connected to all others. Thus, if the cosmos is a system (*sýstema*)[4], a correlation of elements, and if this unit is intrinsic and configures it, each element must necessarily influence the others to give the whole a particular shape. Posidonius calls this co-implication of some elements with others in the universe *sympátheia*.

In the analysis of the concept of *sympátheia* in Plotinus we must take as a starting point the study of the relationship between the One and the many, without departing from the dynamic pattern of procession which, ultimately, consists of a double movement from unity to multiplicity. Thus, Plotinus tries to "think about the One" at various levels of this deployment. "Dialectics" is for him precisely the movement of thought which seeks the one in the manifold, with the objective of achieving a "unification" (*hénosis*) of the soul with the One above the multiplicity that being and thinking imply.

Plotinian *sympátheia* originates in Stoic sources where it has a materialistic interpretation. Plotinus reinterprets Stoic *sympátheia* and adds elements from its own henological-processional system. *Sympátheia* is applied at two levels: 1) In general, it refers to nature, explaining the relationship of one part of the universe to another. And, more specifically, it refers to the unity of nature which is in the

---

2. Cf. W. THEILER, "Plotin zwischen Platon und Stoa", in VV. AA., *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique. Tome V, Les sources de Plotin*, Vandoeuvres-Genève, 21-29 août, 1957, Genève, 1960, p. 63-103 (= *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, Berlin-New York, 1966, p. 124-139).

3. A selection of fragments, identified by name, recently elaborated by L. EDELSTEIN & I.G. KIDD. *Posidonius. Vol. I, the fragments*, Cambridge, 1972; I.G. KIDD: Vol. II (i) and vols. II (ii): *The Commentary*, Cambridge, 1988; and vol. III: *The translation of the Fragments*, Cambridge, 1999. Besides the annotated edition, which includes the unidentified fragments by name, by W. THEILER: *Poseidonios, die Fragmente*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1982. About Posidonius, see K. REINHARDT, *Poseidonios*, Munich, 1921; and by the same author, K. REINHARDT, *Kosmos und sympathie. Neue Untersuchungen über Poseidonios*, Munich, 1926.

4. In Posidonius' cosmos there is a correlation of elements (*sýstema*), where each of its elements has an impact on others. "The cosmos is a system of heaven and earth of the natures in them, or a system of gods and men and what is born for them" (our translation) (DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Vitae philosophorum* (DL), 7, 143 EK, 4, and 8 Long). In addition, cosmos is continuous and an energy place (*tónos*). See J.R. ARANA, "Materialidad sígnica en Posidonio de Apamea", *Daimon: Revista de Filosofía*, 21, 2000, p. 10.

basis of sensation and apprehension. 2) S*ympátheia* also allows him to explain the nature of the souls and their relationship with the bodies. At this level he examines each individual soul and how it contributes to all. This paper analyzes the different levels of *sympátheia* in the universe, sensory perception, sympathy between souls, and the relationship between *synaísthesis* and *sympátheia*.

I. – UNIVERSAL *SYMPÁTHEIA*

Plotinus introduces sympátheia in nature within the context of divination. In the treatise *On Destination* (III, 1 [3]) he addresses the various causal explanations of the universal order of the cosmos, as well as the causes and behavior of individual men. He writes this treaty against astrological determinists, who believe that the stars are primarily responsible for directing cosmic events, and even, ultimately, of human thought and activities.

> "The evidence for this is that by divination from the planets people foretell what is going to happen in the All and about each individual, what sort of fortune and, in particular, what sort of thoughts he is going to have. And they say that one can see that the other animals and plants grow and diminish under the sympathetic influence of the planets *(apò tês toúton sympatheías auxómená)*, and are affected by them in other ways."[5]

The Alexandrian seeks to preserve human responsibility and liberty. His main attack is focused on the causal efficacy of the stars. Thus, he finds it absurd to say that, as the passion of the stars might indicate what has happened, the stars are, therefore, causes of events. For Plotinus, making the stars a cause of evil is inconsistent with his divine and immutable nature. He admits that they have an influence on certain physical factors, but human actions cannot be reduced solely to physical factors. Therefore, he denies the causality of the stars, but, interestingly, he denies rules outside the sympathetic relationship of the terrestrial world to the earthly circuit. Plotinus replaces the materialistic interpretation of sympathy as a cause by a sympathy in which the stars operate in favour of the preservation of the universe, but in a restricted sense which allows experts to read the future in considering models and celestial configurations[6].

---

5. *Enn*. III, 1 [3] 5, 4-11 (P. HENRY & H.-R. SCHWYZER eds., *Plotini Opera*, 3 vols., Oxford, 1964-1982). We follow the English translation by H.A. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus, Enneads*, 7 vols., London-Cambridge [Mass.], 1966-1988, contrasted with the Spanish translation by J. IGAL, *Plotino. Enéadas I-VI*, 3 vols., Madrid, 1982-1998.

6. Cf. *Enn*. III, 1 [3] 5-6; IV, 4 [28] 8, 55-57.

In the treatise *Problems About the Soul* (II) [28], Plotinus presents a more systematic analysis of the unity of the universe and the role of sympathy[7]. The reference to *sympátheia* is done in connection with the knowledge of prayer and magic, explained by the harmony of the stars[8]. The arts of divination, magic and prayers are phenomena that Plotinus does not deny, but which he situates in relation to transcendent elements. These are matters arising from the interplay of the various material parts of this universe.

Magic is explained by "sympathy" and "connection" of some parts with others. "But how do magic spells *(goeteías)* work? By sympathy *(têi sympatheíai)* and by the fact that there is a natural concord of things that are alike *(symphonían eînai homoíon)* and opposition of things that are different (kaì enantíosin anomoíon), and by the rich variety of the many powers which go to make up the life of the one living creature *(èn zôion)*"[9]. Plotinus uses an explanation of sympathy without falling into the materialistic determinism of his predecessors, in order to preserve individual integrity without losing the fundamental unity of these individuals as members of a unitary whole.

The origin of sympathy in the soul is not confined to the expression of sympathy at the level of the physical universe. This materialistic level has no effect in terms of a part which is in tune with another, to use a musical image which appears frequently in the *Enneads*[10]. Sympathy is described as a mutual influence of the parts with respect to each other and to the whole, while preserving the individual as well as the whole at the material level.

Plotinus describes sympathy as the ratio of one part of the universe to another in terms of similarity or harmony. This is an important aspect of sympathy in relation to the structure of the universe. But besides, as we shall see, sense perception of the world starts from the sympathetic character of the universe as a whole, and it expresses the self-same internal involvement of living organisms and the ability of this living being to be affected and related to another. From the problem of the material unity of the universe as a whole Plotinus goes to each one´s individual unity.

The sensitive Plotinian universe is composed of a multitude of beings, however, it remains "one", as the beings who compose it are in harmony with the Whole and with themselves. The Whole is a body and it forms "an orderly world" (*kósmos*). To express this universal sympathy, or universal harmony,

---

7. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 8, 52-61; 23, 9-29; 26, 1-15; 32, 13-22; 34, 9-13; 34, 26-33; 35, 8-16; 40, 1-4; y 41, 1-6.

8. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 41, 1-6: Cf. *En*. IV, 4 [28] 26, 1-15.

9. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 40, 1-4.

10. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 8, 56: *chordaì en lýra sympathôs kinetheîsai*.

Plotinus uses the image of a dance, in which every movement contributes to the beauty of the whole[11]. The image of a dancer adjusts to life in the universe, to the extent that Plotinus designates this life as "the dance of the universe".

> "But if we remember that we posited that the universe is a single living thing *(zôion hèn)*, and that since it is so it was absolutely necessary for it to have an internal self-communication of its experiences *(sympathès autò heautôi)*; and if we remember further that the process of its life must be rational and all in tune with itself, and that there is nothing casual in its life but a single melody and order, and that the celestial arrangements are rational, and each individual part moves by numbers, as do the dancing parts *(choreúonta)* of the living being, we must admit that both are the activity of the All, the figures in it and the parts of it which are arranged in figures (and the consequences of these and how they follow)."[12]

If we could participate in universal sympathy, sympathy of the whole of the universe with itself, we would discover the interdependence of things with respect to the Whole even to the most intimate detail. The image of dancing represents the various configurations of the stars corresponding to major changes in terrestrial things, for example, the production of different vegetable and animal species[13].

There is a universal coordination of each and every event. A "universal plot" (*sýmpnoia mía*), using the stoic expression Plotinus uses in the treatise *On Whether the Stars Have an Influence*[14], which does not consist of a voluntary intervention of the supernatural in the lives of those here. "The movement of the stars announces future events, but does not produce them"[15]. The celestial figures are only signs, Plotinus even talk of letters:

> "Let us suppose that the stars are like characters *(grámmata)* always being written *(graphómena)* on the heavens, or written *(gegramména)* once for all and moving as they perform their task, a different one: and let us assume that their significance *(semasía)* results from this, just as because of the one principle in a single living being, by studying one member we can learn something else about a different one. For instance, we can come to conclusions about someone's character, and also

---

11. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 34, 26-33: "This argument, then, gives powers to the figures and powers to the bodies arranged: since with dancers each hand has a distinct power and so have the other limbs, but the figures also have great power, and then there is a third group of consequentially effective things, the parts of the limbs which are brought into the dance and their constituents, for instance the clenched fingers of the hand and the muscles and veins which are affected along with them."

12. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 35, 8-16.

13. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 33, 25-27.

14. *Enn*. II, 3 [52] 7, 17-18.

15. *Enn*. II, 3 [52] 1, 1-2.

> about the dangers that beset him and the precautions to be taken, by looking at his eyes or some other part of his body. Yes, they are members and so are we; so we can learn about one from the other *(álla oûn állois)*. All things are filled full of signs *(mestà dè pánta semeíon)*, and it is a wise man who can learn about one thing from another. Yet, all the same, many processes of learning in this way are customary and known to all."[16]

When one knows the affinities and correspondences that exist naturally, it is possible to use that knowledge to either predict or produce certain effects or events. So, for Plotinus, divination and magical practices bear no esoteric character, it is only necessary to know to be able to predict and to predict to be able. Thus, magical practices are part of the system that Plotinus describes in *Enneads*: astrology is only the science of musical harmony transferred to the measure of the universe, and the configurations of the stars, although they cannot themselves produce events, are part of the organization of the universe, as the sympathy that coordinates them leaves behind signs that announce them. Therefore, if everything is intertwined, if all things agree with each other, it is because the practices of divination and theurgy are explained by the sympathy and correspondence of the similar. At this point, Plotinus' theory is close to that of the Stoics. As, for the Stoics, sympathy governs the structure of the world, the development of events and wisdom.

The Stoic notion of universal *sympátheia* replaces the pre-Socratic cosmic *philía*. It articulates the theory of causation, the theory of fate, of *contagio rerum*, in addition to the physics of *pneûma* and tension[17]. In *On Fate*[18], Cicero

16. *Enn*. II, 3 [52] 7, 4-14.

17. The Stoics used to distinguish two notions of cosmic totality: *tò pân* and *tò hólon*. *Tò pân* is the group composed by *tò hólon* and the void that surrounds and limits it (cf. DL, 7, 143). In *tò hólon* there is no vacuum, all parts are supportive to each other. Of this solidarity, the Stoics offer different conceptual formulations, which include sympathy (*sympátheia*). The stoic world is an energetic continuum of bodies. In this world, everything is connected. For Chrysippus, for example, a breath unifies the Whole of substances, penetrating it completely. By means of this breath the universe maintains stability, in sympathy with itself. (A.A. LONG & D.N. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Cambridge, 1987, vol. I, 48c; ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, *De mixtione*, 216, 14-218 Bruns, (H. VON ARNIM, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (SVF) [1905-1924], Leipzig-Stuttgart, 1964 reprinted, vol. II, 473). The world is a total cohesion and an organic rapport of its parts. Total mixture allows the action of some bodies over others in a homogeneous, continuous and active universe. Stoic theories of universal sympathy and complete mixing allow Chrysippus to reconcile in his physics the affirmation of a single cause with the multitude of unique individuals, characterized by a "quality of their own", meaning, in its logic, the "name ", for example, Socrates or Diogenes. But this individuality does not prevent communicability: the world is animated by a universal sympathy which allows dynamic, integral cohesion. "The entire substance is unified by a pneuma that runs through it completely, by their effect, the universe is continuous, made consistent and sympathetic to itself," (the translation is ours) ZENO OF CITIUM, *ap*. TERTULLIAN, *Adversus Marcionem,* II, 4 (SVF, I, 529).

translates the Stoic *sympátheia* as the Latin term *contagio rerum*, emphasizing the conceptual link that exists between *sympátheia* and total mixture. For the ancient Stoics, precisely, this articulation of *sympátheia* in the total mixture distinguishes it from *philía*. Universal sympathy corresponds to destiny (*heimarméne*) as destination is considered as a force, the *lógos*, the tension, the vital and divine breath of life which governs the organization of the Whole. Destiny is, therefore, the power that animates universal sympathy by making all things observe a reciprocal relationship, intertwined with each other in terms of mutual friendship[19]. For Plutarch, it consists of being the "reason in the world, or the law of all things in the world ruled and governed by providence (*prónoia*), or the reason why past things have been, present things are and future things will be"[20]. Providence is a stream of life that brings beings and things together. "God is an immortal, reasonable, perfect, smart, lucky living being, who ignores all evil. And he makes his providence (*prónoia*) reign in the world and what is in it"[21]. The Stoic God, merged with the world and all forms of reality, is the principle of cohesion and sympathy of the things that he unites. Thus, the Stoic providence expresses the universal sympathy which unites all beings and the development of the events which reflect the life of the world. However, it is impossible to grant any kind of transcendence to the stoic providence, as it is immanent in the world and an expression of universal sympathy, the sign of the harmony of the parts with the Whole. Thus *prónoia* expresses the intimate solidarity according to a harmonically regulated chain in which causes relate events to each other. For the Stoics, God is the "seminal reason of the cosmos" and it contains "all seminal reasons according to which everything originates in accordance with fatality."[22]

For Plotinus, the cause of universal harmony must be sought in the supernatural, "the things below depend on the ones above –those in this universe, on those which are more divine– and because even this universe participates in those. Therefore, the things in this universe do not originate from seminal reasons, but for reasons inclusive of contents previous even to those which correspond to seminal reasons."[23] It is to universal logos, prior to its

---

18. Cf. CICERO, *De fato*, 18, 41 Plasberg.

19. Cf. MARCUS AURELIUS, *Meditations*, VII, 75 Farquharson.

20. Cf. PLUTARCH OF CHAERONEIA, *On Philosophers' Maxims*, I, 28.

21. DL, VII, 147.

22. SVF, II, 1027. About providence in the Stoa and Platonism, see H. DÖRRIE, "Der Begriff *Pronoia* in Stoa und Platonismus", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 24, 1977, p. 60-87, about Plotinus, p. 82-85.

23. *Enn.* IV, 4 [28] 39, 3-7.

outward manifestation, that the organization belongs to that accounts for contingent facts and supposes a kind of calculation of the possible, like the calculations that a general would make, if he wanted the organization of an army to obtain concrete results." The universe is under the providence of a general (*pronoía strategikêi*) which takes into account the operations, mishaps, the proper supplies of food, beverages, weapons and machinery and all the results that are expected to combine all these things so that the outcome of all this will lead to a favourable situation."[24] But we should not take this comparison to the letter, and imagine Plotinian providence calculating the fortune of each party to make the best of all possible worlds, which would reduce it to the level of an artisan. The harmony of the parties is not expressly wanted and does not come from a disposition of pre-existing elements: the cause of multiplicity is the unity that precedes it, and it is unity that explains the order that organises the manifold. Harmony is a sensitive result of the intelligible unity which contemplates the superior portion of the Soul. Thus, to the extent that the Idea, instead of staying enclosed in itself, is manifested, its manifestations are necessarily coordinated. This is why all the effects of the stars are woven into unity and come into a wonderful harmony.

Harmony represents the multiplicity-one, where unity is first, because it comes from the intelligible model, and multiplicity is second, not only because it comes from spermatic reason, but because it is realised in a sensitive substance which tends to dispersion.

Plotinus assimilates providence to the bottom of the Soul or *phýsis*, which, in the treatises *On Providence* [47 and 48] corresponds to the demiurge of the *Timaeus*, and describes "the ruling principle of the universe (*tò hegoúmenon toû pantòs*)."[25] "But since the ordering principle is twofold, we speak of one form of it as the Craftsman and the other as the Soul of the All; and when we speak of Zeus we sometimes apply the name to the Craftsman and sometimes to the ruling principle of the All *(hegemonoûn toû pantós)*."[26] Thus, the guiding principle "knows the future", and this knowledge shows the dynamic skeleton of the creation of Soul-producer. It is not therefore a hypothetical or partial provision, but, instead, a worldview that operates in the production of the material world. "And its knowledge of future events, granted that it has it, will not be like that which diviners have, but like that which those have who make things happen with full confidence that they will do sot."[27] Harmony is both due to transcendent causality of the procession, and to immanent causation of

24. *Enn*. III, 3 [48] 2, 6-10.

25. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 12, 14.

26. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 10, 1-4.

27. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 12, 22-24.

participation, by which the whole, instead of being divided into parts, remains entire in each of them. And this participation depends not only of the Soul which contemplates the intelligible, or on the cosmic or providential Soul, but more specifically on particular souls immanent to production. As there is an agreement of souls with the order of the universe, they do not act in isolation, but modulate its descent in accordance with the circular movement of the world. The descent of souls into bodies is not arbitrary; the concept of choice for individual souls ultimately depends on destination. Therefore, in Plotinus, universal providence is both Stoic as it is *immanent*, because it is Zeus, life, soul and order of the universe, yet transcendent, since it is the demiurge who builds an orderly world.

Chrysippus defines divination as "'The power to see, understand, and explain premonitory signs given to men by the gods.' 'Its duty,' he goes on to say, 'is to know in advance the disposition of the gods towards men, the manner in which that disposition is shown and by what means the gods may be propitiated and their threatened ills aberted'."[28] The Stoic sage includes the "sacred nodes"[29] which connect all things and by which all beings concur in the harmony of the same world. Universal sympathy reflects that providential concert of a world where man is but one of its parts. Therefore, the Stoic sage conforms his life to the decrees of providence, living in harmony with it and with nature, remains sympathetic with the universe in which it participates.

The Plotinian sage, like the Stoic sage, knows that man is a part of the universe; but, unlike the Stoic sage, the Plotinian man occupies a mid position between the sensitive and the intelligible. "Since, then, men are not the best of living creatures but the human species occupies a middle position, and has chosen it, yet all the same is not allowed by providence to perish in the place where it is set but is always being lifted up to the higher regions by all sorts of devices which the divine uses to give virtue the greater power."[30] The attachment of the soul to realities which are alien or subordinate is just the reversal of the solidarity which links parts of the universe to each other. The material world is only an appearance with respect to the actual realities which are intelligence and the intelligible, but we should not dismiss this appearance because it is a splendid image of the intelligible, a universe of signs, the subject of mediation, to the extent in which universal sympathy reflects the empathy in the lives of the intelligible.

---

28. CICERO, *De divinatione,* II, 63 Plasberg. (Transl. by W.A. Falconer, Cambridge [Mass.]-London, 1971, p. 516-517).

29. Cf. MARCUS AURELIUS, *Meditations*, VII, 9 Farquharson.

30. *Enn*. III, 2 [47] 9, 19-22.

II. – THE PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD

The matter *here* is identified with the non-being, so it does not transfer any degree of reality to sensible objects, whose only real appearance is its forms. The soul projects the *lógoi* on tangible matter in a manner similar to the way in which the laser beam is used in holography to produce an image, which achieves a three-dimensional optical effect. Without the projected *lógoi* nothing could be perceived, just as we would not see the image if the hologram plate was not printed with the laser.

E K. Emilsson has been the first to conduct a rigorous study on the Plotinian theory of sense perception[31], and his trail has recently been followed by J. Dillon, who proposes that Plotinus might have anticipated, in some ways and from a different perspective, the Cartesian antithesis between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*[32], which allows him to compare Plotinus's theory of perception of material objects to that of the Irish philosopher Berkeley[33].

In the first and third books of the *Problems about the soul* (in. IV, 4 and 5 [28 and 29]), Plotinus offers us the first reference to this theory. The conditions (*páthe*) do not belong entirely to the soul, nor the body alone, but to the body which takes part in an image or vestige of the soul, ie. "something common and composit" intermediate between the vegetative soul or *phýsis* and organic structure[34].

To produce sensations a bodily organ is required to intervene as a mediator between the soul and the sensible object[35]. At the beginning of the third book of

---

31. Cf. E.K. EMILSSON, *Plotinus on sense-perception: a philosophical study*, Cambridge, 1988. Besides this text, see the article by G.H. CLARK, "Plotinus' Theory of Sensation", *Philosophical review,* 51, 1942, p. 257-282 on sensitive perception; also H.J. BLUMENTHAL, "Soul, world-soul and individual soul in Plotinus", in Various authors: *Le Néoplatonisme, Royaumont, 9-13 juin 1969*, Paris, 1971, p. 41-58 (=*Id*., *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonis*, Aldershot, 1993, VII, p. 41-58); and K. CORRIGAN, "The Internal Dimensions of the Sensible Object in the Thought of Plotinus and Aristotle", *Dionysius,* 5, 1981, p. 98-126.

32. Cf. J. DILLON, "Plotin, le premier des cartésiens?", *Rue Descartes,* 1-2, 1991, p. 165-178.

33. Cf. J. DILLON, "Notre perception du monde extérieur selon Plotin et Berkeley", *Diotima,* 9, 1991, p. 100-108.

34. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 18, 20-21. Véase H. BENZ, *"Materie" und Wahrnehmung in der Philosophie Plotins*, Würzburg, 1990, p. 219-223.

35. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 23 y IV, 5 [29] 9-13.

the *Problems about the Soul or on Vision*, Plotinus summarizes what he explained about sensations in both his extensive earlier treaties, as follows:

> "Now we have said that seeing *(tò horân)*, and in general sense-perception *(tò aisthánesthai)*, must take place by means of some body *(dià sṓmatós tinos)*; for without body the soul is wholly in the intelligible world. Since sense-perception is an apprehension, not of intelligible objects, but of sense-objects alone, the soul must somehow be connected with sense-objects through things which are very much like them and establish a sort of communion of knowledge or affection with them. This is why this knowledge comes through bodily organs *(diò kaì di'orgánon somatikôn he gnôsis)*; for through these, which are in a way naturally united to or continuous with sense-objects, the soul must somehow in some way come to a unity with the sense-objects themselves, and so a sort of common affection with them must arise."[36]

What is the function of bodily organs in the perception of sensible objects? Vision, like any sensation, is produced by means of a body. To explain this, Plotinus adapts the Stoic theory of *sympátheia*[37] to his own theory, relying mostly on Plato's *Timaeus*[38].

The Stoics conceived the cosmos as a living organism whose parts are sensitive to each other by "sympathy"[39]. Just as any event reacts to any other, it is possible to predict future events. Thus, the ancient Stoics use the concept of sympathy as a cosmic principle that allows them to explain the events of the physical world and the cosmos as a whole based on the model of an organism. However, the Stoics do not use it when referring to the theory of vision.

Although for Plotinus *sympátheia* can only occur in the structure of an organism, unlike the Stoics, the soul is incorporeal. Light, even if it belongs to a body, must be seen as totally disembodied[40]. "But if one thing is naturally disposed to be sympathetically affected *(péphyke páschein sympathôs)* by another because it has some hind of likeness *(tina homoióteta* to it, then the intermediary between them, being unlike, would not be affected, or would not be affected in the same way."[41] If something is "naturally susceptible" to

---

36. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 1, 3-13.

37. See A. GRAESER, *Plotinus and the Stoics. A preliminary study*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1972, p. 68-72; E.K. EMILSSON, *op. cit*.., p. 47-62; J. DILLON, "Notre perception du monde extérieur...", p. 102-104; G.M. GURTLER, *Plotinus. The experience of unity*, New York, Peter Lang, 1988, p. 91-138; y H. BENZ, *op. cit*., p. 200-211.

38. Cf. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 45 d-e Burnet.

39. Cf. J.M. RIST, *La filosofía estoica* [1969], trad. española de D. Casacuberta, Barcelona, 1995, p. 186-187.

40. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 7, 41-43.

41. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 1, 35-38.

something else sympathetically, it will be much more affected if there is no intermediary, even if the agent is such that it can suffer some condition[42].

Before presenting his own theory of vision, Plotinus briefly presents those of his predecessors. Thus, to Plato, vision is the connection of light flowing from the eye with the surrounding daylight, then what is similar falls on what is similar to it, and a related body comes straight in front of the eye[43].

To Aristotle, vision, like other sensations, takes place through a medium, the transparent or diaphanous. Light is the act of transparency, and colour acts on the transparent "in action" which, in turn, acts on the corresponding organ[44]. Plotinus criticizes the Aristotelian theory of vision, if the body behind the color causes change: "[…] what prevents the alteration getting to the eye immediately without any intermediary *(medenòs óntos metaxý)*? This is all the more likely if, even as things are, that which is situated immediately in front of the eyes, when it is there, is necessarily altered in some way."[45] Some scholars explain vision as a "trickle" of a light beam which is directed from the eye to the object and then returns from the object to the eye. According to E. Bréhier, Plotinus bases himself for this explanation on a chapter of the doxographers which lists the various theories of vision[46]. From the Plotinian standpoint, it is not necessary for there to be a medium, unless they fear that the light beam may fall[47].

For the Stoics, light spreads in a cone shape from the eye to the subject, and the soul uses this cone as a staff[48]. According to this, the resistance of the object in the light needs some medium[49].

The Epicureans assume that the images go through a vacuum[50], therefore, in order for them not to become jammed, they need some free space. Now, if a

---

42. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 1, 38-40.

43. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 2, 1-4. About this theory, see Plato: *Timaeus*, 45 b 4-d 3 Burnet. Aristotle criticises the platonic theory of vision in *De sensu et sensibilis*, 438 a 25-b 2 Ross.

44. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, B 7, 418 a 29-419 a 10 Ross.

45. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 2, 4-8. Both J. Igal and E. Bréhier move the question mark in line 6 to line 8.

46. Cf. E. BRÉHIER ed. and transl., *Plotin. Ennéades*, IV, [1924-1938], Paris, 2ª ed. 1956-1963, p. 156. (H. DIELS ed., *Doxographi graeci*, 403 b 11).

47. Cf. *En*. IV, 5 [29] 2, 8-11.

48. Cf. SVF, II, 867.

49. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 2, 11-12.

50. Cf. EPICURE, Fr. 319 Usener. See also LUCRETIUS, *De rerum natura*, IV, 29-238 Bailey.

medium is not necessary, the obstacle will be even smaller. Plotinus agrees with this hypothesis, and explains the vision through *sympathy*; but one sees less when there is a medium that stands in the way, because "it would obstruct and hinder and weaken the sympathy."[51] If the medium which is homogeneous with the bodies for whom it is an intermediary is affected, sympathy will be destroyed.

Vision does not require a medium either as a cooperator or as a mediator, it is sufficient to have sympathy. Now if vision is explained by sympathy, the medium would weaken sympathy.

Plotinus raises a number of objections to his theory:

1) If there is no medium, there would be no continuity or sympathy either. Plotinus replies that it requires a medium to have continuity, but not for sympathy. Powerful evidence that a medium is not needed in vision is that, at night and in the darkness, we can see fire, the stars and the forms of these, and even, if in darkness we see what is on the other side, if there was nothing in between, we would see even better[52].

2) If there is no medium, vision is not possible. But not because there is no medium, but because sympathy, which is based on the unity of the animal itself and that of the pieces together, would be destroyed[53].

> "For it looks as if any kind of perception *(tò aisthánesthai)* depends on this, that the living being *(zôion)* –this All– is in sympathy *(sympathès)* with itself. For if this were not so, how would one thing share in the power of another, and especially in power from a distance?"[54]

Vision does not occur because the air medium is affected, because if it were, it would inevitably be so corporally. Each portion of air gets full vision, but this does not happen as a body condition, but as a psychic necessity, characteristic of "the living being unit in sympathy with itself"[55].

If vision is explained by the coincidence of light from the eye with surrounding sunlight extending to the material object, we would not need any condition, but a medium would be necessary. However, as light is not a body, a bodily medium would not be necessary. To see there is no need of another intermediate light, which is only required to see at a distance[56].

---

51. *Enn.* IV, 5 [29] 2, 16-17.

52. Cf. *Enn.* IV, 5 [29] 3, 1-15.

53. Cf. *Enn.* IV, 5 [29] 3, 15-26.

54. *Enn.* IV, 5 [29] 3, 18-21.

55. Cf. *Enn.* IV, 5 [29] 3, 26-38.

56. *Ibidem.*

> "But if the soul stays in its own place, but needs light like a stick *(hósper baktērías)* to reach the object with, then the apprehension would be a violent business, with the light stretched out and pushing against the object and the object of perception, the colour as colour, itself pressing back: for this is how sensations of touch occur through a medium."[57]

If something is "naturally affectable" by something else sympathetically, it will be much more affected if there is no intermediary, even if the intermediary is such that it can suffer some condition[58].

III. – The sympathy between souls

Plotinus takes from Stoic cosmology the conception of the world as an "animal unit in sympathy with itself." However, for the Stoics, the immanent soul is corporeal, it constitutes the only organizing principle. All parts of the universe, by virtue of this principle, are in sympathy with each other and contribute to the unity of the Animal-All.

The theory of the soul in ancient Stoicism is supportive of the cosmic sympátheia. For Chrysippus, a sensation never takes place in isolation but integrated in a bundle of sensations[59]. The whole world communicates in the soul, both information and changes. The "octopus soul" is an alterable, deformable, plastic host of information, changes and configurations. Sensory activities are emanations of the directing part, which circulate in the body, then return to the directing part: vision is the "breath" that extends from the directing part to the eye, hearing is the breath that spreads from the directing part to the ears; smell the breath that extends from the directing part to the nose; taste, the wind that extends from the directing part to the body surface to touch, which allows us to perceive things that fall within our reach.

The Stoics reject any kind of transcendence, and they consider the universe as a living organism. The spontaneity and the materiality of the Stoic universe hinders any kind of transcendence. Hence the opposition to the dualism of Platonic cosmology, as shown above in the *Timaeus*.

For Plotinus, the cosmos is an animal unit in sympathy with itself[60], in this they agree with the Stoa, however, he reacts against it in favour of the Academy,

---

57. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 4, 38-43.

58. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 5 [29] 1, 38-40.

59. DL, VII, 50.

60. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 32, 13-22: "This one universe is all bound together in shared experience and is like one living creature *(sympathès dè pân toûto tò hén, kaì hos zôion hén)*, and that which is far is really near, just as, in one of the individual living things, a nail or horn or finger or one of the other limbs which is not contiguous: the intermediate part leaves a gap

and defends the idea of transcendence: the Soul of the world produces a living unit, in sympathy with itself, when it contemplates the organization of intelligible forms in the Intelligence. "This then is how it is with the solution of this problem, and the fact of sympathy does not hinder our arguments: for since all souls derive from the same from which the soul of the Whole derives too, they have a community of feeling."[61]

A. *Nature of the soul and its relationship with the body*

Plotinus goes against a materialistic conception of sympathy. In his critique of astrological determinism he admits the presence of sympathy in the physical universe, but denies that it may have any causal efficacy. The physical manifestation of sympathy, in fact, is based on the Total-Soul (of the universe) which makes the universe a living being. The sympathy which underlies the sensation is not physical contact, but a physical pressure based on the animated nature of physics as fit for being felt and on the animated nature of the sensitive creature as apt to feel. Plotinus thus transforms the notion of sympathy and focuses on the nature of the soul.

In the *Enneads* he uses the argument of the Stoics, the sympathy of the body parts, to criticize the theories of Epicure and Democritus, who conceived the soul as a body conglomeration of round and very fine atoms.

> "But if someone says that it is not so, but that atoms or things without parts make the soul when they come together by unity and community of feeling, he could be refuted by their [mere] juxtaposition, and that not a complete one, since nothing which is one and united with itself in community of feeling and unable to be united *(ou gignoménou henòs oudè sympathoûs)*, but soul is united with itself in community of feeling *(psychè dè hautêi sympathés)*. But no body of magnitude could be produced from partless constituents."[62]

This passage denies the materialistic conception of the soul. There is in Plotinus a connection of the soul with life, and it is not a question of physical proximity. An illustration of this connection of sympathy with the soul appears in the discussion of the relation of soul and body. When addressing the problem

---

in the experience and is not affected, but that which is not near is affected. For the like parts are not situated next to each other, but are separated by others between, but share their experiences because of their likeness *(homoiótēti sympaschónton)*, and it is necessary that something which is done by a part not situated beside it should reach the distant part; and since it is a living thing and all belongs to a unity nothing is so distant in space that it is not close enough to the nature of the one living thing to share experience *(têi toû henòs zóiou pròs tò sympatheîn phýsei)*". Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 35, 8-16.

61. *Enn*. IV, 3 [27] 8, 1-3.

62. *Enn*. IV, 7 [2] 3, 1-6.

of the relationship of the individual soul and body, Plotinus preserves the soul from a condition of the body. The material universe has an influence on the individual soul, but it is measured by the body. The soul is not essentially affected, but it is so in its sympathetic relationship with the body. In contrast to the materialistic determinism of astrologers, in which there is an interrelationship of concrete circumstances with individual initiative, he builds the notion of material universe as an organic Whole. The soul represents the light of the universe and the source of direction and order. In this context of total unity, the individual soul has the capacity for initiative, which involves two aspects: a strong sense of individuality, coupled with a clear perception of the total unit at its base.

B. *The unity of souls and its relationship with the Whole*

Sympathy between souls is related to the union of the universe as a Whole: the highest level of sympathy between human souls is in the context of the sympathetic nature of the universe as a living being. The notion of a living whole is the only context in which individuality appears and the environment in which the individual comes into a sympathetic relationship with others. At this point, *sympátheia* has a restricted scope of application. Plotinus never associates it with the highest level of unity in the pursuit of the One, nor with the unity in identity which is possible in the intellectual world. He discovers the expression of physical unity in human experience, from the material continuity of the physical world and the transcendence of the physical in the sensing.

The founder of Neoplatonism takes a materialistic notion, apparently opposed to his system, internalizes it and makes it a concept that allows him to express the source of unity in the individual soul. However, in the *Enneads* sympathy is not based on the physical continuity of the natural world. Sympathy has been radically dematerialized, but still does remain totally with it in the orbit of matter. Thus, he tries to integrate unity and diversity with the different levels of his system.

IV. – *Synaísthesis* and *sympátheia*

Synaísthesis concerns the unity of the hypostasis, and that of the individuals with themselves. Its fullest meaning is expressed at the level of Intelligence and the top of the Soul, which represents total unity and identity of knowledge. But Plotinus also applies *synaísthesis*, in the sense of consciousness, to the lower level of the soul or *phýsis*. But to adapt it to the multiplicity of this level of reality, he has to define its meaning.

The consciousness of nature (*physis)* contrasts with all self-conscious activities of the Soul and Intelligence. However, it plays a major role: it

constitutes the basis of sensation (*aisthesis*) and sensory perception or apprehension (*antílepsis*). In nature *synaísthesis* works exactly like *sympátheia*, because the unity of the material universe itself has a meaning that is related to sensation.

On the upper level unit of the Soul individual souls appear separately. These form the unity of the soul and its partition into the bodies. The introduction of intermediary souls, placed between the Soul and the sensitive world, poses the problem of safeguarding individuality in an essentially unified Whole[63].

Plotinus proposes the following solution: the soul, as a source of unity, and the body as the cause of partition and individuality. The upper, intellectual level of the soul, is able to awaken the sleeping consciousness and conduct *lógoi* installed in matter to objective knowledge[64].

It is in the analysis of *sympátheia* and *synaísthesis* where the conflict between unity and individuality lies. Plotinus takes this conflict and applies it to the realm of human experience. In his effort to synthesize these two poles of experience, its total unity and particular individuality, he uses the terms *synaísthesis* and *sympátheia*. An emphasis on the isolated unit must deny the existence of real meaning to individual experience and, conversely, an emphasis on individuality denies not only the formation of experience, but even the possibility of any experience.

Plotinus refers to the notion of synaísthesis in the context of the genesis of Intelligence[65], when he explains how the upgrade and improvement of the second hypostasis takes place, after it has been produced by the One-Good as indeterminate activity.

The expressions *Synaísthesis* and *sympátheia* are henological terms which complement each other, as they express: 1) horizontally, the consciousness of unity and the self in tune with its parts; 2) vertically, the awareness of the source as a foundation of unity and the self which is to culminate in direct consciousness, and the quasi-consciousness to the source on the part of the product. Plotinus points out the dependence of the product with respect to its source as "feeling with", in the sense of "dependent on" and "in tune with." Thus, the form includes a presence of the particular in its being and definition, which makes the particular contain its continuity at its core.

---

63. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 9 [8] 1, 15-18.

64. Cf. *Enn*. II, 2 [14] 3, 1-6.

65. Cf. *Enn*. V, 1 [10] 7, 11-18. About this, see M.I. SANTA CRUZ, "Sobre la generación de la Inteligencia en las *Enéadas* de Plotino", *Helmántica*, 30, 1979, p. 287-315; and J. IGAL, "La génesis de la Inteligencia en una pasaje de las *Enéadas* de Plotino (V.1.7.4-35)", *Emerita* 39, 1971, p. 129-157.

He also distinguishes *synaísthesis* as self consciousness, from *aísthesis*, feeling, as consciousness of the other. To the cosmos, "we must grant it self-perception, just as we are aware of ourselves, but not perception of a continual succession of different objects."[66]

In his vision of the intelligible form the soul does not see the form as another. In other words, form can only be contemplated in the field of self-consciousness. We must depart from the identity of being and thinking that occurs in Intelligence: as the soul contemplates the intelligible form in Intelligence, it introduces unity and identity in it. The progress of the soul in the vision of form[67] involves a new consciousness of the empirical ego as internal. This empirical self is viewed as another, and here it is an object of sensation in the emergence of the noetic self.

However, the term *synaísthesis* refers to self-consciousness, but, under certain conditions, it refers to the consciousness of other objects. Thus it refers to the consciousness of the objects of sensation, which means that these objects have been appropriated in self-consciousness. Material objects, selected by memory, are thus objects of *synaísthesis*, and not simply perceived as external. In *Problems about the Soul (II),* IV, 4 [28] 8 he says that the soul has no memory of the things about which it has no direct consciousness, of those there would only be a sensation (*aísthesis*)[68].

The *synaísthesis* of the soul is a kind of self-consciousness; yet it requires the mediation of the consciousness of form, or of sensible external objects as its objects of appropriation. Here *synaísthesis* is a cognitive equivalent of *sympátheia*. As we have seen, Plotinus uses the term *sympátheia* of the parts in a cosmos conceived as a living being.

The identity of the soul is understood as sympathy and, in this sense, as self-consciousness. The "self" is totally individual. Their perception and consciousness depend on their rapport with the cosmos, on its sentient part with a sentient whole. *Synaísthesis* is a cognitive equivalent of *sympátheia*: as we are conscious of ourselves[69], there is a sort of *synaísthesis* of everything with respect to everything else, the animal body is analogous to the cosmos.

---

66. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 24, 21-23.

67. Cf. *Enn*. V, 8 [31] 11.

68. *Synaísthesis* is not the mere consciousness of an external object. It is different from sensation *(aísthesis)* in that the consciousness of an object is, also, a kind of self consciousness, in which the object is appropriated.

69. Cf. *Enn*. IV, 4 [28] 2, 4, 21-32.

Sympátheia and synaísthesis are denied about the One, since they are not compatible with its radical unity[70]. But *synaísthesis*, as consciousness of oneself, implies a concomitant awareness of the foundation of self and being. Plotinus describes the conversion of Intelligence to the One, by which it is self-constituted as intelligence, in terms of a *synaísthesis* of itself. The vision of Intelligence is the joint vision of the object that illuminates it[71].

Synaísthesis also expresses the consciousness of oneself as a unity with the source of the self. Thus the soul, when it comes into union with Intelligence, has a kind of consciousness. *Synaísthesis* always means a certain kind of self-consciousness. Even in contexts in which Plotinus seems to deny the soul's self-consciousness, some kind of self-consciousness is not entirely excluded. But, in the sense of self-knowledge, the "self" in question is not a fixed entity, but a flexible consciousness of the self different from any range of human personality. For the soul the true self-knowledge (other than self-awareness) consists only of a union with Intelligence, that is, paradoxically, when it transcends its own nature and comes into sympathy with the higher source. This represents true self-knowledge, because there is in it a coincidence between the object of knowledge and self-consciousness. Thought and its objects are identified in Intelligence. It is impossible for this union of "self" to take place below the level of Intelligence. As thought and its objects coincide, thought and its objects are, besides, reflectively, self-awareness. The self, however, referred to by consciousness is (by virtue of its superior self-identity, when the radical self-identity of the One is preserved) more truly self than the wich is based on the soul as soul.

Thus, *synaísthesis* must also refer to consciousness, to a part of Intelligence, the One which is its own source. The true consciousness for Intelligence is self-constutution. This interpretation preserves the sovereignty of the One which is, by its nature, a power which generates Intelligence. But also the autonomy of Intelligence is preserved, because it is the consciousness of the power that it has of producing what constitutes itself. There is therefore no rupture between the affirmation of the power of the One and its appropriation by Intelligence. We can see here the elasticity of *synaísthesis,* ie the awareness of Intelligence comes from a dynamic continuity: the awareness of the power that resides in the One and the self-constituting consciousness that intelligence has generative possibilities that derive from the One (without duality) and become cognitive.

---

70. Cf. *Enn*. VI, 9 [9] 6, 50-52. Plotinus points out the impropriety of attributing *synaísthesis* to the One. Self-consciousness corresponds to deficiency. Intelligence is unity of being and thinking, which represents a duality, and the One is absolutely simple, above being and thinking.

71. Cf. *Enn*. V, 5 [32] 7, 5-6.

There is therefore a strong similarity between the notions of *sympátheia* and *synaíshesis*: 1) The notion of self-consistency of the multiple (the unit which is based on a more radical self-identity and unity) corresponds to an awareness of itself as a multiplicity-in-unity. 2) The continuity with the source through self-consistency is achieved through a sympathetic consciousness of the source. The continuity of the source with the product will be a kind of science of the product of a part of the source which is aware of its own productive action. Thus *synaísthesis* and *sympátheia* relate to self-consciousness, as both show the source on which they are dependent (poor self-identity that obscures multiplicity under a veneer of unity).

Aristotle uses *synaísthesis* to describe a friend's feelings[72.] Sympátheia, on the other hand, is Stoic in its origin. Plotinus internalizes the vocabulary of human relationships to describe the self consistency, continuity of superior realities with the material world. The complexity of the notions of synaísthesis and sympátheia shows the dynamic continuity of his system. This highlights henological, ontic and epistemic dependence on a higher source.

In a recent article, A. Pigler shows how Plotinus welcomes the vitalistic cosmology of the Stoics, and how, however, he rejects the radical immanentism of the Stoa which "reabsorbs metaphysics into physics"[73]. Plotinus knows the Stoic doctrine of *sympátheia*, but he integrates it into the architecture of his henological and processional metaphysics, which allows him to build a henology which exceeds Stoic physics. Thus, Plotinus opposes the identification carried out by the Stoics between self and body, or more specifically, with matter, as regards that which remains in bodies. Therefore, Plotinus' henology is constructed as a criticism of Stoic materialism[74]. Plotinus opposes stoicism in the reduction they make of being to the body, what makes it be matter, in the sense of a substrate of the change of bodies, the true being.

---

72. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Ethica Nichomachea*, 9, 9, 1170b10 Bywater.

73. A. PIGLER, *art. cit.,* p. 45-46.

74. Cf. A. GRAESER, *op. cit.*, p. 11-67; and the article by P.A. MEIJER, "Stoicism in Plotins' *Enneads* VI 9, 1", *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, 59 [n.s. 30], 1988, p. 61-76.

PROVIDENCE OU LIBERTE : PORPHYRE

JEAN-MICHEL CHARRUE

Porphyre, l'éditeur de Plotin, qui écrivit lui-même soixante-quinze titres connus, dans les classifications de Beutler ou de Girgenti[1], qui faisait preuve d'un savoir encyclopédique sur la plupart des questions, qui se spécialisait sur la philosophie des religions, devait s'intéresser à la providence, à propos de Platon, ou dans le cadre des religions astrales, et avait une autre passion, celle de la liberté, ce que témoignent des textes restitués, tels que la *Lettre à Anébon,* où se rencontrent les deux thèmes : le destin ou la providence laisse-t-il place à la liberté ? ou encore le *Commentaire sur le Timée*, qui en pose le cadre. Car il semble que ce soit ce dilemme qui se pose qui ne paraît devoir être résolu que dans le *τὸ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν*, *Sur la liberté*.

I. – LE COMMENTAIRE SUR LE TIMÉE

1

Le premier de ces fragments porte curieusement sur la prière : il s'agit du F 28 tiré du *Commentaire sur le Timée* de Proclus[2]. Jamblique estimait que " cela n'a rien à voir avec le sujet [3]. En (I), Porphyre se livre à un parcours sur trois formes d'athéisme, avant (II) de voir, la réalité de la prière, en cinq arguments. Se référer au texte platonicien permettra d'en voir le bien-fondé. Le texte du *Timée* est en effet cette invocation: " les hommes, pour peu qu'ils participent tant soit peu à la sagesse, quand ils sont sur le point d'entreprendre une affaire petite ou grande, invoquent toujours de quelque façon la divinité "[4].

---

1. Cf. G. GIRGENTI, *Porfirio, negli ultimi cinquant'anni*, Milan, 1994, p. 323-333.

2. A.R. SODANO, *Porphyrii in platonis Timaeum Commentarium fragmenta*, Naples 1964, PROCLUS, *Commentaire sur le Timée*, I, 207, 24-208, 31.

3. PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 209, 2-3.

4. PLATON, *Timée*, 27c1-3.

Nous nous demanderons si celle-ci pouvait s'apparenter à une prière, et n'était pas un simple prélude formel.

La prière (εὔχη) avait fait l'objet de multiples passages chez Homère et les tragiques. " Le plan ordinaire d'une prière grecque se conformait au schéma ternaire que l'on peut résumer ainsi : invocation, arguments, requête "[5]. L'invocation était cette adresse élogieuse aux dieux, les arguments, ce que les hommes pouvaient dire pour justifier leur demande, la prière leur apparaissant comme un droit, montrant leurs mérites, et les services dont ils pouvaient se prévaloir, enfin la demande : la requête. Le schéma paraît la plupart du temps dominer l'épopée homérique, ainsi Ulysse à Athéna, en *Iliade* V, 762-7, ou X, 278-83, Achille à Apollon, en Il. XXII, 15, de Diomède au chant V, 114 à Athéna, d'Héra, en II, 157-65. On peut penser que le schéma n'était pas disjoint des pratiques courantes, que ce n'était pas seulement celles des héros, mais aussi des humbles, telle cette inscription découverte à Dodone où un paysan interroge le dieu " pour savoir auquel des dieux, ils doivent adresser leurs prières "[6], et qu'elle était cette pratique populaire qu'Homère aurait retranscrit et stylisé.

Le texte du *Timée* 27c1-d3 paraît ne comporter ni partie 2, ni partie 3, puisqu'il semble difficile que l'homme demande au démiurge de créer le monde. Mais si l'on retranscrit ainsi la prière homérique, où a = invocation, b=arguments, c = requête, on a le schéma vertical

(a)

(b)

(c)

Il est possible d'y substituer le schéma : (a) _____ (b), pour l'invocation du *Timée*. Reprenons la phrase : " les hommes, pour peu qu'ils participent un tant soit peu à la sagesse… ". C'est donc le mot sagesse qui, dans son raccourci représenterait l'argument, Ce faisant il se mettait sur le même plan que le dieu : le dieu était cet interlocuteur sur lequel " on pouvait peser par l'énoncé de droits et de devoirs, devant qui on pouvait faire valoir des revendications - donc presque comme un égal- ce qui n'excluait pas les égards "[7].

Les hommes se rendent dignes des dieux par la sagesse. Ceci répondrait à une perspective platonicienne, puisque " l'image du sage devait être le

---

5. D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *Prière et conceptions religieuses en Grèce ancienne*, Lyon, 1992, p. 201.

6. M. DÉTIENNE, *De la pensée religieuse à la pensée philosophique. La notion de daimon dans le pythagorisme ancien*, Paris, 1963, p. 40, cité par D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *op. cit.,* p. 244.

7. D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *op. cit.,* p. 217.

complément indispensable à un discours sur la piété "[8]. Le *Philèbe* note: " si quelque dieu veut bien exaucer mes prières -prie donc et réfléchis- je réfléchis, et je crois qu'un dieu nous favorise en toutes circonstances "[9]. L'*Epinomis* ajoutait : " le véritable sage est celui qui sait penser, faire et dire au sujet des dieux, toutes choses comme il faut et quand il faut "[10]. On peut voir dans le *Critias*, la suite : " prions donc le dieu de nous faire don lui-même du philtre le plus parfait et le meilleur des philtres, la connaissance. Et après avoir prononcé cette invocation (*proseuchesthai*) remettons à Critias le soin de continuer "[11]. Mais c'est dans le *Timée* que l'on trouve la demande : Invoquons donc encore maintenant en commençant le dieu, pour qu'il nous sauve des considérations absurdes et incohérentes et nous suggère des opinions probables[12]. Le texte de 27d-e, du reste avait employé en 27c le mot εὔχεσθαι : " les prier que nos propos soient avant tout conformes à leurs pensées ", et avait parlé d'une aide, sans préciser laquelle (c 6) ; nous savons maintenant ce qu'elle était : c'était celle du *discours*, correspondant à la demande qu'allait tenir Timée.

Ainsi fait-il état, de l'admission ou non de " la prière par les anciens ", d'un critère de différenciation ; il n'est pas sûr que ce soit un contresens sur σωφροσύνη. Le texte fait état en (I) de plusieurs athéismes, et il semble que ce soit le texte des *Lois* 885 b 6, qui en ait été la source, puisque celui-ci parlait de trois causes : " ne pas croire en l'existence des dieux ", première sorte d'athéisme selon Porphyre, " y croire mais être indifférent aux affaires humaines ", la deuxième cause. Dans le premier cas, il parle des avantages qui en résultent : la prière a une fonction et une utilité, ce que nous ne manquerons pas de rapprocher du traité d'Origène, où l'auteur chrétien répond à deux détracteurs disant que la prière ne sert à rien, parmi lesquels il distinguera " ceux qui sont entièrement athées et nient l'existence de Dieu ", ou " ceux qui admettent son existence sans reconnaître sa providence "[13].

Enfin, le troisième fait état " de ceux qui accordant l'existence des dieux et leur providence, veulent que tout ce qui vient des dieux se produise nécessairement "[14]. Il s'agit des stoïciens ; nous avons vu ailleurs la critique de Proclus, puisqu'ils admettaient une multiplicité de causes physiques en sorte que tout ce qui pouvait advenir aux phénomènes était comme soudé, les causes

---

8. A. MOTTE, " La prière du philosophe selon Platon " , dans *L'expérience de la prière dans les grandes religions*, Colloque de Louvain, 22-23 septembre 1978, Louvain, 1980, p. 190.

9. PLATON, *Philèbe* 12b-c, cité par A. MOTTE, *art. cité*, p. 184.

10. PLATON, *Epinomis*, 989b, cité par A. MOTTE, *art. cité*, p. 189.

11. PLATON, *Critias*, 106 a-b.

12. PLATON, *Timée*, 48d-e, cité par A. MOTTE, *art. cité*, p. 185.

13. ORIGÈNE, *La Prière*, Paris, 2002, p. 33.

14. PORPHYRE, in A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 207, 31-208, 2.

s'enchaînant les unes les autres, pour former une continuité, liant un événement extérieur à un autre, même si une cause principale réussissait à dominer[15]. Ainsi la nécessité pure l'emportait et il n'y avait pas de véritable providence.

Ce que Porphyre voyait, au contraire, dans la prière, c'était qu'elle présupposait l'idée d'une influence possible, qui s'appelle la providence, et qu'invoquer les dieux, était de la sorte en reconnaître l'idée *ipso facto*. En sorte que, dès lors celle-ci était étroitement liée à l'idée de providence. On reconnaît là le théologien et l'homme religieux[16].

Ainsi lorsqu'en (II), il aborde la question sur les " événements qui se produisent […] et qu'il y en a des contingents "[17], semble-t-il admettre que l'intervention providentielle suppose cette absence de déterminisme physique et que les événements extérieurs qui ne dépendent pas de nous, peuvent se produire ou non, c'est à dire ont ce degré d'incertitude, il y verra la marque possible de l'intervention divine, donc de la providence et la possibilité de la prière aux dieux, à même de changer le cours de l'événement. En II, (1), il envisage le rôle de la vertu, dans un sens platonicien que " le semblable pouvant s'unir à son semblable, le vertueux peut devenir semblable aux dieux "[18]. Nous venons de voir cette possibilité d'une presque égalité de dignité, sous-tendue qu'elle était par le texte du *Timée*. Mais si, chez Platon, la sagesse pouvait être aussi bien morale qu'intellectuelle : σωφροσύνη ou φρόνησις peuvent contribuer à la σοφία, il n'est pas besoin de citer les textes majeurs de la *République*, pour s'en rendre compte, c'est d'un œil plotinien que Porphyre regarde la sagesse et la vertu. Le texte du *traité 20* sur la dialectique culmine dans l'affirmation de cette sagesse pratique, φρόνησις avant de parvenir au νοῦς, et tout au bout, au Bien[19]. Mais le *traité 20*, faisait suite au *traité 19*, sur la vertu, où Plotin dégageait les vertus civiques, purificatrices, contemplatives et exemplaires[20]. Et dans *Les Sentences* ou Ἀφορμαί, cette sorte de compendium, où la pensée de Plotin fait figure d'une sorte de bréviaire

---

15. Cf. J.-M. CHARRUE, " Providence et liberté dans la pensée de Proclus ", *Philotheos,* 9, 2009, p. 71.

16. H.-D. SAFFREY, " Pourquoi Porphyre a-t-il édité Plotin ? ", in *Porphyre, Vie de Plotin* II, Paris, 1992, p. 33 " son domaine de prédilection était la religion ".

17. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 208, 4-5.

18. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 208, 8-10.

19. Cf. PLOTIN, *Traités 7-21, traité 20*, Paris, 2003, p. 480-81, notre traduction, cf. notre *Illusion de la dialectique et dialectique de l'Illusion*, Paris, 2003, p. 399-415, et traduction, p. 429-30.

20. PLOTIN, *Traités 7-21, traité 19*, p. 431-442, E. Bréhier traduit exemplaire *Enn.,* I, 2, 7, l. 2 p. 58.

doctrinal, il avait repris la partition des vertus en ces quatre: civiques, purificatrices, contemplatives et paradigmatiques[21].

Or cela il pouvait aussi le découvrir dans la prière des classiques. Le héros ne devait-il pas avoir accompli son devoir, avant d'arguer de ses droits[22] ? Il y avait ce sens moral de la prière dans laquelle, même s'il ne s'agissait pas de prière cultuelle, mais personnelle, il ne fallait pas par de trop grandes prétentions, friser l'insolence, où le sens du collectif passait mieux que l'intérêt personnel. La vertu civique était toujours exigée. Il y avait les vertus purificatrices, ainsi lorsqu' Ajax, dans Sophocle demande à " Tecmesse de prier pour lui pendant qu'il veille à sa purification "[23]. La contemplation, y était ce recueillement préalable, et les conduites évoquées dans l'argument se voulaient exemplaires, surtout lorsqu'il s'agissait de héros. Porphyre parlera de son côté, à l'instar du *Phédon*, " de l'âme dégagée du corps comme d'un cachot ", reprenant ce passage au sujet de la délivrance de l'âme[24].

Dans les deux passages suivants, Porphyre argumente en reprenant l'idée en (2), que " les dieux sont des parents ", et en (3) que " ceux qui refusent de prier en sont privés "; la source n'en est-elle pas le fameux ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα du *Timée* 28c 2-3 ? Du reste dans le fragment XXIX, où Proclus cite encore Porphyre présentant l'idée qu'elle doit se faire " au moment d'entreprendre quelque affaire si petite soit-elle ", dans la même exégèse de *Timée* 27 c1-3[25], et y ajoute le commentaire " qu'il n'a pas dit qu'il faut prier pour toute affaire, mais pour l'impulsion de toute affaire (ἐπὶ παντὶ ὁρμῇ πράγματος) "[26], alors que le *Timée* 27 c3 notait : ἐπὶ πάντος σμικροῦ καὶ μεγάλου πράγματος. Et là encore, le parallèle est possible avec la prière classique, car il était recommandé de " prier avant toute action "[27].

La lecture porphyrienne de ce passage du *Timée* fait ressortir le théologien. Mais elle fait aussi ressortir l'homme de culture. Les fragments de A.R. Sodano le montrent en butte avec " Origène le païen qui avait passé trois jours dans les clameurs, les rougeurs d'indignation à montrer […] que l'art imitatif d'Homère a grande force pour pousser aux actions de courage "[28]. Et dans la réponse qu'il fait Porphyre déclare qu' " Homère est certes capable d'attacher […] de la sublimité aux passions, et d'élever les exploits guerriers […], mais qu'il n'est

21. PORPHYRE, *Sentences*, Paris, 2005, *Sentence 32*, t. I, p. 335-345.

22. Cf. D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *op. cit.,* p. 202-03.

23. SOPHOCLE, *Ajax*, 685-6, cf. D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

24. A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 208, 9-12.

25. A. R. SODANO, F. XXIX, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* I, 216, 20-21.

26. PROCLUS, *ibidem*.

27. Cf. D. AUBRIOT-SÉVIN, *op. cit.,* p. 243 et 246, avec renvoi à *Iliade XVII*, 538-39.

28. A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, F XIX, PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 63,30-64,11.

pas capable d'enseigner une impassibilité intellective et à une vie philosophique ".

C'est tout le sens de son interprétation de la vertu et de la sagesse de ce passage du *Timée*. Aussi lorsque dans le 4è point de ce (II), fait-il appel à " la sagesse des peuples qui ont été zélés à prier : les Brahmanes, les Perses, les Mages, ceux qui ont été les meilleurs théologiens "[29], c'est cette homme de culture qui cherche ainsi à donner le maximum de poids à la prière " qui se trouvera dans les cultes d'initiation et les mystères ". Elle devenait une affaire humaine, dans ce qu'on pouvait connaître alors des peuples et de leurs pratiques religieuses, et témoignait de cette sagesse que les Chaldéens avaient nommé " Vertu des dieux ", dans une allusion possible aux *Oracles Chaldaïques*[30].

Cette fidélité au platonisme se retrouve dans le 5è, où " comme nous sommes une partie du tout, il s'agit de se tourner vers le Tout ", " possédant la vertu d'invoquer la totalité de la vertu "[31]. C'est conforme au *Critias* : " Je le supplie de vouloir bien lui-même assurer pour nous la conservation de ceux de ces propos conformes à l'harmonie et si, malgré nous, il nous est arrivé d'y faire une fausse note, de nous infliger la pénitence (*diké*) qui se doit. Mais la vraie pénitence est de rétablir l'accord. Afin que nous puissions mener à bonne fin ce qui nous reste à dire, prions le dieu de nous donner le meilleur des filtres, la connaissance "[32].

Il n'est pas interdit, disions-nous, d'y voir la consécration de la demande du *Timée*. Elle est conforme à l'interprétation que fait Porphyre du dialogue, la vertu et la sagesse devant contribuer à l'harmonie du monde. Il en était question dans le F XIX, à propos de *Timée* 24 b 1-7 : " Tout découvert en ce qui regarde le Cosmos, parce que ne sont pas visibles les causes des objets ordonnés dans le Monde, ces causes que la sagesse parfaite contemple avant les objets "[33]. Le monde formait un tout et était cette harmonie, ce que notait encore le F XXVI, à propos de *Timée* 27a2-b6 où " il faut s'être formé le caractère pour devenir semblable à l'objet perçu " et " après que les auditeurs des explications du *Timée* aient d'abord bénéficié de la *République*, et c'est seulement alors quand ils ont été ordonnés par elles, qu'ils viennent entendre

---

29. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, F XXVIII, PROCLUS, *op. cit.*, I, 208, 17-23.

30. *Oracles Chaldaïques*, Paris, 1989, n° 107, 6-11 (=64, Kroll) : " la procession des astres n'a pas été enfantée en ta faveur, la large palmure des oiseaux du ciel jamais n'est véridique, non plus que les sections de victimes d'entrailles ; ce ne sont là que des jouets, soutiens d'une fraude vénale. Fuis les pour ton compte, si tu veux t'ouvrir le paradis sacré de la piété, où vertu, sagesse, et bonnes lois se rencontrent ".

31. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* F XXVIII, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* I, 208, 23-26.

32. PLATON, *Critias*, 106 a-b.

33. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* F XIX, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* I, 159, 9-11.

les enseignements sur le monde, parce qu'ils ont été révélés par l'éducation tout semblables au bon ordre du Tout "[34]. Ce passage inaugure le nôtre: c'est parce qu'ils sont semblables au tout qu'ils peuvent connaître le Tout. Cela se passe dans l'âme individuelle, en accord avec l'Âme de l'univers.

L'interprétation porphyrienne du *Timée* peut être mise au jour : le passage de 27c-d ne constitue pas seulement une introduction formelle, mais décide du fond, comme cadre qui en ouvrait la perspective. Et ce qu'il dévoile, c'est cet éclairage nouveau : le *Timée* est un dialogue moral, parce qu'il était structuré par la prière : invocation, argument (la sagesse, la vertu), édification de la connaissance qui correspond à la demande. Et cet éclairage qui structure ainsi, fait du dialogue, non pas une démiurgie, mais le *logos* de cette démiurgie qui édifie l'âme, la conduit à la connaissance. C'est là, par la prière et ses succès, qu'on a la preuve de l'existence d'une providence.

2

Le fragment suivant, où il s'agit de la providence est le F LXVII[35], tiré du *Commentaire sur le songe de Scipion* : Cicéron raconte le songe qu'il a fait en –149, après l'écoute du récit de l'aïeul, Scipion, l'Africain, où la nuit il s'élève dans les régions célestes, accueilli par celui-ci, dans ces admirables réalités du cosmos, où accèdent les âmes[36]. Le commentaire de Macrobe déclare que " Platon qui avait reconnu, grâce à l'héritage du pythagorisme et à la divine profondeur de son propre génie, que tout rapport de proportion reposait sur des nombres, a défini, dans son *Timée*, l'Âme du monde, en fonction de ces nombres combinés par l'ineffable providence du démiurge divin "[37].

" En premier lieu il (le démiurge) a séparé du mélange total une portion. Ensuite, il a pris une portion double de celle-là ; puis une troisième portion égale à une fois et demie la seconde, et à trois fois la première ; une quatrième double de la seconde; une cinquième triple de la troisième ; une sixième égale à huit fois la première ; une septième égale à vingt-sept fois la première "[38]. On y reconnaît la figure de la tetraktys, sous forme de Λ:

---

34. A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, F XXVI, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* I, 202, 7-13.

35. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.* F LXVII, p. 53-59, MACROBE, *Commentaire sur le songe de Scipion*, tr. fr., Paris, 2003, t. II, II, 1-20, p. 8-12.

36. MACROBE, *op. cit.,* t. 1, *Introduction*, p. XXV.

37. MACROBE, *op. cit.,* II, 2, p. 8.

38. PLATON, *Timée*, 35b4-c2, traduction A. Rivaud, Paris, 1925.

1

2 3

4 9

8 27

En effet, on peut voir ces points de correspondance évidents, entre les rapports mathématiques, dont L. Brisson[39] donne une explication et les rapports musicaux : l'octave 2 /1, la quarte 4/3, la quinte 3/2, le lemme (le reste) 256/243. La question est de savoir si le texte du *Timée*, porte sur cette " musique des sphères, et sur les rapports harmoniques et l'Âme du monde dans le *Timée* de Platon ", comme le note le passage de Macrobe. A cet effet, celui-ci croit bon de traduire ainsi : " chaque intervalle se trouve lié entre deux médiétés : ces liens engendrent les hémioles, les épitrites et les épogdes "[40], où l'hémiole est le 3/2, l'épitrite le 4/3, l'épogde le 9/8. On voit, à l'évidence, cette homologie entre les rapports numériques et les rapports harmoniques.

Mais était-ce suffisant pour faire de l'Âme du monde une harmonie de type musical ? Malgré ce que peut avoir de séduisant une interprétation qui aboutit à la musique des sphères, on peut se demander si l'homologie des rapports numériques, donc des nombres peut décider d'une réalité ontologique ? N'est-ce pas déduire des nombres au réel, ce que faisaient les pythagoriciens, où les nombres 2, 4, ou 10 correspondaient à une réalité[41] ? Comme le note L. Brisson, " Platon voyait effectivement une certaine analogie entre l'œuvre du démiurge et l'harmonie musicale. Cependant, on ne peut à partir de là ni définir l'âme comme une harmonie, ni postuler l'existence d'une harmonie des sphères "[42].

L'interprétation, tout aussi inexacte qu'elle soit, était originale. Porphyre l'a-t-il partagé, vu ce que l'on sait de Macrobe, qui reproduisait, la plupart de ses positions ? On peut en trouver la réponse au F LXIX, qui reproduit, le *Commentaire sur le Timée* de Proclus : " Porphyre s'est borné à démontrer longuement que l'Âme a été harmonisée et qu'elle remplit d'harmonie tout le Cosmos. Il se fonde sur deux raisons. D'une part l'Âme est multiplicité. Est-elle multiplicité, elle est ou inordonnée ou harmonie. C'est la seconde qui est

---

39. L. BRISSON, *Le Même et l'Autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon*, Paris, 1974, p. 314-322, cf. p. 317, pour la tetraktys, et 319, les correspondances.

40. MACROBE, *op. cit.*, II, 2, 15, cf. t. I, I, 19, 21 et note 423 pour les définitions : selon Ptolémée, *Harmonica*, 7.

41. Cf. L. BRUNSCHVICG, *Les étapes de la philosophie mathématique*, Paris, 1930, p. 33-42.

42. L. BRISSON, *op. cit.,* p. 315.

ici, non la première : étant, en effet une fabrication de l'intellect, comment pourrait-elle être sans ordre ou harmonie? D'autre part, l'Âme dirige toutes les sphères encosmiques conformément à des rapports harmoniques, et les générations de vivants, et la façon dont ils composent un seul et même ordre en liaison avec le Tout "[43]. Par son harmonie, elle fondait l'ordre providentiel.

3

" Lors donc qu'il se rapporte au sensible, et que le monde de l'Autre, allant droit son chemin transmet son message à l'Âme entière, des opinions et des croyances y naissent fermes et véritables; mais quand il se rapporte à un objet intellectuel et que c'est le cercle du Même, tournant bien rond qui doit faire cette déclaration, c'est l'intellect et la science qui se produisent nécessairement "[44]. L'Âme du monde en recèle la possibilité, posée comme sujet connaissant; et comme mouvement[45]. Le thème est en rapport avec la providence : comment s'imaginer, en effet, qu'elle puisse coordonner le monde, sans connaître et prévoir les événements ? Ainsi, pour réunir les cercles des planètes, doit-elle être ce sujet qui connaît tant à l'égard du sensible, que de l'intelligible. Porphyre ne l'ignore pas. Ainsi la rectitude est-elle cette droiture de l'opinion (τὴν ὀρθοδοξίαν) · " c'est ainsi que Porphyre et Jamblique l'interprètent, note Proclus ". Porphyre voit dans le mot rectitude la possibilité " de ce caractère inaltérable et inébranlable de la providence "[46].

Alors, la connaissance se fait " à partir ' de ce cercle qui marche droit ' (τὸν ὀρθὸν κύκλον) comme indivisible, le cercle qui ne marcha pas droit, comme divisé, mais comme participant […] à la ligne droite, parce que la connaissance des sensibles se porte vers l'extérieur, et qu'ensuite elle se retourne vers l'Âme elle-même, en sorte qu'elle n'est ni seulement une droite, comme la connaissance des sensibles ni seulement un cercle comme celle de la raison discursive "[47]. Même si l'explication reste embrouillée, il avait compris le rôle de l'Âme du monde, dans sa fonction cognitive, dans ces cercles de parcours des planètes, qui devaient se raccorder à cette fermeté d'une connaissance du cercle droit du Même, pour assurer la possibilité d'une coordination du Monde, condition de l'action providentielle.

---

43. A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* F LXIX, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* II, 214, 6-13.

44. PLATON, *Timée*, 37b6-c3.

45. Cf. PLATON, *Timée*, 37a6-7.

46. A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* F LXXVI, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* II, 309, 12-14.

47. A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.* F LXXVI, PROCLUS, *op. cit.,* II, 309, 15-23.

II. – La Lettre à Anébon

La providence, ici reçue comme εἱμαρμένη, destin, laisse-t-elle subsister la liberté humaine ? Si l'on parle de philosophie religieuse, il faut ici appuyer sur la première note. C'est, en effet, comme problème philosophique que la question se pose. Aussi ce n'est pas un de ces contempteurs de l'astrologie qui parle, mais quelqu'un qui s'est intéressé à elle, et en a suivi le devenir, au point de lui emboîter le pas. Il avait été l'auteur d'un traité sur l'apotélesmatique de Ptolémée, publié par H. Wolf en 1559 : Πορφυρίου φιλόσοφου Εἰσαγώγη εἰς τὴν ἀποτελεσματικὴν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου[48], pour lequel Ch. E. Ruelle, dans la *Revue des études grecques*, en 1911, notait : " tous les chapitres, qui, dans Porphyre, suivent Démophile, semblent viser les sujets traités dans le *Tetrabiblos* de Ptolémée "[49]. Claude Ptolémée (90-168, ap. J.C), auteur de l'*Almageste*, en astronomie, et du *Tetrabiblos*, traitant de l'astrologie horoscopique, expliquait les effets astrologiques des planètes, à partir des 7 planètes.

L'astrologie était d'origine égyptienne, même si, comme le souligne A. Bouché-Leclercq, les zodiaques dont celui de Denderah étaient plus tardifs[50], puis chaldéenne, mais s'était fondue dans l'héritage grec. Comme le note W. Scott : " the notion of a system of departemental gods, and the names Zeus, Heimarmené indicate a stoïc source; but the terms Decani, Horoscopi, […] are derived from astral religion of hellenistic Egypt "[51]. Ainsi avait elle emprunté à ces sources, pour se fondre en une unité. Aussi, quand en 2, 4 parle-t-il du " dieu, de l'ange et du démon ", A. R. Sodano la rapproche des *Papyrus magiques grecs* : " the mighty decans, and archangels, and myriad angels " ou " gods, archangels, and decans "[52]. Mais c'est surtout Hermès qui avaient été le maître d'œuvre de cette astrologie.

Aussi quand Porphyre, au début de § 12, cite sa source : " Chérémon et ses pareils ne mettent rien d'autre avant les mondes visibles… "[53]. Le ton péjoratif vient d'Eusèbe, mais, par cette présence première des mondes visibles, on

---

48. Porphyre, " Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὴν ἀποτελεσματικὴν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου ", réédité dans A. Boer et S. Weinstock, *Introductio in Tetrabiblum Ptolemaei*, Bruxelles, 1940, p.187-228.

49. Ch.E. Ruelle, " Texte astrologique attribué à Démophile et rendu à Porphyre ", *R.E.G.*, 24, 1911, p. 334-336.

50. A. Bouché-Leclercq, *L'astrologie grecque*, Paris, 1899, p. 70.

51. W. Scott, *Hermetica*, I, p. 60 cité par A. R. Sodano, *La Lettera ad Anebo*, Naples, 1958, Appendice II, " gli scritti ermetici e la lettera ad Anebo ", p. 69.

52. A.R. Sodano, *op. cit.,* 2, 4, 14, cf. H.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek magical papyri*, translation, Chicago-London, 1986, p. 8, 209-210, p. 61, 1203.

53. Porphyre, *Lettre à Anébon*, A. R. Sodano, *op. cit.,* 2, 12, 7, cité par Eusèbe, *P. E.,* III, 4, 1-2.

comprend d'entrée qu'il est stoïcien. Ce que Porphyre note, dans le traité *De l'abstinence,* en IV, 6, 8[54]. On comprend, comme l'avait noté Bouché-Leclercq, que " l'attraction des planètes et des divinités choisies comme équivalents approximatifs des divinités chaldéennes a été sinon faite par les stoïciens, du moins justifiée par eux […] ainsi de la planète Mercure et du dieu Hermès "[55]. On a pu voir en l'astrologie cette affabulation imaginaire[56], mais justement cet ascendant stoïcien avait contribué à rendre rationnelle cette présentation. Ainsi lorsque " la tabula Bianchini présente les décans (trois par signe) dont la tête affleure et soutient le cercle extérieur du monde "[57].

La citation ajoute " Ils placent au rang de principes ceux des Egyptiens, et n'admettent pas d'autres dieux que les astres appelés planètes, ceux qui composent le zodiaque et tous qui se lèvent à côté d'eux, les divisions en décans, les horoscopes, ceux qu'on avait appelé 'chefs puissants', dont les noms sont aussi rapportés dans les éphémérides astrologiques, avec les cures médicales, les levers et les couchers, les signes annonciateurs de l'avenir "[58].

Les décans couvraient 10° du cercle écliptique, trois par signe zodiacal (30°), donc 36 décans, pour les 360 degrés. " Leur domination s'étendait à l'espace et au temps, puisque chacun dominait 10 jours, découpant ainsi l'année "[59]. Mais l'astrologie était " chronocratie "[60]. " Je veux dit Hermès au F VI que la leçon sur les décans te devienne intelligible "[61]. Placés ainsi entre le cercle extrême de l'univers et le cercle zodiacal; figurés parfois comme personnages, ils étaient les maîtres de maison, exerçant leur influence sur une partie de l'univers. Le cercle zodiacal comprenait 12 signes et Porphyre, donnait cette description, dans l'*Antre des Nymphes* : " Voici dans quel ordre sont placés les signes zodiacaux, du Cancer au Capricorne: le Lion, demeure du Soleil, la Vierge d'Hermès, la balance, d'Aphrodite, le Scorpion, d'Arès, le Sagittaire de Zeus, le Capricorne de Kronos ; puis partant du Capricorne, le Verseau demeure de Kronos, le Poisson, de Zeus, le Bélier d'Arès, le Taureau d'Aphrodite, les Gémeaux, d'Hermès, le Cancer de la lune "[62]. Le Soleil et la

---

54. PORPHYRE, *De l'Abstinence*, IV, 6, 8= F 10 de VAN DEN HORST, *Cheremon, Egyptian priest and stoïc philosopher*, Leiden, 1984 ; cf. R. GOULET, *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, II, Paris, 1994, p. 284-6.

55. A. BOUCHE-LECLERCQ, *op. cit.,* p. 68.

56. A.J. FESTUGIÈRE, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, Paris, rééd. 1981, I, p. 98.

57. HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE, III, les fragments extraits de Stobée, Introduction, p. XLV.

58. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* 2, 12 b 1-5, p. 24.

59. HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE *op. cit.,* III, Introduction au F. VI, p. XL.

60. A.J. FESTUGIÈRE, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, *op. cit.,* I, p. 102.

61. HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE, *op. cit.,* III, F VI, § 2.

62. PORPHYRE, *L'Antre des Nymphes dans l'Odyssée,* § 22, tr. Y. Le Lay, texte du séminaire de Buffalo, Verdier, 1989, p. 78.

lune sont cités une fois, les 5 autres, deux fois. Les astres sont en mouvement autour du zodiaque, et les horoscopes dépendront de leurs positions par rapport aux 7 planètes.

Mais dans *La Lettre à Anébon*, Porphyre est épris de liberté. " La plupart d'entre eux ont fait dépendre notre liberté du mouvement des astres, en enchaînant tout, je ne sais comment des lois indissolubles de la nécessité qu'ils appellent fatalité, qu'ils adorent comme seuls capables de libérer de la fatalité dans les temples, les statues et autres formes du culte "[63]. La liberté est ainsi recouverte par le déterminisme astrologique de l'horoscope qui prédit l'avenir de chaque personne. Les planètes pouvaient être situées en trigone, quadrat ou diamètre, déterminant le destin. Et elles l'emportaient en se neutralisant, ou à partir du rayonnement qui les reliait: l'astrologie était, au départ, une physique. " C'est l'énergie ou influence astrale émise par les corps célestes et qui agit sur les corps mortels du monde sublunaire, équivalent du terme ἀπόῤῥοια, force cosmique souvent personnifiée et assimilée à un démon "[64], parce que " les forces, bien qu'incorporelles sont dans les corps et elles opèrent par le moyen des corps "[65], en sorte qu'elles atteignent les hommes soumis à la fatalité en vertu des énergies astrales qui ont influé sur eux au moment de leur naissance.

Porphyre sent intensément cette privation de la liberté, puisque juste avant, il notait : " ils interprètent tout par rapport aux phénomènes de la nature, et rien par rapport aux substances incorporelles et vivantes "[66]. D'où ses solutions possibles. D'abord, celle de la connaissance : " tu parles de généthlialogie pour savoir s'il y en a ou non et de la découverte du maître de maison, si elle est impossible ou possible "[67], puisque celle-ci aurait permis de dominer le sort, ensuite celle de la division du corps et de l'âme démoniaque[68], enfin, celle des démons bons et mauvais[69]. Mais cette dernière était trop proche de l'Hermès lui-même qui parlait de l'intelligence comme bon démon[70], et la deuxième avait

63. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* 2, 13, 3-7, EUSÈBE, *P. E.*, III, 4, 2, 8-13.

64. A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, Appendice C, p. 140-141, HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE, I, " Poimandrès ", cf. t. II, Asclépius, § XVI, 13.

65. HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE, III, fragments extraits de STOBÉE, IV, 6, l. 1-3, p. 60.

66. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* 2, 12c, l. 12-13.

67. PORPHYRE, *op.cit.,* A. R. SODANO, *op. cit.,* 2, 14, l. 13-14, JAMBLIQUE, *Les Mystères d'Égypte*, IX, 2, l. 6-8.

68. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* A.R. SODANO, *op. cit.*, 2, 16, 15-16, JAMBLIQUE, *op. cit.,* IX, 7, 2281, 14-15.

69. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* A.R. SODANO, *op. cit,* 2, 16, 19-21, JAMBLIQUE, *op. cit.,* IX, 7, 281, 18, 2-282, 2.

70. HERMÈS TRISMÉGISTE, *op. cit.,* I, (Poimandrès), X, 23.

été réfutée par Jamblique[71]. Porphyre se heurtait à une théologie constituée. Pour retrouver une parcelle de liberté, il lui fallait trouver d'autres solutions : ce qu'il fera dans le τὸ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν.

III. – SUR LA LIBERTÉ[72]

Là où *La Lettre à Anébon* a échoué, dans l'établissement de la relation entre cette providence/destin, et la liberté, *Sur la liberté* va réussir. Le texte porte sur le mythe d'Er, mais, alors que le début fait penser à une exégèse d'ensemble, nous dirons que l'étude de Porphyre est, à la fois problématisée en tant qu'interprétation et fragmentaire. Elle ne reprend le mythe que sur quelques points clés après avoir résumé quelques passages. Celui de Lachésis " fille d'Ananké, qui envoie un démon à l'homme, qui lui serve de gardien dans la vie et lui fasse remplir entièrement la destinée qu'il a choisie. Ce démon reçoit l'homme en charge, le conduit vers Clothô, sous la main de cette Parque et sous le fuseau qu'elle fait tourner "[73], puis vers Atropos. Le cadre est ainsi tracé : quelle est la part de choix, quelle est la part de nécessité et de destin, dans cet ordre providentiel du mythe d'Er ?

Là où Porphyre réussit, c'est justement qu'il ne fait plus la différence entre deux parties du démon, mais entre les deux possibilités de liberté pour l'homme, celle de l'âme et celle du corps. Que dit le texte ? " Le choix, pour les âmes, hors du corps, consiste principalement à choisir le premier type d'existence; ensuite, le choix fait, Ananké a sanctionné la destinée inévitable, le démon a suivi cette sanction, comme s'il présidait au type d'existence […] pour forcer les âmes à s'en tenir à ce qui a été choisi "[74]. Il remarque, par la suite : " Dans le cas de l'être humain, le vouloir propre s'avance principalement libre d'agir en ce qui regarde les choses de l'âme, dans la mesure où elle s'appartient à elle-même, et où elle n'est pas enchaînée dans le corps, et en ce qui regarde d'autre part les choses du vivant composé de corps et d'âme, dans la mesure où il a rompu ses liens pour agir librement. C'est en effet avec cette propriété que chacun de nous parcourt son temps de vie humaine, la propriété d'avoir l'élan convenable pour les actes libres du composé humain "[75].

---

71. Cf. notre article " Providence et liberté chez Jamblique de Chalcis ", *Philotheos,* 10, 2010, p. 112-125.

72. Les citations sont empruntées à la traduction de A.J FESTUGIÈRE, PROCLUS, *Commentaire sur la République*, III, Paris, Vrin, rééd. 2005, p. 349-357, " Porphyre sur le libre-arbitre ", modifiée.

73. PORPHYRE, " Sur la liberté ", apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 164, 10-14 Wachsmuth.

74. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 166, 16-20 Wachsmuth.

75. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, II, 167, 1-7 Wachsmuth.

Ainsi que le notait F. Cumont : " la théologie sur laquelle elle (la divination astrale) repose, a pour doctrine fondamentale l'idée d'une parenté de l'âme qui vivifie nos corps avec les feux éternels. Cette conception qui avait appartenu aux Chaldéens, devient celle de leurs successeurs égyptiens, et au II è siècle, trouva en Hipparque un défenseur convaincu "[76]. C'est pourquoi ce texte est à la fois un document en matière d'astrologie, et le plus apte à définir la liberté. En effet, lorsque l'âme scrutant le ciel, verra se dérouler les destinées inscrites dans les astres, comme sur un tableau devenant inchangeable " lorsqu'elle passera à travers les 7 sphères, et que, juste à ce moment là, chaque sphère imprime en l'âme des choix différents qui influeront sur son choix de telle ou telle deuxième vie ", l'âme est entièrement libre.

Relatant l'histoire d'Er, avec cette connaissance du choix des horoscopes, Porphyre voit cette parenté avec l'astrologie des égyptiens, et leurs traditions, à l'intérieur du mythe même. D'une part, " Platon a attribué aux âmes hors du corps le choix, ce en quoi, il risque de supprimer la liberté (τὸ ἐφ᾽ἡμῖν), et généralement- l'autonomie du vouloir (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον)[77]. Mais ce risque paraît cependant bien moindre " que celui que Platon a dit qui arrive aux âmes, après qu'elles aient choisi et qu'elles doivent montrer sur la scène les hommes individuels, par le fait qu'elles sont entrées dans les corps, cela nous est apparu difficile à accepter, dès là que Platon dit tantôt " que le premier choisisse la vie à laquelle il sera lié par nécessité ", tantôt que " le démon que nous avons reçu en part est un gardien auquel on ne peut échapper "[78].

Le côté fragmentaire du mythe apparaît ainsi, puisqu'il trouvera d'autres explications dans d'autres endroits notamment dans l'*Antre des Nymphes* au § 22 où il s'agira des deux bouches devenues les deux portes du Cancer et du Capricorne, où les âmes descendaient du ciel ou remontaient de la terre, et les deux autres parallèles, dans un mouvement inversé[79].

Dans *Sur la liberté*, Porphyre est préoccupé par cette conciliation entre la liberté et la nécessité. C'est pourquoi Ananké est présentée comme le danger qui menace: " le démon suivant la fatalité, et veillant à ce qu'elle s'accomplisse, de quoi pourrions-nous être encore les maîtres, ou comment serait-il vrai encore que la vertu est sans maître et que chacun de nous en aura plus ou moins selon qu'il l'honore ou la néglige "[80]. Cette nécessité est implacable, une fois le choix fait " car ni un homme ne saurait jamais avoir été

---

76. F. CUMONT, *L'Égypte des astrologues*, 1937, rééd. 1999, p. 156.

77. PORPHYRE, *op.cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 163, 19-22 Wachsmuth.

78. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 164, 3-9 Wachsmuth.

79. PORPHYRE, *L'Antre des Nymphes*, *op. cit.,* § 22, p. 78, cf. F. BUFFIÈRE, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque*, Paris, 1956, p. 443, avec le schéma des deux entrées.

80. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 164, 20-24 Wachsmuth.

femme, même si par débauche, il devient extrêmement efféminé et que son vouloir transforme entièrement pour lui l'aspect extérieur en celui habituel à une femme, ni une femme ne saurait jamais avoir été un homme, même si elle s'adonne aux pratiques des mâles "[81]. Elle est cet ordre de nature, providence ou fatalité maintenue par les dieux : les moires au secours de la *phusis* !

Mais Porphyre est attaché à l'existence et à l'exercice de la moindre parcelle de liberté. C'est la condition de la vertu : " Il convient de fuir partout les excès (619a7) et de poursuivre le milieu, si la liberté n'est pas déjà esclave, liée par les passions incurables du vice (619a5) "[82]. La liberté correspond au mérite des hommes de se maintenir dans l'exercice de la morale. Comme dans le passage sur les métiers : " mais quant à l'acquisition de tel métier ou de telles occupations et sciences, quant à la poursuite de la vie politique et des magistratures et toutes les choses pareilles, tout cela a dépendu de la liberté, sous réserve que certaines choses ont été difficiles à obtenir, du fait qu'elles ont besoin d'une assistance extérieure, par suite de quoi on a de la peine à les atteindre, et il est malaisé de s'en décharger, par exemple les magistratures, le pouvoir tyrannique, les fonctions d'orateur du peuple "[83]. Là, la volonté intervient : " toutes ont dépendu du choix préalable (προαίρεσις), mais le fait de les obtenir n'est pas totalement en notre pouvoir, et nous sommes contraint d'obéir à l'agent qui nous les a fait obtenir "[84]. Il y a les obstacles, la résistance du monde et les intervenants extérieurs. Comment résister à Ananké qui force l'homme à continuer toute sa vie, une fois le choix fait ? Porphyre parle des types d'existence : " la vie agricole, puis une autre, la politique, ou encore une autre, la militaire "[85], s'étonne que l'on soit forcé et indique que chez Platon, ces types d'existence (βίος) sont aussi ceux des animaux. Il y a deux vies, et deux choix, ce qui a fait hésiter les interprètes : Bouché-Leclercq pense que la seconde vie ne fait que manifester le choix antérieur[86], tandis que Festugière parle " du κλῆρος, du choix libre du type de vie, et d'un deuxième choix du βίος, qui livre l'âme à la fatalité "[87].

L'âme voyant les types d'existence inscrites comme sur un tableau, et choisissant, en fonction des variations sidérales est menée par Diké : " Celle-ci est appelée Tyché, parce qu'elle est une cause impénétrable du calcul humain

---

81. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 166, 22-25 Wachsmuth.

82. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBEE, § 42, II, 168, 10-13, Wachsmuth.

83. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 165, 30-166, 6 Wachsmuth.

84. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE *ibidem,* l. 7-8 Wachsmuth.

85. PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* apud STOBÉE, § 39, II, 165, 2-4 Wachsmuth.

86. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, *op. cit.,* p. 602.

87. A.J. FESTUGIÈRE, PROCLUS, *Commentaire sur la République*, III, Paris, 1970, PORPHYRE, *op. cit.,* p. 349.

[…] et dans la dodécade, les premiers degrés du zodiaque sont favorables […], les derniers malfaisants "[88]. Mais, après le premier choix, c'est elle encore qui est responsable du choix qu'elle fait de la seconde vie, que montre, inscrite au ciel l'ordonnance régulière des astres au moment de l'horoscope : " l'horoscope de la conception manifeste que l'homme choisit le lot de l'homme ou du chien, et que d'autre part l'horoscopie de la sortie du ventre manifeste le choix de la seconde vie, choix qui vient en confirmation de ce qui a été préalablement choisi "[89].

Porphyre traduit en termes humains le mythe d'Er. Or, qu'est-ce qui permet à la liberté de subsister, que n'ont pas vu les interprètes, à propos de ce second choix, n'est-ce pas cet élan (ὁρμή), que nous avons vu[90], qui vient de l'âme, et, après le premier choix, va traverser toute la vie ? Par cette préservation du choix humain, au-delà de la fatalité d'une providence/destin, Porphyre a su donner là, à la liberté sa dimension cosmologique[91].

IV. – Conclusion

Porphyre donne une interprétation majeure du *Timée* dont 27c1-d3 ne serait pas simple prélude, mais la formulation d'une prière qui structure le dialogue, attestant la providence dont on saisit le sens en la comparant avec la prière homérique: invocation, argument, demande. L'homme de culture savait retrouver le sens d'un texte ; même s'il s'est fourvoyé avec l'Âme harmonie, ou les deux cercles du *Timée*. Pourquoi sacrifier l'astrologie, dans *La Lettre à Anébon* puisqu'elle appartient aussi à cet univers? Malgré ses efforts désespérés, la *Lettre* semble se heurter à un échec, dans la conciliation avec la liberté. Le *τὸ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν*, transmis par Stobée, dans son interprétation fragmentaire du mythe d'Er réussit cette conciliation à partir d'une investigation en deux moments du choix des vies, où l'âme qui a choisi, une première fois conservera cet élan propre, dans le deuxième choix, à l'horoscope de naissance, et dans toute la vie, donnant ainsi une dimension cosmologique à la liberté.

---

88. Porphyre, *op. cit.,* apud Stobée, § 42, II, 171, 8-15 Wachsmuth.

89. Porphyre, *op.cit.,* apud Stobée, § 42, II, 171, 25-172, 3 Wachsmuth.

90. Cf. supra p. 12 et note 75.

91. Les fragments du *Pros Nemertion, Porphyrii Philosophi fragmenta*, A. Smith, Stuttgart et Leipzig, 1993, F. 276 à 282, p. 314-318, consultés après la rédaction, confirment, selon nous, les orientations dégagées ici.

ORPHIC INFLUENCES ON PROCLUS' EXEGESIS OF PLATO: THE GODDESS NECESSITY AND THE DESCENT OF SOULS INTO BODIES*

ANTONI BORDOY

Neoplatonism is commonly described as an attempt to clarify and expose the truth of Plato's doctrines[1]. This definition can be applied to all authors included in this philosophical tradition, although each school[2] has its own peculiaritie. One of the elements that make these schools different is, precisely, the use of an own type of exegetical methodology, that sometimes results in opposed conceptions of what is the "truth" of the Platonic doctrines[3]. Iamblichus, for example, criticizes the methodology used by Plotinus and the Roman School, considering their exegesis too far from its object[4]; or Proclus, who criticizes Iamblichus' methodology for the same reason. Some centuries before, Calcidius observed that the first exegetical problem derives from the difficulty to find the

---

* This study is included in the I+D+I Project "Estudios sobre la transposición de las doctrinas órficas en la filosofía estoica", reference number: FFI2009-0861.

1. Cf. H.J. BLUMENTHAL, *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism*, Great Yarmouth, 1993, I, 1. IGAL, 1992, p. 7-8 mentions the insistence of Proclus to describe himself as a simple teacher of Plato's doctrines (Πρόκλος ὁ Διάδοχος), a definition that can be extended to other Neoplatonists. Also vid. Ph. MERLAN, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, The Hague, 1953 (2ª ed. 1960).

2. The first division of Neoplatonic schools is from K. PRAECHTER, "Richtungen und Schulen im Neuplatonismus", *Genethliakon für Carl Robert*, Berlin, 1910, and idem, *Die Philosophie des Altertums*, Berlin, 1926,

3. D. Larsen, *Jamblique de Chalcis. Exégète et philosophe*, Aarhus, 1972, p. 208 and L. BRISSON, 2002, p. 17-18, claim that the relation between Neoplatonic authors and Plato consists in a "mediation", an interpretation made with the aim of "adapting" the Platonic doctrines to a new context, something that today would be considered as a "critique".

4. For a more extensive analysis, vid. D.P. TAORMINA, *Jamblique, critique de Plotin et de Porphyre. Quatre études*, Paris, 1999.

correct meaning of Plato's words, not by the unclear style of the dialogues but by the differences between the original and the new contexts[5], and at the 3rd century it difficult the comprehension of the primary reference.

Proclus was aware of these exegetical problems, and for this reason he suggests and uses a new interpretative methodology that, from today's perspective, seems to be more accurate: when the Lycian analyzes the Platonic dialogues –in this case, *Timaeus* and *Republic*–, he not only makes a direct reading of the text, but also compares all interpretations that have been submitted by the most important commentators. This new methodology is based on four principles: first, presenting evidences, it means, collecting and exposing Plato's words; second, determining the precise context in which they are mentioned; third, analyzing the previous interpretations on a passage, question or idea; and fourth, using the evidences, data and interpretations to construct an own theory and argue for it. However, and this is the main point of this study, Proclus' methodology is not completely neutral and, in the case his interpretation of the conception of the "Necessity" in the context of the descent of individual souls from Intellectual to Sensible World, he receives an important influence from Orphic doctrines. In this sense, our study aims to determine the importance of Orphism, a religion placed among Theology and Divine Inspiration, in order to demonstrate that it is a possible key for understanding the construction of his conceptual division of Necessity: the Necessity that is prior to Intellect –called by A. J. Festugière as "Ananke", using a transliteration of Greek; and the Necessity that is posterior to Intellect and is placed in a lower position.

I. – *Ananke* and the Descent of Souls: Proclus' Exegesis

The Platonic conception of human dualism presupposes, among others, a theological structure in which the Noetic soul has a divine and intellective origin but, for some reasons, she descends to the sensible world and is incarnated into the a body. Indeed, the Noetic soul originally lives in the world of Ideas and contemplates them in their purest form; but this soul is not capable to remain in her place or state, and she descends across the different spheres of the Cosmos until her incarnation into a sensible being; when an entity reaches to the end of his life and dies –it means, when the sensible body is corrupted–, it begins a cycle of transmigrations that leads the soul from one body to another, until they arrive to a complete salvation, possible only for those who have been for three

5. Calcidius, *Com.*, 1, p. 57. J. H. Waszink, *Timaeus. A Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, Series Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aeui. Corpus Platonicorum, London, 1962.

times philosophers[6]. This fall of souls is not an aleatory process, and really it is subject to some rules that Plato identifies with the ineluctable "Laws of Destiny". According to *Timaeus* 41d[7], the souls know these laws, because they were revealed by the Demiurge before the first incarnation.

Commonly accepted by the Platonic commentators, this explanation raises some exegetical questions[8], like the problem of the existence or inexistence of responsibility of souls in the first descent or the place and role of the Lays of Destiny in the fall. According to their own background, each Neoplatonic School defends a concrete opinion: Plotinus derives his concept of "Laws of Destiny" from a thoughtless act of individual souls[9]; instead, Iamblichus' supposes that the descent exists because the Good needs to be extended through his activity[10]; and Proclus defends a combination of free will, Laws of Destiny and the own nature of souls to explain the descent[11]. It is also important to remind that each of these exegeses is originally conceived as the most correct interpretation of Plato's doctrines, largely because Neoplatonists construct their theories using different background knowledge and, for this reason, only a concrete exegesis is coherent with the context.

---

6. For a more accurate analysis on Plato's doctrine of metempsychosis, vid. F. CASADESÚS, "La transmigración de las almas en Platón" (in press).

7. The same idea appears in PLATO, *Phdr*. 248c and *Lg*. 904c. Also, at *R*. 617d 2-e 5, Plato narrates the discourse of Lachesis, daughter of Necessity, to some souls. In this discourse, Lachesis explains to the souls which is the way of the cycles of reincarnation that follow the first descent.

8. F. LISI, "Individual Soul, World Soul and the Form of the Good in Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*", in *Études platoniciennes*, vol. IV, Paris, 2007, p. 105-11 explains that the origin of these problems about the conception of the individual have their origin in the new importance of Psychology. According to Lisi, the Neoplatonism begins a new philosophical orientation in which the center of the explanations leaves the Theory of Ideas to be placed in the Noetic soul. Also, an important part of these problems come from the discussion about the division of the soul, this is, if she is divided in two or three parts. In *Ti*. 69c-d, Plato identifies the parts of the mortal soul that correspond to the division of the *Republic*: the aggressive part, *thumos*; and the appetitive part, *epithumia*. In this sense, there is a correlation between these two parts and the division that appears in PL. *Phdr*. 235d-254a: the white horse would be the aggressive part, and the black horse corresponds to the appetitive part. PLOT. *Enn*. IV 8.28-29 explains what is the original problem: "Something is clear: [Plato] does not say the same in all dialogues." As IGAL 1992, 528, n. 9 says, "Plotinus does not say that Plato contradicts, but at firs sight it is disconcerting".

9. PLOTINUS, *Enn*. IV 3 [27] 13.18-27.

10. STOBAEUS, *App*. I, 49, 37, p. 375, 5 ff. Wachsm. The sense of Iamblichus' words is examined in A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* (vols. III y IV), Paris, 1949-54, p. 61

11. This Proclus' theory will be examined in sections II. and III. of this study.

In the case of Proclus, the exegesis of the Platonic conception of "Necessity" is apparently influenced, among other elements, by a concrete tradition: the Orphic theology reveled in the *Poems* and *Rhapsodies*. This influence is already evident when Proclus explains the relation between Orpheus and Plato, more when he talks about the starting point of the *Republic* and *Timaeus*:

> "In the *Timaeus* (Pl. *Ti*. 40e ff), he [Plato] also says about this Orpheus that his teachings on divine matters are credible, although these were developed without plausible arguments and demonstrations, believing that he has known the Gods, who are his relatives, mostly through a divine delirium, if it is true that he is a sort of father of the Theology among Greeks."[12]

In this sense, we can bring three arguments to justify the use of Orpheus in the exegesis of Plato's concept of "Necessity":

a) In the *Life of Proclus*, Marinus narrates that Proclus' could not study the Orphic Theology with his teacher Syrianus. There are two reasons for it: the premature death of the teacher and the discussions about the convenience to study the Orphic poems or the *Chaldean Oracles*. In spite of these two historical events, Proclus proves to have an important knowledge about Orphism[13]. According to L. Brisson and H. D. Saffrey, the Lycian studied the Syrianus' *Commentaries on Orpheus* (book that includes the *Concordances Between Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the Chaldean Oracles*) before his death. Indeed, Proclus examined the texts of his teacher with the aim to improving his knowledge and, at the request of Marinus, he would have written a commentary on Orpheus' books[14].

b) In various texts, Proclus says that there is a strong relation between Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines, and he argues that an important part of Pythagoras' ideas come from his initiation in the Orphic rites. To prove this relationship, Proclus pays attention to Timaeus of Locri:

> "After this manner therefore, we must say, that Timaeus being a Pythagorean, follows the Pythagorean principles. But these are the Orphic traditions. For what Orpheus delivered mystically through arcane narrations, this Pythagoras learned, being initiated by Aglaophemus in the mystic wisdom which Orphes derived from his mother calliope."[15]

---

12. PROCL. *in R*. 3.340.28-341.3.

13. L. BRISSON, "El lugar, la función y la significación del orfismo en el neoplatonismo", in *Orfeo y la tradición órfica. Un reencuentro*, A. Bernabé & F. Casadesús eds., Madrid, 2008, p. 1492-1494.

14. PROCL. *in Ti*. 1.315.1-2.

15. PROCL. *in Ti*. 3.168.8-14.

The evidence, from first book of the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, that the Academic uses the Pythagorean doctrines[16], allows to Proclus to say that, in the case of the Necessity, there is a continuous line between Orpheus and Plato.

c) Another element that shows the importance of Orpheus for Proclus' doctrine of descent is the use of other authors for the exegesis of the Myth of Er, concretely, the Ancient Platonists, Theologians and Poets. In his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, when Proclus explains to Marinus the correct structure of the Myth, he defends the use of these authors because "many have been applied to the understanding of Myth, including the coryphaei of the Platonists, Numenius, Albinus, Cayus, Maximus of Nice, Harpocration, Euclid, and, above all these Porphyry, who I argue that it was the most perfect exegete of the truths hidden in the Myth"[17]. Analyzing the arguments of the Epicurean Colotes of Lampsacus against the reincarnation of souls, the Lycian talks about the value of some of them and says that he uses Porphyry because he is "the best" of all authors who criticize the wrong interpretations of the Poets: "Plato has not outlawed all kinds of mythology, only which comes through dishonorable and immoral fictions, such as those that have been written by Homer and Hesiod."[18] In this context, when Proclus mentions "the Poets", he does not talk about Orpheus, who does not consider "like the others" because he transmits, by divine inspiration, the truth.

II. – The Descent of Souls According to Proclus

In *Republic* X, Plato describes the Myth of Er[19], Armenian man killed during a battle and whom the judges of the Hereafter let come back to become a messenger of that what he has seen and heard. In this context, Plato introduces the theory on the descent of souls: the Intellectual souls descend from the World of Ideas and, life after life they travel across the world and the Underworld since some of them can be saved. When he presents the reasons for the descent and the posterior metempsychosis, he mentions for twice the principle that makes it possible: Necessity (Ananke). First explanation includes stars and planets, because "from these ends [*sc*. of the chains that stretch across the sky and holding the vault] is extended the spindle of Necessity, on which all the

16. According to Festugière, 2006, p. 23, n. 1, in the context of ancient critics, the accusation of plagiarism is one of the most classic entertainments. This accusation is resumed and discussed by authors such as Timon of Fliunte, Hermippus, Satyr, Aulus Gellius, Diogenes Laertius, Iamblichus and Proclus himself.

17. Procl. *in R*. 3.96.10-15.

18. Procl. *in R*. 3.106.24-26.

19. Pl. *R*. 614b 1-621d 2.

revolution turns"[20]. In the second reference to Necessity, Plato says that she is the Mother of the Moiras, because

> "the spindle turns on the knees of Necessity; and on the upper surface of each circle is a siren, who goes round with them, hymning a single tone or note. The eight together from one harmony; and round about, at equal intervals, there is another band, three in number, each sitting upon her throne: these are the Moiras, daughters of Necessity, who are dressed in white and have chaplets upon their heads […]."[21]

The role of Necessity is, in this case, to construct and rule for the individual souls the Universal Providence and their Destiny.

This conception of the Necessity appears also in *Timaeus*, a dialogue where Plato says that "the things which come into being through Necessity; for the creation is mixed, being made up of Necessity and Intelligence. Intelligence, the ruling power, persuaded Necessity to bring the greater part of created things to perfection, and thus and after this manner in the beginning, when the influence of Reason got to better of Necessity, the Universe was created"[22]. Plato's *Timaeus* places Necessity in the process of causality and, as consequence, this causality is divided in two types, necessary and divine, and she is transformed into an indispensable element for the comprehension of the universe.

A. *The Human Soul*

Proclus develops his theory of human soul using the doctrines of Iamblichus and Syrianus[23], two Neoplatonic teachers with which becomes evident the relation that exists between Orphism, Platonism and Pythagoras[24]. His argument on this influence is now important to understand the place of Orpheus in the exegesis of the Necessity: thus Iamblichus like Syrianus have, according to Proclus, a strong relationship with Plato, the *Chaldean Oracles* and Pythagoras.

---

20. PL. *R*. 616b-d.

21. PL. *R*. 617b.

22. PL. *Ti*. 48a.

23. At PROCL. *in R*. 3.101.15 ff, Proclus identifies all elements that must be accepted when we talk about the transmigration of souls: the immortality of souls, their subsistence outside the body, the rewards and punishments and the existence of the Providence. In the *Institutio theologica*, the Lycian explains these elements in a metaphysic way when he develops the theorems concerning soul (184-211); at *in R*. he refers to Socrates' demonstration, which this author believes "irrefutable" (*in R*. 3.101.25). Also, in *in R*. 3.113.1-118.17, Proclus collects different historical evidences on metempsychosis, using for this the writings of "the Ancients".

24. PROCL. *in R*. 3.101.15 ff. The analysis of the relations between Iamblichus, Syrianus and Orpheus is analyzed in BRISSON, 2008, 1491-1499.

The Lycian takes from Iamblichus the idea of a substantial existence of the individual souls, criticizes Plotinus' conception of the soul as a movement and conceives these as entities in full sense. Proclus takes from Syrianus the idea of the existence of a universal hierarchy based on the proprieties of each nature, which sets the place of each entity in the cosmos. These two elements form a structural unity in which the different parts are essential for the correct development of the system.

The individuality of the human soul is now combined to a set of divisions and subdivisions of the reality, which have in their origin the demiurgic activity:

> "Plato divided whole demiurgic activity in the generation of the divine entities and the generation of mortal beings. He divided the generation of divine beings into the production of the World as a whole above the parts, and in the [production] of the larger and eternal parts in it, and [he divided this production] in time in the production of heavenly beings and the production of sublunary beings. He divided again the generation of mortal beings into the creation of what in them is of divine and immortal and in the production of all is mortal. And he divided this production in the creation of the souls and the bodies, and he divided the creation of the bodies in the [creation] of the whole bodies and its parts, such as the head, heart, liver."[25]

As L. Brisson says[26], this division presents an interesting harmony with the theology of the Orphic *Rhapsodies*.

Soul is an individual entity attached to the order of beings and she has the ability to bridge the distances that separate the different levels. This ability comes from his natural powers, but also their nature is that determines the grade[27]. In this context, the soul is placed in a different level from the sensibility, because she is "an incorporeal substance and [she is] separable from the body"[28],

---

25. PROCL. *in R*. 5.242.10-19. At *in Ti*. 2.245.5-9 Proclus explains the significate of the creative action of the Demiurge, and he says that this creation has not a temporal value: it means only the order of the creation, while these creations are distinguished by the causal action, so in a certain sense the Father is the same and not the same. The discussion about the ontological or chronological sense of the creation is a subject that appears in many Platonic writers (vid. vid. i. e. CHAL. *Comm*., 276, p. 280-281 Waszink). C. MORESCHINI, *Calcidio: Commentario al* Timeo *di Platone*, Milan, 2003, p. 760, n. 735 puts in relation the ontological explanation of the Demiurgic activity whit the Genesis, using for this some Jewish authors, like Achilles or Simac.

26. Vid. BRISSON, "El lugar, la función y la significación del orfismo en el neoplatonismo", p. 1505-1510.

27. PROCL. *in Ti*. 5.245.25-28. The explanations of Proclus and Iamblichus' are in parallel. Vid. STOB. *App*. I, 372, 23 Wachsm.

28. PROCL. *Inst*. 186, 13-14 Doods. In our text, we take as starting point the explanation that appears in *Inst*. 184-211, from which is interpreted the Plotinus exegesis on *Timaeus* and the commentary of the *Chaldean Oracles*.

a self-animated principle which role is to give life[29]. To be separated or to be separable from the body is a condition for immortality, because "all that could be dissolved or destructed in many way must be incorporeal or composed or remains in a subject. […] Nevertheless, the souls are at the same time incorporeal and doest not remains in a subject, because she exists in herself and reverses in herself. [The soul] is, consequently, indestructible and incorporeal."[30] Immortality has its origin in the capacity of the soul to be self-constituted by a reversion on itself which is the cause of her limitation in a concrete order in the hierarchy[31]: every soul, capable of ascent to her cause, is self-constituted through the reversion on itself, and the origin of which stood in one place or another in the creation is her own activity. For this reason, immortality is extends over three orders of souls[32]: a) the order or the divine souls, always related to the thought; b) the order of the divine souls that changes between conscience and unconsciousness[33]; and c) the order of intermediate souls that, although they are inferior to divine souls, are always thinking.

B. *Descent and Metempsychosis of Souls: Decision, Necessity and Legislation*

The descent of souls into bodies is a consequence of the demiurgic action. Indeed, the Demiurge gives to the souls the capacity to participate and, more precisely, the power to participate along the time: "[…] each particular soul –by this participation– has the power to descend to the generation and ascend from

---

29. PROCL. *Inst*. 188-189 Doods. According to *Inst*. 188, 2-3 Doods, all being that have a soul is necessary a "living being", and those who are private of soul, are "naked of life". The cause of this difference is that each soul is, at the same time, "life" and "living being" (188, 1 Doods), and "his being is formed by vitality" (189, 24 Doods). Proclus attributes to Orpheus (*in Ti*. 5.223.4-17) that the soul is what gives life to what is mortal, and he puts in relation the metaphor of the Nymph who weaves that appears in PL. *Ti*. 41d 2 with this Orphic conception. Also, at *in R*. 3.125.1 ff., the Lycian describe the existence of a soul in a body as a temporal relationship that disappears with the dead.

30. PROCL. *Inst*. 187, 25-31 Doods. Also, in its commentary on *Timaeus* (*in Ti*. 5.231.26-232.1), Proclus criticizes to "those who" conceive the soul as a mortal substance. According to the Lycian, the reason is that these authors defend the inseparability of forms from matter and, consequently, from the irrational life. In PLOT. *Enn*. IV [2] 7, 2-8[5]. this position is associated to Stoic and Epicurean schools: in the first case, by association of the soul to the *pneuma* that penetrates in the matter; in the second case, by association between the substance of the soul and the atomic particles.

31. PROCL. *Inst*., 189, 21-23.

32. PROCL. *Inst*. 184, 28-30.

33. In opposition to her predecessors, Proclus does not use the term *alogia*, but *anoia*, to determine the reality that is opposed to the Intelligence. In order to respect this difference, J. TROULLIARD, *Proclos, Éléments de Théologie*, trad., introduction and notes, Paris, 1965, prefers to use the word "unconsciousness" to translate the Greek *anoia*.

generation to being endlessly."[34] This power is the cause of an infinite and perpetual cycle that begins with the born of the soul: "Since such a soul sometimes accompanies the Gods and, other, decays of her tension toward the divine, while she participles of the lucidity and unconsciousness, it is evident that, cycle after cycle, she comes to the becoming and joins the being among the Gods."[35]

The *Commentary on Timaeus* attributes the cause of the descent of souls to their incapacity to remain in the star where she has been first placed for more than one revolution. For this reason, when Proclus analyzes the discourse of the Demiurge, he says that it exists a first appointment of Fate[36]: the Demiurge does not reveal –as in the case of the Gods–, the Providence, but the Fatality. With this conception, the Lycian places the future of souls in a dependence from the celestial revolutions and not, also directly, in the hypercosmic causes –however, it not implies that the hypercosmic causes has not an important role in the becoming of souls. Also, the discourse of the Demiurge is not, as Alexander of Aphrodisias says, a particular disposition; or, as Aristotle supposes, the Intellect of All; or, according to Theodore of Asina, the relations of the souls; or, as Porphyry defends, the Nature[37]. Instead, this discourse is the revelation of the Nature, not in itself, but the Nature "penetrated by the divine"[38]. Is in this context that the Demiurge reveals to the souls their potentials and, at the same time, he explains the order of the causes[39]: Adrasteia, the intellective; Ananke; the hypercosmic cause; and Heirmarmene, the incosmic cause. Using the Orphic doctrines[40], Proclus sets the discourse of the Demiurge in the elevation by the first of these, the union by the second and generation by the third. Therefore, the causes must understand that they are governed by the incosmic cause, but this cause always refers to a superior and hypercosmic order.

According to Proclus, the universal order described in the Myth of Er comprises six elements that are the result of a combination of Orphic and Platonic doctrines[41]: (1) the "Hypercosmic causes" that regulate and govern the universal order and represent the Laws upon the Cosmos: the Monad, which

34. PROCL. *Inst*. 206, 15-16.

35. PROCL. *Inst*. 206, 17-27.

36. PROCL. *in Ti*. 5.271-29-272.5.

37. PROCL. *in Ti*. 5.272.5-25.

38. PROCL. *in Ti*. 5.272.27. In 5.273.24 ff., Proclus takes this interpretation from PL. *Plt*. 272e 5.

39. PROCL. *in Ti* 5.274.14 ff.

40. Fr. 162 Kern. To set the order of the causes explained by the Demiurge, Proclus returns to PL. *R*. 620e 6 ff, where Plato develops a doctrine that could be considered "similar" to the Orphic description.

41. PROCL. *in R*. 3.100.28-101-1.

compose the basic substance and in the Platonic conception is equal to the Necessity; (2) the Sirens[42], which are related to the movements designated by the Necessity and the Moiras, and signifies the harmony derived from the Hypercosmic Laws; (3) the celestial Gods, the cosmic guardians of the Hypercosmic Laws and of the whole process, whose eyes nothing escapes; (4) the Heads, assigned to the souls like *cacodaemones* or *calodaemones*, responsible for guiding their lives, for order the movement that comes from the free will and for prevent that the action of souls do not transgress the limits of Providence and Justice; (5) the Judges, whose function is to judge the souls after their separation from the body, rewarding or punishing them depending of this life in the Sensible World; and (6) the called "sixth generation"[43] in Orpheus poems, this is, the public Executors of Cosmos who, being fierce and relentless, punish the souls after they have been tried and who are responsible for govern the prisons that exists in the depths of the earth, the Tartarus.

Proclus attributes to souls another feature: recalling the Syrianus' doctrines, he says that the souls, whereas they have been engendered, must be placed or they are susceptible for to be placed. This is so because "for each particular soul has been established a first descent, not purely and simply, but according to each "revolution of the Begotten Divine""[44]. As Plato says, it is no possible for the souls to remain in the star where they were deposited. Indeed, because the souls are smaller than the Whole, they cannot keep away from the celestial bodies during a single revolution, and therefore fall to the genesis. This fall implies also the output of souls of the incosmic cause of the *Timaeus* and represents the moment in which they acquire the vehicle that marks along the entire process of life and death. Moreover, the obligation for descends in each celestial revolution is the cause of their equality, thus reaffirming the equitable creation of the Demiurge.

According to Proclus, the process of the descent and the cycles of transmigration contain necessarily ten elements or conditions[45]: (1) there is, for each soul, a single set of possibilities of kinds of existence, which is offered depending from the nature and the merits of the soul[46]; (2) each set of possibilities includes different kinds of existence; (3) each set must contain and to be contained by the others, so all of them are equivalent and, consequently, the first incarnation includes a kind of random derivates from this equality; (4)

---

42. Proclus (*in R*. 3.236.16-239.14 and 239.19-241.9) says that the Sirens are different from Muses and they are placed in an inferior level.

43. Fr. 14 Kern.

44. PROCL. *in Ti*. 3.272.11-12. The text attributed to Syrianus repeats PL. *R*. 546b 4.

45. PROCL. *in R*. 3.264.31-266.26.

46. Consequently, for example, a human soul cannot be incarnated in a God. Proclus argues that the soul cannon escape from this limitation.

the increasing of the grades that distinguish the kinds of existence is what determines the sets that the Whole proposes to the souls, so the sets that are contained remain in a structural hierarchy; (5) each kind of existence includes the accidents that are jointed to it, and for this reason, even those who chose first must undergo some sort of calamities, because there is not existence without hardship; (6) each kind of existence must have designated a demon, who guarantees his realization; (7) any kind of existence, one time it has been chosen, introduces the Necessity in the souls, subjecting them to the chosen embodiment; (8) in addition to the demon, each kind of existence gets a "lucky" that shares the form of life, and this "lucky" develops the circumstances of the life that are attributed by the Whole to each soul; (9) the species of the types of soul include every living being, rational and irrational, but the Whole impose an order; and (10) it is necessary the presence of the free will in this choice, either in the genesis of after in the choice of the kind of life.

III. – The Place of Orpheus' in Proclus' Theory of the Descent of Souls

A. *References to Orpheus*

An evidence of the importance acquired by the Myth of Er in Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Republic* is the extension of the XVI dissertation[47]. This is, indeed, one of the longest discourses and in it includes all kind of considerations, from the structure of the Myth since the commentary of specific subjects. In this dissertation, the Lycian discusses, one by one, the basic questions of Plato's story and the opinions of a large number of authors. Although in this dissertation the references to Orpheus are not many, they show a continuous pattern: the mentions to Orphic theology are focused around the discussion on Necessity. However, to understand the Proclus' position is first necessary to considerer the wrong interpretations on Ananke[48]. The first of these has no difficulty: it is the assertion that Necessity and Matter are equal, and idea that this Platonic teacher does not hesitate to describe as "impious"[49]. The second case is somewhat more complex, since it refers to the identification of the Necessity that appears in the *Timaeus* with the one that Plato describes in the *Republic*:

---

47. The commentary on the Myth of Er begins on page 96.2 and finishes on page 359.8 of Kroll edition, corresponding to the XVI dissertation. To understand the exegesis of Proclus, it is necessary to remember that "is evident that not all myths about Hades written by Plato teach the same things" (Procl. *in R*. 3-128.12-13).

48. Procl. *in R*. 3.204.23-207.13.

49. Vid. Procl. *in R*. 3.204.27-30.

> "He says that the Necessity described in the *Timaeus* (Pl. *Ti*. 47e 5) is this Mother of the Moiras that is celebrated here, is to confuse different things: the Necessity inferior to the Intellect and that 'was persuaded by the Intellect to conduct the most things that are born according to nature' (Plt. *Ti*. 48a 2 ff.) and the Necessity which governs all that is incosmic, who chairs the cycles of the souls."[50]

In Proclus' context, the use of Orpheus is always relative to Ananke and no to the Necessity inferior to the Intellect, placing the Orphic description not only in the Empiric world, but also in the journey of souls through the Hereafter.

B. *Orpheus and the "True" Definition of Ananke*

In his introduction to the Myth of Er, Proclus says to Marinus that, to reach the true comprehension of what is the order of the republic, the laws and the judges, it is first necessary to note that exists a hierarchy in which we can find how "nothing can escape to the universal providence of the Gods"[51]. In the highest point of this hierarchy, and according to the "true" order, the Lycian places two Neoplatonic elements: "First, as stated, the Hypercosmical causes of all order, the Monad and the Triad, I mean Ananke and the Moiras, from which derive all cosmic law."[52] The cosmic Necessity that appears in the *Timaeus* is analyzed in the Myth of Er as the first element of a higher order and corresponds to this Ananke to set the ineluctable laws that must be followed by any entity. In his commentary on the *Republic*, Proclus called Ananke with two mythological names: the Mother of the Moiras and the Leader of the cosmic order that extends to the souls and natures. These two names are combined according to three different interpretations: a) the conception of the Theologians, that is associated to the goddess Themis, who is represents an ineludible divine law that can not be transgressed; b) the Orpheus' conception, who places the "horrible Ananke" before the Moira and says that she has emerged from the first Gods (fr. 126K); and c) the Hesiod's interpretation, who would put Themis as the creator both the Moiras and the Horai (Hes. *Theog*. 901). In that what refers to the Plato's conception of Ananke, Proclus says that he frequently uses the

---

50. PROCL. *in R*. 3.205.29-206.4. According to Proclus *in R*. 3.206.22 ff., this confusion can be also observed in the discussion about the relation between Necessity and Fatality which appears in PL. *Pol*. 272e 5, it means, the confusion between the Ananke that governs the All and the Necessity that is derived from this and regards only the Nature. It is for this reason that, in his translation of the Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Republic*, Festugière used the word "Ananke" in contraposition to the "Necessity" that appears in the *Timaeus*. Also, in *in R*. 3.205.25-207.13, Proclus defends that the *Timaeus* ad *Republic* use exactly the same conception of "Necessity", but only if we understand the concept of "necessary" in right sense.

51. PROCL. *in Ti*. 3.101.1.

52. PROCL. *in Ti*. 3.100.7-8.

Hesiod's *Theogony* and, for this reason, the Academic chose to take her concept and change the name of Themis by Ananke.

In this sense, when Proclus describes the truth signification of this part of the Myth of Er, he says that

> "the goddess Ananke is the cause of the order that is inherent to the Universe and of the order of the living beings and, through her daughters, she governs all movements and the revolutions that are fixed by an only and the same Intellective Power, which leads to an end completely whole revolution of the Divine Begotten."[53]

Thus, as was explained by describing the different interpretations on the Myth of Er, Ananke "represents both the single Deity who presides over the Fatality and the Order that governs over the celestial bodies, it means the goddess herself that in the case of Theologians is Themis"[54]. The Moiras are placed after Ananke, they are the goddesses who spread the Providence established by Themis: Clotho, which covers the area of the fixed stars; Athropos, the planetary sphere; and Lachesis, the sky. Also, when Proclus talks about the names that are convenient to the Moiras, he recovers the primacy of Ananke:

> "May the Moiras be named 'daughters of Ananke' shows, first, that the supreme and unitary power suits Ananke, hence she maintains everything as a single causation, which any of incosmic beings have no right to circumvent, or between the celestial and between sublunary or between the whole beings or between the partial beings."[55]

This causation governs and maintains in their place all the parts of the Cosmos, although in this chain the Moiras are subordinated to the royal power of Ananke, who governs the Moiras, the destination and the concatenation tissues of all things.

According to Proclus, there is a type of Necessity that must be interpreted in relation to Dike, the Justice[56], and a notion that the Lycian also refers to Orpheus. Indeed, when he talks about the decisions of the Judges in the Hereafter, the decisions on the destiny of souls in the Underworld and the elements that determine the choice of future lives, the Lycian talks about the diversification of these is made according to Dike, which is the "only

---

53. PROCL. *in R*. 3.208-21-25.

54. PROCL. *in R*. 3.94.16-18.

55. PROCL. *in R*. 3.245.6-10.

56. As Proclus said, the Myth of Er is a story that aims to address the subject of Justice. Cf. PROCL. *in R*. 3.97.10-19.

adjudicatory Monad that assigns all their debt"[57], including Gods, keeping each in their proper place. For this reason

> "Orpheus says that when Zeus was predisposed to be assigned to the Titans their places to stay in the Cosmos, he was followed by Dike: *Dike marched on harsh punishment to come all crime* (fr. 158K). If, indeed, Dike "the Severe Punisher" revenges all crimes, if she shares with the universal Demiurge the government of all things, she governs the Gods, watches the Demons and decides by judgment the fate of the souls."[58]

Thus, when Proclus puts in relation Ananke and Dike, he explains how from the first of these have originated the laws that govern the application of the second of these, referring in each case to Orpheus.

C. *The Journey in the Hereafter*

The journey in the Hereafter –including Hades and heaven– is the result of an application of the laws that comes from Necessity. It is indeed under Dike, born as an extension of Ananke, that the Judges have ruled the road to be followed by the souls, and this path always has fixed their duration. It is precisely in the calculation of travel time that Proclus is forced to demonstrate that, despite the differences, Plato and Orpheus agreed. Both in the *Republic* as the *Timaeus*, Plato sets the time of 1000 years, during which the souls receive penalties or rewards depending on their behavior while they were attached to bodies. However, when it is question of the common point for the different destinations of the souls –always set considering the crimes of these souls–, Proclus finds a contradiction between the two expositions: while Plato, by association between journeys and the Decade (the symbol of the soul[59]), fixes the duration in 1000 years, the Orphic *Rhapsodies* talks only about 300 years[60]. In order to provide a solution to this difference, Proclus develops two arguments[61]:

a) Proclus and Orpheus do not talk about the same stage of the journey. According to Proclus, Orpheus says that the cycles of the souls will last 300 years, but he talks about the souls placed in the underground and under the earth. In opposite, Plato calculates 1000 years, but he refers to the whole process. In this sense, there is an important difference between the two authors: Orpheus turns to number three because he means the time for the purification of the souls during their stage in the Genesis, and he refers to the hecatontade

57. PROCL. *in R.* 3.144.19-20.

58. PROCL. *in R.* 3.144.29-145.7.

59. PROCL. *in R.* 3.169.10.

60. PROCL. *in R.* 3.173.14-18.

61. PROCL. *in R.* 3.173.14-27.

consecrated to Poseidon, this is, the symbol of the Generation; on the other hand, Plato establishes a duration of 1000 years because he thinks in the journey of the souls through the heaven. Consequently, there is no contradiction between Plato and Orpheus, because each one talks about a different moment of the journey.

b) The two discourses have different symbologies. There are two stages in the journey: the first stage is the previous time to the descent of souls to the Genesis; the second, the reversion of the souls to their cause. Plato talks, always according to Proclus, about the first of these moments, the fall of the souls in the Generation by the virtue of the Hecatontade, which is extended only in two dimensions; Orpheus, instead, talks about the reversion of the souls, this is, when a soul returns to the Decade by the virtue of the Triad, it means, when she is again converted to the three dimensions and returns to the Decade by virtue of the Triad, since the Dyad is the cause of the procession and the Triad the cause of conversion in humans whose procession is due to the Dyad.

As we can see, Proclus tries to demonstrate that these differences do not exclude the truth of the two discourses, as both discourses express the same reality but from two different points of view. However, the Lycian is not conform with the elimination of the differences between these authors, but he also wants to demonstrate that there is an overlap in the explanation of the origins and place of the Decade, the Triad and Tetrad, from which explains the presence of the Necessity in the Universe:

> *On the impenetrable sanctuary of the pristine Monad*
> The Orphic Hymn on the Number says (fr. 315K)
> *until it has reached to the completely holly Tetrad*
> –this is the Dionysus' deity, which is Tetrad, because the Orphic theology holds an infinite number of times the God with the four eyes, with the four edges (fr. 77K)–
> *who has given birth to the Mother of all things,*
> *The Universal Receiver, the venerable*
> –while she contains and embraces all that is in the Cosmos–
> *who has set a limit to all things,*
> *immutable, indefatigable*
> –eternal and indivisible is, indeed, the nature that maintains the World–
> *we call it the pure Decade*
> while she is non engendered sets the limit to the All[62].

According to Proclus, the Tetrad must be identified to Dionysus[63], she follows the Monad (Zeus) and is followed by the Decade (the forms in the World and

62. PROCL. *in R.* 3.169.24-170.8.

Cosmos). It is a different way to show how this Necessity is introduced in the own world as daughter of Zeus and followed by the Decade and the forms that are introduced in the world, and creates a place for the Moiras.

D. Animal metempsychosis

When Plato talks in the *Timaeus* about the hierarchies of reincarnations and the laws that governs the process, he sets as the last of the genres in which a soul can be incarnated, the bodies of the animals[64]. This is idea is repeated in the *Republic* and exemplified whit the cases of Thersites, who Plato comically describes as trapped in the body of a monkey[65]. However, the reincarnation of human souls in animal bodies always was, for the Neoplatonism, a subject of discussion, even to deny its existence[66]. Proclus is also interesting for this item, because he is once of the few Neoplatonics who talks clearly about the possibility to add this king of metempsychosis to the variety of incarnations proposed by Plato[67]: (1.) among humans, and it can be occur in three ways, (1.1.) form a man to a man, (1.2.) from a man to a woman or from a woman to a man, and (1.3.) from a woman to a woman; (2) between human and animal, while (2.1.) from a man to an animal or (2.2.) from an animal to a man; and (3.) among animals. Should be added to these types of metempsychosis the possibility described in Pl. *R*. 620d 5, this is, "a mixture of all" in which is resumed the whole of changes.

In fact, the only evidence that Proclus can bring to defend the transmigration between human and animal is, precisely, the words of Orpheus. Is in this context that the Lycian conveys the fr. 223 K:

---

63. Plot. *Enn*. IV 3 [27] 12.1-8 uses the Myth of Dionysus' mirror to explain the reasons for which the souls are separated from the Soul that lives next to the Intelligence to go into the Sensible world. I this regard, although the identification of the tetrad with the Orphic Dionysus is a constant in Proclus' thought, it is also necessary to consider that its use dates to the first Neoplatonism. For a more detailed analysis on the Myth of Dionysus' mirror, vid. J. Pépin, "Plotin et le mirroir de Dionysos", *Rev. Intern. de Philos*., 24, 1970, p. 304-320.

64. Pl. *Ti*. 91d 6-92c 3; *R*. 619a 5 ff. In his *Republic*, Plato related that Er explains as he saw Orpheus chose the life of a swan, because women murdered the Poet and he has developed a great hatred for females and did not consent to be born a woman.

65. Pl. *R*. 620c 1-2. Proclus comments this case at *in R*. 3.319.1-24.

66. Porph. *De Regr*. Fr. 11 Bidez.

67. Procl. *in R*. 3.312.10-320.17. The transmigration among humans is described in 3.317.11-24 and 3.320.5-321.6; the transmigration among animals in 3.324.11-325.10. In 3.330.17-341.8 Proclus explains the three questions that appear when we accept the Plato's doctrine: (a) the possibility that some souls can not fall into an animal body; (b) the impossibility that some souls can be incarnated in plants; and (c) the animal animation.

"When the soul of beasts and winged birds
Has sprung out the body, and the duration of life has abandoned them,
Then nothing conduces its souls to remain in the Hades,
But when she stands there, useless, until
Another animal abandons them, mixed with the breath of air.
But when a man has abandoned the light of the day,
Hermes Kylenian lowers the immortal soul
to the appalling depths of the earth."[68]

According to Proclus, these words explain the concordance between Plato and Orpheus: the souls of beasts do not descend to the Underworld, but they travel from a body to another body at the level of the earth and according their choice of new lives, and this is an idea that, certainly, Plato would have taken from Orpheus[69]. The souls of the beasts, indeed, cannot fall to the Underworld because they are no capable to commit the most ferocious crimes, but their status allows them to make another choice of life in another type of body. Also, the stupidity that corresponds to the animal condition suppresses the possibility of knowledge that is to have some kind of responsibility in the ascent or descent along the hierarchy of bodies.

IV. – Recapitulation and Conclusion

When Proclus comments the Myth of Er and explains the reason for the descent of the souls to the Sensible World, he use for three times the Orphic theology with the aim to clarify what is the true conception of Plato's doctrines: first, to locate the Necessity in his own place, beyond the Intelligence and upon the Moiras which materialize her designs; second, during the classification of the journeys of the souls through the Hereafter, and in the clause of time that corresponds to the cycles; and finally, to demonstrate the possibility of metempsychosis between human and animal beings, an idea not always accepted by Neoplatonists. In this sense, the references to Orpheus, although they are few, they can be considered a sort of key to understand the concept of "Necessity" attributed by the Lycian to Plato. Indeed, when he analyzes these items, Proclus talks about the "true conception" of Ananke, in which he dismisses both the materialist conceptions and some interpretations of the *Timaeus* and *Republic*, referring to the Thracian poet as the origin of the

68. Procl. *in R.* 3.339.20-27. At *in R.* 3.339.4-9, Proclus also recalls some Orpheus' words: "It is for this reason that the human soul, according to some cycles of time, / falls into animal, this and that; / sometimes she becomes a horse, sometimes …, / sometimes a sheep, sometimes a bird terrible for to be seen, / sometimes also a body of a dog, a voice that barks silently; / or she drags in the divine land, cool baby snakes."

69. Procl. *in R.* 3.340.12-13.

authentic definition. Thanks to Orpheus, Proclus deduces that, in the case of the wrong interpretations of Plato's dialogues, there are two different definitions of Ananke: one, the definition that appears in the *Timaeus*, were the Necessity is placed under the Intellect and is the responsible to introduce in the World the obligatory established by the hypostasis; and the definition that appears in the Myth of Er, where Ananke is placed in a previous place to the Intellect. In the first case, Necessity is really something equal to the Moira, the Destiny; in the second case, Ananke is the Providence that will then be applied by the Moiras.

In Proclus' commentaries on *Timaeus* and *Republic*, the interference of the Orphism in the platonic conception of the Necessity results, if we consider two elements, from a natural process. The first is, as L. Brisson has demonstrated, that Proclus follows the Iamblichus' tradition, in which is attributed to Orpheus the starting point of certain doctrines of Plato: an important part of the *Timaeus* doctrines comes from Pythagoras, who also has been initiated in the Orphic rites. The second element is the own Plato's conception of souls that, as it was suggested by authors like A. Bernabé, is the result of the transposition of an Orphic notion; and others, like F. Casadesús, who defends that even the style used in the subjects of the Myth of Er are oriented to the defense of Orpheus. If we consider its elements, it is possible to infer that the use of Orpheus in Proclus' commentaries on Necessity and in the case of the theory of the descent of souls, responds to an attempt to make a more literal exegesis of the Platonic texts, without underestimating, of course, of the impact that the Thracian poet had as one of the Theologians who, beside *Chaldean Oracles*, configures the curriculum of the 5th Neoplatonic Academy.

DAMASCIUS AND WHITEHEAD ON TIME

MICHAEL CHASE

I. – DAMASCIUS ON TIME

The life and thought of Damascius, last diadoch of the Platonic Academy, is incomparably better known now that it was a couple of generations ago, thanks to the editions of Combès and Westerink and the analyses of scholars such as Philippe Hoffmann, Stephen Gersh, John Dillon, Sara Rappe, Marilena Vlad and many others. When it comes more particularly to Damascius' theory of time, which is what interests us here, the pioneering studies of S. Sambursky, Richard Sorabji, M.-C. Galpérine and Hoffmann remain fundamental[1].

According to Sambursky, Damascius, although he took over a great deal from Iamblichus' theory of time, was responsible for two major innovations: one was the quantization of physical time, or the idea that time consists in quanta of finite duration, and the other the treatment of time as analogous to space. It strikes me as interesting that precisely these two features of Damascius' thought have close parallels in the ideas of Whitehead, some 1500 years later, although it is highly unlikely that Whitehead knew anything about Damascius. So in what

1. See S. SAMBURSKY & S. PINES, *The concept of time in late neoplatonism*, Leiden-Jerusalem, 1971, 1987[2]; R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, London-Ithaca, 1983; M.-C. GALPERINE, "Le temps intégral selon Damascius", *Les Études Philosophiques,* 3, 1980, p. 325-341; Ph. HOFFMANN, "Jamblique exégète du pythagoricien Archytas: trois originalités d'une doctrine du temps", *Les Études philosophiques*, 3, 1980, p. 306-32, and idem, "Paratasis. De la description aspectuelle des verbes grecs à une définition du temps dans le néoplatonisme tardif", *Revue des Études Grecques*, 96, 1983, p. 1-26.

follows I would like to compare the theory of time of these two very different thinkers[2].

What I will be doing here is pure comparativism. What I will *not* be doing is trying to show that Damascius influenced Whitehead, or that Damascius already discovered the solutions Whitehead was to come up with so many centuries later. I merely want to share my own experience, which is that by studying the similarities and differences between these two difficult theories, I felt I have been able to understand them both better, and I hope some readers of the present contribution may have the same experience. It will turn out that if Whitehead and Damascius arrived at similar conclusions, it is because they thought long, hard, and in a way marked by their respective original genius, about the same ancient sources: particularly Plato, Zeno of Elea, and Aristotle.

A. *Damascius on Time: the quantization of time*

Like Whitehead, who however tends to dismiss them a bit too quickly, Damascius was impressed by Zeno's arguments against the reality of motion, as well as by Aristotle's *aporiai* raised against the existence of time, which the Stagirite left unsolved[3]. Damascius tried to solve these *aporiai* by adopting and developing a doctrine originated by Iamblichus, who had distinguished between a static intelligible time that is participated, and a generated, flowing time that participates in and derives from the former. For Damascius, the flowing time "winds off" (*ekmêruetai*) from real total time, like a thread winds off from a skein as we se in a passage from Simplicius, *In Phys*., 1155, 14-18 Diels : "...what is eternal possesses all its substance, its capacity and its activity at once, because eternity has grasped 'always' together with 'what exists'. But time and what is in time, since they possess their being in becoming, unwind (*ekmêruontai*) their integrality in accordance with motion and coming-into-being".

As is well known, Zeno's paradox of the dichotomy runs as follows: for a human being or any other object in motion to reach its destination, it must first traverse half the distance between its starting-point and its goal, then half of that distance, and so on *ad infinitum*. It will therefore never reach its target, since an infinity of distances cannot be traversed in a finite period. Likewise, an arrow

---

2. Different, but not without affiliation. Damascius, as a Neoplatonist, commented on Plato's *Timaeus*, although this commentary is now lost; while Whitehead is unstinting in his praise for Plato in general and the *Timaeus* in particular. Cf. among many similar passages, A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Corrected edition, New York, 1978 (henceforth *P&R*) 95: "The organic philosophy only repeats Plato".

3. Cf. Ph. HOFFMANN, "Paratasis. De la description aspectuelle...", p. 1-26, citing M.-C. GALPÉRINE, "Le temps intégral selon Damascius", p. 325, notes 1-2: "Aristote étudie la *phusis* du temps après avoir peut-être éludé la question de son appartenance à l'étant".

can never reach its target, for to do so it must traverse an infinity of fractional differences; and Achilles can never catch the tortoise, for every time he advances, the tortoise advances too. Zeno had advanced these paradoxes in order to show the impossibility of motion: they are all based on the infinite divisibility of space and time, and the impossibility of traversing an infinite series of during a finite time. Aristotle reacts to these paradoxes in his *Physics*, and it has been argued persuasively that Plato's analyses of time in the *Parmenides* are also directed against Zeno.

Damascius' solution to Zeno's paradoxes consists in supposing that time is made up not of instants, but of "stretches", which Samburksy calls quanta of time. Time progresses in finite steps that Damascius calls leaps or jumps (*halmata*), each of which is finite and complete, and occurs suddenly and all at once. During such a leap, time is considered to stand still, and as we shall see in a moment, it is thanks to this leap that we have contact with, if not eternity, then at least with integral or total time. Zeno's paradox is thus dissolved: since time progresses in leaps, it is not necessarily the case that a moving object or person must traverse half a distance before traversing the entire distance. Things disappear from one spot and reappear some distance away, without ever having been half-way. Motion can, as Damascius puts it, "advance completely by a whole step, and does not always require the half before the whole, but sometimes, as it were, leaps over whole and part"[4]. Since motion is inseparable from time, the results of the analysis of motion also hold true of time.

The present is nothing other than such a leap of time, and it is the progress of these leaps that gives rise to our sense of the flow of time. Damascius is careful to point out that such a leap of time is not becoming, but being, and this will turn out to be an important point of comparison with Whitehead[5]. Time progresses section by section, with each such "Demurgic section" constituting a complete interval (*diastêma*), in which time progresses all at once. One finite-length present has contact with its finite-length successor only at the point separating them, that is, at the end of one jump or leap of time and the beginning of another. Sambursky proposes a number of images to help us understand this process : the flow of time is to be imagined as a movie film, which seems continuous when it is projected, but in fact consists of a number of small, immobile pictures, each separated from its neighbor by a small jump. Yet although our usual perception is of continuous flux, each Now provides us a glimpse of the intelligible essence, or of that Being which is above time.

---

4. DAMASCIUS, ap. Simpl., *Coroll. De temp.*, 797, 1-3, trans. Urmson.

5. For Whitehead, as we shall see, becoming does not take place in time or in space, but its result, which Whitehead calls the satisfaction of an actual occasion, is situated both in time and in space, because it creates them in the course of its becoming.

B. *Damascius on Time: the spatialization of time*

Damascius held that the whole of primary or integral time exists simultaneously in its totality, an idea that was resolutely combatted by his otherwise loyal disciple Simplicius, and this comparison of the simultaneous extension of primary time to a spatial extension constitutes what Sambursky calls Damascius' other great innovation in the theory of time. Time, says Damascius, came into being in order to measure and limit the extension (*paratasis*) of being, just as space arose as to measure and limit position[6]. If it were not for this providential function of time, which establishes an order in becoming and enables us to distinguish between before and after, confusion would reign, and the Trojan War would be simultaneous with the present moment[7].

We have here another important point of comparison with Whitehead. For as Philippe Hoffmann has pointed out, paraphrasing Derrida, Damascius "shakes to its foundations the realm of the *ti esti*". Instead of asking what time *is*, as Aristotle does, Damascius starts by asking what it's *for*, or what is its function. Damascius thinks that many of the *aporiai* that have haunted the philosophical tradition since Plato have arisen because we insist on trying to discover the substance or essence of things (*ti esti*), rather than their purpose or function; likewise, Whitehead will claim our search for unchanging substance, and our resulting reificiation of the subject-predicate scheme, have impeded the development of philosophy, leading to what he calls the bifurcation of nature.

To illustrate his concept of integral time, Damascius[8] adduces the example/metaphor of a river. If we stick our head into a fast-flowing river, we will see nothing but a ceasless, chaotic flow. Yet if we zoom out with Sambursky's imaginary movie camera until we can see the entire river, and then use its stop-action function to freeze the river's flow, we will have a picture of primary or integral time. It is from this frozen river of time, in its simultaneous extension, that the phenomenal flow of time derives[9]. Elsewhere[10], Damascius

---

6. Ph. HOFFMANN, "Paratasis. De la description aspectuelle...", p. 18.

7. SIMPLICIUS, *In Cat*., p. 364, 7-18, cited by Ph. HOFFMANN, "Paratasis. De la description aspectuelle...", p. 20.

8. Apud SIMPL., *Coroll. de temp*., p. 798, 18 ff. Cf. J. HALFWASSEN, "Seele und Zeit im Neuplatonismus", in H.-D. Klein, ed., *Die Begriff der Seele in der Philosophiegeschichte,* Würzburg, 2005, 101-117 p., at p. 114-115.

9. Cf. SIMPL., *Coroll. de temp*., 784, 18-22 : τοῦ πρώτου χρόνου τοῦ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ἔγχρονα ὄντος καὶ ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ μεθέξεσιν ἐκεῖνα χρονίζοντος, τουτέστι τὴν τοῦ εἶναι παράτασιν αὐτῶν εὐθετίζοντος καὶ μετροῦντος, καὶ τάξιν ἔχειν ποιοῦντος τὰ τῆς τοιαύτης παρατάσεως μόρια. With this Simplicio-Damascian notion of the primary time "temporalizing" the things within time, by straightening out and measuring the extension of their being, cf. Whitehead's notion of actual entities " atomizing " or " temporalizing " the extensive continuum.

asks us to think of dance or a contest[11]. These take place bit by bit (*kata meros*) - that is, they have their being in becoming - yet one can be said to be dancing the present dance, because there is a sense in which the entire dance is present in each of the instants that constitute its duration. We are to imagine the integral time as being present in the same way[12].

Aristotle, as is well known, had made a fundamental distinction between time, which has its being in succession such that no two parts of it coexist, and space, which is such that all its parts coexist simultaneously. Contrary to the Stagirite, and unlike Simplicius, Damascius sees no essential difference between the simultaneous perception of the spatial world, which we all experience in our daily lives, and the simultaneous perception of the entire temporal world, in all its parts or divisions. Yet our consciousness seems inevitably to break this simultaneity into past, present and future. That this division is merely relative (*pros hêmas*) is shown by the fact that different people have different presents: Einstein was of course to arrive at the same conclusion of the relativity of our temporal frame of reference, and in this he was followed by Whitehead. For Damascius, as the soul divides what it thinks, it divides itself. Incapable of conceiving of the flux of movement and time, our thought circumscribes and distinguishes them, then proceeding to absolutize these distinctions[13].

C. *The sources for Damascius' theory of time*

I don't believe Damascius's theory of time can be properly understood without taking into account the sources of his thought, that is, the texts he himself probably had in mind when he elaborated it. These sources include such Late Antique thinkers as Iamblichus and the Pseudo-Archytas, ably studied by Philippe Hoffmann, but here I will concentrate on Classical thinkers. We have already seen that the paradoxes of Zeno of Elea represent one such source. In my view there are at least two other certain sources - Plato and Aristotle - and one other possible one, the Stoics.

---

10. Apud SIMPL., *Coroll. de temp.*, p. 798, 1-4.

11. The example of the contest (*agôn*) is taken from ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, III, 6, 206a21 ff. : *hê hêmera esti kai ho agôn tôi allo kai allo gignesthai*. Cf. SIMPL., *Coroll. de temp.*, 782, 1 ff.

12. Cf. M.-C. GALPÉRINE, "Le temps intégral selon Damascius", p. 336.

13. Here I follow the eloquent final pages of M.-C. GALPÉRINE, which are imbued with a tragic vision of the limits of human cognitive abilities.

1) Plato

Beginning at *Parmenides* 152a, Plato discusses whether or not the One participates in time. It must do so, says Parmenides, if the One is to participate in being (*to einai*), since being is nothing other than participation in substance or essence (*ousia*), combined with the present tense, and this is turn means that the One participates in time as it progresses (*poreuomenou tou khronou*). The One therefore always becomes older than itself, but this can only happen with regard to something younger, so that the One also becomes younger than itself. But it can become older and younger than itself only in the now (*kata ton nun khronon*), which it cannot bypass as it progresses from the past to the future. When the One thus reaches the now, however, it stops (*episkhei*, 152c1) getting older, and is no longer *becoming* older; instead, it *is* older. What proceeds (*to proion*) always seizes hold both of the now and of the next moment, letting go of the now as it grasps the next instant. What proceeds thus comes to be between the now and the next instant. But if everything that becomes cannot bypass the now, the person or thing travelling through time must mark a pause in its becoming (*episkhei aei tou gignesthai*) when it comes to the now, and at that moment it *is* whatever is has become.

Let us retain from this text the verb *episkhein*, "to leave off, stop, wait...with the genitive, cease from" (LSJ s.v. III 1-2). In this mysterious space between the now and the subsequent instant, says Plato, things "stop", "cease", or "leave off" becoming and stand still, as if we were watching a film and hit the pause button.

2) Aristotle

The *locus classicus* for Aristotle's view on time is of course, *Physics* 4 10, 217b30-218a30. Here, Aristotle raises his famous *aporiai* concerning the existence of time: time seems not to exist because it is composed of non-existent parts; the existence of divisible things presupposes the actual existence of some or all of its parts; but time is divisible, and yet none of its parts exist. He then sets forth his doctrine that the now (*to nun*), since it is sizeless, is not a *part* of time. The now does not measure time, as parts do the whole, nor is time made up of nows[14], although every whole is made up of its parts.

For Aristotle, then, the *nun* is not a period or part or time, however short, but the limit or boundary (*peras*) of such a period. The reason the now has no size is, as Sorabji points out, that it is not equivalent to a very short line, but to the *boundary* of a line, i.e. a point.

---

14. Nothing continuous can be made up of indivisibles; cf. *Phys*. 231a34. Thus a line is not made up of points, nor is a plane made up lines, nor time of nows (*Phys*. 239b. 8 f.). On these and other similar texts, cf. H.J. KRÄMER, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie*, Berlin, 1971, p. 290 ff.

3) The Stoa

We now come to our final source of Damascius theory of time : the Stoics. Strictly speaking, the present, for the Stoics as for Aristotle, was an ungraspable boundary between past and future. Yet there was also a present in the extended sense of the term, which the Stoics referred to by such expressions as *kata platos*, *en platei*, *kata meizona perigraphên*. This is the sense of the present that is expressed by the present tense of verbs: I am writing, I am walking. This present in the broad, sense is said to *huparkhein*[15], a term broadly synonymous, in this context, to *enestanai* "to be present". Damascius seems to have adopted this Stoic distinction, but he has radicalized it. If the Stoics shrank from admitting that the present is indeed present in the strict sense of the term, it is because, in the words of Pierre Hadot[16], "a genuinely present time would no longer be time, since it would stand still". Damascius agrees: but, he adds, that is precisely what does indeed happen: the present *does* stand still, and it is in this contact between Becoming and Rest that we have the chance to taste Eternity, right in the midst of time itself. All of time is "packed together" (*suneptuktai*) in the present instant[17], just like a circle and its radii are folded up within its center[18].

This concept of the present in the extended sense is quite close to William James' notion of the "specious present", which was extremely influential on Whitehead[19]. As James writes in the *Principles of Psychology* (1891):

> "....the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in

15. Cf. Ph. HOFFMANN, "Paratasis. De la description aspectuelle...", p. 6. In contrast, the Stoics say of the past and future not that they *huparkhei* (exist) but that they *huphistêsi* (subsist).

16. P. HADOT, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Begriffs "Existenz": ΥΠΑΡΧΕΙΝ bei den Stoikern ", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte,* 13, 1969, 115-127 p., at p. 118: "eine wirklich gegenwärtige Zeit wäre keine Zeit mehr, da sie ja stillstünde".

17. DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, vol. II, p. 185, 16 W.-C.

18. DAMASCIUS, *De principiis*, vol. I, p. 62, 20 Ruelle. Whitehead sometimes sounds as if he would like to adopt this doctrine, but does not quite dare to do so. Cf. P&R 154: "This one felt content is the ' satisfaction ', whereby the actual entity is its particular individual self [...] in the conception of the actual entity in its phase of satisfaction, the entity has attained its individual separation from other things [...] Time has stood still ... if only it could".

19. Cf. I. STENGERS, *Penser avec Whitehead. Une libre et sauvage création de concepts*, Paris, 2002, p. 75 ff. See now Isabelle Stengers, Thinking with Whitehead. A free and wild creation of concepts, translated by M. Chase, with a preface by B. Latour, Cambridge, Mass. 2011.

> two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a duration, with a bow and a stern, as it were – a rearward – and a forward-looking end. It is only as parts of this duration-block that the relation of succession of one end to the other is perceived. We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with its two ends embedded in it." (PP, I, 609-610)

And in *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909, p. 104) James wrote :

> "[All our sensible experiences] come to us in drops. Time itself comes in drops."

For the early Whitehead, the specious present becomes an "epoch" or "pause", that within which "the event realises itself as a totality, and (...) realises itself as grouping together a number of aspects of its own temporal parts" (*Science and the Modern World* 104f.). It is thus a kind of precursor of the role and function of the "actual occasion", perhaps the key concept of Whitehead's mature thought in *Process and Reality*.

D. *Damascius,* Commentary on the Parmenides

The best way to see how Damascius utilizes his sources, combining them into a coherent whole, is probably to follow him as he comments on the section of the *Parmenides* I summarized earlier.

According to Damascius, *Parmenides* 151e3-155d5, corresponding to the last conclusions of the dialogue's second hypothesis, is devoted to the final order of sublunary gods. Before confronting this part of the text, Damascius[20] first sets forth and then answers fifteen questions that had been raised by Proclus[21]. The eleventh of these questions ran as follows[22]: How can time, which is divisible (*meristos*), be composed of indivisible nows (*ex amerôn tôn nun*), and how can it be simultaneously continuous and discrete ?

---

20. DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, II, 12^3, b^{11}, vol. III, p. 182, 10 ff. Westerink-Combès = Vol. II, p. 235 ff. Ruelle.

21. All that remains of Proclus' voluminous commentary on the *Parmenides*, which covered all nine hypotheses, is the section extending as far as the end of the first hypothesis (137c4-142a8), but Damascius gives us information on Proclus' lost commentary on the second hypothesis (142b1-155e3) as well. Damascius' commentary is, however, also incomplete, lacking the commentary on the first hypothesis and the first part of the second.

22. DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, II.12^3.a, vol. III, p. 172 10-11 W.-C.

Damascius replies as follows. Time is not made up of indivisible nows, because time has extension (*ouk adiastatos*), and no extended thing can arise out of unextended parts (*ex amerôn*). Parmenides shows that time is both continuous and discrete. This is true, says Damascius, yet time is not made up of partless parts (*ek merôn amerôn*), but from parts that are extended and discrete (*all'ex diastatôn diôrismenôn*)[23]. He seems to deduce this from Strato of Lampsacus (fr. 82, I Wehrli), who had maintained that time is made up of parts that do not remain (*mê menontôn*), which implies that the parts are discrete with regard to one another. Each part taken individually, in contrast, is continuous.

In his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, unfortunately lost, Damascius had shown that time does not progress by proceeding from one now to another now. Indeed, it could not: since there are an infinite number of nows, time could never make any progress on this hypothesis. Expanding on Damascius' argument, we might say that since time is continuous, it is infinitely divisible, but this means that between any two nows there is an infinity of other nows. If, then, time progressed from n_1 to n_2.... , n_n, it would fall victim to Zeno's paradoxes and never make any progess at all. Motion, claims Damascius, does not progress by points, but by intervals (*diastêmatikôs*), that is, by jumps (*kata halmata*). Yet since time measures motion, it follows that time must progress in a similar way, by entire measures (*kata metra hola*) that are capable of measuring these leaps of motion. Time thus consists of measures, but measures that are discrete and separated by limits ; this is what makes it both discrete and continuous, just as motion is. Motion is made continuous by bodies in motion, but when it is interrupted it is rendered discrete (*diorizetai*) by its own leaps.

Time is thus made up of discrete measures, not of partless nows, as is shown by the example of the soul. When the mind contemplates diverse Forms or Ideas, such as justice, moderation, and science, either it spends a solitary instant (*nun*) at each one, or it spends an entire stretch of time (*khronon holon*) in such contemplation. The latter must be the case - indeed, only ‘ having thought ’ (*to ... nenoêkenai*) pertains to the now, while thinking itself (*to noein*) takes place in time - and so each stretch of time will be analogous to a leap of motion[24]. As

---

23. Cf. M.-C. GALPÉRINE, “Le temps intégral selon Damascius”, p. 336.

24. This doctrine of Damascius is remarkably similar to that found in (Pseudo?) Simplicius' *Commentary on the De anima*. Here again, the soul is said to think discursively (*metabatikôs*), passing or rather jumping from one object to another as if it were made up of monads. In each cognitive act, however, the soul stands still at its object of knowledge (*hê kata to gnôston tês gnôseôs stasis*), a rest (*stasis*) in which the soul is in a state of indivisible union with its object. Thus, although thought is not continuous, its activity within each stage is undivided. It follows that such pure mental acts take place in a time that is discontinuous, and is made up of now-moments as monads (καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ εἰσὶ τῷ ἐκ τῶν νῦν ὡς ἐκ μονάδων ἀριθμουμένῳ). Cf. C. STEEL, “The Neoplatonic doctrine of time and eternity and its influence on medieval thought”, in P. Porro (ed.), *The Medieval concept of time. Studies on*

Damascius points out elsewhere[25], Aristotle has shown that nothing moves or changes in the *nun*, but it merely *has* moved or changed. All change must take place within time[26].

To understand the *Parmenides*, Damascius continues, we must realize that when Parmenides speaks of things halting when they encounter the now (*epeidan...entukhêi tôi nun*), the now in question is not the Aristotelian limit of time, but an extension (*diastêma*) of time, viz. the present time (*ho enestôs khronos*), which is present wholly and simultaneously (*ho enestêken holon homou*). This is what Parmenides means by "now". This Parmenidean-Platonic now has a certain breadth (*platos*). Unlike the Aristotelian now, it is a whole and has parts, as Plato shows by speaking of "letting go of the present now and seizing hold of the new one" (*Parm*. 152c3-5) : in this case, what is being let go and seized are different *parts* of the now.

It follows that what proceeds - i.e. the thing that is moving through time - can touch and let go of the now simultaneously[27], in that it will touch one part of the now as it lets go of another. But this means that the now is divisible (*meriston ara to nun*), and this in turn means that the now under discussion is not the Aristotelian limit of time, but (a stretch of) time itself.

Damascius thus interprets the *Parmenides* as teaching that entities in the process of becoming travel in the realm of becoming (*poreuetai en tôi gignesthai*), but stop and stand still in the realm of being (*episkhei de kai histatai en tôi einai*), so that in this world both movement and rest are within time. If follows that the now is a temporal extension, and that time is made up of such extensions. Another of Aristotle's *aporiai* is thereby solved : the Stagirite had asked (*Physics* 4, 10, 218a8sqq.) whether the *nun* that delimits the past from the future is always the same or always different. Damascius answers, in a manner that is typically Neoplatonic, that both views are correct. The now is always different thanks to the succession and, as it were, the movement of these *diastêmata* of time. Yet insofar as each *diastêma* stops in a kind of instantaneous remaining (*têi...hopôsoun athroai monêi tou diastêmatos*), eternity comes to be

---

the Scholastic debate and its reception in early modern philosophy, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschihcte des Mittelalters, Band LXXV, Leiden, 2001, p. 22-23 ; idem, in P. HUBY trans., PRISCIAN, *On Theophrastus, On sense-perception, with "Simplicius" On Aristotle, On the soul 2.5-12*, transl. by C. STEEL; in collab. with J.O. URMSON notes by J.O. URMSON, London, 1997, p. 122-123.

25. Apud SIMPL., *Coroll. de temp*., p. 797, 7-10.

26. Cf. GALPÉRINE, "Le temps intégral selon Damascius", p. 338 ff., who emphasizes the importance of Aristotle, *Physics* VI as a source for these ideas.

27. Ἔστιν ἄρα ἅπτεσθαι ἅμα καὶ ἀφίεσθαι τοῦ νῦν. The translation by S.-P. is mistaken: "It is thus the nature of the Now to be touched and be let go".

within time (*en khronôi to aei on estin*)[28], and this is what makes the now a trace of eternity (*ikhnos aiônion*)[29].

II. – WHITEHEAD ON TIME

It is not easy to present a coherent and comprehensive picture of Whitehead's theory of time, not least because he himself did not really produce a systematic treatise on the subject. Whitehead's views evolved throughout his philosophical career, but for the purposes of this presentation we may limit ourselves to the theory of time as set forth in *Process and Reality*, with a few additional references to his other late works[30].

Early in his carer, Whitehead, like his Cambridge colleague MacTaggart, flirts with the idea that time is not real, and at first he shows no awareness of the idea first set forth by Einstein in 1905, that space and time are components of a single four-dimensional manifold. By 1914, Whitehead had applied the method of class constructionism, developed in the *Principia Mathematica*, to the study of space in his *Relational Theory of Space*. Russell tells us that Whitehead had done the same for time, but he did not publish his results. Whitehead had by now abandoned his earlier view that instants of time are immediately given to the senses. Instead, what are given are durations, or slices of time possessing temporal thickness.

Whitehead first acknowledges Einstein's special theory of relativity in 1915, and from this point on he will view time as, in at least one of its guises, a component of the four-dimensional spacetime manifold. In *The Concept of Nature*, Whitehead designates the basic fact of our sensory awareness as the "passage of nature". This passage is our experience of a four-dimensional world continuously "moving on". We experience temporally thick chunks of this

---

28. S.P. p. 90 n. 1: "wish to emend the text to read ἐν χρόνῳ τῷ ἀεὶ τὸ ὄν ἐστιν". But not only is such alteration of the manuscript text otiose, it eliminates Damascius' entire point, which is that eternity, in the guise of intelligible being, is present in the present time, not in "everlasting time".

29. DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, II, $12^{3}.c^{1}$, vol. III, p. 189, 20 W.-C.

30. Whitehead's philosophical activity as a whole can be divided into three periods :

1. He starts out at Cambridge from 1884-1910, where he studies and then teaches mathematics, collaborating with his student Bertrand Russell on the *Principia Mathematica*.

2. At London 1910-1924, he becomes interested in social and historical questions, as well as in the theory of education and the philosophy of science.

3. Finally, invited to Harvard in 1924, he stays there for the rest of his life until his death in 1947. This is the period when Whitehead completes his transformation from mathematician to metaphysician, culminating in *Process and Reality*.

passage, which Whitehead calls “events”. Events consisting of a temporally thick slice of the entire world are called “durations”.

Beginning with the *Concept of Nature*, then, Whitehead accepts the implications of Einstein's special theory of relativity[31], including the existence of multiple time-systems, a view in which he agrees with Damascius. He developed his final theory of time during his American period. On April 7th, 1925, he announced before his class of Harvard students that science requires an atomic theory of time, speaking of

> “The temporalisation of extension through the realization of potential [...] An event, qua present, is real for itself. It is this becoming real that is temporalisation.” (L.S. Ford, *The emergence of Whitehead's metaphysics*, 1925-1929, Albany, 1984, p. 281-282).

Whitehead's *Science and the modern world* appeared in 1925. But in two passages he added subsequently, Whitehead elaborates his theory of the atomicity of duration, or the doctrine that time is made up of indivisible atoms or epochs. By now, Whitehead has come to conceive of realization, which he calls concrescence, or the becoming of reality, as the actualization of a potentiality, and this, for reasons we shall see shortly, cannot be conceived in terms of continuous space and time. Actual entities or occasions, the basic components of Whitehead's metaphyscal system, are not located in time, but they *create* time as they actualize themselves. As he wrote in *Science and the modern world:*

> “In realisation the potentiality becomes actuality. Temporalisation is realisation. Temporalisation is not another continuous process. It is an atomic succession. *Thus time is atomic (i.e., epochal), though what is temporalised is divisible*.” (SMW, 126/154)

In order to make sense of this statement, and others like it, we must take a brief detour to sketch the outlines of what Whitehead calls his “Philosophy of organism”, that is, the final form of his philosophical system.

---

31. More precisely, Whitehead views the “classical” theory of time as a special case of the “relativity” view of time (P&R 66).

A. *Whitehead on actual occasions*

Actual occasions or actual entities are, for Whitehead, what substances are for Aristotle: the basic agents or stars of the metaphysical story that each of these philosophers has to tell. They are the real things of which the world is made. Unlike Aristotelian substance, however, an actual occasion is not an enduring thing like a rock or a chair, but a process, or an event. More precisely, each actual occasion is a "process of growth from phase to phase [which Whitehead calls concrescence], ending in a definite achievement [which he calls satisfaction]"[32]. What an actual occasion is *not* is something like a table or a dog. Instead, it is a "drop" or "bud" of experience, "the passing experience of a pleasure or pain, the experience of an emotion, such as anger or fear, or an aesthetic thrill of delight evoked by the contemplation of a beautiful object". If we consider a table, for instance, we can think of it as lasting for a minute; then as lasting for half a minute, then half that, and we can keep on going as long as we like. Each of these temporal slices is an event, consituted by a series or group of actual occasions, and these events, taken all together, constitute the "enduring object" known as a table.

Actual occasions, as units of experience[33], are thus what the world consists of ultimately. Each one is a monadic creature that synthesizes the world in its own way, and mirrors the entire world from its own perspective or standpoint. Each actual occasion can, moreover, be considered as a subject presiding over its own process of becoming, and it does this by seizing or "prehending" other actual entities and synthesizing them into its own experience. The actual entity's self-creative process of becoming, in turn, can be considered a case of final causation, although the *telos* or goal of this process need not be a conscious one. The endpoint of this teleological process is the satisfaction of the actual entity, when all potentiality is actualized and a fully determinate, concrete fact has arisen : Whitehead says that the entity at this stage has achieved objective immortality, in that it can henceforth serve as an ingredient in the developmental process of other actual entities.

Each actual occasion has a region of spacetime, or a standpoint associated with it, that is, both a quantum of time and a quantum of space, and it is these regions which, when actualized, atomize spacetime. Past actual occasions create potentialities for subsequent actual occasions, which in turn specify new regions in spacetime, or standpoints, and as this process continues, it fills up the

---

32. The following account is indebted to S.E. HOOPER, "Whitehead's philosophy: actual entities", *Philosophy*, 16, 1941, p. 286 ff.

33. It may seem odd to talk about the "experience" of entities we regard as inanimate. But not for Whitehead, for whom there can be experience even where there is no consciousness (S.E. HOOPER, "Whitehead's philosophy: actual entities", p. 291).

spacetime region lying in the past of the advancing sequence of spacetime surfaces "now". (See H. Stapp, *Mindful Universe: Quantum Mechanics and the Participating Observer*, Berlin etc., 2007, p. 92, whose diagram I reproduce).

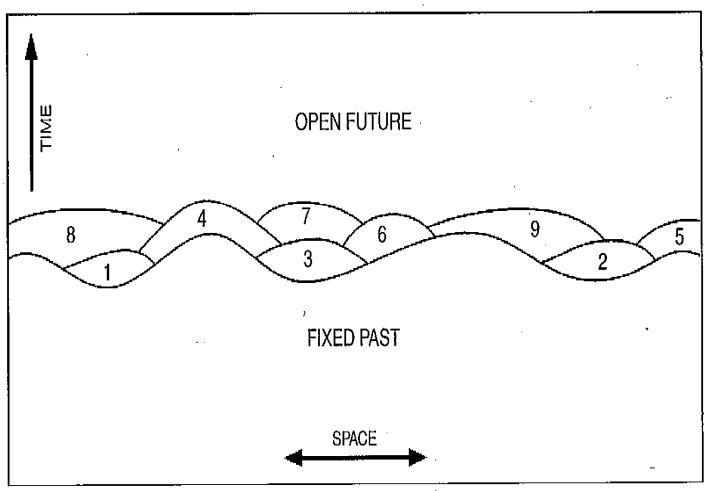

Fig. 13.1. A representation of the spacetime aspects of the Whiteheadian process of creation

Each actual occasion has what Whitehead calls a physical and a mental "pole"[34]. To use an example adduced by Henry Stapp, we may take the event or entity we usually call "thought". Its mental output is an "idea", and its physical output is the neural correlate of that mental output. There can be no question, for Whitehead, of reducing one to the other, since they are merely aspects of one and the same process. To separate these aspects, absolutizing them as independent entities or phenomena, is precisely to fall victim to the "bifurcation of nature" which Whitehead's entire philosophy of organism was intended to remedy.

B. *Levels of time in Whitehead's thought*

Whitehead's later thought distinguishes the following kinds or levels of time :

1. There is a first, primitive level of experience, which gives us our first acquaintance with time: that of Becoming. It's our awareness of the endurance and persistence of our self, as the world outside flows into us, and the succession and transition of our feelings into one another. We also experience

34. These poles arise from the fact that each actual entity or occasion consists of a unified combination of physical and conceptual feelings : the former derive from other actual entities functioning as data, and the latter from eternal objects (that is, roughly, Platonic ideas) that function as forms of definiteness (Hooper).

causal efficacy at this level, which is most prominent in the absence of any sensory stimulus.

2. Ordinary sense perception. Here we are aware of sensa projected against a spatio-temporal background, and time is a one-dimensional component of this four-dimensional background. This is what Whitehead calls the level of presentational immediacy, and it's characterized by what he calls, in analogy with the stresses and strains that distort electromagnetic fields in Maxwell's theory, "strain feelings", which allow us to distinguish regions in space and time and thus locate perceptual objects.

3. Next we come to conceptual awareness: we know in the abstract what time is, and what moments, durations etc. are. This abstract conceptual time, or time as it appears in mathematical equations, is derived from intellectual feelings; thus, a conceptual feeling reproduces the eternal object that is ingredient in an intellectual feeling.

4. When we come to time as it exists in the world outside the perceiver, the notion of the extensive continuum[35] comes into play: it is the scheme of basic relationships underlying our four-dimensional universe of entities. The extensive continuum is merely potential before it is actualized by the ingression of actual entities[36], and as such it has no dimensions. Yet when the extensive continuum is actualized and atomized, extensiveness appears, and this actualization or atomization of the extensive continuum is its temporalization and its spatialization. In other words, when dimensionality is welded together with extensiveness in the concreteness of an actual occasion, the result is space and time. The special form of atomization undergone by time is Whitehead refers to as his "epochal theory of time"[37].

It follows, then, that the external world exhibits two kinds of temporality. There is

i. Potential time, which is the potential unification of extensiveness and dimensionality, and there is

ii. Actual time, which is a feature in the satisfaction of an actual occasion. Only at this final stage of concrete satisfaction can the world of becoming be said to be extensive. For Whitehead, therefore, potentialities are continuous, but actualities are atomic.

---

35. P&R ch. II, p. 61-82.

36. P&R 67.

37. P&R 68, where Whitehead refers to *Science and the Modern World*, ch. VII.

C. *Whitehead and Zeno*

Interestingly, Whitehead, like Damascius, arrives at his fully-developed theory of time in response to the arguments of Zeno of Elea (P&R 68-69), although he dismisses these arguments in a rather cavalier fashion. If real things (*res vera*), or actual occasions become, Whitehead argues, then every act of becoming is divisible into earlier and later sections. But what becomes as a result of a process lasting one second presupposes what becomes in a half-second, which in turn presupposes what becomes in a quarter-second, and we have an infinite regress, so that the concrescence of an individual entity could never get started. Whitehead's solution is to declare that every act of becoming, or in his terms, every conscrescence of an actual entity, *contains* something with temporal extension, but *the act itself is not extensive:* in other words, the act of becoming itself is not divisible into earlier and later acts. Becoming is outside of extensiveness, and it is not until an actual occasion reaches its satisfaction at the end of its process of conscrescence that a four-dimensional quantum makes its appearance in the world. As he puts it early in *Process and Reality:*

> "The extensive continuity of the physical universe has usually been construed to mean that there is a continuity of becoming. But if we admit that ' something becomes ', it is easy, by employing Zeno's method, to prove that there can be no continuity of becoming. There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming. The actual occasions are the creatures which become, and they constitute a continuously extensive world. In other words, extensiveness becomes, but ' becoming ' is not itself extensive. Thus the ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism." (P&R, 35)

Thus, while Damascius seeks to solve Zeno's paradoxes by claiming that time proceeds in extended leaps that are not further divisible, Whitehead tries to achieve the same goal by postulating that the process of becoming does not take place in time, but is the source of time.

III. – Conclusion

Faced by the same problem - Zeno's paradoxes showing the dangers of the infinite divisibility of time and space - Damascius and Whitehead came up with a similar solution. For both thinkers, time does not increase instant by instant, like the ticking of a clock's second hand. Instead, it progresses by leaps, which are in a certain sense divisible, and in a certain sense not. For both, time is not infinitely divisible, but atomic. For Whitehead, the process of becoming is not in time, but creates both time and space when it reaches the completion of its

process. For Damascius, the leaps of time are not becoming, but being: that is, like Whitehead's process of beoming, they are themselves beyond time, and partake of the immutability and true being of intelligible reality. Finally, both Damascius and Whitehead can be said to have "spatialized" time: Whitehead by accepting Einstein's view that both and space and time are mere components of a four-dimensional spacetime continuum, and Damascius through his doctrine of primary or integral time as existing simultaneously in its totality, thus obliterating Aristotle's view of the contrary modes of being of space, characterized by the simutaneity of its parts, and time, marked by ceaseless succession.

Apart from the fact of an intereresting convergence of views across the centuries between Whitehead and Damascius, what is the interest of the ideas we have been surveying today? Well, they may happen to be approximately correct. Or if this claim is too bold, they may at least correspond to some aspects of recent discoveries in the so-called "hard sciences", particularly physics.

The notion that space and time are essentially homologous is, as we have seen, both common to Damascius and Whitehead, and also one of the key points of Einstein's theory of relativity. But the discontinuous or atomic nature of time is another theoretical element that has proved essential to quantum mechanics. In Niels Bohr's model of the atom, as Michael Epperson[38] reminds us,

> "...rather than moving continuously through space from state to state according to previous conceptions, the electrons in Bohr's model must be thought of as making quantum leaps from one fixed state to another, each state associated with a discrete volume of space a certain distance from the nucleus and associated with a specific energy level. An electron making such a leap, in other words, must be thought of as making an instantaneous transition from one volume of space to another without moving through the space in between."

Heisenberg basically agreed with Bohr's supposition, emphasizing that it does not make any sense to ask where a particle is in between observations. Schrödinger's equation, which describes the evolution of quantum particles, also takes place outside of physical time, to which it makes no reference. Whitehead would have agreed, and so would Damascius: time is not infinitely divisible, but occurs in chunks or slices that have a certain duration or thickness. For Damascius and for modern quantum mechanics, things can simply disappear from one place and reappear in another, without having successively traversed all the intermediate positions.

---

38. M. EPPERSON, *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, New York, 2004, p. 25.

If this is so, we have here an example of an ancient philosophical theory that may well be of interest to contemporary scientists. Whitehead's thought is in the process of being recuperated by many contemporary philosophers of science[39], some of whom claim that his thought, or the process philosophy that has arisen from it, is the philosophy most capable of accounting for the phenomena observed by the scientific discoveries of the last century. There is therefore reason to believe the philosophy of Damascius - which, as I hope we have seen, is oddly congruent to the philosophy of Whitehead, at least in some of its aspects - may be one of those that contemporary scientists might find interesting, were they to become acquainted with it. The case of Damascius' theory of time is, then, I submit, a good example of a theme for the dialogue we've been trying to establish in this panel between Neoplatonism and contemporary science.

39. This view is defended, with various qualifications and degrees of enthusiasm, by Henry Stapp, Abner Shimony, Shimon Malin, and Michael Epperson, to name but a few.

THE NEOPLATONIC TRADITION ON THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETRY. 1757-1850

JOSÉ MIGUEL VICENTE PECINO

I. – THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICATION OF THE NEOPLATONISM

When the religious character of the Roman and Hellenic philosophy began to be relevant, it started a new trend which was getting significant little by little and found its main expression on an eclecticism which tried to gather the religious elements found upon a wide range of the Greek thought and also connected with the Eastern religions, giving a deep spiritual tone and leading to a new and transcendental direction which will be known as Neoplatonism[1]. We all know that the foundation member was Plotinus, born in Licopolis (Egypt), about 203-205. In spite of being heir of Plato's philosophy, the main points of his philosophy could be resumed as[2]:

i. Overcoming of the platonic dualism of the supreme principia which appear on the oral teaching in Plato, such as the opposition between body and soul in subordination, establishing at the same a flow to the transcedecy and to the material existence.

ii. As an overcoming of the related antagonism, Plotinus proposed the principle of unity, of pure intellect, of moving and vitalising power, and, at the same time the matter itself. If we translate to nowdays terms it will be like a theory of knowledge or –metaphysics– and without it nothing could exist, and so everything would be formless, without preparation to the being. This principle of unity has been previously recognised in the soul –psyché or third hypostasis–, not being

1. N. ABBAGNANO, *Historia de la Filosofía*, 3 vols., Barcelona, 1973, p. 204.

2. P. GARCÍA CASTILLO, *Plotino*, Madrid, 2001, p. 40.

absent in natural things and having a relation of dependence on levels, being the soul the principle of life and moving.

iii. One of the distinguished feature in Neoplotinian philosophy, being a new concept and included on the on the mystical side of Plotinus doctrine, was the theory of 'emanation' which was no more than a very systematic expression of the principle common to Plato and Aristotle, that the lower is to be explained by the higher (*Enn*. V, 9, 4). The accepted term of 'emanation' is derived from one of the metaphors by which Plotinus illustrates the production of each order of being proceeds from the 'next above'.

iv. On this eternal process, the One produces universal Mind or Intellect that is one with the Intelligible and so the Intellect produces the Soul of the Whole or *Anima Mundi*: It is worth to explain this concept briefly: is in Plato's *Timaeus* when first appears the concept 'Soul of the Whole' on being inspired the Cosmos by the Demiurge. P. Harpur makes clear that this abstraction, with the imagination and the collective unconscious rejected by the Christian orthodoxy, has had an extraordinary blooming in imaginative poets just because it is a human faculty very much praised on the ground of reality. All the Neoplatonists, hermetic philosophers, alchemists and Cabbalists have remarked that the Cosmos is animated by a 'Soul of the Whole' that sometimes reveals itself spiritually, physically and daimonically[3]. This is an ambiguous principle because sometimes it was also supposed as a 'macrocosm' and a 'microcosm'; it was a collective soul and it was the one that allowed us to be in touch ourselves and with the rest of the living things. That was the way the English Romantic imagined the nature. The Imagination was co-extendable to the creation, as it was to the Soul of the Whole, which were identical. Any other natural object was spiritual and physical, as the inside and the outside of the same thing. Blake once said that 'the nature was the imagination itself', and Coleridge remarked that 'the very first imagination was the vivid power and the first agent of every human perception, being a repetition on the finite mind of the eternal act of creation on the infinite'.

v. From this historical derivation, which was accepted by Porphyry, appears the concept of 'hypostasis' by which Plotinus wanted to interpret the three ontological levels and in the same way that in the nature of things there are three principles so also are with us. The relation among the 'hypostasis' is of hierarchical transcendence, so each one illuminates the next one underneath. Plotinius compares each of these principles with a central source of 'light'. The accepted term of

3. P. HARPUR, *El fuego secreto de los filósofos*, Girona, 2006, p. 72

> 'hypostasis' or 'emanations', which are essentials on Plotinus, are in the intelligible order: the body which may be said to be in soul, soul in mind, and mind in One; this permanent evolution may be generated ascending or descending, known in greek as 'próodos' or 'principle of creation'[4].

The Neoplatonism, which in some ways was quite opposite to Christian religion and today the Christian call it 'pagan', it apparently disappeared with the Christian victory of Constantine, but the progress of the Christianity led to a kind of chistian-hellenic synthesis which ended with Agustine by who the neoplatonism entered the mystic in Middle Ages and influenced not only the philosophy John Scotus Erigena but in many medieval philosophers and ecclesiastical writers as well, up to the period of XIII century when the Scholastic current began to be remarkable. This deep influence went on to the Renaissance in two directions: one through the Platonic Academy (Florence) quite closed to the Byzantine tradition and which culminated with Giordano Bruno; and the other is through the 'innatism', which proceeding of augustinian platonic tendencies had its origin in the 'School of Cambridge'; since then the 'Cambridge Platonist' manifested an strong and idealistic tone which represented a new platonism strongly influenced by mystic, spiritual and immaterial theories.

II. – HETERODOX MOVEMENTS IN ENGLAND DURING THE XVIII CENTURY

Historians who study the eighteen century persist in writing about 'The Enlightenment' as a coherent body of secular ideas shared by intellectual vanguard of Europe[5]. These concepts and opinions had as rational, classical and liberal, obscured the profound religious concerns which many men had and a great variety of movements professed, giving to this century the tremendous vitality that we want to emphasise. The fascination of this century lies in the fact that these scholars not only found the real innovations of Enlightment, but sought eagerly a great and exuberant variety of themes and places.

These theosophies of considerable importance in England: Why do they come? Where do they come from?[6]; the atmosphere to the acceptance of these theories come from the previous mentioned Cambridge Neoplatonism, currents as natural philosophy, mystic, and alchemy had a considerable interest between

---

4. J. FERRATER MORA, *Diccionario de Filosofía*, Madrid, 1986, p. 192.

5. C. GARRETT, "Swedenborg and the Mystical Enlightenment in the late eighteen-Century England", *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 45, 1984, p. 67 and ff.

6. C. CANTERLA, "Neoplatonismo, filosofía natural y misticismo: fuentes ocultas del Romanticismo en el Kant precrítico", *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo,* 1, 1991, p. 163-173.

1609-1718. All this new thoughts were studied by an important character who combined these new obscure concepts, studied them and bestowed to this scattered 'corpus' a new identity; he was Emmanuel Swedenborg, as years before has done Jacob Böhme, having both men many points in common.

It is remarkable to point out that the main heterodox, surviving movements during the XVII-XVIII centuries were antimechanism, pantheistic philosophy, mysticism, and alchemical naturalism.

A. *Antimechanism*

It is understood as Antimechanism the body of theories which want to demonstrate that not all the bodies are ruled by mechanical laws, and also says that the theory by which 'every force' held by a body, had been impressed by other body through 'collision' is false; and when Newton thought that his mechanical system was not enough to complete scientifically his conception of natural philosophy, he was talking about something more profound: 'the action at distance and the theory of aether' which permitted to overcome his difficulties.

1) *Newton (1642-1727),* tied quite soon with the philosophical traditions of the Middle Ages, in particular with those which could be understood as philosophical and religious heterodoxy and through the ancient Neoplatonism, had important repercussions in Cambridge University. This place had a remarkable tradition of thinkers who disagree the principia of the Cartesian mechanism, especially with two ontological categories Descartes used to explaining the diversity of phenomena in nature related to 'matter amd motion'.

The Newtonian antimechanicism had its purpose in clarifying unknown concepts in natural philosophy such as 'magnetic attraction or transmutations'. He was always convinced that mechanical science should be completed with more profound philosophy, capable of exploring active principia on the moving particles. In the *Hypothesis of the Light (1775),* Newton stated a 'mechanical Cosmogony' by which a universal 'aether'caused all the phenomena in nature, which were were from lightness, subtlety or transparency to universal gravity or magnetism and even the movement of the muscles across the nerves of the human body. This expanded aether throughout the universe had the purpose of transmitting the energy in every kind of structure.

The Newtonians theories of the aether and his further interest in alchemy firmly stated the interests in 'Neoplatonic theories', being antimechanicism a principal current of the Neoplatonism, of which two parameters are going to be considerable: the hierarchical and natural order and the macrocosm which reproduced the microcosm, or the other way round.

2) *Cambridge Platonists (1609-1687)* are due to the fact that the group of men whom it is applied that were associated with the University of Cambridge, and strongly influenced by the inspiration from Platonism as being a religious interpretation of the reality. These philosophers continued the tradition of Plato and Plotinus and made no clear distinction between them[7]. All of them rejected the radical philosophy of Hobbes, as atheistic and materialistic, and also did with Descartes ´view of nature'.

B. *The Pantheistic Philosophy*

With this term we state the second heterodox current, which had its origin in Neoplatonism and other ancient philosophies and it spread quite considerably during Enlightenment and after. As philosophical declaration is a kind of theist view of monism by which God is either identical with the world and with the historical flux; God constitutes the 'Whole or Unity' in which everything exits.

The term 'pantheism' was coined by John Toland who during the difficult years of the European 'crisis' (1720)[8], payed attention to this philosophical doctrine when many philosophical societies appeared and were based in the most secret and different theories. Many intellectual had the free opinion which permitted that political moment, newly won with the French Revolution. Toland's main work *Pantheisticon*[9], which since the very beginning was connected with traditional Hermetism.

1) *Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)*. He was born into an atmosphere of great ideas. It is hard to say what was of his own and what was of others, nevertheless his life was dignified by the widest studies of the universe and favourite views of mathematics, mining, or theology, he had training as a race of athletic philosophers. Since a century, Europe was filled with the leading thoughts of magnetism, polarity, and the secrets of nature. In the year in which Swedenborg was born; Newton published the *Principia*, and established the universal gravity; his wide scope of interests makes that nothing had escaped his attention, so any academic discipline which can be illustrated during XVIII century was object of his scientific ambition.

---

7. F.Ch. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*. Vol. V: *Modern Philosophy: The British Philosophers from Hobbes to Hume*, New York, 1994, p. 54.

8. M. BENÍTEZ, *La Cara Oculta de las Luces. Investigaciones sobre los manuscritos filosóficos clandestinos de los siglos XVII y XVIII*, Valencia, 2003, p. 239.

9. J. TOLAND, *Pantheisticon, sive Formula Celebrandae Sodalitatis Socraticae, in tres partes divisa…*, London, 1720.

In this greatest scientific and technological interest, we could give evidence that together with Paracelsus, Agrippa and Böhme his thoughts were the basis of the most heterodox philosophical systems of the following centuries. But we have to ask ourselves why this scientific, mystic and theologian whose influence was slight during his lifetime, in the decades after his death his ideas stirred up considerable interest in the Europe of Enlightenment and after, especially in England; part of the answer is that Swedenborg combined in a new 'synthesis' a body of familiar and diverse concepts making them more exciting and attractive by the claim, to the ordinary people of then and now, that he had recieved spiritual knowledge directly from God's angels[10].

2) *Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677)*. The philosophy of Spinoza sets up the biggest synthesis of ideas of the XVII century, based in the universe's conception and the life. His writings are mainly religious and ethic, covering a wide scope of theoretical concepts such as: *logos, ethos, eros* and *myth,* and above all the sentence which resumes his philosophical system '*Deus sive substancia sive natura'*[11]. His arguments are metaphysical, anthropological and moral, with great clair-obscure in his life and thoughts. In spite of his effort by writing objective and unmistakable texts, of his words and ideas there always have been interpreted many beliefs: from the systematic atheism to the passionate pantheism to go to an absolute rationalism, mysticism and materialism, making an overall of incredible versatility.

C. *The Mysticism*

The term 'mysticism' leads us to a varied and large range of meanings and definitions. In this issue, it suggests a close relation with the religious and spiritual dimension of Neoplatonism, it is also understood as an activity which connects the individual soul with the 'Divine One'; reconciliation which causes an inner illumination of the souls up to the understanding of the essence and existence of the divine reality[12].

The history of the mystic carries us to a diachronic and illustrative vision of different religions which have been involved in this process: since the Upanishads, the Islamic Sufism, and the Judaic mystic, prelude of Christian mystic in its writings and treatises about the contemplative life. This wealthy

10. C. GARRETT, "Swedenborg and the mystical…", p. 68.

11. J. HIRSCHBERGER, *Historia de la Filosofía,* Barcelona, 1954, p. 33.

12. J. FERRATER MORA, *Diccionario de Filosofía*, p. 2234-5.

variety, mainly in his forms, reflects a certain difficulty to find common elements[13].

When we come close to the great mystics from Plotinus, Proclus, Eckhart or Ruysbroeck, who have fascinated us, we have to wonder what was the reason for such an attraction, and as element of truth is because there is something in our inside which reflects what they represent; it is to say that nowdays, the men had a deep necessity of internalisation, which namely is the moment which leads the man to hear inner voices which are veiled or hidden, but which come from inside, is perhaps the interpretation of 'the ego or super ego'.

Jacob Böhme (1575-1624). In this philosopher we find an example of an essential humanist and spiritual. From the oriented Christian philosophy, he has always been treated as the 'Görlitz shoemaker', seeking to minimise his remarkable and important influence, nevertheless from the heterodox philosophy, he has always been observed as the maker of a metaphysical system which represents an interesting innovation in the Neoplatonic circle of the 'emanation and return'[14].

His mysticism. - As happened to Swedenborg, Böhme had a famous vision which determined the rests of his days; was it that been working in his workshop, by 1600, at a reflection of a copper pot hung from the wall and illuminated by the sun, observed by some instant the secrets of the universe which further tried to decipher and interpret. Ten years later he had a second vision while he was working in his repair shoe shop. It seemed that he read writings of 'high masters' in which always found figurative symbology, intuitions and visionary experiences.

Böhme's is quite influenced by three main trends: the mystic German current, the Neoplatonic irradiations and Paracelsic alchemy[15]. All of them have in common the uncovering of his own spirituality which was just the understanding of the mystery to the man who has chosen the 'way to God'[16].

D. *The Alchemical Naturalism*

The intimate testimonies of Neoplatonic and Gnostic elements in the alchemical tradition come from the young Jamblicus and further from Zosimus of Panopolis (III-IV centuries). Are these theurgic (different from the

13. J. MARTÍN VELASCO, *Introducción a la Fenomenología de la Religión*, Madrid, 1978, p. 180.

14. M.H. ABRAMS, *El Romanticismo*: *tradición y revolución,* Madrid, 1992, p. 159.

15. J. HIRSCHBERGER, *Historia de la Filosofía,* vol. 1, p. 384.

16. R. TRESOLDI, *Enciclopedia del esoterismo,* Barcelona, 2003, p. 28.

contemplative Plotinus and Porphyrius) who with a great deal of Gnostic, hermetic, and old alchemical material, state the steps which led the mediaeval and modern alchemy.

Throughout centuries the alchemical naturalism had comprehended the vision of the world trying to interpret natural and positive phenomena of difficult explanation. In the XVII it began to split, what can be understood, the 'physical' from the 'mystical', producing a kind of imaginative genre which served to many European intellectuals to be aware of the psychic nature of the 'alchemical processes', transmutations, and other phases of much complicated alchemical proceedings. After XVIII century, alchemy had a progressive decay; the idea of a starting science of the unknown it could not get on well with the scientific nature of chemistry. That is why many alchemists left their practices and devoted to the hermetic philosophy.

The connection of the secret symbology of alchemy and naturalist versions of these two centuries, which had been innovator, gave at the same time a new vision of the world, and got in touch with the English and German romantic poets through Newton, Böhme, Swedenborg and others, acting as communicating serum between the heterodoxy of these centuries and the English and German romanticism[17].

1) *Newton,* whom we have mentioned as antimechanist, was also devoted to alchemy for a long period of time. When he was 51 years old, a fire which broke out in his workshop made him seriously sick with a metallic poisoning, so he stopped investigating in this field. The alchemical production of Newton was very important, silenced quite often due to his heterodox nature being a professor at Cambridge University, in spite of the long and liberal tradition which this university had, as we have mentioned above with 'The Cambridge Platonist'.

One out of ten books belonging to Newton's library was of alchemy, classifying a sum of 175. The interest of Newton in the theory and practice of this matter was shaped in many aspects, and the most important one are the theory of 'transmutations' as an antimechanist response to the 'readjustment of particles' and also the inquires into fire, balloons and melting pots. Newton has always been considered as the perfect unifier between the secret traditions (neoplatonists) and natural science.

2) *Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738).* Known as the 'Dutch Hippocrates', this physician very soon took up chemical investigations. After his graduation, quite

17. C.G. JUNG, *Psicología y Alquimia*, Vol 12, Madrid, 2005, p. XXIV.

unjustly, he was suspected of Spinozism, what made him being opposite to the Dutch Reformed Church, although he continued as a physician at Leiden University, supplementing his invetigations as mathematician and continuing his intensive chemical experiments.

Detailed discussions of his *Elementa Chemiae* reveals the importance of chemestry, in which he insited on the strict application of the Newtonian principles to chemical experiments. Other interesting works in chemistry are about 'temperatures and reactions, matter of fire and the theory of phlogiston. As a physician, he undertook important experimental works on urea, blood and other organic substances.

III. – The new aesthetic of the English Romanticism as a consequence of these heterodox movements

The fascination of the XVIII century didn´t lie in the fact that intellectuals found and wondered with the innovations of the Enlightment, but they sought eagerly a numerous variety of themes and places, as justice and freedom, without forgetting the permanent idea of uncovering prejudices, traditions and religious ideologies of every sign.

On the other side of the traditional Romanticism, it began to forge the hidden Romanticism, formed by the heterodox currents and carried by the philosophers, we have previously mentioned, and will set up an intellectual movement very suitable and exciting for the next romantic writers who will see soon, giving a significant advance to, what up to then, was known as orthodox. Essentially, the European Romanticism and English in particular, senses the deep influence of neoplatonism and also of the vast spiritual movement which supported the French Revolution and postkantian idealism in the German metaphysic, making a whole which had a powerful influence and was called Dynamic Philosophy, in 1747 appeared Kant´s *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*. This philosophical position exercised by the Neo-Platonists was difficult for the romantic philosophers-poets do not recognise his participation and scientific discussion with philosophic implications in fields such as literature, medicine, alchemy, or just the natural philosophy[18].

In this speculation, the romantic poets saw their own dreams and the general intellectual influence of finding the material world not less than the spiritual; and for this reason, his concern with the science or work of art was merely the free effort to adecuate his philosophical position to the influences of Neoplatonism, English divines and German Natur-philosophers whose emergent statements are further than any doubt.

---

18. J.H. Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher,* London, 1930, p. 118-121.

M. H. Abrams shows that:

> "The major poets of the age, who differed quite a lot from his XVIII century predecessors, had in common important themes, modes of expression and ways of feeling and imagining; that the writings of these poets were an integral part of a comprehensive intellectual tendency which manifested itself in philosophy as well as poetry, in England and in Germany, and that this tendency was causally related to drastic political and social changes of the age... He also shows that central Romantic ideas and forms of imagination were secularised versions of traditional theological concepts, imagery, and design, and as Shelley said 'the literature of England has arisen as it were from a new birth'."

Imaginative poets as Blake, Shelley or Coleridge were at the same time metaphysical or bards, acting as agents of the western tradition and inside of a profound crisis; the difference was that they didn´t believe in the same tradition as others as done before, they behave themselves as vitalist philosophers or prophets-poets who had a preceding in Milton, the great bard who inspired Blake or Shelley, on being recalled as the main figure in the national fight for religious and civil freedom.

Blake, Shelley or Coleridge are among the most representative of this other side of Romanticism.

A. *Blake (1757-1827)*

First of all we will try to discover the conception of the Blakian mythology, his mysticism, the visionary and imaginative presences; everything in the most traditional and Neoplatonist tradition.

How did Blake include himself in this influence? The most experienced critics and scholars agree that it was through the Cambridge Platonist, as we have seen a group of philosophers in the most mature and spiritual atmosphere, who had taken these theories as his own, in three directions: an overcoming of the rationalist Cartesian currents, the philosophical interpretation of the spiritual reality of the universe, and the definition of the matter as transfixed by the soul or vitality. Other influences come from: the second reading of the Bible, the inspirations which produced upon him Swedenborg, and the one of Milton. Of these second influences Blake comprehended his essential interpretation of his thinking and the conviction that everything in the universe is necessary as a whole part of the 'created'.

But is Swedenborg, the pantheistic and mystic philosopher previously seen, who influenced on him on the conception of the art and the Blakian poetry and also stressed the role of the imagination in their philosophy, theology,

religiousness and philosophical thinking[19]. Swedenborg had written a singular work *Arcana Coelestia and Hevenly Secrets (1747),* in which represented the wonders that had been observed in the 'World of Spirits' and in the 'Heaven of Angels'; the angels had a power which couldn´t be understood by those ignoring the spiritual world and his influence in the natural universe. But in spite of this influence, Blake wrote *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, rejecting the Plotinian and Swedenborgian influence in favour of iluminism and a strong moral actitude.

B. *Coleridge (1724-1834)*

It is difficult to consider Coleridge only as poet, because he was well known as 'the poetry thinker', an inspired and theoretical inventor who used his verses to exemplify his ideas [20].

In this author, more than other considerations, is important to emphasize the concept of nature in his *Lyrical Ballads and the Ancient Mariner,* just to define the influence of Neoplatonic thought on him and establish the process by which this concept was used by Neoplatonists and how was by English Romanticism.

These poets noticed 'the nature' in all his levels of contemplation, in the same way as Plotinus in his *Ennead* III, 8.4.1, when he remarked that[21] "what was necessary to understand?... What I produce while I'am silent is that what I contemplate, an object of contemplation that is born from my nature, and, to me, having been produced by a contemplation, it is convenient that my nature was in love with the contemplation. And what in me contemplates, is the producing of what I contemplate, in the same way as geometricians draw when they are contemplating. But in my particular case, I don't draw, only consider and the lines of the body are accomplished as if they were going out of myself". In this direction, Plotinus was quite close with this vision to the mystery of the life: the nature contemplates what the soul let see of the world of forms[22], that is the three principles of his philosophy[23]: the ontological levels or hypostasis.

It would be interesting to question oneself the following: when Coleridge tried to express in his poems the idea of nature: how did he do? from which

---

19. N. FRYE, *Fearful Symetry. A Study of William Blake,* Boston, 1967, p. 85.

20. J.M. VALVERDE & M. DE RIQUER, "Literatura de la época romántica", in *Historia de la Literatura Universal,* II, Barcelona, 1968-1977, p. 7.

21. It is retaken the conjecture of S.T. COLERIDGE, *Biographia Literaria*, London, 1817 (new ed. 1907).

22. P. HADOT, *Plotino o la simplicidad de la mirada*, Barcelona, 2004, p. 64.

23. J. ALSINA CLOTA, *El Neoplatonismo, síntesis del espiritualismo antiguo,* Barcelona, 1989, p. 51-56.

viewpoint did he notice? His most important concern was to establish a point of reference of his metaphysical theory and set a recovering with the Nature; he transmitted that the 'wonderful' are the effort of nature to reconcile the abyss with the continuity, the leap with the slipping; although the continuity is bound to the Nature, the abysses are the effects of a high principle, which limits the length and rules the immobility of the processes.

C. *Shelley (1792-1822)*

On the contrary to Byron whom has been considered the least Neoplatonist, Shelley has traditionally been taken into account the most Neoplatonist of all Romantic postes. Two important opinions confirm it; James Notopoulos[24] argues for a natural affinity between Plato and the Romantic poet, supporting that Shelley is the most outstanding Platonist in the platonic renascence of the Romantic period; and Edward Dowden[2525], the poet's first authorised biographer, he wrote that Shelley felt the radiance and breathed the air of Plato's genius as no other poet had done before.

Shelley has always been joined together with Plato and Neoplatonism because of the idealising tendencies, in opinion of most of modern critics; behind those critical comments lies the notion that the Romantic movement was a semi-religious, mystic and near an unworldly divinity great change[26]; so that Shelle's poetry is interpreted as ethereal, dreamlike associated with their Neoplatonic filter, very closed with the notion of mystic transcendence to a world of reality, beauty and unity.

Neville Rogers's[27] points out that Shelley adopted similar symbols to those used by Plato, boats, caves and veils, in order to represent metaphorically the mind's elevation beyond the world of particulars to a realm of the eternity and the universal. He also insist on Shelley's thinking as a quest for ultimate truth, known as 'Platonic path', term which goes back to Socrates, when he mentions other and best life, the most virtuous, in which any person prepares for his death, leaving the ties of this world from an emotional point of view; this 'idea' is also important in the Neoplatonic metaphysical as a return the 'One', path which is undertaken in solitude, and is only reserved to few intellectuals and aimed to control his own and individual desire; it would be like an individual and

---

24. J.A. NOTOPOULOS, *The Platonism of Shelley, A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind,* Durham (North Carolina), 1949, p. 145.

25. E. DOWDEN, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* 2 vol. I, London, 1886, p. 74-75.

26. A. BALWIN & S. HUTTON, *Platonism and the English Imagination,* New York, 1994, p. 230.

27. N. ROGERS, *Shelley at Work: A Critical Inquiry,* Oxford, 1956, p. 230.

intellectual project in which it is achieved the contemplation of the 'One' and from here to the immortality[28].

Shelley was an idealistic, visionary and sceptic poet; but the dimensión which best define him is 'visionary', and it is in the poem *Ode to the West Wind*, where the inspiration of the poet and the prophet go together to light one of the most symbolic poem of the English Romanticism[29].

IV. – Conclusions

The English philosophers-poets and some of the German ones, who have been object of this study, have all of them contributed, without hesitation, to a tradition which comes from 'new sources of inspiration'; from them originate the new contemporary aesthetic starting here, and also consequences of the French Revolution and English philosophy of XVII and XVIII century. The Romantic ideas of creativity, hidden sources and revolution, have shaped a successful great deal of contemporary thought, just as the most avant-gardist concepts come from this period.

I believe and I have tried to demonstrate in a wider investigation, from which this paper has been taken, that the 'heterodox currents' from which Neoplatonism has a definitive nexus, have contributed to this philosophical rediscovering, difficult to say to which extent.

The reactionaries spirits have always been in front of these 'cries of freedom', is the reason that Neoplatonism has been considered heterodox. This paper wants to clarify the aesthetic and thinking conflicts of this period, and also to check how this ancient philosophy has developed and formed the Romantic English poetry. Basically this complex Romantic Revolution, started in the last decade of XVIII century, was like a struggle which many people and intellectuals quarrelled; sometimes they won, sometimes they lost. What happened in this confrontation, what was thought and what was written has been the object of this communication.

---

28. The Metaphysics of Quality… "Mystical Experience", extracted from http://www.venus.co.uk/hypermail/moq-discuss/0723.html

29. J.M. Vicente, "Percy Shelley, Oda al Viento del Oeste", *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo,* 4-5, 1997, p. 235.

INDEX LOCORUM

Porphyrius

De abstinentia

INDEX OF MODERN NAMES

AUTHORS

Antoni BORDOY FERNÁNDEZ, *Universitat de les Illes Balears, Spain*
Jean-Michel CHARRUE, *Institut Saint-Pierre, France*
Michael CHASE, *CNRS-UPR 76 Centre Jean Pépin, France*
Judith OMTZIGT, *Universität Heidelberg, Germany*
Svetla SLAVEVA-GRIFFIN, *The Florida State University, USA*
Atsushi SUMI, *Hanazono University, Japan*
Malena TONELLI, *Universidad de Buenos Aires-CONICET, Argentina*
José Miguel VICENTE PECINO, *SAFA-San Luis, S.J. High School, Spain*
José M. ZAMORA CALVO, *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

.

The nine essays in this volume were presented at the Eighth Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies (ISNS), hosted and sponsored by Autonomous University of Madrid, and held in Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid / Spain) on June 17-20, 2010. They were part of the "*Stromata*. Neoplatonic Questions" panel, whose general coordination was my responsibility. ISNS Conferences, annually held, bring together scholars from all over the world interested in Plato's philosophy and its tradition. This time, the selected articles deal with the interpretations of Plato by authors like Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, and Damascius, as well as with the romantic English poetry reception of this hermeneutic tradition. They include perspectives as wide as philosophic, historical, or literary, and in different contexts; like pagan, Christian, Jewish, etc. All of them aim to give a new appreciation of Neoplatonic Philosophy and a better understanding of what Platonism and Neoplatonism may be.

José M. Zamora Calvo, Ph.D. (1998) in Philosophy, University of Valladolid, is Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Autonomous University of Madrid. His publications include *La génesis de lo múltiple. Materia y mundo sensible en Plotino* (Valladolid 2000); with Enrique A. Ramos Jurado *et alii Porfirio de Tiro. Contra los cristianos* (Cádiz 2006); as editor *La amistad en la filosofía antigua* (Madrid 2009); *Platón. Timeo* (Madrid 2010).

Logos Verlag Berlin

ISBN 978-3-8325-3663-3