

XIII.—Plotinus *Enneads* 2.2¹

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Simplicius quotes the opening passage of *Enneads* 2.2 in a manner suggesting that this essay of Plotinus could be interpreted as being or, at least, containing, a contribution to certain discussions dealing with Aristotle's phronomics. The present paper proposes such an interpretation.² It is the first of a series of investigations in which an attempt is made to show how closely Plotinus' problems and solutions are related to discussions carried on among his contemporaries and immediate predecessors.

Aristotle's theory explaining the motions of the heavenly bodies contains elements which it is often very difficult to reconcile. Some passages in *De caelo* and some fragments from *Περὶ φιλοσοφίας* seem to teach that some kind of celestial motion is caused by a soul of the heavens and heavenly bodies.³ In *Met.* XIII the motion of the stars is reduced to the motion of celestial spheres (the sphere of the fixed stars, starless or revolving spheres, spheres of the planets). The motions of the spheres themselves are explained partly by assuming that they are mechanical (the motion of the including sphere influences the motion of the included one), partly—and this is the predominant point of view—by the assumption of the existence of unmoved movers. The way in which at least the supreme mover moves is explained by the well known formula *κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον*. In *De caelo* also the motion of the stars is reduced to the motion of the spheres. Yet the unmoved mover and the mutual influence of the spheres are hardly more than mentioned and the material quality of the spheres is presented as the main cause of their motion: the spheres consist of ether; and ether is endowed by nature with circular motion, just as the other four elements possess by nature

¹ I am indebted to my colleague, Mr. Howard T. Westbrook, Scripps College, who was kind enough to correct my English.

² Cf. my paper "Ein Simplicios-Zitat bei Pseudo-Alexandros und ein Plotinos-Zitat bei Simplicios," *RhM* 84. (1935) 154–160.

³ Such a doctrine would, according to Jaeger, be characteristic of the Platonic period in Aristotle's development.

rectilinear motion. Thus, for Aristotle, the soul, the unmoved mover, and ether are the three principles of the heavenly motion.⁴

The later Peripatos exhibits rather characteristic attitudes towards the different elements of Aristotle's theory; in connection with this we find different interpretations of the celestial motion. Xenarchus, Herminus, Julianus of Tralles (regardless of whether he actually was a Peripatetic), and Alexander of Aphrodisias deserve particular attention.

Xenarchus is known mainly because of his polemic against the ether theory. We confine ourselves to the discussion of one point of this polemic, a point deserving particular attention because it is presented in Simplicius with the comment that it is to be found also in Ptolemy⁵ and Plotinus. Aristotle mistakenly assumes, says Xenarchus, that the motion of the four elements is rectilinear and only that of the ether circular. Actually, the four elements move along straight lines only when they are not in their οἰκείος τόπος; when they have arrived there, they either rest, or move in circles. The former holds true for water, earth, and the λιμνάζον τοῦ ἀέρος, the latter for fire, and the εὐαγές τοῦ αἵματος.⁶ This is the view of Xenarchus. We pass to Herminus and Julianus.

In *De caelo* B1,284a 27–284b5 Aristotle severely criticizes a theory according to which the heavenly motion is caused by a kind of necessitation (ἀνάγκη) exercised by the soul. But as there indubitably are other passages in *De caelo* clearly indicating that Aristotle also believes in the soul as a cause of the heavenly motions, ancient commentators quite naturally asked: What kind of motion, then, is caused by the soul? What does the soul contribute to the celestial motion? Julianus' answer was: While the soul does not cause the motion itself, it does determine, first, the direction to the

⁴ The main passages are: for the soul, *De caelo* B2,285a29 and B12,292a18; for the unmoved mover, *Met.* XIII, *passim*; for ether, *De caelo* A, *passim*, and B1,283b26. For the problem of a plurality of unmoved movers see my paper "Aristotle's Unmoved Movers," to be published in *Isis* soon.

⁵ According to Simplicius in Arist. *De caelo*, 20.10–25H ἐν τῷ περὶ τῶν στοιχείων βιβλίῳ, and in his *Optics*. The first of the two works (if it was an independent work at all, and this doubt holds true also for *Περὶ ὁπῶν* to be mentioned below; cf. Heiberg in *Ptolemaei Opera astronomica minora* 264 note) has not been preserved. With the assertion of Ptolemy that the elements do not move in their natural places in straight lines, but, if they move at all, in circles, is connected another, also preserved in Simplicius, *op. cit.* 710,14 (from *Περὶ ὁπῶν*), according to which the elements have no weight at all in their natural places.

⁶ Simplicius *op. cit.* (note 5) 20, 10–25H.

right, and second, the uniformity of the velocity of the sphere of the fixed stars.⁷ The same question is answered by Herminius differently: The soul causes the eternity of the celestial motion.⁸

Alexander takes one more step in the direction of Herminius and Julianus. This is somewhat striking, because he is well aware of Aristotle's criticism directed against the concept of a moving soul and well aware of the fact that Aristotle here opposes Plato. But as there are unmistakable passages in *De caelo* where Aristotle himself admits motion caused by the soul, Alexander (far from an evolutionary interpretation of Aristotle) tries to reconcile the two explanations in a rather peculiar way. The soul, he says, is the nature (*φύσις*) of the etheric spheres.⁹ Therefore, we could interpret Alexander as saying that the celestial motion is neither purely corporeal (ethereal) nor caused exclusively by the soul, but rather a combination of the two, an explanation which, after all, would be along the lines of Herminius and Julianus.

The doctrine of the animation of the "cyclical body" is used in Alexander also to relate ether and the unmoved mover or *νοῦς*.¹⁰ This is done in the *Quaestiones*. Here Alexander proves, first, that the cyclical body must be animated; but as motions of animated beings take place in virtue of a *nîsus* and desire, there must exist an object of desire; where motion is eternal, the object of desire must be eternal and actual itself, and also unmoved.¹¹ This is the way in which Alexander tries to synthesize the different elements of Aristotle's celestial phronomics. The cyclical, ethereal body moves in a circle, because the soul that dwells in it and is its "nature" desires that which is unmoved.

In addition, Alexander interprets this circular motion as desire to *imitate* the object of desire.¹² Thus, the desire of the celestial

⁷ Simpl. *op. cit.* (note 5) 380, 1-3H.

⁸ Simpl. *ibid.* 3. It should be stressed that from the way in which Alexander presents Xenarchus' views it follows that Xenarchus did not intend to *replace* the ether by the soul. He only asked: As the *circularity* of the motion is caused by nature, what is the soul's contribution?

⁹ Simpl. *op. cit.* 380, 29; cf. Simpl. in Arist. *Physics* 1218, 36D.

¹⁰ The coöperation of the three factors is asserted also in Ps.-Plutarchus' *Placita*, 1.7 (Diels, *Dox. Gr.* 305, 1). The supreme God has "ascended" the ethereal sphere of the all. The all is subdivided into spheres. According to Aristotle each sphere is a *ζῶον* composed of body and soul. The ethereal body moves cyclically, while the soul, an unmoved ratio (*λόγος*), causes the actuality of the motion.

¹¹ *Quaestiones* 1.1.3, 10-23B; cf. 1.25.40, 8-14.

¹² *Op. cit.* 4.1; 2.18.63, 18-21.

sphere is not to "receive" that which is unmoved; what it actually desires is to become like it, as far as possible; and this is achieved by motion, particularly by its eternity and uniformity, because an eternal and uniform motion is, in a way, a standstill. To persist in a natural, continuous motion is exactly an imitation of the immobility of the First Mover or First God.¹³

So much for some Aristotelian problems in the Peripatos. Only one more point need be stressed. All the above theories of Xenarchus, Herminus, and Julianus were to be found in Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo*. It is, therefore, obvious that Plotinus could easily have been acquainted with them.

We can now discuss *Enneads* 2.2.¹⁴ In this passage Plotinus starts with the question: Why does it move in a circle? He gives this answer: Because it imitates the νοῦς.

This reads like a quotation. Who is quoted? If we think of Alexander's assertion that the celestial bodies imitate by their uniform, continuous, and eternal motion the best of the beings, we shall be entitled to assume that Plotinus simply summarizes Alexander; or at least has his explanation in mind. We have also to consider that the last words of Plotinus' essay tie in with the beginning: Of this kind, says Plotinus, is the motion of the νοῦς; it stands still and yet is moved, because it is self-centered (or self-concerned, *περὶ αὐτόν*). Now, this is the way in which the all moves in a circle: because while moving it stands still. We can easily compare this with Alexander who says: This is the way in which things, continuously moving in virtue of their nature, imitate the standstill of the unmoved mover, i.e. the νοῦς, namely, through the immobility of their motion (*διὰ τῆς ἐν τῇ κινήσει μονῆς*). It is, therefore, a rather safe conjecture that Plotinus in *Enneads* 2.2 discusses a doctrine, the content and almost the wording of which can be found in Alexander.

If this assumption is right we may expect to find also some of the antecedents of Alexander's theory in Plotinus.

The words following the opening clause of Plotinus' essay read: And this motion is a motion of what? Of a soul? Or of a body? The double question is ambiguous. The genitive case may be a *genetivus subjectivus* or a *genetivus objectivus*. We can, however, best understand the question in its ambiguity when we think how

¹³ *Op. cit.* 2.18.62, 23–63, 2. Cf. 1.25.40, 17–21.

¹⁴ My renderings are based on the text of Bréhier.

the Peripatos tried to reconcile the different elements in Aristotle's celestial phoronomics: Should celestial motions be explained in terms of the corporeal quality of the ether, or in terms of its animation?

What follows in Plotinus is an explanation of how to imagine the motion of a soul and the way in which its motion could cause a motion of the heavens. Is it, asks Plotinus, because soul exists in itself and tries to come to itself? Or is it, because soul is in itself but is not thoroughly compact (or connected, *συνεχής*)?¹⁵ Or does the soul help to carry, being carried itself?

Thus three possibilities are discussed. First, the soul wants to remain within itself, and its "self-centripetal" force¹⁶ is the cause of its motion. Secondly, the soul, while existing in itself, is not thoroughly compact: there are, as it were, gaps within it, and the soul tries to close all these gaps in a motion of self-contraction. Thirdly, the moving force of the soul is derived from the fact that the soul itself is carried by the body in which it dwells.

But what follows is a refutation of the third possibility. Rather than contribute to the motion by carrying, the soul should act as having been carried, should, in fact, arrest (scil. the body) instead of moving eternally in a circle. Either the soul will stand still, or if it moves, it will not do so spatially. Thus, whether the soul itself is moved or not, it does not move spatially (though it could be moved in this way when carried, i.e. incidentally).¹⁷ But if it does not move spatially, Plotinus goes on to ask, how can the soul cause spatial motion while it is moved in a different, i.e. a non-spatial, way itself?¹⁸ Perhaps, Plotinus answers, the cyclical motion of the heavens should not be interpreted as a spatial motion—unless (*ἀλλ' ἐι ἄρα*) incidentally.¹⁹

Of what kind is, then, the motion of the heavens? Their motion, says Plotinus, is a motion of self-apprehension, self-thinking and living (and by no means an external motion tending elsewhere),

¹⁵ For this translation of *συνεχής* see O. Neugebauer in *AJPh* 64 (1943) 454.

¹⁶ We are reminded here of Hegel, who says that Spirit may be defined as that which has its center in itself and therefore exists in and with itself, is self-contained existence.

¹⁷ Cf. Arist. *De an.* 1.3.

¹⁸ The possibility that the soul could move incidentally, being carried itself—*συνφέρειν φερόμενη*—is not taken into consideration, probably because if *φερόμενη*, it does not act itself.

¹⁹ With Volkmann I therefore assume a full period after *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*.

and is a motion corresponding to or in virtue of the fact that it must comprehend everything.²⁰

Here, then, Plotinus interprets the celestial motion as a process of self-consciousness or of life that embraces or rules (*περιλαμβάνει*) that which is inside the heavens. In other words, he interprets what is spatial as a mere symbol or outward expression of the unextended. This is an idea which, though going back as far as Plato,²¹ is at the same time a development of Alexander's idea to the effect that circular motion is an imitation of immobility. After having read Plotinus one is almost tempted to translate Alexander's *ὁμοίωσις* and *μίμησις* (both words used by him to describe what the motion of the heavens is aiming at) by "simile," namely a simile of the *νοῦς*. The idea of interpreting the spatial motion of the universe as a symbol is one of the main theses of Plotinus' essay.

Plotinus explains his last words (the circular motion takes place in virtue of the fact that the celestial sphere is all-embracing). The ruling principle always "embraces" the living being ruled by it. Just so, the heavens embrace what is inside of them. Now, a body lives only as long as it moves. Therefore the ruling principle, in order to keep the body alive, must move itself. The same holds true for the celestial sphere. If it is to rule what is inside of it and living, and, therefore, moved, it must be moved itself.

We see how time and again Plotinus tries to interpret the celestial motion symbolically; now, if this motion is spatial only incidentally, it could be, of course, a spiritual (psychic) motion.

But Plotinus once more discusses the possibility of a corporeal motion. The occasion is given by the mention of the "living being." Even assuming that (*εἰ οὖν καί*) its motion is spatial, it will move according to its capacity, that is, not only as a soul would, but also as an animated body and a living being. That means that the motion of a living being is neither purely physical, nor purely psychic; it is just the motion of a living being. Such is also the case with the heavens, for they also are a living being.

It is not difficult to trace this discussion back to Aristotle's *De anima*; but it is even more natural to recognize the combination of

²⁰ I read with Bréhier *καὶ τῷ πάντα δεῖν περιλαμβάνειν*. Here again Hegel offers a parallel. The self-contained existence of the Spirit is interpreted by him as its self-consciousness.

²¹ Tim. 34A (with Bury's note *a.l.* in the Loeb Classical Library) and 47C.

the celestial body with the soul in Julianus, Herminus, and Alexander.

Thus, Plotinus answers his first question (*τίνος ἡ κίνησις*) by saying that the celestial motion is a mixture of a physical with a psychical motion. Still the question remains: What does the soul, and what does the body contribute to this motion? Plotinus' answer is that the body moves by nature in a straight line; the soul constrains the body; and the result of the two is something that moves and rests, *scil.* at the same time.²²

Thus, the celestial motion is a resultant of the natural rectilinear motion of the celestial body and the "constraining" (arresting) force of the soul; hence, the circular motion is a kind of moved standstill. Thus the functions of the soul are not exactly these ascribed to it by Julianus or Herminus, but very similar ones. It does not cause motion, but it redirects it.

It is obvious that the idea of a motion that is rectilinear by nature (which Plotinus introduces at this point) is connected with Aristotle's theory of the motion of the elements. It is obvious also that according to Plotinus the celestial sphere consists not of ether, moving in a circle by nature, but of a stuff that by nature moves in a straight line. This stuff is fire, of course. Now we know that perhaps Plato himself, if he was the author of the *Epinomis* (and most certainly the Academy), gave up his own original doctrine of the four elements in favor of Aristotle's theory of five elements. Shall we, therefore, say that Plotinus' return to Plato's earlier conception is peculiar to him? We can hardly say so, for as we have seen above, Xenarchus had already criticized the ether theory; and what is even more interesting, we meet this kind of criticism also in pre-Plotinian Platonism (or Neoplatonism, if we prefer to call it so). It is Atticus who refutes the ether theory as both un-Platonic and wrong.²³

But Plotinus is ready to discuss the possibility of a purely bodily, and yet circular motion. He first raises an objection: How could the cyclical motion ever be a bodily motion? Does not every

²² My late teacher, H. Gomperz, with whom I discussed this passage, pointed out a certain similarity with Newton's theory of the circular motion as being a resultant of the tangential and gravitational forces.

²³ Atticus in Eus. *PE* 15.804b-806b (18ff. Baudry); cf. A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, p. 223f. For Atticus' place within pre-Plotinian Neoplatonism see f.e. my review of Baudry's edition of his fragments, *Gn* 10 (1934) 263-270 and 336.

body, and therefore also fire, move in a straight line? ²⁴ He meets this objection by saying that a body moves in a straight line until it arrives at the place destined for it (obviously only a circumlocution for the Aristotelian *οἰκέλος τόπος*). According to (its spatial relation to) the place of its destination it either rests by nature or moves (straightforwardly) towards its destined place.

The meaning is that elements move (straightforwardly) only as long as they are not in their "natural" places. This doctrine is, of course, closely connected with Xenarchus' objections against the ether theory. It is obviously this passage in Plotinus that is alluded to by Simplicius when he says ²⁵ that according to Plotinus, Ptolemy, and Xenarchus, the elements move rectilinearly only as long as they are not in their "natural" place, but no longer after they have arrived in their natural place.

Now, how do the elements behave after their arrival in their natural place? Ptolemy, Xenarchus, Plotinus, says Simplicius, ²⁶ maintain that there, they either rest, or move in a circle. As already mentioned, the former holds true for earth, water, and dense air, the latter for fire and thin air. Or to use Xenarchus' words: ²⁷ As long as fire is moved, it is not fire in the proper sense of the word; it becomes true fire only after its arrival in its natural place; and there it rests. But if it should turn out that motion can be attributed to elements even insofar as they are truly elements, which they are after they have arrived in their natural places, fire most certainly would move in a circle.

In other words, Xenarchus tries to attribute to fire the circular motion that, according to Aristotle, was peculiar to ether. This explanation has certain difficulties, and Xenarchus speaks only hesitatingly of the motion of elements within their natural places. It is this difficulty which Plotinus discusses next. He asks why fire does not rest after its arrival in its natural place? Plotinus seems to see two possible explanations. He says that fire, ultimately, must move in a circle either because its nature (i.e. essence) consists in motion, or because it would disperse if it would always move in a straight line.

²⁴ I read with Bréhier . . . *εὐθυπορῶντος <ὡς> καὶ τοῦ πυρός*.

²⁵ *Op. cit.* (note 5) 20, 2.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, 20, 21.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, 22, 3-17. Cf. 42, 10-14.

This is obviously a teleological explanation. Plotinus admits it. And so he continues: Providence has ordained it in such a way that fire, after its arrival in its natural place, moves from itself, i.e. without an external compulsion, in a circle. This is one of the possible explanations. The other, offered by Plotinus as an alternative, has it thus: True, fire tries to move straightforwardly; but when there is no more space left, it turns, as it were, and moves within the space at its disposal; for it has reached the limit and there is no other space beyond. One is almost tempted to express this doctrine in modern terms and say: as space is spherically curved and closed, the rectilinear motion of the fire ultimately becomes a circular motion. Plotinus' doctrine is obviously closely connected with Aristotle's well known assertion that there is no space beyond the heavens.²⁸ And Plotinus summarizes his second explanation by saying: The fire moves, then, where it can move and becomes its own space; it arrives in its natural place²⁹ not in order to rest but rather to move. This is hardly different from Xenarchus' solution. Only, it is combined with the idea of Aristotle that ether is the only element which moves even after its arrival in its natural place.³⁰

Now Plotinus returns to his idea that, after all, the motion of the heavens should be explained as a kind of imitation; and so he starts to prepare the closing sentence of his essay. He says that in a circle, the center naturally is at rest. Should the perimeter also rest, the perimeter itself would become a great center. It seems that what Plotinus means is that with a circle it is only natural for its center to rest while its perimeter moves around the center. Should it be otherwise, the difference between center and perimeter would disappear. If this interpretation is correct the words of Plotinus that follow would mean that it is only natural for a living body too to move around a center—in the sense that for both a circle and a living being the circling *around* a center is the proper way to express their tendency *towards* the center. If the perimeter should express its tendency to become *like* the center by resting, just as the center rests, it would annul its own existence as a perimeter and, as a result, fail to achieve likeness with the center. This idea that the drive towards the center is satisfied best by circling around it, by remaining, therefore, at a distance from it,

²⁸ *De caelo* A9, 279a17.

²⁹ μένῃ <ἐκεῖ> γεγεννημένον.

³⁰ *De caelo* A9, 279b1.

finds its counterpart in Alexander. The force motivating the motion of the heavens is desire. The object of this desire is the supreme being. But this desire would not be satisfied by "getting" the supreme being; it is satisfied by imitating it and the imitation of the unmoved, supreme being consists just in motion.³¹

To be sure, Plotinus speaks of the *center* of a circle; Alexander of the unmoved mover who is outside of the universe and not its center; but still both try to prove that just by not becoming something you may imitate this something (for example by not coming to rest you may imitate something unmoved). This holds true whenever, by *becoming* something else, the thing that tried to imitate would annul itself. For the heavens, the appropriate way of imitating the unmoved is to move in a circle, not to stand still, and this idea is common to both Alexander and Plotinus. Soon this idea will develop into the characteristic Neoplatonic doctrine that the finite receives the fullness of the infinite according to its (the finite's) own mode of being.³²

This is the end of Plotinus' discussion of the question whether the motion of the heavens should be interpreted as physical or else as psychical. As we have seen, he admits both possibilities; in particular he admits the concept of a soul that originates motion. But if so, he has to meet a characteristic Aristotelian argument. Not only in the *De anima*,³³ but, strangely enough, also in the *De caelo*,³⁴ Aristotle objects to Plato's theory that soul is the ultimate source of motion by saying that a moving soul would be tantamount to a laboring, and therefore unhappy, soul. This certainly is strange in view of the fact that, in the *De caelo*, Aristotle himself speaks of the soul as originating celestial motion. Here is the way in which Plotinus meets Aristotle's argument: A moving soul, says he, would not become tired of causing motion because the way in which the soul causes motion is not a kind of pulling, and not unnatural, for "nature" is just that which is subordinated to the universal soul.

In my critical study of Walzer's *Aristotelis dialogorum fragmenta* I described the three most characteristic interpretations of Aristotle's arguments by ancient commentators. In some passages Aristotle

³¹ *Quaestiones* 1.25, 40, 17-21.

³² Cf. Porphyry. *Sent.* 30.38.

³³ 407b1-12.

³⁴ Cf. note 4; *De caelo* B1,284a27.

contradicts the idea of a moving soul, in some others he himself teaches the very same idea. How is it possible to reconcile this contradiction? Simplicius gave a very acceptable answer—an answer which is given even today by scholars who do not feel that they should explain this contradiction as the effect of Aristotle's development.³⁵ This answer reads that Aristotle refutes only a *mechanistic* action (ὠθισμός) of the soul on the heavenly bodies, while he admits another, an untiring kind of action. We see that, essentially, Simplicius' answer is to be found already in Plotinus, the whole difference being that Plotinus rejects a *ἐλκεῖν*, while Simplicius rejects an *ὠθεῖν*, and that Simplicius tries to prove that there is no contradiction in Aristotle, while Plotinus is interested rather in defending Plato against Aristotle.

What follows in Plotinus' essay is a profound explanation of the cyclical motion of the heavens as a spatial equivalent of the non-spatial ubiquity of the soul. The soul that is everywhere without becoming divided bestows, by this fact, upon the heavens that kind of ubiquity of which the spatial heavens are capable: its all-embracing motion. Because the soul is in no definite place, the heavens too can not stay in a definite place. In other words, permanent motion and, thus, nowhere-ness of this kind, is the spatial equivalent of the non-spatial nowhere-ness of the unextended soul. Plotinus expresses the same idea also by saying that the soul, embracing the heavens, makes them move toward itself; and by moving in a circle the heavens participate in the soul everywhere. Because the soul has no determinate place, the heavens will move everywhere; and because the soul is everywhere (just because it is nowhere), the heavens can not move outside of it, and therefore they move in a circle (which holds true, says Plotinus, only for the universe, because the universe is, as it were, its own space, but not for parts of the universe, such as man).

But if the soul is everywhere, should this not arrest the heavens rather than move them? Plotinus refutes this objection by saying in effect: True, the heavens "have" the soul everywhere; but the point is just this: because of its ubiquity the soul is not only there³⁶ where the heavens just happen to "have" it, and accordingly, to have it everywhere, the heavens must move.

³⁵ Cf. *PhW* 58 (1938) 68f., and W. K. C. Guthrie in the Introduction to Aristotle, *On the Heavens* (The Loeb Classical Library), p. xxix, note *a*.

³⁶ Read ἐκεῖ.

The next section is extremely difficult. Plotinus tries to prove that the single souls (i.e. the soul of the universe—to be distinguished in Plotinus' system from the soul as a hypostasis, and, thus, a sphere of being rather than a being—, and the individual souls) also move in circles around God, their center; and just as the heavens by their motion participate in the soul, so the soul circling around God is unable to be "to him," i.e. to become God, but is "around him," thus becoming God according to its capacity. But if this is true, asks Plotinus, if every soul circles around God, why do not our bodies move in circles also?

Plotinus answers that *our* bodies are moved not only by our soul's desire for God; they are moved also by other forces which cause a rectilinear motion. Besides, even the spherically shaped parts of our bodies (which, one would think, would easily be moved in a circle by the circling soul) are not perfect spheres, because they are of earthly stuff. But the celestial sphere consists of a stuff which does not offer any resistance to the soul. And, perhaps, our *πνεῦμα* has a quality similar to the quality of the celestial stuff and, perhaps, our *πνεῦμα* actually is moved by the soul in a circle.

Thus, the fact that our bodies do not move in circles does not disprove the doctrine that our souls move in circles. And Plotinus, transferring his interpretation of the relation between the universe and the soul to the relation between soul and God, adds: That the soul must circle around God is caused by the fact that God has no determinate place.

So our bodies do not move in a circle; but the celestial bodies, particularly the stars, do. This, as taught by Plato, is simply an expression of the fact that every individual soul strives toward God as, therefore, do the souls of the stars also; the circular motion is simply an expression of the love for God. True, it is a kind of love expressing itself not *λογισμῶ* but *φυσικαῖς ἀνάγκαις*, which we could interpret as meaning: not by knowing but by natural necessity, i.e. not consciously but unconsciously.³⁷

What follows is once more an attempt to interpret the motion of souls and spheres as a consequence of the non-spatial ubiquity of

³⁷ The similarity with Schelling is unmistakable. The "reasonableness" of the forms of nature is for Schelling the objective, i.e. unconscious *modus*, of the existence of reason. Only in us reason exists subjectively, i.e. as understanding. In Hegel's terms: the "reasonableness" of nature is reason in its self-alienation. Applying this terminology to Plotinus we could say that the motion of the stars is the objective *modus* of existence of love—or love in its self-alienation.

God. The last words of the essay have been quoted above and we have seen that they hark back to Alexander.

In his biography of Plotinus Porphyry describes³⁸ how Plotinus used the commentaries of Severus, Cronius, Numenius, Gaius, Atticus, Aspasius, Alexander, and Adrastus as a starting point for his profound speculations. An analysis of *Enneads* 2.2 in the way attempted in the present paper is an illustration of Porphyry's report. At the same time, it reminds us that the still unsettled quest for Plotinus' spiritual ancestry must not overlook such second and third rate philosophers as the ones enumerated by Porphyry. Cumont looked among Egyptian mystery cults; Bréhier was convinced that Plotinus' system had its roots in Indian philosophy. Jaeger turned our attention to Posidonius; Heinemann and Good-enough to Philo. But it seems that Plotinus is indebted very much to Greek philosophy as it existed in the second and third centuries. Perhaps, even as far as Plato and Aristotle are concerned, it is more important to know how they were interpreted in Plotinus' time, than what they "really" had said. Theiler, Bréhier in the notes accompanying his Plotinus translation—much more than in his book on Plotinus—, partly also A. H. Armstrong, have done much to further our understanding of Plotinus by discussing tenets and problems of Plotinus' contemporaries and immediate predecessors. Much remains to be done in this direction; the present paper has tried to do at least a little.

³⁸ *Vita Plotini* 14.