

PORPHYRY'S PLACE IN
THE NEOPLATONIC TRADITION

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IN THE
NEOPLATONIC TRADITION

A STUDY IN
POST-PLOTINIAN NEOPLATONISM

by

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To Joan and Helen

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PREFACE

This book is a slightly emended version of a dissertation presented at the University of Hull in 1972. I realise only too well the deficiencies of style, presentation and material which this involves. The title implies a more final note than I had intended in my treatment of Porphyry. On reflexion, however, it seemed the most suited to convey the general purpose of my enquiries. A more rounded assessment of Porphyry can come only after some more basic work has been completed. An edition of his philosophical fragments, to which I am now turning my attention, is a prerequisite.

I owe, of course, a great deal to all those who have written on Neoplatonism. I am particularly indebted to Prof. Willy Theiler under whose guidance I studied in Bern. Conversation with him always resulted in new directions of enquiry and I was constantly stimulated by his breadth of knowledge. I must also thank Prof. A. H. Armstrong who has constantly encouraged me and helped me to look more deeply into a number of problems. Welcome, too, was a detailed criticism of Part Two by Dr. R. T. Wallis. Their criticism and advice have not always been followed and the responsibility for the faults and weaknesses of this book rests on myself.

My thanks are due also to my supervisors Dr. C. W. Chilton and J. C. G. Strachan who displayed remarkable patience and were a great source of sensible advice to me throughout my work. To Prof. A. F. Norman whose general advice and practical help in presentation are deeply appreciated. To Prof Margaret Heavey who has helped to check proofs and has encouraged and assisted the publication of this book in many practical ways. Finally to my wife who has helped at every stage and especially in typing large parts of the manuscript, correcting style and checking proofs.

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January 1974

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ABBREVIATIONS

For details see bibliography.

Bidez	<i>Vie de Porphyre</i> J. Bidez.
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> .
CR	<i>Classical Review</i> .
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> .
Kroll	<i>De Oraculis Chaldaicis</i> ed. W. Kroll.
Lewy	<i>Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy</i> H. Lewy.
LSJ	<i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> Liddell and Scott, 9th ed. revised H. S. Jones, Oxford 1940.
REG	<i>Revue des Études grecques</i> .
Révélation	<i>La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste</i> A. J. Festugière.
Rh.Mus.	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i> .
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> ed. H. von Arnim.

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INTRODUCTION

Porphyry, who was born some twenty-eight years after Plotinus in 232–3 A.D. and probably about twenty years before Iamblichus,¹ occupies in many ways a unique position in the history of Greek philosophy. He stands at the end of the final creative phase of Greek thought which culminates in Plotinus and at the beginning of that, at times brilliant but relatively unoriginal, period of later Neoplatonism whose main distinction seems to many to have been the sacrifice of genuine Greek rationalism to occult magico-religious practices which were meant to secure the salvation of the soul. He stands also geographically between east and west, a Greek speaker who lived for a good part of his active life at or near Rome. This fact is of no little importance when we realise that the Roman empire was being split down the centre even in his own lifetime. It is probable that the division of the Empire which culminated in the transfer of the capital to Constantinople in 330 was one factor which helped to make Porphyry so influential in the west whilst Iamblichus and Proclus are virtually unknown.² Fortunately the last of the Greek philosophers who is extensively known in the west was a great polymath and an excellent exponent of the complex doctrines of Neoplatonism. The researches of P. Courcelle³ have shown the pervading influence of this philosopher on the pagan and Christian writers of the Latin west.

¹ Plotinus was born in A.D. 204–5. Porphyry tells us in the *Life* (ch. 2) that he died at the end of the second year of the reign of Claudius (i.e. 270 A.D.) as the age of 66. Porphyry was born in 232–3. In ch. 4 of the *Life* Porphyry tells us he was thirty years old in the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus (i.e. A.D. 263) and Plotinus was fifty-nine. He probably died shortly before 305, see Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, p. 127. Iamblichus' dates are uncertain. He may have been born between A.D. 250–275. Bidez ("Le Philosophe Iamblique et son école," p. 32) puts his death in A.D. 328 at the latest and probably around 325/6.

² See Dörrie, "Porphyrios als Mittler zwischen Plotin und Augustin."

³ P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident*, Paris, 1948.

J. Bidez was the first to write a detailed study of Porphyry – *Vie de Porphyre*, 1913. But he admits that “dans tout ce qui nous reste de ses écrits, il n’y a pas une pensée, pas une image dont on puisse affirmer à coup sûr qu’elle est de lui.”⁴ This assessment is echoed by E. R. Dodds⁵ who quotes Bidez’s judgement with approval. Unfortunately little is left of Porphyry’s massive output, which makes final conclusions hazardous. On the other hand it is possible to trace much of Porphyry’s thought from authors whom he influenced. Although this can sometimes be an extremely dubious procedure there are occasions when a more direct use of Porphyrian ideas can be discerned and a reasonable attempt at reconstruction can be made. H. Dörrie has recently extracted the remains of Porphyry’s *Symmikta Zetemata* from Nemesius’ *de Natura Hominis*.⁶ The results seem to modify the idea of a totally unoriginal thinker, since Porphyry is here shown adapting Stoic terminology to Neoplatonic arguments on the relationship of soul and body in a way which is not paralleled in Plotinus’ *Enneads*. A far more revolutionary picture, however, emerges from P. Hadot’s ascription to Porphyry of an anonymous Neoplatonic commentary on Plato’s *Parmenides*. This work has some startling things to say about the higher reaches of metaphysics – the relationship of the One to Nous. Hadot’s contention was first published in an article in 1961. The consequences for Porphyrian metaphysics were drawn in his contribution to the Vandoeuvres conference dedicated to Porphyry in 1965 and are now exhaustively treated in *Porphyre et Victorinus*.⁷ Whether Hadot is correct in ascribing the *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides* to Porphyry is difficult to say. His arguments are very persuasive and as certain as the evidence allows. But they are not absolutely certain. As scholars reassess the evidence a general consensus may arise and the *Anonymous Commentary* become accepted in the Porphyrian corpus much as the *de Mysteriorum* is now ascribed to Iamblichus. If Hadot is correct then we have a new insight into Porphyry’s metaphysics the study of which has long been obscured through paucity of evidence. The traditional Porphyrian corpus is concerned more with ethics, logic, the soul and daemonology. Unfortunately the *Anonymous Commentary* casts little light on the old material in these fields. Hadot notes this

⁴ *Vie de Porphyre*, p. 133.

⁵ Article “*Porphyry*” in the Oxford Classical Dictionary.

⁶ *Porphyrios’ “Symmikta Zetemata.”*

⁷ “Fragments d’un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide,” REG 74 (1961) 410–438; “La Métaphysique de Porphyre,” *Entretiens sur l’Antiquité classique*, xii *Porphyre*, 1966; *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Paris, 1968.

when he admits the difficulty of comparing the Commentary with the attested works of Porphyry. "La plupart des oeuvres conservées concernent la psychologie ou la morale et n'abordent pas pour la plupart les sujets traités dans notre commentaire."⁸

A similar state of uncertainty now attaches to the *Philosophy from Oracles* and the *de Regressu Animae*. J. O'Meara has contended that these two works are identical and that the one single work was probably late in date. Although the argument of his first book *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* has been generally rejected a recent supplement seems to open up the question again.⁹

Porphyrian studies have now reached a crisis point. General dogmatic assertions and generalisations are no longer acceptable or even possible. A further period of detailed research is required before any final assessment of Porphyry's place in the Neoplatonic tradition can be made. A collection of Porphyry's fragments is long overdue and is essential for further investigation. In this present work no attempt has been made to cover every facet of Porphyry's thought. On the contrary it is considerably limited in scope and represents no more than a small contribution to the picture although I have attempted in the conclusion to generalise on the basis of the particular topics with which I have dealt. I have chosen to deal with the traditional corpus and with what is, perhaps, its major theme – the ascent and salvation of the soul. Porphyry's search for the salvation of the soul led him from a consideration of the nature of the soul to an attempt to find a universal teaching on salvation which could even embrace the magico-religious practice of theurgy. It is some basic aspects of this theme that I propose to follow by examining Porphyry's ideas in the context of what went before and what came after. This means, within the limits here set, Plotinus, Iamblichus and Proclus.

In the first half of the work I have attempted to show something of the relationship between Porphyry and Plotinus in their speculations about the human soul, both concerning its essential nature and the way in which it can be said to "ascend." I would not like to underestimate the middle-Platonic and Stoic influences on Porphyry¹⁰ but it is equally

⁸ Art. cit. p. 421.

⁹ *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine, Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Eusebius's Praeparatio Evangelica and Augustine's Dialogue of Cassiciacum.*

¹⁰ Porphyry and middle Platonism: see Dörrie, "Die Schultradition im Mittelplatonismus," (*Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique, xii Porphyre*); Waszink, "Porphyrius und Numenius" (*ibid.*). Porphyry and the Stoics, see Dörrie *Porphyrios' "Symmiktia Zetemata."*

important to remember that Plotinus was the greatest influence on him. I hope to show how Porphyry's doctrine of the nature of soul (in some of its aspects at least) can be understood only in a Plotinian context. The problems connected with the "separation" of soul and body in the soul's "ascent," are also important. What does "separation" mean? Do Porphyry and Plotinus mean the same thing? The ascent of the soul raises basic problems in Plotinus. Are they also present in Porphyry? Finally we turn to their attitude to the fate of man after death. The attitude to man's purpose and destiny is especially brought out in the general teaching on eschatology. What is essential to Plotinus here and how does Porphyry's position differ from it?

Almost at the opposite extreme to the deep philosophical problems in which Porphyry comes face to face with Plotinus is the concern for religious phenomena of all kinds which have or might have a bearing on the salvation of the soul. To understand Porphyry's attitude here it seems to be essential to see him in the light of subsequent thinkers for we are dealing by all accounts with the development of a theory which only later came to full fruition – the introduction of theurgy to philosophy and its consequent integration. It is not possible to *judge* adequately Porphyry's stance without taking into consideration the views of those who attempted to carry this integration much further than Porphyry had done.

Before entering on the discussion proper it might be useful to say something about Porphyry's personal relationship with Plotinus and of the attitude of the later Neoplatonists to him. The details of Porphyry's life and his time with Plotinus are dealt with by Bidez. Porphyry reached Plotinus at a fairly late stage after studies in Athens under Longinus. In his *Life of Plotinus* Porphyry has occasion to give us some idea of how he conceived of his relationship to Plotinus. One has the impression that he is trying to demonstrate his special position in Plotinus' circle of which he was one of the newer members. This is, perhaps, what we might expect of an editor who is anxious to secure his credentials, and the *Life* is a preface to an edition of the *Enneads*.¹¹ On the other hand this tendency in the *Life* might have wider implications. Porphyry tells us (ch. 15, *Life*) that he once read a poem called "The Sacred Marriage" at the feast of Plato. Someone in the audience

¹¹ This may have been important if Porphyry had rivals. There was certainly an earlier edition of the *Enneads* by Eustochius, another of Plotinus' pupils. The evidence is in the scholiast to iv, 4, 29 end. A passage of the *Enneads* quoted in Eusebius *P.E.* XV, 10 and 22 may be part of this early edition. See further the remarks in Henry-Schwyzzer vol. I, p. ix f., vol. II ix f.

shouted out that Porphyry must have gone mad as it was full of “the mysterious and veiled language of inspiration.” Plotinus’ reply “You have shown yourself at once poet, philosopher and expounder of sacred mysteries” was cherished by Porphyry as a vindication of his standpoint. But the passage suggests less the enthusiasm of Plotinus than his broadminded tolerance towards such extravagances. Was the reporting of this episode meant to secure the stamp of the master’s approval on the more un-Plotinian of Porphyry’s activities – Homeric exegesis, dabbling in oracles and eventually theurgy?

This little story might be taken in itself as no more than a mere anecdote. Combined, however, with the other indications that he wants to be known as having held a special place in Plotinus’ circle it is clearly more than just that. Porphyry was once asked by Plotinus to write a refutation of a scandalous interpretation of the *Symposium* by the rhetorician Diophanes. He tells us that Plotinus was so pleased with his effort that he kept on quoting *Iliad* 8.282

βᾶλλ’ οὕτως, αἴ κέν τι φέως ἄνδρεσσι γένηται

So strike and be a light to men (ch. 15).

There are two points to this incident. Porphyry wants firstly to remove Plotinus from the ranks of those who bring philosophy into disrepute by using the great master to support dishonest and licentious ideas and, secondly, to stress that it was he, Porphyry, who was chosen by Plotinus to defend philosophy and be a “light.” He again stresses his special position in the school when he refers to his editorial duties (ch. 24) as being not a self-imposed task but one commissioned by Plotinus. In ch. 21 he refers us to Longinus’ comments on contemporary philosophers. This is the report on Amelius, that veteran of Plotinus’ school. κατ’ ἔχνη μὲν τοῦ Πλωτίνου ἐβάδιζε, τῇ δὲ ἐξεργασία πολὺς ὦν καὶ τῇ τῆς ἐρμηνείας περιβολῇ πρὸς τὸν ἐναντίον ἐκείνῳ ζῆλον ὑπήγετο. Then he comes to Longinus’ reference to himself. It is in fact a rather weak recommendation. ὁ δὲ κοινὸς ἡμῶν τε κάκεινων ἐταῖρος Βασιλεὺς ὁ Τύριος οὐδ’ αὐτὸς ὀλίγα πεπραγματευόμενος κατὰ τὴν Πλωτίνου μίμησιν. But notice how Porphyry interprets it. He firstly prepares the ground for the general nature of the reference by saying that it was written when he had only just got to know Plotinus ἐτι ἀρχὰς ἔχοντος τῆς πρὸς τὸν Πλωτῖνον συνουσίας, and he goes on to interpret Longinus as suggesting that he was nearer Plotinus because he avoided τῆς Ἀμελίου περιβολῆς τὸ ἀφιλόσοφον... καὶ πρὸς ζῆλον τὸν Πλωτίνου γράφων ἀφεώρων. When we recall that Amelius was one of Plotinus’ oldest and most revered associates we see Porphyry’s point. Porphyry

also levels an implied criticism against Amelius in ch. 4 and at the same time records his own influence over Plotinus. Here he says that although Amelius had been with Plotinus for eighteen years he had not written much except notebooks. Plotinus he found in a similar position and in ch. 5 he records that Amelius and himself kept urging him to write. Porphyry is trying to impress upon the reader the impact of his presence at the school of Plotinus. If Amelius had not written much it is unlikely that he would have persuaded Plotinus to write. With his own arrival a new dynamism is introduced and he gets Amelius on his side in pressing Plotinus. At the end of ch. 18 he again refers to his influence in coaxing Amelius and Plotinus to write proper treatises.

If Porphyry wanted to be known as the chief pupil and closest associate of Plotinus this did not mean that he followed Plotinus slavishly. It is true that he shows great admiration for Plotinus throughout the *Life* and even regards him as divinely inspired¹² but, unlike Marinus in his biography of Proclus, he also criticises the work and methods of his master. He even claims that Plotinus' powers were failing in the last treatises. He also criticises the waste of time in lectures caused by aimless questions (ch. 3). His criticism of small points derives, no doubt, from his own thoroughness. This thoroughness expresses itself in his scholarly interest in the history of philosophy, the search for a universal philosophy of salvation and his work on Platonic commentary which was held in high esteem by Proclus.¹³ It manifests itself in the *Life* in his criticism of Amelius (ch. 7) who always used to get the name of Paulinus of Scythopolis wrong, in his accusation of lack of order in Plotinus' seminars and the comments on Plotinus' carelessness in speech and writing.¹⁴ He admired Plotinus' thoroughness in philosophical discussion (ch. 13 end) and although he may have shared Plotinus' view that Longinus was no philosopher he values his judgement for its fullness of background and erudite scholarship (ch. 20). Again in this criticism of Plotinus Porphyry might be trying to show his own importance.

In Eunapius' *Life of Porphyry* IV. 1.10 we are told that Porphyry

¹² On this see below p. 104.

¹³ "*The history of philosophy*" in four books (fragments in Nauck, op. select. *The Life of Pythagoras* (also in Nauck) may also have formed a part of it.) On universal salvation see ch. ix. A list of Porphyry's commentaries may be found in Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre* 65*-67*. For Proclus' appreciation, cf. *In Rem.* ii. 96, 13.

¹⁴ He records that Plotinus used to pronounce ἀναμνησκειται as ἀναμνημισκεται and made other mistakes in his writing (ch. 13). He criticises his untidy handwriting in ch. 8.

was a good and clear exponent of Plotinus. Eunapius also tells us that when Porphyry returned to Rome after his stay in Sicily he even lectured in public – *παρήει καὶ εἰς τὸ δημόσιον κατ' ἐπίδειξιν*. Even if Eunapius' testimony is rather dubious in Porphyry's case,¹⁵ this outward-going trait is clearly characteristic of Porphyry and balances Plotinus' more reserved nature. I do not mean to imply that he did not have the recluse within him. In fact at times (e.g. his retirement to Sicily) he is more extreme than Plotinus. He is a man of contradictions. But he does seem to have been more involved in the outside world than Plotinus was. His editorial work is an example of this. He wanted to record and publish Plotinus' ideas. His later marriage is also a concession to the world as is his mysterious journey to the East.¹⁶ Philosophically his greater involvement in the world shows itself in his interest in a universal way of salvation which might include all men, and in his direct clash with Christianity.¹⁷

When we look forward in time the picture is not so clear. It is still uncertain whether Iamblichus was ever an actual pupil of Porphyry or had simply studied his works.¹⁸ Nor is it completely clear whether

¹⁵ In his life of Porphyry he seems to rely greatly on Porphyry's letter to Marcella. His account of Plotinus visiting Porphyry in Sicily where he had retired in despair (*V. Soph.* iv. 1.7, 456) is rather fanciful and contradicts Porphyry's own account of the incident (*Life* ch. 11), which makes it clear that he was persuaded by Plotinus to go to Sicily as a *cure* for his melancholy.

¹⁶ For the marriage, see *Ad Marcellam* ch. 1, and for the journey, ch. 4, p. 275, 19. Cf. H. Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus*, 142f., and Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, p. 112, who consider that Porphyry was involved in the discussions which preceded the persecution of Diocletian in the edict of A.D. 303.

¹⁷ *Against the Christians* – frags. ed. A. Harnack, 1916, *Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. kl. 1916, 1 (additions in *ibid.*, Sitzungsberichte, 1921, i. 266–84 and ii. 834f.); Hagedorn, D. and Merkelbach, R., *Ein neues Fragment aus Porphyrios Gegen die Christen*. V. Chr. XX, 1966, 86–90; Altheim, F. and Stiehl, R., *Neue Brückstücke aus Porphyrios' κατὰ χριστιάνους*, Gedanschrift Rohde, 23–38; P. Nautin, *Trois autres fragments du livre du Porphyre contre les chrétiens*, R. Bibl. LVII, 1950, 409–416; cf. also P. de Labriolle, *Porphyre et le christianisme*, R.H. Ph. III, 1929, p. 385–440; Schraeder, H. O., *Celsus und Porphyrius als Christengegner*, W.G. xvii, 1957, 190–202; Benoit, P., *Un adversaire du christianisme au III^e siècle, Porphyre*, R. Bibl. 1947, 543–572.

¹⁸ The evidence is Eunapius, *V. Soph.* V. 1.3, 458 εἶτα μετ' Ἀνατόλιον Πορφυρίῳ προσθεὶς ἑαυτὸν. This might simply mean that he had read Porphyry's works but *προστίθημι* seems to imply more than this. That Porphyry addressed the treatise *περὶ τοῦ γνῶθι σεαυτὸν* to Iamblichus (cf. *Stob.* III. 579, 21) implies a reciprocal relationship of some kind even if it does not prove that Iamblichus had ever been a formal pupil of Porphyry. Dillon in his edition of the fragments of Iamblichus' Platonic commentaries adds *Stob.* I. 375, 24 ὡς δ' ἐγὼ τινῶν ἀκήκοα Πλατωνικῶν, οἷον Πορφυρίου καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν. See his remarks about ἀκούω p. 10 n 4. Dillon gives the impression that Iamblichus did study under Porphyry in Rome. I think we can only say that he might have studied under him.

Porphyry had a school of his own.¹⁹ Iamblichus appears in general as an opponent of Porphyry.²⁰ It has recently been claimed that not all of Iamblichus' opposition is philosophically serious, that he is often simply trying to become independent of Porphyry.²¹ In the points, however, which are analysed in this work there would appear to be genuine and profound differences between the two philosophers and one would not be inclined to disagree with Proclus' conventional reference to ὁ φιλόσοφος Πορφύριος and ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος.²² Between Plotinus and Iamblichus Neoplatonism seems in some important respects to have changed in emphasis from philosophy to theology. There are certain qualifications but, whilst it remains incorrect to call Plotinus a theologian one could not deny the term to Iamblichus in *de Mysteriorum*. The very term appears even in the titles of important works by Proclus.²³ While that need mean little in itself for the later Neoplatonists it is the outward sign of an important revolution in their concept of the relationship of man and god. What role did Porphyry play in this change? We hope to discover something of his attitude and contribution as we follow his own thought from the metaphysical doctrine of the human soul to the consideration of theurgical rites in the context of man's salvation.

¹⁹ There is no direct evidence that Porphyry maintained or was head of a school like that of Plotinus. On the other hand he would seem to have had pupils although they are mostly just names to us. For a list of pupils, see Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, p. 104f.; cf. also Procl. *In Tim.* iii. 234, 18, οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον and the same phrase in Iamblichus, *Stob.* I. 370, 5f. where Plotinus is added, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πορφύριον καὶ Πλωτῖνον.

²⁰ In *Stob.* I. 365, *de Myst.* passim, and esp. in Proclus, *In Tim.* i. 307, 15, ὁ θεῖος Ἰάμβλιχος πολλὰ μὲν ἀντιγράψας πρὸς τὴν Πορφυρίου δόξαν: cf. *ibid.*; 24, 12f., ii. 306, 2f.

²¹ H. Dörrie, *Kontroversen um die Seelenwanderung*, p. 429.

²² e.g. *In Tim.* I, 77, 22f.; cf. also David, *In Porphyrii Isagogen* p. 92, 3 Busse, quoting an oracle, Ἐνθους ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος, φιλομαθὴς ὁ φοῖνιξ; and further, Bidez, *art. cit.* p. 37. It would be more correct, perhaps, to call Iamblichus a priest rather than theologian. See Olympiodorus' famous comment *In Phaedonem* p. 123, 3 "Οτι οἱ μὲν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν προτιμῶσι, ὡς Πορφύριος καὶ Πλωτῖνος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φιλόσοφοι οἱ δὲ τὴν ἱερατικὴν, ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος, καὶ Συριανὸς καὶ Πρόκλος καὶ οἱ ἱερατικοὶ πάντες. I retain the term "theologian" in order to express the particular contribution of these late Neoplatonists in presenting an amalgam of religious practice and natural theology (philosophy).

²³ e.g. *Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, περὶ τῆς κατὰ Πλάτωνα θεολογίας*.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

SOUL'S CONNECTION WITH THE BODY

In chapter thirteen of the “Life of Plotinus” Porphyry records that he spent three successive days questioning Plotinus about the soul’s connection with the body – πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι. He does not tell us whether he was satisfied with Plotinus’ answers or whether he came himself to any definite conclusions but the question was evidently an important one for him as is also shown by the attention he gave to it in his other works.¹ In this chapter we will explore some of his remarks about the connection of soul with the body, giving special attention to the Plotinian background – a procedure which might enable us to gain some insight into the content of that marathon discussion. This will serve as a preamble to a number of important problems concerning the soul which will form the subject of the first half of this work. We will begin in this chapter with a study of the soul itself and will move on to consider the soul in the context of spiritual and moral life in the later chapters.

In *Sententiae* iii and iv Porphyry talks about the presence of τὰ καθ’ αὐτὰ ἄσώματα in bodies. I think it legitimate here to understand the remarks he makes in the context of the relationship of soul and body. *Sent.* iv is particularly important. τὰ καθ’ αὐτὰ ἄσώματα ὑποστάσει μὲν καὶ οὐσίᾳ οὐ πάρεστιν οὐδὲ συγκίρνεται τοῖς σώμασι, τῇ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ῥοπῆς ὑποστάσει τινὸς δυνάμεως μεταδίδωσι προσεχοῦς τοῖς σώμασι· ἡ γὰρ ῥοπή δευτέραν τινὰ δύναμιν ὑπέστησε προσεχῇ τοῖς σώμασιν.² Soul is not present

¹ See appendix I.

² Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. i, p. 401, translates, “Les incorporels ne sont pas présents aux corps et ne se mêlent pas à eux par leur hypostase et substance. Mais ils se communiquent à eux en produisant une certaine puissance contiguë aux corps car leur inclination vers les corps a produit une certaine puissance qui vient à leur suite et qui est contiguë aux corps”. For the term ῥοπή, cf. Dörrie, *Symmikta Zetemata*, p. 88. It is difficult to decide whether this term implies an act of will on the part of soul or the inevitability of soul’s fall as something built into its nature. Dörrie senses the two meanings (*loc. cit.*). Porphyry in Eusebius *P.E.* 15, 11: 813a identifies ῥοπαί of soul with βουλαί τε καὶ σκέψεις καὶ θελήσεις. But the term can imply a natural propensity, cf. Plot. ii. 1.3, 22.

ὑποστάσει and οὐσίᾳ but by the projection of a certain δύναμις which can come into relationship with a body. Clearly Porphyry is attempting to account for the presence of the soul in the body whilst preserving intact its essential nature as an independent incorporeal entity – a point which emerges in a slightly different context in *Sent.* xxxvii, p. 33, 3. οὐδὲ σῶμα συνεμπεσὸν ἀποκόπτει τὴν ἔνωσιν, καίπερ πρὸς τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐν πολλοῖς ἐμποδίζον. Here he means that body does not destroy the unity or ἔνωσις which exists between all souls in the hypostasis Soul. The ἔνωσις of essential soul (as opposed to its external δύναμις) within Soul³ is thus preserved on embodiment. The soul itself is not split into parts when embodied. In this sense it is not present οὐσίᾳ as is claimed in *Sent.* iv. What is present (and hence adapted when it meets body) is the ἐνέργεια or ἐνέργειαι of soul. These ἐνέργειαι are quite clearly related to the secondary δύναμις of *Sent.* iv.

In *Sent.* xxviii, p. 12, 13 δύναμις appears in the plural – ἀλλ' αὐτὸ (sc. τὸ ἀσώματον) δεῖ ὑποστῆσαι δυνάμεις ῥεπούσας ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐνώσεως εἰς τὸ ἔξω, αἷς δὲ κατιὸν συμπλέκεται τῷ σώματι. It is clear from this that any talk of the 'descent of the soul' (κατιὸν above) must strictly refer to the derived δυνάμεις of the soul and not to the soul itself. There is a difficulty here. In *Sent.* xxviii Porphyry says that there is a loss of ἔνωσις when soul descends to body while in *Sent.* xxxvii he denies any such loss of ἔνωσις. In *Sent.* xxviii the presence of soul in body is seen as a sort of extension or weakening of soul (ἐκτάσεως . . . ἀρρήτου). This evident contradiction between *Sent.* xxviii and xxxvii is seen even within xxxvii itself where Porphyry also says that soul, when embodied, diminishes in power (p. 33, 18 τῆς οἰκειᾶς δυνάμεως κένωσιν). We must, however, remember that the loss of ἔνωσις strictly refers to the pluralised external powers rather than to the soul itself. This rather loose application of the concept of grades of reality which progressively decrease in power, unity and goodness is quite common in Neoplatonism.⁴

Although Porphyry definitely rejects the Numenian idea of a double soul⁵ he would admit a certain duality in soul – soul itself and its immanent power which alone can be related to body. In a fragment preserved in *Stobaeus* 1.354, 4f. he tells us that nothing prevents body from re-

³ On the complex distinction between the hypostasis Soul, World-Soul and individual souls, see below ch. Two, p. 30f. and H. Blumenthal "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus."

⁴ See below ch. Two, p. 29.

⁵ Cf. Porph. in *Stob.* I, 350, 25f.

ceiving μεριστῶς the ἐνδόσεις τῶν ἐνεργείων of the 'indivisible' soul ⁶ (that is the essential soul) which 'is divisible' into parts only through the presence of its external power in body – αἱ ζωτικαὶ ἐνέργειαι κατὰ ψυχῆς ἐνδοσιν δεχόμεναι τὴν εἰς μέρη τῶν διαφόρων ἐνεργείων κατὰταξιν καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τὸ μέρη ἔχειν προσανέθεσαν. καὶ μήποτε διττῶς ἐπινουμένης τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἐχούσης τὴν ζωὴν, τὴν τε καθ' αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν κατὰ σχέσιν, ἐν τῇ κατὰ σχέσιν ζωῇ ὑφίσταται τὰ μέρη . . . οὕτω καὶ ψυχῇ ἀμερίστῳ οὕσῃ ἐν τῇ σπορᾷ παρυφίσταται τὰ μέρη.⁷ Notice the expression for these powers – αἱ ζωτικαὶ ἐνέργειαι and the idea of a double ζωή, a life of the soul itself and a related life (i.e. related to body), which we might term the soul's external life. Cf. also *Stob.* I.370, 8. τὰς ζωὰς τὰς ὁπωσοῦν πορβληθείσας. ζωή would seem to be an equivalent of ἐνέργεια, cf. *Sent.* xxiii, p. 10, II τὰ πάθη ζωαί, which is similar to *Sent.* xviii, p. 6, 5 τὰ πάθη ἐνέργειαι.

Although δύναμις and ἐνέργεια appear to be used somewhat indiscriminately Porphyry does distinguish the two terms in a psychological context at *Stob.* I.352, II – δύναμις δὲ τῆς κατασκευῆς ἕξις ἀφ' ἧς ἐνεργεῖν δύναται. Thus δύναμις represents the existence of a faculty whilst ἐνέργεια stresses its activity. The same distinction may be observed in *Sent.* xli, p. 40, 6 – αἱ μὲν αἰσθητικαὶ δυνάμεις διὰ σώματος κέκτηνται τὸ ἐνεργεῖν. This definition suggests that the presence of soul in body, as described in the *Sententiae*, may be seen both as the static presence of a faculty (δύναμις) and as the activity of that faculty

⁶ Indivisible soul cf. *Enn.* iv. 1 and 2.

⁷ We might translate, "The life-giving activities, by accepting the arrangement of the different activities into parts which is imposed upon them by their acceptance of the enharmonising power of soul, have added the "possession of parts' even to the soul. And perhaps soul is to be thought of and to have life in two ways, its own life and life in relation; the 'parts' exist in the related life . . . thus in the sowing (embodiment) the parts exist, alongside soul which remains indivisible".

μήποτε is to be translated "perhaps," as is common in later writers (cf. L.S.J.-cf. *Plot.* iv. 9.3, 3, *Porph.* in *Stob.* I. 349, 3f., also Jahn, *De Philosophia Chaldaica*, n. 105, p. 39.

ἐνδοσις found also in the plural here (p. 354, 6) means strictly "striking of the keynote" but seems to have been used in the sense of "imparting (harmony, order and form) on something – thus *Simp.* in *Ph.* 440, 8 τοῦ εἶδους. It is also connected with procession and derived δύναμις. *Dam.* *Pr.* 100 τὰς πολλὰς οὐσίας ἐνδόσεις εἶναι κατὰ ἑλλαμψιν ἀπὸ τῆς μιᾶς οὐσίας προΐούσας εἰς πάντα ὄντα, and *Procl.* *In Rem.* ii. 146, 15f. . . . ἐνδοσιν οὕσαν δυνάμειως.

Porphyry speaks in *Sententiae* xxxii, p. 25, 10 of the higher soul bestowing the benefits of reason and order on the lower. The λογισμός presents τὸ ἐνδόσιμον to the lower soul. In *Sent.* xviii following *Plot.* iii. 6.4 he uses the analogy of the musician to aid his argument that the higher soul is not affected by πάθος but is active rather than passive. The idea of immanent and transcendent ἁρμονία used by both Porphyry and Plotinus implies the equation of lower soul with εἶδος or form in the Aristotelian sense. See further below p. 12ff.

(ἐνέργεια). The constant use of ἐνέργεια and ἐνεργεῖν rather than δύναμις in the *Symmikta Zetemata* calls for our attention. Porphyry would seem, in this work, to be avoiding the idea of an immanent "power" (which may or may not be acting) by stressing the "activity" of soul. Is there a contradiction between the doctrine of soul in the *Sententiae* and that of the *Symmikta Zetemata*? In this latter work Porphyry says that a frequent mistake when discussing the presence of soul in body is to speak in terms of τόπος – ἀντὶ τῆς σχέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας (*Nemesius* 136, 11, ch. 12, Dörrie p. 99), instead of relationship and activity. Only bodies can be ἐν τόπῳ. The immaterial cannot be ἐν τόπῳ. But this does not rule out all relationship (σχέσις) between body and soul. By using a popular piece of Neoplatonic metaphysical juggling we may say that the body is in the soul.⁸ Porphyry has not rejected the idea that the immaterial can in some way be localised. He is not objecting to the "here," the pointing to a definite "somewhere" when we talk of soul, but to the way in which we say it is present "here" – cf. *Nem* 136, 11, ch. 12 δέον γὰρ λέγειν "ἐκεῖ ἐνεργεῖ" λέγομεν "ἐκεῖ ἔστιν." The point of reference or relationship (ἐκεῖ) occurs in both statements, the mode, however, changes. We have, he says, confused relational activity ἐνέργεια ἢ ἐκεῖ with *being* in τόπος. This is not inconsistent with the rejection of presence by οὐσία in the *Sententiae* (nor is it a denial of the substantial nature of the external power of the soul, a question of some importance as we shall see, since no immaterial entity can be said to "be in a particular place" in the sense in which Porphyry denies this of the soul). Now in the *Sententiae*, too, he talks of the presence of soul by its "activity." The παρουσία, a neutral word, of soul to body is not τοπική but ἐξομοιωτική (*Sent.* xxxv, p. 29, 18). This word refers both to the activity of soul on the body, its moulding, forming and directing the body *and* to the effect of body itself on the activity when it impedes it and narrows its scope. As we have seen the external power, the means whereby the soul is present, is also said to be hindered by the body (*Sent.* xxxvii, p. 33, 3). Presence by δύναμις and presence by "activity" would appear to be identical or at least not inconsistent. The doctrine of soul's presence by its activity is to be found in the *Sententiae* alongside other statements in the same work which give this expression of embodied soul a more substantial existence as a δύναμις that would exist whether actually operating or not. There would, therefore, seem to be no basic

⁸ *Nem. de nat. hom.* 134. 11, §10. Dörrie p. 80; cf. Plot. *Enn.* iv. 3, 20, 10f.

contradiction between the doctrine of the *Sententiae* and that of the *Symmikta Zetemata*.

We must now try to determine the ontological status of this immanent δύναμις of soul. This is an important question because it has been argued that Porphyry considered the lower soul, if we may use this expression for the external power of soul, to be an illusion of thought⁹ – thus inviting speculation as to its actual status. Moreover this argument is fitted into a more general theory that Porphyry had begun to telescope the Plotinian hypostases, thus minimising the concept of grades of being. According to this theory there can be only one level of Being and anything falling short of this level does so, not in itself, but through our own inability to conceive of it in a proper way. The beginning of such a development may be found in *Enn.* vi. 4 and 5 with the discussion on the omnipresence of incorporeal Being. The term Being, or τὸ ὄν, is frequently employed by Porphyry in the *Sententiae* to encompass the whole range from Nous to Soul.¹⁰ Whilst we might admit that this more general concept of Being could lead to new developments it is also possible to argue that it is merely a more simplified approach employed when dealing with more basic problems about the relationship of the incorporeal to the material. Indeed, the laboured arguments of both Porphyry and Plotinus about the nature of incorporeal Being indicate that the concept of immaterial substance was still very much debated in their own time and more basic discussion was needed to stress the concept of Being without the added complication of hypostases at different levels of reality. But just as the old hierarchical element occurs in *Enn.* vi. 4 and 5 so also does it appear in the *Sententiae*.¹¹ The two different approaches can be taken together.

To argue that only what is experienced intellectually is “real” and that anything below this must be an illusion of thought due to imperfect apprehension is to misunderstand Neoplatonic metaphysics and epistemology. What is below the purest manifestation of Being is, of course, less real but its inferior grade of being is an objective fact and not a result of our own application of limiting characteristics on Being itself. If we are trying to concentrate on and contemplate Being itself and the

⁹ A. C. Lloyd, *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy* (ed. Armstrong) ch. 18, p. 288f. “But it is surprising, however logical, for anyone to take the further step of regarding the embodiment of soul as an illusion of thought.”

¹⁰ *Sent.* xxix p. 13, 7; xxxii p. 18, 9; xxxviii p. 34, 18, and especially *Sent.* xxxiv–v, where it is opposed to the material.

¹¹ Plot. *Enn.* vi. 4.11, 1f. seems to imply a hierarchy: cf. also vi. 4.16, 17f. which also suggests grades of reality. Porph. *Sent.* xii, xxx, xxxi, xxxii.

kernel of ourselves which is identical with Being then, of course, we may be said to fall short of Being when we add spatial and other limitations to the object we are contemplating. Moreover the contemplation of Reality and the objective existence of grades of reality are quite distinct spheres as we shall see in chapters two and three.

That Porphyry allows a fairly important role to a semi-incorporeal entity called the *pneuma* which stands between body and soul is, at least, *prima facie* evidence that he could accept the concept of grades of reality. A man, it may be argued, who so easily blurred the distinction between corporeal and incorporeal, when he wished to, would hardly hesitate to distinguish levels of immaterial Being.

In the *Sententiae* Porphyry uses the following expressions which suggest that the soul power was something substantial. *Sent.* iv, p. 1, 15 . . . δύναιμιν ὑπέστησε; xxviii, p. 12, 13 ὑποστῆσαι δυνάμεις. The Porphyry passage from *Stob.* 1, 354, 11 f. uses the words ὑφίσταται and παρυφίταται of the immanent powers of soul. A passage in *ad Gaurum* p. 42, 22f. invokes the idea of grades of reality: οὕτω γὰρ διάνοια γέννημα οὐσα νοῦ ὑποβέβηκε μὲν κατ' οὐσίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ γεννήσαντος αὐτὴν νοῦ . . . Here he distinguishes νοῦς and διάνοια. He has previously (line 19) made a more general statement ἀεὶ γὰρ κατ' αὐτὸν (= Πλάτωνα) τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας τινῶν γεννώμενα ὑποβέβηκε <κατὰ> δυνάμεις καὶ οὐσίας. He goes on to distinguish διάνοια from the irrational soul in the same context πάλιν ἡ ἀλογία ἢ τῷ λόγῳ (= διάνοια) συναφῆς γέννημα οὐσα τοῦ λόγου ἐστὶ μὲν κατ' οὐσίαν λογισμῶν ἄμειρος. There is certainly no hint that these levels of soul are an illusion of thought. They seem as real as the levels of being in Plotinus. The levels differ in their οὐσία, i.e. in themselves and not through our applying limiting characteristics. The lower soul or lower power of soul is something created not by our own inability to grasp the true value of soul but from above. We must, however, press even further the enquiry about its ontological status and ask how it is related to other entities in the Plotinian system.

The idea of the presence in the material world of transcendent entities by means of an immanent δύναιμις is not completely original to Porphyry or even to Plotinus but has a long history. The idea lies behind the *logos* concept in Philo¹² and may be seen in the Pseudo-Aristotelian *de Mundo*,¹³ where god is distinguished from his powers which can

¹² Philo *de Agricultura* 51; cf. further *L.A.* II, 4; *de Posteritate Caini* 28f.; *de Cherubim* 86f. and in Cohn's edition the index verborum, δύναιμις, 10 δυνάμεις θεοῦ.

¹³ Ps. Arist. *de Mundo* 6, 397b24.

work in the world whilst he remains transcendent. But Porphyry refers not merely to an immanent δύναμις but also implies a higher δύναμις from which it is derived. In *Sent.* iv he calls the immanent power δευτέραν τινὰ δύναμιν which implies a πρώτη δύναμις. The double "life" of soul (p. 3 above) also looks similar. The nearest source for this idea is Plotinus who uses a concept of twofold activity – an external activity derived from a higher internal activity – throughout his metaphysical system. This has points of contact with Porphyry's doctrine as applied to the soul and it is highly likely that Porphyry was influenced by this important Plotinian concept. Plotinus' own sources for the idea are debated¹⁴ and it is possible that Porphyry might have used the same original sources. But an editor of the *Enneads* would hardly have been uninfluenced by Plotinus' reworking of the older concept to fit a new system.

The concept of the twofold activity of intelligibles is one of the most fruitful ideas that Plotinus used to explain the process of emanation and the relationship of one hypostasis to another. By making the interior activity of a hypostasis the cause of its external activity he can stress at the same time the difference between cause and effect, between producing hypostasis and produced hypostasis and their essential connection and unity. We must now trace this theory in Plotinus and see how it provides the necessary philosophical background to Porphyry's psychology.

The theory of double ἐνέργεια by which a hypostasis has both an inner and an outer activity is in many ways complementary to the universal theory of θεωρία. For θεωρία itself is the activity within a hypostasis whereby the hypostasis produces something lower than itself as a παράγωγον or by-product. This concept¹⁵ is basic to Plotinus' metaphysics. Double ἐνέργεια will also, then, be one of the basic ways in which Plotinus explains the meaning of emanation. The concept shows (a) how a hypostasis can generate another below it, (b) how the higher hypostasis can be said to be present to the lower. Thus generation, transcendence and immanence are the ideas lying behind the theory. We will attempt to trace the theory as it is applied to each hypostasis and finally how it is applied to soul.

¹⁴ Cf. Rutten, C., "La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin, *Revue philosophique* CXLVI, 1956, p. 100–106; P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. I, p. 228, n. 4.

¹⁵ For θεωρία, see Plot. *Enn.* iii. 8. The θεωρία which produces levels of reality must be distinguished from the contemplation associated with the return or ascent of the soul. This latter sort of contemplation does not produce anything in the same sense. This basic distinction is analysed in the succeeding chapters.

Firstly, the One. Two passages suffice to show the essential points. v. 4. 2, 26f. ἀλλὰ πῶς μένοντος ἐκείνου γίνεται (sc. ὁ Νοῦς); ἐνέργεια ἡ μὲν ἐστὶ τῆς οὐσίας, ἡ δ' ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκάστου. καὶ ἡ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας αὐτό ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἑκάστων, ἡ δὲ ἀπ' ἐκείνης, ἣν δεῖ παντὶ ἐπεσθαι ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἑτέραν οὖσαν αὐτοῦ. As with fire οὕτω δὴ κακεῖ. καὶ πολὺ πρότερον ἐκεῖ μένοντος αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οἰκείῳ ἦθει ἐκ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τελειότητος καὶ συνούσης ἐνεργείας ἡ γεννηθεῖσα ἐνέργεια ὑπόστασιν λαβοῦσα. Before turning to Nous let us examine one further passage in which it is clearly stated that the external ἐνέργεια of the One is not the One itself but is nevertheless not cut off from it. In other words we have here a principle to explain transcendence/immanence as well as generation (v. 3. 12, 39ff. Εἰ κατὰ λόγον θησόμεθα, τὴν μὲν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οἶον ῥυεῖσαν ἐνέργειαν ὡς ἀπὸ ἡλίου φῶς τι οὖν θησόμεθα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν νοητὴν φύσιν, αὐτὸν δὲ ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τῷ νοητῷ ἐστηκότα βασιλεύειν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξώσαντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐκφανέν – ἢ ἄλλο φῶς πρὸ φωτὸς ποιήσομεν – ἐπιλάμπειν δὲ αἰ μένοντα ἐπὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀποτέμνεται τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὐδ' αὖ ταὐτὸν αὐτῷ), (cf. also i, 7, 1 end).

Next Nous. We have already seen how Plotinus seems to think of the concept almost in terms of a general rule; this is further stressed not only by the similarity of language and metaphor used in the description of the process in both Nous and the One, but also by the direct insistence on the analogous nature of the two hypostases in producing their inferiors. v. 2. 1, 14ff. is instructive: τὰ ὅμοια ποιεῖ δύναμιν προχέας πολλήν. And there are more indications of the analogy with the One at 16f. καὶ αὕτη ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς τοῦτο μένοντος ἐκείνου γενομένη· καὶ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς μένοντος τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο.

In v. 3. 7, 20f. the same fire metaphor is used as with the One. Again the simultaneity of the two ἐνέργειαι is stressed – καὶ γὰρ εἴ τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ, τῷ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Thus the outer activity is a by-product of that inner activity which is identical with what a thing really is (its οὐσία).¹⁶ In the case of the hypostases below the One this essential activity will be some form of contemplation. With the One the inner activity is more difficult to determine.

For further parallels with the One, cf. the light metaphor of v. 3. 9, (also v. 1. 6, 28); and compare with v. 3. 12, 40f. and i. 7, 1 end. v. 1. 3, 21 – καὶ τῷ πατὴρ εἶναι καὶ τῷ παρῆναι – gives us the two notions of generation and presence as noted above in the case of the One. ii, 9, 8, 22 presents a simple formula similar to that often used for soul... ἐνεργεῖαν ... διττήν, τὴν μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, τὴν δὲ εἰς ἄλλο.

¹⁶ Note the connection of ἐνέργεια with οὐσία in iii, 1.1, 1f.

Now we come to soul. At this point we naturally meet new complications. The relation of soul to what lies below it is not simply one more link in the chain. In certain respects it represents a break. This break is in some ways analogous with that between Nous and the One. In both cases there is a transition between being and non-being, though a different sort of non-being in each case. Nous is derived from what is above being, soul has contact with matter – sheer non-being.

We shall notice that the outer activity of soul is especially connected with the enforming of matter and body. The stress on enforming makes the outer activity of soul somewhat different from that of the One and Nous, a fact which becomes clearer if we try to determine more precisely what the outer activity of the One is. Plotinus tells us¹⁷ that the One produces from itself an unlimited and formless entity which then turns back on the One to contemplate it and becomes enformed by its vision of the One. Thus what is produced from the One is initially something indeterminate which Plotinus calls spiritual $\psi\lambda\eta$ ¹⁸ as it acts as matter to the second stage of enforming. The One's activity is basically the production of this "matter." The enforming of this substrate is achieved by the substrate itself by its own act when it turns back towards the One to look at it. The One is merely the formal and final cause here. This theory which is found in close proximity to the double $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ theory (so both in v. 4. 2; and see v. 3. 11 and 12) helps to explain further just what it is that the One produces. What is produced by the external activity is a kind of substrate which then becomes enformed. This idea is reflected in the theory that each level of reality acts as $\psi\lambda\eta$ or substrate to what is above it.¹⁹ If we are to pursue the parallel through the system then the product of soul will not be the lower soul but rather the matter in which the lower soul is present and which it moulds and forms. But earthly $\psi\lambda\eta$ is different from spiritual $\psi\lambda\eta$. It is non-being and totally lifeless. The spiritual $\psi\lambda\eta$ is life par excellence, unlimited $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$. Thus, earthly $\psi\lambda\eta$, being lifeless, cannot return in contemplation of the soul. Its part in being enformed is passive. This means that the chief external activity of soul will be enforming rather than the production, as in the case of the One, of a substrate which helps to enform itself. This will help to show the connection between the double $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ theory and the use of the

¹⁷ ii. 4.5, 3If.: v. 4.2; vi. 7.15: v. 3.11; cf. Armstrong, *Architecture of the Intelligible Universe*, p. 67–70.

¹⁸ Cf. ii. 5.3, 4 and ii. 4.

¹⁹ cf. p. 16 below.

concept of form and matter in Plotinus' system. This nexus of ideas is particularly relevant when we come to discuss soul. Here, more than elsewhere in the system, form becomes identified with the outer activity of a hypostasis. The equation of lower soul with form, the idea that each level acts as substrate to the higher level also occurs in Porphyry. The way in which these ideas are intimately connected with the double *ἐνέργεια* theory in Plotinus strengthens the impression that Porphyry thought of the role of "lower soul" in much the same way as Plotinus.

A suitable introductory passage to Plotinus' application of the double *ἐνέργεια* theory to soul is iv. 8. 7, 17f. where Plotinus begins by mentioning the activity of Nous – ὥσπερ δὲ ἡ νοερά διέξοδος κατὰβάσις ἐστὶν εἰς ἔσχατον τὸ χεῖρον – οὐ γὰρ ἐνὶ εἰς τὸ ἐπέκεινα ἀναβῆναι, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη ἐνεργήσασαν ἐξ ἑαυτῆς καὶ μὴ δυνηθεῖσαν μεῖναι ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς φύσεως δὴ ἀνάγκη καὶ νόμῳ μέχρι ψυχῆς ἐλθεῖν· τέλος γὰρ αὐτῇ τοῦτο· ταύτη δὲ τὸ ἐφεξῆς παραδοῦναι αὐτὴν πάλιν ἀναδραμοῦσαν – οὕτως καὶ ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια. τὸ μὲν μετ' αὐτὴν τὰ τῆδε, τὸ δὲ πρὸ αὐτῆς ἡ θεὰ τῶν ὄντων. Just as the θεὰ τῶν ὄντων is an activity so is the World (τὰ τῆδε) the external activity of Soul. The case is different for individual souls as Plotinus goes on to explain. Here we have the notion of external *ἐνέργεια* being applied in a parallel way to Nous and Soul. At the end of the chapter we are told how Soul can perform these two acts simultaneously and without falling or descending to the world of sense in the way in which the individual soul does. Here we see clearly that the outer act is not the creation of matter but its informing and governing.

iv. 3. 10, 31 tells us more about this act – this time with seeming reference to the individual soul. ψυχῆς δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐν αὐτῇ, τὸ δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰς ἄλλο. . . . Ψυχῆς δὲ ἔργον καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐγρηγορός τι καὶ τὸ εἰς ἄλλο ὡσαύτως. Ζῆν οὖν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ποιεῖ, ὅσα μὴ ζῆ παρ' αὐτῶν, καὶ τοιαύτην ζώην, καθ' ἣν αὐτὴ ζῆ. Ζῶσα οὖν ἐν λόγῳ λόγον δίδωσι τῷ σώματι, εἰδωλον οὐ ἔχει – καὶ γὰρ καὶ εἰδωλον ζῶης, ὅσον δίδωσι τῷ σώματι.

And finally in vi. 2. 22, 26f. the double activity of Soul is compared with that of Nous (see also v. 1. 6, 44) and the double activity of the individual soul is clearly mentioned. ὅτε μὲν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνεργεῖ (sc. ὁ Νοῦς), τὰ ἐνεργούμενα οἱ ἄλλοι νοῦ, ὅτε δὲ ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ψυχῇ. ψυχῆς δὲ ἐνεργούσης ὡς γένους ἢ εἶδους αἱ ἄλλαι ψυχαὶ ὡς εἶδη. Now he goes on to speak of the inner and outer activity of individual souls – καὶ τούτων αἱ ἐνέργειαι διτταί. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὸ ἄνω νοῦς, ἡ δὲ πρὸς τὸ κάτω αἱ ἄλλαι δυνάμεις κατὰ λόγον. ἡ δὲ ἐσχάτη ὕλης ἥδη ἐφαπτομένη καὶ μορφοῦσα καὶ τὸ κάτω αὐτῆς τὸ ἄλλο πᾶν οὐ κωλύει εἶναι ἄνω. Ἡ καὶ τὸ κάτω λεγόμενον

αὐτῆς ἰνδαλμά ἐστιν αὐτῆς, οὐκ ἀποτετμημένον δέ, ἀλλ' ὡς τὰ ἐν τοῖς κατόπτροις, ἕως ἂν τὸ ἀρχέτυπον παρῇ ἕξω.

We have noted the words εἰδωλον, ἰνδαλμα in the passages above. The idea that everything apart from the first is an image of the first is closely connected with that of double ἐνέργεια.²⁰ An interesting meeting point is iv. 3. 10, 31 quoted above, where we learn that the outer ἐνέργεια is an εἰδωλον of the inner activity, and also v. 1. 3, 22f. (soul is matter to Nous which enforms it). We see this metaphor of archetype to image again connected with the notion of ἐνέργεια in vi. 7. 4 and 5 where Plotinus eventually decides that the ἄνθρωπος of this world is the ἐνέργεια τῆς ψυχῆς and not the οὐσία. It is the man "there," i.e. in the intelligible world, who is ψυχή. He goes on to explain that there are two activities involved, αἴσθησις here and αἴσθησις there. Thus in the lower man the ἐνέργεια is an image of the ἐνέργεια/οὐσία of the higher. This is close to the double ἐνέργεια theory since the lower derived activity is based on a similar higher and more perfect activity. The lower activity is inferior as Ch. 5, 19f. shows. αἰσθήσεις ἄλλας ἐναργεῖς δοκούσας εἶναι, ἀμυδροτέρας δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὰς πρὸ αὐτῶν καὶ εἰκόνας and 6, 10 ὕστερος ἄνθρωπος, τὸ μίμημα, εἶχε τοὺς λόγους ἐν μιμήσει. The parallels with iv. 3. 10 above are further heightened by vi. 7. 4, 34 where the higher man παρέξεται τὴν ζωὴν τὴν λογικὴν and 7f. where the λόγος or lower man is ψυχῆς ἕτερος τῆς τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον ποιούσης καὶ ζῆν αὐτὸν καὶ λογίζεσθαι παρεχομένης; and vi. 7. 5, 27 where the higher soul τρανοτέραν ζωὴν διδοῦσα· μᾶλλον δ' οὐδ' ἐπηκολούθησεν, ἀλλὰ οἶον προσέθηκεν αὐτὴν. οὐ γὰρ ἐξίσταται τοῦ νοητοῦ, ἀλλὰ συναψαμένη οἶον ἐκκρεμαμένην ἔχει τὴν κάτω συμμίξασα ἑαυτὴν λόγῳ πρὸς λόγον. "Οθεν καὶ ἀμυδρὸς οὗτος ὦν ἐγένετο φανερός τῇ ἐλλάμψει. The lower man, τὸ συναμφοτέρον is (in so far as the activity of soul, i.e. lower soul, is in him) a λόγος of the higher man or real soul. The phrase λόγῳ πρὸς λόγον shows that the higher soul too is a λόγος – of Nous, which is above it.

Dodds suggests, in his note on the *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 64, that the Plotinian doctrine of the twofold activity of intelligibles has its roots in the Stoic antithesis of ἐνδιάθετος and προφορικὸς λόγος. So in v. 1. 3, 7f. soul is an εἰκὼν of Nous. Just as the λόγος ὁ ἐν Προφορᾷ is the image of the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ so is the soul an image or λόγος of Nous and is the πᾶσα ἐνέργεια καθ' ἣν προΐεται ζωὴν εἰς ἄλλου ὑπόστασιν. The whole passage deals with the double activity of Nous 10f. – δεῖ δὲ λαβεῖν ἐκεῖ οὐκ ἐκρέουσιν, ἀλλὰ μένουσιν μὲν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, τὴν δὲ ἄλλην

²⁰ Hadot also notes this, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. i, p. 335f.

ὀφισταμένην. Here too is the fire image (πυρρός ... θερμότης 10). In similar context i, 2, 3, 26f. two types of νοεῖν – ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πρῶτως, τὸ δὲ παρ' ἐκείνου ἐτέρως. ὥς γὰρ ὁ ἐν φωνῇ λόγος μίμημα τοῦ ἐν ψυχῇ, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἐν ψυχῇ μίμημα τοῦ ἐν ἐτέρῳ – he means the activity of νόησις proper and, secondly, the sort of νόησις which the soul can indulge in. This is a λόγος or image of the former and is derived.

We must now turn our attention to i. 1 where the lower soul as image or εἶδωλον plays an important role. In i. 1. 8, 15 we are told that soul ἐλλάμπουσα εἰς αὐτὰ καὶ ζῶα ποιουῖσα οὐκ ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ σώματος, ἀλλὰ μένουσα μὲν αὐτῇ, εἶδωλα δὲ αὐτῆς διδοῦσα, ὥσπερ πρόσωπον ἐν πολλοῖς κατόπτροις. Πρῶτον δὲ εἶδωλον αἰσθησις ἢ ἐν τῷ κοινῷ. And at i. 1. 12, 17f. we have the two activities again. ἄλλη οὖν ζωὴ καὶ ἄλλαι ἐνέργειαι καὶ τὸ κολαζόμενον ἕτερον. And then, to forestall the arguments of chapter II, Plotinus tells us that the production of lower soul (a lower grade of reality) is not a fault of (higher) soul. The involvement in πάθος of the lower soul and the punishment which it may suffer for it (e.g. in Hades) are not to be blamed on higher soul: *ibid.* 23, ἄρ' οὖν ἀφίησι τὸ εἶδωλον; καὶ ἡ νεῦσις δὲ πῶς οὐχ ἀμαρτία; 'Αλλ' εἰ ἡ νεῦσις ἑλλαμψις πρὸς τὸ κάτω, οὐχ ἀμαρτία, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἡ σκιά, ἀλλ' αἴτιον τὸ ἐλλαμπόμενον. The mere production of an εἶδωλον is no sin. We note in these passages how the idea of εἶδωλον or image is closely combined with that of double ἐνέργεια. The first εἶδωλον of higher soul is αἰσθησις, an activity, and the phrase in i. 1. 12, 17f. points to the double ἐνέργεια theory. But the main point to note in i, 1 is the treatment of lower soul or the external activity of higher soul as form – immanent form – the equivalent of Aristotle's immanent form. This also seems to have been the case in Porphyry as we shall see.

The concept of lower soul as form immanent in body, thus making the living body or ζῶον, is seen by Plotinus to be closely connected with the idea of lower soul as the external activity of soul itself. Two points are to be noted here. Firstly the lower soul – when seen as form – can exist only in a substrate. The implication is that this soul does not continue its existence when a suitable substrate is not at hand. Secondly we must note the way in which the double ἐνέργεια theory is connected with enforming. External δύναμις or ἐνέργεια is, in the case of the One and Nous, to be identified with the "undefined" which only by turning back on its producer becomes defined. From Nous downwards the Plotinian form enters the metaphysical scene. Form had been termed δύναμις from Philo onwards²¹ and Form in Plotinus is seen

²¹ cf. Theiler, *Vorbereitung* p. 50.

as a reality gradually unfolding itself dynamically at each successive level of reality. The form at each level is a λόγος of that at the previous level. We have seen that the double ἐνέργεια theory is combined with this notion of form as developing δύναμις or λόγος. The connection here proves most useful when the double ἐνέργεια theory is applied to soul for, as we have already noted, the act of enforming comes to play a more prominent role at the level of soul than at any other point in the system.

We have already quoted passages from the treatise i, 1 which reflect the double ἐνέργεια notion. Plotinus there identifies the lower soul with Aristotle's immanent form (4, 20f.). Now Aristotle's concept of soul as form had always brought with it two corollaries:

(1) it must exist in a substrate by definition; therefore it forms a compound;

(2) when the substrate no longer "holds" the soul-form, it ceases to exist; therefore there is no such thing as disembodied soul. It would be startlingly unplatonic to apply such ideas to the soul but Plotinus and Porphyry do, although not to soul in itself but to the "lower soul."

In the comparatively early treatise iv. 3. Plotinus rejects the equation of soul and εἶδος. In ch. 20, 36 Soul, he says, makes εἶδος but is not itself εἶδος. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὡς εἶδος ἐν ὕλῃ. ἀχώριστον γὰρ τὸ ἐν ὕλῃ εἶδος, καὶ ἤδη ὕλης οὐσης ὕστερον τὸ εἶδος. ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ τὸ εἶδος ποιεῖ ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ ἄλλη τοῦ εἶδους οὐσα. He also rejects soul as transcendent form, since this notion is unhelpful in the enquiry, for one still has to explain how it is immanent. None of this contradicts the acceptance of soul as form in i, 1. since in the later treatise Plotinus draws a very clear distinction between higher and lower soul, inner and outer man, which he uses to explain soul's presence to body. The "immanent form" of iv. 3. 20 is termed τὸ γενόμενον εἶδος (39). This is closely paralleled by the association of γένεσις with immanent soul in i. 12. 20 καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ γενέσει ἡ προσθήκη (= lower soul + body) ἥ ὅλως ἡ γένεσις τοῦ ἄλλου ψυχῆς εἶδους (that is, the lower soul). The equation of lower soul with the Aristotelian concept of soul as form (discussed in i, 1, 4.) is implied in lines 29-36f. which seem to suggest that final separation of soul from body (natural death) which means the end of the lower soul - ἀφίησι δὲ οὐ τῷ ἀποσχισθῆναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ μηκέτι εἶναι.²² In line 29 we are told that

²² Similar is Porphyry in *Stob.* i. 370, 7 καὶ ἀφίεσθαι μὲν καὶ μηκέτι εἶναι τὰς ζώας τὰς ὁπωσοῦν προβληθείσας. But, as we shall see in ch. iv, further evidence shows that he did not think that the lower soul simply passed out of existence but rather that it continued to exist though as no longer belonging to any particular part of the universe. This further suggests the reality of the δυνάμεις (lower soul) as they continue to exist when the higher soul has "returned" to its source just as the external activity is always given off from a hypostasis.

the lower soul will cease to exist if there is nothing to receive it – εἰ μὴ ἐγγὺς τὸ ὑποδεξάμενον. Thus lower soul needs a bodily substrate which is a feature of form. That lower soul needs a substrate is also a fundamental tenet in Porphyry's eschatology.²³ It is the basis for belief in a *pneuma* or semibodily soul-substrate by which the compound of irrational soul + body, which alone sins and therefore alone can be punished, may survive death. It is here that Porphyry has made use of the notion of substrate which the equation soul – εἶδος introduces.

In iii. 6. 4, 31 Plotinus explicitly calls lower soul an εἶδος and says that the nature (φύσις) of this εἶδος is ἐνέργεια. It is important to notice the connection between εἶδος and ἐνέργεια or δυνάμις. The manifestation of soul in body is essentially an activity. Of course Plotinus' doctrine differs considerably from that of Aristotle in that the lower soul is dependent on a higher separated soul.

Inevitably connected with the notion of immanent soul as εἶδος is the "compound" idea. The subject of sin and suffering is for Plotinus the ζῶον or συναμφοτέρον, the conjoint of lower soul and body. Technically neither pure ὕλη nor any immaterial thing can suffer change. It is only the combination of both that is the subject of change. So i, 1, 9, 24f.

αἱ δὲ τροπαὶ καὶ ὁ θόρυβος ἐν ἡμῖν παρὰ τῶν συντηρημένων καὶ τῶν τοῦ κοινοῦ, ὃ τι δῆποτε ἐστὶ τοῦτο, ὡς εἴρηται, παθημάτων, and iii, 6, 9, 35 ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἴ τι πάσχοι, μὴ ὕλην, ἀλλὰ τι συναμφοτέρον ἢ ὅλως πολλὰ ὁμοῦ εἶναι. So Porphyry speaks of πάθος as belonging to the συνθέτον ἐξ ὕλης τε καὶ εἰδους and ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος (*Sent.* xxi, p. 9, 15f.). This seems to be the meaning of *Sent.* xxxv, p. 30, 10f. where the phrase τὸ δ' ἐν μέσῳ ὁμοιοῦν καὶ ὁμοιούμενον refers to the compound.

It cannot be proved that Porphyry explicitly called the lower soul immanent form although this is very likely. Although in *Sent.* xxi above he distinguishes the compound or συνθέτον of form and matter from that of body and soul and seems to regard the latter as higher in the scale of complexity, they are, nevertheless, both called compounds and are apparently analogous in nature. In *Sent.* v. soul is placed "midway" between Nous and embodied forms and would thus seem to be distinguished from form. But soul really partakes of both extremes – it lies between Nous and form – and one of the simplest ways of expressing this is to regard the soul as existing on two levels – the lower of which might be analogous to the existence of immanent form. One notes that αἱ φύσεις καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις are classed with τὸ εἶδος τὸ

²³ cf. p. 57f. and appendix Two.

ἐπὶ ὕλης (*Sent.* xlii, p. 40, 12f.) as opposed to νοῦς . . . καὶ νοερός λόγος which is never related to body. The evidently lower class of φύσεις and δυνάμεις does exist in relation to body – πρὸς τὰ σώματα ὑφίσταται (17) – which is precisely what the lower or immanent power of soul can do. Nor can one ever localise or express spatially the activity of Nous – τόπον δοῦναι ἐνεργείᾳ (sc. τοῦ νοῦ, 26) which again is something we can do (with certain restrictions) to the external activity of the soul.²⁴

Thus Porphyry can include lower soul amongst the forms. When he appears to oppose it to form he does so in the same way that Plotinus does in iv. 3. 20, for he is there thinking of soul as a unity (i.e. not of a higher and lower soul) and is inclined like any Platonist to stress its independent reality. One recalls that Plotinus speaks in similar terms in i. 1. 5, 1f. and (in a passage about the κοινόν) considers soul as a unity. It is only after careful analysis that he presents his theory of the two levels of soul when it is abundantly clear that by asserting the existence of an immanent soul he is not denying the integrity of real soul by suggesting that there are two souls. The idea of two separate souls (higher and lower) was a feature of Numenius. So Porphyry – *Stob.* I, 350, 25f. ἄλλοι δὲ, ὦν καὶ Νουμήνιος, οὐ τρία μέρη ψυχῆς μᾶς, ἢ δύο γὰρ, τὸ λογικὸν καὶ ἄλογον, ἀλλὰ δύο ψυχὰς ἔχειν ἡμᾶς οἴονται . . . τὴν μὲν λογικὴν, τὴν δὲ ἄλογον. However close Plotinus and Porphyry sometimes come to this idea they are always at pains to avoid the final break to create two opposed souls – rational and irrational.

It is the unity of soul which Porphyry wishes to preserve (So *Stob.* I, 353, 1) whilst accounting for its apparent plurality. He evidently did not think that Plotinus had betrayed this principle and we have shown how he adopted Plotinian ideas. This is no less so with the

²⁴ There are some other indications that Porphyry connected lower soul with Form. In *Sent.* xviii he adopts the thought of Plotinus *Enn.* iii. 6.4 where lower soul is seen as εἶδος. Although Porphyry does not mention the word εἶδος his interpretation of Plotinus with a transcendent and immanent ἀρμονία implies an acceptance of Plotinus' position. See further note 7.

In *εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* p. 95, 22 Busse he suggests the connection of immanent soul with Form. οὐσιώδεις εἰσὶν ποιότητες αἱ συμπληρωτικαὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν. Συμπληρωτικὰ δὲ εἰσὶν ἐκεῖνα ἅτινα ἀπογινόμενα φθείρει τὰ ὑποκείμενα . . . τὸ γὰρ λογικὸν ἐὰν ἀρθῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φθίρεται. The essential qualities of the human being are to be distinguished from the accidental qualities which, as *Sent.* xxi tells us, account for change and πάθος in general. Here reason is seen as part of the lower soul which may "perish". (cf. n. 22 above). Plotinus postulates a type of διάνοια which only comes into evidence on embodiment (iv. 3.18). *Sent.* xxix p. 13, 10 sees reason as part of the embodied soul τὸν λόγον ἐχούσῃ τὸν μερικὸν προβελημένον. The ὁχυμα/πνεῦμα theory as seen in Synesius (see *app.* II), though stressing φαντασία as the border between matter and the immaterial, views the πρώτη ψυχὴ (διάνοια) as riding on the ὁχυμα-φαντασία and able to "fall" with the ὁχυμα.

εἶδος idea which, though not specifically mentioned by Porphyry, nevertheless betrays its presence in his thought by his treatment of body as substrate. The idea is clearly presupposed in much of Plotinus' thought about soul. One might suggest that it goes through the whole of Plotinus' system. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* Vol. 1 p. 193 refers to *Enn.* iii. 9. 5, 3, soul is ὅλην οὖν πρὸς νοῦν, and to Porphyry p. 341 *ad Marc.* p. 291, 3 νοῦ γὰρ σῶμα ψυχὴν λογικὴν θετέον when each hypostasis is the substrate or receiver of the one above it, so becoming enformed.²⁵ The idea is closely allied with that of double ἐνέργεια. It is clear that the whole complex of these Plotinian doctrines lies behind some of Porphyry's doctrine of the soul.

The concept of δύναμις as mediator happens to be particularly developed in the *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides* and in Synesius. Their development of the concept strengthens our case for stressing the idea in Porphyry and noting its connection with Plotinian doctrines (which are also related to the later development).²⁶ P. Hadot in his recent book "*Porphyre et Victorinus*" has alluded to Porphyry's use of the triadic principle²⁷ to express the relationship between the One and Nous, and also to the fact that an analogous scheme was used by him to elucidate the soul-body relationship. The focal point of the triad's structure is the mid-term δύναμις or ζώῃ. In assessing Porphyry's position we have not dealt with the *Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides* which Hadot ascribes to Porphyry and which contains the triadic idea. It is still not certain that this piece was written by

²⁵ Similarly, perhaps, Synesius *de Ins.* p. 153, 2. τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα σῶμα πρῶτον ψυχῆς: *ibid.* p. 155, 15, αὐτὴ (ἡ φανταστικὴ οὐσία) ταῖς ὑποκειμέναις δυνάμεσιν ἐποχεῖται, αὐτὴ λόγος οὐσα τοῦ ζῴου. Plot. *Enn.* v. 1.3, 22f. See Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* p. 341.

²⁶ cf. Hadot, "Être, Vie et Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin." in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique V, Les Sources de Plotin.*

²⁷ For a very clear exposition, see Hadot, "La Métaphysique de Porphyre." *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique xii.* The relationship between the One and Nous is expressed by referring to an intermediate principle δύναμις which is not an independent entity but merely a point in the procession. This is further complicated by seeing each point of procession at all levels. Thus Nous is present with the One (or ὑπαρξίς), as is δύναμις. We are thus presented with an ennead.

ὑπαρξίς	δύναμις	Νοῦς
ὑπαρξίς	δύναμις	Νοῦς
ὑπαρξίς	δύναμις	Νοῦς.

Thus Nous is to be found within the One as the One is immanent in Νοῦς. This triple triad is ascribed to Porphyry in Lydus, *de Mens.* iv. 122, p. 159, 5. θεῖος ὁ τῆς ἐννάδος ἀριθμὸς ἐκ τριῶν τριάδων πληρούμενος, καὶ τὰς ἀκρότητας τῆς θεολογίας κατὰ τὴν χαλδαϊκὴν φιλοσοφίαν, ὡς φησιν ὁ Πορφύριος, ἀποσώζων. For the application of the same theory to soul, cf. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. i, p. 337f. However the evidence in Proclus (*In Tim.* ii 166, 28) does not specifically refer to Porphyry.

Porphry himself and the best method seems to be to analyse the genuine Porphyry fragments and see whether the *Parmenides* Commentary could be a development of the ideas contained in them.

This approach is interesting with regard to *δύναμις*. We have seen the importance of external activity in Plotinus' exposition of emanation. Here the external *ἐνέργεια* or *δύναμις* is the key connection between hypostases. It represents, in the case of the One, that outgoing indefiniteness which by being defined becomes the hypostasis *Nous*. Plotinus never intended this *δύναμις* to be seen as a hypostasis in itself or even as an intermediate term. But this movement in his metaphysics calls for further attention and the *δύναμις* idea is probably one of the factors which led the anonymous *Parmenides* commentator to build up his complicated triadic structure around *δύναμις*. Hadot points out that the enneadic (3 triads) structure of the *Parmenides* commentary has only two "real" points or hypostases. — chez Porphyre cette triade n'est pas une hiérarchie "verticale" d'hypostases, comme elle le sera dans le néoplatonisme postérieur; elle correspond simplement à des actes ou à des genres au sens platonicien, les deux points hypostatiques étant l'Un et L'Intelligence, dans la hiérarchie "verticale."²⁸

Interesting in this respect is Synesius. Though he does not mention an ennead in his works his trinitarian doctrine is almost certainly derived from it as Hadot shows.²⁹ Synesius, however, has hypostasized the term *δύναμις*. The three persons of the Trinity are co-ordinate or immanent in the Father, thus expressing the main philosophical point of the horizontal line of the triad. The persons are also manifested. Here is the vertical aspect of the triad. But Synesius has both condensed the ennead and made *δύναμις* into a hypostasis. This perhaps points back to the origin of the enneadic structure in a simpler explanation of the relationship between hypostases which is akin to the notion of double *ἐνέργεια*. We have shown how the outer *δύναμις* of soul is seen as something real and independent of soul though, in Porphyry and Plotinus, necessarily subsisting in a substrate. Synesius has gone further and made the Holy Ghost as intermediate *δύναμις* into a full hypostasis. We might compare Plot. v. 4. 2, 35 ἡ γεννηθεῖσα ἐνέργεια ὑπόστασιν λαβοῦσα, i.e. the outer *ἐνέργεια* of the One. Plotinus, of course, means that this *ἐνέργεια* is hypostasized as *Nous* not as an intermediate between the One and *Nous*. However it is not difficult to see how such

²⁸ "La Metaphysique de Porphyre," p. 160, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique*, xii *Porphyre*.

²⁹ *Porphyre et Victorinus*, vol. i. p. 461ff.

a hypostasization of δύναμις could take place. Moreover δύναμις is also connected with form, which is something "real."

The following texts from the hymns show this hypostasization of δύναμις.

αὐτὰ πρόχυσις
εὗρετο βλάσταν·
ἔστη δὲ μέσα

(2, 108f).

Thus the emanation process itself – πρόχυσις – stands in the middle between Father and Son, hypostasized as Holy Ghost. So also 3, 53.

καὶ τὰν σύνθωκον πνοιάν
μέσσαν ῥίζας καὶ βλάστας.

This middle principle (2, 97 μεσάταν ἀρχάν) is an *activity*. It is called ὠδῖνα πατρός (2, 95). It aids the Father in giving birth to the Son – μαιωσαμένα κρυφίαν ῥίζαν (2, 104). Again ἄφραστος ὠδὶς (4, 6) and ὠδὶς (1, 238).

We have, in this chapter, attempted to determine how Porphyry conceived of the relationship between soul and body and the nature of soul. Soul is present to body by means of an immanent, derived power. The idea of a secondary or derived power is basic to Plotinus' metaphysics and runs throughout his system. It is equally applicable to soul where the derived power represents the "lower" soul. The idea of an immanent power is an old one though given new depth by Plotinus. It is very likely that Porphyry was influenced by Plotinus' thought here. The later development in the *Parmenides Commentary* and in Synesius points to the influence of this concept. In a work like the *Sententiae* which constantly makes reference to the *Enneads* it is difficult to think that the term δεύτερα δύναμις was not meant to convey the Plotinian concept. Plotinus connects this theory in the case of the soul with the concept of embodied form. This too, seems to have been the case in Porphyry.

If we have correctly related Porphyry's doctrine of soul to the Plotinian background it would appear that he changed none of the basic tenets of Plotinus and continued to think in the same terms. To this extent the embodied soul is as "real" in Porphyry as it is in Plotinus.

We have also drawn attention to the increased importance that is attached to the concept of external δύναμις in the *Parmenides Commentary* and Synesius. It is not insignificant that Porphyry makes particular

use of the principle of inner and outer activity as this clearly places him in a line of development which might well have culminated in a system of thought such as that displayed by the *Parmenides* commentator even if he is not to be identified with Porphyry himself.

CHAPTER TWO

SEPARATION OF SOUL FROM BODY

We have given some account of how Porphyry understands the embodiment of soul. We must now introduce the further complication of “philosophical” separation – the call to escape from the body – which is an idea of paramount importance in Platonism. Having discussed how body and soul come together and are related to each other we must now turn to see how the soul, whilst embodied, may yet act independently of body and break off its “relation” with body. The problem which presents itself here is the relationship between the two apparently contradictory ideas of embodiment and separation. Separation, as we shall see, does not necessarily refer to the moment of death but to a full separation of body and soul even during earthly life. This is termed “philosophical” separation, a term which equally must involve the concept of a “philosophical” union of body and soul or rather “fall” of soul into body. This, too, calls for examination. But what does philosophical separation of soul from body mean? What is its metaphysical basis? The call to separate soul from body seems to be the major ethical injunction which Porphyry lays upon us in his moral treatises. Is it a purely negative approach to life – an escape from the realities of this world and the foundation of a philosophy which can tell us nothing about how to live life here and now?

Porphyry certainly seems to have held more extreme views on “separation” than Plotinus. That is the lasting impression left us by the fragments of *De Regressu Animae* which constantly tells us that everything corporeal must be avoided – *omne corpus fugiendum est*. The theme of *De Abstinencia* also points in the same direction.¹ But we must

¹ Aug. *Civ. Dei* X. 29 (Bidez fr. 10 p. 38*4), xii. 27 (Bidez fr. 11, 2 p. 41*2), xii. 12 (Bidez fr. 11, 3 p. 41*17), xiii. 19 (Bidez fr. 11, 5 p. 41*31). However one should recall Augustine's own temperament and allow for the possibility of exaggeration. *De Abst.* i, 36 p. 112, especially lines 27f. This represents an extreme version of ascetism. It is purely theoretical but Porphyry's evident interest suggests that he had a disposition more prone to such extravagances than that of Plotinus.

never forget that we have only a tiny portion of Porphyry's philosophical writings in our hands and must remind ourselves how easy it would be to form an unbalanced, onesided view of Plotinus if we had only fragments of the *Enneads*. We should recall the fact that Porphyry finds Plotinus' involvement in action a source of praise² and that Plotinus is sometimes more positive about such involvement than he at first appears. But the very fact that Plotinus contradicts himself even within the bounds of a single treatise (i. 4) and displays there both the positive and the supremely negative aspects of separation should put us on our guard when we want to find only the negative in Porphyry. In i. 4. 7 Plotinus seems to approve of civil action (or at least not disapprove). But we must not be so involved as to feel grief if we fail. In i. 4. 14, 14f. he declares that the riches of this world are indifferent. Yet he adds that they are perhaps even positively disadvantageous (17f. ἴσως μὲν . . .).

It is true that the fit of depression which almost led Porphyry to suicide³ betrays a temperament which was dissatisfied with the things of this world. Even so he may well have maintained the Plotinian balance. It would be untrue to say that Porphyry was a recluse. He was very active in the spreading of philosophical ideas and obviously had contacts in many parts of the Greek world. His claim to have stimulated the activity of writing and organisation in Plotinus' school is not without significance.⁴ Moreover his interest in creating an opening for the lower type of man, the non-philosopher, into the scheme of salvation shows an awareness of the social duty of the philosopher which seems lacking in Plotinus.⁵ To end this preamble let us recall Plotinus i, 4, 6 where he tells us that "separation" is not something negative, an escape, but rather the supremely positive act. Although the *Sententiae* bring out the opposition between spirit and matter, "separation" has meaning only when seen as a stage towards the positive act of union with the

² This is certainly the impression given in ch. 9 *Life* where Porphyry describes some of Plotinus' charitable activities. Significant, however, is the remark at line 16f., καὶ ὁμῶς τοσούτοις ἐπαρκῶν τὰς εἰς τὸν βίον φροντίδας τε καὶ ἐπιμελείας τὴν πρὸς τὸν νοῦν τάσιν οὐδέποτε ἂν ἐγρηγορότως ἐχάλασεν. Virtuous activity in the world can be a hindrance to contemplation but the good man can contemplate without being disturbed by his outer actions. See page 23f. on this transcendent form of contemplation, and further chap. Five p. 75f. on the relationship of action and contemplation.

³ *Life* ch. 11, 11f.

⁴ His continuing contacts with Longinus (*Life* ch. 19), his association with Iamblichus (cf. Introduction n. 18) and his journey to the East (cf. Introduction n. 16). He may also have known Hierocles personally (cf. Bidez *Vie de Porphyre*, p. 105 n. 5). For his editorial activity, cf. Introduction p. xiv and xvii.

⁵ cf. chap. nine p. 139.

intelligible realm. And the title of the *Sententiae*, ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά, puts the emphasis on this positive aspect.

Sententiae viii and ix make very clear statements about “separation.” *Sent.* viii ὁ ἔδησεν ἡ φύσις, τοῦτο φύσις λύει, καὶ ὁ ἔδησεν ἡ ψυχὴ, τοῦτο αὐτὴ λύει. ἔδησε μὲν φύσις σῶμα ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δὲ ἑαυτὴν ἐν σώματι. φύσις μὲν ἄρα λύει σῶμα ἐκ ψυχῆς, ψυχὴ δὲ ἑαυτὴν λύει ἐκ τοῦ σώματος. *Sent.* ix ὁ γοῦν θάνατος διπλοῦς. ὁ μὲν συνεγνωσμένος, λυομένου τοῦ σώματος ἀπὸ ψυχῆς, ὁ δὲ των φιλοσόφων, λυομένης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος· καὶ οὐ πάντως ἕτερος ἑτέρῳ ἔπεται. Here Porphyry declares that the soul both binds itself to and releases itself from body. The body in its turn is bound to and freed from soul by φύσις. The last sentence of ix is important καὶ οὐ πάντως ἕτερος ἑτέρῳ ἔπεται – “and the one mode of death (death = separation)⁶ does not follow the other at all.” They are not mutually implicative. The soul may separate itself from body before body has separated itself from soul – this would be the ascent of the soul during life. But even when the body has been released by φύσις from the soul, the soul need not have released itself from the body. Thus Porphyry seems to be implying that natural death need

⁶ Death is variously interpreted by Neoplatonists to mean

- (1) Natural death
- (2) Spiritual death (a) freedom from the world
(b) moral degeneracy.

Examples of 2b Porphyry in Procl. *In Tim.* i. 117, 7 interpreting Plato ἡθικῶς (20), Plot. *Enn.* i. 8.13, 21f. It is the first two which concern us here. Plato speaks in sense 2a of the ascetic ideal as death in life, *Gorgias* 492c5 (see Dodds’ note ad loc.). In the *Phaedo*, however, it is clear that the death to which the philosopher looks forward is the natural separation of soul and body.

The Porphyrian formula is found in Olymp. *In Phd.* p. 2, 13–18, p. 21, 22f. Macrobius (misinterpreting Plato) has all three meanings. In *In Somm. Scip.* 1.11.1 he mentions the moral death of soul and the natural death in which body and soul are separated. In I. 13.5 he elaborates on the death of the compound of soul and body. There is the natural separation and the philosopher’s separation. Though Plotinus is mentioned, Macrobius is probably drawing on Porphyry for this systematic account (just as he does for the virtues in 1.8.5).

The idea of a soul separated naturally but not spiritually is a real one for the Neoplatonists. Olympiodorus discusses (*In Phd.* 19, 3f.) what happens to a soul which is separated naturally but not philosophically. Such a soul σχετιχῶς ἔτι συνῆπται αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν ἡμίσχετον σχέσιν, ἐξ ὧν καὶ τὰ σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα περὶ τοῦς τάφους ἐνελείνται. This theme of ghosts is discussed by Proclus with the same reference to the ghost of Patroclus as occurs in Olymp. (*In Rem.* I. 119, 27f.). In Proclus also is the same reference to Plato (*Phaedo* 81d) in σκιοειδῆ ... φαντάσματα (*ibid.* 119, 20). This theory fits in with *Sent.* xxix where σχέσις to a body is retained in Hades through the stamping of an εἰδωλον on the πνεῦμα by φαντασία. (Note the importance of σχέσις in Olympiodorus. The curious term ἡμίσχετος occurs in Procl. *In Tim.* III. 277, 1 in a similar context. This peculiar term might be borrowed from Theodorus who made soul ἡμίσχετος (*In Tim.* II. 142, 26. It was a term which Olympiodorus might have heard in Damascius’ lectures (*Pr.* 131, ii. 9, 25f.)).

not be the complete release of the soul which is supported by *Sent.* xxix where the semi-material *pneuma* body remains attached to the soul of the less good man after death.

The idea of separation during life is a common theme in Plotinus, e.g. iii, 6, 5, 20 *μηκέτι ἐν σώματι γιγνομένης ὡς ἐκείνου εἶναι* and i. I. 3, 2If. *λέγω δὲ ἥ τὸ μὲν κεχωρισμένον, ὅπερ τὸ χρώμενον, τὸ δὲ μεμιγμένον ὁπωσοῦν καὶ αὐτὸ ὃν ἐν τάξει τοῦ ὧ χρεῖται, ἵνα τοῦτο ἡ φιλοσοφία καὶ αὐτὸ ἐπιστρέφῃ πρὸς τὸ χρώμενον καὶ τὸ χρώμενον ἀπάγῃ, ὅσον μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὧ χρεῖται, ὡς μὴ αἰεὶ μὴδὲ χρῆσθαι.*

This introduces the theme of man's double nature – the higher and lower soul, the inner and outer man⁷ which is brought out in the treatise on happiness especially when the isolation of the inner man from the outer man is compared to the light inside a lantern in the midst of a storm (i. 4. 8, 3f.). In chapter 16 he stresses the superiority of the inner man over the outer (19f.), *κύριος δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν τοῦ βουλεύεσθαι περὶ τούτου.* But he also stresses the importance of the body. We cannot escape by suicide. *καὶ οὐ μάτην αὐτῷ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄργανον ἐδόθη. ἐχρήσατο γὰρ αὐτῷ ἤδη πολλάκις.* The insistence on this gains additional force by its being the closing remark of the treatise. Indeed we have a duty to our body, cf. vi, 4, 15, 37f. *διδούς τῷ σώματι ὅσα δίδωσιν ὡς ἐτέρῳ ὄντι ἑαυτοῦ* and i. 4. 16, 17 *διδούς μὲν τούτῳ ὅσα πρὸς τὴν χρείαν καὶ δύνανται.*

Separation means living the life of the inner man. This life is vested in the higher or intellectual part of soul and eventually in Nous. Only the rational powers can rightly be said to lead us to this life as they alone are capable of introversion whereby we come to see the ground of our own being, the inner self. This is not to deny that the lower powers are important. They must remain "quiet" and controlled by the higher.⁸ The real life goes on at the higher level. The lower activities of man are a mere by-product of the higher self and express its life at a lower level⁹ just as the lower soul itself is a lesser manifestation of the higher soul.

Thus so far we gather that the soul can and ought to release itself from the body even before natural death and that this release is called

⁷ For inner and outer man, cf. Plot. *Enn.* vi. 4. 14–15, Porphyry *περὶ τοῦ γινῶθαι σαυτὸν* in *Stob.* III. 582. Plotinus is nowhere as explicit as Porphyry who here mentions the inner and outer man together. Plotinus calls what I have termed the outer man an addition or another man. For example in vi. 4. 14, 23 he speaks simply of another man – *ἄνθρωπος ἄλλος* – who has added himself to our true self. The phrase *τὸν εἶσω ἄνθρωπον* is used in v. 1. 10, 10 quoting Plato *Resp.* 589 a7–b1 *ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος.*

⁸ cf. vi. 4. 15, 27f.

⁹ See further below chap. five p. 75.

philosophical separation or death. But what does it mean for the human being when the soul releases itself from the body? Porphyry answers this question in very clear terms in a passage from the *Symmikta Zetemata* preserved in Nemesius 131, 5, 8 Matth. Dörrie p. 63: "Οτι δὲ καὶ ἀσυγχύτως μένει, δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν τρόπον τινὰ χωριζομένην τοῦ σώματος ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ, καὶ ὥσπερ νεκρὸν αὐτὸ κεῖσθαι καταλείπουσαν, μόνον δὲ ἐξατμίζουσιν αὐτὸ τῇ ζώῃ, ἵνα μὴ παντελῶς ἀπόληται, καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐν τοῖς ὀνείροις ἐνεργεῖν, θεσπίζουσιν τὸ μέλλον, καὶ τοῖς νοητοῖς πλησιάζουσιν. τὸ αὐτὸ δὲ συμβαίνει καὶ ὅταν καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐπισκέπτηται τι τῶν νοητῶν. καὶ τότε γὰρ ὡς οἶόν τε τοῦ σώματος ἑαυτὴν χωρίζει καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὴν γίνεται, ἵν' οὕτως ἐπιβάλλῃ τοῖς οὖσιν. In this passage Porphyry seems to imply that when we contemplate our soul is "somehow" released from its relationship with the body to such an extent that the faculties which work through the body cease to function, excepting the basic activity of breathing. This idea is based on the observation that the body in sleep lies dormant, yet we are conscious of mental activities, e.g. dreams. The conclusion from this observation is that the soul continues to be active but apart from the body.

This passage suggests that we understand the last sentence of *Sent.* ix as referring to the basic minimum of life left in the body when the soul has released itself. But on this reading οὐ πάντως must be translated "not entirely" rather than "not at all" which would be the more usual meaning. On the other hand the passage from Nemesius is quite explicit and has to be accounted for in some way. It would seem to be a more extreme version of the idea that contemplation involves being dead to the world. All mental activity must be turned towards the incorporeal and even perception will probably cease. Plotinus, too, sometimes thinks of contemplation or separation in this way as a special activity when we are dead to the world.¹⁰ Such contemplation would have to be intermittent and therefore imperfect. This concept of contemplation is also bound to stress the distractions of this world and the difficulty of turning to the intelligible realm.

Such an interpretation seems, however, to present grave problems. Did Porphyry really think of contemplation in this way as nothing more than a sort of trance state? Did he think that contemplation was always only an intermittent activity? Whilst granting that Plotinus and, perhaps to a greater extent, Porphyry did consider contemplation in this way, they also, I think, have what one might call a more optimistic

¹⁰ iv. 8.1, 1f.; vi. 9.10, 1f. imply intermittent contemplation. iv. 3.12 suggests escape from the body.

approach where it is clear that contemplation, far from being intermittent, can and must be a permanent state which does not prevent us from exercising our lower functions. In this optimistic approach a man may both live a fully noetic life whilst at the same time conducting his earthly life in a normal manner. This seems to be the meaning of a long passage in the treatise on Providence.¹¹ In i. 4. 10 Plotinus tells us that it is not important if the lower self is not aware of the νόησις of the higher self.¹² A similar idea is contained in iv. 3. 30 where, as in i. 4. 10, he explains that we are aware of our νόησις only when the faculty of φαντασία reflects an image of the activity taking place "above." In fact Plotinus seems to prefer νόησις which is not accompanied by an image that brings it to the consciousness of the lower self. See also iv. 8. 8 on this. This νόησις would appear to be something more than the sort of intellectual activity which produced the *Enneads* as philosophy. What is particularly interesting here is the utterly transcendent nature of νόησις. When Plotinus says that the lower self is sometimes not aware of the active contemplation of the higher self he implies that this lower self is not merely idling or vegetating but can be actively engaged in the business of living. Despite the imagined accusation in ch. 11 that Plotinus' wise man would not even be *living* by normal standards it is clear that Plotinus does not preclude all normal activity and simply suggest a vegetable life for the lower self. The example of the man under torture shows this (ch. 13). The whole point of this example is that the poor man really is feeling pain. He is fully conscious of this pain and knows just where he is – in the torture chamber. Plotinus fully admits here perception and consciousness of (and, by implication, activity in) the material world whilst we have the vision of the noetic world. What is new is that man has a higher self, his real self, which is completely independent of his earthly troubles. The two exist and operate side by side and simultaneously. Moreover it is made clear throughout this treatise that happiness, which is equated with contemplation, may be a continuous state, which once it has been attained may be a permanent activity which is not incompatible with the activity of the lower self. Thus contemplation is reconciled with action and perception within the material world.¹³

There is evidence that makes it likely that Porphyry, too, considered

¹¹ See below ch. Five p. 74, and comment.

¹² i. 4.10 should be taken in conjunction with chap 4 of the same treatise. See also below ch. Three, p. 43f.

¹³ See further p. 75 on action and contemplation.

νόησις to be reconcilable with the continuance of our lower lives. In *Sent.* xxxii p. 21, 16ff. (*Sent.* xxxii is concerned with virtue) he tells us that those who possess the greater virtues (i.e. the virtues which exist on a higher ontological level) also possess the lesser. These lesser virtues, which belong to a lower ontological level, are activated no longer by free choice (They *are* activated by free choice in the case of the man who has not aspired beyond these lower virtues) but as the circumstances of one's involvement in the world demand *καὶ ὁ μὲν ἔχων τὰς μείζους ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔχει καὶ τὰς ἐλάττους, οὐ μὴν τοῦμπαλιν. οὐκ ἐτι μέντοι τῷ ἔχειν καὶ τὰς ἐλάττους ὁ ἔχων τὰς μείζους ἐνεργήσει καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐλάττους προηγουμένως, ἀλλὰ μόνον κατὰ περίστασιν τὴν τῆς γενέσεως.*

Just as we would expect, the lower virtues can no longer be the main concern of the good man. He acts at an ontologically higher level, but the lower levels of his being continue to be the scene of activity (*ἐνεργήσει*), though the activity is no longer the direct concern (*προηγουμένως*) of the ascended self but seems to occur automatically.¹⁴ Thus at the highest level of the virtues, the paradigmatic virtues, our nous will be active in the intelligible realm whilst at the same time, though in a secondary way, we shall be able to operate noetically at the highest level of soul and politically or socially even lower down in the scale.

In his *Life of Plotinus* Porphyry makes a comment which also casts some light on our problem. In the eighth chapter he remarks on Plotinus' great powers of concentration. If he had been working and someone interrupted him he was able to keep his train of thought even after a long conversation. He could take part in a conversation and at the same time (*ἅμα*) keep his mind fixed on what he was considering. When the discussion ended and he was alone again he could start off his work again from the point where he left off without rereading what he had written. Porphyry's final comment is worthy of note. *συνῆν οὖν καὶ ἑαυτῷ ἅμα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις* (19). The phrase seems to give additional weight and universal significance to a simple idea and the wording

¹⁴ This is perhaps how the whole Soul rules over the cosmos; cf. in this chapter p. 31f. and the discussion of ii. 9.18 on p. 78 chap. V. For *περίστασις* (= circumstances) cf. *S.V.F.* 3, 135, *τὰ κατὰ περίστασιν καθήκοντα* – duties dependent on circumstances. Further, *Cic. Att.* 16.11.4. *Plot. Enn.* i. 4, 13, 3 *περιστατικαί* of the external activities of man as opposed to contemplation, cf. also iv. 8.4, 19. The Porphyry passage closely follows *Plot.* i. 2.7 although Porphyry is more explicit about the continuance of lower virtues when we ascend.

For *προηγουμένως* (also *Sent.* xxxii p. 18, 12). *Theopr. de Igne*, 14 = principally, as opposed to *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, and in Stoic terminology means chiefly, as guiding principle, cf. *Zeno S.V.F.* I. 57, 20. *Julian, Or.* 8. 242c and is opposed to *κατὰ περίστασιν* by *Arrian - Epicteti Dissertationes* 3.14.7.

implies the metaphysical background of union with the real self and the intelligible world. Porphyry is suggesting that Plotinus could be in two realms at the same time.

Another factor to be taken into account is the doctrine that the lower soul continues to exist and act in a generic form¹⁵ after death and the return of the self to the intelligible realm. This doctrine suggests that Porphyry thought that contemplation and action, in this case νόησις and ἐπιμέλεια τοῦ κόσμου, the twin functions of the soul according to Plato, could be ultimately reconciled.

Finally we might note the optimism of Synesius in this regard when in *de Insomniis* – a work which owes much to Porphyry – he refers to the benefits of spiritual ascent and implies that the lofty position of the soul when it has ascended helps it to govern its body. μένουσα ἀτρεμῆς (ψυχῇ) δώσει τῷ ζῳῷ τὰ τῶν γινομένων ἰνδάλματα (i.e. insight into future events). καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸ λεγόμενον, κατιόντα μὴ κατιέναι, ὅταν ἀσχέτως ὁ κρείττων ἐπιμελῇται τοῦ χειρόνος (*de Ins.* p. 167, 1f.). The paradox in κατιόντα μὴ κατιέναι expresses the whole difficulty in trying to express this optimistic concept of ascent in suitable language. Separation or ascent has many different meanings as also has the opposite, “descent.” Synesius uses a traditional paradox, the origin of which is unknown (it may refer to the Plotinian doctrine that the highest part of the soul does not descend) in order to express the idea that the soul separated from the body and amidst the intelligibles can yet at the same time be present and active in the body. The contradiction here, which is basic to the optimistic concept of the spiritual life in Plotinus and Porphyry will, we hope, be elucidated in the present chapter. But we will firstly say a word about the dual function of soul as seen by the Neoplatonists to which we referred above because this is the starting point and context of all discussion about the nature and role of man in the whole cosmos.

The origin of the distinction between the inner and outer man, contemplative man and man as active in the world, is to be found in Plato. This is closely bound up with the notion of soul as occupying a mid-position between the real world of Forms and the derived world of sense experience. Plato sees soul under two main headings in respect of its functions;

- (a) It gives life to body
- (b) It is its true self when freed from the body and when contemplating the Forms.

¹⁵ See below ch. Four, p. 65f.

For (a) we might refer to *Phdr.* 246b.6 ψυχὴ πᾶσα παντὸς ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἀψύχου: cf. also *Epinomis* 981b. 7f. τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ σχεδὸν ὅ μόνῳ πλάττειν καὶ δημιουργεῖν προσήκει. The notion of the true soul as the disembodied soul comes out clearly all through the *Phaedo* and in the Glaucus simile of *Rep.* x. 611d.

These two functions of soul seem at times diametrically opposed. Yet Plato does attempt a reconciliation in the *Phaedrus* passage. There he distinguishes two types of soul – that which remains in flight and that which falls or loses its wings. The former πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖ (*Phdr.* 246c. 1) whilst the latter is carried down ἕως ἂν στερεοῦ τινος ἀντιλάβηται . . . ζῶον τὸ σύμπαν ἐκλήθη, ψυχὴ καὶ σῶμα παγέν. At first sight this seems to be a contrast between embodied and disembodied souls. But it is not so simple. The winged souls too govern the cosmos – but it is the *whole* cosmos that they govern.¹⁶ This observation lies at the heart of an idea developed by Plotinus in which he distinguishes the partial nature of the fallen souls' activity from the universal scope of the activity of the world Soul.¹⁷ For Plato the fallen souls no longer have a clear vision of god – οὔτε ἰδόντες οὔτε ἱκανῶς νοήσαντες θεόν (*ibid.* c. 7) – and think of him as a sort of super, immortal ζῶον. The winged souls on the other hand know god and still take part in the running of the universe. Here the two functions which belong to the nature of the soul are reconciled.

But once the soul has taken charge of a particular body and channelled its energies into an individual body, can it still see the Forms? Plato seems to have been more pessimistic than either Plotinus or Porphyry, and, in seeing life as a preparation for death, he was thinking of the death of the body which frees the soul, whilst Plotinus and to some extent Porphyry were indifferent to death in the natural sense and aimed only at the philosophical death whereby the soul, "separated" from the body, could see and live on the level of true being even during its earthly sojourn. This is not to deny that the earthly life of the individual is a great impediment and that some form of escape from

¹⁶ This passage is quoted by Plotinus in V 8.7, 4–5, vi 1.2, 9 (= *Phaedr.* 245c), cf. Sallustius xxi, Procl. *In Tim.* iii 296, 25f.

¹⁷ The same Platonic idea was used in Christian circles as early as Justin; cf. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, p. 16, "The appearances of God in the Old Testament refer to the son and cannot be the supreme Father since he is too far removed to have direct contact with this inferior realm and cannot have abandoned his universal care for the cosmos as a whole to become circumscribed by incarnation in one small corner of the world." The argument is turned against the Christians by Celsus – cf. *Contra Celsum* iv. 36; vi 78.

individual reincarnation was seen as desirable. But such an escape is, for Porphyry at least, only possible when full philosophical separation has been achieved during the earthly life.

Let us restate the problem. For a Platonist soul has by its nature a double function. The object of the philosophic life is to fulfil these two functions and to fulfil them simultaneously in so far as this is possible. Thus the soul must be at the same time transcendent and immanent, corresponding with the two fields of the soul's activity – the world of real being and the world of sensibles.

In the Plotinian system the paradox is partly resolved by pointing to the virtually double nature of the soul. Soul as we saw in the last chapter exists and operates on two levels – in the intelligible world and in the visible world. It operates “here” in the visible world by means of a presence achieved through an emanating power, a sort of lower soul.

Having shown the connection between the general principle of emanation and the way in which soul becomes involved with the material world, it remains to pursue further the implications of the connection and the approach of Plotinus and Porphyry to the reconciliation of the two functions of the soul. This examination will also help to bring out the double meaning inherent in the Neoplatonic concept of the “descent” of the soul. The same ambiguity will be seen to apply also to the concept of ascent or separation, for descent and separation are closely related movements.

The dual function of soul Plotinus often explains by the application of the theory of double activity. The theory, as we have explained elsewhere, runs through the whole system of Plotinus connecting hypostasis to hypostasis. We have also shown how it is applicable to soul. We must now turn to one more factor involved in this theory. Basically it is a theory of development which accounts for the gradual unfolding of the universe from the highest principle. Because in the highest principle, the One, unity is identified with goodness, clearly any evolution from unity to plurality will be seen as a diminution in goodness. Thus it is that Plotinus sometimes sees the emanation of the hypostases as something evil, e.g., iii. 8.8, 32 ἀλλὰ ἀρξάμενος ὡς ἐν οὐχ ὡς ἤρξατο ἔμεινεν, ἀλλ’ ἔλαθεν ἑαυτὸν πολὺς γενόμενος, οἷον βεβαρημένος, καὶ ἐξείλιξεν αὐτὸν πάντα ἔχειν θέλων – ὡς βέλτιον ἢ αὐτῷ μὴ ἐθελῆσαι τοῦτο, δεύτερον γὰρ ἐγένετο. This revolt is termed *τόλμα*, cf. vi. 9.5, 29 ἀποστῆναι δέ πως τοῦ ἐνὸς τολμήσας.¹⁸ This is elsewhere seen as a kind

¹⁸ For *τόλμα* in Plotinus and Gnostic *τόλμα*, see the remarks of A. H. Armstrong *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* p. 242f.

of self assertion.¹⁹ Similarly the revolt of Soul is criticized in at least two places in the *Enneads*. iii. 7. 11, 15f. φύσεως δὲ πολυπράγμονος καὶ ἄρχειν αὐτῆς βουλομένης καὶ εἶναι αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ πλεόν τοῦ παρόντος ζητεῖν ἐλομένης ἐκινήθη μὲν αὐτή . . . (20) ἐπεὶ γὰρ ψυχῆς ἦν τις δύναμις οὐχ ἡσυχος . . . (29) πρῶτον μὲν ἑαυτὴν ἐχρόνωσεν. Here the essential nature of soul which distinguishes it from Nous is closely connected with its creative activity. So too v. 2.1, 18f. ἡ δὲ (Soul as opposed to Nous) οὐ μένουσα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινηθεῖσα ἐγέννα εἰδωλον. ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα, ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾷ εἰδωλον . . .

Yet elsewhere Plotinus tells us of the necessity of emanation and that the world produced at the end of this process is not an evil one but merely a poor reproduction since it is the final image of a chain of mirror reflections.²⁰ In fact the double ἐνέργεια theory would seem to demand such an interpretation since the external ἐνέργεια is produced only because there is a (logically) prior and perfect inner activity. And such indeed is the case in general but Plotinus like any Monist will find it difficult to avoid calling plurality an evil.

Plotinus sometimes accuses Nous or Soul of self assertion but he does this much more frequently with the individual soul. And here we come to the main point of our discussion. We have shown how Plotinus used the principle of double activity to explain the relationship even of the individual soul to the hypostasis underneath it. Such a theory, as we have seen, suggests the necessity of emanation and can involve responsibility and prehension only in the sense that any of the hypostases is guilty of this. But Plotinus regards the individual soul as more guilty than any of the higher hypostases. The hypostasis Soul and the individual souls must differ in some way and our state of separation from the One can only be explained by a further factor.

The main difference between individual soul and Soul lies in the scope of their activity in the material world. The outer activity of the individual soul differs from that of Soul in the way in which it is administered since it is directed to a particular part of the cosmos and not to the cosmos in general. We noted the origin of this idea in Plato.

¹⁹ cf. v. 1.1, 3-5. Ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐταῖς τοῦ κακοῦ ἡ τόλμα καὶ ἡ γένεσις καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἑτερότης καὶ τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι.

²⁰ cf. iv. 3.17, where Plotinus makes disparaging remarks about individual souls and then compares their action with that of Nous. Necessity is at work but there is something defective in its operation in causing the externalising of hypostases. The idea of a gradual weakening in procession in Porphy. *Sent.* xxviii p. 12, 15; xxxvii p. 33, 18; xiii.

In iii. 9.3 Plotinus insists on the difference between *πᾶσα ψυχή* and *ἄλλαι ψυχαί*. The main points in which individual souls differ are:

- (1) There is movement in the partial souls.
- (2) They are somehow related –
 - (a) to the *πᾶσα ψυχή* because of their movement from it.
 - (b) to the bodies which they have entered.

The whole Soul is different – *ἡ πᾶσα ψυχή οὐδαμοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἦλθεν* (1f.). Here is neither relation nor movement. Yet this does not take us too far since Soul is said in iii. 5.3 to have contact (relation) with the earth through its later phase, the World Soul. The first Soul is separate – *χωριστήν* (22) – and equated with Love. A lower level of Love accompanies the Soul of the universe which is below the first Soul and connected to it, (27) *ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς ψυχὴν εἶναι ἔδει, ὑπέστη μετὰ ταύτης ἥδη καὶ ὁ ἄλλος Ἔρωσ ὅμιμα καὶ ταύτης, ἐξ ὁρέξεως καὶ αὐτὸς γεγεννημένος*. Thus we have distinguished Soul and World Soul, the former being *χωριστή*. But how does the individual soul differ from the complex Soul/World Soul? For the individual soul is here contrasted with the World Soul. The difference cannot lie between transcendent and immanent since the World Soul is also immanent in the world, but rather in the contrast between the particular and the general nature of the operation of Soul and souls.

This difference is most forcefully expressed in iv. 8. 2, 26f., *διττὴ γὰρ ἐπιμέλεια παντός, τοῦ μὲν καθόλου κελεύσει κοσμοῦντος ἀπράγμονι ἐπιστάσι βασιλικῇ, τὸ δὲ καθέκαστα ἥδη αὐτουργῶ τινι ποιήσει συναφῇ τῇ πρὸς τὸ πραττόμενον τὸ πρᾶττον τοῦ πραττομένου τῆς φύσεως ἀναπιμπλάσας*. And also, iv. 8.4, 5f., the various ranks of soul *ἀπήμονας μὲν εἶναι μετὰ τῆς ὅλης μενούσας ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, ἐν οὐρανῷ δὲ μετὰ τῆς ὅλης συνδιοικεῖν ἐκείνῃ*, but on embodiment (10) *μεταβάλλουσαι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ὅλου εἰς τὸ μέρος . . . ἀποστᾶσα καὶ μὴ πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν βλέπῃ, μέρος γενομένη μονοῦται τε καὶ ἀσθενεῖ καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖ καὶ πρὸς μέρος βλέπει . . . στραφεῖσα εἰς τὸ ἐν (= the particular)*. Similarly, vi. 4.16, 29, *ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ τὸ μέρος ἀποκρύπτουσα οἷον ἐξέθορον*²¹ *ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς εἰς μέρος, εἰς ὃ ἐνείργει ἑαυτὴν μέρος ὄν . . .* (34) *ἐνεργεῖα γένηται τὸ καθέκαστον*.

The same idea is contained in the notion of a twofold providence, iii. 3.4, 11f., *κάκεινα πρόνοια (= ἡ τελεία πρόνοια 9) ἡ ἄνωθεν, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς*

²¹ A possible borrowing from the *Chaldaean Oracles* where it is used of procession. Kroll p. 23 *ἐξέθορον*, p. 20 *τοῦδε γὰρ ἐκθρόσκουσιν ἀμείλικτοί τε κεραυνοί*; cf. also p. 25 and the usage in Synesius *Hymn* 1, 408 *ἐκπροθορών*; 2, 123 *προθορών*; *ibid* 137; 4, 4; 9, 66, 69.

Compare the use of *exsilio*, *prosilio* and *proexsilio* (Synesius, *ἐκπροθρόσκω*!) in Victorinus.

ἄνω, and iii. 3.5, 14, ἐν δὲ ἐκ πάντων καὶ πρόνοια μία. εἰμαρμένη δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ χείρονος ἀρξάμενη, τὸ δὲ ὑπεράνω πρόνοια μόνον.

The “kingly” or “royal” presence of the World Soul and its ease in ruling the cosmos as contrasted with the difficulty which the individual soul experiences are both reduceable to the general or particular nature of their respective charges. Thus iv. 8.2, 9, σκεδασθέντος μὲν ἂν ἐκάστου καὶ πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον τόπον φερομένου . . . πολλῆς δὲ καὶ ὀχλώδους προνοίας δεομένων, ἅτε πολλῶν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων αὐτοῖς προσπιπτόντων ἀεὶ τε ἐνδεία συνεχομένων καὶ πάσης βοηθείας ὡς ἐν πολλῇ δυσχερείᾳ δεομένων. Τὸ δὲ τέλος τὸν καὶ ἱκανὸν καὶ αὐταρκες καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχον αὐτῷ παρὰ φύσιν βραχέος οἶον κελεύσματος δεῖται. We hear elsewhere of the imperfection of the individual parts of the cosmos. So iv. 3.10, 22, Ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ὑστέροις ἄλληλα ἐμποδίζοντα πολλάκις ἀποστερεῖται τοῦ τυχεῖν μορφῆς τῆς οἰκείας, ἣν ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν σμιχρῷ θέλει. ἐκεῖ δὲ γιγνομένης καὶ τῆς ὅλης μορφῆς ὑπ’ αὐτῆς καὶ τάξιν τῶν γενομένων ἅμα ἐχόντων ἀπόνως τὸ γενόμενον καὶ ἀνεμποδίστως καλὸν ἐστι. The contrast lies between the individual and the universe as a whole. The passage also points to the double nature of providence.

The World Soul is rather startlingly called *πολυπράγμων* iii. 7.11, 15. This term is used elsewhere²² in the *Enneads* to indicate the state of partition, of being directed to and animating only a part of the cosmos, which is the hallmark of the individual soul. The general tone of the passage is unusual and we have suggested reasons above for this. The overwhelming usage of Plotinus shows that it was just this aspect of *πολυπραγμοσύνη* which distinguished the individual soul from the World Soul. We should, therefore, regard it as one of those inevitable passages where the imperfection of plurality is seen against the perfection of the One.

At this point an impasse is reached. The Procession of one level from its higher is something necessary and good insofar as it completes the universe. On the other hand plurality is a defection from unity and goodness. At each level hypostases are being diverted from their inward and upward orientated function by a necessary downward directed activity. Plotinus solves this problem by claiming that the whole hypostases, Soul and Nous, can perform their lower functions without prejudicing their higher activities. With the individual souls, however, the matter stands somewhat differently. They would appear to have lost all chance of such a reconciliation by the depth of their involvement

²² cf. iv. 8.4, 15 above; v. 3.3, 17.

in the world of multiplicity and particularity. Yet their involvement with particular bodies may also be seen as a necessary stage in procession since there can be no world without individuals and fully actualised particulars. How, then, can they be treated as "guilty?"

In *Ennead* iv. 8 Plotinus addresses himself to the problem of reconciling the necessity of individual embodiment with the feeling that the individual is somehow guilty and responsible for what is a misfortune in being brought to this imperfect world. This is the import of the opening words of iv. 8. 5. He attempts to reconcile free, responsible choice and necessity by appealing to the traditional concept of a first and subsequent fall into body.²³ This concept distinguished the first embodiment of soul which was caused by god (but which might also be caused by *τόλμα*) from subsequent incarnations which were caused by personal wickedness in the previous life. In iv. 8. 5, 16 Plotinus distinguishes two *ἀμαρτίαι*. Διττῆς δὲ τῆς ἀμαρτίας οὐσης, τῆς μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ κατελθεῖν αἰτίᾳ, τῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐνθάδε γενομένην κακὰ δρᾶσαι, ἥ μὲν ἔστιν αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὃ πέπονθε κατελθοῦσα, τῆς δὲ τὸ ἔλαττον εἰς σώματα ἄλλα δύναι . . . The first is its very descent to the world and its embodied state. The second is its doing wicked actions after being embodied, which involves it in further incarnations. This implies the concept of first and second fall. In the first fall the soul is sent by god or chooses to descend in a pure state. It may and should return again after its death (*ibid.* 27 καὶ μὲν θᾶττον φύγῃ), but if it should act wickedly it is condemned to return again to this world. In a sense this further fall is caused by god insofar as the soul obeys a universal law that it should return, but it has brought this punishment on itself by its own wickedness during its first life. The soul's free choice to live well or badly in its first life now involves it in a necessary and binding result. If it lives badly, it must descend again to body and be bound there. Every incarnation after the first represents a greater fall from perfection. Being an individual in the world becomes increasingly dangerous. In fact in this traditional frame of reference all subsequent incarnations are a punishment for wrongs done in the previous life and it is difficult to escape from the cycle.

Although Plotinus does mention the possibility of a quick return (a temporary escape, as permanent escape is not allowed) to our heavenly origin, meaning in the traditional sense that we will not be reincarnated for a while at least, he gives the impression that few, if any, will

²³ cf. Festugière *Révélation* III p. 77ff.

attain this. Instead he holds out to us something we can achieve during our earthly life. He is conscious that it is not traditional. In iv. 8. 8 and iv. 8. 4 he says that part of the soul has not descended and that we can live on this higher level even during our earthly life. This is the kind of escape and freedom of soul to release itself which Porphyry expresses in *Sent.* viii, and ix. He is a little pessimistic and may here regard this life at the higher level as something intermittent and not as a permanent state but it is clear that Plotinus stakes all on this means of freedom. We shall see that by choosing to stress this kind of liberation of the soul rather than an escape from reincarnation he is trying to reconcile the two functions of soul. (Plotinus accepted the necessity of embodiment and of the lower function of the soul.) In the traditional scheme of reincarnation the higher function of the soul could be exercised fully only after death. The two functions are thus reconciled in a chronologically determined way. Plotinus sometimes accepts this, but in iv, 8, 8 he is also struggling to express the optimistic aspect whereby the higher and lower functions can be achieved simultaneously.

In ii. 9. 7, Plotinus again explains the difference between Soul and soul. To draw conclusions about Soul from the nature of individual souls is as if someone were to pick out just potters or smiths from a whole city and treat them as if they were the whole city. The idea of the twofold providence shows itself at the end of ch. 7 in the image of the tortoise amidst the dancers. Individual souls are under the lower providence. They are bound to individual bodies and are passive whilst Soul actively binds the whole body of the universe. At the end of the following chapter, however, he says that we can escape from the world whenever we want to. He is addressing the Gnostics against whom this treatise is directed. 8, 42 τί μέμφεσθε εἰς ὃν ἐκόντες ἤλθετε διδόντος καὶ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι, εἴ τις μὴ ἀρέσκειτο; The sort of escape which he suggests they might be interested in is the escape from reincarnation. The Gnostics particularly wished to avoid reincarnation as for them the universe was positively evil, a doctrine which Plotinus quite clearly rejects. For him this world is a reflection of the intelligible world. Bodily escape is not necessary as we infer when he immediately adds to his previous question this further rhetorical question – εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τόδε τὸ πᾶν, ὥς ἐξεῖναι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ σοφίαν ἔχειν καὶ ἐνταῦθα ὄντας βιοῦν κατ' ἐκεῖνα, πῶς οὐ μαρτυρεῖ ἐξηρητῆσθαι τῶν ἐκεί; We can live the higher life during our earthly life. This is confirmed in chapter 18 where Plotinus encourages us to live like the whole Soul during our earthly lives (see further p. 78).

In both iv. 8 and ii. 9 an attempt is made to reconcile the soul's innate inner activity of contemplation in the intelligible world with its external duties in the material world. Whilst Plotinus views all movement to plurality as defective he is equally insistent that ontological procession is a good and necessary thing. It is a natural law that procession takes place, cf. iv. 8. 6, 12, οὐκ ἔδει στήσαι (the infinite power of the One) οὐκ περιγράφαντα φθόνῳ, χωρεῖν δὲ αἰεί . . . The soul is bound by this law to become involved in the world even as an individual since the outer activity of soul is as necessary as its inner activity. Yet despite the soul's being bound to an individual body by the law of metaphysics or by its own misbehaviour it is at all times free to leave that body and live on the higher level. Plotinus chooses not to emphasize the traditional idea of a certain sojourn in heaven after bodily death but the freedom to attain that release while we are living our lives. This is the vital element of freedom seen also in Porphyry and to correspond with this freedom real enslavement is not merely embodiment but lack of willingness to raise oneself here and now from moral degradation. Plotinus seems to mean two things when he talks of fall and ascent or return of the soul. He may be talking of the fall as embodiment and return as the opposite process after death. But equally important to him is the concept of ascent during life and equally of fall during life when we fail to turn to the intelligible world and our higher self.

This distinction of two meanings is vitally important to an understanding of the optimistic attitude to contemplation which we analysed earlier. If a man can live at the higher level even during his early life and if that may be a continuous state then the factor in his life which determines his spiritual status is somehow independent of the ontological factor of his embodiment. Embodiment does not necessarily imply spiritual degeneration nor is the reverse true. Embodiment and release from body at death are concerned with the actual ontological presence of soul whereby it gives life to a body by means of an external power identifiable with its lower phase. The spiritual ascent/descent is not concerned with the metaphysical procession but with the inner life which is perhaps more vital. We will term this life of inner ascent and fall the spiritual life to distinguish it from the ontological life. It embraces the moral and spiritual attitude of the individual which is the vital aspect of his experience and which cannot be identified with any one particular level of reality or being.

If we turn to Porphyry we will find a similar picture. That he, too, could accept the optimistic aspect of contemplation has already been

shown and he also employs the concept of a first and second fall of the soul. But there are some important differences. Porphyry seems to lay much more emphasis than Plotinus on actual escape from the body. The concept of a primary fall is appealed to more frequently by him and is used very precisely. He makes the first descent purely necessary and introduces will as a factor only in subsequent descents. It is true that by "will" in the first fall Plotinus does not mean will in our sense²⁴ but Porphyry would seem to have played down or eliminated this factor and given special emphasis to the necessity of the first descent. The idea of a fault in descent does appear in Porphyry²⁵ but it may not refer to the first descent. But even if it does this hardly compensates for the stressing of necessity in the texts which follow. Porphyry's mode of expression here suggests that he laid special emphasis on the traditional aspects of the scheme of cosmic reincarnation which, as we have noted, are relatively unimportant to Plotinus. The further implications of this will be dealt with in chapters Four and Five.

Augustine in *Civ. Dei* x, 30 (Bidez, *de Regr.* fr. 11, 1, p. 39*4) reporting on Porphyry's *de regressu animae* says that Porphyry declared the soul to be sent by god into the world. This suggests that the fall into body is necessary rather than freely chosen. *Dicit etiam ad hoc Deum mundo dedisse, ut materiae cognoscens mala ad Patrem recurreret nec aliquando iam talium polluta contagione teneretur.* The full implications of the latter phrase must be left until a later chapter. The purpose of the soul's descent is to learn evil so that it will never be embodied again. This is very close to *Enn.* iv, 8, 5, 27f. καὶν μὲν θᾶττον φύγῃ, οὐδὲν βέβλαπται γνῶσιν κακοῦ προσλαβοῦσα καὶ φύσιν κακίας γνοῦσα . . . and Plotinus, we said, meant by this the πρώτη κάθοδος of the soul. The necessity of the first embodiment is also mentioned by Porphyry in *Stob.* ii, 172, 15f.

Μοῖραν δ' οὐ τινά φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν

οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.

Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ πρώτου καὶ ἀπαραβάτου εἴη ἂν λέγων βίου· περὶ δὲ τοῦ δευτέρου, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, Synesius also entertains the idea that the soul is sent down by god (*Hymn* 1, 573f.). It descends to earth as a servant,

²⁴ cf. iv. 3.17, 17f. where Plotinus tackles the same problem of reconciling free will and necessity in emanation. Again he combines the two and lets us understand that free choice in the case of souls in the intelligible world is not a deliberative process but rather instinctive. He is, however, quite insistent on this element of "freedom" that the individual soul has.

²⁵ See note 20 of this chapter, on weakening in procession and ch. One n. 2 on ῥοπή. The inclusion of "will" may also refer more to the inner spiritual ascent/descent.

κατέβαν ἀπὸ σοῦ
 χθονὶ θητεῦσαι·
 ἀντὶ δὲ θήσας
 γενόμεναι δούλαι·
 ὕλα με μάγοις
 ἐπέδησε τέχναις.

It is almost certain that Porphyry is Synesius' source. The same image is used in *de Ins.* p. 159, 14f. which certainly makes use of Porphyrian material as Lang²⁶ has shown. θῆσσα γὰρ κατιοῦσα τὸν πρῶτον βίον ἐθελοντῆς ἀντὶ τοῦ θητεῦσαι δουλεύει· ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἦν λειτουργίαν τινὰ ἐκπλῆσαι τῇ φύσει τοῦ κόσμου, θεσμῶν Ἀδρασταίας ἐπιταττόντων. γοητευθεῖσα δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν δώρων τῆς ὕλης, πάθος πέπονθε παραπλήσιον ἐλευθέρους ἐπὶ συγκείμενον χρόνον μεμισθωμένοις, οἳ κάλλει θεραπαινῆς ἐνσχεθέντες μένειν ἐθέλουσι, τῷ κυρίῳ τῆς ἐρωμένης δουλεύειν ὁμολογήσαντες. Note the reference in τὸν πρῶτον βίον to the πρώτη κάθοδος concept. Soul comes to earth as a servant obeying the laws of necessity but may by an act of the will (ἐθελοντῆς) make herself into a slave. She performs a λειτουργία or service to nature – φύσις. The πρώτη κάθοδος is mentioned on p. 161, 7, ὅλως δὲ οἱ βίοι πάντες ἐν πλάνῃ, τῇ μὴ μετὰ τὴν πρώτην κάθοδον ἀναδραμούση. The concept of λειτουργία also appears in Porphyry *de Abs.* iv, 18, p. 258, 13, αὐτοὶ δὲ (οἱ Βραχμᾶνες) οὕτω πρὸς θάνατον διάκεινται, ὥς τὸν μὲν τοῦ ζῆν χρόνον ὥσπερ ἀναγκαίαν τινὰ τῇ φύσει λειτουργίαν ἀκουσίως ὑπομένειν, σπεύδειν δὲ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπολῦσαι τῶν σωματίων. He clearly quotes this idea with approval. It is interesting to note that the Βραχμᾶνες are looking forward to death when the body is separated from the soul. This fits in with the more precise interpretation of the πρώτη κάθοδος in Porphyry – that we should try to return after our first fall. In *Enn.* iv. 4. 34, 1f. the same image of servant and slave occurs. We should submit to the world only partially, just as wise servants do not give themselves entirely over to their masters but retain something, thus not becoming slaves. The same elements are present. There is service to the world and being enslaved to the world. But Plotinus is not referring to a πρώτη κάθοδος. The image of servant is not merely applicable at our first entry into body but is cast in the form of general advice which applies in every case of embodiment. All of this is fully in accord with the way in which he deals with πρώτη κάθοδος in iv. 8. 5. An important difference shows

²⁶ W. Lang, *Das Traumbuch des Synesios* p. 65–66, Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte, x. Tübingen, 1926.

itself between Porphyry and Plotinus in their handling of what must have been a common image.²⁷ For Plotinus man always has the chance of being a servant. In Porphyry he has that chance only once.

We will finally survey the ground we have covered. It was seen that Porphyry and Plotinus regarded contemplation in two ways. Sometimes they see it as an intermittent activity which can be achieved only by the cessation of our normal bodily and earthly duties. At other times they believe that contemplation may take place continuously without prejudicing our normal earthly life. The separation of soul from body is, under these conditions, something independent of the normal presence of soul in body. Plotinus and Porphyry were here attempting to reconcile the dual function of soul as laid down by Plato. Soul had a life of its own as contemplation and had to give life to body. The Neoplatonic reconciliation is based on man's dual nature, a higher and a lower self, an inner and outer man. As we saw in chapter one the double *ἐνέργεια* theory was used to explain how the higher soul is present in body by means of an external activity (lower soul). This theory presupposes that the external *ἐνέργεια* is a purely necessary activity derived from the internal activity of the soul. Plotinus accepts this in the case of Soul but still claims that the individual soul is somehow responsible for its involvement in the world. It rules over an individual body and thus channels its energies to one small area. Yet even individuals are necessary to complete the world. In iv. 8 he tries to reconcile the idea of guilt with the necessity of procession and world fulfilment by reference to the idea of a primary and secondary fall into body. The individual soul gains knowledge of evil and helps to complete the world but it will return straight away if it retains its purity. If it succumbs it will be forced to be reincarnated.

However, Plotinus chooses not to stress the immediate escape from reincarnation but lays greater stress on a way in which we can escape from the body whilst being still embodied. We can return to our higher selves even whilst attached to individual bodies. We can imitate the

²⁷ The idea of service is also to be found in the *Chaldaean Oracles* e.g. Psell. 1129c.

Δίξο<καί> ψυχῆς ὀχετόν, ὅθεν ἐν τινι τάξει
σώματι θητεύσας ...

and, commenting on the oracles, Procl. *In Rem.* ii. 99, 1 καὶ οἱ θεοὶ φασιν τὴν γένεσιν (sc. ψυχᾶς) ἐπιστρεφομένους θητεύειν, ἀλλ' ἀδαμάστω τῷ αὐχένι θητευσάσας ἀνάγεσθαι πάλιν ἐντεῦθεν. These are the souls which have not yielded to matter and become slaves. Cf. further *Plat. Theol.* 302, 3 τῆς περὶ ὕλην θητείας; *In Tim.* i. 34,4 τὸ θητεῦον περὶ τὴν γένεσιν. See Kroll p. 48, 51; Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 189, n. 45.

way in which the whole Soul transcends the cosmos whilst still attending to its duties there. This is a more satisfactory reconciliation of the functions of soul since they can be achieved simultaneously. By this he reconciles the presence of soul in individual bodies, which involves being chained to multiplicity and *εἰμαρμένη*, with the true freedom in the unity and universality of the intelligible world. A more radical reconciliation of the two functions of the individual soul has been achieved than in the appeal to the traditional formula of a first and second fall in which the higher function of the soul is achieved only when the lower function is ended. The soul may now at any time fulfil both functions at once. This brings us back to the optimistic aspect of contemplation.

It is necessary here to distinguish two movements – an ontological movement by which embodiment and release take place and an independent movement of spiritual ascent and descent. It is only in this way that the independence of Plotinus' *σπουδαῖος* can be fully appreciated and an adequate assessment of his mystical transcendence made.

Porphyry, too, seems to have accepted the idea of the optimistic type of contemplation. But he displays also a tendency to see man's progress defined more precisely within the framework of reincarnations. The idea of primary and secondary fall seems for him to have retained its traditional emphasis. He would appear to have accepted the idea of an escape from reincarnation after the first fall as a real possibility and he appears to lay more emphasis than Plotinus on an escape from embodiment. This interpretation is supported by what we shall say later about eschatology. But for now we will be satisfied to have shown the different meanings of "separation" of soul and body and the independence of the inner spiritual life. It would be wrong to shackle Plotinus' or Porphyry's philosophy with an over-rigid analysis into an ontological and spiritual approach. I do not think that these distinctions were ever made explicitly by either of them. On the other hand the two concepts sometimes do appear to surface and if one is to capture the life, vitality and tension of their thought, it is, I think, legitimate to probe into some of the underlying and less explicit aspects of their philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM SOUL TO NOUS

Having distinguished between an ontological and a spiritual sphere we must now attempt to elucidate further the relationship between these two spheres. The particular difficulty here is that the levels at which we may be said to live i.e. to which we have risen or fallen spiritually – are in themselves identifiable in the ontological sense, a fact which causes considerable confusion. The spiritual aspect may be more closely pinpointed as a movement between ontological levels. In this chapter we will pay particular attention to an area in which this movement or transition becomes especially difficult to explain – namely that stage in spiritual ascent where there is a transition from soul to nous. We will see how the ascent is described in ontological terms and how, at the critical point where the transition to unity with a higher ontological level occurs, this terminology no longer suffices. Even the concept of pre-existence in a higher hypostasis¹ is insufficient simply because such pre-existence is a necessary and unalterable fact whilst descent and ascent in the spiritual sense are just the opposite of this, involving freedom, movement, transition from one plane to another. The whole spiritual movement seems rather like something imposed on the almost static backcloth of the ontological world picture. The actual process of ascent seems to be independent of the ontological order. Plotinus often says that “we” live at this or that level of reality or of our own ontological self. But what is this “we” and what is the nature of its relationship to the different ontological levels of our own being?²

¹ Pre-existence in a higher hypostasis cf. Hadot *Porphyre et Victorinus* Vol i, 340. Soul is present in nous in a transcendent mode, is itself as soul proper when independent of nous and finally may act externally in the body. Porphyry makes use of this metaphysical scheme in the context of spiritual ascent, cf. *Nemesios de nat. hom.* 135, 7 § 11 (Dörrie 85) ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ ποτὲ μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἐστίν, ὅταν λογίζεται, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν τῷ νῷ ὅταν νοῇ. But this explanation does not seem sufficient, as we shall see.

² cf. Dodds, *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique*, V. p. 385; “Finally, is not

Moreover at the moment of real transition from one level of reality to another, from soul to nous, it is not merely a matter of activating a higher dormant faculty. For according to Plotinus and Porphyry our nous does not fall into body but is ceaselessly operating in the intelligible world.³ The highest part of man is always in active contemplation, however low "we" might have fallen. In chapter four of i. 4 Plotinus says that although this activity is constant a man may have it actually or potentially. Rist has pointed to the difficulty of the terminology here.⁴ For Plotinus does not mean that the activity of nous can in itself be potential, but rather that our relation to it may be described as potential or actual possession, or better, identity. And this relationship is not one of mere awareness (chapters 9 and 10) or apprehension by a lower faculty of the activity in the higher faculty but something completely outside this frame of reference, a movement of the "ego," not identified with any one soul faculty, to complete union with nous. In the ontological sense the concept of nous as ever active source of soul serves to preserve the existence of soul, in the spiritual sense the conviction of an ever active higher self serves as goal to the moral aspirations of man. It is only at this goal that the spheres of real being and spiritual aspiration are harmonised. But it is with the movement towards this goal that we are concerned rather than with the goal itself and it is this movement which forms the free world of spiritual ascent.

We must now look at two ways in which Plotinus treats the relationship of soul and nous in the context of ascent and then we must turn to Porphyry. Firstly there is what we might term the directional approach to nous in which a lower faculty is turned towards a higher faculty and away from the lower world. This is most readily seen in those passages where there is a triple division of man and in those phrases in which soul is said to turn towards nous. Let us first illustrate what we mean. In this triple division of man into nous, rational soul and lower soul, the central faculty acts as a sort of pivot.

Plotinus the first to have clearly distinguished the concepts of soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) and ego ($\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$)? For him the two terms are not co-extensive. Soul is a continuum extending from the summit of the individual $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, whose activity is perpetual intellection, through the normal empirical self, right down to the $\epsilon\iota\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\nu$, the faint psychic trace in the organism; but the ego is a fluctuating spotlight of consciousness."

³ Enn. iv. 8.8, 1f. Porphyry *de Abst.* I 39, p. 115, 9 νοῦς μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ πρὸς αὐτῷ, καὶν ἡμεῖς μὴ ὄμεν πρὸς αὐτῷ. This passage is pessimistic with regard to the reconciliation of ascent and presence in the body; *ibid.* p. 115, 4, and 117, 6-7.

⁴ Plotinus - *The Road to Reality* p. 149-150, and also "Integration and the undescended Soul in Plotinus." *American Journal of Philology* LXXXVIII, 1967, p. 419f.

It may look up or look downwards, cf. ii. 9.2, 4ff., ψυχῆς δὲ ἡμῶν τὸ μὲν αἰεὶ πρὸς ἐκείνους, τὸ δὲ πρὸς ταῦτα ἔχειν, τὸ δ' ἐν μέσῳ τούτων· φύσεως γὰρ οὔσης μιᾶς ἐν δυνάμεσι πλείοσιν ὅτε μὲν τὴν πᾶσαν συμφέρεσθαι τῷ ἀρίστῳ αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ὄντος, ὅτε δὲ τὸ χεῖρον αὐτῆς καθελκυσθὲν συνεφελκύσασθαι τὸ μέσον. τὸ γὰρ πᾶν αὐτῆς οὐκ ἦν θέμις καθελκύναι (cf. i. I.11). v. 3. 3, 34ff. tells us a little more. It stresses the transcendency of nous and the inferiority of the lower power. The faculty of reason which lies between these two is identified with what Plotinus calls the "we"; ἡ αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ νοήματα αὐτοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμεῖς. τὰ δὲ τοῦ νοῦ ἐνεργήματα ἄνωθεν οὕτως, ὥς τὰ ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως κάτωθεν, τοῦτο ὄντες τὸ κύριον τῆς ψυχῆς, μέσον δυνάμεως διττῆς, χείρονος καὶ βελτίονος, χείρονος μὲν τῆς αἰσθήσεως, βελτίονος δὲ τοῦ νοῦ. The higher principle does not turn to us but rather we turn to it – ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ἄνω βλέποντας (43). Perception is described as ἡμῖν ἄγγελος (44), nous as βασιλεὺς . . . πρὸς ἡμᾶς see also chapter 4, If., βασιλεύομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅταν κατ' ἐκείνον. We recall the image of the king applied to Soul in iv. 8.2, 28.

This connection with Soul is interesting because we find the tripartite division used to distinguish soul from Soul, ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆ (II), in iv. 3. 12, 4f., οὐ γὰρ μετὰ τοῦ νοῦ ἦλθον, ἀλλ' ἔφθασαν μὲν μέχρι γῆς, κάρᾳ δὲ αὐταῖς ἐστήρικται ὑπεράνω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Πλέον δὲ αὐταῖς κατελθεῖν συμβέβηκεν, ὅτι τὸ μέσον αὐταῖς ἡναγκάσθη, φροντίδος δεομένου τοῦ εἰς δ' ἔφθασαν, φροντίσαι. Plotinus does not appear here as optimistic as in the other passages, since freedom seems here to come only with natural death.⁵ Yet the μέσον here does seem identical with the central faculty of the other passages and probably represents the reasoning element in us.

The distinguishing mark of this explanation of the spiritual relationship of soul and nous is that the soul is strictly subordinate to nous. Ascent is a movement of a faculty identified with the self or ego towards nous and real union is not implied. In fact, as will later become clear, this approach culminates only in knowledge by representation or image (φαντασία) and is similar to the idea expressed in Sent. xvi. The whole concept of knowledge by representation or illumination is closely allied to the ontological device whereby the lower hypostasis acts as an indeterminate substrate to the forming power of the higher hypostasis in producing the final definitive hypostasis. The concept of

⁵ Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ ἐλεήσας πονουμένας θνητὰ αὐτῶν τὰ δεσμὰ ποιῶν, περὶ ἃ πονοῦνται, δίδωσιν ἀναπαύλας ἐν χρόνοις ποιῶν σωμάτων ἐλευθέρας, ἵν' ἔχουσιν ἐκεῖ καὶ αὐταὶ γίνεσθαι, οὐπερ ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆ αἰεὶ οὐδὲν τὰ τῇδε ἐπιστρεφομένη. (iv. 3. 12, 8f.).

illumination is employed in both a spiritual and an ontological context.

But Plotinus often attacks the problem in a different way. He sometimes speaks of man as existing on different levels and the actual subject of ascent is altogether vaguer than in the directional approach for it is not identified with any particular faculty. Plotinus often refers vaguely to "we" as a sort of floating ego, the location of which determines the stage reached in the ascent.

Let us first quote some of the passages which have this vaguer relation of an ego to different levels of reality. In the difficult treatise iii. 4, Plotinus explains in chapter 2, 11f. that after bodily death each soul will take up a level in the after life corresponding with the level at which it has lived during its earthly life, ἐξελοῦσα δὲ, ὃ τι περ ἐπλεόνασε, τοῦτο γίνεται. Each person contains all the various levels from nous to mere vegetable life and may choose to live according to any one of them. In chapter 6 he says that most souls will still be attached to some kind of body after death (i.e. star bodies) but those who have lived at the level of nous will escape from matter altogether to the intelligible realm. The concept of soul in this treatise is extraordinarily broad and seems to include even nous (cf. ii. 4.6, 21). The instrument of spiritual advance is no longer identified with any one faculty but rather with a vaguer subject, an ego or self which chooses to live and make its own any of the levels which together form its soul, and this choice is of vital importance for its state in the after life and in future reincarnations.

In v. 3.9 Plotinus talks of a similar progression through the different soul phases; 28ff. Εἰ δὲ τις ἀδυνατεῖ τὴν πρώτην τὴν τοιαύτην ψυχὴν ἔχειν καθαρῶς νοοῦσαν, δοξαστικὴν λαβέτω, εἴτα ἀπὸ ταύτης ἀναβαινέτω. Also iv. 3.8, 12, καὶ ὅτι πάντα πᾶσαι, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἐνεργῆσαν ἐν αὐτῇ ἐκάστη· τοῦτο δὲ τῷ τὴν μὲν ἐνοῦσθαι ἐνεργείᾳ, τὴν δὲ ἐν γνώσει, τὴν δὲ ἐν ὁρέξει, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῃ ἄλλα βλέπειν καὶ ἄπερ βλέπει εἶναι καὶ γίνεσθαι. This is clarified by iv. 3.6, 27 where we have the same contrast between the microcosm and the macrocosm as in the treatise on our guardian spirit: τὸ γὰρ δευτέρως καὶ τρίτως τῷ ἐγγύθεν καὶ τῷ πορρώτερον ὑπονοητέον εἰρῆσθαι, ὥσπερ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν οὐχ ὁμοίως ψυχᾶς ὑπάρχει τὰ πρὸς τὰ ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐνοῦντο ἄν, οἱ δὲ βάλλοιεν ἄν ἐγγὺς ἐφιεμένοι, οἷς δὲ ἤττον ἄν ἔχοι τοῦτο, καθὼς ταῖς δυνάμεσιν οὐ ταῖς αὐταῖς ἐνεργοῦσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν τῇ πρώτῃ, οἱ δὲ τῇ μετ' ἐκείνῃ, οἱ δὲ τῇ τρίτῃ, ἀπάντων τὰς πάσας ἐχόντων.

The idea of not using the higher powers which are, nevertheless, always present potentially comes out well in i. 4.4, 9f., ἥ οὐδ' ἔστιν ὅλως ἄνθρωπος μὴ οὐ καὶ τοῦτο ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ ἔχων, ὃν δὴ καὶ φαμεν

εὐδαίμονα εἶναι. ἀλλ' ὥς μέρος αὐτοῦ τοῦτο φήσομεν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ εἶδος τῆς ζωῆς τὸ τέλειον εἶναι; ἢ τὸν μὲν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον μέρος τι τοῦτο ἔχειν δυνάμει ἔχοντα, τὸν δὲ εὐδαίμονα ἤδη, ὃς δὴ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐστὶ τοῦτο καὶ μεταβέβηκε πρὸς τὸ αὐτό, εἶναι τοῦτο. We have already discussed the curious usage of the terms δυνάμει and ἐνεργείᾳ.⁶ One thing is certain. Contemplation here has nothing to do with our being aware of these higher activities for this is explicitly denied in i.4.9 and 10. It is just this factor of awareness which seems important in the directional approach as may be seen by examining Plotinus' description of our relationship to nous in v. 1.12. Here also various levels are mentioned. In v. 1.10 Plotinus says that the three hypostases exist for us – the microcosm – as well as for nature – the macrocosm: (5f.) “Ὡς περ δὲ ἐν τῇ φύσει τριττὰ ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ εἰρημένα, οὕτω χρὴ νομίζειν καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ταῦτα εἶναι. But we are not always active at the various levels, (chapter 12, 1f. πῶς οὖν ἔχοντες τὰ τηλικαῦτα οὐκ ἀντιλαμβάνομεθα, ἀλλ' ἀργοῦμεν ταῖς τοιαύταις ἐνεργείαις τὰ πολλὰ, οἱ δὲ οὐδ' ὅλως ἐνεργοῦσιν;). He goes on to explain what this activity involves. We must, he says, turn our perceptive faculty inwards in order to receive the φωνή or impression from above. At once we see that we are thrown back to the pivot idea that the soul should look upwards towards its higher faculties. This is a process of participation rather than union and the concept of ἀντιληψις involves the reception of representations or images. In this way it is connected with φαντασία. Plotinus rejects the explanation of contemplation by awareness in i.4 because of immediate difficulties. He wants to show that the good man can remain happy even though his external fortune is threatened. We might also refer to the problem posed by the man who has been drugged and the man in his sleep. They also, Plotinus claims, can be happy, i.e. be living the life of contemplation. But there is also a deeper reason for the rejection of contemplation by awareness as an explanation of spiritual ascent. This concept does not fully explain union but only participation or illumination. It is in fact equivalent to the third stage of ascent as described by Porphyry in *Sent.* xxxii and xvi. In v. 3 we see the deeper reasoning behind this rejection of participation or illumination as a means to explain the highest attainments in man's spiritual ascent.

We have suggested that the return or upward turning of the soul might be described as taking place in a sphere other than that of the ontological and yet have noted how ontological terminology is used to

⁶ cf. p. 41 above.

describe the ascent. It is evident in the passage we are now going to examine that this terminology is not sufficient to describe the “crossing” of the gap between nous and soul which is necessary if the philosopher is to attain to true knowledge as opposed to knowledge by representation or images. In the treatise v. 3 the two approaches occur together and we can assess the relationship between them. In chapter 3 Plotinus makes a tripartite division of soul, or rather of man. We have already seen what this involves. At the end he states that the ἡμεῖς is the central or reasoning faculty. Above it lies its βασιλεύς namely nous, whilst αἰσθησις is described as our ἄγγελος and lies below “us.” In chapter 4 Plotinus wishes to take us a stage higher for βασιλεύομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς. So somehow “we” – he is vague and speaks only of “we” not “the we” can rise onto a higher level. This occurs κατ’ ἐκεῖνον (= nous), he explains cautiously. He has now to span the gap between soul and transcendent nous. The idea of soul looking up to nous is now subtly changed. In chapter 3 he is very adamant that we are not nous but rather draw upon it (illumination). He now wants to move towards a union with nous. This he now does by the introduction of an uncommitted subject. The subject is now ὁ γινώσκων ἑαυτόν. He no longer talks of the soul or διάνοια looking up, or of the “we” which is firmly identified and anchored to the reasoning faculty. It is this new personal subject which becomes nous, who takes himself above, συναρπάσαντα ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸ ἄνω (12) and, Plotinus adds cryptically, μόνον ἐφέλκοντα τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄμεινον, ὃ καὶ δύναται μόνον πιερούσθαι πρὸς νόησιν. His thought is elastic. He can still talk of taking up a soul faculty though it cannot be denied that this whole chapter is groping for a different kind of expression for spiritual ascent. In lines 25f. he reaffirms that nous is ours, thus reminding us of his previous statement in chapter three that “we” are not nous. But he is now confident that the higher stage of ascent, unity and identity with nous, can be reached and goes on to claim that one *becomes*⁷ nous when one abandons all the other phases of oneself and gazes on nous by means of nous, (28f., ἔστι δὲ νοῦς τις αὐτὸς γεγονώς, ὅτε τὰ ἄλλα ἀφείς ἑαυτοῦ τούτῳ καὶ τούτῳ βλέπει, αὐτῷ δὲ ἑαυτόν). Plotinus has not contradicted himself when he now claims that we can become nous, he has merely changed the subject of the statement and is thinking of a floating “ego.” One somehow

⁷ Merlan, *Monopsychism* p. 79, has also noted the use of γίγνομαι here. “The repeated use of the word γίγνεσθαι permits no doubt ... Plotinus here discusses (and admits) the possibility of some kind of transformation (γένεσις) of “us” into the νοῦς χωριστός.” νοῦς τις seems to imply individual νοῦς, however.

feels here in the language the appeal to personal experience. The expression in chapter 6, 16f., ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐνταῦθα γεγενήμεθα πάλιν αὖ καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ also gives this impression and adequately expresses the concept of the floating self with its treatment of soul as something we are "in" and can leave.

Broadly, then, we have identified the first approach with a lower stage in man's spiritual ascent. The process of epistemological illumination is here adequately described by the use of terminology which is similar to that often employed to denote the ontological process. The movement toward union defies such terminology and to express it Plotinus has recourse to an altogether new mode of expression which owes much to personal experience⁸ as befits the mystical nature of this final step towards union with nous.

Plotinus was convinced that real knowledge which is the goal of the spiritual life consists in nothing less than identity of knowing subject and known object. This identity which occurs at the level of nous is ontological since the knowing subject nous and its intelligible objects are both fully real. Knowledge below this level is only by representation. But by affirming the transcendence of nous and distinguishing it from soul a difficult problem develops as to how we can explain the occurrence of real knowledge. What is the relationship in the sphere of knowledge that obtains between nous and soul? Their relation in the natural sphere of emanation is clear. Soul stands below, dependent on and distinct from nous. But the ascent which is often seen as the counterpart of emanation is in effect quite different from it, for it does not reverse the process of emanation. It is independent of this. It is other than ontological and yet its end consists in an ontological union of subject and object. But it is clear that the subject which knows in nous can never be subtracted from nous. Nor can anything "enter" nous as knowing subject for nous (= Nous) is complete. Thus nothing can strictly be said to "enter" Nous, "strictly" being used in the sense of forming an ontological union with nous. In loose terms we could say that soul is in a sense in nous since nous is the ἀρχή of soul. But this does not seem to me to satisfy the Plotinian ideal of unity.⁹ Moreover this notion of immanence or pre-existence within the higher is a

⁸ Merlan, *loc. cit.* points to the use of συναρπάζειν in this connection; "Here for the transformation (γένεσις) the term συναρπάζειν is used – indicative of some ecstatic quality of the experience here envisioned by Plotinus." Also *ibid.* 81. with ref. to ἀρπάζειν in 2 Cor. 12, 4.

⁹ Since a thing with its origin in what is above it can be separate from it. See further p. 48f.

necessary ontological fact. The soul always is in nous (*Sent.* xxxi) in this sense and one still has to explain spiritual ascent.

It is relatively easy for Plotinus to demonstrate that there is an ontological unity of subject and object at the noetic level but much more difficult to show how, within the confines of his own system, there can be a *transition* to such an identity from the lower level. The treatment of the ascent as taking place in a separate sphere of reality is intelligible enough but the attempt to produce a dynamic union of the two spheres seems well nigh impossible. It may be that such an attempt can only be made by way of personal conviction born of actual experience and our examination of v. 3 bears this out.

We must now look at Porphyry's position. Critics both ancient and modern have frequently accused Porphyry of confusing nous and soul.¹⁰ But we often find Porphyry taking considerable pains to show how they differed. Nothing could be clearer or more correctly Plotinian than *Sent.* xxxi p. 17, 4, οὕτω καὶ νοῦς πανταχοῦ ὦν καὶ οὐδαμοῦ αἴτιος ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτάς, καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς ψυχῇ οὔτε τὰ μετὰ ψυχὴν οὐδὲ ἐν τούτοις. Then we have the standard Neoplatonic definition of soul in *Sent.* v where a clear distinction is meant, ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς οὐσίας μέσον τι, ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἀμέριστος οὐσία μόνον.

Sent. xlv distinguishes nous and soul with respect to eternity and time and the mode of thought proper to each – p. 45, 14 (soul) τὸ ὄμμα φερούσης εἰς ἃ ἔχει κατὰ μέρος and p. 44, 14 (nous) ἅμα πάντα νοεῖ.

¹⁰ Lloyd, *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* p. 290. Iamblichus, *Stob.* I. 365, 7f.; 372, 9f. But Lloyd, I think, overstates the case for Iamblichus' criticism of Porphyry. In fact Iamblichus explicitly states that Porphyry was in two minds about the "identification" of soul (higher) and nous. The case for the introduction of telescoping by Porphyry in this regard seems a little exaggerated. Furthermore Lloyd is misleading when he says (*Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* p. 290) "If Porphyry was right, he (Iamblichus) complained with some insight the soul is impeccable," referring to Procl. *In Tim.* iii. 334. In fact it is Plotinus and Theodore who are here named and not Porphyry; *ibid.*, 333, 28f. I would not deny that Porphyry might be included in this criticism but it is clear that he is no innovator.

Nor does Porphyry fully identify individual soul with Soul which is impeccable. In the second passage of *Stob.* referred to above, Iamblichus expressly tells us that Porphyry distinguished the ἐνεργήματα of soul and Soul. Festugière seems to think this is contradicted by *Sent.* xxxvii, where Soul and souls are identified (*Révélation* vol. III p. 203 n. 2). But here he is talking about souls in their transcendent state before embodiment. Individual souls may differ from Soul in their embodied ἐνεργεῖαι which Porphyry tells us are restricted by the body (*Sent.* xxxvii, p. 33, 3f.). See also Wallis, *Neoplatonism* p. 113 although I do not agree that *Stob.* I. 457, 11ff proves that the distinction between the activities of souls and Soul was not caused by embodiment. That soul remains in its own τάξις after death need not mean that it does not operate at the level of Soul. The most that can be taken from this passage is that soul does not enter or become nous but remains quite separate from it at a lower level.

Further evidence for the transcendence of nous over soul is found in *Sent.* xxxii. The highest "virtues" belong to nous, not to soul as the lower three grades of virtue do (p. 21, 10f.). Soul has of itself knowledge of being but would not see its own possession *ἄνευ τοῦ πρὸ αὐτῆς*, i.e. nous (p. 20, 10). Soul is "filled by nous" (p. 21, 12). And the phrase *συνεῖναι τῷ γεννήσαντι* (p. 20, 7) implies transcendence.

Outside the *Sententiae* we find further supporting evidence. In *ad Gaur.* p. 42, 22 *διάνοια γέννημα οὐσα νοῦ ὑποβέβηκε*¹¹ *μὲν κατ' οὐσίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ γεννήσαντος αὐτὴν νοῦ, δύναται δ' ἐπιστρέφειν αὐτὴ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν καὶ συνιέναι τῶν αὐτοῦ, εἰ καὶ μὴ καθάπερ ὁ νοῦς τῆς ἀθρόας καὶ ἄνευ διεξόδου θιζέως*¹² *ἐστὶν ἑμμοιρος*, Porphyry insists on the principle that the product is always inferior to the producer. *Ibid.* 18 *ἀεὶ γὰρ κατ' αὐτὸν* (Plato) *τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας τινῶν γεννώμενα ὑποβέβηκε δυνάμεως καὶ οὐσίας ἀξία τῶν γεγεννηκότων*.¹³

There are, however, at least two pieces of evidence which go against this trend. The first occurs in the *Symmikta Zetemata* (Nem. 135, 7 § 11. Dörrie p. 85), *ὥς ἡ ψυχὴ ποτὲ μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἐστὶν, ὅταν λογίζεται, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν τῷ νῷ, ὅταν νοῇ*. What are these two stages? Are they the second and third or the third and fourth stages of ascent as described in *Sent.* xxxii? Even if the latter two stages are referred to here it is hard to believe that Porphyry thought that nous and soul could become ontologically identical and soul cease to exist as a separate entity.¹⁴

There is a passage from *De Regressu Animae* which is more explicit. It occurs in fr. 10 p. 37*21 of the Bidez collection of the fragments. *Vos certe tantum tribuitis animae intellectuali, quae anima utique humana est, ut eam consubstantialem paternae illi menti, quem Dei Filium confitemini, fieri potest dicatis*. The soul is said to become consubstantial with nous. Hadot argues¹⁵ that it is consubstantial in so far as it is pre-existent in nous which acts as its source or *ἀρχή*. But how can soul become – *fieri* – consubstantial? *Fieri* indicates that we are dealing with

¹¹ cf. Plotinus 1.8.7, 19 *ὑπόβασις*. *Sent.* xi. *Stob.* I 349, 16. This whole passage of Porphyry in Stobaeus makes clear distinctions of level between soul phases, though as with the rest of this work on the powers of soul it is difficult to determine whether Porphyry is giving his own independent position or merely arguing *ad hominem*.

¹² For these phrases see Plot. ii. 8, 1, 9; iv. 4. 1, 15f.; *Stob.* I 349, 8; *Sent.* xlv p. 45, 7; 46, 3.

¹³ Reading is here adapted from Kalbfleisch, *ad Gaurum*, Nachträge p. 80

¹⁴ A similar sort of looseness of expression occurs in *Sent.* xli p. 40, 4, *νοῦς δὲ χωρίζων ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ σώματος τότε μάλιστα νοεῖ*. Strictly speaking nous does not fall into the body nor does it think less at one time than at another. It is rather we who do not rise to nous. The clearly loose expression warns us to exercise caution.

¹⁵ *Porphyre et Victorinus* p. 338f.

the spiritual ascent and the meaning of change or transition which is implied in *fieri* is essential if spiritual progress is to be meaningful. But the notion of pre-existence is a relatively static one. There is need of a further factor such as "I activate my pre-existence in nous and thus become consubstantial with nous." In other words we must follow the same course as Plotinus which we outlined in the previous part of the chapter. The use of what is basically an ontological term is typical of the attempt to stress the reality of the spiritual ascent. As Hadot argues, nous and soul may be described as ontologically consubstantial in so far as nous is the source of soul, but they still remain separate entities. We saw this idea of connection and separation in the double ἐνέργεια theory. Consubstantiality is also to be understood in the spiritual sense in which x becomes "consubstantial" with y by the crossing of the gap from image knowledge to true knowledge.

However there is a further point here. One could press the fact that Porphyry refers not to a union of soul and nous but to a union of the *anima intellectualis* with Nous, i.e. the whole hypostasis Nous. It is then possible that the term *anima intellectualis* includes both soul and individual nous. But one might also be justified in understanding in this conflation of soul and nous, if that is what Porphyry meant, no more than a convenient way of referring to the "inner man" as opposed to the "outer man" or *anima spiritalis* and Porphyry would be going no further than Plotinus who often treats man as a bare duality.¹⁶ If this is the meaning of the passage one must admit that it slurs over a difficulty for it is easier to describe the identity of the inner man with Nous (by stressing the nous part of the inner man) than the crossing over from soul to nous. Individual minds are more closely related to Nous than is soul to its nous since in the latter case the two entities involved are on different levels of reality. On the other hand the passage does not rule out the possibility that Porphyry is talking about a transition of the *anima intellectualis* seen as soul to a union with a Nous, the *paterna mens*, which encompasses individual minds. One might finally refer to Stob. I. 457 11-13 where Porphyry as opposed to Plotinus is reported as having said that the soul after death (and, therefore, also in life, we might add) keeps to its own τᾶξίς. This does not, of course, mean that union with Nous or the One cannot take place but simply that the soul itself cannot *become* νοῦς.

¹⁶ The idea of the "inner" man in Plotinus (cf. i. 1, vi. 4, 14) often seems to break down to some extent the distinction between nous and the highest faculties of the soul. A similar tendency may be seen in the Porphyry passages quoted.

The weight of evidence shows that Porphyry distinguished soul and nous and the contrary evidence does not definitely prove that he identified them. Moreover the evidence for conflating them occurs in the context of spiritual ascent and we have argued that it would be invalid to deduce ontological identity from spiritual union. Iamblichus' allegation of contradiction may have been partly caused by a failure to discern the distinction between these two spheres.

Then what did Porphyry think of the relationship of soul and nous in the context of spiritual ascent? One ought first to stress that the evidence for a consideration of Porphyry's doctrine on this point is hardly extensive enough to allow us to draw really definite conclusions. The outcome of our discussion will point to Porphyry's weakening of the Plotinian doctrine. But this impression may be due to the cursory treatment this subject receives in the extant works which can with certainty be attributed to Porphyry.

That Porphyry accepted a stage of ascent higher than the contemplation of the νοητά as mere externals is adequately attested. Whether he succeeded in giving the transition to this higher stage a coherent explanation is more debatable.

Sent. xxxii clearly puts nous as the fourth goal of the ascent of the soul. The third stage is that of soul acting intelligently – p. 20, 13 νοερώς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνεργούσης. At this stage soul is directed towards and filled by nous. It receives, then, only images of the νοητά – p. 21, 11 ψυχῆς ὡς ψυχῆς πρὸς νοῦν ἐνορώσης ἤδη καὶ πληρουμένης ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. The final two stages are compared at p. 22, 7 τῶν δὲ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργῆσαι μὴδὲ τοῦ ἀποστήσαι ἐκ τῶν παθῶν εἰς ἔννοιαν ἀφικνουμένους, τῶν δὲ μὴ πρὸς νοῦν ἐχουσῶν τὴν ἐνέργειαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ οὐσίᾳ εἰς συνδρομὴν ἀφιγμένων. The man who acts according to the paradigmatic virtues is called θεῶν πατήρ as opposed to the man at the third stage who is simply θεός (p. 22, 12f.), thus making a clear distinction between the two highest levels of ascent.

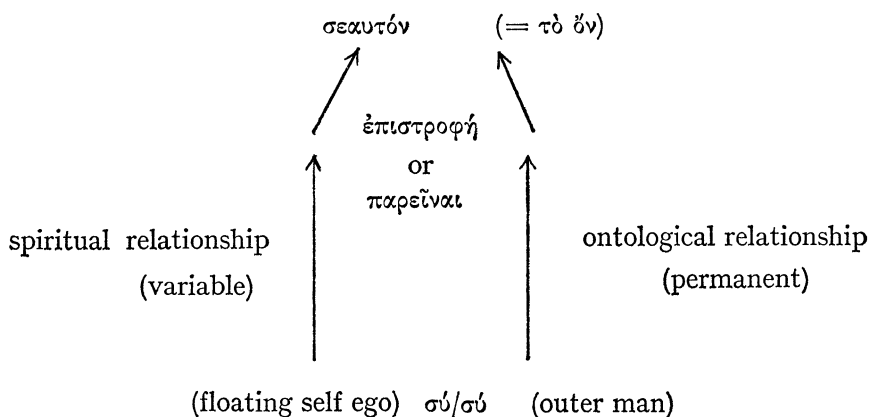
The supreme union with nous seems to be meant in *Sent.* xl, p. 38, 7. We will quote the passage in full – τοῖς μὲν γὰρ δυναμένοις χωρεῖν εἰς τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν νοερώς καὶ τὴν αὐτῶν γινώσκειν οὐσίαν <καὶ> ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ γνώσει καὶ τῇ εἰδήσει τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοὺς ἀπολαμβάνειν καθ' ἐνότητά τὴν τοῦ γινώσκοντος καὶ γινωσκομένου [καὶ] τούτοις παροῦσιν αὐτοῖς πάρεστι καὶ τὸ ὄν. We must ask what sort of union is meant here. The identification of real self and nous has already been made. This is something permanent and the floating self must now make contact and become identified in some way with this higher self. But Porphyry

does not seem to make any definite identification of an ego with the higher self. He does not say with Plotinus ἔστι δὴ νοῦς τις αὐτὸς γεγωνός (v. 3. 4, 29). He does, however, use the word ἐνότης which might imply this. This word is used of the unity of true being in *Sent.* xxxvi p. 31, 5f. and of the unity which this bestows on inferiors. The term also occurs in Plotinus, e.g. iv. 9. 3, 8; vi. 1. 26, 27 and vi. 5. 1, 8 where unity is the common τέλος. In the latter passage the word is also drawn into the spiritual sphere of ascent. Porphyry qualifies the word by a further phrase ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ γνώσει καὶ τῇ εἰδήσει τῆς γνώσεως which seems to suggest something less than full identity of subject and object. It reminds us of Plotinus v. 3. 4, 23 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει προσχρησάμενοι νοῦν αὖ γινώσκοντα ἑαυτὸν κατοψόμεθα ἢ ἐκεῖνον μεταλαβόντες . . . οὕτω νοῦν καὶ αὐτοῦς γνωσόμεθα. Plotinus seems to jump from participation to real unity. Porphyry does not express the actual process of the final step in such clear terms as Plotinus and, despite his conviction that nous is the real self, would appear, when talking about actual transition to the level of nous, to be less firm than Plotinus.

The word σύνδρομος is often used in the context of the spiritual ascent. Thus *Sent.* xxxii p. 21, 10 σύνδρομοι αὐτοῦ τῇ οὐσίᾳ and p. 22, 10. Plotinus uses the word in i. 1. 7, 21 to indicate the identity of the ἄνθρωπος – what is essentially man in the human being – with the λογικὴ ψυχὴ and in vi. 8. 13, 29 to express the unity of will and self in the One σύνδρομος αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ. The usage in Plotinus suggests that Porphyry was, in the *Sententiae*, thinking of more than participation but we cannot be sure with such vague terms. For example σύμφυσις might also be less strong than it at first appears in *de Abst.* p. 107, 5f. τὴν κατὰ δύνάμιν τὴν ἡμετέραν σύμφυσιν τῷ θεωροῦντι καὶ θεωρουμένῳ . . . οὐδὲ πρὸς ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν ὄντως αὐτὸν <ῆ> σύμφυσις. Although it is used by Aristotle to indicate continuity of substance (*Met.* 1014b22, 1069a12, *Phys.* 227a23), by the time of Proclus it seems to be identical in meaning with μετέχειν etc. See *El. Theol.* prop. 111, p. 98, 25 where only the more perfect members of a series participate in members of the series above them συμφύεσθαι τοῖς ὑπερκειμενοῖς. See also *ibid.*, prop. 128, p. 114, 9 and prop. 135, p. 120, 7.

A further factor to be considered is the application of ontological terminology to the spiritual ascent. This comes out clearly in *Sent.* xl. There we are told that Being is always present to us and, in a curious paradox, that we are always present to Being even though we are not present to it; *ibid.* p. 37, 14f. εἰ δ' οὕτως αὐτῷ παρὼν οὐ πάρει καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σαυτὸν ἀγνοεῖς καὶ πάντα μᾶλλον, οἷς πάρει . . . Thus Being is

present to us and we are present to it (παρών). But there is another sense in which we may not be present to Being (οὐ πάρει) and we are told to correct this.¹⁷ The latter plainly refers to the inner disposition of man, what we have called the spiritual aspect. Plotinus, too, seems to consider the normal constitutive ἐπιστροφή of a hypostasis towards its prior as different from its spiritual ἐπιστροφή or union. This is particularly clear in his treatment of the relationship of Nous and the One. Nous is formed by a constitutive ἐπιστροφή, and its turning in mystical contemplation towards the One, by which it indulges in an activity whose scope lies outside its mere existence as Nous, is a further type of ἐπιστροφή.¹⁸ Porphyry would appear to be making a similar distinction here and it is an important distinction, for by it the metaphysical structure in virtue of which soul exists and is related to nous (and thus to Nous) in the realm of existence is distinguished from the spiritual ascent or mystical relationship. One might schematise the thought of *Sent.* xl thus



The ontological relationship which is κατ' οὐσίαν is ἀναπόσπαστον (p. 38, 3). This confirms its necessary nature. Interesting, too, is the statement that we are not separated οὐσίᾳ or cut off by anything else (p. 38, 17 οὐδ' ἄλλω τινὶ ἀποτετμημένοι) from nous but are separated τῇ

¹⁷ See also the preceding lines, *ibid.* p. 37 11f., esp. καὶ οὐ πάρει σεαυτῷ καίπερ παρών. The σεαυτόν or real self is identical with Being – αὐτῷ of line 14.

¹⁸ For Nous and the One, cf. Armstrong, *Intelligible Universe* p. 69. The νοῦς ἐρῶς or mystical contemplation of the One by Νοῦς (vi. 7.35) is something different from what Armstrong calls its "normal and constant contemplation" by which it is itself; cf. vi. 7.15, v. 3.11.

πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὄν στροφῇ. The word ἀποτέμνω is used frequently by Plotinus¹⁹ to express the inseparable ontological link between a hypostasis and its product and this relationship is one of subordination. Bearing all this in mind we might conclude that the words παρεῖναι and ἐπιστροφή when used analogously in the spiritual context suggest something less than identity.

There is a similarity here with the process of illumination which seems to be used both ontologically and for the spiritual ascent. Illumination is the hallmark of the third stage of ascent (*Sent.* xxxii p. 21, 12 πληρουμένης ἀπ' αὐτοῦ). It is this stage which is meant in *Sent.* xvi and, in *ad Marcellam*, Porphyry seems in most cases not to go beyond this stage. This sort of subordination occurs in *ad Gaurum* p. 42, 22. For *ad Marcellam* see p. 283, 9f., ἐπέσθω τοίνυν ὁ μὲν νοῦς τῷ θεῷ, ἐνοπτριζόμενος²⁰ τῇ ὁμοιώσει θεοῦ· τῷ δὲ νῷ ἡ ψυχὴ· τῇ δὲ αὖ ψυχῇ ὑπηρετεῖτω τὸ σῶμα, εἰς ὅσον οἶόν τε, καθαρᾷ καθαρὸν . . . τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ τῇ θεοφιλεῖ καὶ τῷ θεοφιλεῖ νῷ ἐν τῷ καθαρῷ σώματι. This same subordination is found in an expanded context on p. 291 where two important ideas are added.

(1) Each lower level acts as substrate to the higher.

(2) The higher illuminates the lower.

We have seen this scheme before in the context of the twofold activity of intelligibles but in an ontological context. We now see it portraying the spiritual ascent. See also p. 290, 6f. ὁ δ' αὖ θεὸς (νομὸς) ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ νοῦ σωτηρίας ἕνεκα ταῖς λογικαῖς ψυχαῖς κατὰ τὰς ἐννοίας διετάχθη. Salvation is achieved not through the unity of soul and nous but by the reflection in the logical soul of νόησεις in the form of ἐννοιαί.

The two spheres are seen in both the *Sententiae* and in the other passages we have quoted to illustrate the "third" stage of ascent. In both cases ontological terminology is employed for the spiritual sphere. In *Sent.* xl, where the highest or fourth stage of spiritual ascent is almost certainly meant, the use of this terminology suggests participation rather than union. I am not arguing that Porphyry denied the possibility of union but that he failed to express the final *transition* to that union as clearly as Plotinus had done.

¹⁹ cf. i. 7.1, 27; vi. 2.22, 34; vi. 4.9, 38, 42.

²⁰ Possible φαντασία terminology; cf. image of mirror in Plot. i. 4.10, 9 ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ (φαντασία *ibid.* 19f.). Reception from above (and below) by the faculty of φαντασία is frequently termed τύπος – impression; cf. also Porphyry *ad Gaurum* p. 42, 9, τὰς ἐμφάσεις τῆς φαντασίας ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ; *ibid.* 6, ἀπομύργυσθαι; *Sent.* xxix p. 13, 12.

We have shown that Porphyry did posit a fourth stage of ascent. We now know that this stage must no longer consist of thought by reflections but must be without *φαντασία*. The whole difficulty of describing the *transition* to this stage is that the process of illumination analogous to the ontological process of enforming no longer suffices. A leap must be made. It is at this point that Plotinus had recourse to the dogmatic assertion of the unity of the ego with nous, that we *become* nous. With Porphyry, however, we must admit that it is not possible from the available evidence to state with any certainty the position which he adopted with regard to the crossing of the gap from image knowledge to pure thought. The evidence would seem to suggest that he regarded this stage as more difficult than Plotinus had done, but, nonetheless, possible in exceptional cases. Excepting, perhaps, the passage from *de Regressu Animae* he is more timid than Plotinus in describing the transition from soul to nous. We attributed Plotinus' boldness here to the conviction of actual experience. Porphyry was, perhaps, less optimistic. Although he himself records in the *Life of Plotinus* that he once experienced mystical union with the One he sees his own achievement as negligible compared with that of Plotinus whom he records as having reached that goal several times.²¹ No doubt the fact that Porphyry so passionately desired but failed to bring the ordinary man into a common scheme of salvation with the philosopher also weakened his belief in the capacity of man to reach the divine level. Plotinus, less interested in the non-philosopher, would have had less cause for such despair. The legacy of an attempt to popularise Platonism, to look out at the despondent pagan society of the third and fourth centuries A.D., was the weakening of the philosophical statement of man's status so evident in Iamblichus and Proclus.²²

Finally, one thing Porphyry and Plotinus have in common is an attitude towards the ascent of the soul which can only be maintained by distinguishing an ontological and a spiritual sphere. When they want to talk about spiritual ascent at the highest level they abandon the directional concept and, without doing away with or telescoping the various grades of reality that make up the human being, have recourse to an independent sphere in which a floating ego or self is the pointer to spiritual progress. In the transition to the level of nous, however,

²¹ Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, chap. 23.

²² The status of the human soul is reduced in Iamblichus and Proclus. cf. Dodds, *Proclus Elements of Theology*, Introduction xx. This goes hand in hand with an increased awareness of the necessity for divine aid. See Part Two, below.

where Plotinus' expression depends on personal experience, Porphyry finds himself confined within the limits of the Neoplatonic metaphysical structure. This marks the beginning of a process in which that structure begins to dominate and stifle the reality of experience, a tendency which finds its culminating point in Proclus' dry and lifeless exposition of probably genuine religious and mystical experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

We raised earlier the problem of natural death¹ and it is now necessary to deal more fully with the problem of the fate of the soul after death and the general nature of Neoplatonic eschatology. It is outside the scope of this work to make a detailed and full study of all aspects of this wide subject and we must be satisfied with an examination of those points which will help us to understand the meaning and relevance of eschatology within the framework of the ontological and spiritual aspects of man's existence as outlined in the preceding chapters. In this chapter we will try to clarify the ontological factors in the eschatology of Porphyry and Plotinus.

One of the most startling doctrines ascribed to Porphyry is that the soul of the philosopher will escape permanently from the cycle of re-incarnations. Zeller rejected the doctrine as genuinely Porphyrian and Festugière regards it as conflicting with evidence provided by Iamblichus in which Porphyry is loyal to the Platonic concept of the twofold function of soul.² Yet there is, as we shall see, a way in which this novel doctrine can be harmonised with the traditional Platonic concept of soul.

The testimony of Augustine for Porphyry's new doctrine seems strong enough in itself but is reinforced if we can reconcile the permanent escape of the soul with the concept of soul as an intermediary between matter and pure spirit. This we will attempt to do by firstly seeking to reconcile two conflicting reports on Porphyry's theories on the fate of the lower soul after death. For, although these two problems are distinct

¹ Chapter Two, note 6.

² Zeller, p. 593, n. 1. Festugière, *Révélation* vol. iii p. 81. See also Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, p. 433ff. where he discusses Augustine Sermons 240 and 241 and concludes that they contain Porphyrian eschatology. They do not contain the idea of a permanent escape but, as Pépin rightly argues (p. 439), neither do they exclude it.

and not to be confused, it is clear that a clarification about the relationship of the lower soul to the world would be of some assistance when dealing with the idea of a permanent escape. If the lower soul continues after death to subsist in a body of some kind (e.g. a celestial body) in such a way as not to compromise its eternal contemplation of the intelligible world, it would be possible to reconcile the two functions of the soul. This is precisely what Porphyry does. Having made this reconciliation it is easier for him to assert a permanent escape. Indeed the concept of a temporary escape involves similar difficulties and objections. There remains one powerful objection, however, raised by Sallustius.³ If the number of souls is finite and new souls cannot be created the earth would eventually be depopulated. We do not know whether Porphyry was aware of such an objection nor do we have any evidence to show how he might have countered it. No doubt he might have claimed that the number attaining to complete escape would be small enough to make little difference to the world.

The evidence that Porphyry believed in a permanent escape is contained in several passages from Augustine's *Civitas Dei* where he is drawing on Porphyry's *de Regressu Animae*. In *de Regressu Animae* Bidez fr. 11, 4 p. 41* 21f., after telling us that Porphyry altered the Platonic tradition in this matter⁴ Augustine goes on *quod in libro decimo commemoravi, dicere maluit* (Porphyrius) *animam propter cognoscenda mala traditam mundo, ut ab eis liberata atque purgata, cum ad Patrem redierit, nihil ulterius tale patiatur*. In *de Regr. An.* Bidez fr. 11, 1 p. 39* 4f. he is much more explicit. He regards Porphyry as a corrector of Plato himself (note the comment p. 40* 29 – *sed homini praeponit veritatem*) and claims that Porphyry has revoked the Platonic theory of the circle of the dead and the living (*Phaedo* 70c.). It seems likely that this is Augustine's own interpretation rather than an explicit statement of Porphyry.⁵ *Dicit etiam ad hoc Deum animam mundo dedisse, ut materiae cognoscens mala ad Patrem recurreret nec aliquando iam talium polluta contagione teneretur ... in eo tamen aliorum Platoniorum*

³ Sallustius, xx.

⁴ Merlan (*Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, p. 28) claims that Plato sometimes teaches a permanent escape of the soul. He quotes *Phdr.* 248c–249a and *Tim* 42c. See also Nettleship (*Lectures on the Republic of Plato*, p. 361) who quotes *Phdr.* 249a combined with *Gorgias* 525bf. Also *Phaedo* 113d where incurable sinners are thrown for ever into Tartarus. None of these passages seems to me to be explicit enough to give Plato a doctrine of permanent escape and the tradition of Platonic interpretation is against the idea.

⁵ See H. Dörrie "Seelenwanderung" for general respect for Platonic tradition amongst Neoplatonists.

opinionem et non in re parva emendavit, quod mundatam ab omnibus malis animam et cum Patre constitutam numquam iam mala mundi huius passuram esse confessus est . . . Cf. p. 40 14f.: purgatamque animam ob hoc reverti dixit ad Patrem, ne aliquando iam malorum polluta contagione teneatur, and Civ. Dei. bk. X chap. 31 Deinde beatitudo quoque eius post experimentum malorum firmior⁶ et sine fine mansura, sicut iste confitetur.⁷*

For Plotinus, as we shall see, both temporary and permanent escape are of little interest because of his overall confidence in transcendental mysticism. There seems to be no definite evidence in Plotinus to suggest that he thought of a permanent escape, though he accepts the Platonic teaching about the sojourn of the soul in Hades between incarnations. In iii. 4. 6, 46, however, some kind of escape may be meant – Πάλιν δὲ ἔαν ἔη ἡ ψυχὴ ἐνταῦθα. This does not mean moral descent or fall during the period of life on earth since the end of the previous paragraph is discussing the natural function of the soul.⁸

Permanent release is definitely rejected by Proclus (*El. Theol.* prop. 206) and Sallustius. Cosmic law requires that every soul descend at least once in every world period (*Proc. In Tim.* iii. 278, 10ff.) though most people will descend more frequently because of their own weakness. By temporary release of the soul Proclus and Sallustius mean not a total separation of soul from the material world but the maintenance of some kind of link with the soul ruling the whole cosmos with the gods (Sallustius xxi; Proclus *In Tim.* iii. 296, 25). It is interesting to note that Proclus says that certain exceptional souls might spend many periods in the intelligible world (*In Crat.* cxvii). This sort of exception and the special descents of great men to serve the world seem to point to a restatement of the value of actual ontological separation from the body. In this sense we might say that Proclus is far closer to Porphyry than to Plotinus who still believed in man's ability to transcend the ebb and flow of the life of the lower soul and the body.

Despite, however, these points of similarity in principle Porphyry would seem to be alone in accepting the idea of permanent escape in the

⁶ It is evident from Augustine *Civ. Dei* X. 29 (Bidez fr. 10, p. 37*17f.) that Porphyry considered the life after death (*post hanc vitam*) to be perfected by god. Perfect wisdom is not found in this life, cf. p. 103f. below and also *Life of Plotinus* § 23, 24f. ἡ γὰρ δὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θεωρία ἀνθρωπίνης μὲν ἂν γένοιτο ἀμείνων ὥς δὲ πρὸς τὴν θείαν γνῶσιν χαρίεσσα μὲν ἂν εἴη, οὐ μὴν ὥστε τὸ βάθος ἐλεῖν ἂν δυνήθῃναι, ὥσπερ αἰροῦσιν οἱ θεοί.

⁷ And Aug. *De Trin.* xiii, 12 *Et qui eorum de hac re erubuerunt sententia, et animam purgatam in sempiterna beatitudine sine corpore collocandam putaverunt.* *Civ. Dei* xxii 12 (Bidez fr. 11.3 p. 41*15, fr. 11, 5 p. 41*31f., 11, 6. p. 42*4f.).

⁸ See further, pages 61f. and 74. The phrase *συνανεχθείσης καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ φιλογενέσεως οὐσίας* (iii. 4.6, 33) indicates a real withdrawal of the lower soul here.

fullest sense. It has been claimed that the Orphics believed in a permanent escape⁹ but this would seem more difficult to establish than Guthrie has thought. His evidence in *Orpheus and Greek Religion* does not completely substantiate his claim. Proclus who is quoted as evidence (*in Tim.* iii 296f.) does not criticise the Orphic view as we might expect him to do in view of his comments in the *Elements of Theology*.

When Porphyry talks about the permanent escape of the soul one must qualify his statement by one important fact. He did not think it possible for all men to attain this end, or, put in a less absolute form, it may be achieved only through philosophy, a study and discipline for which few men are qualified – *de Regr. An.* Bidez fr. 4 p. 32* 14f.: *ut videlicet quicumque a philosophiae virtute remoti sunt, quae ardua nimis atque paucorum est, te auctore theurgos homines . . . inquirant*. Then what will be the status of these ordinary men after death and how will they achieve that status? *De Regr. An.* Bidez fr. 4 tells us that those who are purged in their *anima spiritalis* by theurgy will not return to the Pater but will dwell amongst the *dei aetherii super aerias plagas*. In fr. 6 Augustine attributes to Porphyry a similar opinion as to the power of theurgy – p. 34* 10f.: *isto aëre transcenso levare in caelum et inter deos vestros etiam sidereos conlocare*. Those who reach this level will not stay there permanently but must descend again to the earth. In *de Regr. An.*, Bidez fr. 6 p. 34* 24 Augustine tells us that Porphyry extended the effective range of magic beyond the region under the moon *in aetherias vel empyrias mundi sublimitates et firmamenta caelestia*. It is clear, then, that the station reached by the ordinary man is bound up with the practice of theurgy.

Theurgy is not the only way by which the ordinary man can advance himself. There is also virtue and more especially the lower levels of virtue. Macrobius' description of the ascent of the soul in his commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*, though owing much to Porphyry, does not involve the concept of theurgy.¹⁰ This is not simply because of

⁹ Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, p. 166f.

¹⁰ P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres Grecques en Occident*, has shown how the western tradition uses Porphyry as its major source for Neoplatonic ideas. His researches were particularly directed at an examination of the sources used by Macrobius and he concluded that these are in the main Porphyrian. However one should use Macrobius with considerable caution since he frequently misunderstands Plotinus and Porphyry. He is also adapting Neoplatonic material to the older ideas of the *Somnium Scipionis*.

Macrobius distinguishes between the philosopher and the non-philosopher and makes the Milky Way the abode of good souls. He is thinking mainly of Scipio whom he classifies under both headings. There are two major points where he differs from the fragments of *de Regr. An.* In Macrobius

adherence to earlier Greek and Roman concepts of virtue and salvation but no doubt also because he is influenced by Porphyry's commendation of virtue as a means of attaining the salvation of the lower soul. The fragments of *de Repr. An.* deal with the salvation of the ordinary man almost exclusively in terms of theurgical rites (a hint that the lower soul may be saved by virtue occurs in *de Repr. Animae* Bidez fr. 7 p. 35* 15). But the way to the salvation of the lower soul is also thought of in terms of practical virtue and the more philosophically conceived *Sententiae* do just this. In *Sent.* xxix Porphyry is handling the more limited notion of spiritual ascent which goes no further than the etherial level i.e. salvation of the lower soul only. There is no mention of theurgy in the *Sententiae* and the natural context of *Sent.* xxix suggests that ascent occurs by a moral change in man. Yet in a curious phrase, p. 15, 3 – ἀν μὴ ἄλλη τις αὐτὸ αἰτία ἀνθέλκεῃ; – Porphyry hints at another way of saving the lower soul. What other way could he mean except theurgy and magical rites? He shows here some hesitation about the efficacy of this other way but nevertheless sees fit to allow it some place. All these points will be discussed more thoroughly in part two but it is important to remove at this stage any general misunderstanding about the nature of the salvation of the lower soul. Theurgy and virtue are both involved

(1) The origin and ultimate habitat of *all* souls is the starry sphere (cf. esp. 1.9)

(2) The philosopher is contrasted with the practical man rather than with the theurgist or the man who has recourse to the theurgists (cf. 1.8; 2.17.9). Macrobius too seems to think of a permanent escape from the cycle of rebirth (2.17.14) but by eventual transmission to the starry sphere.

Are we to identify the etherial realm of *de Repr. An.* with the Milky Way of Macrobius? The highest station in Porphyry, *Sent.* xxix is the etherial one and Porphyry is dealing there with the lower, embodied aspect of the human soul. It would appear that Porphyry's etherial region is to be identified with the sphere of the fixed stars where each soul after death chooses a star, a concept developed from Plato who thus provides one of the starting points for the notion of star-bodies. (cf. Plato *Timaeus* 41E and Dodds, Proclus, *Elements of Theol.* App. ii.) But what of the differences?

That Macrobius provides the same goal for the philosopher and the practical man comes from the original *Somnium* and is supported by a misunderstanding of the Plotinian and Porphyrian teaching on virtue (*Som.* 1.8). Macrobius contrasts Plotinus with those who say that only the philosopher has virtues and is blessed. He argues that Plotinus defines virtue as that which makes one blessed and that Plotinus includes the so-called civic virtues in his list. But Plotinus' list is in fact a hierarchical *scale* and the practical virtues will not raise a man to the highest level. Macrobius recognises that the purifying virtues are attained only by the philosopher who retires from public life. What he does not realise is that Plotinus meant that the effects of the virtues are unequal. For Plotinus and Porphyry maintain that the higher virtues make one *more* godlike and blessed than the lower virtues. Macrobius' interpretation of the Neoplatonic teaching is a misrepresentation which inevitably helps to abolish the fundamental Neoplatonic distinction between sage and layman.

though they are mutually exclusive and form two distinct ways of salvation for the ordinary man.

The Porphyrian eschatology so far described is seen to operate in what one might call three strata or areas into which the Neoplatonic world can be divided. The earth or region beneath the moon is the region of embodiment as this presents itself to us now. The region above the moon is seen as the dwelling place of the soul after death.¹¹ The third stratum is, though often referred to spatially as above the stars, clearly not to be thought of as in any sense spatial in strict philosophical discussion – it is the intelligible realm,¹² the home of the higher part of the soul which has contact with matter only through its lower phase which on death subsists in a star body in the heavenly spheres.

The same tripartite division occurs in Plotinus also. In iv. 4.5, 11f. Plotinus is discussing memory. This faculty first comes into operation, he says, in the οὐρανός. He then distinguishes three “places” that souls inhabit.

(1) νοητόν

(2) ἐν οὐρανῷ (14)

(3) αἰσθητὸς κόσμος (26)

By the second he is thinking particularly of the stars who rule their bodies with ease and without ἐπίνοιαι καὶ μηχαναί (iv. 4. 6, 14). iii. 4. 6 makes a similar distinction in an eschatological context. See especially 19ff. αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐν αἰσθητῷ ἢ ἐν ἡλίῳ ἢ ἐν ἄλλῳ τῶν πλανωμένων. He has previously distinguished those who are above and those below in Hades which is here regarded as a place for the less perfect after death which seems to form a fourth layer in the whole cosmos. He then went on to distinguish two classes of those who are above the earth – 18f. ἡ τῶν ἄνω αἱ μὲν ἐν αἰσθητῷ, αἱ δὲ ἔξω. The visible world may be subdivided into the earth or region of embodiment proper and the heavenly spheres. Each soul will return to the star or sphere appropriate to it. This is evidently based on Plato *Timaeus* 41d ff. But going into the question more precisely than Plato Plotinus proceeds to make a clear

¹¹ Though some people enamoured of the material world may even haunt the earth. The traditional starting point for this doctrine is Plato, *Phaedo* 81d. Hades as a place for the wicked sometimes seems to form a further level, under the earth.

¹² It is important to note that this final realm has no personal significance for man in Macrobius who seems to be little interested in the higher principles the One and Nous, except as Macrocosmic principles which act as the source of reason and unity in the human soul. (*Somn.* i. 14. 5f.). This attitude is clearly not derived from Plotinus and Porphyry. Although Macrobius' general metaphysical picture is Neoplatonic, his treatment of man's place in the cosmos would seem to be derived from a more limited metaphysics.

division within each soul of an upper transcendent part and a lower part which is necessarily immanent in body, in its purest state immanent in a heavenly body. Thus he can now speak of the souls which are outside the visible cosmos. He makes a further comment on these (30f.) τὰς δ' ἔξω γενομένας τὴν δαιμονίαν φύσιν ὑπερβεβηκέναι καὶ πᾶσαν εἰμαρμένην γενέσεως καὶ ὅλως <τὸ> ἐν τῷδε τῷ ὁρατῷ, ἕως ἐστὶν ἐκεῖ, συνανενεχθείσης καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ φιλογενέσεως οὐσίας. In iii. 5, 6 he tells us to call Beings in the intelligible world "gods," those in the visible world as far as the moon are secondary gods. The *daimones* are more difficult to place but seem to be related somehow to the embodied soul while the pure soul is related to the gods. Transcendent and immanent universal Soul is similarly related to the gods and *daimones* in ii. 3. 9, 45ff. θεὸς μὲν οὖν ἐκείνης συναριθμουμένης, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν δαίμων, φησί, μέγας καὶ τὰ πάθη τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ δαιμόνια.¹³

iv. 8.4, 5f. also shows the tripartite stratification;

(1) μετὰ τῆς ὅλης μενούσας ἐν τῷ νοητῷ (5).

(2) ἐν οὐρανῷ δὲ μετὰ τῆς ὅλης συνδιοικεῖν ἐκείνη (6).

(3) μεταβάλλουσαι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ὅλου εἰς τὸ μέρος (10).

In iv. 3. 32, 23 he contrasts Heracles ἐν οὐρανῷ and Heracles ἐν τῷ νοητῷ who really transcends Heracles — ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἡρακλέα. We recall i. 1.12 where the distinction is between Heracles in the intelligible world and Heracles in Hades. Hades cannot here mean a place of punishment for impure souls since Heracles as a possessor of practical virtue is a good man. The term Hades is very vague in Plotinus. It can refer to earthly existence, to the habitat of the lower soul after death or to a specific part of this habitat reserved for wicked persons.¹⁴

The οὐρανός is the highest part of the αἰσθητὸς κόσμος. We see this again in iv. 3.17, 1f.: ὅτι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ νοητοῦ εἰς τὴν οὐρανοῦ ἵασι αἱ ψυχαὶ τὸ πρῶτον χώραν, λογίσαιτο ἄν τις ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων. Εἰ γὰρ οὐρανὸς ἐν τῷ αἰσθητῷ τόπῳ ἀμείνων, εἴη ἄν προσεχῆς τῶν νοητῶν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις. Ἐκεῖθεν τοίνυν ψυχοῦται ταῦτα πρῶτα καὶ μεταλαμβάνει. He seems to think of a gradual descent of soul, each soul passing through the various stages but some not going as far as others; *ibid.* 8f. Πᾶσαι μὲν δὴ καταλάμπουσι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ διδόναι οἷον τὸ πολὺ αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐκείνῳ, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα τοῖς ὑστέροις ἐναυγάζονται, αἱ δ' ἐπιπλέον κατιοῦσαι ἐναυγάζουσι μᾶλλον κάτω.

Having introduced the notion of theurgy it is appropriate to record that the Chaldaean Oracles, one of the main sources of theurgic rites

¹³ cf. Iamblichus *De Myst.* x 7, 293, 10f.; ix, 6, 280, 17f.

¹⁴ see p. 72f.

and a work which influenced Porphyry, also divides the world into three parts. The report of Proclus (*In Tim.* ii. 57, 9f.) states that the Chaldaeans divided the universe into the ἐμπύριον, αἰθέριον and ὕλαϊον. This is almost certainly the original Chaldaean teaching rather than a Neoplatonic interpretation. It was greatly elaborated by the later Neoplatonists.¹⁵ The ascent of the soul into the empyrean or intelligible realm is found in Synesius, *Hymn* 8, 57, where Christ surmounts the οὐρανοῦ . . . νώτων and enters the intelligible world of silence. See also *Egyptian Tale* p. 65, 5 οὐρανοῦ νώτων. The notion of "the back of the universe" seems to be ultimately derived from Plato *Phaedrus* 247b7 where the νῶτον οὐρανοῦ is the ultimate border between matter and the intelligible world and is somehow situated above the stars. It appears that the Chaldaeans themselves not only distinguished the various levels but also taught that the highest level was not open to all men. They distinguished two classes of good men in the after life.¹⁶ There are the theurgists who ascended to the level of the cosmic Soul in the supra-mundane or empyrean region and the non-theurgists who ascended to a station in the stars or planets. Rebirth for the former would take the form of a special service to mankind and would be seen as a privilege. A clear example modelled on this is Osiris in Synesius' *Egyptian Tale*.

The tripartite division of the universe is a necessary background to Neoplatonic eschatology. We claimed earlier that an examination of the relationship of the higher and lower soul after death would aid us in our enquiry about permanent escape in Porphyry. The distinction of higher and lower soul is quite clearly involved in the tripartite world picture and we shall commence our discussion of the relationship of higher and lower soul after death by looking at Plotinus i, 1, 12, a passage we have already had occasion to quote in the context of the tripartite division. The relevant passage is i. 1. 12, 28f. ἀφίησι οὖν τὸ εἶδωλον, εἰ μὴ ἐγγὺς τὸ ὑποδεξάμενον. ἀφίησι δὲ οὐ τῷ ἀποσχισθῆναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ μηκέτι εἶναι. οὐκέτι δὲ ἐστίν, ἐὰν ἐκεῖ βλέπη ὅλη. The clue to the meaning lies in the underlined words. It is body which receives the image of soul and Plotinus can be referring here only to that stage in life when the body ceases to be suitable for the reception of the image or lower part of soul, the point, in fact, of natural death. This interpretation is reinforced by the Heracles and Hades illustration that

¹⁵ For further details, see Theiler, "Die Chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios" (now reprinted in *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*) p. 22-3 and, Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles* p. 137 and Thilo, *Coel. Emp.* 3, 4ff.

¹⁶ cf. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 223.

follows. We shall see that Hades for Plotinus nearly always means a place or state connected with the soul after separation from its earthly body in natural death. Then in i. 1. 12 Plotinus is saying the following:

(1) Lower soul may simply cease to exist after death.

(2) This total annihilation of the lower soul is somehow bound up with perfect direction towards the intelligible world.

The Heracles illustration explains this. Heracles was not a perfect contemplative being during his earthly life. Upon his natural death he, therefore, retained his lower soul.

Now there is a curious link with Porphyry in the wording of this passage. Iamblichus, in his treatise on the soul, fragments of which are preserved in Stobaeus, makes the following reference to the followers of Plotinus and Porphyry (Stob. *Flor.* i 370, 5f.) οἱ δὲ περὶ Πορφύριον καὶ Πλωτῖνον ἐκάστω μέρει τοῦ παντὸς τὰς οἰκείας δυνάμεις προβάλλεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀποφαίνονται, καὶ ἀφίεσθαι μὲν καὶ μηκέτι εἶναι τὰς ζωὰς τὰς ὅπως οὖν προβληθείσας [οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον καὶ Πλωτῖνον Πλατωνικοὶ] ἀφορίζονται παραπλησίως τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος φυομένοις, ὅποτεν εἰς ἑαυτὸ ἀναδράμῃ τὸ σπέρμα· εἶναι δὲ καὶ ταύτας ἐν τῷ παντὶ καὶ μὴ ἀπόλλυσθαι τάχα ἂν τις ἐπινοήσῃ καὶνότερον, οὐκ ἀπιθάνως. The *μηκέτι εἶναι* recalls the similar phrase in Plotinus i. 1. 12. We have shown elsewhere the connection of *ζωαί* with the lower soul and the external activity of soul.¹⁷ Surely, if we were correct in connecting Porphyry's concept of the presence of soul by *δύναμις* with the Plotinian theory of the twofold activity of intelligibles the external activity of a hypostasis must continue to exist as long as the hypostasis itself (i.e. the internal activity) continues to exist. Plotinus seems to argue this himself in vi. 4. 10; iv. 4. 29 and iv. 7. 14 also support this. This consideration makes it difficult to understand how Plotinus can think of the annihilation of the lower soul as soul itself certainly does not cease to exist. In iii. 4. 6 Plotinus speaks of the withdrawal of the lower soul and explains how it is still present to the cosmos as a whole.¹⁸ This fits in better with the notion of lower soul as the external activity of higher soul. Iamblichus reflects this apparent inconsistency. We have seen how he records that Porphyry and Plotinus said that the lower soul ceases to exist when the higher soul or rather the ego is completely re-integrated with the higher self. In Stob. *Flor.* i 384, 19 he appears to

¹⁷ cf. Chap. One p. 3.

¹⁸ See below, p. 74. Note also iv. 3.4, where he again says that the soul is never completely outside body οὐ πάντῃ δὲ ἔξω σώματος ἔσσεσθαι. See Dodd's comment on Procl. *Elements of Theol.*, prop. 196.

reflect Plotinus' inconsistency (if we may include Plotinus in τοὺς περὶ Πλωτῖνον) but to accredit Porphyry with the opposite opinion accorded him in i 370, 5f. He writes that those around Plotinus say that at death the irrational or lower soul is either

- (1) released (ἀφιείσεως) εἰς τὴν γένεσιν
- (2) separated (ἀφαιρούσης) ἀπὸ τῆς διανοίας.

In this latter case one may see a further distinction

(a) each power is dissolved into the life of the cosmos and yet remains (μένει) ἀμετάβλητος. This idea is attributed to Porphyry.

(b) The whole ἄλογος ζωὴ remains and is preserved – a view attributed to the priests.

In the general analysis of this passage I would agree with Festugière whilst differing from him on the text and meaning of (a).¹⁹ (1) implies the destruction in some unspecified way of the irrational soul whilst (2) implies that it somehow continues to exist. The elaborations of Porphyry and the priests (surely Iamblichus' own doctrine) are clearly an attempt to fill in the details left vague by Plotinus. Porphyry's position seems to conflict with what Iamblichus has to say in Stob. *Flor.* i 370. In this second passage Porphyry is reported to hold that the irrational or lower soul somehow remains or continues to exist after death. The final view expressed in this passage looks similar to Iamblichus' own opinion in the other passage. The difference between his own doctrine and that of Porphyry will emerge more clearly in a moment. From these two passages we can see that Porphyry no less than Plotinus would seem to hold conflicting views on the fate of the irration-

¹⁹ On this passage see Festugière, *Révélation* III p. 235–6 and notes. I do not agree with him, however, when he rejects the conjecture ἡ καὶ (*ibid.* p. 236 n. 1). Against Festugière I would suggest that the subject of λύεται and μένει is numerically identical. Each irrational power is dissolved as to its individuality into the whole life of the cosmos but remains unchanged or rather undiminished in power in so far as it can. Festugière on the other hand speaks of some powers being dissolved and others remaining. I think that the former interpretation accounts for the difficulties that Proclus seems to have had with Porphyry's doctrine (see below). If Festugière is right surely Proclus would have expressed himself more clearly. Dillon in his edition of the fragments of Iamblichus' *Platonic Commentaries* also now supports ἡ καὶ (misprinted as ἡ καὶ p. 376) and comments "Porphyry assumes the dissolution of the individual faculties from each other, but imagines the psychic stuff from which they sprang to subsist permanently in the universe (presumably in the spheres of the relevant planetary gods). This is Hermetic doctrine as given in the *Poimandres*, for instance."

Festugière refers to *Corp. Hermet.* i 24–5. I do not, however, see in this passage the clear distinction between two parts of the lower soul that Festugière uses to support his argument that Porphyry makes some parts survive and others dissolve. The ἡθός seems to me to be treated in a similar way to the other aspects of the lower soul. It is true that it is handed over to the daimon but it is ἀνεέργητον like the other parts.

al soul. An important passage of Proclus shows, however, that Porphyry probably reconciled the two views.

In *In Tim.* iii 234, 6f. Proclus connects the problem of the fate of the irrational soul with that of the survival of the *ὄχημα* and places Porphyry between the extremists, Atticus and Albinus, who say that the *ὄχημα* and the irrational powers of the soul cease to exist after death and Iamblichus who says that both continue to exist; 18f.: οἱ δὲ τούτων μετριώτεροι, ὥσπερ οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον, καὶ πρᾶότεροι παραιτοῦνται μὲν τὴν καλουμένην φθορὰν κατασκευδαννύναι τοῦ τε ὀχήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, ἀναστοιχειοῦσθαι δὲ αὐτὰ φασὶ καὶ ἀναλύεσθαι τινὰ τρόπον εἰς τὰς σφαίρας, ἀφ' ὧν τὴν σύνθεσιν ἔλαχε, φυράματα δὲ εἶναι ταῦτα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανίων σφαιρῶν καὶ κατιοῦσαν αὐτὰ συλλέγειν τὴν ψυχὴν, ὥστε καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα καὶ μὴ εἶναι, αὐτὰ δὲ ἕκαστα μηκέτ' εἶναι μηδὲ διαμένειν τὴν ιδιότητα αὐτῶν. This passage, it is true, is as much concerned with the *ὄχημα* as with the irrational soul but the *ὄχημα* and the irrational soul are very closely bound together and it would not be illicit to use this passage to give us information, in the first place, about the fate of the irrational soul alone.

The first point that the Proclus passage clears up is the meaning of Iamblichus' phrase ἢ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα μένει ἀμετάβλητος. We now see that Porphyry claimed that the *ὄχημα* and the irrational soul remain (μένει) and are yet dissolved (διαλύεται). They do not simply pass out of existence but "they are and are not." Proclus professes to find this paradox mystifying (*ibid.* 236, 22). Yet in his report he gives us an important clue which helps us to understand a little better what Porphyry was trying to say. Porphyry evidently explained the "μὴ εἶναι" part of his assertion by denying the further existence of the *ὄχημα* and the irrational soul as individuals – ἕκαστα. The word *ιδιότης* would appear to carry the same meaning although Porphyry usually implies by this word the natural or essential element in a thing which gives it its ontological rank.²⁰ Perhaps this might reinforce our argument if we were to conclude that this expression introduces the notion of ontological change in order to stress the cosmic effect of the process of withdrawal of the lower soul from the world. We recall here what we said earlier about the two ways in which we can say that a soul becomes

²⁰ *Sent.* xxxiii p. 26, 18: 27, 6. xxxiv p. 28, 15. xxxviii p. 34, 5, 8. *Ad Gaur.* 33, 5: 35, 13.

Chrysipp., *Stoic* 2.126 = particular existence. Proclus generally seems to imply by this term something unchangeable which characterises a particular rank (*In Tim.* i. 36, 8f: *In Rem.* i. 78, 3), but also uses the word of *personal* character, *In Tim.* i. 7, 25 *Σωκρατικὴν ιδιότητα*. Also *ibid.* 43, 10, but more concerned with subdivision of a series; and 48, 25 and *In Rem.* i. 83, 23 of the identity of the various gods.

individualized or falls. The one is ontological, the other spiritual.²¹ We are now dealing with the reverse process of ontological emanation, the ontological return. If a man "returns" or becomes "whole" internally or spiritually he will attain, after death, an equal wholeness in the ontological order when his lower powers no longer are directed towards an individual body but towards the cosmos as a whole.

This interpretation accords well with the Iamblichus passage (*Stob.* i 384). The difference between Porphyry's doctrine and the doctrine of the priests which, as we suggested earlier, is probably Iamblichus' doctrine too, is to be traced precisely to the mode in which the irrational soul lives on. For Iamblichus the whole irrational soul lives on whilst for Porphyry there is some kind of dissolution of the component powers which somehow continue to exist in a separated state. Clearly the integral irrational personality as vested in the irrational soul has greater significance in Iamblichus.

One final point to notice in Iamblichus and Proclus is their apparent failure to understand the limitations of Porphyry's theory. It is surely not the case that Plotinus and Porphyry thought that the irrational or lower soul of every single man would be dissolved after death. The dissolution of the lower soul is the reward of the philosopher alone and is, no doubt, a rare phenomenon. Thus Proclus' argument *In Tim.* iii 235 that Porphyry's idea would do away with Hades and the traditional punishments is exaggerated. Both Porphyry and Plotinus accepted these. The man who has not reached the level of the philosopher still retains the traces of earthly life and passions and so remains within the cycle of eternal rebirth and will undergo the punishments of Hades if he is wicked. This fate will be that of the majority of men. Proclus' failure to see this point is, perhaps, due to a more optimistic view of the attainability of the highest levels of spiritual ascent, access to which is made easier by theurgy.

We have attempted no more than a statement of the framework within which eschatological events occur and have touched on what one might call the mechanics of eschatology in trying to reconcile and explain conflicting reports about Porphyry's position. It is clear that Porphyry even when positing a permanent escape of the soul need not have denied the Platonic doctrine of soul as an intermediary between spirit and matter with two functions to perform. The irrational soul may cease to be an individual soul and thus a source of impediments for

²¹ See chap. two, especially p. 35.

the higher self but it still continues to exist and give life to the cosmos. Porphyry can still claim that all souls are *συμφύεις τῇ γενέσει*. We must now, however, go on to assess the importance of some of the ideas and doctrines discussed in this chapter and ask whether Plotinus and Porphyry take the traditional eschatology seriously, whether, in fact, eschatological events are real events or just a mythical equivalent of our spiritual state and finally how their doctrine of the fate of the irrational soul fits in with the rest of the Neoplatonic system.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN EVALUATION OF ESCHATOLOGY IN PORPHYRY AND PLOTINUS

We have surveyed the system and workings of eschatology and must now turn to the meaning and value of eschatological statements within a philosophical system which juxtaposes ontological and what we have termed spiritual statements. It must be stressed that the attainment of successive levels in the internal ascent is not merely spiritual but that the inner attainment has a corresponding ontological level in which it is vested and which it uses as a sort of base. Now these ontological bases continue to exist and perform their functions however far our inner ascent may have carried us, i.e. irrespective of the level to which the floating self or ego has risen. They will be marginally affected in that they are perfected in their operation by the influence of the higher faculties that have been brought into operation or actualised by the floating self. But we have also heard of another way in which the lower levels are affected. This occurs at the moment of natural death and, in the case of the philosopher, involves the withdrawal of the lower powers of his soul so that they are henceforth given a universal rather than an individual existence. This represents the final overcoming of the individual *ἐπιμελεία* discussed in chapter two. It involves an ontological transformation in the lower soul. The overcoming of individuality and the ascent to universality can be understood in a spiritual and in an ontological sense and are thus key ideas in both spheres.

In chapter two we discussed the concept of primary and secondary fall in Plotinus and Porphyry. Their treatment of this concept, as we suggested earlier, throws light on their attitude to eschatology. In Plotinus' case the fall into body is considered to be partly sinful (self-willed) whereas in Porphyry and Synesius it is simply necessary, a service to god and to the universe. This is perhaps one of the details which alone shows how Porphyry tried to clarify the human adventure by giving it a fixed starting point and goal. Since the first descent into

body is not self-willed the ultimate withdrawal from γένεσις cannot be revoked by an act of self-assertion leading to a new descent. The two realms of human moral responsibility and will and that of ontology are more carefully distinguished than in Plotinus. They are brought together again in two ways: (1) by the identification of each successive spiritual level with a corresponding ontological entity or level; (2) the visible and historic world change which, in its ultimate form, results in the withdrawal of the lower soul from the cycle of individual re-embodiment as a consequence of perfection in the inner life.

Plotinus evidently saw little reason to press for such a "conversion." For him the spiritual movement predominates. Of course the inner realm or spiritual ego is ultimately united to the higher phases of the ontological order whereby the opposition of spiritual and ontological realms becomes an opposition of higher and lower soul. This is (1) above. But (2) with which we are now dealing does not seem to be as important for Plotinus as it was for Porphyry. No passage expresses this better than iii 2. 15, 43f. The world is merely a stage on which the shadow of the real man acts. Transmigration is taken seriously but is of little or no importance since it involves only the lower man leaving the real self untouched (*ibid.* 24f.).

Kristeller, in a perceptive book *Der Begriff der Seele in der Philosophie Plotins*, balances this interpretation by discussing those passages where Plotinus treats of the effect that the noetic life has on the lower life.¹ But one is left with the disturbing feeling that "time" is totally irrelevant, i.e. the historical life in the world is utterly transcended and made superfluous when one has rediscovered the real self in the world of eternity. (This is the burden of the treatise on "Whether well-being increases with time," 1.5. True happiness exists outside time and is vested in the higher self.) Transmigration continues, one supposes, simply because soul is by nature connected with body since, according to Platonic tradition, it is an intermediary between pure spirit and matter. Yet the good man not only lives above the level of the chances of fortune in each life but also above the transition from one life to another (iii. 2, 15, 45f.).

All this is changed in Porphyry who says that the soul of the good man never descends again. He has, I suggest, seen the irrelevance of eternal transmigration in the Plotinian scheme and, whilst adopting the distinction of spiritual and ontological spheres, recognised the impor-

¹ Kristeller p. 89ff.

tance of time and the historical event, i.e. there is both a beginning and an end to salvation. This beginning and end is not, of course, applicable to the intelligible world or the higher self but to the mode of ontological relationship which the lower soul has to the material world. The universalisation of the lower soul's presence in the world marks the end-point of salvation.

Plotinus' attitude is, I think, dominated by his discovery of the transcendent self and the corresponding possibility of escape and union with that self now. And most important of all, the fact that he himself had doubtless attained such escape meant that he had little time for the lower elements of life. For Porphyry the matter seemed different. Firstly he inherited from Plotinus a fairly comprehensive metaphysical system and saw as his task the clear exposition of this system which inevitably would include the correction of minor points and the filling in of loopholes. The fate of the ordinary man was such a loophole. Secondly he was, perhaps, less mystical than Plotinus and more aware of the problem of the ordinary man – which in Neoplatonism centres around the fate of the lower soul. Thirdly he was less optimistic than Plotinus and defined the escape of the soul in historical terms. Thus his spiritual optimism is modified by the more pessimistic attitude to contemplation which is found in Plotinus too, but not to the same extent.

The evidence we will now examine suggests that Plotinus took eschatology seriously and that he meant it to be real, but it is very difficult indeed to see what real relevance it had to the philosopher. Nevertheless there does seem to be in Plotinus an important psychological undercurrent which stresses the great impediments of embodiment and, therefore, the desirability of escape from reincarnation. For the same reason Porphyry reassesses the problem and this represents the common ground between them.

We will now examine these ideas in more detail, but firstly it must be determined whether Plotinus takes seriously the traditional Platonic eschatology in its broad outlines or whether he regards it entirely as a myth. Plotinus took eschatology seriously in so far as the lower soul was for him an object of serious discussion. In this first part of our discussion we are concerned simply to show that Plotinus meant his eschatology to be accepted as a real event with a certain importance. How this then fits in with the wider implications of his metaphysics is a separate and more difficult question dealt with later.

A. N. M. Rich has shown in a recent article² that Plotinus was very

² "Reincarnation in Plotinus," *Mnem.* Ser. 4, 10.1957, 232–8.

serious about the doctrine of reincarnation. She discusses several passages where Plotinus comments on the problem. vi. 4. 16 states Plotinus' position quite adequately. He accepts the doctrine because it is traditional and comes from a good source and says he will attempt to show how it fits in or, at least, does not contradict his own philosophy. On the other hand his attitude here betrays a certain diffidence. It is true that punishment after death plays an important role in his metaphysics but it is equally important to remember that the philosopher will transcend this. This is a basic tension in Plotinus' thought.

Further testimony about the reality of the afterlife etc. may be gained from a study of the concept of Hades in the *Enneads*. It has sometimes been supposed that the Neoplatonists primarily meant by Hades the earth and our earthly existence.³ But though such a metaphor is employed it is by no means as commonly found as has been supposed and I can find only two clear examples of it in the *Enneads*. Let us go through the references to Hades in Plotinus. i.8.13, 21f. Plotinus first talks about the moral death of the soul ἀποθνήσκει οὖν, ὡς ψυχὴ ἂν θάνοι, καὶ ὁ θάνατος αὐτῇ καὶ ἔτι ἐν τῷ σώματι βεβαπτισμένη ἐν ὕλῃ ἐστὶ καταδύναι καὶ πλησθῆναι αὐτῆς καὶ ἐξελθούσῃ ἐκεῖ κεῖσθαι, ἕως ἀναδράμῃ καὶ ἀφέλῃ πως τὴν ὕψιν ἐκ τοῦ βορβόρου· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἐν Ἀΐδου ἐλθόντα ἐπικαταδραθεῖν. Clearly ἐξελθούσῃ cannot refer to spiritual separation since we are dealing with the man who has failed to do this. It can have only the ontological meaning of separation in the sense of natural death. Thus Hades is applied to the soul after death. The word ἐξέρχομαι will occur again and again in similar contexts and seems to refer invariably to the natural separation of soul and body. The only precedent in Plato occurs in *Crito* 54c2.

In i.1.12, 33 again the reference seems to be to natural death. The immediate cause of the withdrawal of soul is the lack of a 'receiver' – ὑποδεξάμενον (29). It seems difficult to interpret this other than ontologically. i.6.8, 15 seems to equate Hades with the act of turning towards sensible objects. This is one of the exceptions.

In i.7.3, 13 Hades is seen as the state of soul after natural death – μετὰ θάνατον (7) and iii.4.6, 11, after natural death comes the choice of new lives.

In ii.9.6, 13 he can accept the gnostic treatment of Hades because it comes from Plato.⁴

³ H. Dörrie, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique, xii Porphyre*. p. 180.

⁴ ii. 9. is Plotinus' attack on the Gnostics. In ii. 9.6. he makes it clear that some of their doctrines are acceptable but only because they are derived from Plato. He does not, however, give any indication of the kind of Hades he thought Plato meant.

In iv.3.27, 7 Plotinus thinks of higher and lower soul each vested with a memory. He refers to a stage when they come together – συνῶσιν (4) – and a second stage when they stand apart. To this second stage he adds the remark εἰ ἄμφορ εἶεν καὶ μένοιεν (5). This suggestion that the soul might cease to exist is surely relevant only if Plotinus is here referring to what occurs after natural death. The tenor of the passage suggests that the lower soul of Heracles is recalling a life already spent. In the last part of the section it is clear that Plotinus is discussing memory after death. This is the question raised in ch. 25, 1 f. and it is the elucidation of this problem that provides the theme for the final chapters of the treatise. It seems, then, to have been a particularly real and important question for Plotinus. Chapter 31 develops the idea of convergence and separation seen in chapter 27. There seem to be two types of separation. One which occurs now due to disharmony and one which occurs on death (ἐξελεύσασα).

In vi, 4, 16, 36f he offers several interpretations of the phrase “to go to Hades.” Of these the first two do not refer to a real Hades. I take the second as referring to this world in view of Ἄλλὰ οὐκ ὄντος which indicates that natural death comes into consideration only from this point on.

Thus Hades in Plotinus refers in all but two cases to the fate of the soul after natural death and is not a mere allegory of the wicked earthly life. These passages have also shown the importance and care with which Plotinus sometimes treated the question of the state of soul after death. We might say that the question is raised not for its own sake but because the answer which it brings (in this case concerning memory) provides us with a principle upon which we can act now (iv, 3, ch. 31–32) and which gives further reasons why man should transcend his lower self. Nevertheless the observation and theories propounded and the concept of the fate of soul (lower) after death which underlies them are taken seriously and cannot be merely a myth or empty conjecture but reasonable metaphysical speculation.

Finally in this review I would like to refer back to the tripartite world picture which we described above⁵ and touched on again in discussing iv. 3.27. We must ask ourselves how far the tripartite world division is a mythical way of explaining different attainments in human existence.

In iv.3.32, 21 we read ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, ὅταν ἐκεῖ ἐθέλῃ εἶναι, ἔτι οὐσα ἐνταῦθα ἀφίησι πάντα ὅσα ἄλλα· ὀλίγα τοῖνυν ἀκαεῖ τὰ ἐντεῦθεν· καὶ ἐν

⁵ See p. 61f. above.

οὐρανῷ οὐσα πλείω. Here we have, it seems, the two realms – while we are in the body (external) we can yet be in the noetic realm (internal). The external is represented by the phrase ἔτι οὐσα ἐνταῦθα. Now the same phrase is used of the heavenly region – ἐν οὐρανῷ οὐσα and is to be taken as parallel with ἔτι οὐσα ἐνταῦθα (argument *a fortiori*) rather than with ἐκεῖ ἐθέλη εἶναι. This suggests that Plotinus took literally the idea of an external or ontological presence in the heavenly region.

I take the tripartite view in iii.4 in the real rather than allegorical sense. In iii.4.6, 40 he seems to be discussing the natural function of soul. The transcending of γένεσις (31) seems not to be a merely spiritual occurrence since the withdrawal of the lower soul which it involves looks as if it is treated as an actual fact and not simply the overcoming of earthly feelings. The discussion about the divisible soul which follows (38f.) leads to this conclusion. The divisible soul is not divided μεγέθει. When its activities in a particular area cease it is still present as a whole. He seems to be suggesting that the lower soul is reabsorbed in the World Soul – precisely the explanation of Porphyry when faced with the ontological problem of the lower soul's existence when we have finally "returned."

Having accepted all this there remains one enormous problem. Eschatology, even earthly existence, is a matter for the lower soul. The highest part of us always remains above. Plotinus shows in iv.8.8 that he is aware that this is an innovation. By reactivating the higher self by ascending to it internally we can transcend our lower selves. This is forcefully expressed in iii.2.15, 24f., the passage which was mentioned in the introductory remarks: εἰ οὖν καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἀλλαγὴ ἐστὶ σώματος, ὥσπερ ἐσθῆτος ἐκεῖ, ἢ καὶ τισιν ἀποθέσεις σώματος, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ ἔξοδος ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς παντελὴς τότε, εἰσύστερον πάλιν ἡζοντος ἐναγωνίσασθαι, τί ἂν δεινὸν εἴη ἢ τοιαύτη τῶν ζώων εἰς ἄλληλα μεταβολὴ πολὺ βελτίων οὐσα τοῦ μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτὰ γενέσθαι; . . . (47) καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἐκάστων οὐχ ἢ ἔνδον ψυχῇ, ἀλλ' ἢ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιά καὶ οἰμώζει καὶ ὀδύρεται καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ ἐν σκηνῇ τῇ ὅλη γῇ πολλαχοῦ σκηναὶς ποιησαμένων. Thus by identifying our ego with the undescended part of the soul we can transcend not only the misfortunes of our life here and now but also the whole process of transmigration.

The immediate result of such philosophical optimism is a concentration on the means to attaining this goal and a corresponding lack of interest in the lower stages of ascent since the highest stage is not so much a continuation as an annihilation of the relevance of the lower stages and represents a complete break with the time and event based

philosophy of Plato and the later Neoplatonists. Death is now the supreme irrelevance.

This lack of interest in the details of the lower stages of ascent is not evident where they are treated as steps towards the higher goal but only when they are seen as ends in themselves. This treatment will, one expects, be particularly evident in the explanation of eschatology and the fate of the lower soul of the philosopher after death. At the end of vi. 4.16 the fate of the *εἰδωλον* is not accurately pinpointed and the subject is cursorily dismissed without any final solution being offered.

We have already noted that when Plotinus talks of transcendence in this way he is not suggesting that our lower selves vegetate. In fact our lower life is perfected when we transcend it. Not only may action lead to contemplation but action also flows from and is perfected by contemplation. This theory seems, on first sight, to offer a link between the spiritual and ontological realms and between the higher and lower self. Unfortunately this is only superficial as we shall see and action is regarded very much as a subsidiary to contemplation, the whole theory thus supporting rather than diminishing the transcendence noted above. It will be as well to treat Plotinus and Porphyry together on this point as there seems to be no fundamental difference between them.

In his treatise on contemplation (iii. 8) Plotinus seems to be using the concept of contemplation in two ways which correspond with the spiritual and ontological areas we have distinguished. On the one hand contemplation provides the clue to the existence of the various levels of reality. But when he comes to discuss contemplation in the individual soul we are aware of a difference. This contemplation produces not a lower order of reality (for this has already occurred) but *action* as its by-product. We have here no less than the two forms of *ἐπιστροφή* which we noted earlier. This by-product of action is equivalent to the external *ἐνέργεια* of the ontological process. An equal parallel is found in the assertion that internal disposition rather than action is the important element (i. 5.10 end) – that disposition, therefore, when it finds no outlet in action because of a lack of external opportunity is in no way to be considered imperfect. This idea of opportunity is similar to the notion of the substrate which must be present if the activity of (higher) soul is to be manifested. The difference is that in the former the outgoing or manipulation of the substrate is variable since we may not always act at the highest level and there may be no outgoing *ἐνέργεια*, however many material opportunities are to hand for its expression. This is what is meant by the element of freedom and re-

sponsibility as opposed to the necessary nature of the ontological order. This parallel treatment leads to the important bias, already part of the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, that contemplation is superior to action just as, ontologically, contemplation comes before and is the cause of lower grades of reality.

In his note on Proclus *Elements of Theology* 36, 37 Dodds says: "It is natural to ask what it is that is 'generated by reversion' (prop. 37, 7); for while procession is a creative process, reversion has so far appeared as a relation or state of the will. The answer appears to be that reversion generates the progressive perfection of the lower principles. Thus *Enn.* iii. 4.1." By quoting *Enn.* iii. 4.1 he shows that he means only the ontological reversion since Plotinus is here talking about the ontological formation of the various soul levels. In *ad Gaurum* p. 42, 18f. Porphyry refers to a perfecting of the lower powers. He speaks of a return or ἐπιστροφή of each faculty upon its producer and this return produces perfection in the lower. But in this case he cannot mean ontological ἐπιστροφή by which a hypostasis is formed. Firstly the faculties are seen not as mere substrates but as fully formed. Secondly the ἐπιστροφή is not necessary but optional (δύναται). He means that each faculty can have a beneficent effect on its lower neighbours if we make the effort. Plotinus speaks in similar terms when he says that the lower part of the soul must be ruled and thus made better or perfected by the higher part.⁶ This is the prerequisite for further ascent by separation.

There seems to be a difficulty here in that this effect of the higher on the lower is seen to be both a *sine qua non* for further progress towards higher principles and a result of this progress. Perhaps we might explain by saying that the control of the bodily passions etc., though necessary as a first step towards the higher philosophical life, becomes easier once that life is attained. The same paradox is involved in the treatise on θεωρία where προᾶξις is seen both as the result of contemplation and also as the starting point in the upward direction towards the higher life of contemplation. Plotinus tries to keep the two in balance in i. 3.6, 14, "Can the lower kinds of virtue exist without dialectic and theoretical wisdom? Yes, but only incompletely and defectively. And can one be a wise man and a dialectician without these lower virtues? It would not happen; they must either precede or grow along with wisdom. One might perhaps have natural virtues, from which the perfect ones develop with the coming of wisdom. So wisdom comes after the natural virtue,

⁶ cf. vi. 4.15.

and then perfects the character; or rather when the natural virtues exist both increase and come to perfection together: as the one progresses it perfects the other; for in general natural virtue is imperfect both in vision and character, and the principles from which we derive them are the most important thing both in natural virtue and wisdom" (trans. Armstrong). Thus the possession of the principles (*ἀρχαί*) perfects the lower virtues though these virtues remain subordinate and largely irrelevant to the supreme task of the philosopher. He transcends them much as Nous transcends Soul and the One transcends Nous. The Neoplatonic concept of the relationship between action and contemplation forms only a tenuous link between the lower and higher self and the spiritual and ontological realms. In Plotinus it supports rather than diminishes the concept of spiritual transcendence.

Then why did Plotinus retain the details about eschatology if they are ultimately transcended? One must first recall what we have already said about Porphyry. Plotinus was evidently not very interested in the *μικτὸς ἀνθρώπος*. He seems to think that the middle course is insecure (v. 9.1). His whole effort was concentrated on the real goal rather than on any intermediary. Porphyry compromised to some extent by his greater interest in and treatment of religious and symbolic themes whose real value was as a guide to the man who could never aspire to the heights of philosophy and, by implication, the highest grades of spiritual salvation. On this score alone eschatology is more important for Porphyry than it is for Plotinus.

But is the traditional eschatology relevant in any way to the philosopher? We have already seen how the lower soul is transcended and I do not want to weaken the philosophical position reached by Plotinus. We have also seen that Plotinus sometimes has a less optimistic attitude to contemplation and man's involvement in the material world.

We do not need to quote examples of Plotinus' warnings against the distractions of this world. At the root of such warnings lies the belief that the soul is somehow endangered or restricted by the body which it has chosen to inhabit and although Plotinus claims that we can transcend the compound of lower soul and body, it still remains true that the body is a real impediment and source of concern. I am trying to stress now what I would call the pessimistic strain as opposed to the optimistic strain so clear in the theory of transcendence. The two strains seem to occur in Plotinus' treatment of the relationship of soul to Soul. The presence of this basic pessimistic trait may go some way to explaining why Plotinus retained the externals of the old Platonic eschatology, i.e. what relevance it had to his own life.

We saw in chapter two the ways in which the individual soul differs from the All-soul. The individual soul gives life to a particular body. It also tends to look towards the world of particulars in the spiritual sense. Internally such a soul can rise to universality, but externally it remains bound to the particular body of its initial choice, separation from which comes only in the natural order. Plotinus often seems to sense a real conflict here, grounded in the observation that the individual soul must be somehow inferior to the All-soul since it has fallen from its contemplation and however quickly or surely it returns nevertheless commences its ascent from a position of inferiority. Thus in iv.8.7, 24f. he tells us that the ascent of the individual soul begins in time and from a low state. The All-soul, however, does not have these disadvantages, ταῖς μὲν παρὰ μέρος καὶ χρόνῳ γιγνομένου τοῦ τοιούτου καὶ ἐν τῷ χεῖρονι γιγνομένης ἐπιστροφῆς πρὸς τὰ ἀμείνω, τῇ δὲ λεγομένη τοῦ παντός εἶναι τὸ μὴδ' ἐν τῷ χεῖρονι ἔργῳ γεγονέναι, ἀπαθεῖ δὲ κακῶν οὕση θεωρίᾳ τε περινοεῖν τὰ ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἐξηρητῆσθαι τε τῶν πρὸ αὐτῆς ἀεί· ἢ ἅμα δυνατόν καὶ ἄμφω. . . . The individual soul is frequently compared with the All-soul in this way. The same point about the eternity of the All-soul's contemplation as compared with that of the individual soul is made in ii.9.18, 30; ἐγγύς δὲ γερόμενοι τοῦ ἀπλήκτου μιμούμεθ' ἂν τὴν τοῦ σύμπαντος ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀστρῶν, εἰς ἐγγύτητα δὲ ὁμοιότητος ἐλθόντες σπεύδοιμεν ἂν πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ ἂν ἐν θεᾷ καὶ ἡμῖν εἴη ἅτε καλῶς καὶ αὐτοῖς παρεσκευασμένοις φύσεσι καὶ ἐπιμελείαις· τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑπάρχει. The All-soul has, in general, a facility for effortless management of its body.⁷ We are sometimes told that we must imitate the All-soul and treat the body as a mere subsidiary and manage it in the way that Soul manages the cosmos.⁸ These passages express the feeling that we can attain to such transcendence, but also point to man's weakness because of the particular nature of the body over which he has charge and which forms the point from which ascent begins. In this context some form of temporary escape from individual embodiment seems relevant as a welcome relief from the distractions of the world. This pessimistic trait is difficult to reconcile philosophically with Plotinus' optimistic transcendence but at least accounts for the presence in the *Enneads* of a

⁷ iii. 4.4, iv. 3.4, iii. 2.2; cf. chap. two p. 31ff.

⁸ Imitation of All-Soul, ii. 9. 18, 30 – A striking passage is the end of iii. 4.3, 24f. καὶ μένομεν τῷ μὲν ἄλλῳ παντὶ νοητῷ ἄνω, τῷ δὲ ἐσχάτῳ αὐτοῦ πεπεδημέθα τῷ κάτω ὅσον ἀπόρροιαν ἀπ' ἐκείνου διδόντες εἰς τὸ κάτω, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐνέργειαν, ἐκείνου οὐκ ἐλαττουμένου. Here it is not even Soul but Nous that we should reach out towards. If we do, our worldly business will take care of itself, just as Nous and Soul give off an external ἐνέργεια to the level below them. Cf. also chap. seven n. 12.

meaningful eschatology. There is here a vital tension in Plotinus' thought, and like the tension between the spiritual and ontological derives ultimately from personal experience. One might instance the opening remarks of iv, 8, 1.

Before turning to a final assessment of Porphyry's position we should clear away the problem of whether Porphyry regarded Hades to be a reality or not. H. Dörrie thinks that the Hades of *Sent.* xxix stands for the earthly existence of the soul. But the addition of στερεοῦ to σώματος in the phrase ἐξελεύσθῃ γὰρ αὐτῇ τοῦ στερεοῦ σώματος (p. 13, 7) is surely peculiar unless Porphyry is talking about ontological separation. The argument might be raised that this word is added to distinguish the earthly body from the pneumatic body and provides no evidence for the existence of a special abode called Hades where the pneumatic body dwells when separated from the earthly body. The word ἐξέρχομαι is, as we have remarked above,⁹ usually employed to express natural or ontological separation. Of course one could say that this too is used metaphorically. But what of *Sent.* xxix p. 14, 19f.? – καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐξόδῳ ἔτι κατὰ τὴν δίγυρον ἀναθυμίασιν τὸ πνεῦμα ἔχουσα τεθολωμένον... If the metaphor is carried on in ἔξοδος we have the peculiar situation of a morally good soul (i.e. internally separated) having a wet *pneuma* – the mark of an impure soul. Such a confusion of ideas can hardly be meant and it seems preferable to take the whole piece literally as asking about the whereabouts, if any, of the lower soul after death.

We reduced the relevance of Plotinus' eschatology in the case of the philosopher ultimately to a question of optimism or pessimism. We have shown the pessimistic traits in Plotinus which would give rise to a reassessment of the relevance of release from γένεσις. It is extraordinary that Porphyry, who appears to be the champion of optimism judging by the precise way in which he treats the problem of spiritual escape,¹⁰ should also give such emphasis to the pessimistic strain that he gave it theoretical expression in the concept of permanent release. We can only conclude that Porphyry's optimism is theoretical rather than practical.

His attempted suicide is a remarkable pointer to his practical pessimism. More precise is Augustine's comment in *Civ. Dei* x 29, Bidez fr. 10 p. 37*16. *Uteris etiam hoc verbo apertius, ubi Platonis sententiam* (cf. *Phaedo* 66e) *sequens nec ipse dubitas in hac vita hominem nullo modo ad perfectionem sapientiae pervenire, secundum intellectum tamen viventibus omne quod deest providentia Dei et gratia post hanc vitam posse compleri.*¹¹

⁹ p. 72.

¹⁰ See the discussion in chapter two p. 22–23.

¹¹ See chapter four, note 6.

The same attitude is evident in *Ad Gaurum* p. 50, 23 τὸν νοῦν, ὃν καὶ Πλάτων ἀγαπητὸν ὅτῳ εἰς γῆρας ἀφικνεῖται λελόγισται. An echo is found in Synesius *de Ins.* p. 156, 5 νοῦς γάρ, φησί, καὶ φρόνησις ἀγαπητὸν ὅτῳ καὶ εἰς γῆρας ἀφίκοντο, τὴν ἀφάνταστον λέγων. The wording in the Synesius passage suggests strongly that he had read the Porphyry passage.

For Porphyry, then, there is sufficient reason for desiring ultimate release even for the philosopher since the restrictions imposed by the body are considered by him to be a serious impediment, even at times an insurmountable obstacle, in attaining the goal. The doctrine of release reasserts once again the historic element as an important factor in the philosophic life and inevitably returns to natural death the importance it had lost in Plotinus. In so far as Porphyry tempers the extreme formulation of Plotinian spiritual transcendence we could claim that he shows a return to primitive Platonism. But perhaps it would be more correct to stress the uniqueness of Plotinus. I have hinted in these pages that personal and practical achievement played a great part in the formation of the philosophy of Plotinus and Porphyry. Personality seems to be one of the most important factors in the realm of contemplative metaphysics. Plotinus led Porphyry in philosophical thought. We also recall that he led him out of the trough of despair which almost brought him to suicide.

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

In his introduction to Proclus' *Elements of Theology* xx E. R. Dodds quotes Iamblichus *de Mysteriis* ii, 11 to show the change from mysticism to magic and theurgy which Iamblichus is supposed to have fostered. Although it would be absurd to argue that the externals, at least, of such a change are not to be found in the Iamblichus-Proclus tradition of Neoplatonism, there has, I believe, been too little attention paid to a proper understanding of the meaning of theurgy in the life and thought of the later Neoplatonists. It is my intention here to suggest that some aspects of theurgy, far from being a betrayal of Plotinian Platonism and drawn from an alien source, are actually developments of Plotinus, that theurgy is not a system of passive salvation, that Plotinian θεωρία is not excluded by theurgy, and, finally, that the life and conduct of the more eminent later Neoplatonists is to be carefully distinguished from the bizarre career of charlatans such as Maximus who bring into disrepute a way of life which need not have ruled out genuine religious and contemplative experience. Indeed the *de Mysteriis* of Iamblichus is an important document in the history of religious thought. We recall that the occasion for writing the *de Mysteriis* was Porphyry's letter to the Egyptian priest Anebo. The contrasting attitudes of the two philosophers are striking and an examination of the role of theurgy in *de Mysteriis* will put Porphyry's ideas into context and thus help us to clarify his position with regard to theurgy and his place in the Neoplatonic tradition.

Because of the complex nature of the issues involved it seems best to avoid giving a formal definition of theurgy and instead to build up a picture gradually, beginning with an analysis of Iamblichus' concept of theurgy. This allows us to make the important distinction between a higher and a lower theurgy which will prove a useful tool in the evaluation of the attitudes of Porphyry and Plotinus. Theurgy as the "work"

or activity of the gods introduces the concept of divine intervention in human life and we, therefore, next trace from Plotinus to Iamblichus the idea of divine causality in the ascent of the soul. Proclus is then introduced since he develops in many ways and systematises the ideas of Iamblichus. It will then be possible to give a final summary of the concept of theurgy and its metaphysics in Iamblichus and Proclus. It remains to return to Porphyry and Plotinus to give their theoretical attitude to theurgy and religion, to compare them with each other and finally with Iamblichus. Lastly we turn from theory to practice to see the practical activities of the Neoplatonists as regards religion and theurgy.

CHAPTER SIX

THEURGY IN THE *DE MYSTERIIS* OF IAMBLICHUS

This examination of theurgy in the *de Mysteriis* will fall into three parts, the last of which will be dealt with in chapter seven.

- (1) Theurgy and νόησις.
- (2) Higher and lower theurgy.
- (3) Causality in theurgy.

We turn first to the relationship between theurgy and νόησις. Twice in the *de Mysteriis* Iamblichus criticises Porphyry for not distinguishing theurgy from philosophy. In his introduction Iamblichus says something about the methods he intends to follow in his criticism of Porphyry's letter to Anebo. In i.2 he particularly stresses the necessity of preserving for each area of discourse its own peculiar mode of examination. This generalization is applied, in particular, to theurgy and philosophy (7, 3f. τὸ δ' οἰκεῖον ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἀποδῶσομέν σοι προσηκόντως, καὶ τὰ μὲν θεολογικὰ θεολογικῶς, θεουργικῶς δὲ τὰ θεουργικὰ ἀποκρινούμεθα, φιλοσόφως δὲ τὰ φιλόσοφα μετὰ σοῦ συνεξετάσομεν). The point is raised again in ii.II, 96, 7; καὶ διότι φιλοσόφως μᾶλλον καὶ λογικῶς ἄλλ' οὐχὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργὸν τῶν ἱερέων τέχνην τον ἀπολογισμὸν ποιεῖται, διὰ τοῦτο οἶμαι δεῖν θεουργικώτερον εἰπεῖν τι περὶ αὐτῶν. Now this latter passage acts as a preamble to the well-known passage in the same chapter in which Iamblichus apparently puts theurgy above νόησις and disparages τοὺς θεωρητικῶς φιλοσοφοῦντας. But what does Iamblichus mean by the terms νόησις and φιλοσοφῶς?

Before involving ourselves in an examination of ii, II it is important to grasp the general tenor of Iamblichus' criticism of Porphyry – that Porphyry uses one method of examination for all subjects. And this method Iamblichus calls φιλοσοφία. It is clear, however, from many points that Iamblichus makes, that what he most objects to in Porphyry is the use of human terminology (to express it crudely) when talking about the supernatural. Thus ix. 10, 285, 2; ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθα καὶ

μάλιστα σφάλματα συμβαίνει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ μέγιστα, ἥνικα ἂν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας συλλογίζωνται τι περὶ τῶν δαιμονίων ἐπιστάσιων. . .

In iv. 3 he seems to be making the same point, though this time about our relations with the gods rather than about discourse concerning the gods per se. The terms “caller” and “called”, Iamblichus says, do not signify the real relationship of entities here. For at the highest level of mystical/theurgical union there is no ἐτερότης and thus no real difference between the two entities. In this way he neatly parries Porphyry’s objection that the idea of summoning a god implies the use of force against that god and hence the god’s lack of freedom. Iamblichus’ point is that the terms used are human terms which distort the metaphysical situation.¹ This seems to me to be Iamblichus’ chief point against Porphyry and he seems to understand by φιλοσοφία what we would term rational discourse which necessarily uses terminology and images drawn from the world of sense experience and which even at its purest level still involves ἐτερότης. This is certainly what Iamblichus finds to criticise in Porphyry. Then is it simply a matter of how we talk about or understand divine or supernatural phenomena? Here, perhaps, lies the crux of the problem if we wish to appreciate Iamblichus’ position. When he distinguishes theology and theurgy² he would appear to separate our understanding of the divine from our actual experience of it. Theology is the correct discipline for talking about the divine

¹ We see here that tendency, found in Plotinus, too, though much more so in the later Neoplatonists, to resort to the language of the mysteries when confronted with intractable metaphysical problems. It is the ease and almost mechanical nature of such descriptions of union in later Neoplatonists which leads us to think, often unfairly, that they never experienced real mysticism.

² Theology deals with the names and nature of gods, theurgy with the actual experience of union with the gods and the practical means to its attainment. Theology and theurgy are distinguished by later writers in the context of the scale of virtues. So Olympiodorus *In Alc.* 172, 1f. This corresponds with a similar analysis in *In Phaed.* 113. If we take the two passages together it becomes clear that the theological virtues are on the same level as the paradigmatic virtues (see also Marinus, *Vita Procli* 3). In Olympiodorus the distinction of virtues at this level is used to explain how we attain really unified thought where subject and object are identical (see chapter eight and chapter nine n. 74). *In Alc.* 172, 1f. adds an extra complication. The theological virtues help us to know ourselves. It is only with the theurgic virtues that the fullest form of subject-object unity is expressed when we are united with what is outside ourselves, our own particular god. Only in the fullest union are we united with what is above us.

This divorce of knowledge from union may be seen also in Porphyry *de Abstergentia* I. 29, p. 106, 26f. Here, explaining that it is not rational knowledge that leads to happiness and true contemplation he makes a clear distinction between διάνοια and νόησις. But he goes on to say that not even τὰ περὶ τῶν ὄντων ὄντων promote full contemplation. One must add, he says, φυσίωσις (a medical metaphor cf. Galen 14. 386 “inflation”) and ζώή. It is not easy to see what these two terms mean but it is important to note that he is breaking down the Plotinian experience of νόησις where knowledge of true being is the same as the νοητὴ ζώή.

whilst theurgy is the discipline which leads to actual participation in it. It is difficult to see exactly what is the relationship between theology and philosophy. Iamblichus would seem to regard both of these as disciplines involving more the exercise of *διάνοια* in the Plotinian sense than that of *νόησις*. Perhaps theology is concerned with the naming and hierarchy of the gods whilst philosophy, when concerned with the highest realities, concentrates on the problem of their metaphysical status. But at least this much is certain, that *φιλοσοφία* and *νόησις* do not of themselves lead to actual union with the divine. But it is also becoming clearer that Iamblichus does not always use the word *νόησις* in the way in which Porphyry and Plotinus use it. The *νόησις* or *γνώσις* of ii, 11 would appear to resemble Plotinian *διάνοια*, discursive reason, rather than unified intuition. This *γνώσις* is concerned with the knowledge of facts (98, 5 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐὰν γνῶμεν τὰ ἐκάστω γένει παρακολουθοῦντα ἴδια... ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ μὲν τοῦ γινῶναι...). It is time to pursue this point in further depth. I hope here to show that Iamblichus does recognise a form of *νόησις* which is above the *γνώσις* of ii, 11 and is more akin to Plotinian *νόησις*.

In an important passage in i, 3, 7, 14f. Iamblichus claims that our *γνώσις concerning* (ἡ περὶ θεῶν γνώσις) the gods is *ἐμφυτος*. This *γνώσις* is superior to all *κρίσις*, *προαίρεσις*, *λόγος*, and *ἀπόδειξις*. *εἰκασία*, *δόξα*, and *συλλογισμός* begin in time (*ἀρχομένοις ποτὲ ἀπὸ χρόνου*). Such *ἐμφυτος γνώσις* is, as the name implies, something vested in the soul by nature. But such *γνώσις* is not the same as ἡ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον *συναφή*. It is still divided and, therefore, not an adequate means of knowing that which is undivided and always stable. Iamblichus goes on to say that above such knowledge of different by different there is ἡ τῶν θεῶν *ἐξηρημένη μονοειδὴς συμπλοκή*.³ This is unified and *αὐτοφυής*. He then seems to imply that by this *συμπλοκή* we become somehow enveloped in god and filled by him. We transcend our human selves and in this knowledge of the gods (*εἰδέναι*) we find our real selves. The same is true of the lower gods. He now applies the name *σύμφυτος κατανόησις* (9, 11) to this *συναφή*. This must be the same as the *συμπλοκή* since he now expounds the principle of like perceived by like, of the connection with the eternal and unchangeable through eternal and unchangeable thoughts (*νοήσεις*) – ταῖς δὲ καθαυαῖς καὶ ἀμέμπτους νοήσεσιν αἷς εἴληφεν ἐξ

³ For *συμπλοκή* see further 23, 6 and 17, 8–20 where it denotes the hierarchical chain of being, i.e. the ontological relationship between different levels. This provides, as it were the ladder for the spiritual ascent (through daemones etc. as intermediaries) and differs from the *συμπλοκή* which is achieved by the use of the ladder or framework. Here are the ontological and spiritual aspects again.

αἰδίου παρὰ τῶν θεῶν. This he again calls εἴδησις and then declares that it is eternally in the soul μονοειδής – just the point which distinguished the earlier συμπλοκή from the ἔμφυτος γνῶσις which is not μονοειδής.

There is, however, one difficulty here. The whole passage seems to refer to the permanent state of the soul (8, 8; ἔστηκε γὰρ ἀεὶ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐνοειδῶς) and what I have elsewhere called its ontological dependence. It is not always easy to discern whether words like συναφή refer to ontological dependence or the spiritual state of the soul. συνάπτει in 96, 14 obviously carries the latter sense since some men (the theoretical philosophers) are excluded. συμπλοκή also occurs in Proclus *in Alc.* 224, 15 in the latter sense although it concerns an involvement or movement towards the world of sense perception rather than to the divine. Yet as we have already seen the Neoplatonists are not always clear in their distinction of the two spheres but easily pass from one to the other. It is possible then that this passage contains both ideas. We possess νοῦς but do not always use it. Can we construe the δεῖ of 9, 9 and the subjunctive συναπτέσθω of 9, 13 as implying obligation (and therefore free choice) rather than necessity – a spiritual rather than an ontological meaning?

The word συμπλοκή occurs again in iv, 3, 184, 18 in the same context of the removal of division – εἰ γὰρ ἡ φιλίας ὁμονοητικῆς κοινωνία καὶ τις ἀδιάλυτος συμπλοκή τῆς ἐνώσεως συνέχει τὴν ἱερατικὴν ἀπεργασίαν... What is remarkable here is the conjunction of νόησις and theurgy. This ἀδιάλυτος συμπλοκή refers to the union of caller and called where all ἐτερότης disappears, 185, 5, οὔτε... ὥς ἕτερον ἐξ ἐτέρων ἐγχειρίζομεν. This recalls the μονοειδής συμπλοκή of i, 3 and the context in iv, 3 refers to the ascent of the soul, the spiritual factor mentioned above. Iamblichus frequently has this combination of νόησις and theurgy – 289, 8, ἡ μακαριωτάτη τῶν θεῶν νόησις comes as a result of theurgy; 294, 4, τὸ μακαριστὸν τέλος τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἡμῖν πρόκειται καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ κύρος τῆς ὁμονοητικῆς φιλίας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους: those who reach the higher theurgy live κατὰ νοῦν μόνον, v, 18–19.

All this has a bearing on the interpretation of ii, 11 since from these passages it would appear that Iamblichus is not putting a theurgic level above the level of νοῦς in a way which would either abolish it or reduce it to a lower level. νόησις would seem to be an aspect of the actual union with the gods which Iamblichus calls theurgic union (τὴν θεωργικὴν ἐνωσιν, 96, 15). But what is the meaning of ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν νόησιν in ii, 11, 96, 18? Even if this includes the highest form of νόησις as described above and does not simply refer to reason or knowledge of

facts, it is not legitimate to say that Iamblichus does away with *νόησις* in union, since what he is trying to stress here is that the ultimate *causality* of union is above *νόησις*. Theurgy is the work of the gods and the gods are above men (here is the point of departure from Porphyry and Plotinus). Then the *νόησις* attained in union might be similar to the *εἶδησις* in *συμπλοκή* which we discussed above. Such *νόησις* is attainable only through the workings of theurgy by the grace of god. It is possible that Iamblichus may not have meant to include this sort of *νόησις* in the formula *πᾶσαν νόησιν*. He may have meant merely all *human* *νόησις* by the expression.⁴ We recall that in iv, 3 Iamblichus says that man

⁴ One should be very cautious when later Neoplatonists speak of transcending *νόησις* etc. They tend to separate unity with the *νοητόν* from *νοῦς*, *νοεῖν* and to speak of *νόησις* at different levels without making quite clear at times to which level they are referring. Both Iamblichus and Proclus display this tendency in their description of the ascent at the highest levels. In the *Phil. Chald.* iv Proclus clearly distinguishes the two aspects – *καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς ἐνεργείας ἔχει διττὰς τὰς μὲν ἐνοειδεῖς καὶ κρείττονας νοήσεως, τὰς δὲ νοητικὰς*. Referring to fragment 1 of the *Chaldaean Oracles* he says the following *ἄν γὰρ ὧσιν αἱ τοιαῦται νοήσεις ἀπλαῖ, ἀπολείπονται τῆς τοῦ νοητοῦ ἐνιαίας ἀπλότητος καὶ εἰς δευτέρως φέρονται τινὰς νοεράς (φύσεις) εἰς πληθος ἡδὴ προελθούσας*. He is talking about union with the highest member of the noetic world. It is beyond *νοῦς*. It is *νοητόν* but still subordinate to the One which is only introduced with the words *τίνι ἂν ἔτι συναφθεῖ μὲν πρὸς τὸ ἓν*. This *νοητόν* may be grasped only by the *ἄνθος νοῦ* at the very pinnacle of *νοῦς* and related to the unified *νοητόν* by the unity in its own nature. At this level of *ἄνθος νοῦ* Proclus is still talking about *νόησις* (*τὸ νοητόν τοῦτο νοοῦμεν*). And yet at this stage *νοῦς* must be using the second of its *ἐνέργειαι*, the *ἐνοειδεῖς ἐνεργείας* which are *κρείττονας νοήσεως*. One must be cautious indeed with the meaning of the term *νόησις*. It is easy to see from this chapter of Proclus how simple it would be for him to talk about a stage above *νοῦς* and *νόησις* whilst not severing all connections with some of the implications of *νόησις* as Plotinus conceived it. Much of this complexity is due to the distinction of that which is *νοητόν* and that which is *νοερόν*. Damascius in *de Principiis* ch. 70 makes this point clear when commenting on Fr. 1 of the *Chaldaean Oracles* – *οὐδὲ ἡ σπεύδουσα ἑαυτῆς ποιῆσαι τὸ νοητόν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἀφιεῖσα ἑαυτὴν ἐκείνῳ πρὸς τὴν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀνάπλωσιν, καὶ νοητόν μᾶλλον ἢ νοερόν εἶναι προθυμουμένη*. The stress on passivity in the *νοητόν* stage where unified thought is attained provides the point of entry for the help of theurgy).

Dillon (in his edition of the fragments of Iamblichus' Platonic Commentaries p. 390 n. 1) suggests that Proclus' commentary on fr. 1 of the *Chaldaean Oracles* in *de Phil. Chald.* iv is probably derived from Iamblichus. Iamblichus and Proclus do seem to have a great deal in common here. An important sequence of pages in Damascius reporting on Iamblichus (*de Principiis* ch. 70) shows the same tendency in Iamblichus as in Proclus to divorce unity and *νόησις* or *γνώσις*. The difficulties with the application of these terms to our relationship with the highest levels of the noetic world are apparent. Iamblichus is said to have expressed himself in different ways. In one book he is said to have denied that the *νοητόν* could be grasped even by the *ἄνθος νοῦ*, that it was not *γνωστόν* but *ἑφετόν καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου πληροῦσθαι τὸν νοῦν (λέγοντες) οὐ γνώσεως ἀλλ' οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ὅλης καὶ νοητῆς τελειότητος*. In his commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles, however, he and his followers *καὶ τὴν γνώσιν ἐν τῷ νοητῷ καὶ περὶ αὐτὸ καταλείπουσιν*. I agree with Dillon (See his general comments on Iamb. *In Parm.* Fr 2a and 2b) that there is no contradiction here rather a viewing of the situation from a different angle although this is hardly a completely satisfactory explanation. Damascius in commenting appears to agree with Iamblichus and him-

transcends his own human nature in union with the gods at the highest theurgical level. However, he never makes clear whether the (surely superhuman) νόησις enjoyed in union gives us an understanding of the divine συνθήματα (which are strictly unknowable in the human sense at least). But then at this level all distinctions and difference are obliterated and in a semi-popular work like the *de Mysteriis* he would not wish to examine more deeply and, perhaps, more philosophically the metaphysical implications of this doctrine.

Iamblichus, therefore, saw man's elevation as ultimately in the hands of the gods. The divine power is transmitted by certain cult actions, objects and words, all of which are actually dangerous to those not morally or intellectually prepared. But Iamblichus seems for the most part in the *de Mysteriis* to restrict his discussion to the noetic gods. It is to the realm of pure νόησις that he bids man to return. The unifying power of the gods is thus above all human νόησις, but this human νόησις is a necessary part of ascent, the human co-operation with the divine, and is somehow enhanced and lifted up so that it becomes, in a transformed way, part of the experience of union itself. It is in this way that Iamblichus can combine the philosophical and the theurgical in his description of the way to salvation in p. 291, 3; ἡ μὲν τὰς τῶν νοητῶν οὐσίας ἱερατικαῖς ὁδοῖς ἀναμετρεῖ. Iamblichus unlike Porphyry and Plotinus did not think that human νόησις could attain its pure united form without the aid of the gods. Unaided, human thought always stands outside the object it contemplates or reaches out towards (ultimately god). It is only through the divine causality that the barrier can be broken down, the human be made divine and united with the divine. Uniting, even at the noetic level, is the work of theurgy. We shall see this more clearly in Proclus and in certain passages in the *Phaedo Commentary* of Olympiodorus. It is highly probable that Proclus' teaching here is simply a fuller expression of a doctrine which goes back to Iamblichus.

But Iamblichus also includes a more sinister element which comes

self sees the two sides. After giving the arguments for the highest part of the noetic world being ἀγνωστόν he then argues for a higher level of γνώσις by which it is grasped ἡ ἠνωμένη γνώσις – ἡ νοητὴ γνώσις ὡς ἀληθῶς. Iamblichus himself would appear to have used this phrase (Damascius *de Principiis* I 147, 22f.) συνάγει γὰρ εἰς ἓν πάσας ἡμῶν τὰς νοήσεις καὶ ποιεῖ μίαν συνειλημμένην ἐκ πασῶν παντελῆ καὶ ἀδιάκριτον καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἠνωμένην νόησιν, οἷον τοῦ νοητοῦ ἐκείνου τὴν νόησιν εἶναι βούλεται ὁ Ἰάμβλῖχος. Further investigation into the use of terms like γνώσις and νόησις and their relationship to the metaphysical structure of reality in late Neoplatonism would help greatly to clarify our assessment of Iamblichus and Proclus.

out especially in his discussion of mantic. Mantic or divination is not only a source of useful information concerning the future in the world of sense experience⁵ but also a means to union with the divine (higher theurgy): cf. *de Myst.* x. 4, p. 289, 13f. ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὴν τάξιν τὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ πρέπουσαν μετὰ τῆς προγνώσεως παραδέχονται· πάρεστι δ' αὐτῇ καὶ τὸ ὠφέλιμον. The seer actually exchanges his human life for a divine existence iii, 4, p. 109, 14–15 ἢ μεταλλάττουσιν ἀντὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς τὴν θεῖαν. Now Dodds⁶ has shown that the sort of divine activity which Iamblichus is here talking about displays all the hallmarks of the modern spiritualist's concept of a medium and mediumistic trance. That communion with the divine can take place under such circumstances was probably totally rejected by Plotinus and Porphyry. It would thus appear that Iamblichus' νόησις has nothing whatever in common with Plotinian νόησις and contemplation. This might certainly be true as far as Iamblichean mantic is concerned. Yet his concept of sacrifice seems free of these objections. There is, I think, here a basic tension in Iamblichus' thought which comes of a genuine attempt to combine Plotinian contemplation with the actual phenomena of "religion" which he felt to be genuine. If my contention that Plotinian νόησις can be seen in the *de Mysteriis* seems to be overstressed it is only to bring out this tension in Iamblichus' thought. He believed and accepted the magico-religious practices of his times and attempted to incorporate them into Neoplatonism. He sees νόησις as the end-point even of the mediumistic trance⁷ though what value such νόησις can have when divorced from the rigorous contemplative ascent is hard to say. For Iamblichus such νόησις is god-given in any case though there must be some co-operation on man's part. He must lead a good life as a preparation.⁸ Eunapius tells us that Iamblichus frequently prayed alone and Proclus, too, is said to have prayed much.⁹ Perhaps this kind of activity represents the more genuinely spiritual tendencies of the later Neoplatonists (in accordance with the spiritualizing theory of sacrifice). And prayer, we should remember, was considered by the Neoplatonists to be a part of theurgy¹⁰ for it, too, aims at union and union is the work of the gods. It is this aspect of theurgy which I wish to examine more closely and which is, perhaps, a philosophically more

⁵ A characteristic of a lower level of theurgy. See below p. 96f.

⁶ Dodds, "*The Greeks and the Irrational*," Appendix ii, p. 295f.

⁷ See p. 91 below on divination as an aid to salvation.

⁸ On need for a good life when involved in mysteries see p. 92.

⁹ Eunapius *V. Soph.* v. 1.4ff., 458. See below Postscript.

¹⁰ Procl. *In Tim.* i 210, 30f.

important development than the admission of sinister rites which may be seen as a most regrettable corollary. That the later Neoplatonists were mere magicians does not seem to me to be true. The following exposition is an attempt to probe deeper into some of the ways in which Iamblichus (and to some extent Proclus) incorporated theurgy and its rites into the Neoplatonic system, in the hope that it will give us a better appreciation of the development of Neoplatonism after Plotinus and in particular help to clarify Porphyry's position.

We now turn to the second main point we intended to raise, the distinction of a higher and a lower type of theurgy. In the *de Mysteriis* there are several reasons which lead us to postulate a division in what we might loosely term theurgical matters into a higher and lower theurgy. Such a division has, of course, not gone unnoticed and various scholars have seen this in Proclus also. One might refer to the treatment of Rosan, Lewy and Sodano. The division which they have made seems basically correct except in one small, but important point. To illustrate this point I shall give a more detailed account than has been hitherto given of the division of theurgy in the *de Mysteriis*.

Previous opinion has identified a higher and a lower theurgy with a division of theurgy into theoretical, mystical or philosophical theurgy and practical theurgy, the latter employing material objects and rites whilst the former transcends their use. S. Eitrem opposes theoretical theurgy, or contemplative philosophy, and practical theurgy which concerns itself with rites. Rosan sees the higher theurgy in Proclus as identical with *πίστις* (he refers to *Theol. Plat.* 61-3, 193). Lewy¹¹ sees a higher and lower theurgy in Iamblichus and stresses the absence of the ritual element in the former.

Such a simple solution is attractive, neatly cutting off the ritual element from the higher mystical theurgy. Though I am still arguing for a higher theurgy the division does not seem to me to be quite here. It seems better to define lower theurgy as restricted to the area of *σμπάθεια*,¹² the material world of humans and daemones. It is essentially a horizontal relationship. Higher theurgy involves the linking of man with his superiors, the gods, not through *σμπάθεια*, but through *φίλις*. This would seem the only analysis which can take adequate account of a passage like ii, 11, where one cannot deny that Iamblichus

¹¹ S. Eitrem, *Symbolae Osloenses* xxii (1942), 51-2; Rosan, *Proclus* p. 213ff.; Lewy, excursus iv in *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*; Sodano, *Lettera ad Anebo*, Appendice i.

¹² See below p. 93.

advocates the application of certain rites but where it is at the same time clear that he is talking about the very highest level of union with the gods.

Lewy argues that for Iamblichus theurgy and philosophy are two distinct ways to the same goal, and that theurgic union in ii, 11 means the theurgist's way as opposed to the philosopher's. He adds that there is a mystical theurgy or metaphysical theurgy in the philosophical way and to justify it the philosophers employed some of the seemingly more intellectual passages of the Oracles but that this philosophical theurgy is not to be confused with the genuinely theurgical way to union with the gods. The objection to this interpretation of Iamblichus can best be seen by the way in which Iamblichus distinguishes two grades of theurgy, a lower which does not extend outside the material universe and thus cannot lead to union and a higher theurgy linked with νόησις (see 224, 10f. and the discussion below) which does lead to union with the gods. The obscurities in Iamblichus' position (e.g. are there rites or not at the highest level?) would seem to be caused more by his desire to *combine* the two ways than to preserve two parallel methods of ascent.

Iamblichus' analysis of theurgy and the way to salvation in the *de Mystериis* is based on a grading of the ontological levels which are the object of each particular branch of theurgy. If we wish to reach god we use one type or level of theurgy; if we want to attain only a lower level we can use an inferior type of theurgy. The distinction of level aimed at seems to be the main criterion in his analysis. A secondary factor is the corresponding polarity of corporeality and incorporeality. But this would not necessarily seem to involve the abolition of all tangible rites at the higher level. ii, 11 shows that Iamblichus could combine the two and he, no less than Proclus, probably had a means of accounting for this factor.¹³

In the *de Mystериis* Iamblichus deals with several subjects which we might term theurgical since they involve god's intervention in human affairs and man's attempt to reach and communicate with the gods. Iamblichus himself includes sacrifice in theurgy (*de Myst.* 225, 4f.). Divination is no less a part of theurgy and leads to salvation (see *de Myst.* 289, 8ff. and Sodano, *Lettera ad Anebo*, Appendice 1. Divinazione e Teurgia.¹⁴) It is to an examination of these branches of theurgy that we now turn.

¹³ See below p. 120 on the levels of συνθήματα.

¹⁴ See further *de Myst.* 179, 9–12 δίδεται τοῖς θεουργοῖς ἡ πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν πῦρ ἄνοδος, ὃ δὴ καὶ τέλος δεῖ πάσης μὲν προγνώσεως πάσης δὲ θεουργικῆς πραγματείας προτιθεσθαι.

Iamblichus recognises the existence of black magic (*de Myst.* 177). This is a perverted form of theurgy which makes use of evil daemones. Impure people who get in touch with the evil daemones of black magic rather than with good daemones will find that their own wickedness and depravity will increase in a sort of vicious circle (κύκλος). Indeed people who perform rites for the wrong reason or when they are impure, will find themselves addressing evil daemones, even though they intended to call on good ones. Thus the good come in contact with good daemones which connect them with the gods. These good men are the true theurgists. Note that Iamblichus is talking about μαντεία (p. 175, 18) but treats it under theurgy. One further point to observe here is that the goodness and wickedness mentioned here would seem to be moral and not merely ritual.

Initially we must distinguish both of these forms of "theurgy" from human mantic. Divine mantic comes from god. Human mantic is a product of human reasoning or instinct based on the natural order of the world and the purely mechanical sympathy of its parts (iii, 26; x, 3. In book x he treats separately those who use some form of spiritual power for a bad end (2) and those who are not using any spiritual power at all (3)).

Even though Iamblichus mentions perfect and less perfect mantic, ranging the less perfect under the control of lesser gods or angels (iii, 18), there does not seem to be the same basic distinction of a lower and a higher aspect of mantic such as the one found in sacrifice. It is important to realise that human mantic cannot form this lower branch even though Iamblichus says that the sympathy which it utilises contains an ἔχθος of the divine. Nevertheless divine mantic is seen as a part of theurgy or theurgical salvation. It is not merely a source of gratuitous information. Indeed the gods sometimes withhold information about the future if the soul may become "better" that way (289; see also iii, 31). Iamblichus seems to stress throughout his treatment of mantic its usefulness to salvation and its ability to connect us with the νοητά. This comes out particularly in the section which discredits the making of images, iii, 28–30; esp. p. 167, 11f. θαυμάσαιμ' ἂν εἴ τις ἀποδέξαιτο τῶν τὰ ἀληθινὰ εἶδη τῶν θεῶν θεωρούντων θεουργῶν. Διὰ τί γὰρ ἂν τις εἶδωλα ἀντὶ τῶν ὄντως ὄντων ἀνταλλάξαιτο... On the whole, then, for Iamblichus mantic is concerned with the furtherance of that part of human activity which is concerned with the immaterial world and thus conforms more to the higher forms of theurgy. The nearest Iamblichus comes to making any kind of hierarchical distinctions in mantic is in iii, 18, esp. p. 144, 3ff.

All forms of theurgy have to do with divine beings of some sort. Yet a general distinction has to be made between cosmic divinities and hypercosmic gods who are completely separate from material *σχέσις*. This distinction will be observed especially in Iamblichus' treatment of sacrifices.

Underlying this distinction of a theurgy which, as we shall see, is of this world and a higher, hypercosmic theurgy is the distinction which Iamblichus makes between *συμπάθεια* within the *ζῳον* or material world, and *φιλία* which is the transcendent cause of this sympathy. Iamblichus seems to avoid the use of the word *συμπάθεια* for the relationship of a lower and higher *τάξις*. This is particularly evident in v, 9–10. The beneficial causality of sacrifices should be termed *φιλία* or *οἰκείωσις*. He is attempting to show that the real cause is transcendent *φιλία*. This effects a *σχέσιν συνδετικὴν* (209, 11f.) of:

τῶν δημιουργούντων πρὸς τὰ δημιουργούμενα
τῶν γεννώντων πρὸς τὰ ἀπογεννώμενα.

In 10 he distinguishes two major levels or *τάξεις*. Firstly that of the physical world and the *δαίμονες* and *περικόσμιοι θεοί* within it, and secondly that of higher and more perfect causes. The lower level is the level of physical *συμπάθεια*. It is also our human *τάξις* – ὡς *πρῶτα προσοικειούμενα κατὰ τὴν ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς τάξιν* (211, 2). The higher level is the level of true causality which leads to the ultimate cause, *φιλία μία*, and in p. 211, 16 this is seen as the all-pervading cause which

(1) connects lower with higher,

(2) is the unifying source and cause of lower *συμπάθεια*,

(3) is a unifying power within its own level.

συμπάθεια expresses the horizontal connection between objects whose true relationship is grounded ultimately in a transcendent cause termed *φιλία*, which for the higher theurgy is an end in itself. Seen as such, *φιλία* involves a vertical movement of inferior towards superior.¹⁵

In iii, 16, 137, 20, *ἔνωσις δὲ καὶ ἡ συμπάθεια τοῦ παντός* seems to refer to the material world. The unity in the material world is the *means* whereby the gods express things to men (*ὀργάνους* p. 138, 7). They use *δαίμονες*, souls and *ἡ φύσις ἑλὴ* as *ὄργανα* – all these cosmic entities “obey” the gods (*ἀκολουθοῦσι*) and represent the *μία ἀρχή* and *κίνησις*

¹⁵ See also *de Myst.* v. 7 where he mentions sympathy but says that it is not the whole answer to the problem of causality in sacrifices. 207, 17f. οὐ μὲν ὁ γε ἀληθὴς τρόπος . . . He goes on to stress the transcendence of the higher gods. Further cf. Festugière *Révélation* iii p. 201 n. 2.

which comes from the gods who are outside (ἔξω) the universe. This is similar to v, 10, 210, 18 ἐπακολουθοῦντα.

Whilst he sees a hierarchy within the phenomenal world of συμπάθεια, the various parts are, nevertheless, regarded as belonging to a single τάξις when one makes the vital hierarchical distinction between the embodied and the incorporeal, i.e. the gods who are outside the universe. φιλία expresses the relationship of these two levels and the real source and cause of the sympathy which obtains between the levels within the lower sphere. One cannot, of course, deny the great hierarchical chain of intermediaries in Iamblichus, but it is at times clear that he is equally intent on stressing the great divide between the material world and its gods and the purely noetic gods.

φιλία "operates" in the realm of νοῦς ἀπαθής (211, 15) and this connection of transcendent φιλία with νοῦς recalls again the fact that it is the connective power of the incorporeal, noetic gods. It recalls also the distinction of sacrifices into corporeal and noetic and the parallel division of and within human beings.¹⁶ It is thus not surprising that the highest level of union with the gods is described by a combination of νοῦς and φιλία, as in iv, 3, 184, 18, ἡ φιλίας ὁμονοητικῆς κοινωνία, and more personally in X, 8. 294, 5, τὸ κῦρος τῆς ὁμονοητικῆς φιλίας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους, where divine friendship implies not only the breakdown of all barriers between man and god but also a similar fostering of communication and union of men who have reached the noetic level.

The division I have mentioned may be seen in an important passage on theurgy (p. 184). The context, however, makes interpretation difficult. Iamblichus wants to show how, in Porphyry's words, we can call on the gods as though on superiors yet order them as though they were inferiors. Iamblichus gives several answers which seem hardly consistent with each other. Some daemones, he argues, are lower than us in perfection. These one may ask and command. But at the highest level no human expressions (asking, etc.) are adequate to describe the relationship of man to god and their unity. In between these two explanations comes an important statement about the nature of theurgy in which the following two "aspects" of theurgy are described. The points can be analysed in the following way.

1a τὸ μὲν ὡς παρ' ἀνθρώπων προσαγόμενον. This theurgy is exercised by men.

b It preserves our τάξις in the universe and the All.

¹⁶ Dealt with below p. 95.

- c We call on our superiors.
- d We call on them from our position as human beings.
- 2a We act empowered by divine συνθήματα.
- b This theurgy reaches up to the gods outside the world.
- c We now order the powers of the All.
- d We are invested with divine συνθήματα (and thus raised to the divine τάξις).

He seems to be comparing not two aspects but two stages of theurgy when he distinguishes the objects aimed at by (1) and (2) above. He differentiates means and ends. The first is analogous to the lower type of sacrifice (see below). The second is taken up in the following chapter where he develops the idea of man transcending his own "human" τάξις. This is the highest stage and is reserved for the few. Both stages are dependent on divine power and concerned with divine powers. Thus the lower type is not to be compared with human mantic where man is the main agent and interpreter of the natural world around him. The ἔχνος of the divine which Iamblichus recognises in the material of human mantic is much further removed from the divine source than is the divine presence in theurgy type 1.

Two further points might be noted here. As regards the flow of thought both before and after this passage, could it be that Iamblichus has wandered a little here, that initially he wanted to distinguish and reconcile two aspects of theurgy but ended up by separating them, spurred on, perhaps, by the interesting new argument of the following section (iv, 3)? Secondly, it is to be noted that whilst the higher type of theurgy reaches up to the noetic level, it has not transcended all dealings with the lower powers (those of the All).¹⁷ The inclusion of this continued use of lower powers and, therefore, concern with the material world, is necessitated by the context. Iamblichus can now counter Porphyry's objection and tell us what gods we can "command" and why. But the fact that Iamblichus allows, even in this context, continued dealings with cosmic gods to those who have risen above their level indicates, however indirectly, the importance which Iamblichus placed on the lower theurgy.

In v, 15 Iamblichus grounds a division of sacrifice in a twofold classification of human beings. This classification of human beings seems to imply not merely two distinct types of person but a division within the individual as well. We are either ἔξω τοῦ σώματος μετέωροί

¹⁷ Similar to Proclus' division of theurgy in Marinus *Vita Procl.* ch. 28 πρόνοιαν ἡδη τῶν δευτέρων. See p. 116.

(cf. μετέωρον p. 184, 5) τε τῷ νῷ, (i.e. spiritually), or bound down ἐν τῷ ὁστρεώδει σώματι. In accordance with this there is a double cult (θρησκεία). One is ἀπλοῦς ἀσώματος ἀγνός and free from γένεσις. The other is ἀναπιμπλάμενος τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τῆς ἐνύλου πάσης πραγματείας. Hence there are two sorts of sacrifice (θυσίων . . . διττὰ εἶδη). The first is performed by those already pure. The second are ἐνυλα, σωματοειδῆ and belong to the less perfect. He also speaks of ἄνυλα and ἐνυλα ἀγαθά, which seem to mean the rewards consequent on the two types of sacrifice. This is brought out more fully in 16. The lower type of sacrifice is concerned with petitions for bodily goods whereas the higher type brings spiritual benefits which he describes in 17. The lower sacrifices bring "gifts" which promote the civic virtues (p. 223, 8, συμμετρίαν δὲ καὶ κρᾶσιν . . . παρεχόμενος). They afford success and avert disaster in the material sense.

Iamblichus now claims to introduce a further classification in 18, but it is difficult to see how this really differs from that put forward in 15. The same distinctions are meant but different terms are used. Most men live under φύσις and εἰμαρμένη, but a few transcend this by using νοῦς. Others lie between these two extremes. The first group live according to φύσις. The phraseology here at 224, 10 reminds us of 184, 4, where it is employed to describe the first aspect/stage of theurgy itself. Those who live κατὰ νοῦν μόνον (for he is here also taking account of those in the middle who live partly at both levels) are freed from the bonds of φύσις and νοερὸν καὶ ἀσώματον ἱερατικῆς θεσμὸν διαμελετῶσι περὶ πάντα τῆς θεωργίας τὰ μέρη. Again the different types have different gods (19). One can "offer" φυσικὰς δυνάμεις (226, 5) to the lower gods whilst the higher gods are honoured (226, 11f.) ἀπολύτοις τιμαῖς . . . τὰ δὲ νοερὰ τοῖς τοιούτοις δῶρα ἀρμόζει καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀσωμάτου ζωῆς, ὅσα τε ἀρετὴ καὶ σοφία δωρεῖται, καὶ εἴ τινα τέλεια καὶ ὅλα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶν ἀγαθά. Again at 227, 11 he stresses that we cannot transcend the cosmos and the cosmic gods by the use of lower rites. Participation (μετέχειν) in the *theurgic* gods at the hypercosmic level is a rare occurrence achieved by transcending corporeal objects so that one is (228, 5) ὑπερκοσμῶν τε δυνάμει τοῖς θεοῖς ἐνούμενος. οὐδεὶς δὲ τὸ ἐν ἐνὶ ποτε μόλις καὶ ὀψὲ παραγιγνόμενον ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει τῆς ἱερατικῆς τοῦτο κοινὸν ἀποφαίνειν πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχομένους τῆς θεωργίας ποιεῖσθαι αὐτόχρομα κοινόν, οὐδὲ πρὸς τοὺς μεσοῦντας ἐν αὐτῇ. καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι ἀμωσγέπως σωματοειδῆ ποιοῦνται τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ὁσιότητος.

One might note here that the idea of spiritual sacrifice or an offering

up of one's deeds as seen at the end of 19 is already to be found in Porphyry. He, too, in *de Abst.* ii, 34 distinguishes different levels of sacrifice. At the highest level words are not used, not even internally. Silence is the order (163, 22f.); δεῖ ἄρα συναφθέντας καὶ ὁμοιωθέντας αὐτῷ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀναγωγὴν θυσίαν ἱερὰν προσάγειν τῷ θεῷ, τὴν αὐτὴν δὲ καὶ ὕμνον οὔσαν καὶ ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν. He tells us that one can sing a hymn of words to the νοήτοι θεοί. See further Apollonius of Tyana quoted by Eusebius *P.E.*, iv p. 150, and for Porphyry *de Abst.* ii, 60, 185, 1; θεοῖς δὲ ἀρίστη μὲν ἀπαρχὴ νοῦς καθαρὸς καὶ ψυχὴ ἀπαθής: *ibid.* ii, 45, 174, 18, νοεῖθ' θυσίᾳ where he speaks of internal and external ἀγνεία – the latter being ritual; further a quotation from the *Philosophy of Oracles* in Aug. *Civ. Dei* xix, 23, “*Nam deus quidem, utpote omnium Pater, nullius indiget; sed nobis est bene, cum eum per iustitiam et castitatem aliasque virtutes adoramus, ipsam vitam precem ad ipsum facientes per imitationem et inquisitionem de ipso. Inquisitio enim purgat, inquit, imitatio deificat adfectionem ad ipsum operando;*” Macrobius – though probably reflecting Porphyry *Som. Scip.* 1.7.3, *solae faciunt virtutes beatum, nullaue alia quisquam via hoc nomen adipiscitur; unde qui aestimant nullis nisi philosophantibus inesse virtutes, nullos praeter philosophos beatos esse pronuntiant.* The idea of spiritual sacrifice is further adopted by Proclus *de Phil. Chald* ii; ὕμνον οὖν τῷ θεῷ τοῦτον ἀναθῶμεν, τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξομώσωμεν. The care and original mode of Iamblichus' expression of this tradition show that he really believed what he was saying and was not simply repeating a pious formula.

Having given an account of that branch of theurgy which is concerned with sacrifices we can now deal with Lewy's interpretation of Iamblichus' theurgy.¹⁸ Lewy claims that for Iamblichus theurgy and philosophy are two distinct ways of reaching the same goal – union with the gods. Now sacrifice is said by Iamblichus to be a part of theurgy (225, 4). The higher stage of sacrifice to which he here refers requires a noetic disposition on the part of the participants. Those who do not live κατὰ νοῦν cannot reach the same ontological level. They are restricted to a lower term of ascent. Their mode of conduct is theurgic, in the ritual sense, and can hardly be seen as a lower stage in the philosopher's way to god. It is clear then that “theurgy” alone in Lewy's sense does not take us to the highest level but rather a combination of “theurgy” and “philosophy” is required for the final stage of the ascent. Thus one can hardly speak of two parallel ways. Iamblichus has

¹⁸ See above p. 90f.

attempted to dovetail the two ways in the final stage of ascent in his concept of a higher theurgy.¹⁹ It is, I think, this attempt to combine the two ways at the highest level which causes such great difficulty when we ask about the role of ritual at the noetic level.

The account of sacrifices certainly has a “spiritualising” tendency. This impression is strengthened by the concluding sentence of v, 20 which puts those who practise a *σωματοειδῆ ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ὁσιότητος* into a middle class hovering between earth and heaven. Yet this higher sacrifice, so spiritual in its tendency, is concerned with union with the theurgic gods, 228, 2 τῶν θεουργικῶν θεῶν. A similarly curious phrase in ii, 11, 96, 16 θεουργικὴν ἔνωσιν gives one the impression that Iamblichus is implying that there is a separate philosophical union, that what the philosophers do not attain is *theurgic* union though they may well attain some other union. This would seem to support Lewy’s parallel idea. But the occurrence of the phrase in the spiritualising section on sacrifices argues against this interpretation and confirms the general analysis of theurgy presented above – which involved the corollary that there is only one way to union. The exact role of ritual at the higher level remains obscure even in Proclus where conflicting views are still found.²⁰ Iamblichus takes care to explain that the highest gods are outside the material universe and attempts to give a rudimentary metaphysics of theurgy in explaining how they are efficacious within the material world. He is clearly an opponent of the crudest theurgy which makes material objects divine in themselves and this may go some way to explaining “spiritualising” passages such as that on sacrifices. Besides there is in the case of spiritual sacrifice already a traditional framework of thought. Of course, Iamblichus will not go so far as to give an explicit metaphysical explanation of theurgy. This he would deem to be out of place since theurgy cannot come under the discipline of speculative philosophy. Proclus goes against Iamblichus on this point and his “religion” seems drier as a consequence.

We must be content to point out that Iamblichus’ higher theurgy, however spiritualising it may appear to be, is still basically involved in ritual. Mantic, which is a branch of theurgy, at the highest level uses externals. The passage ii, 11 reinforces the point, whilst 184–5 clearly implies, with its reference to σύνθημα and its attempt to “explain”

¹⁹ Moreover Iamblichus tells us (217, 8) that the worship of the material gods is also necessary if we wish to reach the higher grade. There is no short cut.

²⁰ On conflicting views in Proclus on ritual see chap. eight.

theurgic vocabulary and concepts, the use of ritual of some kind at the highest level of union.

This said, it remains possible to distinguish two types of theurgy only on the basis of a difference in the ontological level at which each operates and of the inner disposition of the human participant himself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CAUSALITY IN THEURGY

After the initial survey of theurgy in Iamblichus' *de Mystериis* we are, perhaps, now in a better position to examine the actual meaning of the word theurgy. This leads, as we shall see, to a consideration of the problem of causality in theurgy. Lewy gives a good survey of the difficulties presented by the Greek words for theurgy in *Chaldaean Oracles*, Excursus iv; "The meaning and the history of the term 'theurgist' and 'theurgy'". As regards our own examination we are concerned here with only one of his observations, that theurgy may mean the work of the gods. Does this mean the gods acting on men or men performing divine actions (or actions which lead to the gods)? Lewy claims that Iamblichus understood the word in the latter sense. Theurgists are οἱ τὰ θεῖα ἐργαζόμενοι – and he quotes *de Myst.* i, 9, 33, 9 ἡ τῶν ἔργων τέχνη and 96, 17 ἡ τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀρρήτων . . . τελεσιουργία. But in Exc. v. n. 8 of *Chaldaean Oracles* he gives us the other meaning which stresses the activity of the gods; iii, 18, 144, 1; iii, 20, 148, 6 τὸ δὲ θεῖον ἔργον . . . οὔτε ἀπ' ἀνθρωπίνης αἰτίας iii, 20, 149, 6 θεῖα ἐνέργεια. *Ibid.* 14–15 shows the general principle behind this usage. God is the ultimate cause in theurgical activity. Lewy stresses this in the same note. Iamblichus emphasizes that the gods appear κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν and not by force (cf. 43, 3; 44, 14; 284, 1f.). He also uses the term αὐτοφανής (in magic and Chaldaean contexts this means "personal appearance") as "voluntary" appearance.¹ Men are involved in the operation of ritual or divine actions, but it is the divine which achieves results.

This concept of theurgy naturally leads us to ask about the nature of god's activity amongst men – his intervention and presence to human beings. We will now sketch the background to this doctrine in

¹ *De Myst.* 40, 19 Αὐτοφανής γάρ τις ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτοθελής ἡ διὰ τῶν κλήσεων ἑλλαμψίς. On self-manifestation see Lewy, p. 101.

Plotinus and Porphyry and attempt to assess the similarities and differences between their concept of divine causality and that of Iamblichus. The title of this chapter reproduces Iamblichus' own terminology for the relationship of divine and human in theurgy. The language of strict causality would probably appear too rigid for Plotinus. Already on this score communication between the two philosophers may perhaps be said to have broken down. For those who reject the Aristotelian terminology of causality altogether Iamblichus will have little to contribute.

Firstly we turn to Plotinus. For the sake of the comparison with Iamblichus it is best to restrict ourselves mainly to the One, the ultimate cause in the Plotinian system, because of its overall transcendence. This gives a more accurate point of comparison when discussing the transcendence of Iamblichus' divine world over the human soul.

Armstrong (*History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, p. 261-2) deals with the role that the One itself plays in mystical union. In *Enn.* v, 3.17, 28-32 Plotinus tells us of the light which comes to us from the One and which is identical with the One. In v. 5.8 he tells us that there is no question of spatial source (πόθεν). The One simply appears – διὸ οὐ χρὴ διώκειν, ἀλλ' ἡσυχῇ μένειν, ἕως ἂν φανῇ, παρασκευάσαντα ἑαυτὸν θεατὴν εἶναι, ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμὸς ἀνατολὰς ἡλίου περιμένει. ὁ δὲ ὑπερφανὲς τοῦ ὀρίζοντος . . . ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν θεάσασθαι τοῖς ὅμμασιν. At other levels of ascent, as we shall see, Plotinus talks of the effect of the higher on the lower but nowhere else does he express so well that union with a higher principle is not an automatic process. Man is not helpless. He must "prepare" himself. Note the resounding answer to the question "how?" at the end of v. 3.17, ἔφελε πάντα. But this does not automatically entitle us to the vision of the One. It would be going too far, as Armstrong points out, to see in this anything like the Christian doctrine of grace in which union with God is only possible by His free gift of Himself. The difference is, perhaps, that the Christian mystic awaits an individual act of grace from God and stresses the utter dependence of man on God and the worthlessness of his own finite endeavours to approach the infinite. Unlike the Christian mystic who waits for God to look down on him personally and care for him Plotinus is stressing simply the ultimate dependence of man on the One, a dependence which is the same for all men and which does not involve any act of will on the part of the One. If the One is seen as the ultimate source of return there is nevertheless a large element of the One within us, there is something akin to the One in our very nature which helps to bridge the gap between ourselves and the transcendent One.

In vi. 7.22, 6f. Plotinus says that the One is the cause and giver of love by which we approach him. The passage is worth extensive quotation: ἐφετὸν δὲ γίνεται ἐπιχρώσαντος αὐτὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὥσπερ χάριτας δόντος αὐτοῖς καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐφιέμενα ἔρωτας. καὶ τοίνυν ψυχὴ λαβοῦσα εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἀπορροὴν κινεῖται καὶ ἀναβακχεύεται καὶ οἷστρον πίμπλαται καὶ ἔρωας γίνεται. πρὸ τοῦ δὲ οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν κινεῖται . . . (I4) ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἦκη εἰς αὐτὴν ὥσπερ θερμασία ἐκεῖθεν, ῥώννυται τε καὶ ἐγείρεται . . . (I8) αἵρεται φύσει ἄνω αἰρομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ δόντος τὸν ἔρωτα. Similarly, chap. 31, 17; ψυχὴ ἐρᾷ μὲν ἐκείνου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τὸ ἐρᾶν κινηθεῖσα.

The effect of the One is thus felt at all stages. Moreover it is now clear that it somehow causes not only the final union but all aspiration to higher reality. In ch. 23, 4 we are told the principle behind this – ἐκ τούτου τὰ πάντα. Thus the One is not only the source of all things with respect to their ontological status, it is also the supreme cause (or end) of the inner life of the soul. We have often remarked how difficult it is to distinguish these two aspects in Neoplatonism. These passages underline that difficulty. Nor does this spiritual dependence on the One destroy human freedom. For just as ontologically the One is cause, united and yet separate from its product, so in the spiritual sphere it acts as supreme principle whilst not eliminating the individual will. The particular nature of the hypostasis Nous is as much dependent on its own impulse as on the causal effect of the One. Thus the relationship between hypostases in the spiritual sense is analogous to their ontological relationship. We might, perhaps, call this causal effect of the One in the spiritual sphere teleological or final in that it is concerned with the desirability of the object of the human soul. We might even ask whether it is the efficient cause but in fact such terminology hardly seems capable of expressing Plotinus' thought and it was left to more pedestrian minds to harden thought with school terminology.²

The above passage is also interesting in that this "giving" of the One occurs at all levels. The effect of the One is transmitted to the soul through Nous. This ἀπορροή, as it is termed, is the equivalent in the spiritual sphere of the ontological process of emanation.³ In ch. 23 it is seen as φῶς and is presented to Nous. It is now only an ἔχνος. In v. 6.4, 16f. the hierarchical image of light is used ontologically. The light image thus applies to the spiritual and the ontological spheres. Notice that soul has νοῦς ἐπιχρώννυντα αὐτὴν νοερὰν οὖσαν (same word ἐπιχρώννυσιν iv. 5.7, 39 used of the effect of an external activity). The

² For Iamblichus and Proclus see below p. 105 and note 10.

³ See also on περιουσία δυνάμεως p. 107.

image of light is a favourite of Plotinus to express both ontological and spiritual illumination.⁴

What we have to assess is the scope of this ἀπορροή. This is not the informing process by which Nous and soul became what they are. It is something more than this. It is a means of recreating them after their initial creation and, more than that, a means of lifting them above and beyond their own ontological status. Plotinus gives a more detailed explanation of the ontological process but it is not surprising that he fails to elucidate the idea of the "spiritual" ἀπορροή, which is evidently something more easily experienced than conceptualised though basically rooted deep in the concept of the One as source of all.⁵

We next deal with Porphyry. Firstly there is the passage of Augustine *Civ. Dei* x. 29. Though at first possibly he is reading too much into his sources, the latter part of the paragraph is not open to this objection. Porphyry, following Plato, apparently declared that man could not reach "*perfectio sapientiae*" in this life, but for those who live on the intellectual level any deficiency can be made good by god's grace and providence after death.

In *Ad Marc.* 282, 1 f. we have the following: ἀνθρώπων δὲ σοφῶ θεὸς θεοῦ δίδωσιν ἐξουσίαν. καὶ καθαίρεται μὲν ἄνθρωπος ἐννοία θεοῦ, δικαιοπραγίαν δὲ ἀπὸ θεοῦ ὀρμώμενος διώκει. Like Plotinus he sees god as the instigator of his efforts to reach up to the νοητά. He follows with the Platonic formula that all the good we do is caused by God, all the evil by ourselves: 282, 6, καὶ πάντων ὧν πράττομεν ἀγαθῶν τὸν θεὸν αἴτιον ἡγώμεθα: τῶν δὲ κακῶν αἴτιοι ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν οἱ ἐλόμενοι, θεὸς δὲ ἀναίτιος.⁶ Porphyry, then, continues to speak of what god gives, the δῶρον θεοῦ. This gift is ἀναφαίρετον (inalienable). Requests must be for things which have relevance to a separated soul. Wait till god shows you what to ask for and then ask for ᾧ (θεὸς) θέλει τε καὶ ἔστιν αὐτός (283, 3). Note that god is here invoked as a helper. When we desire to obtain spiritual benefits we should strive after them and ask god to assist us in attaining them (282, 16f.). This accords with his criticism in the letter to Anebo of those types of prayer which are concerned with the needs of the body. Iamblichus effectively dismisses this objection both at the end of *de Mysteriorum* and in v. 16–17 where he distinguishes material and spiritual benefits which are to be had from the gods. These belong, as explained

⁴ Light image used for spiritual illumination, i. 2.4, 20.

⁵ For ἀπορροή see chap. nine n. 2.

⁶ This is a combination of Plato *Rep.* ii. 364B 3f. and 366C–D with X. 617E.

above, respectively to the man who offers material gifts to the gods and to the one who offers spiritual gifts. But Iamblichus and Porphyry did have in common here the idea of spiritual help from god.

Porphyry displays here considerable differences from Plotinus. For Plotinus, as shown above,⁷ life after death is not intrinsically better for the man who lives at the level of nous than his earthbound life. Secondly and more to the point here, Porphyry stresses much more than Plotinus the divine aid needed by man. Of course this is couched in religious rather than philosophical terminology which may partly account for the difference. But is not the very use of the religious framework itself an indication of the difference of Porphyry's position?

Porphyry's comment in the *Life* that Plotinus' work was divinely inspired⁸ as Armstrong says (note ad loc.) has little support from the *Enneads*. We have attempted to show how such a doctrine might have developed from Plotinus' ideas. On the other hand one has here the distinct impression, and it can be stated no more precisely than that, that Porphyry has changed the temper of Neoplatonism.

However it might be unfair to use the *ad Marcellam* when comparing Porphyry and Iamblichus. We must exercise a certain caution. The *ad Marcellam* involves what one might term traditional piety rather than "theurgy" with its sacramental and magical elements. It is true that god is seen as a helper (ch. 12, 21). On the other hand it is clear throughout the work that it is man who can and must make the effort to reach god. Only virtue leads to god (ch. 16). εὐσέβεια comes through deeds, i.e. virtuous acts. God will strengthen us if we act rightly. But does this imply anything more than the extra strength we receive when we see the Intelligibles and understand what life is about? It is significant that in chapter 18 he tells us that the gods do not do us harm by being enraged but by our ignoring and not knowing them, 286, 10, οὐ χολωθέντες οὖν οἱ θεοὶ βλάπτουσιν, ἀλλ' ἀγνοηθέντες. Porphyry retains an intellectualist and anthropocentric view of human relations with the divine. He is convinced that pious actions and even general reverence for the gods must be accompanied by ἀρετή and σοφία (ch. 22–23), but he makes it quite clear which comes first, 285, 11f. οὐχ ἡ γλῶττα τοῦ

⁷ See p. 74 above.

⁸ *Life* ch. 23. καὶ ὅτι λοξῶς φερόμενον πολλάκις οἱ θεοὶ κατεύθυναν θαμινὴν φαέων ἀκτῖνα πορόντες, ὡς ἐπισκέψει τῇ παρ' ἐκείνων καὶ ἐπιβλέψει γραφῆναι τὰ γραφέντα, εἴρηται. See Armstrong's note ad loc. "Note that Porphyry attributes his master's achievement predominantly to divine inspiration and guidance. This has little support from the *Enneads*. Plotinus normally thinks that the philosopher can attain to the divine level without this sort of special assistance."

σοφοῦ τίμιον παρὰ θεῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἔργα. σοφὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ σιγῶν τὸν θεὸν τιμᾷ· ἄνθρωπος δὲ ἀμαθὴς καὶ εὐχόμενος καὶ θύων μιαίνει τὸ θεῖον. μόνος οὖν ἱερεὺς ὁ σοφός . . . The philosopher is a priest and not the other way round. But when he turns to theurgy in the narrower sense his attitude is somewhat different as we shall see.

Iamblichus, on the other hand, undoubtedly thought that man could only be united with the gods by the activity of the gods themselves. That Iamblichus should express himself in this way does not surprise us for it has long been pointed out⁹ that the later Neoplatonists reduced man's status. But is this in every aspect a radical reversal of Plotinus' position or might it not be in some respects at least rather a change of emphasis? It has already been demonstrated that Iamblichus was not a magician or charlatan and that he probably admitted νόησις in his mystical or theurgical union. It will also now be seen that his concept of divine help has some links with ideas in Plotinus.

I wish now to take up again the problem of theurgic rites in the ascent of the soul in order to show that even here in an area ignored by Plotinus Iamblichus does not descend to mere magic but attempts to maintain the doctrine of god's transcendence whilst not losing sight of the spiritual endeavours of man himself.

In *de Myst.* ii. 11. the divine origin of theurgical union is argued for. It is all the more indicative, therefore, of Iamblichus' genuine attempt to reconcile ritual and divine transcendence that in this very section we should be referred to mystical ἔργα. The ingredients of divine union are as follows:

- (1) τὰ θεῖα αἵτια, δυνάμεις θεῖα
- (2) Rites – συνθήματα etc.
- (3) Human thought and virtue.

It remains to ask about their relationship. Firstly we must point out that all are considered necessary and Iamblichus makes explicit reference to (3) in this respect: 98, 8 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ μὲν τοῦ γινῶναι παραγίγνεται ποτε ἡ δραστηρικὴ ἔνωσις. νόησις and ὅλας τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρίστα διαθέσεις (97, 12f.) are called attendant causes – συναίτια. However it is the θεῖα συνθήματα which are seen as actual or primary causes (dare we call them efficient causes?)¹⁰ ὡς κυρίως ἐγείροντα τὴν θεῖαν βούλησιν, and

⁹ Dodds, *Procl. Elements of Theology* Introduction xx n. 2.

¹⁰ If we take Proclus' analysis of prayer (*In Tim.* i. 213) we have the following "causes."

- (1) ποιητικὰς – δραστηρίους τῶν θεῶν δυνάμεις.
- (2) τελικὰς – ἄχραντα ἀγαθὰ τῶν ψυχῶν.
- (3) παραδειγματικὰς – πρωτουργὰ αἰτία.

again αὐτὰ τὰ συνθήματα ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν δρᾷ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔργον. The transcendence of the gods is maintained when he says ἡ τῶν θεῶν . . . ἄρρητος δύναμις αὐτῇ ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐπιγιγνώσκει τὰς οἰκειὰς εἰκόνας. Iamblichus wants to prove the necessity of συνθήματα (and of virtue and νόησις) whilst maintaining the independence of the gods. He then suggests that the συνθήματα are not inferior to the gods (97, 9–11). This idea is contained in the epithet θεῖα applied to the συνθήματα in 16. In this way, he says, τὰ τῶν θεῶν αὐτὰ ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν ἀνακινεῖται. Then the ἄρρητη δύναμις or θεῖα αἰτία and the θεῖα συνθήματα are put on an equal level as attributes of the gods. This idea occurs again in 184 where it is by virtue of the presence of ἀπόρρητα σύμβολα that man is raised to the level of the gods and *then* has the right to union with them. Proclus refines this (*In Crat.* 29f.) when he distinguishes different levels of σύμβολα. The theurgists only “imitate” the θεῖα σύμβολα.¹¹ In *de*

(4) εἰδικᾶς – τὰ ἀφομοιωτικὰ τῶν ψυχῶν (i.e. to the gods) πρὸς τοὺς θεούς.

(5) ὕλικᾶς – the συνθήματα sown in the world by the demiurge for human ἀνάμνησις.

Like Iamblichus Proclus places direct causality in the hands of the gods, but unlike him he accords the συνθήματα a much lower role. Yet a glance at an important passage in the *Cratylus Commentary* (p. 29f.) shows that Proclus thought of different levels of συνθήματα. The theurgists only imitate the θεῖα σύμβολα. For men they are πολυειδῆ. At the level of the gods, however, they exist μονοειδῆ. Each symbol is, indeed, part of the nature of a god and expresses his ιδιότης or his ability to act on what is below him (αἰτία). In this he seems to agree with Iamblichus. τὸ ὀνομάζειν or the ὀνομαστικὴ ἐνέργεια is not a merely human activity. The human element, however, divides naming from thinking whilst at the divine level ὀνομάζειν and νοεῖν are united.

¹¹ The relationship of σύμβολα and συνθήματα to the Forms is very obscure. The statement in *de Phil. Chald.* v. (See p. 118) is the clearest evidence that Proclus distinguished them. It is also likely that Iamblichus did too, cf. *de Myst.* 136, 6 which suggests this by referring to their analogous nature. καθάπερ οὖν δι' εἰκότων γεννᾷσι παντὰ, καὶ σημαίνουσιν ὡσαύτως [καὶ] διὰ συνθημάτων.

For Proclus a σύνθημα is a token of a god (is it to be identified in any way with a henad immanent in a lower level?) which inhabits a thing or person and becomes the means whereby the object or person reverts to that god. See Procl. *In Tim.* i. 21, 11f.; 215, 24. In *in Alc.* 69, 3 where the συνθήματα are clearly meant they are called ἀπορροαί τῶν θείων. θνητά participate in them (μετίσχει) and so bear the images (εἰκόνας) of different gods. He also calls them ἐμφάσεις. We have noted the use of the term ἀπορροή in Plotinus. Proclus' συνθήματα perform a similar function since it is through them that everything is summoned back to the One. cf. *In Crat.* 30, 24 καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ πάντα κινεῖν εἰς τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πόθον καὶ ἄσβεστον τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦτον παρεχόμενον τοῖς οὖσιν.

In many ways, however, the συνθήματα seem to be similar to Forms. They represent the material manifestation of the immaterial. This was clearly taught by the Chaldaean Oracles (cf. *In Crat.* 21, 1: *In Tim.* i. 340, 12f.). The συνθήματα are present in the world to remind us of the gods (*In Tim.* i. 213, 17, πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν). The Oracles clearly identified them with the thoughts of the Father (see Lewy p. 191–2) and may have equated them with the Forms throughout their system; cf. Proclus *de Phil. Chald.* v, ἡ φιλοσοφία τὴν τε λήθην καὶ ἀνάμνησιν τῶν αἰδίων λόγων αἰτᾷται . . . , τὰ δὲ λόγια τῶν πατρικῶν συνθημάτων. Proclus proceeds to reconcile the two ideas (συνάδει δὲ ἀμφοτέρω). See further on p. 118 below. Proclus frequently speaks of participating in συνθήματα (e.g. *In Tim.* i.

Myst. 101, 3f. Iamblichus explains that in divine mantic ὡς ὄργανα ὑπόκειται τῇ ἐκ θεῶν καταπεμπομένη τῆς προγνώσεως δόσει ὅσα τε περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῇ φύσει τοῦ παντὸς ἢ ταῖς ἰδίαις ἐκάστων φύσεσιν ἐνυπάρχει. Evidently ritual actions are in themselves merely ὄργανα. If this interpretation is correct the σύμβολα at the lower level will be merely ὄργανα which transmit the power of the gods.

Thus god is not actually himself immanent where his effect is experienced. See further 126, 17; καὶ τότε δὴ πάρεστιν αὐτῇ χωριστῶς ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλάμπων, ἕτερος ὢν καὶ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἔδρας καὶ πάσης τῆς περὶ τὸν τόπον φυσικῆς καὶ ἱερᾶς φαινομένης κατασκευῆς. ἐπιλάμπων recalls the concept of ἔλλαμψις which was probably used by Iamblichus to explain the divine presence. The same words recur a little before, in iii, 11, 125, 2; ὡς παρέχον ἔξωθεν καὶ ἐπιλάμπον τὴν πηγὴν, and 125, 11 πάρεστι δ' εὐθὺς καὶ χρῆται ὡς ὀργάνῳ τῷ προφήτῃ cf. 138, 7 ὡς ὀργάνοις μέσοις πολλοῖς οἱ θεοὶ χρώμενοι.

Iamblichus stresses that god "remains" above whilst his effect is felt below: 139, 1 οὐ γὰρ καθέλκει οὐδὲ οὗτος ἐπὶ τὰ τῇδε καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὸν τῶν κρειττόνων νοῦν, μένοντος δ' αὐτοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τά τε σημεία καὶ τὴν μαντείαν ὅλην πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπιστρέφει καὶ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ προϊόντα αὐτὰ ἀνερρίσκει. Clearly there is an analogy here in μένοντος and προϊόντα to the remaining and procession in the ontological order and this is, here at least, something similar to the outward flowing movement from the One in Plotinus which draws us to it.

A further idea used by Iamblichus to explain theurgy and mantic which recalls a Plotinian concept is the notion of procession by abundance of power. Plotinus and Porphyry use this concept to express the ontological relationship of the created and the creator.¹² An

365, 24 μετέχω). Although immanent in the world in much the same way as Forms they have a different origin and function. They perfect the cosmos rather than simply inform it (*In Tim.* i. 161, 10). They are mentioned alongside the λόγοι (*In Tim.* i. 4, 32). The soul is full of λόγων ἀρμονικῶν καὶ συμβόλων θείων καὶ δημιουργικῶν.

When closest to forms or λόγοι Proclus seems to stress in them the upward orientated function of form rather than the downward orientated function of emanation.

¹² The concept naturally belongs to the theory of emanation; iv 8. 6, 14, αἰτία δυνάμεως ἀπλέτου; vi. 9. 6, 11, τῷ ἀπεριλήπτῳ τῆς δυνάμεως (of the One); vi. 7. 32, 32, γεννᾷ ... τῇ παρ' αὐτοῦ περιουσίᾳ τοῦ κάλλους; ii. 9.8, 25 δυνάμεις δὲ θαυμαστές; iii. 2.2, 10 of Nous – πολλὴν δύναμιν ἔχον καὶ πᾶσαν. καὶ ταύτην τοίνυν τὴν τοῦ ποιεῖν ἄλλο ἄνευ τοῦ ζητεῖν ποιῆσαι. In Proclus the concept is connected with the technical term τελειότης which indicates the perfection of power that enables a hypostasis to create effortlessly; cf. Procl. *Elements of Theol.* (ed. Dodds), 30, 25; 68, 9; 106, 17; 112, 23. *In Parm.* iv, p. 955, 17 (Cousin) δι' ὑπερβολὴν γνωστικῆς ἐνεργείας. In Porphyry the term almost certainly has the same

example of this idea may be found in *de Myst.* 232, 12 ἡ περιουσία τῆς δυνάμεως. He goes on to say that this περιουσία allows superior grades of reality to be efficacious in lower orders. The word used is παρῆναι which is later qualified by ἐλλάμπει (see above). Again in 143, 6 he makes a similar statement. In 232, 12 he had attributed super-abundance of power to higher beings (τῶν ἀκροτάτων) but here he attributes it to mantic itself (to be more precise the subject is ὁ τρόπος τῆς μαντικῆς). As he does frequently in this work Iamblichus is here making it clear that mantic does not rely on human powers for its performance. Its "causality" (we might say) is πρωτουργὸς αὐτεξούσιός τε καὶ ὑπερέχων συνειληφώς τε ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ ὅλα ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὸς περιεχόμενος ὑπὸ τινων οὐδὲ διειργόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν μεταλαμβάνοντων . . . ἀδιορίστῳ δὲ δυνάμει ἐπικρατῶν τὰ ὅλα καὶ διασημαίνων ἀθρόως. A further point of similarity with Plotinus' concept of superabundance is the idea of the ease with which the superior or whole hypostases "operate" on the lower level. One may refer to 136, 1 μετὰ ῥαστώνης.¹³

basic meaning but the extant examples are not in a static context, i.e. he speaks about gaining and losing περιουσία δυνάμεως rather than seeing it as a permanent property. This is because he is more interested in the hypostases (souls) which can fall than the eternally perfect ones. But the extension of the concept to them is interesting. In *Sent.* xxxvii he opposes a downward movement of pluralisation and ὕφεσις δυνάμεως with an upward movement to unity ἕνωσις which is finally secured by δυνάμεως περιουσία.

This loss and regaining of ἕνωσις or wholeness of power (cf. *Sent.* xxxvii, p. 33, 15, ἔχει (soul) δὲ τὴν τῆς ὅλης δύναμιν ἤδη καὶ ἐντυγχάνει οὕση ἐν αὐτῷ, ὅταν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνύλου ἀποστὰν ἐν ἑαυτῷ γένηται; *ibid.* 18f. οικείας δυνάμεως κένωσιν . . . τὴν δύναμιν ἔχειν τῆς πάσης εὐρίσκατο) is ambiguous in meaning. It may refer to the externalized activity of soul which becomes pluralized in body and does not regain full unity until death (ontological sphere) or it may be understood in the spiritual sense. This seems implied in some of the passages we have quoted and is even clearer in *Sent.* xxxii, p. 21, 7 where he is discussing virtue and the moral life (spiritual sphere), καὶ τὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένειν καθαρὸν διὰ δυνάμεως περιουσίαν. Perhaps influenced by this is σοφίας περιουσία in Synesius, *de Ins.* 145, 13. A passage in *ad Marc.* (281, 3) similarly refers to ascent during life and must, then, be spiritual in meaning – ἀπὸ τῆς τέως ἐν μεγέθει δυνάμεως ἰσχυρούσης ἐνώσεως. Here is an idea already found in Plotinus, that we should imitate Soul in its wholeness (cf. above p. 78). A further point to be raised concerning περιουσία as abundance or excess is the way in which such wholeness is maintained. The internal power can give off an external power effortlessly. This leads to easy and effortless control of the lower self, an idea presented in *Sent.* xxxii as we have seen (chap. two p. 26f.). See also Plot., iv. 3.18 where he explains that there is a certain type of λογισμός which operates when soul is embodied. It works by deliberation but that is inappropriate to the disembodied state. Since, however, disembodied souls are still λογικά he must account for reasoning in some way. The problem is solved by suggesting a type of λογισμός which *always* flows from the νόησις of disembodied souls and is always successful, 12f. ἐνέργειανέστ ὥσαν καὶ οἶον ἔμφασιν οὔσαν. Note also the connection of external activity and image.

¹³ cf. Proclus *In Crat.* 81, 14 of 'Ρέα/δύναμις – λέγεται οὖν 'Ρέα καὶ διὰ τὸ ἐπιρρεῖν αἰεὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ αἰτίαν εἶναι τῆς θείας ῥαστώνης. 104, 10 τῆς θείας ῥαστώνης χορηγόν. The word is Platonic though it has no metaphysical significance in the works of Plato; cf. *Rep.* 460D, *Laws* 684D, 625B, 720C, *Crit.* 107C, *Epinom.* 991C, *Gorg.* 459C.

Plotinus often uses the word δίδωμι¹⁴ to express the ontological relationship between higher (or whole) hypostases and lower hypostases. Iamblichus also uses this word in a theurgic context. Talking of mantic he says (140, 15), μεταδίδωσι μὲν πᾶσι τῶν ἀγαθῶν . . . ὠφελεῖ τε τὰ διοικούμενα ἀφθόνως, μένει δὲ ὡς πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς τοσοῦτω μᾶλλον τῆς οἰκείας τελειότητος πεπλήρωται (note also δίδωσί, 129, 10). Here too we can see the idea of superabundance which is based on the concept of the perfection inherent in a hypostasis. For ἀφθόνως see also p. 17, 6.¹⁵ Saffrey refers to Plot. iv. 8.6, 11–13 τοῦ δὲ μετ' αὐτὸ οἶον γεννωμένου ἐκ δυνάμεως ἀφάτου, ὅση ἐν ἐκείνοις, ἣν οὐκ ἔδει στῆσαι οἶον περιγράψαντα φθόνῳ . . . This passage from Plotinus shows a meaning similar to that implied by Iamblichus' usage of the concept of ἀφθονία and, incidentally, shows the connection of the idea with that of superabundance as is seen also in the passage from Iamblichus quoted above (140, 15).

One final point must be made before concluding our remarks about Iamblichus. He frequently talks about the divine will in a way which seems quite foreign to Plotinus and Porphyry. Whilst asserting the impassivity of the divine he often stresses its transcendent nature by declaring that the divine operates according to its own volition and is not forced or manoeuvred by lower entities.¹⁶ But he also introduces an individual concept of divine will whereby the divine may or may not affect certain people or things. The gods sometimes withhold the future from men to help them, 289, 18, ἀποκρύπτουσι τὰ ἐσόμενα ἕνεκα τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν βελτίονα ἀπεργάζεσθαι. In 209, 16 the concept of divine will is used to express the particular preordained function of certain objects as agents for mantic. Such things preserve (διασώζω) τὸ βούλημα τοῦ πεποιηκότος. This notion of divine will expresses that tendency in Iamblichus to see the divine presence in the world frequently as a sort of personal intervention.¹⁷

In this rather summary account of causality in theurgy and spiritual ascent we see certain points of contact between Porphyry, Plotinus and Iamblichus. All three philosophers stress the *ultimate* dependence of man on the divine source both ontologically and spiritually. But it is

¹⁴ e.g. v. 1.2, 22: 6, 32.

¹⁵ See also Ernst Milobenski, *Der Neid in der griechischen Philosophie*, Klassisch-Philologische Studien 29, Wiesbaden, 1964, who adds *Laws* 730E 4f., *Epist.* vii 344B, *Épinom.* 988B, and further examples from the *Philebus*.

¹⁶ See Lewy p. 468 n. 8 for examples and p. 100 above.

¹⁷ See also *de Myst.* 137, 4–10 and discussion below p. 126f. 211, 13 has the same implication of localisation of divine benefits by god.

with the latter that we are here concerned. Porphyry shows a certain leaning towards a concept of "grace." This is radically re-emphasized in Iamblichus (for whom the soul is ontologically lower in rank and nous is fallen, thus putting man at a lower level and increasing the necessity for divine aid). So far this concept of "grace" might be traced to Plotinus' concept of *ἔρως* and Iamblichus frequently uses the language of Plotinian ontological procession and return to describe the spiritual ascent. But there is a fundamental change when Iamblichus introduces a more personalised theory of divine will and involvement in the world. Iamblichus bases his theurgy on *συμπάθεια* and its transcendent cause, *φίλια*. Although to a large extent separating the noetic and the material world each with its own particular theurgy he also stresses their continuity through *φίλια*. Hence he can introduce popular magical elements from top to bottom of his system by means of the great chain of Being and the use of material objects as intermediaries. Although the use of these objects is limited to the lower sphere, nevertheless, the aspirant to the higher theurgy must not neglect them even though he will later transcend them. The *συνθήματα* display a greater continuity and are present throughout the system and are similar in many ways to the *λόγοι* in Plotinus.¹⁸

The use of traditional philosophical material by Iamblichus might raise theurgy above the level of vulgar magic but his attempt to integrate popular theurgy in the Neoplatonic system¹⁹ has resulted in some strange changes of emphasis, and even abuses, of those points of Plotinus' intellectual structure which are most vulnerable to religious thinkers of Iamblichus' type. In many cases Iamblichus can be said to have legitimately expanded those points which Plotinus, no doubt grudgingly but at least consistently, accepted but chose not to emphasize. Porphyry certainly represents the first stage of innovation, but Iamblichus has a more radical approach.

¹⁸ For *συνθήματα* and *λόγοι* see n. 11.

¹⁹ cf. Julian's letter to Priscus (*Rh. Mus.* n.F (1887) p. 25 and *Bulletins de l'Acad. R. de Belgique*, 1904 p. 500) in which he asks for Iamblichus' writings on Julian the theurgist and declares his enthusiasm for Iamblichus in philosophy and Julian in theosophy. Bidez, quoting this letter, remarks (*REG* (1919) xxxii 38, 'Iamblique et son école') that Julian shows interest in Iamblichus the philosopher in so far as he gives "la justification philosophique de la théurgie chaldaique qu'il préconise comme instrument de salut."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THEURGY IN PROCLUS

We have already had occasion to mention Proclus in our discussion of theurgy and we now take the opportunity of saying something about theurgy in the works of Proclus. Obviously this is a much vaster subject than can properly be encompassed in a few pages and we will limit ourselves to those points which might throw some light on the thought of his predecessors. Such a survey is important for our purposes in two ways. Firstly a study of the role of theurgy in Proclus will enhance our general understanding of the Neoplatonic attitude to theurgy. Secondly Proclus frequently develops the ideas of previous philosophers and attempts to incorporate them more profoundly into the Neoplatonic system. Iamblichus very often lies at the beginning of this process of development and one might be able to learn more about him, however tentatively.

The enquiry begins with what appears to be an inconsistency by Proclus on the position of theurgy vis à vis νόησις. *Plat. Theol.* i. 25 is the clearest¹ evidence for the primacy of theurgy in Proclus, though clearly, in view of the distinctions and nuances observed in Iamblichus, we must treat the passage with caution. The essential sentence comes at the end of the chapter. Σφύζεται δὲ πάντα διὰ τούτων (πίστις, ἀλήθεια, ἔρως) καὶ συνάπτεται ταῖς πρωτουργοῦς αἰτίαις, τὰ μὲν διὰ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς μανίας, τὰ δὲ διὰ τῆς θείας φιλοσοφίας, τὰ δὲ διὰ τῆς θεουργικῆς δυνάμεως, ἢ κρείττων ἐστὶν ἀπάσης ἀνθρωπίνης σωφροσύνης καὶ ἐπιστήμης, συλλαβοῦσα τὰ τε τῆς μαντικῆς ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰς τῆς τελεσιουργικῆς καθαρτικὰς δυνάμεις καὶ πάντα ἀπλῶς τὰ τῆς ἐνθέου κατακωχῆς ἐνεργήματα.

In the *Cratylus Commentary*, however, theurgy seems to be somehow limited and even subordinate to νόησις. Of particular interest are *In*

¹ This passage has now been discussed by A. J. Festugière "Contemplation philosophique et art théurgique chez Proclus" *Studi di Storia religiosa della tarda antichità*, Messina, 1968. Unfortunately the work has proved unobtainable.

Crat. 32, 28f. and *ibid* 65, 25f. The second passage cuts theurgy short at that level of the νοητοὶ θεοὶ where ὁ θεός, ὁ συγκλείων τὸν πατρικὸν διάκοσμον is situated (65, 24) since he is the highest named god—ὀνομαστός. Proclus goes on to claim that τὰ πρὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—τὰ πρῶτιστα τῶν ὄντων (66, 10) are unknowable except to the ἄνθος νοῦ. We do not name them nor grasp them through γνῶσις or διάνοια. Even the theologians merely indicate them πόρρωθεν through analogies with sense objects. It seems that theurgy is here linked with what is ὀνομαστός and that the ἄνθος νοῦ is that transcendent part of us (66, 14 τὸ ἐξηρημένον ...) which can deal with what is not ὀνομαστός. This separation of the Chaldaean term ἄνθος νοῦ² from theurgy is rather striking. Interesting also is the fact that ἄνθος νοῦ is here concerned with the νοητά as much as with the One.³ In the passage 32, 28f., naming is again discussed and theurgy is said to operate as far as the first rank which can be named which is here identified as the point at which ἡ νοερά τῶν νοητῶν φύσις ἐξέλαμψεν. All before this is in silence and hidden, known only to νόησις.

It might be contended that there is no contradiction here, that the *Cratylus Commentary* is not limiting the power of theurgy but merely denoting at what stage the theurgists ceased to use real names for the gods, since the *Cratylus Commentary* is concerned with semantics whilst the *Platonic Theology* is concerned with actual union. This might well be true, but then does it not imply some kind of difference between a

² ἄνθος νοῦ. Kroll, *De Orac. Chald.* p. 11 and n. 1; cf. Proclus *Plat. Theol.* 6, 35. In *Crat* 47, 15; 66, 11. In *Alc.* 519, 136–8. *de Phil. Chald.* iv. *De Prov.* 172. In *Parm.* 1044, 28. *De Dec. Dub.* 64, 9, p. 106 Boese. Hadot suggests that this idea has its origins in Plotinus—“Fragments d’un commentaire sur le Parménide,” *REG* 74 (1961), p. 425 and n. 73; cf. v. 3.14, 15; v. 5.8, 22; vi. 7.32; vi. 7.35, 19–24, 30; vi. 9.3, 26–7. For Porphyry see Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 1, 11, p. 27. Πορφύριος δὲ αὐτὸ μετὰ τοῦτον ἐν τῇ Περὶ ἀρχῶν πραγματείᾳ τὸν νοῦν εἶναι μὲν αἰώνιον ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ καλοῖς ἀποδείκνυσσι λόγοις, ἔχειν δὲ ὁμῶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ προαιώνιον <τι καὶ τὸ μὲν προαιώνιον> τοῦ νοῦ τῷ ἐνὶ συνάπτειν (ἐκεῖνο γὰρ ἦν ἐπέκεινα παντὸς αἰῶνος) τὸ δὲ αἰώνιον δευτέραν ἔχειν, μᾶλλον δὲ τρίτην ἐν ἐκείνῳ τάξει. A similar idea may lie behind *Sent.* xxv p. 11, 4 θεωρεῖται δὲ ἀνοησίᾳ κρείττονι νοήσεως ... τῷ γὰρ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον γινώσκειται. See further J. M. Rist “Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism,” *Hermes* 92 (1964) 213–225. L. H. Grondijs, “L’Ame, Le Nous et les Hénades dans la Théologie de Proclus,” *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde*, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 23, No. 2. Amsterdam 1960.

³ Though basically the ἄνθος νοῦ is a means of contact with the One, in Proclus *de Phil. Chald.* iv the object of the ἄνθος νοῦ is in the noetic world. The flower of mind secures us ἐπ’ ἄκρῳ τῆς πρῶτης νοητῆς τριάδος ἰδρυμένην and a further stage is required to reach the One by means of what Proclus calls the “flower of the whole soul.” The ἄνθος νοῦ is still concerned with uniting τῆς νοερᾶς ἡμῶν ζωῆς τὸ ἐνοσιδέσκατον but only in the realm of our nous. The “flower of the whole soul,” on the other hand is a device for uniting the whole human being to the One. τὸ δὲ ἀπασῶν τῶν ψυχικῶν δυνάμεων ἐν πολυειδῶν οὐσῶν. It is difficult to see whether Proclus means union with the One itself or a lower form of union with immanent Henads. See further p. 120.

higher and a lower theurgy? The difference here need only be slight. But I think there is a more radical difference.

This division of higher and lower theurgy corresponds in one way at least with Marinus' division of virtues at the highest level into theurgical virtues and those virtues which are even higher than these, cf. Marinus, *Vita Procli* 3, ... θεωρητικὰς καὶ τὰς οὕτω δὴ καλουμένας θεουργικὰς, τὰς δὲ ἔτι ἀνωτέρω τούτων σιωπήσαντες, ὡς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων ἤδη τεταγμένας. It is noteworthy that the highest virtues are passed over in silence, a perhaps not altogether fortuitous use of the word which recalls that region of silence at the summit of the noetic world.⁴ But it is the last phrase which is particularly significant and fits in well with the ἄνθος νοῦ which is ἐξηρημένον and also with the theurgy of *Plat. Theol.* i. 25 which is above all *human* wisdom. On the face of it there is a connection here and one might suppose that the word theurgy was sometimes not applied to the very highest level of ascent.

Marinus gives us no indication of what this highest level really consisted of. But this might be as much due to his own lack of understanding as to some uncertainty on Proclus' part. It is remarkable that Marinus claims no mystical experiences for his subject, Proclus. Now as Westerink-Saffrey note in their introduction to Proclus' *Platonic Theology*,⁵ Marinus was a dry and exact sort of person who regarded philosophy as he did mathematics. This would account for his dry and scholastic reading of the Neoplatonic virtues in his account of Proclus' life. It looks, for instance, as if Marinus understood θεωρητικὴ ἀρετὴ to be merely the brain work of natural theology and θεουργικὴ ἀρετὴ as consisting of rites and the study of Chaldaean theology.⁶ He would appear, then, to have little sympathy or understanding of mysticism or religious feeling. Now this casts serious doubt on the validity of evidence drawn from Marinus since he evidently did not understand the genuine religious nature of later Neoplatonism. It still remains likely, however, that Marinus, being rather unoriginal, took his classifications from Proclus. Marinus' subdivision of theurgic life and virtue at the beginning of ch. 28 of the *Vita* looks genuinely Procline and not an invention of the biographer. Now this classification is hierarchical as it refers to an upward and a downward movement. Marinus seems to interpret ἀνατείνόμενος εἰς τὰ κρείττονα as meaning study of the Chaldaean Oracles. One feels that Marinus has somehow missed the mark

⁴ For silence, see *Theol. Plat.* iv, chap. 9, silence from the noetic level upwards.

⁵ p. xxiv.

⁶ Marinus, *Vita Procli*, xxii.

here and what Proclus really meant was the pursuit of that higher union effected by the higher theurgy of *Plat. Theol.* i. 25.

My basic contention here is that there need be no contradiction between the *Cratylus Commentary* and the *Plat. Theol.* if one accepts that the former concerns itself with a lower form of theurgy, that second or providential aspect of theurgy mentioned by Marinus in ch. 28 of the *Vita*.

In Iamblichus we distinguished two levels of theurgy, a lower concerned with temporal needs, addressed to the lower gods and material in its ritual, and a higher theurgy concerned with spiritual well-being, addressed to the transcendent gods and apparently less material in its ritual elements, if it included them at all in some of its branches. Now although it is possible to determine Proclus' doctrine of theurgy in more detail on some points, on the question of levels of theurgy we cannot bring forward such clear evidence as we can for Iamblichus. It is not, however, likely that he disagreed with Iamblichus on this point and the evidence itself leads tentatively to support this.

We may note two facets of this subdivision of theurgy;

- (1) The occurrence and role of ritual elements even at the higher level,
- (2) The precise position of "Plotinian" νόησις.

We will take the second point first. In Iamblichus we saw how νόησις was in a sense the high point of theurgical activity, that it could only be achieved through moral strength and theurgy, that there was a difference between ordinary νόησις – seen rather as rational activity – and the highest level of νόησις which was to be identified with Plotinian νόησις. The same tendency is found in Proclus with human νοῦς considered as a mere ἑλλαμψις of νοῦς. This makes the discussion of the role of nous more complicated. We have already noted the tendency in Iamblichus and Proclus to lower the position of man in the scale of being with a subsequent increase in importance of divine help – in the form of theurgy. The νόησις which is the final object of the theurgic ascent is now considered to be divine or superhuman. There is no νόησις of the type in which subject and object are identical in an unchanging relationship at the human level. Thus theurgic union in *Plat. Theol.* i. 25 is above *human* σωφροσύνη and ἐπιστήμη. This may be what Iamblichus means in *de Myst.* when he says that theurgic union is above νόησις – human νόησις. We have already shown that for Iamblichus the highest form of union involves something akin to Plotinian νόησις in the sense of overcoming the subject/object gap in an intuitional or mystical experience. The same is true for Proclus who

stresses the role of νοῦς at the highest levels of union. A fact which further supports this is the way in which Proclus sometimes sees theurgy as a means not merely to union with the One but as a means of achieving the unified thought of real νόησις. In this way the relative independence and worth of man in Plotinus is completely sacrificed though the goal reached may well be similar. Indeed when we look at the way Proclus conducted his "theurgical" life we may also wonder whether the means to that goal were so totally different from Plotinus' way as has been thought. It is true that rites and magic were involved but a hard life and prayer were also of importance.

We now turn to the first point. We recall that the higher theurgy in Iamblichus was not correctly defined by maintaining that it involved no ritual element. It certainly seemed to involve some ritual. The same principle might be applied in Proclus' case. We do not necessarily expect to find two levels of theurgy differentiated by the presence or absence of ritual. And we will find that this is the case in Proclus. This somewhat reduces the impact of *de Philosophia Chaldaica* ii on the nature of the hymn we should offer to god. ὕμνος δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς οὐ λόγοι σύνθετοι, οὐκ ἔργων κατασκευή. μόνος γὰρ ἀφθαρτος ὢν, φθαρτὸν ὕμνον οὐ δέχεται. μὴ οὖν καινῇ ῥημάτων καταιγίδι πείσειν ἐλπίζωμεν τὸν λόγων ἀληθῶν δεσπότην, μηδὲ ἔργων φαντάσει μετὰ τέχνης κεκαλλωπισμένων. ἀκαλλώπιστον εὐμορφίαν θεὸς φιλεῖ. ὕμνον οὖν τῷ θεῷ τοῦτον ἀναθῶμεν, τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξομολώσιν.⁷ This still remains a most striking indication that there is a more spiritual side to theurgy in Proclus' eyes. But it would be going too far to accept this as Rosan seems to do,⁸ as evidence

⁷ I do not take τοῦτον ὕμνον as referring literally to the hymn which follows (cf. Lewy, Excursus ix, Proclus "Fire-Song") – It is in apposition to ἐξομολώσιν which includes our whole way of life. Otherwise the passage would be nonsense, since Proclus would first be telling us that god is not honoured by mere words and ritual and then proceed to say that we should honour him with a prayer. The "hymn" would appear to be a result of Proclus' religious enthusiasm. It is worthwhile considering that the language of the Chaldaean oracles might have appealed to Proclus as a means of expressing religious feeling. That is certainly the case with Synesius.

Lewy transposes τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξομολώσιν into the third line of the hymn after ἐπὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ σκοπὸν contending that the two phrases are found together in Plato *Theaet.* 176B. But they are not. On the other hand the idea that true worship is more than words, is in fact ὁμολώσις, is common – cf. p. 97. Des Places in *Oracles Chaldaïques* p. 207 adopts Lewy's transposition. See also Festugière's emendation ἐξομολόγησιν *Révélation* III p. 134 and n. 5). Both of these changes are proposed on the grounds that the text as it stands does not mean anything. I hope to have shown that it does mean something and that it is a perfectly normal Neoplatonic sentiment. I therefore do not find the necessity to emend the text.

⁸ This would seem to be implied by the way in which he treats the division of theurgy into a higher and a lower theurgy; *Proclus* p. 213–217.

that there was never any ritual in the higher theurgy. *Plat. Theol.* (i, 25 end) seems to include rites (ἐνεργήματα). Although the *Crat. Commentary* may be seen as restricting in some way at least the scope of a lower theurgy where the names of the gods are used and ritual shouting is employed Proclus still allows some form of theurgic rite (σημαίνουσι) at the higher levels.⁹ In *Plat. Theol.* iv. 9, p. 193 he mentions the Chaldaean burial rite.¹⁰ It remains difficult to know how far Proclus thought this rite to be in itself effective since he frequently used rites and theurgic language virtually as metaphors or at least simply as parallels of some kind to the internal spiritual state, as for example in *Plat. Theol.* p. 151. Indeed on p. 194 he seems to offer an apology for his extended treatment of ritual and the theological elaborations concerned with it when he says ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐκ τῆς ἐμῆς πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦδε συμπαθείας μεμήκηνται. This comment suggests rather that Proclus enjoyed ritual and Chaldaean theology than that he found it absolutely essential to his position. There seems little more that can be said about the relationship of ritual and spiritual life at this highest stage without entering on a complete survey of Proclus' works, an important task which deserves an independent study. A few more ideas will be added, however, when we come to discuss the role of the henads in theurgy.

Our general impression from Proclus' statements about theurgy is that he did see a distinction between a higher and a lower theurgy similar to the distinction found in Iamblichus. The final sentence of *de Magia* is important in this respect¹¹ as of course is the text from *de Phil. Chald.* iv. But more positive is Marinus' comment at the beginning of ch. 28 of the *Vita* ... ἀρετὴν ἔτι μείζονα καὶ τελεωτέραν ἐπορίσατο τὴν θεωρητικὴν ... οὐδὲ καταθάτερον τῶν ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς διττῶν ιδιωμάτων ἔζη, νοῶν μόνον καὶ ἀνατεινόμενος εἰς τὰ κρείττονα, πρόνοιαν ἤδη καὶ τῶν δευτέρων ἐτίθετο θειότερόν τινα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὸν ἔμπροσθεν εἰρημένον πολιτικὸν τρόπον. Ταῖς γὰρ τῶν χαλδαίων συστάσεσι ... ἐκέχρητο. Here he distinguishes two aspects of theurgic virtue, one is concerned with contemplation and looking towards the gods, the other is concerned, in a downward movement, with the things of this world. It is this lower aspect of theurgy which is concerned with all those curious magical devices and "miracles" which make up the more

⁹ In *Crat.* 66, 16 οὐδὲ γὰρ δι' ὀνομάτων γνωρίζεσθαι πεφύκασιν, ἀλλὰ οἱ θεολόγοι πόρρωθεν αὐτὰ σημαίνουσι ἐκ τῆς τῶν φαινομένων πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἀναλογίας.

¹⁰ See Lewy p. 206, especially n. 125.

¹¹ See further below, p. 120.

dubious side of Graeco-Roman religion and which are enumerated in the following chapter of the *Vita*. Significant also is the fact that Marinus finds these to be of more interest than the loftier side of theurgy. The ancient world had a penchant for the sensational. But this should not lead us to overlook the deeper manifestations of religious feeling.

In the commentaries of Olympiodorus there are three significant passages where theurgy is connected with unity. The passages are as follows;

1. *In Alc.* 172.8f.

ἔστι γινῶναι ἑαυτὸν θεωρητικῶς, ὅτε ἀπολελυμένον ἑαυτὸν τις θεάσθαι· ἔστι και θεολογικῶς, ὅτε τις γινῶ ἑαυτὸν κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ· ἔστι και ἐνθουσιαστικῶς, ὅτε τις γινῶ ἑαυτὸν κατὰ τὸ ἕν, καθ' ὃ συναπτόμενος τῷ οἰκείῳ θεῷ ἐνθουσίῃ.

2. *In Phaed.* 114.16f.

ὅτι παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταὶ αἱ μηκέτι θεωρούσης . . . (i.e. θεωρητικαὶ) . . . ταύτας δὲ προστίθουσιν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἀρετῶν.

ὅτι εἰσὶ και αἱ ἱερατικαὶ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὸ θεοειδὲς ὑφιστάμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀντιπαρήκουσαι πάσαις ταῖς εἰρημέναις οὐσιώδεσιν οὖσαις ἐνιαῖαι γε ὑπάρχουσαι. και ταύτας δὲ ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐνδείκνυται, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πρόκλον και σαφέστερον.

3. *Ibid.* 46, 8.

εἰσὶ γὰρ και παραδειγματικαὶ ἀρεταί. ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ ἡμέτερον ὅμμα πρότερον μὲν φωτιζόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλιακοῦ φωτὸς ἕτερόν ἐστι τοῦ φωτίζοντος ὡς ἐλλαμπόμενον, ὕστερον δὲ ἐνοῦται πως και συνάπτεται και οἶον ἐν και ἡλιοειδὲς γίνεται, οὕτω και ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχὴ κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν ἐλλάμπεται ὑπὸ νοῦ και ἐνεργεῖ κατὰ τὰς θεωρητικὰς ἀρετάς, και ὕστερον οἶον ὅπερ τὸ ἐλλάμπον γίνεται και ἐνοειδῶς ἐνεργεῖ κατὰ τὰς παραδειγματικὰς ἀρετάς, και φιλοσοφίας μὲν ἔργον νοῦν ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι, θεουργίας δὲ ἐνῶσαι ἡμᾶς τοῖς νοητοῖς, ὡς ἐνεργεῖν παραδειγματικῶς.

The three passages are fairly consistent and represent a chapter in the history of the schematization of the virtues which begins with Porphyry.¹² Fortunately Olympiodorus supplies us with some names in the second passage. A familiar pattern emerges – Iamblichus as originator of an idea, Proclus as expounder and refiner. But can we find these ideas in the extant works of Proclus and Iamblichus?

Two general points emerge from these passages.

(1) Theurgy is concerned with uniting.

¹² See Theiler, "Marinus von Neapolis und die Neuplatonischen Tugendgrade."

(2) The theurgic virtues are somehow parallel with the other virtues rather than simply above them.¹³

In Crat. p. 29, 21f. tells us that σύμβολα and συνθήματα (with which theurgy concerns itself) are ultimately vested in what is beyond the νοητά – i.e. the One. Compare this with *El. Theol.* 145 where the ιδιότητες or specific characteristics of lower hypostases are the ἐλλάμψεις of the henads. These ιδιότητες are very closely connected with συνθήματα and sometimes seem identical in theurgic contexts.¹⁴ All the apparatus of theurgy is thus to be traced back to the One. More abstractly *El. Theol.* props. 57–59 lie behind the theory – where the presence of εἶν at all levels is noted.

In *Plat. Theol.* iv. 9 we have already noted the phrase διὰ τῆς ἐνιαίας καὶ πάσης γνωστικῆς ἐνεργείας κρείττονος σιγῆς ἢν ἡ πίστις ἐνδίδωσιν and we might connect it with *Plat. Theol.* i. 25, where the multiple, non-unified nature of nous is expressed. More pertinent is *In Rem.* i. 177, 19 ἀνεγείρουσα δὲ τὸ ἄρρητον σύνθημα τῆς τῶν θεῶν ἐνιαίας ὑποστάσεως. Again the connection of σύνθημα with unity. The σύνθημα seems identified here with the One within us as the following sentence shows: . . . συνάψασα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον . . . τῷ ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν πᾶσαν καὶ ζῶν ἐνὶ τὸ ἐνοειδέστατον [τῇ] τῆς οἰκείας οὐσίας τε καὶ ζῶης.

But the clearest account comes from *de Phil. Chald.* v. συνέστηκε γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ ἀπὸ τῶν νοερῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν θείων συμβόλων, ὧν οἱ μὲν εἰσὶν ἀπὸ τῶν νοερῶν εἰδῶν, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων ἐνάδων· καὶ ἐσμέν εἰκόνες μὲν τῶν νοερῶν οὐσιῶν, ἀγάλματα δὲ τῶν ἀγνώστων συνθημάτων. καὶ ὥσπερ πᾶσα ψυχὴ πάντων μὲν ἐστὶ πλήρωμα τῶν εἰδῶν, κατὰ μίαν δὲ ὅλως αἰτίαν ὑφέστηκεν, οὕτω καὶ πάντων μὲν μετέχει τῶν συνθημάτων δι' ὧν συνάπτεται τοῖς θεοῖς, ἀφώρισται δὲ ἡ ὑπαρξίς ἐν ἐνί. The connection between συνθήματα and unity is clear. And notice also here how the σύμβολα

¹³ The parallel nature of theurgic virtue means that it is present and efficacious at all levels of reality. This would seem to contradict Marinus' report which places theurgic virtue at a particular level (*Vita Procli* ch. iii). On the other hand, ch. xxviii of the *Vita* allows theurgy much greater scope. It encroaches on the realm of political virtue, treating the same material in a new divine way. It is equally possible that it encroaches in the other direction.

¹⁴ *In Crat.* 31, 1. τῆς οἰκείας ιδιότητος συνθήματα. *Περὶ τῆς καθ' Ἑλληνας ἱερατικῆς τέχνης*. Bidez, p. 150, 22; τὰς συνεσπειραμένας ιδιότητας ἐν ἡλίῳ μεριζομένας. This is said in the context of σύμβολα and συνθήματα. See also p. 149ff. The idea of sowing σύμβολα or συνθήματα is common. Proclus *In Tim.* i 211, 1; συμβόλοις ἀρρήτοις τῶν θεῶν, ἃ τῶν ψυχῶν ὁ πατὴρ ἐνέσπειρεν αὐταῖς. Such phraseology is clearly borrowed from the Chaldaean oracles, cf. *In Crat.* 21, 1.

σύμβολα γὰρ πατρικὸς νόος ἔσπειρεν κατὰ κόσμον,
οἷς τὰ νοητὰ νοεῖ καὶ ἀφράστῳ κάλλει ἐνοῦται.

cf. Kroll, *Or. Chald.* p. 50.

and the forms have a different origin, a fact which seems related to the way in which Olympiodorus describes union as involving two elements or stages, becoming nous and being *united* to nous.

This leads us to suppose that Olympiodorus is basing his classification on Proclus. We can now see why he refers to ἀρεταί which are οὐσιώδεις and others which are ἐνιαῖαι. We notice the exactness in distinguishing their modes of existence οὐσαις/ὑπάρχουσι. What is above being can scarcely be described as having οὐσία. ὑπαρξίς is the word to be used and is so used from Porphyry onwards.¹⁵ Notice ὑπαρξίς in the passage above.

The reference to Iamblichus by Olympiodorus indicates that Proclus has here developed a doctrine of Iamblichus. Certainly a term similar to θεοειδὲς τῆς ψυχῆς can be found in the *de Myst.*¹⁶ But more basically this theory of theurgy is one more symptom of the divorce of human knowledge and thought from experience of divine thought which first appears in Iamblichus. From Iamblichus onwards the human is unable to attain direct knowledge where subject and object are identical. This is reserved to the divine level and can only be achieved by man when, with the help of the gods, he transcends himself and his own limited nous. The ordinary nous of man will always stand outside the object it contemplates, never be united with it, nor experience it, until aided by theurgy which enables it to be united with its object and become the sort of nous and enjoy the sort of νόησις that we find in Plotinus.

We have, then, established that Proclus (or Syrianus)¹⁷ connected the working of theurgy with the theory of henads by which the omnipresence of the One at different levels was explained. One curious corollary to the henad theory was deduced from the general theory that the higher in rank a hypostasis is, the more extensive is its field of operation.¹⁸ Thus the One is operative at all levels and is solely operative at the highest and the lowest level. This observation lent theoretical support for the magical theory of the power of stones, herbs, and other

¹⁵ For ὑπαρξίς, cf. Rist, "Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism" p. 220f.

¹⁶ *de Myst.* 46, 13, τὸ θεῖον ἐν ἡμῖν. p. 168, 4 ἐνοειδῶν καὶ νοητῶν οὐσιῶν. cf. Hermeias *In Phaedr.* 150, 24f quoting Iamblichus and especially τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῇς ψυχῆς ἐνοῦσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς πέφυκεν.

¹⁷ One must always leave open the possibility that Proclus inherited a doctrine from Syrianus if not from Iamblichus. On this problem see the remarks of Dodds, *Elements* Introd. xxiii–iv.

¹⁸ *El. Theol.* prop. 57, 59, 140.

material objects, all of which occur towards the bottom of the whole hierarchy.

Yet it remains difficult to see just how Proclus meant this theory to be applied to theurgy. There is no evidence from Proclus so far as I know that he thought the highest mystical union could be achieved through the operation of herbs and stones. Rather the opposite seems to be implied and, as in Iamblichus, such devices are restricted to lower levels of theurgy. At the end of the fragment of *de Magia* he tells us that we ascend to higher levels by abandoning τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὰς φυσικὰς ἐνεργείας and employing ταῖς πρωτουργοῖς καὶ θεαῖς δυνάμεσι. He has only just been talking about the συνθήματα connected with material objects and this final sentence seems to imply that the theurgist graduates from corporally immanent henads or συνθήματα to those immanent on the higher spiritual levels. This is supported by those passages where Proclus deals with the highest level of union and in which he talks of the One's immanence in the individual soul in the form of the ἄνθος νοῦ. In the passage quoted above *In Rem.* i. 177. this highest part seems identical with τὸ ἄρρητον σύνθημα τῆς τῶν θεῶν ἐνιαίας ὑποστάσεως. Thus it is likely that at the higher level of theurgy the σύνθημα concerned with ascent will be that token of the One's presence in us which is itself an ἑλλάμψις of a henad. Proclus nowhere I think explicitly refers to the ἑλλάμψις of a henad in a soul but the *In Rem.* passage comes near to this when we recall how Proclus likes to talk about the immanence of the henads as συνθήματα.¹⁹ The metaphysical principle governing ἑλλάμψεις and ιδιότητες is explained in *El. Theol.* 125, and particularly in 64 αἱ δὲ ἑλλάμψεις ἐνώσεων.

Finally I would like to stress once again how in the passages from Olympiodorus (and in the above examples from Proclus) theurgy is seen as a unifying agent at the level of nous. The final union with the One is not mentioned.²⁰ Thus for Proclus theurgy is not a way of bypassing noesis but rather the only means to attaining it. In *Plat. Theol.* 122 we are told that souls are joined to Nous by the νοεροὶ μονάδες.

This exposition perhaps helps to clarify the way in which theurgical activity was described in philosophical language within the Neoplatonic system. It is difficult to say how much of the theorising and systematising found in Proclus is to be traced back to Iamblichus but some

¹⁹ See *In Tim.* i. 36, 6f.; *de magia* Bidez 150, 9, ἡ τῶν ἡλιακῶν συμβόλων. On the other hand one must beware of making a complete identification of immanent henad and personal σύνθημα. Iamblichus argued against the identification of the personal δαίμων with the self (against Porphyry) in *de Myst.* ix 8. Their relationship is close though somewhat obscure.

similar themes appear and a fairly consistent line of approach to some aspects, at least, of theurgy is apparent.

For Proclus there is seen to be no contradiction between his statements in the *Cratylus Commentary* and those in the *Platonic Theology*. He almost certainly divided theurgy into a higher and lower branch in much the same way as Iamblichus. Both philosophers considered νόησις an important element but fostered by theurgy since they thought of the noetic union as beyond mere human effort. Both appear to have accepted ritual at the highest level of theurgy though certainly restricting it progressively as one approached the ultimate goal. Of vital importance in Proclus' philosophical exposition of theurgy is its connection with unity. Theurgy depends ultimately on the One through the henads represented at different levels by συνθήματα. Whether henads were invented by Iamblichus is impossible to say. They may have been an idea of Syrianus or more likely to have emerged more gradually, acquiring an explicit status only in Proclus, for in Iamblichus the unified element in νόησις is more clearly distinguished than in Plotinus, a fact which surely led to a more precise and analytical investigation of the effect of the One at different ontological levels starting with the intelligible world.

²⁰ Of course Proclus did posit a higher stage in union, cf. *de Phil. Chald.* iv; and *Theol. Plat.* i. 25 also seems to mean union with the highest principle. I should like to make one proviso to the conclusion of Rist's article "Mysticism and Transcendence." Even if the Procline theurgy at the level of nous is a transposition because of the demoting of Porphyry's πατήρ, I cannot believe that Proclus was entirely unaware of the new meaning he gave to the uniting effect of theurgy – uniting at the noetic level of thinking subject and νοητά. It is highly unlikely that Porphyry specifically spoke of theurgy at this level. This means that the efficacy of theurgy at this level was a later conscious innovation or correction of Porphyry's interpretation of the Chaldaean oracles.

Although Proclus' profusion of stages between human nous and the One is in many ways unsatisfactory, nevertheless the idea of the "flower of the whole soul" looks like a determined attempt to call a halt to the infinite regress (or rather progress). This stage differs from the others in being not a further refinement involving an even loftier *part* of man but in attempting to reintegrate man as a whole. Proclus seems dissatisfied with the gradual whittling away of the individual to its "highest" element and, perhaps, wanted to restore a more realistic picture of the mystical aspirant as a conscious human being – οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν νοῦς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διάνοια καὶ δόξα καὶ προσοχὴ καὶ προαίρεσις. There is much more to this than merely an attempt to eliminate the complications caused by doctrinal transitions!

CHAPTER NINE

THE THEORETICAL ATTITUDE OF THE NEOPLATONISTS TO THEURGY

Plotinus' attitude towards magic has been hotly disputed. On this point there will be more to say when we come to discuss his practical attitude. In this chapter we restrict ourselves to an examination of the theoretical standpoint of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. We opened our whole discussion with an examination of theurgy in Iamblichus. It is important to stress that Iamblichus applies the theurgic concept to all branches of religious phenomena and ritual. In Porphyry and probably in Plotinus it is more restricted in scope. It was part of Iamblichus' justification of theurgy that man, in his reduced status, is dependent on the gods for salvation. His theurgy is largely based on the concept of *συνπᾶθεια* and its transcendent cause. It is to the examination of this element as it appears in Plotinus and Porphyry that we must now turn.

For our comparative purposes iv. 4.40ff. is instructive. If we accept the classification of theurgy into a higher and lower theurgy as we have analysed it, there is no place in Plotinus for theurgy of any kind at the higher level. He admits the existence and efficacy of magic but restricts it to the lower soul. We shall note below that magic in Plotinus is not really the same as even the lower theurgy of Iamblichus since it is not really concerned with the salvation of the soul in any sense. Plotinus' whole treatment is based on the broadest possible concept of magic. There is a natural sympathy between all parts of the All. This is the true magic. The sympathy is recognised by men who, then, *use* it on each other. The true magic of the All exists without artifice and spontaneously – *μηδενὸς μηχανωμένου* (40, 4). He thus implies that the human use of this sympathy is a sort of artificial magic. The natural magic includes all forms of merely material attraction – e.g. music.

Thus he distinguishes the natural magic of the world and the exploitation of it by man. It is interesting to see the addition to this exposition in the Arabic Theologia. How much of it might go back to Por-

phyry is difficult to say. In the Theology we read; "The artificial magic is falsehood, for it is all mistaken and does not hit the mark." Where Plotinus makes no comment on the relationship between the objects used in artificial magic and the natural sympathy employed, the commentator adds his own interpretation; "The charm which takes place by touch and the word which he speaks is a trick of his so that the beholder may imagine that that action is his action, whereas it is not his action, but is the action of those things which he uses." This might be implied (we can go no further) in Plotinus' words. At 42, 10f. he suggests that there are two ways in which an effect is achieved (or influence "given") –

(1) spontaneously *παρ' αὐτοῦ*

(2) by artificial means *ἐκλύσαντος ἄλλου εἰς μέρος τι αὐτοῦ*. But in the following words he claims that magic achieves only what it was natural for it to achieve since the moving agent is part of the All as well. He seems to imply here that artificial magic is efficacious but achieves no special effect, i.e. has no special power other than the power naturally residing in the objects it uses.

Though the unity of the All and the consequent sympathy of its parts are due ultimately to the World Soul and, further back still, to the pattern in the noetic world, (cf. vi. 7.14, 20f.) Plotinus does not exploit this transcendent cause as Iamblichus does. In fact Plotinus tends to keep the divine out of magic as far as he can. It is true that the stars are divine and daemones are mentioned. But they are brought in as being parts of the All amongst its many other parts. It is in relation to stars that the idea of effluences is introduced. The causal connection between objects in sympathy is described as a "giving". The stars "give" whether we pray to them or not; 42, 4 *καὶ μετ' εὐχῆς γίγνεσθαι τι δοτέον καὶ εὐχῆς ἄνευ παρ' αὐτῶν*. And Plotinus sometimes specifies that what the stars "give" is an *ἀπορροή*, an effluence. A similar expression is used of the ontological procession of a lower from a higher hypostasis and there is some kind of analogy here to the higher hypostases when he describes the stars as giving but not losing anything and giving without being conscious of the gift.¹ The theory is probably meteorological in origin and even though Plotinus uses the concept here to account for the operation of the hidden sympathy between stars and the material world, its use is very restricted² compared with what we can find in

¹ iii. 2.2, 15f. *νοῦς τοίνυν δούς τι ἑαυτοῦ εἰς ὕλην ἀτρεμῆς καὶ ἡσυχος τὰ πάντα εἰργάζετο· οὗτος δὲ ὁ λόγος ἐκ νοῦ ῥυεῖς. τὸ γὰρ ἀπορρέειν ἐκ νοῦ λόγος.*

² For *ἀπορροή*, *ἀπόρροια*, *ἀπορρέω* etc. see p. 102f. above. ii. 3.11, 8–9, on the influence of the effluence from the heavenly νοῦς on man. ii. 1.3, 28, ii. 1.4, 4,

Proclus where it seems to be employed to express the channels of divine aid.³ Moreover Plotinus' complete rejection of the role played by will here (i.e. the stars do not hear our prayers and decide to answer them or not) is in marked contrast to Iamblichus who accepts the fact that our prayers are heard and that the gods may withhold things from us (though always to our good), and must therefore contend with the problem of divine will in a more personalised form.⁴ In fact Iamblichus' theurgy involves deities or rather noetic beings which are far more personalised than anything we can find in Plotinus but it is interesting that when Plotinus does mention such beings (e.g. his daemons as opposed to the stars⁵), he grants that they can hear our petitions, 43, 12f. It is possible, however, that they form a special class which is very low in the hierarchy of being for they are also said to be subject to the effects of magic while the stars are not.

Artificial magic does not seem for Plotinus to be of any use in the salvation of the soul. But he does seem to recognise both its "good" and bad side. iv. 4. 43 would appear to be concerned with black magic whilst iv. 4.42 suggests by its mention of petitions and prayers the sort of worldly concern we find in Iamblichus' lower theurgy. I put good in inverted commas because Plotinus thought that this kind of concern distracted people from the noetic world and that all material needs and goods drew one literally by magic and sympathy away from the real world to the shadowy material world. The use of sympathy and magic in Plotinus always implies a movement downwards and away from reality rather than towards it.

Another interesting point is Plotinus' suggestion that in the working of magic it is irrelevant whether a petitioner is good or bad, iv. 4.42, 13-16 εἰ δὲ κακὸς ὁ αἰτῶν, θαυμάζειν οὐ δεῖ· καὶ γὰρ ἐκ ποταμῶν ἀρύνονται οἱ κακοί, καὶ τὸ διδόν αὐτοῦ οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ δίδωσιν, ἀλλὰ δίδωσι μόνον. The same idea also appears in Porphyry.

Plotinus does not believe in any form of revelation which is an independent source of otherwise unattainable knowledge. In iv. 7.15

ii. 3.2, 7 on effluences from the stars. vi. 7.22, 8 on spiritual influence from above.
iii. 5.3, 12, of that second outpouring of a hypostasis by which it enforms what is beneath it. iii 4.3, 25 of external ἐνέργεια; cf. chap. five n. 8. See also Plato *Phdr.* 251b τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροήν. For Porphyry, see the *Philosophy from Oracles* Wolff p. 160; *De Abst.* ii. 46 where there is a connection with the *δχημα*. See further Procl. *In Tim.* i, 147, 12. For Iamblichus, cf. *de Myst.* 137, 18.

³ *de Magia*, Bidez 149, 20. *In Tim.* i. 43, 1f., 97, 8.

⁴ See p. 109 above.

⁵ Although the stars too are, in a sense, personal gods, they are not, however, as involved in the world as daemons.

he refers to oracles of gods and of souls of men which give revelation about immortality. But this is only to provide conviction for already held beliefs by more tangible evidence. This conviction (πίστις), which comes from αἰσθησις, is opposed to the ἀπόδειξις of Plotinus' own rational arguments. This is another idea which is found again in Porphyry in the introduction to the *Philosophy from Oracles*.

Plotinus' concept of mantic is restricted in the same way as his concept of magic and for the same reasons. It is a product of universal sympathy and thus operative only within the All or the material cosmos. The sharp difference between the immaterial realm of Nous and the lower world is brought out in iv. 4.12 where Plotinus implies that diviners employ λογισμός rather than nous. Nor does he deny that the stars are a source of prediction. But he insists that predictions from the stars are achieved by learning the various combinations of signs (see ii. 3). But just as Plotinus, by implication, denies any special magical quality to *particular* objects by stressing the universality of sympathy, so also is his concept of divination equally universal. Predictions from the stars are grouped with the sort of conclusions we can make about a person's character and what sort of things he will do by looking at his eyes. For they are members of the All as well as ourselves. Μεστὰ δὲ πάντα σημείων και σοφός τις ὁ μαθὼν ἐξ ἄλλου ἄλλο (ii. 3.7, 12).

Porphyry supposes, like Plotinus, that the basis of mantic is sympathy; *de Myst.* iii 27, 1f., οὐ δὴ τοῦτο λέγειν δεῖ, ὥς καὶ φύσις καὶ τέχνη καὶ ἡ συμπάθεια τῶν ὡς ἐν ἐνὶ ζῷω τῷ παντὶ μερῶν προδηλώσεις ἔχει τινῶν πρὸς ἄλληλα, οὐδ' ὅτι τὰ σώματα οὕτω κατεσκευάσται, ὡς εἶναι προσημασίαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐτέρων εἰς τὰ ἕτερα.

Iamblichus, however, rejects this theory as inadequate to explain all forms of divination. Divination based merely on συμπάθεια is not divine but human mantic though it does contain an ἔχνος of the divine. Here we come to an essential point of difference between Plotinus and Iamblichus, and Porphyry is now on Plotinus' side. Of course Iamblichus does not reject the role of sympathy altogether. iii. 16 makes his position clear. Sympathy is just one of the ὄργανα which the gods use. Now this sympathy is, as Plotinus would agree, something ultimately dependent on the higher hypostases. But Iamblichus seems to go further than simply to stress this dependence. Human mantic works through the sympathies given in nature and the human agent uses skills endowed to him by nature. But divine mantic is not, like human mantic, due to any natural gift whereas in Plotinus and Porphyry

all mantic is due to a natural gift. The ἐπιτηδεύτης for divine mantic is, for Iamblichus, a gift of the gods.⁶ In *de Myst.* 165, 19f. he denies that the ability for divinē mantic comes from nature (παρὰ τῆς φύσεως) – οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ποτὲ ἐν τούτοις εὐφυῖα τις ἂν ὑποκατασκευασθείη . . . θείας ἄρα μαντικῆς οὐδέν ἐστι σπέρμα ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκ φύσεως. φύσις has been, as it were, bypassed and a more direct mode of contact with the divine created.

This direct contact with the gods is seen not only in the way in which we become “suitable” for mantic but in its actual operation. For Iamblichus the natural sympathies of the All are merely the material which the gods can manipulate in order to send messages to men. The sympathies are thus demoted in importance and play a subsidiary role to that of the gods above. This radically new emphasis is seen most clearly in the fact that it is no longer *man* who uses the sympathies in the world but the *gods* (cf. *de Myst.* 120). When dealing with augury from birds Iamblichus says that they are made by god for a particular purpose and that everything they do is in accordance with the divine will at the time of their creation – *de Myst.* 137, 4f.; πάντα συμφωνοῦντα τοῖς βουλήμασι τῶν θεῶν ἄγει αὐτὰς ὁμολογουμένως οἷς οἱ θεοὶ κατ’ ἀρχὰς ἐπιτάττουσιν. We may argue that their prophetic purpose is built in and forms part of the world picture. No doubt Iamblichus means this. The gods use the natural sympathies of the world but not all of them (e.g. the exceptions made under human mantic, the ones which display only an ἔχνος of the divine. Iamblichus is probably basing his distinction on the Stoic distinction of natural and artificial mantic. One might apply Cicero’s criticism (*de Div.* ii, 13). To preserve the argument for a divine mantic he must relegate those phenomena explicable by the use of human reason to a separate and lower type of mantic). In this instance he feels a more direct presence of the divine and thus chooses to underplay the natural element (οὐ γὰρ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν, 137, 6) in order to stress the divine causality. There is here more than an ἔχνος of the divine, ἀλλ’ ὑπερφύες δὴ τι τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶ τοῦτο. Certain prophetic bird behaviour is “supernatural” and there is a transcendent agent at work – ὡς ἐτέρου τινὸς ὄντος τοῦ διὰ τῶν ὀρνίθων ταῦτα ἀπεργαζομένου. How far this is from Plotinus’ concept of sympathy and divination may be seen from our discussion of iv. 4, 40f. For Plotinus the sympathy in the world on which divination is based is the same as any other manifestation of sympathy. There is no special type of sympathy to account for special

⁶ *de Myst.* 101, 2 τῇ ἐκ θεῶν καταπεμπομένη τῆς προγνώσεως δόσει. On ἐπιτηδεύτης see Dodds, *Elements of Theology*, p. 344–5.

phenomena. This is true even in iv. 3, 11, 1-6. Iamblichus, on the other hand, chooses certain elements of the All as particularly endowed with divine significance and although he must admit that even human mantic has a trace of the divine mantic, he is quite firm in his conviction that some parts of the universe betray more than a mere trace. The continuity of Neoplatonic ontological procession seems to break down here.⁷ No doubt this is because Iamblichus is speaking θεουργικῶς. When Plotinus introduces divine presence in statues in iv. 3, 11 he uses the example to illustrate a general metaphysical theory. Iamblichus works the other way round in the *de Mysteriis* at least. This is an important point. One cannot deny that Plotinus here considers that the "gods" may be "present" in statues which reflect their character, but this, he claims, is the same with any recipient which is particularly adapted to the reception of certain forms or presences.⁸ Individualisation takes place before embodiment⁹ and it can be plausibly argued that specific characteristics will inhabit the bodies or receptacles most suited to them. In this case it will be no surprise that particular gods (which seem to be of the level of Soul) may be present where suitable means of material expression exist. That receptivity could be created by men and that the gods should be seen as present in inanimate cult objects is a surprising concession to popular thought. Porphyry deals more fully with the same theme in his work on statues.¹⁰ The fact that Porphyry

⁷ Iamblichus' ἐπιτηδαιότης for divine mantic is over and above normal ἐπιτηδαιότης for form. Proclus distinguishes σύνθημα and Form (see chap. seven n. 11). This seems to imply that the divine channel which aids in ascent is different from the ontological procession of Form. On a broader basis Proclus distinguishes henads and τὰ νοητά. The henads in their manifestation at different levels are independent of the νοητά or Forms. Thus theurgy which works through the henads leads to a divorce of the spiritual ascent from the contemplation of Forms.

⁸ προσπαθεῖς δὲ τὸ ὁπωσοῦν μιμηθῆν, ὥσπερ κάτοπτρον ἀρπάσαι εἰδὸς τι δυνάμενον. Dodds (*Greeks and the Irrational* p. 306, n. 83) comments "ὁπωσοῦν seems to involve denying any specific virtue to magical rites of consecration." Although this statement relies on the interpretation of a single word (might ὁπωσοῦν not equally imply that it is *easy* to make statues which will receive the gods' presence?), nevertheless, the general line of argument in the chapter supports Dodds' interpretation, since he is using the instance of the statues merely as an example of a general theory about the presence of the λόγοι in the universe. What we would like to know is the relationship of these gods and their mode of presence with the νοητά and the λόγοι. I suspect that Plotinus (unlike Iamblichus and Proclus, see n. 7) identified them. This would be in accord with his theory of natural sympathy. Moreover the reference in ch. 11, 11 to τῶ θεῷ ἐκείνῳ (surely meaning Νοῦς) links Νοῦς as god and source of λόγοι with the θεοί of line 2.

⁹ Porphyry *Sent.* xxxvii., Plot. vi. 4.4. How far individualisation goes is hard to say. Whether Plotinus believed in Forms of Individuals, cf. Rist "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus." *CQ* n.s. 13 (1963) 223-31, Blumenthal "Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals?," *Phronesis* 11 (1966) 61-80.

¹⁰ περὶ ἀγαλμάτων. Fragments in Bidez 1*-23*.

devotes a special book to the subject as worthy of independent study points to a divergence from Plotinus who uses the concept merely as an illustration of a philosophical idea. Porphyry goes further than Plotinus in his assessment of the importance of such cult objects as bringing to material manifestation the incorporeal attributes and powers of the invisible gods. This theory probably formed part of his salvation for the masses. The theory is expressed in the *Chaldaean Oracles* and is exploited by Proclus. Porphyry does not, however, seem to have accorded cult objects any further significance than that of revelation.¹¹

We now turn specifically to Porphyry's concept of theurgy. In this he is neither as consistent nor as thoroughgoing as Iamblichus. The letter to Marcella from Porphyry's last days preaches a traditional type of piety which shows no influence of theurgy, *συμπάθεια*, or sacraments of salvation. I think that this is less likely due to retraction or rejection by Porphyry of theurgy towards the end of his life than to a much more limited concept of theurgy. Porphyry considers the theurgic practices to be an actual alternative to a life of practical virtue. The opposite is the case with the pious religion of *Ad Marcellam* where the role of *ἀρετή* is fully stressed. Traditional piety and theurgy are to a large extent in separate compartments and the absence of the latter in a work does not necessarily mean that Porphyry had totally rejected it. One of the reasons which lies behind this limited concept of theurgy is Porphyry's failure to distinguish between magic and black magic and, more precisely, his contention that theurgy is dangerous.

Porphyry seems to have devoted more attention than did Plotinus to the distinction between *γοητεία* and theurgy, black magic and theurgy proper.¹² But he is by no means as clear as Iamblichus. Whilst sometimes distinguishing *γοητεία* and theurgy he often seems to have confused them or rather to have seen the workings of one as affected and possibly checked by the other. The theory of the *de Mysteriis* represents an advance in clarification.

Augustine in *Civitas Dei* x. 9. Bidez Fr 2, 27*13 notes this distinction – “*quam vel magian vel detestabiliore nomine goetian vel honorabiliore theurgian vocant.*” Augustine here suggests that Porphyry and the Platonists used these two names to distinguish two kinds of magic,

¹¹ cf. (περὶ ἀγαλμάτων) Bidez 1*5, τοῖς καθάπερ ἐκ βιβλῶν τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἀναλέγειν τὰ περὶ θεῶν μεταθηκόσι γράμματα. Cf. 2*7, and also Proclus quoting the Chaldaean Oracles (*In Rem.* i. 39, 17f.) for the doctrine of revelation through material means to those unable to approach the true nature of the gods with nous.

¹² See the references given by Zintzen “Mystik und Magie in der Neuplatonischen Philosophie.” *Rh. Mus.* n.F. 108 (1965) p. 96 n. 88.

magic proper and theurgy, but that, in fact, both were concerned with the same spiritual principle and daemons. This is most forcefully proved by the little story in x. 9, where a good man is thwarted by a bad man. "*Quo indicio dixit apparere theurgian esse tam boni conficiendi quam mali et apud deos et apud homines disciplinam.*" (Bidez *ibid.* 29*21.) However, it is difficult to know exactly whether Porphyry considered a beneficent god or daemon to have been checked directly by the wicked man or suspects the operation of an evil daemon. The latter is suggested in *de Abst.* 11, 45, p. 174, 2 where γόητες appear to be impious and associated with δαίμονες πονηροί. The idea of a conflict between good and evil daemons who contend for man's soul is found elsewhere in Porphyry.¹³ In x. 9, Bidez 29*13f. Augustine seems to suggest this when he says "*potestates ... quae vel ipsae inuideant purgationi animae, vel artibus serviant invidorum.*" Here is the idea of a conflict or a checking of good daemons by those spiritual beings ready to do the will of wicked people. Iamblichus himself appears to believe in such forces which he calls ἀντίθεοι, *de Myst.* 177, 18. Though not addressing himself to the charge in *de Regressu Animae* that theurgy can be "dangerous," he, nevertheless, gives us an indication of what his position would be when in 176, 3 he claims that the theurgist in touch with the gods will be immune from any malign influence. It is the wicked who come in contact with evil spirits.

According to Augustine Porphyry wavered in his acceptance of theurgy. It would seem that this hesitancy was found within the compass of a single book, *de Regressu Animae* and Porphyry's more sceptical side is seen also in the letter to Anebo. Augustine reports three reasons for this hesitancy to accept theurgy on Porphyry's part; x, 9, Bidez fr. 2, 27*27f. *Nunc enim hanc artem tamquam fallacem et in ipsa actione periculosam et legibus prohibitam cavendam monet.* The charge of danger surely refers to the sort of spell and counter spell that we have been discussing above. The illegality of theurgy is an interesting topic which falls outside the scope of this work. It is interesting to note that Synesius was also very much aware of the illegality of certain branches of theurgy.¹⁴ The first of Porphyry's objections, that theurgy is *fallax* is, perhaps, more important and more difficult to understand since *fallax* seems to mean not merely deceptive but actually false and useless.

¹³ *de Abst.* ii. 36-43, and the *Hellenic Theology* (if by Porphyry) in Eusebius *P.E.* iv. 5, 1-2. Further, *In Tim.* i. 77, 7f.

¹⁴ Cf. Synesius *de Ins.* p. 170, 11f.; cf. R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* p. 124-127.

Augustine refers to this again in x, 27, Bidez fr. 7, 34*28f. "*Quid prodest quia negare non potuisti errare homines theurgica disciplina et quam plurimos fallere per caecam insipientemque sententiam atque esse certissimum errorem agendo et supplicando ad principes angelosque decurrere.*"

Porphyry, who thought that even the lower soul could be saved without the help of theurgy, was clearly undecided as to the real nature and status of theurgy. As his letter to Marcella shows he hated all mere ritual divorced from virtue. His preoccupation with theurgy was no doubt due to actual experience of the power of magical activities and a general interest in the more speculative and lofty verses of the *Chaldaean Oracles* which inevitably involved him in the exegesis of their more suspicious elements.

Although Porphyry declares theurgy to be effective only on the lower soul he, nevertheless, uses Chaldaean terminology for the highest ends attainable by man, e.g. the ascent to the πατήρ.¹⁵ This leads us to ask whether there is a form of higher theurgy in Porphyry. Though Porphyry talks in *de Abstinencia* about verbal prayers which can be offered up to the νοητοὶ θεοί (he forbids all kind of verbal prayer to the highest God),¹⁶ he nowhere else mentions anything remotely ritualistic in connection with the return to the Father. But Porphyry's use of the Oracular language here in *de Regressu Animae* for the highest part of ascent may point to a higher theurgy in the Oracles themselves which has been further spiritualized by Porphyry. A few curious remarks from *de Regressu Animae* lend support to the theory that the Oracles themselves advocated two levels of theurgy. What I shall say about the Oracles will be only superficial since it would be out of place here to examine in any greater depth the teaching of the Chaldaean Oracles on this point. In fact the material hardly suffices.

I would like firstly merely to pose a question. Why should we find a passage so philosophical as Kroll p. 11 in the *Chaldaean Oracles*? Lewy sees such passages as a sort of inverted metaphor where metaphysical or philosophical language is used to express a "theurgical" concept; cf. *Chaldaean Oracles* p. 175-6, "Plato compared the illumination accompanying the vision of the ideas with that experienced by the initiate at the culminating point of the mystery. The Chaldaeans, on the other hand, used the image of philosophical vision in order to represent the illumination of their initiate." He then warns us of the spiritualising

¹⁵ *De Regr. Anim.* Bidez fr. 4. For πατήρ, cf. Kroll p. 12ff. and Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles* p. 76f.

¹⁶ *de Abst.* ii. 34.

tendencies of Neoplatonic exegesis of the Chaldaean Oracles. But is it possible that the Chaldaean rites did demand a corresponding spiritual or contemplative attitude? This seems to be a possibility which requires further investigation.

There are two fragments from *de Regressu Animae* which suggest a higher level of theurgy in the Oracles. The first passage is found in Bidez fr. 4, 32*21; "*Hoc enim tibi immundissimi daemones, deos aetherios se esse fingentes, quorum praedicator et angelus factus es, promiserunt. quod in anima spiritali theurgica arte purgati ad Patrem quidem non redeunt, sed super aerias plagas inter deos aetherios habitabunt.*" This suggests that the Oracles themselves limited the lower man to a lower level of ascent. It is clear that the Oracles did preach a return to the *Pater* but they evidently limited the attainment of this level to a minority of the human race.

The second passage is in Bidez fr. 8 36*5; *Dicit etiam Porphyrius divinis oraculis fuisse responsum nos non purgari lunae teletis atque solis . . . Denique eodem dicit oraculo expressum principia posse purgari . . .*" This might be, as Lewy maintains, a deliberate misinterpretation on Porphyry's part (*Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 139, n. 274). If the *principia*/*ἀρχαί* were originally to be identified with the three Chaldaean cosmic rulers, two of whom are connected with the sun and the moon, and Porphyry has elevated them above the material world he would appear to have read into the Oracles two levels of theurgy, the one concerned with the *ἀρχαί* and a lower theurgy concerned with the rites of the sun and moon. Another and perhaps more likely interpretation is to admit Porphyry's misinterpretation of the *ἀρχαί* as the highest triad (or dyad?) but to claim that the Oracles themselves must have maintained the difference between the *ἀρχαί* and the sun and the moon whose rites did not purify. The Oracles do seem to have distinguished, for example, between a transmundane and an intramundane sun (Lewy, p. 151f.). Could they be here referring to such a distinction of levels? For there is reference elsewhere to Chaldaean rites of sun and moon (Proc. *In Rem.* 1.152, 14) which seem to be connected with the more material ascent of the *ῥχημα/πνεῦμα*. The Oracles are perhaps here warning us in a hyperbolic manner that their own lower rites do not take us beyond a certain level. Otherwise one must take this passage as an attack on the rites of some other mystery religion of which the Oracles did not approve.

This discussion shows, however vaguely, that there might have been a division in the Chaldaean theurgy itself into a higher and a lower theurgy. Such a division would correspond with the Chaldaean world

picture and stratification of human ascent which we have described above.¹⁷ It is significant in this distinction of human attainments that the "lower" man is doomed to rebirth in the order of things whilst the "higher man" (the theurgist himself) by rights escapes from the cycle of rebirth after death, though he does find his way down to the world again as a special emissary of the gods.¹⁸ He is thus *sent* down to the world whilst the others fall. For him it is a privilege. He does not escape rebirth but it is no longer a natural consequence of his own imperfection.

Another important point which has to be raised here is the question of a change in Porphyry's attitude towards the relationship of philosophy and theurgy. In view of some of O'Meara's work on *The Philosophy from Oracles* it now looks less likely that Porphyry altered his views radically on this particular theme. O'Meara does not seem to me to have proved that the *Philosophy from Oracles* and the *De Regressu Animae* are the same work. On the other hand the possibility cannot be discounted.¹⁹ He also reveals some interesting facets of Porphyry's thought.

¹⁷ See p. 62f.

¹⁸ The privilege of the theurgist makes him comparable in some ways to the Porphyrian philosopher who escapes to the Father – cf. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, p. 393f., esp. 394, n. 1 and 2. Although he ascribes a special way to the rank of angel which seems to be superior to the normal theurgical way (Bidez fr. 2, 29*6, *aliā vero viam esse perhibeat ad angelorum superna consortia*) the rank attained is still within the "visible" world – *aetheria vel empyria (loca)*. Porphyry elsewhere considers angels to be very close to the intelligible world (see Porph., *Contra Christianos* fr. 76, Harnack). Yet it does not seem that they were *in* the intelligible world. The angels have nothing to do with the philosophers' goal and way to that goal. Moreover Porphyry denies that those who reach the deos aetherios come to the Father. Possibly Porphyry has demoted the Chaldaean empyria (the equivalent of the noetic world in Chaldaean terminology). This demoting fits in well with Porphyry's general assessment of theurgy as an inferior δευτερος πλοῦς. Unless it is Augustine who has misunderstood Porphyry, it looks as if Porphyry reduced the empyrian world to a lower status at the summit of the visible world; cf. Bidez fr. 6, 34*24; *aetherias vel empyrias mundi sublimitates et firmamenta caelestia*. This refers to the limit set on the ascent by theurgy which elsewhere clearly comes within the visible world (fr. 4, 32*24).

¹⁹ Bidez p. 15 dates the *Philosophy from Oracles* to a time before Porphyry met Plotinus in Rome (c. 262/3 A.D.) and the *de Regressu Animae* after the letter to Anebo, both of these being after 262/3 A.D. Sodano puts the *de Regressu Animae* after 268 (Porphyry's return from Sicily), *Lettera ad Anebon*, 1958, ch. 1) and Dodds (*Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 287) after Plotinus' death in 269 A.D.

O'Meara queries Bidez's conclusions which are based on the discrepancy between the contents of the two works and a statement in Eunapius. *V. Soph.* iii. 1.11, 457; αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν φησὶ (νέος δὲ ὢν ἰσως ταῦτα ἔγραφεν ὡς ἔοικεν) ἐπιτυχεῖν χρηστηρίῳ μὴδενὶ τῶν δημοσίων· ἐν δὲ αὐτῷ τῷ βιβλίῳ καταγράφει. O'Meara's arguments (*Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles*, p. 33–34) are not entirely convincing. He would like to interpret the passage as supporting his theory that the *Philosophy from Oracles* was written after 268 A.D. He is right to point out the ἰσως and ὡς ἔοικεν. Eunapius was clearly not well informed. But it is best to leave it at that. The μέν and δέ are hardly contrasting two periods of writing, as O'Meara claims since we are explicitly told that he recorded the Oracle in the *same* book. It is just possible that the one book was revised later on. As to the force of *κατα* – in

An important fragment of the *Philosophy from Oracles* in Augustine *Civ. Dei*, xix. 23 has the following sober statement about the ascent of the soul "... ipsam vitam precem ad ipsum (deum) facientes per imitationem et inquisitionem de ipso ...". This is remarkably similar to statements from his later period and if we uphold the traditional early dating for the *Philosophy from Oracles* (i.e. pre-Plotinian) we find here a certain consistency on Porphyry's part and a soberness which might require us to reappraise the conventional picture of a superstitious, religious-minded Porphyry restrained and brought to reason by the rationalist Plotinus.

Of course similar turns of phrase in Iamblichus and Proclus do not exclude a higher theurgy, but they do at least imply what one might term a "pure" theurgy, i.e. a type of ritual magic which involved genuine religious and moral conditions.²⁰ Then we are reduced to two interpretations of Porphyry's position; (a) he held the same view of theurgy in the *Philosophy from Oracles* as in *de Regressu Animae*, i.e. it applies only to the lower soul, the way of virtue being the means to higher union, (b) he held a view similar to that of Iamblichus in the *Philosophy from Oracles* and modified this later in *de Regressu Animae* to exclude even the name of theurgy at the higher level of union. Of these alternatives the former is more likely (There is no problem, of course, if *de Regressu Animae* and the *Philosophy from Oracles* are the same work and are late in date. We would simply know less about Porphyry's attitude to religious matters in his early days). He declares his intention in the prologue²¹ of the *Philosophy from Oracles* to concern himself with reporting the philosophical content of oracles whilst touching little on the actual practice of divination. This is the opposite of Iamblichus in the *de Mysteriis* where content is not dealt with. Moreover Porphyry will deal with divination only where it will aid θεωρία. (Could this be the limited form of divination by dreams found in Synesius *de Insomniis* and going back to Porphyry?). The weight of the *Philosophy from Oracles* must have fallen on the actual content of oracles and revelations rather than on the means of obtaining them, and the contents are reported so that they might be of use to those who

καταγράφω might this mean no more than recording of the Oracle whilst ἔγραψεν means he described the circumstances surrounding the revelation? The Oracle might well have been already in a written form which Porphyry then copied out. See O'Meara's arguments about καταγράφει, that it "means to register what has previously been recorded." He then takes this as an early account by Porphyry later written down in a later account. But it could refer to a written oracle.

²⁰ See page 96f. above.

²¹ Prologue of the *Philosophy from Oracles*, Wolff p. 109-110.

wish to secure release from philosophical doubt. They are ancillary to philosophy and the search for salvation announced in the preface would, despite the religious subject, appear to be obtainable ultimately through contemplation and philosophy.

It is quite clear that, even in the *Philosophy from Oracles* Porphyry, unlike Iamblichus, is searching not for cult ways to god or a justification of ritual and religion, but for oracular and divine confirmation of his philosophical position. We already see that critical spirit which is supposed to belong to the later period, when he claims that δαίμονες use natural means when divining the future since they can make mistakes just as men can; see Wolff p. 169; 'Ἄλλ' ἤδη καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς φορᾶς τὴν ἀκριβῆ καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων συμβάσεις ἀκατάληπτον εἶναι ἀνθρώποις, καὶ οὐ μόνον τούτοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τισι τῶν δαιμόνων· ὅθεν καὶ ψεύδονται περὶ πολλῶν ἐρωτηθέντες. Even more interesting is a fuller statement by Philoponus (Wolff p. 174) where, if the source is the *Philosophy from Oracles*, that work would seem to include some of the criticisms of theurgy found in *de Regressu Animae* τούτοις οὖν ἅπασιν ὡς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν τε πρακτικὴν θεοσοφίαν (οὕτω τὴν μαγείαν καλῶν) χαλεπὴν εἰς ἐγχείρησιν εἶναί φησι, καὶ τὴν φορὰν τὴν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἄστρον, καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων συμβάσεις ἀκατάληπτους, διὸ καὶ ψεύδεσθαι περὶ πολλῶν ἐρωτηθέντας ... All of this suggests a more critically minded Porphyry than has hitherto been supposed and the *Philosophy from Oracles* can no longer be used to prove a "superstitious" Porphyry.

One final point might be made which shows even more dramatically the gulf that separates Porphyry from Iamblichus in the matter of theurgy. Iamblichus makes it clear that virtue is necessary for the success of theurgy proper (as opposed to black magic). Porphyry does not seem to have come to such a clear understanding of the place of virtue in theurgy and seems rather to have thought of theurgy as an alternative to virtue as regards the salvation of the lower soul. *Sent.* xxix seems to imply this by the way in which it contrasts the theurgical way to salvation with the way of practical virtue.²² Porphyry sees man as a prey to good and evil demons whether the individual is good or not. Iamblichus firmly states that the good theurgist will not fall a victim to evil spirits of any kind, thus dismissing Porphyry's tales of good men ensnared by black magic (see *de Myst.* 178, 11f.). These concepts confirm the impression that Porphyry considered virtue to be irrelevant to theurgy. We have already seen that Plotinus thought that virtue

²² See p. 60 above.

was not necessary when practising magic. The thought behind this is the firm conviction that the basis of magic is something entirely *natural*. Iamblichus' introduction of the supernatural world of noetic gods into magic would necessarily bring along with it the requirement of moral goodness in those participating in theurgy if he wanted to entertain the idea of a theurgy that led to union with the divine, although one must admit that Iamblichus' genuine religious zeal has a great part to play in his conviction that the theurgist will not succumb to evil spirits.

For all practical purposes the sort of ritual theurgy which we see in Iamblichus, however spiritualised, goes unrecognised by Porphyry, and is replaced by philosophy. The lower type of theurgy is, however, recognised and limited to the lower soul. The old dichotomy of higher and lower soul comes out clearly in *de Regressu Animae* with the *anima intellectualis* and the *anima spiritalis*. Porphyry's discussion of universal salvation to which we shall shortly turn, is bound up with this dichotomy which we have already seen in Iamblichus.²³ There are in fact two distinct stages of salvation and, in addition two modes of salvation. The stages are the higher and lower elements in man, the modes are theurgy and philosophy. The philosophical way to salvation lies initially in the practice of virtue (*Sent.* xxxii). It is only when a man reaches the higher virtues that he begins to save his higher self or return to his real self by means of the theoretical virtues. But even in the *Sententiae* Porphyry implies that there might be another way to save the lower self at least, i.e. the *ἑχρημα/πνεῦμα*-bound lower soul (*Sent.* xxix), and it seems difficult to find any other candidate here but theurgy. It is this way which is dealt with in the extant fragments of *de Regressu Animae* and it is limited to the lower soul and criticized in other respects, all of which suggest that if the theme of the work was the search for a "universal way of freeing the soul" then this examination of the Chaldaean way of theurgy has shown it to be wanting in Porphyry's eyes especially because of its limited nature.²⁴ Porphyry clearly believed that theurgy had some validity and connected us with the gods through *φαντασία*. I think that the letter to Anebo was written in a spirit of friendly criticism by a man who basically believed in some aspects at least of theurgy but who was increasingly perplexed by the important theological and metaphysical problems which such a belief entailed. Porphyry remain-

²³ See p. 95f above.

²⁴ This would, of course, argue against a "higher" theurgy in the Oracles. On the other hand the higher stage that we have suggested for the oracles might have been ignored by Porphyry as being unworthy. It would also be limited to a few exceptions and was handed down in a limited circle. See note 26.

ed loyal on the whole to the Plotinian philosophy but Iamblichus was ready to sacrifice many Plotinian concepts in order to accommodate his religious beliefs.

Yet even if Porphyry did admit the validity of theurgy at the lower level, unlike Iamblichus he saw no reason why the philosopher (the man who has returned to his real or higher self) should bother to participate in the theurgic rites pertaining to his lower soul.

In the thirty-second chapter of *Civitas Dei* X, Augustine tells us that Porphyry looked for a *via universalis animae liberandae* but failed to find one. It is not immediately obvious whether he is quoting Porphyry or rather interpreting him. Did Porphyry use an equivalent of *via universalis* and, if so, what can he have meant by it?

Augustine sees the *via universalis* as a religion of salvation which is not restricted to one nation (or time) but open to all nations at all times and he criticizes Porphyry for not recognising Christianity as the universal religion. Towards the end of the chapter, however, Augustine introduces a new idea. Christianity, he says, saves the whole man – to use Porphyry's terms, Christ saves the *anima intellectualis*, the *anima spiritalis*, and the body: *Haec via totum hominem mundat et immortalitati mortalem ex omnibus quibus constat partibus praeparat. Ut enim non alia purgatio ei parti quaereretur, quam vocat intellectualem Porphyrius, alia ei, quam vocat spiritalem, aliaque ipsi corpori; propterea totum suscepit veracissimus potentissimusque mundator atque salvator* (Bidez fr. 12, 43*, 11f.). This contains the implied criticism that Porphyry had different ways of salvation for the higher and lower soul. Whether he considered a form of bodily salvation is difficult to say but it would not be an impossibility,²⁵ though highly unlikely.

This causes us to ask just what Porphyry meant by a *via universalis*. The following three possibilities present themselves;

- (1) A way common to all nations at all times
- (2) A way which saves all parts of the human being

²⁵ Porphyry, as we might expect, rejects bodily resurrection (*de Regr. An.* Bidez fr. 11, 5, 41*35f.). Even the *δχημα/πνεῦμα* is rejected at the highest level (*sine ullis omnino corporibus*). Yet Augustine here seems to be implying that Porphyry considered a salvation of the body. Kroll argues (*Orac. Chald.* p. 61) that the Chaldaean believed in a Judaeo-Christian type of bodily resurrection. Lewy argues (*Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 214f.) convincingly against this and suggests that "salvation of the body" refers (a) to its being free from disease, etc. in this life – Synesius *Hymn* ii. 275f. suggests this idea in a Porphyrian-Chaldaean context; (b) to bodily dissolution into the elements at death by which it cannot be used magically. Possibly Augustine might be referring to this kind of bodily salvation here. We recall that both Iamblichus and Porphyry accredited theurgy with the power to bring material benefits.

(3) A way which saves all types of men (this latter is really an aspect of (2) since types are defined according to the predominance of the higher or lower soul which belongs to them).

Only three disciplines which lead to salvation are considered by Porphyry.

(1) *verissima philosophia* (Platonism)

(2) *mores ac disciplina Indorum*.

(3) *inductio Chaldaeorum*.

It is not immediately obvious why any of these should be restricted in sense (1) above. Philosophy is open to any apt pupil whatever his ethnic origin and the same would seem to apply to the other two. The second restriction would, however, apply in different ways to all three. Philosophy is limited to the noetic man. Chaldaean theurgy, according to Porphyry, involves the salvation only of the lower soul. The position of Indian philosophy is less clear.

But Porphyry does think of the Βραχμᾶνες as a limited and restricted sect: *de Abst.* iv, 17 p. 256, 6f. οἱ μὲν Βραχμᾶνες ἐκ γένους διαδέχονται ὥσπερ Ἰσρατεῖαν τὴν τοιαύτην θεοσοφίαν. It is true that they are here contrasted with the Σαμαναῖοι whose adherents are voluntary recruits from all India, but these, too, would appear to be limited insofar as they depend on the Indian social structure for their existence. The handing down of doctrine within the family amongst the Βραχμᾶνες is similar to the theurgic family traditions attested in the later period of Neoplatonism.²⁶ Although such restrictions in Chaldaean theurgy apply only to the theurgist himself (the priest) and not to the ordinary recipient of the rites, it is, nevertheless, clear that the theurgists themselves were thus in a class apart which as I have explained elsewhere,²⁷ is comparable to that of the philosopher in Porphyry's thought and would thus involve limitation two. The founder of Chaldaean theurgy²⁸ would appear to have begun this tradition and it is reasonable to assume that Porphyry would have known about it, though there is no extant reference to it in his works.

There is no reason why philosophy should be restricted in sense one.

²⁶ Marinus, *Vita Procli* 28, records how the whole theurgic rite was passed down from Nestorius the Great through Plutarch and his daughter Asclepigeneia to Proclus.

²⁷ See note 18.

²⁸ Cf. Procl. *In Rem* ii. 154, 17 (Kroll 60), *ibid.* 118, 16f. Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 64, 2 (Kroll 60). Iamblichus *de Myst.* ii. 2, 69, 7. For Julianus see Psellus *de Aurea Catena* (Bidez, *C.M.A.G.* vi, 160, 7 and *Mélanges Cumont* i, 88, and Lewy p. 224 n. 195 ὡς (Ἰουλιανὸς) ὁ πατήρ, ἐπεὶ γεννῆσαι τοῦτον (sc. θεουργόν) ἐμελλεν, ἀρχαγγελικὴν ἤτησε ψυχὴν τὸν συνοχέα τοῦ παντός πρὸς τὴν τοῦτου ὑπόστασιν ...

On the contrary it would surely qualify for universality here. Porphyry's restriction of philosophy to a few people would, on the evidence of Augustine, seem to be the traditional one of competence which comes under heading two above.

Moreover Augustine gives a reason for the rejection of the Chaldaean way which seems similar and supports our interpretation above: Bidez fr. 12, 43*8. *Quia plus apud eas curiositas valuit quorumque angelorum cognoscendorum et colendorum*, i.e. theurgy is concerned only with the sort of divine phenomena which will assist the lower soul, thus intimating a division with concomitant restrictions of higher and lower souls. It is difficult, again, to determine whether Augustine is interpreting here or giving Porphyry's own reason for the failings of the Chaldaean way to salvation. But the reasoning here looks similar to that at the end of the letter to Anebo where Porphyry criticizes the Egyptian Mysteries for omitting that part of "religion" which is concerned with salvation proper and concentrating on bodily or sublunar well-being and the lower forms of communion with the gods which benefit the lower soul only.²⁹ This evaluation of theurgy would appear to be a major theme in Porphyry's treatment of the Chaldaean "way." For him it is a second course (cf. Bidez, fr. 4) which does not carry its adherents as far as the first choice, philosophy, but which is open to all men whilst philosophy is for the few.

From these considerations it looks as if both types of universal way are involved in Porphyry's search though with considerable qualifications. The kind of liberation which Porphyry was looking for was liberation for the higher soul since the lower soul could never be really free from the world until the higher soul had returned to the Father. But equally his search was for a way which brought such freedom to all men. It is Augustine's own criticism (based on Christian teaching) that this way must include salvation for all parts of each man – intellect, spirit and body. Porphyry is ultimately concerned only with intellectual salvation. Philosophy which achieves this is possible only for the few. Chaldaean theurgy which is open to all helps only the lower self whilst Indian philosophy seems to be restricted in other ways. And even if Porphyry did see a higher theurgy and a salvation for the real self in the Chaldaean theurgy, this would be restricted to the gifted few who would according to Chaldaean doctrine then join the ranks of the theurgists, a special select body. And once again men are divided into classes.

²⁹ *de Myst.* X. 7; Augustine *Civ. Dei* X. 11. Cf. Sodano, *Lettera ad Anebon* p. 30.

Porphyry is not, then, concerned with total salvation. He is indeed interested in the salvation of the lower self but only as an incidental topic in his search for a discipline that would be easily studied and practised by all men and lead to the salvation of their higher selves. To this extent he differs from Plotinus in that he realised the implications of the difficulties of the philosophical way and ardently searched for a more embracing discipline.

Why he turned in this direction is less easy to determine. His natural interest in religion, his general enthusiasm for every branch of human knowledge, a more practical bent and a more outward looking and involved attitude would, perhaps, account for this development. The influence and example of Christianity cannot, of course, be ruled out here.

That Porphyry failed in his search for a universal way where Iamblichus showed more success can only strengthen the link between Porphyry and Plotinus and help to demonstrate the gulf which lay between the philosopher and the genuinely theological and religious attitude of Iamblichus and the later Neoplatonists.

As regards the theory of religion and theurgy we may now draw the following conclusions. It cannot be denied that Porphyry shows a greater interest than Plotinus in religion and theurgy. While both accepted the theoretical basis of magic, Porphyry's greatest departure from Plotinus is to allow a role to theurgy/magic in the actual salvation of the soul even though he restricts this to the lower soul. Plotinus restricts himself to a discussion of magic and there would appear to be no mention of magic in the theurgic sense in the *Enneads*. It is Porphyry who first introduces the idea of theurgy into Neoplatonism and he goes much further than Plotinus' magic in making magic/theurgy a means to communion with the divine. The reason for this may be sought in Porphyry's great scholarly interest in the abstruse and religious practice in general as well as in his desire to find a universal way of liberating the soul. Porphyry also shows a correspondingly greater interest in daemonology.

Porphyry thus opens the way to Iamblichus though he stands much closer to Plotinus than to Iamblichus. The most important innovation of Iamblichus is the exploitation of the transcendent cause of sympathy and a concept of localisation by which specific material phenomena or persons are endowed with special powers by the divine will. This goes far beyond the concept of universal sympathy in Plotinus and Porphyry follows Plotinus at least in his attitude to mantic.

Their attitude to oracles and revelation is similarly restricted. Neither considered them as imparting new information but rather as confirming already held convictions. Again there is a fundamental difference from Iamblichus. Unfortunately *de Mysteriis* says little about the content of oracles but it is clear from Iamblichus' objection to Porphyry's philosophical attitude to religious phenomena that he takes theological revelation at face value and interprets it in the language of philosophy only in so far as such language will not distort its meaning. Porphyry puts philosophy first. We can, of course, argue that Iamblichus in the *de Mysteriis* is speaking theurgically and that elsewhere he might have a different approach. But Porphyry's position is clear from Iamblichus' criticism. He is a philosopher first and foremost. The Iamblichus of *de Mysteriis* is a theologian.

Porphyry and Plotinus seem to regard the goodness of the magic practitioner as irrelevant. This is the more remarkable in Porphyry who enlarged the scope of magic so as to include the salvation of the soul. His salvation by theurgy really is magic in the worst sense whilst Iamblichus certainly shows an advance on Porphyry here by insisting on virtue as a prerequisite for theurgy even at the lower level.

Porphyry clearly had a very different picture of theurgy from Iamblichus. He regards the operation of theurgy at the lower level as irrelevant for the man who lives at the higher level and would appear to regard theurgy merely as an alternative at the lower level to a life lived according to the practical virtues.

Porphyry clearly lacks Iamblichus' religious zeal and consistency. His attitude to theurgy and religion seems to be a dangerous halfway house between Plotinus and Iamblichus. It has often been noticed how Porphyry frequently changed his ideas and it is not always very easy to decide whether our inability to reconstruct his thought is due to such changes or to the poverty of the extant material. But his wavering in the matter of theurgy is attested by Augustine who had access to more of Porphyry than we have. It is partly due to this hesitancy and doubt that Porphyry produced such a dangerous compromise in the matter of theurgy.

Plotinus had never concerned himself with the search for a "universal" way to salvation, but it is interesting to compare Iamblichus and Porphyry on this point. Porphyry's attempt to find such a way and his great interest in religious matters and spiritualized religion bring him closer to Iamblichus. On the other hand his failure to find a universal way lies in a basically sound Plotinian attitude to contemplation and

magic. Iamblichus, one may say, was more successful in his attempt to produce a popular Neoplatonism but even he frequently has severe reservations about the chances of reaching the highest grades of reality which he sometimes sees as attainable only by the few.³⁰ Indeed, despite the popularity and great influence of Iamblichus, he was, probably, a little more cut off from the more flamboyant of his "followers" than has been thought. This we will see in discussing the practical attitudes of the Neoplatonists towards theurgy and religion.

³⁰ *de Myst.* 219, 14.

POSTSCRIPT

So far we have dealt only with theoretical attitudes to theurgy and magic. It would be most instructive if we knew how far the Neoplatonists involved themselves in the actual performance of magic. Unfortunately, the evidence for these matters is very vague and even where it exists there is sometimes some obscurity as to the intentions of the participants. This is particularly true in the case of Plotinus. Merlan has argued¹ that he was a practising magician. Such a view hardly stands up to criticism² and it is, perhaps, not necessary here to review the arguments again except to note that at no point is Plotinus said to be an *active* agent in magical practices.³

This is in marked contrast to Porphyry. In Eunapius' life of Porphyry there is a report of an incident in which he was not merely a bystander or subject but the actual agent of magic. The event referred to probably occurred in Syria before Porphyry's meeting with Plotinus.⁴ Eunapius is actually quoting from Porphyry's work on the *Philosophy of Oracles*: Eunap. *V. Soph.* iv. 1.12, 457 φησι δὲ καὶ δαιμόνιον τινα φύσιν ἀπὸ λουτροῦ τι νὸς ἐκδιῶξαι καὶ ἐκβαλεῖν. Καυσάθαν τοῦτον ἔλεγον οἱ ἐπιχώριοι. There is no other report of his being so involved in magic. On the basis of this one piece of evidence we can make no more than an informed guess that Porphyry had gone one step further than Plotinus but probably did not become a regular magical practitioner. His objections to magic as outlined in the previous chapter would surely have restrained him.

The picture that Eunapius paints of Iamblichus is very different.

¹ "Plotinus and Magic," *Isis*, (1953) 341-8.

² A. H. Armstrong, "Was Plotinus a Magician?," *Phronesis* 1 (1955) 73-79.

³ There is one possible exception where in *Enneads* iv. 4.43, 8 Plotinus refers to "counter-spells." I agree with Armstrong's interpretation that the "counter-spells" are "spiritual" and moral and not magical (*op. cit.* p. 75f.).

⁴ See Bidez p. 15.

It is full of stories about his magical activities. Yet even here we must be very cautious. Iamblichus is said to have attracted pupils because of his access to the gods through his *δικαιοσύνη* (*V. Soph.* v. 1.4, 458). That may be conventional flattery and the story of how Iamblichus spirited forth two godlike youths (*V. Soph.* v. 2.1, 459) seems closer to the accepted picture of the miracle worker. Two things must, however, be noted in Eunapius' account. Firstly, we should note Iamblichus' supposed hesitancy in performing the miracle (*ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐσεβὲς μὲν . . .*). Secondly and, perhaps, more there is Eunapius' own comment about the source of the story, *V. Soph.* v. 2.7, 459; *ἐλέγετο δὲ καὶ παραδοξότερα καὶ τερατωδέστερα, ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων ἀνέγραφον οὐδέν, σφαλερόν τι καὶ θεομισὲς πρᾶγμα ἡγούμενος εἰς συγγραφὴν στάσιμον καὶ πεπηγυῖαν ἐπεισάγειν ἀκοὴν διεφθαρμένην καὶ ῥέουσιν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῦτα, γράφω δεδοικῶς ἀκοὴν οὖσαν, πλὴν ὅσα γε ἔπομαι ἀνδράσιν, οἳ, τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀπιστοῦντες, πρὸς τὴν τοῦ φανέντος αἰσθησιν συνεκάμφθησαν. οὐδεὶς δὲ αὐτοῦ τῶν ἐταίρων ἀνέγραψεν, ὅσα γε ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι.* Evidently a spurious oral tradition had grown up around Iamblichus' activities. It is, perhaps, significant that Eunapius has so few certain stories to tell about him. Evidently Iamblichus' reputation did not rely on such extreme examples of theurgic activity. The general soberness of his way of life might be illustrated by the reference to his private devotions in Eunapius *V. Soph.* iv. 2.7, 458. His disciples asked him whether there was any truth in the report that he levitated whilst praying and that his body and garments became golden in colour. That in itself would not be extraordinary in the case of a genuine mystic and it is surely remarkable that his disciples did not make more extravagant claims about his activity. But we are even more struck by Iamblichus' reaction to the questioners. *οὐ τι μάλα γελασείων, ἐγέλασεν ἐπὶ τούτοις τοῖς λόγοις Ἰάμβλιχος.* Iamblichus is little concerned with the externals of mysticism and prefers to meditate alone, — *τί δῆτα μόνος, ὃ διδάσκαλε θειότατε, καθ' ἑαυτόν τινα πράττεις* — something which his disciples could not readily understand although it may have influenced them later. In *V. Soph.* vi. 1.5, 461. Eunapius records that he has no information on Aedesius' religious gifts. This lack of information he attributes either to Aedesius' fear of legal suppression or the silence and reserve of his disciples. This latter element appears again (*V. Soph.* vii, 2.6, 475) where Eusebius acknowledges but warns Julian to disregard the extravagances of Maximus' magical and theurgical practices. This seems evidence of a rift between the more overtly theurgical like Maximus and Sosipatra and a more reserved and balanced tradition. It would be

easy enough to remove the conventional pious representation of the philosopher from Eunapius' accounts. His reports on the differing attitudes to theurgy of his various subjects merit, however, more serious attention.⁵

Thus a careful reading of Eunapius' life of Iamblichus reveals a man who might well have experienced genuine mysticism and who made no extravagant claims for himself. Iamblichus did lay special emphasis on the religious element in Neoplatonism; he did practise theurgy yet he was probably restrained in his practice. He is far from a manipulator of divine powers. When asked to prove himself by a miracle he hesitates and says ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἐμοί γε τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ὅταν καιρὸς ᾔῃ. (*V. Soph.* v. 2.1, 459). Moreover he lived a simple life – τὴν μὲν δίαιτταν ὦν εὐκολος καὶ ἀρχαῖος (*V. Soph.* v. 1.6, 458).

In the case of Proclus we have a fuller biography. Apart from the conventional piety and rigorous life (*Vita Procli* ch. 19), the extent of his theurgical activities is also described. In ch. 29 is described at length the story of how Proclus cured Asclepigeneia. That there is some basis of fact to this story is suggested by the realistic comment about his fears if the story should get out. This is not modesty but a genuine fear since theurgy was forbidden by law. Chapter 28 gives us an even darker side. We are told that he was adept at raising luminous phantasms of Hecate, making rain and at other branches of lower theurgy. We should recall, however, his own admission that he is very curious about religious rites.⁶ Proclus seems altogether to have been a much drier and less impassioned person than Iamblichus. The *Life* gives us the impression of a meticulous, virtuous and honest professor who had a great weakness for magic and dubious theurgical activities. Yet it would be hard to deny that there is a genuine religious, even mystical, element in his life. Damascius' *Life of Isidore* gives us a similar picture of the last Neoplatonists. They did indulge in magic but at the same time displayed genuine religious feeling and lived lives of real virtue.⁷ These factors are not always incompatible, least of all in that generally superstitious era of the ancient world.

⁵ But caution must be exercised here too. Dillon in his edition of the fragments of Iamblichus' Platonic commentaries p. 17 remarks that the story of Iamblichus' premonition of a funeral passing along a road resembles a similar tale told of Socrates by Plutarch in the *De Gen. Socr.* 580.

⁶ See page 116 above.

⁷ See the remarks of Armstrong in his review of Clemens Zintzen: *Damascii vitae Isidori reliquiae*, C.R., Vol. xix, No. 1. March 1969 pp. 49–50.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Porphyry's exposition of Neoplatonism led him to adopt a number of phrases and terms which occur again and again in his writings. It is, perhaps, one of the qualities which made him such a good teacher of Neoplatonism. One word which dominates his thought is σωτηρία, the salvation of the soul. It was until recently thought that Porphyry's main, if not sole, contribution to the history of thought lay in his treatment of this theme at different levels. But if Hadot's reconstruction of Porphyry's metaphysics is correct he made an equally important and far more original contribution to that field. Our treatment here has been restricted to the "traditional" Porphyry, not because the newly discovered metaphysics is unimportant but in order to clarify a little more, and to keep fresh in the mind, the role which he played in developing the concept of salvation. The new and the old Porphyry in some ways exemplify the two spheres of interest that we have distinguished in the first part of this work – the ontological, concerned with the metaphysical framework of salvation, and the spiritual, which concerns itself more with the actual search for personal salvation, and its integration into the metaphysical structure. The *Parmenides Commentary* has little to contribute about the role and aims of man and the soul. It is precisely on these aspects that the other works lay such great emphasis.

For Porphyry the problem of the ascent or return of the soul (which, of course, presupposes an understanding of the fall of the soul) involved a clarification not only of the metaphysical relationship between soul and body and the relationship of man to the hypostases but also an assessment of the role of religion and theurgy. In the first part of this work we have devoted ourselves to the former and have tried to elucidate Porphyry's position in so far as the material allowed. Porphyry explained soul's presence in body as an immanent power derived from and subordinate to the higher soul of man. This theory can be under-

stood in the light of Plotinus' concept of double *ἐνέργεια*. Nor is this idea inconsistent with the emphasis placed on derived *δύναμις* in the *Parmenides Commentary* and in Synesius. Soul in body is as real for Porphyry as it was for Plotinus and is thus not an illusion of thought. An important basic concept for the understanding and evaluation of Porphyrian and Plotinian psychology is the distinction we have drawn between the ontological and spiritual life of man. This distinction allows us to evaluate properly Plotinus' optimism about the ascent of the soul. It is only by stressing the independence of the spiritual life of man that we can understand the transition in the ascent from one level of reality to another, especially at the level of Nous. Unfortunately the extant works of Porphyry do not allow us to draw any final conclusions about his attitude to transition. He certainly believed that we could rise to the level of Nous, but how remains unclear.

A good pointer to a philosopher's estimate of man's role in the world may be obtained by examining what he thinks about his fate after death. Porphyry did not think that the soul became totally cut off from the material world when it returned to the Father. He is faithful to Platonic tradition here. But he did believe in an escape from the cycle of rebirth. This seems to be something of an innovation and there is no evidence that Plotinus ever taught it. A second point is that Hades as a place for the dead is taken seriously by both Plotinus and Porphyry but is of relatively little importance. In Plotinus' case this is because he thought that the philosopher could transcend Hades and the material world. Porphyry, on the other hand, thought that the philosopher would eventually escape from them by an ultimate return to the Father. The difference between the two philosophers is not only doctrinal but, more importantly, in spirit. Plotinus is so confident at times that man can transcend the world of the lower soul with its succession of earthly lives and sojourns in Hades or Heaven that death becomes irrelevant. Porphyry is less optimistic. His stress on fleeing the body seems to imply not merely a spiritual transcending of the material world but a final ontological escape. His mysticism is less secure than that of Plotinus. It is true that Plotinus is sometimes pessimistic and stresses the weaknesses of man, just as Porphyry can be optimistic, but on balance the optimistic is more dominant in Plotinus whilst Porphyry, despite his theoretical optimism, tends towards a pessimistic interpretation of the human predicament. Whether the melancholy which almost led him to suicide was cause or result of this view of human life is difficult to say, but one has the impression that it was a difference of spirit which led to

his adopting the new doctrine of permanent escape. Plotinus was more able to keep in balance the essential Platonic polarity of matter and spirit, pessimism and optimism.

The search for salvation also took Porphyry into the field of religion and theurgy. No doubt much of his attention to religion is due to his extraordinary wide ranging learning and curiosity but there is also a genuine zeal to discover a discipline or way of salvation that would be common to all nations and, more important, to all levels of mankind. This desire is one example of Porphyry's outgoing attitude, a characteristic that helped the spread of Plotinus' ideas which might not otherwise have been so widely published.

Porphyry would seem to have distinguished traditional piety (*ad Marcellam*) and theurgy about whose efficacy and usefulness he had some serious doubts. He is undoubtedly more religious-minded than Plotinus. The most important change here is his introduction of theurgy into Neoplatonism. Plotinus may have recognised the effect of theurgy on the lower soul but he never professed that it could bring salvation or lead upwards at all. Porphyry's role here can only be judged by giving careful consideration to the nature of theurgy as it was progressively integrated into the Neoplatonic system, Iamblichus and Proclus being the best exponents of this trend. Porphyry seems to have limited the designation "theurgy" to the more magical elements of religion or, at least, if he did not use the term very precisely he distinguished traditional piety and practices from those which seemed to him to involve magic. Iamblichus on the other hand includes all the traditional religious rites within the ambit of theurgy. His more thoroughgoing attitude is based on a more comprehensive and harmoniously constructed supporting theory. Both Plotinus and Porphyry accepted the phenomenon of magic as based on the concept of universal sympathy. But whilst for them this sympathy was "natural," an element in the world of φύσις – though ultimately dependent on the intellectual world – Iamblichus stressed the link with the higher world. Moreover he coupled this with a more personalised form of divine will. With this combination the divine is seen working more directly in specific parts of the universe. This development at once removes some of the restrictions and contradictions of magic and theurgy as conceived by Plotinus and especially by Porphyry. Because magic was simply the use by man of the given sympathies of the natural order the virtue of the operator was for Plotinus and Porphyry irrelevant. Porphyry had scarcely distinguished theurgy from black magic. This was a rather dangerous confusion and

Iamblichus does not make the same mistake. The clear vertical connection of sympathy with the noetic gods ensures that the theurgist, when morally and ritually pure, is under divine providence. It is this connection with the higher levels of reality that Porphyry denies to theurgy. For him it is limited to the world of sympathy, the material universe. At best theurgy may save the lower soul, a restriction which Iamblichus emphatically opposes.

Porphyry sees theurgy as an alternative to virtue as a means of saving the lower soul. For the higher aspirations of man he ultimately concludes that there is no alternative to philosophy. Iamblichus extends theurgy to the "higher soul." It does not replace νόησις but helps to foster it. This idea is particularly prominent in Proclus' connection of theurgy with unity, a concept that may well go back to Iamblichus. In *de Mysteriis* it is clear that, whilst human reason is subordinate to theurgy, there is a form of νόησις the attainment of which is aided by theurgy, and which might be similar to Plotinian νόησις, or at least does not rule out genuine mystical experience.

Of course for Proclus and Iamblichus the human soul is considerably reduced in status. Porphyry still believed that man should and could reach the noetic level by his own efforts. Iamblichus thought that man needed divine help. Theurgy for him means the activity of the gods towards men rather than man acting on the gods and is thus the means to divine help. Plotinus, too, speaks of a kind of spiritual "assistance" from above which takes the form of a goad to spiritual aspirations. The One is ultimately the cause of return and in one passage is said to give out an ἀπορροή which acts as a stimulus to all levels to return upwards. Porphyry stresses even more than Plotinus the element of "grace" and lays special emphasis on the fact that man cannot reach perfection in this life but only after death through god's assistance. But he remains, nevertheless, ultimately loyal to the Plotinian ideal that man has it in himself to reach upwards. Only virtue brings us to god. This is one of the sound Plotinian convictions¹ which made it impossible for him to integrate theurgy and philosophy.

It remains possible that Porphyry at some stage toyed with the idea of a theurgy operating at a level higher than that of the lower soul. There are spiritualising passages in the Chaldaean Oracles which could act as a precedent, and it is possible that the Oracles made some kind of

¹ Porphyry also believed in an undescended part of the human soul. This Plotinian doctrine would seem to be implied by the reference to an ever active νοῦς in *de Abst.* i 39, 115, 9.

distinction between a lower and a higher theurgy. The concept of levels of theurgy occurs in Iamblichus and Proclus and is very important for our understanding of the role of theurgy in Neoplatonism. It is not enough to say that they adopted a higher theurgy which was non-ritual. Although there is less direct manipulation of the forces in material objects in what we are calling the "higher" theurgy there does remain a ritual element in at least some of its branches. The real distinctive mark is found in the difference of goal. There is a theurgy which concerns itself with worldly or material benefits from the intramundane gods working through sympathy, and another higher type of theurgy which makes use of the lower level of reality but which transcends it. The human agent is raised to the divine level by *φιλία* and communes with the transcendent gods for immaterial benefits which concern the very salvation of the soul and union with the divine. Porphyry rejected the idea that the philosopher needed the aid of theurgy to achieve this goal or even that he needed theurgy to purify his lower self. But Iamblichus saw it as essential to the philosopher and despite some dubious elements it cannot be denied that the higher theurgy, as Iamblichus saw it, could act as a support for genuine mystical and religious experience. The lives of Iamblichus and Proclus bear this out. Porphyry, however, because of his sound Plotinian attitude to the dignity of man could neither extend the sphere of theurgy to the higher self nor see it as other than magical coercion of inferior gods.

This brings us to the final point with regard to theurgy. Iamblichus criticises Porphyry for applying the canons of philosophical thought to the consideration of religious and theurgical ideas. The type of integration of religious and philosophical ideals that Porphyry attempted proved impossible. Iamblichus, in his turn, wanted to speak theurgically when dealing with theurgy and philosophically when dealing with philosophical questions. But one cannot deny that he was also concerned to integrate philosophy and religion. Iamblichus' approach is, however, subtler than that of Porphyry. He attempted integration without confusion. Porphyry is first and foremost a philosopher. Iamblichus, in the *de Mysteriis* at least, takes the stance of a theologian. Religious data are there to be accounted for. When they do not contradict reason, all is well; if they do, one must remember that human reason cannot adequately comprehend the divine. Is it not possible that in the final experience of the divine Iamblichus is as close to Plotinus, if not closer, than Porphyry? Iamblichus clearly distinguished human reasoning and transcendent *νόησις* attained with the help of theurgy.

Porphyry sometimes gives the impression that contemplation is a continuation at a higher level of abstract reasoning. Whatever Plotinian νόησις is it is not simply abstract thought. It is an experience, and one feels that Iamblichus was familiar with it.

We commenced this work with a reference to Porphyry's long discussion with Plotinus on the relationship of soul and body. Porphyry seems to have been a fairly persistent critic and questioner in Plotinus' school, and on at least one occasion it is recorded that he changed his mind on a concept after stiffly opposing it.² Augustine, Iamblichus and Eunapius testify that Porphyry was often hesitant and frequently changed his mind.³ His excessive melancholy and failure to maintain the Plotinian transcendental optimism also point to a certain insecurity. He seems to lack the conviction of Plotinus and the single-mindedness of Iamblichus. To a large extent Porphyry's philosophical experience was that of a questioner and his life-long search for salvation was full of contradictions. It has been said that Plotinus is an island in the development of philosophical thought.⁴ This is especially true where he shows little concern for the religious elements which played an important part in Pre-plotinian philosophers such as Numenius and the Post-plotinian thinkers.⁵ We have had occasion to remark that Plotinus was more inward-orientated than Porphyry. It fell to Porphyry, who was intellectually more involved in the contemporary world of religious experience, to account for it in terms of the new philosophy developed by his master. He failed in his task because he was too close to Plotinus. He remained a "philosopher" and it was left to the "divine" Iamblichus of the next generation to make the necessary philosophical concessions to accommodate a more thorough "popularisation" of Neoplatonism.

² *Vita Plotini* ch. 18.

³ Augustine records his hesitancy about theurgy; *Civ. Dei*. X. 9. Bidez 27*26. Iamblichus in *Stob.* i. 365. Eunapius *V. Soph.* iv. 2.6, 457 πολλὰς γοῦν τοῖς ἤδη προπεπραγματουμένοις βιβλίοις θεωρίας ἐναντίας κατέλιπε, περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτερόν τι δοξάζειν, ἢ ὅτι προῶν ἕτερα ἐδόξασεν. But we have noted already that Iamblichus is not an altogether reliable witness for inconsistency in Porphyry and Plotinus (see chap. four) and Eunapius probably relies on him here. It is significant that they only "surmise" (Cumont (see Loeb p. 360 n3.) reads εἰσάγειν for δοξάζειν) a change of opinion. Porphyry obviously never explicitly denied some of his earlier views and it always remains an open possibility that Iamblichus saw contradictions and signs of retraction where he failed to understand the complexity and flexibility of Plotinus and Porphyry. This is not meant to refute what has been said above but merely to point out the possibility that Iamblichus might have been over-severe and a little insensitive in some of his criticisms.

⁴ Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 286 "Plotinus is a man who, as Wilhelm Kroll put it, "raised himself by a strong intellectual and moral effort above the fog-ridden atmosphere which surrounded him."

⁵ One might add the Neopythagorean movement.

APPENDIX ONE

I append here a list of Porphyry's works which are relevant to the doctrine of the soul. In brackets I give the number from Bidez's list of Porphyry's works. *Vie de Porphyre*, App. iv.

πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλην, περὶ τοῦ εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐντελέχειαν [Bidez 33]. Only the title preserved in the *Suida*.

? περὶ ὕπνου καὶ ἐγρηγόρσεως [Bidez 36]. Title only from the *Fihrist* of Muhammed Ibn Ishâq.

πρὸς Γαῦρον περὶ τοῦ πῶς ἐμψυχούται τὰ ἔμβρυα [Bidez 38]. Preserved under the name of Galen. K. Kalbfleisch (ed. and Introduction) has demonstrated that it is almost certainly by Porphyry.

περὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεων [Bidez 35]. Fragments in *Stobaeus*. This is mainly a survey of previous opinions.

περὶ ψυχῆς πρὸς βόηθον ε' [Bidez 34]. The title from the *Suida*. Fragments in Eusebius, *P.E.*

περὶ αἰσθήσεως [Bidez 37]. Reference in *Nemesius de Nat. Hom.* 7 182, 4 Matth.

Commentary on the Phaedo [Bidez 17]. Fragments in Olympiodorus *In Phaedonem*.

De Regressu Animae [Bidez 44]. Fragments in Augustine *Civitas Dei* collected in Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, App. II.

Συμμικτών ζητημάτων ζ' [Bidez 73]. Incorporated in *Nem. de Nat. Hom.* and now assembled by Dörrie.

APPENDIX TWO

THE πνεῦμα/ὄχημα

The idea of a semi-corporeal entity called the πνεῦμα or ὄχημα on the borderline between spirit and matter occurs both in Porphyry and Plotinus although it is of importance only to Porphyry (and the later Neoplatonists). It performs several functions in respect of soul.

- (1) acts as substrate to the lower soul.
- (2) is an organ of perception.
- (3) is the subject of magical and theurgic rites.
- [(4) acts as the “body” of daemons.]

Plotinus several times refers to progressive or gradual embodiment in a way which suggests the descent of the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα through the spheres: e.g. iv. 3.15, 1f.: Ἰασι δὲ ἐκκύψασαι τοῦ νοητοῦ εἰς οὐρανὸν μὲν πρῶτον καὶ σῶμα ἐκεῖ προσλαβοῦσαι δι’ αὐτοῦ ἤδη χωροῦσι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ γεωδέστερα σώματα, εἰς ὅσον ἂν εἰς μῆκος ἐκταθῶσι. Καὶ αἱ μὲν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ εἰς σώματα τὰ κατωτέρω, αἱ δὲ ἀπ’ ἄλλων εἰς ἄλλα εἰσκρινόμεναι, αἷς ἢ δύνამις οὐκ ἤρκεσεν ἄραι ἐντεῦθεν διὰ βάρυνσιν καὶ λήθην πολὺ ἐφελκομέναις, δ’ αὐταῖς ἐβαρύνθη. Notice the terminology. γεωδέστερα implies gradings of corporeality: the idea of weight – βάρυνσιν, ἐβαρύνθη – and the concept of dragging – ἐφελκομέναις – are often associated with the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα; cf. Porph. *Sent.* xxix, p. 13, 7 ἐφελκομένη. *ibid.* p. 14, 1; ἐφέλκεται. p. 14, 4 τὸ βαρὺ πνεῦμα. p. 15, 1 ἐφέλκεται καὶ βαρεῖται. *Ad Gaurum* p. 49, 16f.; ἐφέλκοιτό τι σῶμα αἰθερῶδες ἢ πνευματῶδες . . . *de Antro Nympharum*, Nauck 64, 15; ὑγρὸν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐφελκομέναις. In Plotinus ἐφελκομένας occurs again in iv. 3.24, 22 where the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα is certainly meant. In iv. 3. 9, 5 he mentions souls which enter earthly bodies from airy or fiery bodies τῇ ἐκ σώματος ἀέριου ἢ πυρίνου εἰς γήινον γινομένη (see also on descent of soul in iv. 3. 17, 1 f.).

In iii. 5.6, 37 he suggests that daemons might have bodies of fire or air, εἰ σώματα προσλαμβάνουσιν ἀέρινα ἢ πύρινα. Compare this with the daemons of Porphyry which have an ἀερῶδες πνεῦμα (*ad Gaurum* p. 42,

8) and also cf. *de Abst.* ii, 39. This is an unusual passage in Plotinus as Armstrong notes (ad loc. cit. in Loeb *Plotinus*). Plotinus is not happy about the idea of fiery bodies as intermediaries yet his peculiar use of the concept of νοητὴ ὕλη as an intermediary between total incorporeality and the material world seems to be dictated partly by the semi-corporeal nature of the πνεῦμα/ῥχημα.

One of the clearest references in Plotinus to the πνεῦμα is iii. 6.5, 24f. in the context of philosophical separation – τὸ δὲ χωρίζεσθαι τῇ μὴ πολλῇ νεύσει καὶ τῇ περὶ τὰ κάτω μὴ φαντασίᾳ. εἴη δ' ἂν καὶ τὸ χωρίζειν αὐτὸ τὸ ἐκεῖνα ἀφαιρεῖν ὧν τοῦτο χωρίζεται, ὅταν μὴ ἐπὶ πνεύματος θολεροῦ ἐκ γαστριμαργίας καὶ πλήθους οὐ καθαρῶν ἢ σαρκῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἰσχνὸν τὸ ἐν ᾧ, ὡς ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ὀχεῖσθαι ἡσυχῇ. Notice here that the soul “rides on” the πνεῦμα (ὀχεῖσθαι). The term ῥχημα is not used by Plotinus but might be implied by the term ὀχεῖσθαι. One can say no more than this as the term is also used of the One’s transcendence over νοῦς (i 1, 8, 9) cf. also iv. 4. 27, 13. τὴν τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ φύσιν οὐκέτι τῷ σώματι συμπεφυρμένην, ἐποχομένην δέ. Body here is the earthly body but it also includes with it an ἔχνος of the growth soul, the lowest phase of soul. It is possible that the term ἐποχομένην is used in a way similar to Synesius *de Ins.* p. 155, 14–16 where the lower powers of soul act as substrate to the higher powers which thus “ride” (ἐποχεῖται) on them. The importance, however, of iii 6.5, 24f. lies in the connection of the πνεῦμα/ῥχημα with purification. He here mentions two modes of purification – purification from impure φαντασίαι and purification of the πνεῦμα. Is Plotinus here considering a theurgic purification? This is not necessarily the case. In *de Ins.* Synesius’ purification of the πνεῦμα is more spiritual and moral than ritual. *Sent.* xxix shows how a Neoplatonist could consider purification of the πνεῦμα in a moral sense. The real difference between Plotinus and Porphyry occurs in *Sent.* xxix when he claims that theurgy might provide an alternative means of purifying the πνεῦμα. It seems more likely that in iii 6.5 Plotinus is referring to different ways of talking about purification rather than different methods of achieving it. We should also notice the force of εἴη δ' ἂν. Plotinus is not even sure whether we can talk of purification in this way.

In ii. 2.2, 21 the term πνεῦμα again appears ἵσως δὲ καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦτο ποιεῖ. Here the πνεῦμα of the individual soul is compared with that of the celestial soul. But this is probably a reference to the πνεῦμα of Plato, *Timaeus* 79 A-E. In any case he is hesitant (ἵσως). The influence of the doctrine of descent through the

spheres which is later an integral part of the πνεῦμα/ῥχημα doctrine may possibly be seen in iv. 3.7, 20 f. τὸ δὲ συνέπεσθαι τῇ τοῦ παντὸς περιφορᾷ καὶ ἦθι ἐκεῖθεν κομίζεσθαι καὶ πάσχειν παρ' αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἄν εἴη σημεῖον τοῦτο τοῦ μέρη τὰς ἡμετέρας εἶναι. 'Ικανὴ γὰρ ψυχὴ καὶ παρὰ φύσεως τόπων πολλὰ ἀπομάττεσθαι καὶ ὑδάτων καὶ ἀέρος.

The πνεῦμα/ῥχημα would seem to be involved in several passages which discuss the continuing life of the lower soul after death or eschatology in general. iv. 3. 24, 20f. Ἐχουσαι δὲ σῶμα καὶ τὸ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν σωματικῶν κολάσεων ἔχουσι· ταῖς δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν καθαρὰς οὐσαις καὶ μηδὲν μηδαμῇ ἐφελκομέναις τοῦ σώματος ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὐδαμοῦ σώματος ὑπάρξει εἶναι. He is here talking about souls which have departed from their bodies after death; cf. *ibid.*, i. ἀλλὰ ποῦ ἐξελθοῦσα τοῦ σώματος γενήσεται; Souls which during life on earth were body-bound receive bodily punishments after death in Hades. These souls are located spatially. If they were not altogether wicked their souls are separated from the body. There is then no longer a substrate for their lower souls (τὸ δεχόμενον ὅπως οὖν, 2) but if they are not completely pure they may still retain a corporeal substrate of some kind (4). A similar idea occurs at the opening of i. 9. If we commit suicide (a wicked action) we will still be attached to something corporeal. In fact we will simply be moving to another place and not getting entirely out of body (πάντη ἔξω). Plotinus would appear to be quoting the Chaldaean Oracles in the first lines of the chapter (according to Psellus *P.G.* 122, 1125C-D) and they certainly believed in the πνεῦμα-ῥχημα.

In iv. 3.4 Plotinus asks how it is, if all souls are one, that Soul is always embodied whilst individual souls enjoy periods of freedom from embodiment. He says (6f.) καίτοι τινές φασι τόδε μὲν καταλείψειν, οὐ πάντη δὲ ἔξω σώματος ἔσεσθαι. But this does not satisfy him here since he wants to pose the question on the assumption that the individual soul can be *entirely* outside body. He answers his question by pointing to the fact that both Soul and soul have a higher, transcendent part and a lower, immanent part. It is the higher part which is outside body. The lower soul of the philosopher will no longer be immanent or concerned with the world after death. Plotinus is not here simply rejecting the idea of a πνεῦμα/ῥχημα body (which is clearly implied in this passage – cf. Dodds, *Procl. El. of Theol.* p. 300). Not every person “loses” his lower soul after death. Heracles, for example, does not. The πνεῦμα/ῥχημα theory of “embodiment” after death is not totally rejected but simply proved inadequate to account for those instances where Plotinus thinks that all forms of “embodiment” cease.

[Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 204, 14f. can distinguish those who are *completely* without bodies after death from those with astral bodies.

(1) αἱ μὲν ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας – dwell on the ἄκρων τῆς γῆς – μετὰ σωμάτων πνευματικῶν λεπτοτάτων.

(2) αἱ δὲ πολιτικῶς φιλοσοφοῦσαι – ἐν οὐρανῷ – μετὰ τῶν ἀγροειδῶν.

(3) αἱ δὲ καθαρθεῖσαι τελέως – εἰς τὸν ὑπερκόσμιον τόπον ἀποκαθίστανται – ἄνευ σωμάτων.

ἄνευ σωμάτων is strikingly similar to *sine ullis omnino corporibus* (Porph. *de Regr. An.* Bidez fr. 11, 5 p. 42*1), a phrase which Porphyry is supposed to have used of those who finally returned to the Father. Olympiodorus would appear to be saying something similar. He has ruled out the two astral bodies that Proclus taught, the πνευματικὸν σῶμα and the ἀγροειδὲς σῶμα (see *In Tim.* iii 236f.). These belong to stage one and two respectively. Proclus considered the latter to be indestructible. It is not clear whether Olympiodorus implies its dissolution but in dissociating the soul from it at the highest stage he would seem to go against Proclus. On the other hand we recall how easily one can misunderstand Porphyry on this point. It is equally, if not more, likely that Olympiodorus is merely stating the existence of a soul phase entirely above the material world and a level of ascent which belongs properly to it but which still might not involve a total divorce from the ὅχημα level – i.e. the higher part of the lower soul continues to exist in its ἀγροειδὲς ὅχημα.]

Plotinus is clearly not fully committed to the idea of the πνεῦμα/ὅχημα but he does introduce it most noticeably in an eschatological context where it fulfils the role of corporeal substrate and serves to answer the problem of a spatial Hades, a concept that Porphyry tackles in *Sent.* xxix.

Porphyry connects the πνεῦμα very closely with the faculty of φαντασία. This is not in any way original but it is absent in Plotinus (unless iii. 6.5 is an exception, although Plotinus is here hesitant in any case). The developed πνεῦμα/ὅχημα doctrine as found in Neoplatonism involves the combination of Platonic and Aristotelian ideas (see Dodds, *Proclus, El. of Theol.* App. ii). There is also a third element in Porphyry's doctrine of the πνεῦμα – the idea developed by the Stoics from the Aristotelian notion of πνεῦμα, that the soul is itself πνεῦμα. (*S.V.F.* ii. 774, 885) and the connection of πνεῦμα with perception and φαντασία (cf. Verbeke, *L'Evolution de la Doctrine du Pneuma* p. 74f.). This would appear to be the historical background for Porphyry's doctrine of the *anima spiritalis* in which the πνεῦμα/ὅχημα seems at times to be

identified with a soul-faculty. This confusing theory lies at the root of an apparent contradiction in Porphyry's πνεῦμα doctrine. In *de Regr. Anim.* Porphyry, according to Augustine, distinguished two "parts" or levels of soul, the *anima intellectualis* or rational soul (νοερά ψυχή) and the *anima spiritalis* (*Civ. Dei* x, 9; Bidez fr. 2, 28*3): *utilem dicit esse mundandae parti animae, non quidem intellectuali, qua rerum intelligibilium percipitur veritas, nullas habentium similitudines corporum; sed spiritali, qua corporalium rerum capiuntur imagines. Hanc enim dicit per quasdam consecrationes theurgicas, quas teletas vocant, idoneam fieri atque aptam susceptioni spirituum et angelorum et ad videndos deos.* The reference here to theurgy will concern us shortly. Firstly we must ask what is the *anima spiritalis*. Synesius in *de Insomniis* (which owes much to Porphyry) reproduces the same expression, p. 156, 8; τὸ γέ τοι πνεῦμα τοῦτο τὸ ψυχικόν, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν προσηγόρευσαν οἱ εὐδαίμονες, καὶ θεὸς καὶ δαίμων παντοδαπὸς καὶ εἶδωλον γίνεται, καὶ τὰς ποινὰς ἐν τούτῳ τίνει ψυχῇ. This entity is somehow identified with the faculty of φαντασία. We should note the similarity between this doctrine and that of Porphyry. There is the term πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν. This becomes a god or δαίμων; cf. also p. 163, 13, θεὸς οὐσα καὶ προφητις. There is possibly here a confusion with a different type of πνεῦμα which enters from outside the human soul and is the cause of prophesying and inspiration. The same idea may be found in Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, p. 160 Wolff, πνεῦμα γὰρ τὸ κατιὸν καὶ ἀπόρροια . . . ; cf. Iamblichus *de Myst.* 112, 11: 103, 15. A similar idea may also be implied in Syn. *de Ins.* 165, 11, πονηρὸν πνεῦμα εἰσέρχεται, although the basis of this may be a more primitive physiological notion of πνεῦμα, cf. *ibid.* 165, 10 ἐγκεφάλου κοιλίας, and Galen passim esp. 8.233, 5.606, 17B 247–8 and Aristotle *G.A.* i, 741 b37f. That the soul is punished in Hades through the πνεῦμα is an idea also found in *Sent.* xxix as is also the concept of the εἶδωλον. In Synesius the πνεῦμα is said to become an εἶδωλον whereas in *Sent.* xxix the πνεῦμα attracts an εἶδωλον to itself. The εἶδωλον is the shade in Hades.

The similarity of function is striking. The close connection of the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα in *de Insomniis* with the soul faculty of φαντασία is difficult to comprehend but undoubtedly there. On p. 150, 12 φαντασία later identified with πνεῦμα is a form of *life*, καὶ ἔοικεν αὕτη ζωὴ τις εἶναι μικρὸν ὑποβᾶσα. On p. 155, 12f. φαντασία is described as the ὄχημα of the soul phase above it and in the case of animals itself *rides* (ἐποχεῖται) on the soul powers below it and becomes their "λόγος" or "reason." This aspect of the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα doctrine is seen even more

clearly in Hierocles who may have been influenced by Porphyry. See C.A. 26.478, ἐν ᾧ τὸ αὐγοειδὲς ἐγκείται, προσπνέον τῷ ἀψύχῳ σώματι ζώην . . . Ζωὴ γὰρ τις ἐστὶ τὸ ἄνυλον σῶμα, καὶ ζωῆς ἐνύλου γεννητικὸν δι' ἧς τὸ θνητὸν ἡμῶν ζῶον συμπληροῦται: cf. Syn. 181, 12 ὑπὸ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχοντος (πνεύματος) ἐψυχώθη (the body). In Hierocles the irrational soul – ἀλογος ζώή – stands beneath the ὄχημα as it does in Synesius. The faculty of φαντασία/πνεῦμα is midway between the incorporeal and the corporeal, the rational and the irrational, cf. Syn. 155, 5f. ὅλως γὰρ τοῦτο μεταίχμιόν ἐστι ἀλογίας καὶ λόγου, καὶ ἀσωμάτου καὶ σώματος, καὶ κοινὸς ὅρος ἀμφοῖν. That the lower parts of the irrational soul are *below* the ὄχημα is surely bound up with the doctrine of Proclus that there are *two* ὀχήματα one of which carries the highest parts of the irrational soul, cf. *In Tim.* iii. 236, 32 τὰς μὲν ἀκρότητας τῆς ἀλόγου ζωῆς τὸ πνεῦμα περιέχειν (further similarity with Hierocles is the fact that Proclus' αὐγοειδὲς σῶμα is immaterial like the ὄχημα of Hierocles which is ἄνυλον C.A. 478. See Dodds, *Proclus, Elements of Theology* p. 320 n. 3). In Hierocles the πνεῦμα is equally concerned with φαντασίαι; C.A. 26, 482. τὸ δὲ διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν μεθόδων τὰς ὑλικὰς φαντασίας ἀποτέμνον.

It is difficult to probe any further behind this perplexing conflation of a soul faculty with the semi-material astral body. There is however just one further point to note. In *de Repr. An.* Porphyry had not only restricted theurgic purification to the *anima spiritalis* and denied its efficacy on the *anima intellectualis* (*Civ. Dei* X. 27, Bidez fr. 3. 31*24f.; *Sufficit quod purgatione theurgica neque intellectualem animam, hoc est mentem nostram, dicis posse purgari, et ipsam spiritalem, id est nostrae animae partem mente inferiorem, quam tali arte purgari esse asseris . . .*) but had gone so far as to declare that the philosopher need not bother about the purification of his *anima spiritalis* (cf. Bidez fr. 4 32* 9f. Rejected by Hierocles, C.A. 26, 482; τελεστικὴν δὲ ἐνέργειαν λέγω τὴν τοῦ αὐγοειδοῦς καθαρτικὴν δύναμιν, ἵνα τῆς ὅλης φιλοσοφίας, τὸ μὲν θεωρητικὸν προηγήται, ὡς νοῦς, τὸ δὲ πρακτικόν, ὡς δύναιμις, ἐπηρεται). That does not, however, mean that the philosopher need not bother about his *anima spiritalis*. *Sent. xxix* makes it clear that the πνεῦμα must be kept purified but by philosophical and moral means. Porphyry keeps the two ways of purification separate.

One of the factors in the conflation of a faculty pneuma with the Aristotelian πνεῦμα and the Platonic ὄχημα was the Stoic πνεῦμα concept in which πνεῦμα was identified with soul. In view of Plotinus' rejection of the Stoic teaching on πνεῦμα (see Verbeke *Op. Cit.* p. 352f.) it is unlikely that he would accept a concept of πνεῦμα in the expla-

nation of perception and φαντασία. The role of πνεῦμα in Plotinus is mainly, if not solely, that of a substrate to soul. Porphyry's position is somewhat different. Because of the lack of evidence it is not possible to see exactly what is the relationship between the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα and the faculty of φαντασία. All we can say is that they were closely connected. This close connection in Porphyry had one important result. For Porphyry purification of the πνεῦμα could come within the realm of philosophy when it was seen as the removal of φαντασίαι. He can thus accept πνεῦμα and its purification as a fact – this is one stage beyond Plotinus – but he remains uncertain about its theurgical role.

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