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## The Causality of the Self-Moving Soul: Platonic Responses to the Objections of *De Anima* I 3

Alexandra Michalewski (CNRS, Centre Léon Robin)\*

According to Atticus, the one thing that holds the Platonic *hairesis*<sup>1</sup> together is the theory of the immortality of the soul as it is found at the beginning of the palinode of the *Phaedrus* (245c–246e). There, the argument concerning the soul’s perpetually self-moving nature is presented. Atticus’ fragment 7 (Des Places), which is dedicated to the study of the individual soul, as well as fragments 8 and 9, which deal with the world-soul and the Forms, are filled with references to the palinode. Atticus’ analyses concerning the self-motion of the soul, or its prenatal contemplation of the intelligible Forms, are supported by constant references to this passage of the *Phaedrus*, which is central to his exegesis of Plato.<sup>2</sup> Yet, this passage was not viewed in isolation. Developing a typically Middle-Platonic exegetical method, the palinode was read together with parts of other key passages of the Platonic corpus, taken mainly from Book X of the *Laws*, from the *Phaedo*, or the *Timaeus*.<sup>3</sup>

The fragments of Atticus quoted by Eusebius in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* (*PE*), are taken from a treatise especially written to stress the incompatibility of the theses of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>4</sup> In this, their radically different conceptions of the nature of the soul were considered to be at the heart of their antagonism. Chapters 4 to 13 of *PE* XV, in which eight excerpts of Atticus are quoted, constitute a circle which begins and ends with a presentation of the *telos* of man. This goal is the realisation of

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<sup>1</sup> Rather than to a philosophical institution as such, the term *hairesis* is traditionally related to a school of thought, a philosophical lineage. On this, see Karamanolis 2006, 249-251.

<sup>2</sup> Proclus, *In Tim.* III 247.15, discussing the nature of the mixing-bowl, mentions Atticus in passing as τὸν Φαῖδρον ἐξηγούμενος. On the strength of this allusion, scholars generally agree that Atticus devoted a commentary to the *Phaedrus*. See H. Dörrie-M. Baltes (†) 1993, 197-198 and Van den Berg 1997, 151. On the importance of the *Phaedrus* in Atticus’ fragments, cf. the paper of Moreschini in this volume, and Moreschini 1993. Even more than a dialogue concerning the beautiful or love, here, the *Phaedrus* is considered to be a text providing essential teachings on the soul, defined as a self-moving and immortal reality.

<sup>3</sup> For a *status quaestionis*, see Ferrari 2010.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase Πρὸς τοὺς διὰ τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους τὰ Πλάτωνος ὑπισχνουμένους is to be found in *PE* XI 1. According to Karamanolis 2006, 151–153, it is probably an indication, given by Eusebius, about the target of the treatise rather than the actual title of Atticus’ work.

a good and virtuous life,<sup>5</sup> which is made possible by knowledge of the intelligible order. If the theory of the soul's immortality is what holds the whole body of Platonism together (thus being its συνέχων), its chief and determinative feature (Τὸ δὲ κεφάλαιον καὶ τὸ κῦρος τῆς Πλάτωνος αἰρέσεως)<sup>6</sup> is the theory of Forms, insofar as they are principles of epistemology, ethics, and cosmology. The self-motion of the soul, by which it perpetually tends to contemplate the Forms, is linked to its incorporeal character, a sign of its kinship with the divine. Chapter 9 (= fr. 7), concerned with the defence of the immortality of the individual soul, establishes a series of oppositions between the theses of the *Phaedrus* and those of the *De Anima*. According to Atticus, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato proves that the soul is immortal because it is self-moving – only an incorporeal soul can move itself and, in doing so, move bodies. Aristotle, therefore, by making the soul an immobile entelechy, inseparable from the body, deprives it of its substantiality, reducing it to a mere quality without any causal power. Atticus' objections concerning this decisive point are presented by Eusebius in the framework of a broader polemical perspective. In fact, within the general structure of chapters 4 to 13, we can see a sort of parenthesis, an argumentative micro-structure regarding the question of the soul, composed of chapters 9 to 12, in which Eusebius reports arguments provided by other Platonists. There, he composes an anti-Peripatetic triptych bringing together Atticus, the early Plotinus – with an excerpt from *Enn. IV 7 (2)*<sup>7</sup> – and Porphyry, with an excerpt from *Against Boethos on the Soul*.<sup>8</sup> The polemical unity of these chapters shows, from Eusebius' point of view, the devastating consequences of the Aristotelian psychology, which inevitably leads to a deflationist conception of the soul, making it lose its substantiality and reducing it to nothing more than a mere quality. This selection,

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<sup>5</sup> On the central place of ethics in Atticus's thought, cf. Karamanolis 2006, 159–163.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *PE XV* 13.1 (= fr. 9.1 DP).

<sup>7</sup> *Enn. IV 7 (2)* is well-known to Eusebius, who cites it again in what follows, when he criticises the Stoic psychology (*PE XV* 22 = *Enn. IV 7 (2)* 1-8<sup>4</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> Chiaradonna and Rashed, forthcoming, hypothesised that the book of Boethos targeted by Porphyry was probably not a commentary on the *De Anima* but a psychological work in which Boethos addresses the arguments of the *Phaedo*. In this book, Boethos takes position in the Peripatetic debates of the Hellenistic era on the nature of the soul and articulates his definition of the soul with his exegesis of the *Categories*. Boethos' position is quite subtle since, unlike a Dicaearchus, who reduces the soul to an harmony of the body, and also unlike a Strato, who materializes the soul, Boethos considers that the soul has an affinity with the divine. However, against Plato, he stresses that this affinity is not enough to demonstrate the eternal character of the soul (see *PE XI* 28). For a detailed account and a contextual setting of the reception of Boethos' psychical theses, cf. Trabattoni 2011 and Trabattoni forthcoming. In particular, Trabattoni highlights that the position of Boethos, unlike those of Peripatetics having a stronger materializing conception of the soul, constitutes an excellent starting point for Porphyry's strategy of inciting the Peripatetics to join the Platonic camp.

which juxtaposes Atticus, Plotinus and Porphyry in order to criticise the Peripatetic definition of the soul, testifies to Eusebius' deep understanding of contemporary debates on the nature of the soul. Furthermore, it attests to a true philosophical vision on his part. These three chapters present different facets of the difficulties which arise once the soul is defined as the "actuality" or "entelechy" of a certain kind of body and as "something belonging to a body".<sup>9</sup>

The question of the self-motion of the soul, as a basis for its immortality, is no longer a central issue in Plotinus, and the chapter devoted to this question in *Enn.* IV 7 (2) is an exception in the *Enneads*. Indeed, Plotinus offers several analyses of the problem in a passage which immediately follows the one reported by Eusebius, but he does not return to the question later.<sup>10</sup> One reason for this is that the soul is first and foremost defined as an essentially intelligible reality, being both incorruptible and impassible. Thus, if the soul is an intelligible reality, this also means that it is a being in motion – motion being one of the essential features of the life of the intelligible world according to the reading that Plotinus develops of *Sophist* 249a *sq.*<sup>11</sup> To some extent, this settles the question of its indestructibility, but the way in which the soul differs from the Forms still poses many difficulties,<sup>12</sup> and it is precisely this point which the Neoplatonic tradition after Porphyry will attempt to clarify. Like the Forms, the soul is defined as a substance belonging to the intelligible realm. Also, in the *Enneads*, the analysis of the operations of the soul is developed in the context of an unprecedented articulation of *kinesis* and *energeia* at the level of incorporeal realities, one which goes far beyond the criticism of the soul as the "first actuality of an organic natural body".<sup>13</sup> If Plotinus can thus broaden the framework of the polemic, this may be explained not only by his stylistic difference to Atticus who, in the excerpts chosen by Eusebius, appears essentially as a polemical rhetorician, but also by the internal evolution of the Peripatetic school. One of the reasons why Atticus (who did not have a deep knowledge of the Aristotelian corpus) is so invested in defending the incompatibility of Peripatetic theses with those of Platonism is that the Peripatetic exegetes of his time stripped the notion of form of its substantiality. Plotinus'

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *De an.* II 1 412a21-22; II 2 414a21.

<sup>10</sup> *Enn.* IV 7 (2) 9.1–10.

<sup>11</sup> See e. g. *Enn.* VI 2 (43) 5–7. For a *status quaestionis*, see Michalewski 2014, 142–145.

<sup>12</sup> There is substantial literature on this topic. I will only refer to Blumenthal 1974 and D'Ancona Costa 1999, 81–82.

<sup>13</sup> Ar., *De an.* II 1 412b5-6.

situation was entirely different: the Aristotle that he is targeting is, to a large extent, that of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who attempted to give back ontological consistency to the hylomorphic *eidos*. In response to Alexander, Plotinus defends the existence of transcendent Forms and argues for a definition of *ousia* as a reality which wholly subsists by itself, independently of the body.

Actually, the question of the self-moving character of the soul is closely related to the debate on the criterion of *ousia*. Atticus had pointed out that the Aristotelian definition of the soul as “something belonging to the body” naturally led to the soul losing its substantial features. Plotinus takes a step further than Atticus. Indeed, if Atticus blames the Peripatetics for ignoring the substantial nature of the *eidos*, the Peripatetic exegetes have a strong weapon against the Platonists: even if they draw a line between the incorporeal and the corporeal level, they are not able to make a clear distinction between the movements of the soul and those of the body. As Aristotle indicates in *De an.* I 3, a theory of a self-moving soul implies that the soul departs from itself. Plotinus, by constructing an ontology which clearly distinguishes the categories of the sensible from those of the intelligible, attempts to take up the challenge through a thoroughly renewed definition of the concepts of “movement” and “activity”. As we will see, for Plotinus, there is no incompatibility between a definition of the soul as a self-moving reality and a definition of the soul as an unaffected substance.

First, Atticus’ fragment 7 will be examined in the context of the Eusebian selection. Particular attention will be paid to how the definition of the self-moving soul in the *Phaedrus* is systematically used in a polemical way to highlight the consequences of the Peripatetic doctrine of the soul. Afterwards, it will be shown how Plotinus, while also criticising this conception of the soul, is not content with simply opposing Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, he also shows how the soul, being an impassible substance, is at the same time a self-moving nature, source of the bodily motions.

## **1. The Criticism of the Peripatetic Conceptions of the Soul in *PE* XV 9–11**

The aim of *PE* XV 9 (= fr. 7) is to show that, at the individual level, the human soul is, like the world-soul, a divine and immortal reality, exerting its causality over the body which depends on it. This chapter, dedicated to the defence of the soul's

immortality, is the one that contains most of the allusions to the palinode of the *Phaedrus*.<sup>14</sup> It is part of a long list, compiled by Eusebius, which aims at showing that, with regard to the most significant doctrines – namely the generation of the world, the immortality of the soul, the theory of Forms – Plato is always in basic agreement with the Revelation, while Aristotle systematically disagrees with it. Before examining how Atticus addresses the question of the motions of the soul in chapter 9 (in paragraphs 8 to 12), let us first look at its general structure. Paragraphs 1 to 5 briefly remind us of the importance of the theory of the immortality of the soul, which brings together the three parts of philosophy which Plato was the first to unify.<sup>15</sup> It is the cornerstone of epistemology, for only an immortal soul can contemplate the Forms before incarnation; it is at the basis of cosmology, for it is the world-soul which assures the regularity of the cosmic motions; finally, it is at the core of ethics, for it allows for the retribution of vices and virtues after death. The immortality of the individual soul, which is at stake here, is that of the rational soul, demonstrated by the argument of the automotricity of the soul as presented in *Phaedrus* 245c.<sup>16</sup> Thus, to refuse it, as Aristotle does with his definition of the soul as the form of the body, leads to overturn the whole of Plato's philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Paragraphs 8 to 12 aim at showing that arguing for such a position amounts to considering that the soul is neither immortal nor thinking nor substantial – three features that are closely related to one another. From paragraph 13 on, Atticus deals with the last aspect of his polemic: the separated character of the Aristotelian intellect is not an argument in favour of a conciliatory reading of Plato and Aristotle regarding the immortality of the soul. Instead, Atticus distinguishes the rational functions (which include soul and intellect) from the others, which constitute the 'irrational life', linked to the body, which does not survive after death.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> According to Baltes 1993, Atticus' programme represents the quintessence of the "Ancient Platonism" – which is interpreted as a hierarchical system of theses depending on one supreme *dogma*. He stresses the importance of this fragment which indicates how the whole Platonic edifice is based on the immortality of the soul. For an accurate discussion of Baltes' view, see Chiaradonna 2017, 30–31.

<sup>15</sup> *PE* XI 1.2.

<sup>16</sup> Harpocration, his disciple, does not follow him on this point, but maintains that all souls, even irrational ones, are immortal. On this issue, Deuse 1983, 9.

<sup>17</sup> *PE* XV 9 (= fr. 7) 5–6: "So absolutely all of Plato's doctrines are fixed to and dependent on the divinity and immortality of the soul – and anyone who does not agree with this overturns the whole of Plato's philosophy. So who was it who first tried to develop proofs against the idea, and deprive the soul of immortality and every other capacity? Who else but Aristotle!" Transl. Boys-Stones 2018, **9Jj**

<sup>18</sup> According to Proclus, Atticus distinguishes the rational functions from the other ones, linked to the body, which constitute 'the irrational life' (fr. 15 = Procl., *In Tim.* III 234.9–18) and dissolve after death. The latter, properly speaking, do not belong to the essence of the rational soul, which, by nature,

After having emphatically designated Aristotle as Plato's main adversary, paragraph 8 scrutinizes the definitions of the other schools in order to show that, of all of Plato's dissidents, Aristotle is the most extreme.<sup>19</sup> Surely, he admits that the soul is not a body, but this is not enough to find conciliatory ground with the Platonist definition of the soul, for an entelechy is not an incorporeal either.<sup>20</sup> In a very elliptical way, Atticus suggests that, in divesting the soul of its incorporeal character, Aristotle divested it of its self-motion. An immobile soul is incapable of exercising both primary motions, such as thought and deliberation, and of begetting secondary motions in bodies. This leads to a contradiction in terms, to a paradoxical 'inanimate soul' (ψῦ χή ἄψυχον).

For he said that it could not be breath [*pneuma*] or fire, or any kind of body; but it could not be incorporeal either, such as to exist and move on its own account; but then neither was it unmoved, so far as the body was concerned; it is, as it were, inanimate<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, the soul's immobility entails multiple disastrous consequences<sup>22</sup>, as it abolishes the essential features of the soul: immortality and thought. How could an immobile entelechy account for psychic operations such as learning or thinking, the primary motions of the soul, as stated in *Laws* X (897a1–4)? According to Atticus, it is simply impossible to attribute operations to the soul while also maintaining that it does not

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contains the *logoi* (Syrianus, *In Met.* 105.36–106.2). The 'irrational life' could correspond to the principle of animation of the embryo originating in a part of the world-soul, and to which the 'pneumatic vehicle', which Proclus mentions, refers – cf. Baltes 1983, 53–56. This point is a little obscure. Rashed 2011, 373, draws attention to the fact that if Atticus had theorised the existence of an ὄχημα (although the fragments preserved by Eusebius do not report this), he would have mentioned it to address the question as to how the celestial soul may distribute itself in bodies and enter them. This question of the εἰσκρισις of the divine soul into a mortal body and of its departure from it when the individual dies has served as a basis for Alexander's criticism: if the soul is incorporeal and has no parts, how can it move with a local motion and thus leave the body after death?

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Trabattoni 1993, 301–303.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *De an.* II 2 414a15–17.

<sup>21</sup> *PE* XV 9 (= fr. 7) 8. Transl. Boys-Stones 2018, **9Jj**, slightly modified.

<sup>22</sup> In *PE* XV 11.4, a similar argument is given by Porphyry – although in *Against Boethos* the criticism is not aimed at Aristotle himself, but at 'the Aristotelians', that is, Boethos and his followers. The similarities between Porphyry and Atticus in this passage are so striking that the issue of the attribution of the last paragraph is, even now, subject to controversy. My hypothesis is that this paragraph is not Atticus', but much more likely Porphyry's. This is not the place to go into detail concerning this question, and I would like to provide only the following suggestions here: this paragraph insists on the impious and shameful character of the corporealising definitions of the soul, a shame which culminates in the refusal of the αὐτοκίνητον feature of the soul. Briefly, the *status quaestionis* begins with Mras 1936, who proposes to attribute this passage not to Eusebius himself, as it had been done before, but to Porphyry. In 1967, Philip Merlan started to question this hypothesis, advancing that those few lines could be Atticus', and he was followed by Des Places, in his 1977 edition. Karamanolis 2006 and 2014 dedicated many pages to this problem, to substantiate Merlan 1967 hypothesis. Hadot 2015, 55–56 advanced some convincing arguments for the attribution of the passage to Porphyry, as Zambon 2002, 162–163, did as well.

move: if Aristotle says that the soul is immobile, it is because he ignores that his own soul thinks.<sup>23</sup> By making the soul an ‘inanimate’ principle, he reduces it to something corporeal – even if he refuses to define it as such. Aristotle’s inability to cross the threshold of a genuine materialism echoes a criticism which had already been made regarding providence: so long as we consider that God cannot exert his providence on human affairs, we might as well be bold enough to completely deny divine providence as such, as Epicurus does, rather than relegating it to the superlunary region.<sup>24</sup>

This plea in favour of the incorporeal character of the soul goes hand in hand with a defence of the substantial and divine character of the soul:<sup>25</sup> the independence of the psychic substance is only guaranteed by its incorporeity, to which its self-motion testifies.<sup>26</sup> And claiming, as Aristotle does in *De an.* I 4 408b13–15, that it is not the soul that learns, pities, or thinks, but rather the *man with his soul*, is equivalent to simply refusing to attribute to the soul any autonomy regarding the composite – that is, all substantiality.<sup>27</sup> Further, according to Atticus, if we completely unravel what this definition of the soul as an entelechy implies, we end up directly at the monism of Dicaearchus, who defines the soul as a mere product of corporeal organisation.

Οὐ γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ, φησὶν, ἀλλ’ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὁ τούτων ἕκαστον ἐνεργῶν, ἡ ψυχὴ δὲ ἀκίνητος.<sup>28</sup> [10] Τούτῳ τοιγαροῦν ἐπόμενος Δικαίαρχος, καὶ τὰ κολουθὸν ἰκανὸς ὢν θεωρεῖν, ἀνήρηκε τὴν ὅλην ὑπόστασιν τῆς ψυχῆς.

For it is not the soul, says <Aristotle>, but the man that actualizes each of these (mental processes), and the soul is in this way immobile. [10] Dicaearchus followed accordingly, and since he was competent at observing what was entailed (sc. in Aristotle’s view), he rejected the entire existence of the soul.<sup>29</sup>

There are only few elements left which allow us to precisely reconstitute the thought of this disciple of Aristotle. In the ancient tradition, his definition of the soul is

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<sup>23</sup> Fr. 7.9. This ironic remark recalls the one made by Cicero, in the *Tusculanae Disputationes* I 41, regarding Dicaearchus (*qui animum se habere non sentiat*).

<sup>24</sup> Fr. 3.8–12. For more on this aspect, Michalewski 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Dörrie 1959, 183. .

<sup>26</sup> Fr. 7.8 notes that: ἀσώματον, οἷον εἶναι τε ἐφ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ κινεῖσθαι.

<sup>27</sup> Gottschalk 1971, 185.

<sup>28</sup> Transl. Mirhady. The mss. have: ἡ ψυχὴ δὲ ἀκίνητος οὕτως. τοιγαροῦν ἐπόμενος. R. Estienne’s *editio princeps* (1544) correct it to ἡ ψυχὴ δὲ ἀκίνητος. τούτῳ γὰρ ἐπόμενος. For a discussion on this emendation, Sharples 2001, 154n50.

<sup>29</sup> For an analysis of the term *hypostasis*, Dörrie 1976, 42–43.



frequently associated with that of his classmate Aristoxenus. Diogenes Laërtius (III 38) alludes briefly to the fact that Dicaearchus criticised the *Phaedrus* for being crude. Cicero, who probably had first-hand access to his works,<sup>30</sup> summarises Dicaearchus' theses on the soul in the following way: there is not one reality which would be called 'soul' (it is a word with no sense) and which would be distinct from the body, for life and consciousness are nothing but effects of the body. The force (*vis*) by which we live, we think, we act, would simply be a property of the body, the expression of its good condition. In other words, the psychic activity is merely a secondary manifestation of the corporeal activity – which cannot subsist after death. It is a product of the interactions between the components of the body – an effect of the body itself disseminated in the body.<sup>31</sup> This means that it is nothing but an epiphenomenon of the organism;<sup>32</sup> the principle of life and thought does not precede the individual, but is a result of the harmony of the four elements.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Dicaearchus does not reject the existence of the intellect or of the soul as such. What he dismisses is the possibility that they exist in a separate state and that the soul, as an independent substance, rules over the body.<sup>34</sup> What causes life and thought is not distinct from that in which it manifests itself. Dicaearchus definitely does not go from that to saying that every distinction between the living and the non-living is abolished, but this is a claim which is attributed to him by dualist thinkers.<sup>35</sup> To go back to the polemical association established by Atticus between Aristotle and Dicaearchus in fragment 7, there is no middle term between Aristotelism, interpreted as a materialistic monism, and Platonic dualism which is based on the substantiality of the incorporeal soul: what cannot subsist without the body is reduced to the rank of a

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<sup>30</sup> Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* I 21 (= fr. 21 Mirhady). On this point, Mansfeld 1990, 3129.

<sup>31</sup> On the specificity of this definition of harmony as the *result* of a certain state of the body, in its relation to Aristotle's definition, Sharples 2001, 147.

<sup>32</sup> Caston 1997, 313–315, clearly distinguishes Dicaearchus' position, which is akin to an epiphenomenalism, from Aristotle's, which he interprets as an 'emergentism': if in both cases the soul 'supervenes' in the body, in the former case it has no causal power, while it is a full-fledged cause in the latter.

<sup>33</sup> This definition is given by Nemesius (fr. 11 Wherli = 21A Mirhady) who opposes Thales', Pythagoras', and Plato's definitions (these three considering the soul a self-moving reality) to Dicaearchus' and Aristotle's definitions, which, although conceding that the soul is an *asomaton*, deny that the soul has any substantial feature. For more on Nemesius, Emilsson 1994, 5343–5345.

<sup>34</sup> On this aspect, I refer to Caston 2001, 178.

<sup>35</sup> From Cicero to Nemesius in Antiquity to Pierre Bayle at the very end of the 17th century. This 'eliminativist' reading is still defended by Annas 1992, 31. For an overall perspective on the history of Dicaearchus' reception, Movia 1968, 76–82. Caston 2001, 178, note that describing Dicaearchus as an eliminativist "functions less as a description than as a critique – an unacceptable consequence to which the view is thought to lead inexorably".

mere epiphenomenon, deprived of all causal power.<sup>36</sup> In his view, the definition of the soul as entelechy inevitably falls into that category: the soul, whether it be entelechy or harmony, does not have an existence of its own, but always exists in something else, as it is the case for qualities or accidents.

By putting Aristotle and Dicaearchus on the same side, Atticus tackles a very precise issue: the Aristotelianism of that time is essentially conveyed by Peripatetics who, following exegetes such as Boethos of Sidon<sup>37</sup>, leave aside the definition of form as substance. Out of the three candidates for the title of substance listed in book Z of the *Metaphysics* – form, matter, and the composite –, only the latter two may be selected.<sup>38</sup> Since the form-matter relation is interpreted as a particular case of the relation of inherence, the form cannot be a substance, for it exists ‘in another thing’. This way of reading *Metaphysics Z* in the light of the definition of the individual substance, taken from the *Categories*, is a way of sharply separating it from Platonism.<sup>39</sup> Besides, what Atticus strongly emphasises in this treatise is that the desubstantialisation of the *eidos*, yielded by the Aristotelianism of his time, is fundamentally incompatible with the Platonist theses.<sup>40</sup> The devaluation of the notion of *eidos*, characteristic of early Peripateticism, is linked to the devaluation of the definition of soul, an exemplary case of form<sup>41</sup>, which is reduced to a mere harmony or quality.<sup>42</sup>

The criticism of the non-substantial feature of the Aristotelian *eidos*, which we find in Atticus’ fragment (= *PE XV 9*), is close enough to the one which will be more broadly developed by Plotinus in the following chapter of *PE XV*, aimed at showing

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<sup>36</sup> Sharples 2001, 156.

<sup>37</sup> For an in-depth account of the work of Boethos, see Chiaradonna and Rashed (eds) forthcoming.

<sup>38</sup> Simplicius, *In Cat.* 78.14.

<sup>39</sup> Rashed 2007, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Trabattoni 1993, 301–302.

<sup>41</sup> Ar., *DA II 1*, 412 a 19–21.

<sup>42</sup> Menn 2018, taking up the discussions of M. Griffin 2015, and certain points raised by Chiaradonna and Rashed forthcoming, has recently produced an extensive study of this problem which juxtaposes the exegeses of the definition of *eidos* provided by Boethos, Porphyry, and Alexander. He shows how Boethos, by centring his analysis on an exegesis of the *Categories*, is able to argue that *eidos* is not a substance. Relating *eidos* to the structure or configuration (*skhèma, morphè*) of *Physics VII 3*, he makes form something that, without being substantial, is nevertheless responsible for substantial generation: a stone which receives human form becomes a statue. It is no longer “marble” but “marble statue”. As Menn suggests, if for Boethos, form remains on the side of accident, it is nevertheless that by which the composite, which is substantial, comes to be. Soul is therefore essential to the composite. It is the essence of the composite, without being itself a substance. Menn relates this position to that defended by certain philosophers of the 17th century (such as De Raey), according to whom Aristotle made the soul an essential form, and not a substantial one.

that *ousia* as such is necessarily independent of the body.<sup>43</sup> After having mentioned, via Atticus, that the Aristotelian definition of the soul leads directly to Dicaearchus' conceptions, in chapter 10, Eusebius goes on to present Plotinus' arguments, which come from a long indictment of chapter 8<sup>5</sup> of *Enn.* IV 7 (2), in which the cases of the incoherence of the soul as 'something belonging to the body' are examined. Plotinus' arguments, however, are deeply distinct from those of Atticus, not only because his knowledge of Aristotle is incomparably more precise,<sup>44</sup> but also because they unfold in the framework of a discussion with the essentialist interpretation of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who opposes Boethos' reading, underlining that the *Categories*, a text considered to be propaedeutic, addresses only one kind of substance, namely the sensible substance. For Alexander, saying that the form is 'in' the substrate does not indicate a relation of inherence, but means that the form needs the sensible substance to realise itself.<sup>45</sup> The corollary of this interpretation is a valuing of the natural form to the detriment of the forms of artefacts.<sup>46</sup> Only the form of the living composite, which inchoately contains the individual's features, is substantial, while the form of artefacts is only an external configuration, a qualification among others. Also, Alexander proposes a dangerous alternative to Platonism by defining the immanent form as a substance which, despite being inseparable from matter, still remains immaterial and gives the sensible reality coherence. Indeed, if we manage to show that a hylomorphic *eidōs* suffices to guarantee the unity of the composite, what would we still need the transcendent Forms for?<sup>47</sup> The lynchpin of the Plotinian criticism of entelechy consists in putting tacitly the reading of Boethos' disciples and that of Alexander side by side. In *Enn.* IV 7 (2) 8<sup>5</sup>.1–9 (which corresponds to the beginning of *PE* XV 10), Plotinus polemically considers the hylomorphic form not as an internal principle of development but rather as a shape, an external configuration of the body (such as the

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<sup>43</sup> This passage is absent from the *Enneads* manuscripts. Most of Plotinus' editors, from Creuzer to Henry and Schwyzer, have presented the hypothesis that Eusebius has had access to a Plotinus edition prior to Porphyry's, that is, maybe Eustochius' or Amelius'. Goulet-Cazé 2007, replying to the arguments of Kalligas 2001, maintained that one should not discard the possibility that this passage was indeed present in the Porphyrian edition and was lost later, due to a mechanical accident. For a more detailed presentation of the issue, I refer to the preface to the translation of *Enn.* IV 7 (2): Longo 2009, 33–37 and D'Ancona 2017, 161–163; 272–274.

<sup>44</sup> On this point, Moraux 1984, 568–569 and 580.

<sup>45</sup> Rashed 2007, 177.

<sup>46</sup> Alex., *De an.* 6.3–6; *Quaest.* I 21, 35.6–7.

<sup>47</sup> Chiaradonna 2008.

form of a bronze statue)<sup>48</sup>. Thus, although he never directly mentions Alexander, he points out that the exegetes who consider that *eidos* is always linked to matter have not yet come up with a sufficient criterion allowing us to really distinguish matter from that which qualifies it. By voluntarily putting the Peripatetic *eidos* back in the position of a mere shape (*morphē*) of artificial objects, he suggests that the only true essentialism is Plato's – which posits separated Forms – and not Alexander's.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, chapter 9 of *PE XV* forms a unity with the two following chapters: after having cited Atticus and then Plotinus, Eusebius, in chapter 11, provides an excerpt from Porphyry's *Against Boethos*, which develops some criticism which is very close to that expressed by Atticus, highlighting that the operations proper to the soul, such as thought and will, cannot be attributed to an immobile entity.<sup>50</sup> These three passages are chosen by Eusebius so as to form a polemical triptych aimed at showing that Aristotelianism – broadly speaking, that is, be it Aristotle himself or the panoply of his exegetes – develops an unworthy conception of the soul. In reporting the arguments of these three Platonists, he sheds some light on the fact that a well-understood Aristotelianism results in the negation of the reality of the soul, insofar as it is not a substance independent from the body. Now, many Aristotelian exegetes, from Alexander of Aphrodisias to Themistius, have responded to these critiques by turning against the Platonists many of their own arguments. A passage from the *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, by F. Ravaisson, concerning *PE XV* 9, perfectly summarises the *status quaestionis*.

Mais comme eux tous, aussi, il [*scil.* Atticus] se refuse à retrancher, avec Aristote, l'idée du mouvement de celle de l'âme. Ôter à l'âme le mouvement, c'est, dit-il, la réduire à rien. Et nul doute qu'avec tous ses prédécesseurs, il n'étendît de même le mouvement à l'intelligence. Comme eux tous, il assujettit donc la nature intelligible à des conditions de mutabilité et de diversité au-dessus desquelles Aristote l'avait voulu placer. Ainsi les Platoniciens veulent remettre la nature dans une plus grande dépendance de Dieu que l'aristotélisme ne paraissait l'avoir fait ; ils veulent rendre Dieu et l'âme plus indépendants de la nature (...) ils ne savent toujours pas comment

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<sup>48</sup> D'Ancona 2017, 337-339, provides a complete *status quaestionis* on the polemical association of the *eidos* with a mere configuration established by Plotinus in *IV* 7 (2) 8<sup>5</sup>. 1-9.

<sup>49</sup> Chiaradonna 2016, 160–162.

<sup>50</sup> Porphyry, in *PE XV* 11. 3, criticises Boethos for confusing the soul, a substance independent of the body, with *empsychia* (the ensoulment of the body). On this point, see Menn 2018. Rashed 2016, in his study on the lost commentary to the palinode of the *Phaedrus* (which he attributes to Proclus), shows how Porphyry polemically connects *entelecheia* to *empsychia* in order to highlight the misleading conceptions of the Peripatetics on the nature of the soul : « ils ont confondu l'animation du corps (qu'ils appellent *entélechie*, et qui n'est qu'*empsychie*) avec son âme », p. 518.

concevoir et l'âme, et l'intelligence, et Dieu même que sous des conditions de mouvement et de multiplicité, caractères de l'existence naturelle.<sup>51</sup>

Atticus, as we have seen, attacks Aristotle for advancing a doctrine systematically opposed to Plato's, precisely to court controversy, for the sheer pleasure of producing new theses, to the point of maintaining the most flagrant contradictions. Hence, he (1) made the soul inseparable from the body only because Plato, in the *Phaedo*, showed that it may leave it, (2) rejected its self-motion, and (3) separated the soul from the intellect. Now, the Peripatetics criticise Platonists on similar grounds: they accuse them of conceiving the soul in a mode improper to its nature and of transferring qualities of the sensible onto it.<sup>52</sup> The argument, taken from the first chapter of the *DA*, dismisses the psychological theories of both the Atomists and Plato. Even if Plato has the merit of decorporealising the soul, he still maintains that it is in motion. So, Plato fell into error by not managing to conceive the soul without that which it communicates to the body: motion.<sup>53</sup> In fact, at the beginning of chapter 3, Aristotle reminds us of the four types of motion, and he suggests that, if the soul is self-moving, it should move either according to one of these motions or some or all of them.<sup>54</sup> The dangerous and absurd consequences which follow from the attribution of motion to the soul are (1) the reversibility of motion: if the soul moves the body while being in motion itself, it will be moved and shaken by the body in return; (2) that motion implies an alteration, a passage from one state to its opposite, a departure from itself, and that a self-moving soul will lose its essence (ὥστ' εἰ πᾶσα κίνησις ἔκστασις ἐστὶ τοῦ κινουμένου ἢ κινεῖται, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐξίσταται ἂν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας). Claiming that a self-moving soul departs from its *ousia* could be seen, as S.

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<sup>51</sup> Ravaisson 1837, 347–348.

<sup>52</sup> As Gertz 2010, 75–76, rightly points out, “when Aristotle revisits the question of self-motion in his *On the Soul* I 3, he summarizes his earlier position in the *Physics* with the claim that it is not necessary to suppose that soul *qua* principle of motion is self-moving. Since Aristotle had argued in the *Physics* that a principle of motion does not itself have to be moved, and that even so-called self-movers are really composites of unmoved and moved parts, there is no necessity to attribute motion to soul. In *On the Soul*, however, Aristotle adds to this criticism a much stronger rejection of self-motion in souls, as being both false and impossible, as well as unnecessary”.

<sup>53</sup> Menn 2002 has challenged the *communis opinio* according to which the Aristotelian definition of the soul, as found in the *De an.*, offers “a *via media* between dualism and materialism” (83). According to Menn, this perspective “distorts Aristotle’s aims in defining the soul as the first actuality of an organic natural body” (84). As Menn points out, (1) what Aristotle opposes is a materialistic dualism (according to which the soul is distinct from the body but it is nevertheless a body which initiates movement); (2) his aim in *De an.* I 3 is not to point out the contradictions between Plato and the Atomists, but, on the contrary, to present their positions in order to show their similarity.

<sup>54</sup> Ar., *De an.* I 3 406a12–15.

Menn suggests,<sup>55</sup> as a direct reply to the Platonic statement of the *Phaedrus* (245c 7–8): “only what moves itself, since it does not depart (ἀπολείπειν) from itself, never ceases to be moved, but is a source and principle of motion”. So, according to Aristotle, the soul does not move itself, except by accident: if it were in motion, it would be subject to all changes linked to motion and it would never be itself. There is no need for a mover to be moved itself.<sup>56</sup>

But, even more than self-motion, it is actually the ‘being in motion’ of the soul which is targeted by Aristotle. As S. Menn has shown in a very illuminating way, this critique is the heart of the Aristotelian “programme” directed against the Platonic definition of the soul. According to *DA* I 3, Platonists have no other causality-model than a corporealistic one to understand the psychic operations: “For Plato and Xenocrates, as for Democritus, the soul moves the body by first moving itself and then communicating its own motion to the body and this explanation depends on the soul’s being moved with the same kind of locomotion that the body is: the soul must be co-extended or ‘interwoven’ with the body (...). Aristotle takes this description to show that the Platonists are conceiving the soul as body-like”.<sup>57</sup> This criticism is repeated throughout the Peripatetic tradition: we see it at work in what can be reconstructed of the *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics* provided by Alexander, a text which will serve as the basis for the indictment that Themistius hands down against Porphyry’s self-moving soul.<sup>58</sup>

## 2. The Causality of the Plotinian Soul

This line of opposition, which runs through the entire history of the relationship between Aristotelianism and Platonism in Antiquity, is rooted in the fundamentally different ways of interpreting the origin and the nature of motion. J. Vuillemin, in a seminal article, has shown how the differences in the interpretation of the theory of motion shed light on the fundamental differences between Plato and Aristotle:

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<sup>55</sup> Menn 2002, 97.

<sup>56</sup> Ar., *De an.* I 2 404a21–25.

<sup>57</sup> Menn 2002, 85.

<sup>58</sup> Rashed 2011, 428, schol. 435: “Platon en admettant que tout mû est mu par quelque chose, suppose que l’automoteur est principe de mouvement. Mais Aristote prouve que si tout ce qui est mû est mû par quelque chose et qu’on ne procède pas à l’infini mais qu’il y a un certain principe de mouvement, alors ce principe, à savoir le premier moteur, doit être immobile. Car s’il devait être mû par quelque chose, il serait lui aussi mû, mais ainsi il ne serait plus lui-même premier moteur”. For a detailed account of these issues and of Themistius’ polemic against Porphyry, I refer to Lecerf 2017.

Spiritualism dissociates dynamics from kinematics, while hylemorphism results in subordinating all dynamical manifestations to kinematics. The theology of the immovable Prime Mover does not produce the same consequences as the theology of selfmoving gods.<sup>59</sup>

The first five points of opposition between Platonic and Aristotelian physics listed by Vuillemin concern precisely the question of the motions of the soul. While, for Plato, the mechanical movements of the body depend on the incorporeal movements of the soul, according to Aristotle there is no other movement than sensible movement which is the actualisation of a potentiality.<sup>60</sup> Within this long history of conceptual oppositions and mutual critiques amongst Platonists and Peripatetics over the question of the motion and self-motion of the soul, Plotinus was one of the first philosophers to take the content of these criticisms of Plato seriously and, to quote R. Chiaradonna, to propose a “réponse systémique à la doctrine aristotélicienne de l’*energeia*”.<sup>61</sup> Many new exegetical parameters with regard to the earlier Platonic tradition appear in his treatment of the analysis of motion – and particularly in its articulation to *energeia*: motion does not have the same definition when it is related to the sensible world, to the soul, or to the Forms and the intellect. For the intellect, to be is to live a purely contemplative life: in it we find the perfect unity of being, life, and intellection.<sup>62</sup> Taking the five highest kinds of the *Sophist* (248d–256e), as structuring principles of the architecture of the intelligible world, Plotinus indicates that being is the first kind which characterises the intelligible and that motion is derived from the life of the divine intellect.<sup>63</sup> Unlike sensible motion, incorporeal movement does not involve any change, corruption, or becoming, but the permanence of remaining always in

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<sup>59</sup> Vuillemin 1991, 201.

<sup>60</sup> Vuillemin 1991, 197–198:

- (1) P: The first origin of any motion or change is self-motion, called also soul or life.  
A: There is no self-motion. Every motion is ab alio.
- (2) P: Being without external cause, self-motion is indestructible and perpetual (immortality of the soul).  
A: If there exists a perpetual motion, it is caused and its perpetuity is due to the sempiternality of the action of its cause.
- (3) P: Self-motion in itself precludes any distinction between mover and moved or action and passion.  
A: Every motion results from the affection of a moved by a mover.
- (4) P: Self-motion is a purely spiritual motion without relation to space or to any motion which proceeds in space and is a possible object of sensation. Time is an image of eternity.  
A: Every motion is sensible. Its necessary condition is a trajectory in space during a given time. Time measures motion.
- (5) P: Self-motion is pure actuality.

<sup>61</sup> Chiaradonna 2008, 471.

<sup>62</sup> Montet 1996, 128.

<sup>63</sup> *Enn.* VI 2 (43) 7.2–5. There is an abundance of scholarly literature on this well-known issue. I will merely refer to Collette 2007, 205–214, and to Aubry 2009.

actuality.<sup>64</sup> The hierarchical organisation of the different kinds of movement is rooted in an ontology which clearly separates the categories of the sensible from that of the intelligible realm.<sup>65</sup> At the intelligible realm, motion has full ontological dignity; it is no longer, as Aristotle defines it, an ἐνέργεια ἄτελής, but rather a structuring principle of the intellectual life of the intelligible world. In the sphere of being, “movement appears not as changing the nature of being, but rather in being as if making it perfect”.<sup>66</sup>

The soul, although not being an intelligible Form, belongs to the intelligible realm. Consequently, it is a simple and unmixed reality. Thus, the Aristotelian objections concerning the automotricity are not valid in the case of the soul because an ἁσύνθετος reality cannot be affected by itself.<sup>67</sup> As for saying that the nature of the soul is self-moving, this means that its perpetual activity, which is internal and impassive, allows it to be the cause of the local and quantitative movements of bodies. From chapter 4 of *Enn.* VI 2 (43) on, Plotinus ascends towards the intelligible, starting from the lowest level of existence, that of inert bodies, and making his way through living bodies, which borrow their life from the soul. Now, ‘being’ at the level of the soul is, primordially, ‘living’. The soul, by its essence a living and self-constituting reality, is also a principle of life for what depends on it: “Now this being of soul must be within, like a source and principle, or rather must be all that is so; so it must be life; and both must be one, being and life”.<sup>68</sup> The formula ‘source and principle’ is a reiteration of *Phaedrus* 245c, which evokes the internal dynamism of the self-moving soul. The coupling of πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχή is frequent in Plotinus.<sup>69</sup> However, this passage is the only one in which it is used to describe the activity of the soul, that is, to illustrate the activity of the soul as a self-constitutive principle which connaturally possesses life in itself. For Plotinus, the soul is self-constitutive insofar as it derives from the One. Thus, in other treatises, the phrase πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχή is related to higher-order principles, namely the intellect and the One, the ultimate

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<sup>64</sup> *Enn.* VI 3 (44) 23.1–5.

<sup>65</sup> For an excellent and detailed analysis of this question, I refer to O’Meara 1986.

<sup>66</sup> *Enn.* VI 2 (43) 7.24–27. Transl. Armstrong.

<sup>67</sup> On how Plotinus articulates different theories of Aristotle concerning the impassibility of the unmoved movers and their capacities to remain unaffected in order to develop his own theory of the impassibility of the soul, Emilsson 1994, 53–56.

<sup>68</sup> *Enn.* VI 2 (43) 6.6–8.

<sup>69</sup> In *Enn.* II 5 (25) 3.40, related to the intelligible world; in *Enn.* VI 6 (34) 9.38, to the intelligible number and in *Enn.* I 6 (1) 9.41; I 7 (54) 1.15; VI 7 (38) 23.21; III 8 (30) 10.27; VI 9 (9) 9.2; 11.31, to the One.



source of all power and causality. If the soul is the source and principle of life and movement, this is ultimately because it derives from the One. The soul, as cause of movement and of life in bodies, possesses its own life, different from the one it gives to bodies. Its life and its movement are superior and more unified – a cause always being, by nature, different from what it brings into existence and what depends on it.<sup>70</sup>

Now, according to Plotinus, it is precisely in defining the soul as an incorporeal substance always remaining in activity that we can grasp the difference between cause and effect, between the primary movements of the soul and the sensible movements, a difference which is presented in Book X of the *Laws*. It is insofar as it is an incorporeal substance always in activity, that the soul can be a true cause, producing effects that are different from what the soul itself is. This sharp distinction between psychical and physical motions is clearly set out in the following excerpt from *Enn.* III 6 (26).

Καὶ γὰρ ὅταν λέγωμεν κινεῖσθαι αὐτὴν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις, ἐν λογισμοῖς, ἐν δόξαις, οὐ σαλευομένην αὐτὴν λέγομεν ταῦτα ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτῆς γίνεσθαι τὰς κινήσεις. Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ζῆν κίνησιν λέγοντες οὐκ ἀλλοίωσιν μὲν, ἐκαστοῦ δὲ μορίου ἢ ἐνέργεια ἢ κατὰ φύσιν ζωὴ οὐκ ἐξιστάσα.

In fact, whenever we [i.e. Platonists] say that the soul is in motion in its appetites, reasonings, and opinions, we do not mean that it does these things by being shaken about, but in the sense that its motions come to be *from itself*. For we also say that life is motion, not of what is [thereby] different, but that the activity of each part is its connatural life, which does not cause [it] to depart [from its nature].<sup>71</sup>

By defining the soul as a reality which, while being life and movement, does not depart from itself (οὐκ ἐξιστάσα), since it moves with a non-physical movement, Plotinus opens a way to respond to the objections of *De an.* I 3 concerning the Platonic self-moving soul<sup>72</sup>. Indeed, according to Plotinus no bodily feature can be attributed to the soul, which is not extended through the body, nor moved by it. Remaining absolutely impassible, the soul is not affected by physical changes<sup>73</sup>. However, the question of the self-motion of the soul is, in itself, fairly marginal in the

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<sup>70</sup> O'Meara 1986, 256–257, has very insightfully examined how the Plotinian rethinking of the Aristotelian categories of ποιεῖν and πάσχειν and the careful “isolation of actuality from the bodily change”, “could be considered a rather unusual development of Aristotle’s anti-Platonic position in the *De Anima*”.

<sup>71</sup> *Enn.* III 6 (26) 3.22–26, transl. Noble 2016, 244.

<sup>72</sup> Noble 2016, 244.

<sup>73</sup> Noble 2013, 261–263, who accurately analyses how the developments provided by Alexander in his *De Anima* were decisive for the Plotinus, who endorse the view that the soul is neither extended nor subject to passive change.

*Enneads*. As we have previously seen, Plotinus dedicates a chapter to it in *Enn.* IV 7 (2) – a treatise from the first period, in which Plotinus still relies on the scholarly tradition of Middle Platonism<sup>74</sup>. In *Enn.* IV 7 (2) 9, in the chapter which, in the *Enneads*, immediately follows the one reported by Eusebius in *PE* XV 10, he establishes a distinction between the corporeal, which receives its being from superior principles, and the soul, which is as a self-constitutive principle. The soul, which is a primarily alive substance, is the source of motion and the origin of life in sensible things. If the soul is physically unmoved and unaffected, this is not because it is an entelechy, but because it is an incorporeal and thus impassible substance. In fact, when Aristotle defines the soul as ‘the form of a natural body having life potentially within it’ (*De an.* II 1 412a20), he wants to illustrate the inseparable unity of the soul and the body: it is in virtue of the soul that the body is truly what it is, that is to say, a living body – a dead body being a body only by homonymy – and, by the same token, it is only insofar as it is united with a body that the soul can exert its activities. Plotinus, on the contrary, wants to underline the soul's capacity to subsist and to be active without the body – in other words, its substantiality – and, therefore, its capacity to truly be a cause.<sup>75</sup> If the soul is the cause of life, it is not because it allows the actualisation of the bodily functions, but rather because it possesses its own life, different from the one it gives to the body. Now, in this new conceptual framework, the soul, while being the source and principle of the bodily life, at the same time acquires it from an even higher form of life, that of the intellect, in which ‘life’, ‘actuality’ and ‘motion’ are not different.<sup>76</sup> The question of the immortality of the soul is then moved towards the analysis of the soul as an essentially living reality that communicates life.

Ἀρχὴ γὰρ κινήσεως ἢ δε χορηγοῦσα τοῖς ἄλλοις κίνησιν, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐξ  
ἐαυτῆς κινουμένη, καὶ ζωὴν τῷ ἐμψύχῳ σώματι διδοῦσα, αὐτὴ δὲ παρ’  
ἐαυτῆς ἔχουσα, ἢ ν οὔποτε ἀπόλλυσιν, ἄτε παρ’ ἐαυτῆς ἔχουσα.

For soul is the ‘origin of motion’ and is responsible for the motions of other things, and is moved by itself and gives life to the ensouled body, but has it of itself, and never loses it, because it has it of itself.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> On how Plotinus, in this treatise, both relies on the scholarly tradition and distinguishes himself from his predecessors, see D’Ancona 2017, 181-182.

<sup>75</sup> Aubry 2004, 124–126.

<sup>76</sup> For an articulation of the double heritage of the *Sophist* and of *Metaphysics* Λ 7 in Plotinus, I refer to Aubry 2007, 174.

<sup>77</sup> *Enn.* IV 7 (2) 9.6–9, transl. Armstrong.

Connecting his analysis of the *Phaedo* to his reading of the *Phaedrus* – and, to a certain extent, those of *Laws X* – Plotinus maintains that the life of the soul is essentially a motion, but not a spatial or physical motion.<sup>78</sup> The soul is impassible, for it does not move with the same movements with which it moves the body.<sup>79</sup> While Atticus, utilising the Platonic equivalence between psychic operations and the motions of the soul, purely and simply rejects the Aristotelian distinction between motion and activity, Plotinus goes further. Dissociating the incorporeal cause of movements from the movements derived from it, he can say that the motion of the soul does not imply a departure from oneself; and in this way he replies to the objection from *De Anima* I 3.<sup>80</sup>

Self-motion is not an affection of which the soul is the substratum. The soul has the capacity of staying in itself – while also being, in a way, in motion – to the extent that, just like the intelligible intellect from which it stems, it is an incorporeal *ousia*. As Ch. I. Noble rightly pointed out, “by attributing Peripatetic views on the extensionless and motionless character of the soul to Plato himself, Plotinus disarms the Peripatetic critique against him”.<sup>81</sup> But he goes even further. According to Plotinus’ interpretation of the *Sophist*, at the intellective level, the motion of intellect is an attempt to apprehend its origin, the One, and, indissociably, to move towards itself: hence, intellect is to remain in itself, in the perfection of the first being.<sup>82</sup> The soul, just like the intelligible realities, never leaves itself.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the issue of the self-motion of the soul is subordinated to the analysis of motion in the intelligible world. From Plotinus’ point of view, if Plato indicates, at *Phaedrus* 245c7, that the self-moving soul never abandons itself, this is because it has essentially an intelligible nature: that which does not leave itself is a perfect and unchangeable being.<sup>84</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

The selection of citations offered by Eusebius in *PE XV* 9–11, which demonstrates a real philosophical perspective due to the choice and organisation of the excerpts, allows us to see that there is a real proximity between Atticus, the early Plotinus, and

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<sup>78</sup> For an analysis of how Plotinus combines these readings in *IV* 7 (2) 11, see Chiaradonna 2015.

<sup>79</sup> Plotinus, *Enn.* I 1 (53) 13.4–5.

<sup>80</sup> Noble 2016, 244.

<sup>81</sup> Noble 2013, 262.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. *Enn.* V 6 (24) 5.9–10.

<sup>83</sup> O’Meara 1976, 121–124.

<sup>84</sup> *Enn.* VI 4 (22) 2.14–15.

Porphiry concerning the criticism of the soul's definition as the first entelechy of a natural body. The soul is a cause: for that, it must be an incorporeal substance, something which all the Peripatetics, following Aristotle, fail to grasp. However diverse the interpretations of the nature of the soul developed by different Peripatetics may be, from Eusebius' point of view, they run into one and the same error: latent materialism. This hindsight should not let us forget that Middle Platonists, building particularly on the *Timaeus*, which describes the soul as being interwoven with the body, did not have a hard time conceiving that certain movements of the soul can be extended.<sup>85</sup> This is precisely the point that allows Aristotle to develop his objections against the Platonic theory of the psychic movements. However, at the 3rd century AD,<sup>86</sup> with the renewed analysis that Plotinus devoted to the causality of the soul, the meaning of the self-motion of the soul starts to change. This shift, initiated by Plotinus, has two main aspects: (1) a very clear distinction between the motions of incorporeal realities and the movements of bodies, which is evoked in response to the Peripatetic objections against the Platonic definition of a self-moving soul; (2) a redefinition of the relations between 'actuality' and 'motion' at the intelligible realm. It is their identification which, according to Plotinus, justifies the definition of soul as a substance, that is to say, as constituting a separate reality, and not an entelechy: only this conception can guarantee the causal influence of soul over body and account for the Platonist definition of the soul as a principle of life and movement.

The hermeneutical decision, according to which the meaning of the motion of the soul cannot be read in physical terms linked to extension, first occurs in Plotinus and Porphyry and is systematised by Iamblichus. This process is accompanied by the assumption that what we call self-motion of the soul is, in reality, a turning of the soul towards itself. With a view to harmonise rather than oppose the theories of motion of Plato and Aristotle, Proclus associates Aristotle's theory of movement with Plato's by subordinating self-moving souls to intelligible unmoved movers. As. J. Opsomer rightly points out, "radically different as they may be, Plato's and Aristotle's theories of motion were integrated into an encompassing theory by Proclus and other late Neoplatonists. In a nutshell, whereas Aristotle substituted the notion of an unmoved mover for Plato's self-moving soul, Proclus incorporates both principles of motion and makes the self-movers subordinate to unmoved movers, assigning them to the

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<sup>85</sup> Plat., *Tim.* 36e2. On this point, Noble 2013, 261.

<sup>86</sup> Opsomer 2012.

levels of soul and intellect respectively”.<sup>87</sup> These analyses are framed by the vast enterprise of reconciling<sup>88</sup> Plato’s and Aristotle’s initially opposed definitions of the soul, culminating with Simplicius for whom what Aristotle calls “immobile act” is the same as what Plato calls “movement” because there is only a difference of words and not of concepts.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Opsomer 2009, 189.

<sup>88</sup> The study of this long history of reconciliation and harmonisation of the Platonic and Aristotelian meanings of movement is a long history. A. Longo, in a paper devoted to lexical and conceptual triad ἀκίνητον-αὐτοκίνητον- ἕτεροκίνητον – which was established in the Neoplatonic School of Athens, in the context of the exegesis of *Phaedrus* 245c–246a and of the definition of the soul as a self-moving reality – studied the exegetical strategies of Hermias, who attended with his classmate Proclus the teaching of Syrianus, and of Simplicius, by highlighting their differences. According to Longo, “whereas Hermias just hinted at Platonic or Aristotelian passages, or hastily referred to them, Simplicius gives full quotations and enlarges the canon of Plato’s and Aristotle’s standard texts. Rather than re-stating the principles of Neoplatonic metaphysics and reducing Aristotle’s doctrines to them, as Hermias did, Simplicius sympathizes with the Stagirite, whose works he knows perfectly and discusses extensively in his commentaries. He attempts to produce an essential definition applicable to any kind of change, i.e. to both psychic movements (Plato’s chief concern) and bodily ones (Aristotle’s focus), by means of Aristotle’s opposition between potentiality and actuality” (Longo forthcoming). See further Gertz 2010 and Menn 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Simplicius, *In Phys.* 1248.23–30, notes that, when Aristotle says that it should not be said that the soul is self-moving, this is only in order to prevent wrong interpretations of self-motion that would reduce movement to mere spatial or physical movement. Thus, Aristotle does not contradict Plato but, in a way, purifies his expressions, reserving the concept of *energeia* for the motions of the soul.