IV

THE BACKGROUND OF THE DOCTRINE "THAT THE INTELLIGIBLES ARE NOT OUTSIDE THE INTELLECT"

THE doctrine ὅτι οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ νοῦ τὰ νοητά, which presents the Divine Intellect, the first great reality generated from the Source of being, as forming an inseparable unity-in-duality with its content, the World of Forms, has always been regarded as one of the most distinctive and important parts of the philosophy of Plotinus. In his own time it provoked what, as far as our information goes, was the most serious philosophical opposition he ever had to meet. The eminent Longinus, as we gather from comparing chapters 18, 8-19 and 20, 89-95 of Porphyry's *Life*, found in it the principal, though not the only, ground of his disagreement with Plotinus, and argued against it with vigour, though also with a courtesy and respect for his opponent almost unparalleled in the history of ancient philosophy; and Porphyry himself, as he tells us in ch. 18 of the *Life*, originally shared the view of his friend Longinus on this point and had to be laboriously converted from it by Amelius. A consideration of the possible reasons for this opposition of Longinus will make quite a good starting-point for our enquiry into the background of the doctrine. All we know about Longinus's own position is that he placed the νοητά, the Forms or Ideas, in some way « outside » the Intelligence, and that he made the παράδειγμα of the *Timaeus* in some way « posterior » to the Demiurge, as Proclus tells us when he is commenting on *Timaeus* 29 A (*In Tim.* I, 322, 24 Diehl). Perhaps he brought the *Timaeus* into connection with the curious passage in *Republic* X 597 B about God making the Idea of Bed, and represented νοῦς as constructing an ideal model of the cosmos which was not only subordinate to and dependent on but in some way external to itself —

Philo too thought of the Ideas as a preliminary plan or model for the universe made by the Divine Architect (*De op. mundi* V), though Philo of course placed the Ideas *in* the Divine Mind, and I am inclined to think that the resemblance to Longinus is not only superficial but fortuitous. This, which is no more than a guess, is at any rate consistent with another guess which I am going to make, on a very small basis of evidence, at the real reason for Longinus's opposition to Plotinus. Porphyry tells us (*Life*, ch. 14) that « when the treatise On *Principles* and the *Philarchaios* of Longinus were read to Plotinus, he said « Longinus is a scholar, but certainly not a philosopher ». From this remark I would hazardously conjecture that Longinus professed himself to be offering the authentic interpretation of Plato based on a close and accurate study of the text of the *Dialogues*, of a kind which Plotinus considered inappropriate to a philosopher—certainly nobody who knew the *Enneads* would insult Plotinus himself by calling his interpretation of Plato « scholarly ». I would even go so far as to suggest that the *Philarchaios* mentioned in the passage just quoted was a work, as we should expect from the context, philosophical in content and purporting to present the ancient and authentic doctrine of Plato as it could be gathered from a close and accurate study of his writings, as against the free and wide-ranging misinterpretations of the moderns who got so much more out of isolated texts than was ever in them. This guess is at least not, I think, inconsistent with (though it is not confirmed by) the other references to Longinus in Proclus's *Timaeus* commentary. It implies that Longinus's main reason for opposing the doctrine of Plotinus about the Ideas was that he could not find it anywhere in Plato. This of course is the first question to be considered in our investigation of the background of Plotinus's doctrine. Was Longinus right about Plato, or was Plotinus ? Before trying to answer this question it will be advisable to pause and consider more

carefully than we have so far done what precisely we are looking for. We are not investigating the origins and background of the Middle Platonist (and Christian Platonist) doctrine that the Ideas are the thoughts of God. No doubt this Middle Platonist doctrine is a forerunner of that of Plotinus, and his knowledge and qualified acceptance of it played an important part in his formulation of his own conception of the relation of Intelligibles to Intellect. But I think that Plotinian scholars would generally agree that it would be an inadequate and unsatisfactory description of this relation to say that for Plotinus the Ideas are the thoughts of Intellect. If we are to summarise his doctrine more or less in his own language and according to his own mind we must say rather « The Ideas are Intellect and Intellect is the Ideas » or « Real Being is Ideas and Intellect; they are one reality described from different points of view. » This means, from the point of view of our enquiry, that any doctrine which we may discover that in some way brings divine mind or divine intelligent soul and Forms or Ideas into a unity, and not only a doctrine that the Ideas are thoughts in a divine mind, has some claim to be considered a forerunner of Plotinus. But even with this widening of the scope of the investigation I cannot say that I have been able to find any evidence that even the beginnings of the development which led to Plotinus's doctrine are *certainly* to be found in the Dialogues of Plato — except in the sense, which everybody would admit, that there are a number of texts which taken in isolation can be interpreted in a Plotinian way and were in antiquity so interpreted. But I am not completely certain that Longinus was right either (his interpretation of the *Timaeus*, if I have guessed its nature rightly, seems to me almost certainly wrong). And with this confession of agnosticism I propose to abandon this very important part of the subject. This will, I am sure, appear to some scholars who specialise in the study of Plato

as very cowardly and frivolous behaviour. I can only plead to them in my defence that the extreme brilliance and extreme variety of their interpretations of Plato has so bedazzled me that I am in a condition of hopeless *aporia*: and that even if I had the competence and the self-confidence to add yet another to the long, majestic and ever-growing series of incompatible versions of Plato's theology it would be unreasonable to expand one section of a paper on Plotinus into the critical history, in at least three volumes, of recent Platonic scholarship which would seem to me the minimum necessary preliminary.

When, however, we turn from Plato to his immediate successors, Speusippus and Xenocrates, there does seem to be fairly good reason for asserting that they maintained the identity of intelligent soul with its mathematically conceived objects. Here I am very much indebted to the careful discussion of the evidence by Merlan in the first two chapters of his *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*. He does seem to me to have shown, if not beyond all doubt at any rate as clearly as can reasonably be expected in this particularly fog-ridden area of the history of ancient philosophy, that we can rely on the ancient attributions to Speusippus and Xenocrates respectively of the definitions of soul as « the idea of the all-extended » (ἰδέα τοῦ πάντῃ διαστατοῦ...) and « a self-moving (or self-changing) number » (ἀριθμὸς κινῶν ἑαυτόν, or αὐτοκίνητος); that these mean that Speusippus identified the soul with the objects of geometry and Xenocrates with the objects of arithmetic; that at least in Xenocrates this way of looking at the soul was closely connected with an interpretation of Plato's description of the making of the world-soul in *Timaeus* 35 A; that Posidonius in commenting on the *Timaeus* followed the same line of thought but found the identification of soul with the objects of only one branch of mathematics objectionable and identified it with the whole range of mathematical objects; that he accepted and regarded

as Platonic the tripartite division, sense-objects, mathematical objects, intelligibles (whether he got it from Aristotle or elsewhere) and combined it with the tripartition of the *Timaeus* so as to arrive at a doctrine of the mathematical soul or animate mathematicals as intermediate between intelligible and sensible being; and that the doctrine as we find it in Iamblichus and Proclus derives ultimately from Posidonius. I do not recapitulate the ancient evidence for this, which will be familiar to my hearers and is fully discussed by Merlan. It is worth noticing that among the later philosophers who adopted this way of thinking was Severus, for whom the world-soul was a geometrical object (Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 152, 27 ff., 153, 21 ff. Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus I, pp. 363-4, Wachsmuth): and we know from Porphyry (*Life*, ch. 14) that Severus was one of the authors read in the school of Plotinus. There is no need, for the purposes of this paper, to go into the very difficult problems which arise about how these descriptions of soul are to be fitted in with our other information about Speusippus and Xenocrates. It is unlikely that Plotinus knew either of them directly; his reference to Xenocrates's definition of soul in VI 5, 9, 14 does not suggest that it was anything more to him than a doxographical tag which could be pressed into service, in his usual manner, to illustrate his own train of thought. Nor, for reasons which I have indicated above, do I propose to try to follow the dark and obstructed trail which Merlan very tentatively and cautiously suggests may lead back from Speusippus and Xenocrates to Plato himself. I will only remark in passing that if this trail leads anywhere it seems to me to lead, not to any sort of doctrine of Ideas as thoughts of a divine intellect or intelligent soul, but to a bringing together of what appear (as far as I can see clearly) in the *Dialogues* to be two kinds of reality, thinking-and-moving principle and form-principle, in quite a different way by deriving them both from or composing them both

of the ultimate mathematical elements of reality. And the reason why I have mentioned this line of thought is not, of course, because I think that even the developed doctrine, as we find it in Posidonius and after, which we can assume that Plotinus knew, is the source of Plotinus's own doctrine. The difference between an identification of intermediate intelligent soul with intermediate mathematicals and an identification of Intellect, sharply distinguished from soul, with the ultimate intelligibles, the Platonic Forms, is much too great to make it possible to regard one as derived from the other. But it does seem important to notice, when we are considering the background of Plotinus's doctrine, that a view of reality which simply identifies the thinking-and-moving principle with what we should normally consider the objects of its thought and the patterns of its activity, appears to be established in the Platonic tradition well before, as I think, we find any evidence for the view of reality which makes the objects of thinking and the norms of intelligent activity eternal thoughts in a divine mind. I propose next to try to trace the origins of this latter view, as I am leaving, for reasons which I think will become apparent, the influence of Aristotle's noetic on Plotinus to a later stage of this enquiry. I should however like to remark at this stage that the way in which Aristotle substitutes self-thinking intellects for the Platonic separate immaterial realities, the Forms, is perhaps another illustration of how easy it was for a philosopher brought up in the Academy to regard rational thinking and rational objects as the same thing, or very much the same sort of thing, though I would not like to press this too far. And, to return to Xenocrates for a moment, the fact that he applied the name νοῦς to the monad, the first principle of reality (Aetius Plac. I, 7, 30. Dox. p. 304 *b*) certainly points in the same direction: though without more knowledge of the context than we have I should not care to speculate on what precisely Xenocrates

may have meant by this identification. Later Neo-Pythagoreans like Nicomachus (*Introduction to Arithmetic* I, 6, cp. I, 4) combine the identification of νοῦς and monad (and the regarding of the Ideas as numbers) with the doctrine of the Idea-Numbers as thoughts of the Divine Mind, which was well established by the 2nd century A.D. But this of course is no evidence that Xenocrates himself thought in this way.

The evidence of the Sicilian Alcimus, brought forward by Witt and others to show that a doctrine that the Ideas were the thoughts of God was attributed to Plato by some at least of his contemporaries, does not seem to me very impressive. The patriotic insistence of the worthy Alcimus, as reported by Diogenes Laertius, that Plato owed a great deal to Epicharmus, does not inspire much confidence in, the clarity of his mind. And when he said (Diog. Laert. III, 13) ἔστι δὲ τῶν εἰδῶν ἓν ἕκαστον ἀίδιόν τε καὶ νόημα, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀπαθές, I should be inclined to agree with Cherniss (in his review of Witt's *Albinus*, *American Journal of Philology* 59, 354-5) that it was a muddled reminiscence of *Parmenides* 132 B. Alternatively, Alcimus may have meant no more by calling the Form a νόημα than that it was immaterial, an object of thought, not an object of sense (this explanation would be unsatisfactory if we had any reason to suppose that Alcimus used words with philosophical precision). In any case, the sentence seems to me too inadequate a foundation to support belief in a fourth-century doctrine of the Ideas as the thoughts of God. And I agree again with Cherniss and with Audrey Rich in her excellent article: *The Platonic Ideas as the Thoughts of God* (*Mnemosyne* S. IV, Vol. VII², 1954, pp. 123-133) that there is good evidence for an interpretation of the Forms as thoughts in the human mind (the suggestion made and rejected in the *Parmenides*) before there is evidence for an interpretation of them as thoughts in a divine mind. The

early Stoics in particular seems to have been in the habit of explaining them away on these lines (cp. Zeno as reported in Stobaeus *Ecl.* I, 12, 6). There does not, however, seem to me to be any need to assume, as Miss Rich does at the end of her article, an influence of Aristotle's theory of artificial γένεσις to account for the placing of the Ideas in the divine mind. The thought that a craftsman has, before he starts work, a plan or pattern in his mind of what he is going to do seems to me a very simple and obvious one, which might have come into anyone's mind without being put there by an eminent philosopher; and, as Miss Rich herself remarks (p. 131) Plato uses παράδειγμα both for « the external, transcendent Idea and the internal immanent plan » (she cites *Republic* 561 E and 472 D) — thus providing a starting-point for this way of thinking if any historian of philosophy considers it against the generally accepted rules of the game of source-hunting to assume that anyone could have thought of the same simple idea independently. It is only the specific influence of Aristotle which I wish to deny. What seems to me undoubtedly true in Miss Rich's account of the passages which refer to the Ideas as the thoughts of God is that again and again the doctrine appears in what I may call a « demiurgic » context; the Ideas in the mind of God are the plan or pattern on which he makes the world: the earliest and best known example is the Philo passage which I have already referred to, but there are plenty of others, some of which Miss Rich cites. Now this is an important observation from the point of view of our enquiry, because, as I think everyone will agree, Plotinus's doctrine of the unity of Intellect and Intelligibles is not really « demiurgic ». Intellect in his system is not directly responsible for the formation of the visible world; the powers which are, Soul or Logos, though they are and contain *logoi* from the intelligible world, are other than and dependent on their intelligible model in very much the same way that the

Demiurge of the *Timaeus* as interpreted by Cornford is other than and dependent upon his intelligible model. Intellect is certainly called « the true demiurge and maker » in V 9 [5] 3, 26 (cp. II 3 [52] 18, 15), but it is so only as providing Soul with the *logoi* which are the forms of sensible things, not as making the universe directly. The writers who put forward the doctrine that the Ideas are the thoughts of God seem very often to be concerned with the questions « On what pattern did God make the world ? » and « What is the relationship between the Maker and the pattern he used in making ? » Plotinus in formulating his doctrine that the Intelligibles are in Intellect seems to me to be concerned with a question of a different sort « What is the relationship of eternal intuitive thought to its object (or objects) and how is that object to be conceived ? » In most of the rest of this paper I shall be engaged in trying to show what led Plotinus to ask this question and who had asked and tried to answer it before him. But first it will be as well, for the sake of completeness, to state who I think is the most probable originator of the doctrine of the Ideas as the thoughts of God in its simple « demiurgic » form, in which the Ideas are the plan or pattern in God's mind according to which he made the physical universe. I am afraid my answer to this question is unoriginal and unexciting. I have no hitherto unknown or unnoticed Neo-Pythagorean to put forward as a candidate, nor do I propose to maintain that this was the esoteric doctrine which the New Academy concealed under an outward show of scepticism. It seems to me that much the most likely person to have originated the doctrine is Antiochus of Ascalon: the arguments put forward by Theiler and Luck, and now supplemented by Loenen in the second of his two articles on Albinus in *Mnemosyne* (S. IV, vol. IX [4], 1956, pp. 296-319 and X [1], 1957, pp. 35-56), to which I am much indebted, seem to me reasonably convincing. I shall not recapitulate their discussions here,

but I should like to draw attention to the point which Loenen makes (on p. 45 of his second article), that the fact that Antiochus believed that Platonism and Stoicism were in all essentials the same, and the Stoic doctrines were to be found in Plato, provides a sufficient reason for his conceiving of the Ideas as the thoughts of God, because this is the only way in which they can be fitted into Stoic theology. They become, to repeat a formulation of my own which has been approved by Luck « the immanent wisdom in the mind of the divine Fire-Reason conceived as Providence operating in the upper, aethereal, regions of the Cosmos. » We must add, however, that though the doctrine does provide a way of bringing the Ideas into the Stoic system, and this was probably why Antiochus thought of it, it seems to have gained wide currency in such vague and general terms as to be in no way obviously or necessarily bound up with Stoic physical theology. It could be, and was, regarded, from Philo onwards, as perfectly compatible with Jewish or Christian theism, and it found its way easily and naturally into the thought of Platonists like Albinus who believed in a transcendent and immaterial God.

Loenen's statement (p. 46 of his second article) that Albinus was « the first Platonist, as far as we know, who explicitly, and as forming part of a consistent theory, transposed this interpretation of Antiochus [the Ideas as God's thoughts] to the level of the transcendent God » seems to be true with the qualifications which he gives it. This alone would make Albinus interesting from the point of view of the present investigation. But he seems to me even more interesting because in his *Epitome* we meet for the first time Aristotle's doctrine of divine νοῦς introduced into Platonism, and furthermore, if I am not mistaken, with a critical rethinking of that doctrine on Platonic lines which anticipates the more subtle and elaborate criticism and rethinking of it in Plotinus. Here I find myself for once in slight disa-

greement with Loenen. His account of Albinus seems to me in general most convincing and satisfactory. I agree with him that Albinus was a coherent and original thinker, and not a mere muddled eclectic to be discerpted into his « sources ». Loenen's remarks about the prejudices and presuppositions of historians of philosophy which have led to his being treated, along with other Middle Platonists, in this way, are true and important. But I think that, in his laudable anxiety to refute what I agree are misinterpretations, he has played down the Aristotelian element in Albinus rather too much. On the only point which is strictly relevant to our enquiry, the relationship of the divine intellect which stands at the head of Albinus's system to its object, Loenen, though he admits and indeed emphasises that this supreme intellect in its relation of final causality to the cosmos is Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, wishes to minimise as much as possible the influence of Aristotle's account of the divine thinking on Albinus's statements about God and his thoughts (see in particular p. 314 of his first article). Now I agree with him that Albinus's *starting-point* is not the Aristotelian νόησις νοήσεως but the doctrine, which he assumes without discussion as Plato's, of the ideas as the thoughts of God; and that Albinus never actually speaks of God's thinking as νόησις νοήσεως. But Albinus does say that God thinks himself — though going on immediately to add « and his own thoughts ». The relevant passage in *Epitome*, ch. X (which Loenen dismisses rather too casually) runs: ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς κάλλιστος, δεῖ καὶ κάλλιστον αὐτῷ νοητὸν ὑποκεῖσθαι, οὐδὲν δὲ αὐτοῦ κάλλιον. ἑαυτὸν ἂν οὖν καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ νοήματα ἀεὶ νοοίη, καὶ ἄυτη ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ ἰδέα ὑπάρχει.

It seems to me most unlikely that a philosopher who knew something about Aristotelian theology could have written this without intending an explicit reference to the discussion of divine thought in *Metaphysics* Λ ch. 9 (1074 *b* 15-

1075 *a* 11). What Albinus seems to me to be doing here is something more interesting and intelligent than simply tacking the doctrine of the Ideas as thoughts of God on to his conception of God as an Aristotelian νοῦς. He is, as I suggested at the beginning of this section, critically rethinking Aristotle on Platonic lines. He accepts from Aristotle that God's thought must be self-thought: but it seems to him (I conjecture) as it has seemed to many critics of Aristotle since, that a bare νόησις νοήσεως is a limited, sterile and unsatisfactory conception. So by boldly combining the Aristotelian doctrine of the identity of thought and its object in the case of immaterial beings(*Met.* 1074 *b* 38-1075 *a* 5) with the doctrine of the Ideas as the thoughts of God, which he assumes, as I have said, without discussion, he arrives at the doctrine that for God to think himself is to think the Ideas, that is the whole of intelligible reality. God is eternally actual thought and that thought is the Ideas, so in thinking himself, what he really is, it is the Ideas which he thinks. If this interpretation of Albinus is correct it is obviously of the greatest importance for our own enquiry. We shall have in second-century Platonism an example of the sort of critical but positive use of Aristotle which is so characteristic of Plotinus; and we shall have appearing for the first time in the Platonic tradition that combination of the Aristotelian identification of eternally actual νοῦς and νοητόν with the interpretation of the νοητόν as the Platonic Ideas which is the basis of Plotinus's doctrine. The resemblance to Plotinus at this point in Albinus's system is further increased by the fact that the Ideas in Albinus, though they are paradigms of the cosmos (as they are in Plotinus) are not the plan in the mind of the maker; the maker (or rather orderer) of the cosmos is the cosmic intelligent soul — here I agree entirely with Loenen's interpretation — which the supreme νοῦς brings from potency to act by « waking », it and directing it πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς

ἑαυτοῦ νοήσεις. Here we have something at least very like the actualisation of the lower thinking principle by a νοητόν on a higher level which is such an important feature of the philosophy of Plotinus. I do not of course want to deny that there are important differences, at this as at many other points in the two systems. But the resemblances seem to me to be enough to make it at least quite likely that Plotinus read Albinus (not necessarily, of course, the *Epitome*) and took some ideas from him. We cannot, I think, positively affirm that he did. We know (*Life*, ch. 14, 12) that Gaius was read in the school of Plotinus. But Albinus is not mentioned in that list, and Loenen (pp. 36-40 of his second article) has very thoroughly refuted the idea that Albinus is nothing but a reproduction of Gaius. On the other hand, I suppose no-one would seriously want to confine Plotinus's reading-list to the books which Porphyry says he used as the basis of his lectures.

Even if Plotinus read Albinus, however, it would be quite unreasonable to suppose that his reading of the earlier Platonist was the only, or the principal, source of the Aristotelian element which is so apparent in his doctrine of intellect. It has been noticed often enough, from Porphyry onwards (*Life*, ch. 14, 4-7) that there is a very large Aristotelian component in the thought of Plotinus; and it would, I think, be generally agreed that it is in his doctrine of intellect that it is most evident. Plotinus obviously knew his Aristotle, and the Peripatetic commentators, very well, and we continually find him critically considering Peripatetic doctrine, by no means always, perhaps not in most cases, wholly rejecting it but rethinking it, adapting it, and using it for his own purposes. One particular piece of rethinking of Aristotelianism which is of the greatest importance from the point of view of our enquiry is his critical study and part-acceptance, part-rejection of the doctrine of the identity of the supreme νοῦς and νοητόν in a single simple reality in the

form, as I think, in which he found it in Alexander of Aphrodisias. We know that the commentaries of Alexander were read in the school of Plotinus (Porphyry, *Life*, ch. 14, 13); and he seems to have devoted particular attention to Alexander's writings on Aristotelian psychology, especially to those parts of them which deal with the Active Intellect. Alexander, as we know, identified this with Aristotle's First Cause (Alexander, *De anima*, p. 89, 22-3. Bruns): and a great deal that he says about it is very close in content and spirit to Plotinus. One passage in particular is worth quoting, though it is not strictly relevant to our main theme, because it provides the most solid evidence that I can find that Plotinus knew and used these particular writings of Alexander. It occurs in the *Mantissa* (p. 112, 18-113, 2. Bruns) and deals with the working of the divine intellect in and through our human intellect. It runs as follows:

ὁ γὰρ ἡμέτερος νοῦς σύνθετός ἐστιν ἔκ τε τῆς δυνάμεως, ἥτις ὄργανόν ἐστι τοῦ θείου νοῦ, ὃν δυνάμει νοῦν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης καλεῖ, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἐνεργείας. Ὧν θατέρου μὴ παρόντος ἀδύνατον ἡμᾶς νοεῖν. Εὐθὺ γὰρ τῇ πρώτῃ καταβολῇ τοῦ σπέρματός ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργείᾳ νοῦς διὰ πάντων γε κεχωρηκὼς καὶ ὢν ἐνεργείᾳ, ὡς καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ σώματι τῶν τυχόντων. Ἐπειδὰν δὲ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας δυνάμεως ἐνεργήσῃ, τότε ἡμέτερος νοῦς οὗτος λέγεται καὶ ἡμεῖς νοοῦμεν, ὥσπερ εἴ τις τεχνίτην ἐννοήσαι τοτὲ μὲν ἄνευ ὀργάνων ἐνεργοῦντα κατὰ τὴν τέχνην, τοτὲ δὲ καὶ μετ' ὀργάνων, ὅτε καὶ ἡ κατὰ τῆν τέχνην ἐνέργεια αὐτῷ περὶ τῆν ὕλην γίνεται. Τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ὁ θεῖος νοῦς ἀεὶ μὲν ἐνεργεῖ (διὸ καὶ ἔστιν ἐνεργείᾳ), καὶ δι' ὀργάνου δέ, ὁτὰν ἐκ τῆς συγκρίσεως τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τῆς εὐκρασίας γένηται ὄργανον τοιοῦτον. ὑλικὴν γὰρ ἤδη τινὰ τότε ἐνέργειαν ἐνεργεῖ καὶ ἔστιν οὗτος ἡμέτερος νοῦς. Καὶ ἐκκρίνεται δή, ὅνπερ τρόπον καὶ εἰσκρίνεται. Οὐ γὰρ ἀλλαχοῦ ὢν μεταβαίνει, ἀλλὰ τῷ παντα-χοῦ εἶναι μένει καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐκ τῆς ἐκκρίσεως διαλυομένῳ σώματι φθειρομένου τοῦ ὀργανικοῦ, ὡς ὁ τεχνίτης ἀποβαλὼν τὰ

ὄργανα ἐνεργεῖ μὲν καὶ τότε, οὐ μὴν ὑλικὴν καὶ ὀργανικὴν ἐνέργειαν [1].

The psychology of this passage is not, of course, Plotinian; it is Alexander's own characteristic version of the psychology of Aristotle. None the less there are some interesting points of general resemblance to Plotinus. The question when and in what sense the divine intellect can be said to be « ours » (112, 24-5, 30) is one which interested Plotinus greatly and which he discusses at length in terms of his own philosophy (I. 1 [53] 7-8; V 3 [49] 3-4). The conception, too, of intellect remaining ever active and ever present, but only active in us when we are in an appropriate state to receive it is also one which Plotinus finds acceptable and transposes into the terms of his own thought (e. g.: VI 4 [22] 3; VI 5 [23] 12 — passages which certainly also show the distance Plotinus had travelled from Alexander, even if he was one of his starting-points). But there is also a more precise resemblance in imagery and even language. Alexander in this passage speaks of the divine intellect as being like a craftsman who sometimes works with tools and sometimes without (112, 25-6, 113, 1-2) Plotinus, in a fine passage at the end of the treatise *On Well-Being* (I 4 [46] 16, 20-29) speaks of the good man's attitude to his lower corporeal self « that which is fastened on to him » (τοῦ προσε-ζευγμένου); he describes it as follows; οὗ φροντιεῖ καὶ ἀνέ-ξεται, ἕως δυνατόν, οἷον εἰ μουσικὸς λύρας, ἕως οἷόν τε χρῆσθαι. Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἄλλην ἀλλάξεται, ἢ ἀφήσει τὰς λύρας χρήσεις καὶ

[1] As Professor Dodds pointed out in the discussion, this passage comes from the section of the *Mantissa* which Alexander states is taken from a lecture of Aristokles (110, 4 Bruns, with Zeller's generally accepted emendation 'Αριστοκλέους for 'Αριστοτέλους). It seems to me impossible to be quite certain how much of the whole passage 110, 4-113, 24 is a report of what Aristokles actually said; and there is no evidence that the lecture which Alexander is here reporting was ever in circulation anywhere else in written form. So we are justified, I think, in assuming that Plotinus read the passage in the *Mantissa* rather than in a work of Aristokles.

τοῦ εἰς λύραν ἐνεργεῖν ἀφέξεται ἄλλο ἔργον ἄνευ λύρας ἔχων καὶ κειμένην πλησίον περιόψεται ᾄδων ἄνευ ὀργάνων. Καὶ οὐ μάτην αὐτῷ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄργανον ἐδόθη· Ἐχρήσατο γὰρ αὐτῷ ἤδη πολλάκις.

The two images seem to me closely related, though Plotinus's, as we should expect, is more sharply visualised and poetic; the idea which they convey is the same, the activity always going on, always essentially the same, but sometimes using instruments, sometimes laying them aside. But what makes me almost certain that Plotinus had the Alexander passage in mind when he wrote is the odd plural ἄνευ ὀργάνων, which does not fit very well in its Plotinian context and looks to me like a verbal reminiscence of Alexander's ἄνευ ὀργάνων ἐνεργοῦντα..

Alexander, in the passages in both the *De Anima* and the *Mantissa* in which he deals with the divine intellect, insists particularly strongly on the identity of νοῦς and νοητόν at this highest level (*De anima* 87, 43-88, 5. *Mantissa* 108, 7-9, 16-19, 109, 23-110, 3. Bruns). I think it would be difficult for anyone to compare the *Mantissa* in particular with Plotinus's discussions of the same subject, and especially the long argument, very Aristotelian in its phraseology, of V 3, 5, without coming to the conclusion that Alexander provides at least a very likely starting-point for Plotinus's thinking about the identity of intellect with its object. But Plotinus, in his usual manner, critically rethought and adapted this piece of Peripatetic theological psychology to his own purposes, and two features of his adaptation are especially interesting from the point of view of our present investigation. The first is that he seems to consider himself entitled to assume without discussion the identity of the Aristotelian νοητόν with the Platonic νοητά, to apply, without preliminary demonstration of its applicability, what the Peripatetics say of the self-thought of the νοῦς which is its own νοητόν to the self-thought of his own νοῦς which

thinks the World of Forms which it is. The Aristotelian doctrine in this context appears to him as a support against Platonists like Longinus who placed the Forms outside Intellect, not as something to be attacked because, as it might be expected to seem to a Platonist, it evacuated the divine thinking of all intelligible content. This suggests strongly to me that he found the identification of the self which the divine intellect thinks with the Forms ready made and took it over, and I do not know where he could have taken it from except Albinus: so it now seems still more likely that he knew and used the work of his second-century predecessor. The second feature is the line which he consistently takes in demonstrating that Intellect cannot be the first principle, that we must go on beyond being and intelligence to their source, the One or Good. This, as is well known, is his principal reason for dissatisfaction with the conclusions of previous theologians, Aristotelian or Platonist. They had been content to present their first principle as an Intellect, however transcendent and ineffable. Plotinus, moved by a conviction about the absolute simplicity of the first principle, whose origins, in so far as it is not original, it is outside the scope of this paper to explore, denied that even the highest intellect fulfilled the necessary conditions; we must go beyond. The point I wish to make here is simply that his demonstrations that Intellect cannot be the first principle (or, conversely, that the One is not intellect and does not think, as in VI 7, 40-41) always take the form of showing the insufficient simplicity of the Aristotelian self-thinking intellect. It is not the multiplicity of the Forms in it which disqualifies Intellect for being the First but the distinction, even if it is only a logical distinction, between thought and object of thought, which necessarily involves a sort of multiplicity. Alexander had asserted the simplicity of the divine intellect (*Mantissa* 109, 28-110, 3, Bruns), and Plotinus is perfectly prepared to admit that it

is simple, in a sense which would have satisfied Alexander (V 3). — he will, for that matter, speak even of soul as ἁπλοῦς ἐν οὐσίᾳ (I 1, 2, 22). But the kind of simplicity which he is prepared, in agreement with the Peripatetics, to assert of the divine intellect is not, in his view, sufficient for the first principle, as he demonstrates frequently and nowhere more fully than in the later chapters of the treatise (V 3) which he begins by arguing that Intellect is simple. It may be ἁπλοῦς, but it is not τὸ πάντη ἁπλοῦν (V 3, 11, 28; 13, 17) ἁπλούστατον. (V 3, 13, 35). The whole discussion starts from the Aristotelian conception of the self-thinking divine intellect as presented by Alexander, which Plotinus accepts as true as far as it goes but as requiring (which the Peripatetics did not see) the awareness of a Source which transcends intellect. It is Alexander's thought about intellect which seems to provide the initial stimulus which led Plotinus to work out one of his most distinctive doctrines, the denial of intellection to the One: a doctrine which, as we can see if we look at V 4 [7] 2, 13-20, does not mean that the One has no sort of consciousness, intelligence, or awareness but that the Peripatetic description of the divine thought which is identical with its object is not adequate to express the absolute simplicity of the first principle. This of course implies that Plotinus regarded the Peripatetic doctrine, as he knew and understood it, as a correct account of divine intellect, and indeed the only correct one. If he had not had it before him as clearly set out as it was by Alexander, it is at least possible that he would have remained content, like his Neo-Pythagorean predecessors, to identify Intellect and the Monad, or, like Albinus, to apply the language of absolute simplicity and ineffability to a supreme self-thinking intelligence. He might, I suppose, have worked out his own doctrine simply by trying to elucidate the obscurities of Middle Platonist accounts like Albinus *Epitome* X: but the clarity of Alexander's account must have

helped him greatly in arriving at his own conclusions. (Incidentally, as we have had occasion to mention V 4, 2, it is worth suggesting that the description of the Good as τὸ νοητόν in this chapter[1] may have been the result of Plotinus remembering, or half-remembering, a passage of Alexander *De anima* (88, 24-89, 5, Bruns), in which the Active Intellect is spoken of as τὸ κυρίως τε καὶ μάλιστα νοητὸν εἶδος and it is said that, just as light causes sight and the supreme good causes the goodness of all other goods, so the supreme νοητόν is the cause of the νόησις of all other things: so that here again we should have a transposition of Alexander into terms of Plotinus's own thought.)

My conclusions, then, about the background of the doctrine « that the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect » are as follows. It seems to me not impossible that Plotinus's mind was influenced to some slight extent by the doctrine of the identification of the soul with mathematicals which he knew from Severus, and perhaps from other sources. The influence of the simple, un-Aristotelianized doctrine of the Ideas as « thoughts of God », as he found it in Atticus and others, may well have been somewhat greater. The passages V 9, 3 and II 3, 18, to which I have referred, with their assertion that Intellect is the true demiurge and maker of the universe, show that Plotinus knew, and wished to respect at least verbally, the tradition which made the Forms in the *Timaeus* the plan in the mind of the divine architect. But I think that the principal stimulus to the train of thought which led Plotinus to formulate his own doctrine was his study of the Peripatetic doctrine of the identity of divine intellect and its object in the light of Albinus's identification of the Peripatetic divine νοητόν with the νοητά of the « thoughts of God » interpretation of Platonism, the Forms of Ideas. This identification is extremely important, because

[1] Cp. V 6 [24] 2, where the demonstration that the ultimate νοητόν need not itself think may well be directed against Alexander.

it is only through it that the doctrine of the self-thinking intellect can be brought into a Platonic system. And, though I do not wish to deny that Plotinus may have found the Peripatetic doctrine in Aristotle himself or in other commentators, Aspasius or Adrastus, it seems to me that his most likely principal source is the very full and clear exposition in the psychological writings of his great near-contemporary, Alexander of Aphrodisias. We have seen that there is some evidence to suggest that Plotinus knew these actual treatises, and he would certainly have read them with sympathy and interest. Alexander's identification of divine intellect and active intellect, which makes the illuminating cause of our thinking a divine principle which is ours in a sense, when we think by it, and yet transcends us, brings his doctrine in one way very close to that of Plotinus.

Plotinus's method of philosophising appears from this investigation to have been, at least in that restricted area of his thinking which we have surveyed, very much as Porphyry describes it in the fourteenth chapter of the *Life*: original speculation based on a critical and independent-minded study of his predecessors, particularly of the Platonist and Aristotelian commentators and expositors of the century or so before he began his philosophical career. In a study of this kind, devoted to background and influences, the originality and independent-mindedness of Plotinus may not have appeared as clearly as it should. But this does not mean that I question it; nor, I think, would anyone who knows the doctrine of Intellect as expounded in the *Enneads,* and also the earlier writings to which I have referred, find it easy to deny that Plotinus, though indebted to his predecessors, had made something new out of his material. Even that too easy method of denying his originality by supposing that Ammonius Saccas had already done all his thinking for him seems to me ruled out as regards the doctrine we are considering by the fact that Longinus clearly regarded it,

and attacked it, as Plotinus's own. And, having arrived back by a somewhat circuitous route at the formidable figure of the great critic with whom we began, we can appropriately end by remembering the eloquent tributes which he paid to Plotinus's philosophical seriousness and originality, which Porphyry reports at length in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of his *Life:* tributes the justice of which is confirmed by the influence which Plotinus has exerced and the interest he has aroused through the centuries since Longinus wrote, and not least by the calling together of this distinguished assembly in his honour.