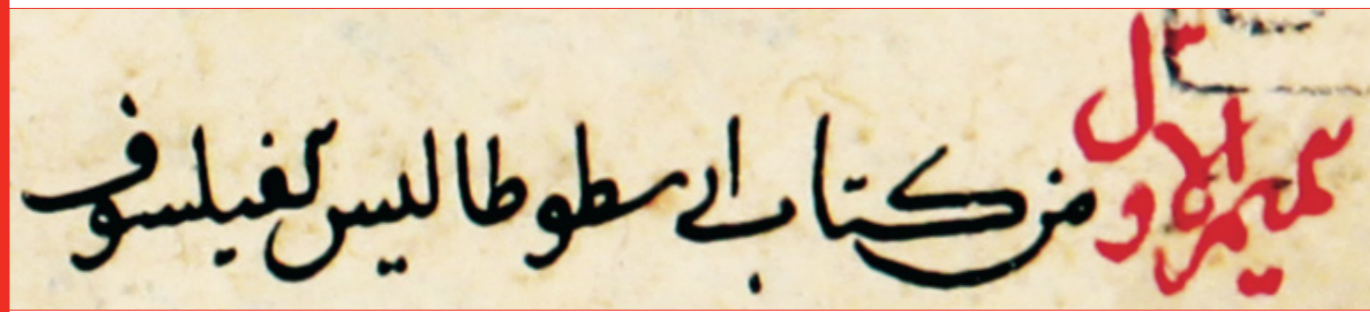
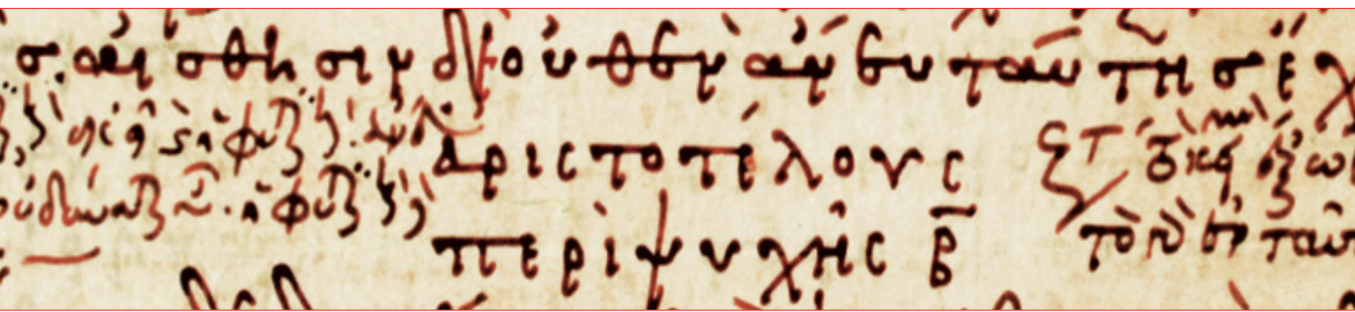


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Hellenistic Philosophy in Baghdad

Plotinus' anti-Stoic Argumentations and their Arabic Survival

Cristina D'Ancona *

to Gerhard Endress on his 75 birthday

Abstract

Submitted to the conference “Die Blüte der arabischen Philosophie und ihre Früchte in Europa. Festkolloquium zum 75. Geburtstag von Gerhard Endress” organized by Jörn Thielmann and Cleophea Ferrari in Bochum, November 26-27, 2014, this paper deals with Plotinus' arguments against total blending (κρᾶσις δι' ὅλων) and their reception in the formative period of Arabic philosophy. Actual dissection of a body by a body to infinity proves to be impossible: hence, only an incorporeal reality – the soul – can be omnipresent in the body. This Plotinian topic, reminiscent of the interschool polemics of the Imperial age, was transmitted to the Arabic-speaking philosophers through the adapted version of *Ennead* IV 7[2].

One of the main lessons taught by Gerhard Endress to all those interested in the heritage of Greek philosophy in the Muslim world is the necessity to pay special attention to the steps of the translation movement. His thorough analysis of the Graeco-Arabic transmission and the rise of Arabic science and philosophy turned out rapidly to be the landmark study of the “stages” of the philosophical and scientific enculturation of the Arabic-speaking élite in Baghdad.¹ What was before an enormous amount of translations listed and classified by those among the Orientalists who laid the foundations of the Graeco-Arabic studies² became under the guidance of Endress' *Proclus Arabus*³ and *Die wissenschaftliche Literatur*⁴ the history of a development. After having outlined the translations from

* My warmest thanks go to Concetta Luna for her reading of a first draft of this article. This reading saved me from a number of errors; for those which remain I am alone responsible.

¹ G. Endress, “Die wissenschaftliche Literatur”, in H. Gärtje (ed.), *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie* II. *Literaturwissenschaft*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1987, pp. 400-506 (henceforth “Wissenschaftliche Lit. II”); Id., “Die wissenschaftliche Literatur”, in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie* III. *Supplement*, hrsg. von W. Fischer, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1992, pp. 3-152 (henceforth “Wissenschaftliche Lit. III”).

² Of special importance is the pioneering work of M. Steinschneider, *Die arabische Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1960 (reprint of a series of studies published between 1889 and 1896 in the journals *Beihfte zum Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, *Zeitschrift für Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, and *Archiv für pathologische Anatomie und Physiologie und für klinische Medizin*). The extremely rich information on the Graeco-Arabic translations is organized according to scientific fields and authors within the fields, in a way which is reminiscent of the classical model represented by the *K. al-Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm. Steinschneider was commemorated in a centennial conference held in 2007 (see below the book announcement by E. Coda of the volume issued from this conference, p. 423) as well as by G. Endress, “Kulturtransfer und Lehrüberlieferung. Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907) und *Die Juden als Dolmetscher*”, *Oriens* 39 (2011), pp. 59-74.

³ G. Endress, *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in Arabischer Übersetzung*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden 1973 (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 10).

⁴ See n. 1.

Greek into Syriac and the first encounter of the Arabs with some Greek philosophical literature, with Persian and Indian astrology, astronomy, and mathematics,⁵ Endress guided his readers from the translations of the circle of al-Kindī with their typical mix of Aristotelian cosmology and Neoplatonic metaphysics⁶ to the fully-fledged acquaintance with Aristotle and Galen that was the outcome of the activity of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his followers,⁷ and then again to the age of the commentaries, both translated and authored by the so-called “Aristotelians of Baghdad”.⁸ I would like to add my personal token of deep gratitude for this invaluable contribution to the understanding of the origins of scientific and philosophical thought in Arabic, and I will do it by means of something which very much resembles bringing owls to Athens. My focus is a detail in the main fresco of the translations of the circle of al-Kindī, namely the trace left in this early Arab scholarly community by a philosophical debate typical of the Hellenistic and Imperial ages.

To some extent, the learned men of the age of al-Kindī were acquainted with what we nowadays call “Hellenistic philosophy” in the broad sense of the term, namely, all that is neither classical Greek philosophy, nor late Antique thought.⁹ The main conduit for the Arab knowledge of Hellenistic thought in this formative period of the *falsafa* was the translation of the so-called *Placita Philosophorum* of the pseudo-Plutarch, a translation made by Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā before 912.¹⁰

⁵ Endress, “Wissenschaftliche Lit. II”, pp. 407-16.

⁶ Endress, “Wissenschaftliche Lit. II”, pp. 420-9. Prepared by the lexical and stylistic analysis of the translations from Greek presented in his *Die arabischen Übersetzungen von Aristoteles' Schrift De Caelo*, Inaugural-Dissertation, Bildstelle der J.W. Goethe Universität, Frankfurt a. M. 1966, as well as in the *Proclus Arabus* (see above, n. 3), the existence of a group of translators and scientists directed by al-Kindī is discussed at length by G. Endress, “The Circle of al-Kindī. Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy”, in G. Endress - R. Kruk (eds.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism*, Research School CNWS, Leiden 1997, pp. 43-76; see also G. Endress, “Building the Library of Arabic Philosophy. Platonism and Aristotelianism in the Sources of al-Kindī”, in C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists. Proceedings of the Meeting of the European Science Foundation Network “Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought. Patterns in the Constitution of European Culture”*, Strasbourg, March 12-14, 2004, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2007 (Philosophia Antiqua, 107), pp. 319-50.

⁷ Endress, “Wissenschaftliche Lit. III”, 28-37; on the “school of Ḥunayn” (in the broad sense) see Endress, “The Circle of al-Kindī”, pp. 48-9.

⁸ Endress, “Wissenschaftliche Lit. II”, 429-31; Id., *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. An Analytical Inventory*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1977; Id., “Grammatik und Logik. Arabische Philologie und griechische Philosophie im Widerstreit”, in B. Mojsisch (ed.), *Sprachphilosophie in Antike und Mittelalter*, Grüner, Amsterdam 1986, pp. 163-299 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 3).

⁹ “Hellenistic” is a broad-spectrum label: while in general history it designates the period between the death of Alexander the Great, 323 BC, and the battle of Actium, 31 BC, the (admittedly conventional) boundaries vary in the history of art, or history of literature. In addition to the foundational study by A. Momigliano, “Genesi storica e funzione attuale del concetto di ellenismo”, *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 16 (1935), pp. 10-37, reprinted in Id., *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici*, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma 1979, pp. 165-93 (Storia e letteratura. Raccolta di studi e testi, 47), see M. Isnardi Parente, “Filosofia postaristotelica o filosofia ellenistica: storia di un concetto storiografico”, *Annali dell'Istituto italiano per gli studi storici* 9 (1985-6), pp. 165-93. According to M. Frede, “Epilogue”, in K. Algra - J. Barnes - J. Mansfeld - M. Schofield, *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, Cambridge U.P., New York 2005 (1st edition 1999), pp. 771-97, in part. p. 790, in its narrow sense the label “Hellenistic philosophy” covers the span of time “from roughly 300 BC to about 125 BC”.

¹⁰ Edition: H. Daiber, *Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung*, F. Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden 1980 (Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission, 33), reviewed by D. Gutas, “The Present State and Future Task of Graeco-Arabic Studies: remarks apropos H. Daiber's *Aetius Arabus*”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1982), pp. 113-23. The translator of the *Placita Philosophorum* into Arabic, Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā, was active in Baghdad as a scientist and philosopher: he authored writings on philosophy, medicine (e.g. the *Medical Regime for the Pilgrims to Mecca*), and philosophical physiology (the well-known *Book on the Difference between Spirit and Soul*);

Important though it may be from the viewpoint of the acquaintance with Greek cosmology, neither the *Placita Philosophorum* nor other items of this literary genre in Arabic which include Hellenistic materials¹¹ do convey a typical feature of philosophy in this age, namely interschool polemics.¹² The first part of this paper deals with a text that conveys a specimen of the vibrant debate of the Imperial age, on a philosophical issue in which Plotinus both attests an earlier discussion and he himself takes the floor; then, I will proceed to discuss what the Arabic version has kept intact of that debate, and what has been modified in it. Finally, an outline of the importance of this version in the formative period of Arabic philosophy will be presented.

Plotinus: Hellenistic Doctrines on Soul and Interschool Polemics of the Imperial Age

The passage that forms the basis of this analysis, first in itself and then in its Arabic rendition, comes from Plotinus' treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul*. In the systematic classification of his works created by Porphyry – the *Enneads* – this treatise is the seventh of the fourth ennead, hence its label as IV 7, while in the chronological order given by Porphyry in his introductory essay to the *Enneads*, entitled *Life of Plotinus and Order of his Books*, it comes as the second treatise, hence the complete label as IV 7[2].

The *Immortality of the Soul* has been presented not only as an early writing,¹³ but also as a “scholastic” work, in which Plotinus almost paid lip service to a Platonic stereotype.¹⁴ This opinion has much to do with the idea that here he does nothing more than endorse a series of objections already raised by earlier Platonists against the materialistic accounts of the soul and its destiny. The objections that feature in this treatise had allegedly been collected, prior to Plotinus, in a “Middle-

he also translated from Greek into Arabic parts of Aristotle's *Physics* with the commentary of John Philoponus (*K. al-Fibrst*, p. 250.13-15 Flügel = p. 310.25-27 Tağaddud). According to the *K. al-Fibrst*, p. 243.18 Flügel = p. 304.9-10 Tağaddud, Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā brought with him from his native Baalbek some material to be translated; nothing prevents us from imagining that it was in this way that the *Placita Philosophorum* reached Baghdad. Be that as it may, Quṣṭā's translation made the Arab readership acquainted with a collection of the opinions of the Greek philosophers from the Presocratic to the Stoics.

¹¹ Cf. H. Daiber, “Hellenistisch-kaiserzeitliche Doxographie und philosophischer Synkretismus in islamischer Zeit”, in W. Haase - H. Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* (henceforth: *ANRW*), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1994, II.37, pp. 4974-92; D. Gutas, “Pre-Plotinian Philosophy in Arabic (other than Platonism and Aristotelianism): a Review of the Sources”, in *ANRW* II.37, pp. 4939-73 (repr. in Id., *Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2000).

¹² Cf. M. Schofield - M. Burnyeat - J. Barnes (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism. Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1980; P.L. Donini, “Testi e commenti, manuali e insegnamento: la forma sistematica e i metodi della filosofia in età post-ellenistica”, in *ANRW* II.36.7, pp. 5027-100 (reprinted in Id., *Commentary and Tradition. Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. by M. Bonazzi, De Gruyter, Berlin 2011, pp. 211-81).

¹³ The fact that it comes second in the list of the 54 treatises allegedly written by Plotinus should not give the impression that it is somehow immature: as attested by Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 3.22-35, Plotinus started to write down his philosophical ideas when he was 59, after having taught his version of Platonism for 10 years at the school of Rome; his works, subdivided at times by Porphyry in order to correspond to the number of 54 (needed for the six groups of nine treatises each of his planning) were written in 16 years.

¹⁴ In his introduction to this treatise included in his influential edition and translation of the *Enneads* for the Collection des Universités de France of the Association Guillaume Budé, Émile Bréhier wrote: “Ce traité est le plus élémentaire et pour ainsi dire le plus scolaire qu'ait écrit Plotin: l'on y trouve de nombreux résumés des commentateurs utilisés par Plotin”: Plotin, *Ennéades*, IV, texte établi et traduit par É. Bréhier, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1927, 1993², p. 179. In the English translation of Plotinus published in the Loeb series, Armstrong endorsed this evaluation in his own introduction to IV 7[2]: “This very early treatise is more ‘scholastic’ than any other writing of Plotinus”, *Plotinus*, with an English Translation by A.H. Armstrong in seven volumes, IV. *Enneads* IV.1-9, Harvard U.P. - Heinemann, Cambridge Mass. - London 1984, p. 336.

Platonic textbook”, whose traces have been detected by no less a scholar than Heinrich Dörrie in Plotinus’ *Immortality of the Soul* as well as in works by other Platonists: Porphyry, Nemesius of Emesa, Calcidius, and Priscian of Lydia.¹⁵ The fact that all of them are posterior to Plotinus, hence potentially inspired by him,¹⁶ did not prevent Dörrie from finding a common ancestor for the whole of these texts: a “Middle-Platonic textbook”.¹⁷

There is something uncontroversial in Dörrie’s account and something which is an unproven inference. What is uncontroversial is that a work by Porphyry had existed, lost to us, that is labelled in the *Suda* Σύμμικτα ζητήματα, *Inquiries on Different Matters*.¹⁸ Some of these were devoted to the soul, and three have left clear traces: *On the Essence of the Soul*, *On How the Soul is present in the Body*, and *Whether the Soul has Parts*, while others have been reconstructed in a more indirect way.¹⁹ Another point established by Dörrie which gained firm footing in scholarship is that one of these *Inquiries* on the soul counted as a source for Augustine.²⁰ What is an unproven inference is, in my opinion, the claim that when Plotinus wrote the *Immortality of the Soul*, he had recourse to a set of structured arguments in a Platonic vein, directed against the rival opinions on the soul and its immortality, which was also the source of Porphyry’s Σύμμικτα ζητήματα, as well as of Nemesius, Calcidius and Priscian. Plotinus’ treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* was indeed the source of Porphyry, as well as of the other post-Plotinian authors mentioned above; but my guess is that it did not depend in its turn upon a preexistent handbook: rather, it was to a large extent this treatise that oriented the debate of later ages on the soul, its nature and destiny. To fully substantiate this claim would exceed the limits of this paper; it is nevertheless useful to pause and focus on the nature and contents of the *Immortality of the Soul*, in the aim to discuss its role in transmitting to Arabic philosophy *statu nascenti* an echo of the interschool polemics of the Hellenistic and Imperial ages. To this end, I will first outline the various ways of dealing with the soul’s immortality against the backdrop of Platonism before Plotinus.

¹⁵ H. Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata. Ihre Stellung in System und Geschichte des Neuplatonismus nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten*, C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München 1959, pp. 15-102.

¹⁶ This is especially true in the case of Porphyry, who lived with Plotinus at his school in Rome between 263 and 268 AD, and whose *Sentences* are almost in their entirety composed out of literal quotations from Plotinus’ treatises; for details on this point one can see my “Les *Sentences* de Porphyre entre les *Ennéades* de Plotin et les *Eléments de Théologie* de Proclus”, in L. Brisson (ed.), *Porphyre. Sentences sur les intelligibles*, texte grec, traduction française, introduction, notes et lexique. *Études réunies sous la direction de L. Brisson, Vrin, Paris 2005*, pp. 139-274 (*Histoire des doctrines de l’Antiquité classique*, 33).

¹⁷ Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata*, p. 35 n. 2, was well aware of this objection, but ruled out the possibility that the source of Porphyry, Nemesius, and Calcidius was Plotinus: “Die sachliche, ja wörtliche Übereinstimmung des obigen Textes [i.e. Nemesius’ and Calcidius’] mit Plotin IV 7, 8².15-20 ist weder nach der einen noch nach der anderen Seite beweisend: Plotin kann das Handbuch benutzt haben, und er kann selbst benutzt worden sein”. As a matter of fact, in Dörrie’s reconstruction the “Middle-Platonic textbook” which is obviously the demonstrandum, plays also the role of the premise. Such a circular argument is redolent of the derogatory evaluation of IV 7[2] given by Bréhier (see above, n. 14): first, Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata*, p. 14 n. 1, speaks of the “handbuchartigen Abrissen bei Plotin IV 7”; later on, the proof that Plotinus had recourse to the alleged scholastic textbook consists in the rudimentary nature of IV 7[2], for which the statement by Bréhier mentioned above is quoted (p. 119, n. 2). In my opinion, this begs the question at issue.

¹⁸ Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata*, pp. 6-9, pointing to the *Suda*, s.v. “Porphyry”, IV 178.28 Adler, and to further mentions of this work by Proclus, Nemesius and Priscianus of Lydia.

¹⁹ Dörrie, *Porphyrios’ Symmikta Zetemata*, pp. 9-11. Especially important is the ζήτημα *On How Soul is Present to the Body*, studied in detail by Dörrie, *ibid.*, pp. 12-103.

²⁰ Augustine was acquainted with the ζήτημα *On How Soul is Present to the Body*: see J. Pépin, “Une nouvelle source de saint Augustin: le ζήτημα de Porphyre *Sur l’union de l’âme et du corps*”, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 46 (1964), pp. 53-107 (repr. in Id., *Ex Platonicorum Persona. Études sur les lectures philosophiques de Saint Augustin*, Hakkert, Amsterdam 1977, pp. 213-67).

At a given point in the history of the Platonic school – a point which roughly corresponds to the “turn to dogmatism” of Antiochus of Ascalon against the sceptically-oriented Academy of Philo of Larissa²¹ – the conviction arose that Plato’s philosophy did not consist in challenging the other’s pretensions to certainty; on the contrary, the conviction took place that Plato held doctrines of his own (in Diogenes Laertius’ wording: Πλάτων δογματίζει, D.L., III, i, 52). This encouraged Platonists to search for the pivot, so to say, of such doctrines; and if we are to trust Atticus, this pivot was found in the tenet of the soul’s immortality.²² The works of the Platonists of that age that have come down to us provide attestations that the point was discussed; however, there are no clear traces that this debate consisted of arguing against the rival doctrines that did not grant immortality to the soul.²³ Rather,

²¹ Towards the end of the 1st century BC, Antiochus of Ascalon put an end to the philosophical tradition of the Platonic Academy conventionally labelled as “sceptical”, which had been inaugurated in 270 BC by Arcesilaus of Pitane, and was represented in his days by Philo of Larissa (d. 84/3 BC). Even keeping in mind that, as Dillon has it, “[Arcesilaus] should not be taken as advocating scepticism in the modern sense” (J.M. Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato. A Study of the Old Academy, 347-274 BC*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2003, p. 236), it is widely acknowledged that when, two centuries after Arcesilaus, Antiochus of Ascalon started again to claim that Plato held doctrines, this represented a major change in the attitude of the Platonic school, and one which paved the way to the assessments of Plato’s “system” that we label as “Middle Platonism” and “Neoplatonism”. On the “turn to dogmatism” see J.M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, London 1977 (1996²), pp. 52-113; J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1978 (containing a criticism of the account on Antiochus of Ascalon presented by H. Dörrie, “Die Erneuerung des Platonismus im ersten Jahrhundert vor Christus”, in *Le Néoplatonisme. Colloques internationaux du CNRS, Royaumont 9-13 juin 1969*, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 1971, pp. 17-33, repr. in Id., *Platonica minora*, Fink, München 1976, pp. 154-65); for a balanced account see P.L. Donini, *Le scuole, l’anima, l’impero: la filosofia antica da Antioco a Plotino*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 1982, 1993², pp. 73-81; several important studies have been published in the collective work directed by D. Sedley (ed.), *The Philosophy of Antiochus*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge - New York 2012; among them, especially relevant for the purpose in hand are R. Polito, “Antiochus and the Academy”, pp. 31-54, and M. Bonazzi, “Antiochus and Platonism”, pp. 307-33; see also H. Tarrant, *Platonism before Plotinus*, in L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, I-II, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2010, I, pp. 63-99.

²² Atticus (fl. 176 AD), admittedly a later testimony of this evolution, maintains that Plato’s doctrine as a whole depends upon the immortality of the soul: fr. 7.10-11 des Places = Eus., *Praep. ev.* XV 9, 1-2, ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τί καὶ λέγομεν ἄν; δῆλα γὰρ ταῦτα οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσοφοῦσιν, ἀλλ’ ἤδη σχεδὸν καὶ τοῖς ἰδιόταις ἄπασιν. ὅτι Πλάτων μὲν ἀθάνατον τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπολείπει καὶ πολλοὺς ὑπὲρ τούτου λόγους ποιεῖται, ποικίλως καὶ παντοίως ἀποδεικνύς ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ. πολλὴ δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἐσπουδακόσι περὶ τὰ Πλάτωνος ἢ φιλοτιμία γέγονε, συναναγκωλιζόμενοις τῷ τε δόγματι καὶ τῷ Πλάτωνι. σχεδὸν γὰρ τὸ συνέχον τὴν πᾶσαν αἴρεσιν τάνδρος τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν, “Now concerning the soul what need we say? For this is evident not only to philosophers but also nearly to all ordinary persons, that Plato allows soul to be immortal, and has written many discourses concerning this, showing in many various ways that the soul is immortal. Great also has been the emulation of the zealous followers of Plato’s teaching in defence both of Plato and of his doctrine; for this is almost the one thing that holds his whole school together”, *Eusebius. Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. by E.H. Gifford, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 1981, 1-2, vol. 2, p. 870. The rest of Atticus’ passage lists the doctrines held by Plato that depend upon the immortality of the soul. Cf. H. Dörrie † - M. Baltes, *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus. Von der Seele als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe*. Band 6.1: Bausteine 151-168; Band 6.2: Bausteine 169-181. *Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart - Bad Cannstatt 2002, Baust. 152.1, pp. 12-20 (text and German translation), pp. 170-6 (commentary).

²³ Such positions are well attested: Atticus, in the same fragment 7 quoted above, mentions Aristotle as the first to deny after Plato the immortality of the soul (fr. 7.28-31 des Places = Eus., *Praep. ev.* XV 9, 6), and Dicaearchus of Messina as the one to draw the logical consequence of the Aristotelian dependence of the soul upon the body, namely that of getting rid of the soul as a real entity: τοιγαροῦν ἐπόμενος Δικαίαρχος καὶ τὰκόλουθον ἱκανὸς ὢν θεωρεῖν ἀνήρηκε τὴν ὄλην ὑπόστασιν τῆς ψυχῆς (fr. 7.51-53 des Places = Eus., *Praep. ev.* XV 9, 10, cf. W.W. Fortenbaugh - E. Schütrumpf, *Dicaearchus of Messana. Text, Translation, and Discussion*, Transaction Publishers, Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities, 10). Nearer to the age under examination, the proofs of the *Phaedo* have been challenged by other philosophers of Aristotelian lineage, if the Βόηθος whose fragments are recorded and discussed by Porphyry is to be identified with the

the main endeavour of the Platonists before Plotinus was that of solving the internal difficulties of Plato's accounts of the soul by identifying the kind, or part of the soul, that deserves immortality. For the doctrine of the soul's immortality expounded in Plato's dialogues is indeed open to the charge of inconsistency:²⁴ in the *Phaedrus* the soul is immortal because it is a principle, hence not generated, while in the *Timaeus* it is said to be generated. As attested by Plutarch, the solution of the riddle consists in distinguishing which kind or part of the soul meets the criteria for immortality – a solution prompted in some way by the *Timaeus* itself, where the mortal parts of the soul are repeatedly alluded to.²⁵ Since the proofs for immortality of the *Phaedo* refer to the rational soul,²⁶ the most palatable conclusion for anyone who had to describe the doctrine of Plato as a systematic whole was that of allowing immortality only to the rational part of the soul; this implies taking for granted that those parts or functions which are intrinsically connected with the body are mortal. The trouble is that in the *Phaedrus* what is said to be immortal is the soul as a whole, or every soul: ψυχή πᾶσα ἀθάνατος (*Phaedr.*, 245 C 5); what is more, the proof for this consists, as mentioned above, in the fact that the soul is a principle, hence not generated:²⁷ something that seems to fly in the face of the *Timaeus'* doctrine of the generation of the soul.

Plutarch proves to be keenly aware of this difficulty, and tries to solve it by distinguishing that kind of soul which is not generated from another kind, which is generated.²⁸ Alcinoüs, who authored

Peripatetic of the mid-1st century BC (the other possibility being that of identifying him with another Boethos of Sydon, a Stoic who lived one hundred years before: see the entries respectively by R. Goulet on Boethos of Sydon, the Stoic, and by J.-P. Schneider on Boethos of Sydon, the Peripatetician, in R. Goulet [ed.], *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, II, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 1994, pp. 123-30); cf. F. Trabattoni, "Boeto di Sidone e l'immortalità dell'anima nel *Fedone*", in Th. Bénatouil - E. Maffi - F. Trabattoni (eds.), *Plato, Aristotle, or Both? Dialogues between Platonism and Aristotelianism in Antiquity*, G. Olms, Hildesheim 2011, pp. 1-15 (Europaea memoria. Studien und Texte zur Geschichte der europäischen Ideen, I. 85).

²⁴ That the corpus of the dialogues lies open to this objection on various counts is a constant worry for the Platonists of this age, hence the well known defence by Eudorus, attested in Stobaeus, πολύφωνος μὲν ὁ Πλάτων, πολυδόξος δὲ οὐδαμῶς (*Anth.* II, 49.25 Wachsmuth). The topic of Plato's alleged πολυδοξία, being in reality nothing other than the richness and variety of his language (cf. D.L., III, i, 63-65) is commented upon by H. Dörrie - M. Baltes, *Der Platonismus im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert nach Christus. Band 3: Bausteine 73-100: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart - Bad Cannstatt 1993, Baust. 97.1, comm., pp. 351-7, esp. p. 352, n. 4; for a similar attitude in the Aristotelian camp cf. J. Mansfeld, "Diaphonia: the Argument of Alexander *De Fato* Chs. 1-2", *Phronesis* 33 (1988), pp. 181-207.

²⁵ Plat., *Tim.*, 41 C 6 - D 2; 69 C 4-8, esp. 7-8: εἶδος ... ψυχῆς ... τὸ θνητόν.

²⁶ The subdivision of the proofs in the *Phaedo* varies to a certain extent according to the translators and commentators, but what is uncontroversial is that all of them point, following the path laid at 65 E 6 - 66 A 8, to the capacity the soul has to perform activities that the body cannot perform.

²⁷ Plat., *Phaedr.*, 245 D 1: ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀγένητον. The proof for the soul's immortality in the *Phaedrus* runs from 245 C 5 to 246 A 2 and pivots on self-motion (or eternal motion; the analysis of the scholarship on this point goes beyond the scope of this study).

²⁸ Plut., *De Procr. an. in Tim.*, 8-9, 1016 A-D: οὐδὲ γὰρ σοφιστῆ κραιπαλῶντι, πόθεν γε δὴ Πλάτωνι, τοιαύτην ἂν τις ἀναθείη περὶ οὓς ἐσπουδάκει μάλιστα τῶν λόγων ταραχήν καὶ ἀνωμαλίαν ὥστε τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀγένητον ἀποφαίνειν καὶ γενομένην, ἀγένητον μὲν ἐν Φαίδρῳ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν δὲ Τιμαίῳ γενομένην. ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐν Φαίδρῳ διάλεκτος ὀλίγου δεῖν ἄπασι διὰ στόματός ἐστι, τῷ ἀγενήτῳ τὸ ἀνώλεθρον τῷ δ' αὐτοκινήτῳ πιστουμένη τὸ ἀγένητον αὐτῆς· ἐν δὲ Τιμαίῳ "τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν" φησιν "οὐχ ὡς νῦν ὑστέραν ἐπιχειροῦμεν λέγειν οὕτως ἐμχανήσατο καὶ ὁ θεὸς νεωτέραν – οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄρχεσθαι πρεσβύτερον ὑπὸ νεωτέρου συνέρξας εἶασεν – ἀλλὰ πῶς ἡμεῖς πολὺ μετέχοντες τοῦ προστυχόντος τε καὶ εἰκῆ ταύτη πη καὶ λέγομεν, ὁ δὲ καὶ γενέσει καὶ ἀρετῇ προτέραν <καὶ πρεσβυτέραν> τὴν ψυχὴν σώματος ὡς δεσπότην καὶ ἄρξουσιν ἀρξομένου συνεπεστήσατο". καὶ πάλιν, εἰπὼν ὡς "αὐτὴ ἐν ἑαυτῇ στρεφομένη θεῖαν ἀρχὴν ἤρξατο ἀπαύστου καὶ ἔμφορος βίου", "τὸ μὲν δὴ σῶμά" φησιν "ὄρατὸν οὐρανοῦ γέγονεν, αὐτὴ δ' ἀόρατος μὲν λογισμοῦ δὲ μετέχουσα καὶ ἀρμονίας ψυχῆ τῶν νοητῶν αἰετῶν ὄντων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀρίστη γενομένη τῶν γεννηθέντων". ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸν μὲν θεὸν ἀρίστον εἰπὼν τῶν αἰετῶν ὄντων τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἀρίστην τῶν γεννηθέντων,

a *Handbook of Platonism* (Διδασκαλικὸς τῶν Πλάτωνος δογμάτων),²⁹ attests a solution of the same kind: according to Plato, there is a kind, or a part of the soul, which is immortal, while other parts are connected with the body, hence mortal.³⁰ The solutions advanced by Plutarch and Alcinous do not overlap; still, they attest a common attitude to circumscribe the soul's immortality only to a specific kind or part of it. It is worth noting also that even though both Plutarch and Alcinous take this problem into account, neither has a specific work devoted to discussing the issue in and by itself. But if we turn to Plotinus, some 150 years after Plutarch and Alcinous, a different attitude appears.

First and foremost, Plotinus wrote a treatise specifically intended to argue for the immortality of the soul. Second, he deemed it necessary to tackle this topic by demonstrating that the rival theories about the soul were wrong. As a consequence, his own way to argue in favour of Plato's doctrine – a tenet as crucial for him as it was for Atticus – was to establish that the argument from affinity of the *Phaedo* (78 B 4 - 84 B 8) refers to the soul as such, and perfectly fits with the axiom of the *Phaedrus* that assigns immortality to “every” soul, or to “all that is soul”.³¹

σαφεστάτη ταύτη τῆ διαφορᾷ καὶ ἀντιθέσει τὸ αἰδίων αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ ἀγέννητον ἀφήρηται. “For one would not attribute even to a drunken sophist and it is nonsense then to attribute to Plato in regard to the doctrines about which he had been most seriously concerned such confusion and capriciousness as to declare of the same entity both that it is unsubject to generation and that it did come to be, in the *Phaedrus* that the soul is unsubject to generation and in the *Timaeus* that it came to be. Now, almost everyone has at the tip of his tongue the discourse in the *Phaedrus* confirming the soul's indestructibility by the fact that it is not subject to generation and its not being subject to generation by the fact that it is self moved; but in the *Timaeus* he says: “The soul, however, now later in the account that we are attempting, was not thus junior also in god's devising – for he would not have permitted the senior of those that he had coupled to be ruled by the junior –, but we, as we partake largely of the casual and random, express ourselves in this way too, whereas he constructed the soul prior <and senior> to body in generation and excellence to be mistress and ruler of it as her subject”. And again, after having said that “herself revolving within herself she made a divine beginning of ceaseless and rational life”, he says: “So the body of heaven has come to be visible; but soul herself, invisible but participant in reason and concord, is become best of the things generated by the best of intelligible and everlasting beings”. For here he has called god best of everlasting beings but the soul best of the things generated, and by this most manifest distinction and opposition he has removed from her the character of being everlasting and ungenerated”: *Plutarch's Moralia in Seventeen Volumes*, XIII, Part I. 999 C - 1032 F, with an English trans. by H. Cherniss, Harvard U.P. - Heinemann, Cambridge (MA)-London 1976 (Loeb Classical Library), pp. 199-201.

²⁹ Alcinous, *Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, Introduction, texte établi et commenté par J. Whittaker et traduit par P. Louis, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1990 (Collection des Universités de France); English trans. Alcinous, *The Handbook of Platonism*, Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by J. Dillon, Oxford U.P., Oxford 1993, 2002² (Clarendon Later Ancient Philosophers). The date of the composition of this work is unknown and only the *terminus post quem* is clear, because part of Chapter XII is “empruntée presque textuellement à Arius Didyme, dont on sait qu'il jouissait de l'amitié de l'empereur Auguste. Cet emprunt fournit un terminus post quem pour le *Didaskalikos*. Trouver un *terminus ante quem* est moins facile. (...) D'un autre côté, il existe des rapports évidents, doctrinaux et terminologiques, entre Alcinous et Philon d'Alexandrie aussi bien qu'entre Alcinous et Arius Didyme. Ce qui pourrait donner à penser que la composition du *Didaskalikos* remonte à la première moitié du 1^{er} siècle de notre ère” (Whittaker, *Introduction*, p. xii).

³⁰ Alcin., *Didask.*, XXV, p. 178.24-32 Hermann = 178.24-32 (p. 50) Whittaker: ὅτι μὲν οὖν αἱ λογικαὶ ψυχαὶ ἀθάνατοι ὑπάρχουσι κατὰ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, βεβαιώσατο ἄν τις· εἰ δὲ καὶ αἱ ἄλογοι, τοῦτο τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων ὑπάρχει. πιθανὸν γὰρ τὰς ἀλόγους ψυχὰς, ψιλῆ τε φαντασίᾳ ἐλαυνομένας καὶ οὔτε λογισμῶ οὔτε κρίσει χρωμένας οὔτε θεωρήμασι καὶ τῆ τοῦτων συναγωγῆ οὔτε καθολικαῖς διαλήψεσιν, παντελῶς δὲ ἀεννοήτους οὔσας καὶ τῆς νοητῆς φύσεως, μήτε τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας εἶναι ταῖς λογικαῖς, θνητάς τε καὶ φθαρτάς ὑπάρχειν, trans. Dillon, *Alcinous, The Handbook of Platonism*, p. 34: “That Plato holds rational souls to be immortal is something that one may affirm; whether irrational ones are as well, however, is a matter of dispute. For it is plausible that irrational souls, driven as they are by mere representations, and not making use of reason or judgement, nor of theorems and the assembling of these into systems, nor yet of general concepts, nor having any conception at all of intelligible reality, should not be of the same essence as rational souls, and should be mortal and perishable”.

³¹ Cf. R. Bett, “Immortality and the Nature of the Soul in the *Phaedrus*”, *Phronesis* 31 (1986), pp. 1-26.

When, after having taught philosophy for ten years without writing down anything, Plotinus decided to write treatises,³² the first topic he dealt with was the nature of “beauty” (I 6[1]); immediately after, he addressed the question of the soul’s immortality. The two treatises have good chances to be taken as summaries respectively of the *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, and their importance has consequently been demoted in scholarship.³³ On closer inspection, however, both writings appear quite different from conventional accounts of two well-known Platonic doctrines, and in particular the treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* presents us with a structure which is unprecedented in the Platonic tradition.

First Plotinus raises the question whether or not we are immortal, and, instead of following the traditional path of the Platonic school that I have tried to outline above, advocates the *Meno*’s criterion: one cannot say whether or not something possesses a quality, unless one has grasped the nature, or essence of that thing.³⁴ This move does not imply that Plotinus rediscovered this criterion out of the blue, directly in in the *Meno*; indeed, there is good reason to think that his formulae are reminiscent of Galen, even though Plotinus’ attitude is in some sense the opposite of Galen’s.³⁵ Be that as it may, no Platonist before Plotinus claims that the immortality of the soul has to be established less on the basis of what the soul *does* – i.e. performing cognitive activities that are independent from the body – than on the basis of what the soul *is*; by way of consequence, the nature of the soul has to be discussed first, in Plotinus’ eyes, because only this prompts the response to the question whether or not it is immortal. Now, there are several competing definitions of the soul, and some are wrong; hence most of the *Immortality of the Soul* is devoted to a sort of *pars destruens* against the doctrines of the rival schools, chiefly Stoicism, and Plotinus’ arguments are as sophisticated as to include the criticism of what we call today the theory of emergent properties.³⁶ Then comes the

³² See above, n. 13.

³³ See above, n. 14.

³⁴ The treatise begins by raising the question whether or not we are immortal, and Plotinus claims that one cannot answer the question, unless one is able to say what the φύσις of the soul is (IV 7 [2], 1.1-8); the initial part where he argues against the rival theories begins by the question: τοῦτο οὖν (i.e., the soul) τίνα φύσιν ἔχει; (IV 7[2], 2.1); finally, and the exposition of the true doctrine on the soul, after the refutation of the rival theories, begins as follows: ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα φύσις, ἡ παρ’ αὐτῆς ἔχουσα τὸ εἶναι, πᾶν τὸ ὄντως ὄν, ὃ οὔτε γίνεταί οὔτε ἀπόλλυται (IV 7[2], 9.1-2). Cf. P. Kalligas, “Plotinus against the Corporealists on the Soul. A Commentary on *Enn.* IV 7 [2], 8.1-23”, in R. Chiaradonna (ed.), *Studi sull’anima in Plotino*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2005, pp. 95-112 (Elenchos. Collana di testi e studi sul pensiero antico, 42).

³⁵ In his analysis of Chrysippus’ doctrine of the ruling part of the soul, Galen remarks that one has to take into account its definition (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας): see *PHP*, V 213 Kühn = p. 108.28-31 De Lacy: καθάπερ ἐν τούτοις ἐν οἷς Χρύσιππος ἐπισκοπεῖται περὶ τοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικοῦ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον εἰπόντας ὑπὲρ οὗ ζητοῦμεν πράγματος ἐκείνω χρῆσθαι κανόνι τε καὶ σκοπεῖ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀπάντων, in Ph. De Lacy, *Galenus De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2005, I, p. 108.28-31 (*CMG* V 4, 1-2), “So in these (discussions) in which Chrysippus reflects on the governing parts of the soul, we should first state the definition of the essence of the thing we are investigating, and then use it as a standard and guide in all the particulars”, trans. De Lacy, *ibid.*, p. 109. However, as remarked by T. Tielman, *Galen and Chrysippus on the Soul. Argument and Refutation on the De Placitis Books II-III*, Brill, Leiden - New York - Köln 1996 (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 68), p. 9, “(...) Galen omits the traditional preliminary issue of existence, i.e. whether there is such thing as a soul. The reason may be seen from passages in other writings where he declares the soul’s existence to be evident from the functioning of the body. (...) It is also typically Galenic to omit from the traditional check-list the question of the soul’s substance, which is one of the speculative issues from which he refrains in principle”. At variance with Galen, this is precisely Plotinus’ point. On the main issue of Galen’s philosophical allegiance, cf. R. Chiaradonna, “Galen and Middle Platonism”, in Ch. Gill - T. Whitmarsh - J. Wilkins (eds.), *Galen and the World of Knowledge*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2009 (*Greek Culture in the Roman World*), pp. 243-60.

³⁶ IV 7[2], 2.4-25 and 8³.1-25; I have tried to account for the structure and philosophical implications of Plotinus’ arguments against the Stoic theory of emergent properties in the commentary on IV 7[2], forthcoming in the series “Greco, Arabo, Latino. Le vie del sapere” (Pisa U.P.).

criticism of the “Pythagorean” doctrine of the soul as the attuning of the body, and here too Plotinus has an argument against epiphenomenism.³⁷ Finally, he discusses Aristotle’s definition of the soul as the entelechy of the living body, maintaining that either this actual perfection is a substance, and in this case the Aristotelian notion of the soul is acceptable, or it is not, and in this case it is nothing if not a version of epiphenomenism and incurs the same criticisms.³⁸

The anti-Stoic arguments are by far the most numerous: they run from the beginning of the treatise to the actual third section of Chapter 8. If I am speaking of “third section of Chapter 8”, it is because part of the treatise, corresponding to some 7 pages in the modern editions of Plotinus, went lost in the direct tradition of the *Enneads*, and is included in the modern editions only because of a lucky chance: the fact that Eusebius, in his *Praeparatio evangelica*, recopied the Plotinian treatise almost in its entirety. The modern editions which reintegrated this great lacuna from Eusebius numbered the additional chapters (so to speak) from 8, section 1 to 8, section 5, in order to keep unchanged the traditional subdivision of Plotinus’ treatises into chapters that had been provided by Marsilius Ficinus in his Latin translation of the *Enneads*, completed in 1491.³⁹ The lacuna in the middle of IV 7[2] will reappear later on in this paper, but for the moment let me simply mention that sections 1-3 of the part missing in the direct tradition belong to the series of the anti-Stoic arguments which started at the beginning of IV 7[2], while section 4 is devoted to the theory of the soul as the attuning of the body, and section 5 deals with the soul as entelechy. With this, the *pars destruens* comes to an end and the *pars construens* begins, at the Ficinian Chapter 9. Once the rival theories are refuted, Plotinus feels entitled to define the soul as an item of that “other nature” which possesses being in and by itself.⁴⁰ The immortality of the soul depends in his eyes on the argument of affinity of the *Phaedo*: the soul is immortal because its nature is that of the intelligible items, whose transcendence to coming-to-be and passing away it shares, albeit differently. Before we focus on a detail in Plotinus’ anti-Stoic arguments, let us pause and remark that such a structure, with the search for definition, the elenctic part, and the focus on the right definition with its implications, is unprecedented in the history of pre-Plotinian Platonism.

The anti-Stoic arguments are by far the most numerous, and can be subdivided into two main sections: first Plotinus deals with the oddities that would follow, were the soul a body as the Stoics pretend; then, he discusses the assumptions lying in the background of the Stoic account of the soul. As a whole, he is unhappy with the idea that from the most basic level of reality, the pneuma as such, another higher level of reality supervenes, the pneuma qualified (*πνεῦμα πως ἔχον*). To counter this theory, he argues that (i) it is impossible for life to emerge from matter and for intellect to emerge from life,⁴¹ and that (ii) the *πνεῦμα πως ἔχον* fails to meet precisely the task it should perform in

³⁷ IV 7[2], 8⁴.1-28; cf. M. Baltes † - C. D’Ancona, “Plotino, *L’immortalità dell’anima*. IV 7[2], 8⁴”, in Chiaradonna (ed.), *Studi sull’anima in Plotino*, pp. 21-58.

³⁸ IV 7[2], 8⁵.1-50; cf. Ch. Tornau, “Plotinus’ Criticism of Aristotelian Entelechism in *Enn.* IV 7[2], 8⁵.25-50”, *ibid.*, pp. 149-78.

³⁹ On the lacuna, its discovery, and the hypotheses on its origins, one can see my survey in “Plotin”, in Goulet (ed.), *DPhA*, Va [2012] = P 205, pp. 885-1068, esp. pp. 899-902 (“Circulation des traités”).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Enn.* IV 7[2], 9.1-2, quoted above, n. 33.

⁴¹ Plot., IV 7[2], 2.4-25: πρῶτον δὲ σκεπτέον, εἰς ὃ τι δεῖ τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα, ὃ λέγουσι ψυχὴν, ἀναλύειν. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ζωὴ ψυχῆ πάρεστιν ἐξανάγκης, ἀνάγκη τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα, τὴν ψυχὴν, εἰ μὲν ἐκ δύο σωμάτων ἢ πλείονων εἴη, ἦτοι ἐκάτερον αὐτῶν ἢ ἕκαστον ζωὴν σύμφυτον ἔχειν, ἢ τὸ μὲν ἔχειν, τὸ δὲ μὴ, ἢ μηδέτερον ἢ μηδὲν ἔχειν. εἰ μὲν δὴ ἐνὶ αὐτῶν προσείη τὸ ζῆν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἂν εἴη ψυχὴ. τί ἂν οὖν εἴη σῶμα ζωὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἔχον; πῦρ γὰρ καὶ ἀήρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γῆ ἄψυχα παρ’ αὐτῶν· καὶ ὅτω πάρεστι τούτων ψυχῆ, τοῦτο ἐπακτῶ κέχρηται τῆ ζωῆ, ἄλλα δὲ παρὰ ταῦτα σώματα οὐκ ἔστι. καὶ οἷς γε δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ στοιχεῖα τούτων ἕτερα, σώματα, οὐ ψυχαί, ἐλέχθησαν εἶναι οὐδὲ ζωὴν ἔχοντα. εἰ δὲ μηδενὸς αὐτῶν ζωὴν ἔχοντος ἡ σύνοδος πεποιήκε ζωὴν, ἄτοπον· εἰ δὲ ἕκαστον ζωὴν ἔχει, καὶ ἐν ἀρκετῷ· μᾶλλον δὲ ἀδύνατον

the Stoic system, namely that of providing the intrinsic rationality of the entire process, given that it pops out only at the end of the process.⁴² The two points are so important for him, that they feature at the beginning of the anti-Stoic argumentation⁴³ and at the end.⁴⁴ Between these two criticisms of the theory of emergent properties, there is another set of objections. They point, as mentioned above, to the oddities ensuing from the Stoic doctrine of pneuma, and allow the reader to realize to what extent Plotinus' philosophy is rooted in Hellenistic interschool polemics.

This paper discusses only one of the arguments destined to establish that the Stoic pneuma is untenable: that which is based on the impossibility for a body to perform the *κρᾶσις δι' ὄλων*, the “total blending” with another body. This discussion occupies the second section of the part of the text which is preserved in Greek by Eusebius (labelled 8²). Among the various arguments against total blending,

συμφόρησιν σωμάτων ζῶν ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ νοῦν γεννᾶν τὰ ἀνόητα. καὶ δὴ καὶ οὐχ ὁπωσοῦν κραθέντα ταῦτα φήσουσι γίνεσθαι. δεῖ ἄρα εἶναι τὸ τάξον καὶ τὸ τῆς κρᾶσεως αἴτιον· ὥστε τοῦτο τάξιν ἂν ἔχου ψυχῆς. οὐ γὰρ ὁ τι σύνθετον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀπλοῦν ἂν εἴη σῶμα ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἄνευ ψυχῆς οὕσης ἐν τῷ παντί, εἴπερ λόγος προσελθὼν τῇ ὕλῃ σῶμα ποιεῖ, οὐδαμῶθεν δ' ἂν προσέλθοι λόγος ἢ παρὰ ψυχῆς. “But first we must enquire into what [constituent parts] we are to analyse this body which they call soul. For since life is necessarily present in soul, then of necessity if this body, the soul, was composed of two or more bodies, either both or all of them will have a connatural life, or one of them will have it and another not, or neither or none of them will have it. Now if life was a property of one of them, this one would actually be the soul. What body, then, could there be which has life of itself? For fire and air and water and earth are lifeless of themselves; and when soul is present to any one of them this makes use of a borrowed life – but there are no other bodies besides these. And those who hold that there are elements other than these have maintained that they were bodies, not souls, and that they did not have life. But if, when no single one of them had life, their coming together produced life, it would be absurd (but if each one of them has life, one is enough) or rather impossible for a drawing together of bodies to produce life and for mindless things to generate mind. [The holders of this theory] will not themselves assert that their elements come alive when mixed at random. There is need, therefore, of an ordering principle and a cause of the mixture; so that this would rank as soul. This is not only because body is composite, but even a simple body could be in existence without soul being in the universe, if it is the coming of a formative principle to matter which makes body, but a formative principle could not come from anywhere except from soul” (trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, quoted above, n. 14, p. 341).

⁴² Plot., IV 7[2], 8³.1-23: Τὸ δὲ καὶ φύσιν μὲν προτέραν τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα λέγειν, ἐν δὲ ψυχρῷ γενομένην καὶ στομωθεῖσαν ψυχὴν γίνεσθαι λεπτοτέραν ἐν ψυχρῷ γιγνομένην – ὃ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸ ἄτοπον· πολλὰ γὰρ ζῶα ἐν θερμῷ γίγνεται καὶ ψυχρὴν ἔχει οὐ ψυχθεῖσαν – ἀλλ' οὖν φασὶ γε προτέραν φύσιν ψυχῆς εἶναι κατὰ συντυχίας τὰς ἔξω γιγνομένης· συμβαίνει οὖν αὐτοῖς τὸ χεῖρον πρῶτον ποιεῖν καὶ πρὸ τούτου ἄλλο ἔλαττον, ἦν λέγουσιν ἔξιν, ὃ δὲ νοῦς ὑστατος ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς δηλονότι γενόμενος, ἢ εἰ πρὸ πάντων νοῦς, ἐφεξῆς ἔδει ψυχὴν ποιεῖν, εἴτα φύσιν, καὶ αἰεὶ τὸ ὑστερον χεῖρον, ἢ περὶ πέφυκεν. εἰ οὖν καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὸν νοῦν ὑστερος καὶ γεννητὸς καὶ ἐπακτὸν τὸ νοεῖν ἔχων, ἐνδέχοιτο ἂν μηδὲ ψυχὴν μηδὲ νοῦν μηδὲ θεὸν εἶναι. (...) οὐκ ἄρα οὕτως ψυχὴ ὡς πνεῦμα οὐδ' ὡς σῶμα. “But as for saying that the same breath was growth-principle before, but when it got into the cold and was tempered became soul, since it becomes rarified in the cold – this is absurd to start with: for many animals come into existence in heat and have a soul which has not been cooled – but anyhow they assert that growth-principle is prior to soul which comes into existence because of external happenings. So they find themselves making the worse first, and before this another of less good quality, which they call ‘character’, and intellect last, obviously originating from the soul. Now if Intellect is before all things, then they ought to have made soul come next to it, then growth-principle, and have made what comes after always worse, as is the natural state of affairs. If then God (conceived as Intellect) is for them posterior and generated and has his intelligence as something brought in from outside, it would be possible for neither soul nor intellect nor God to exist. (...) Soul, then, is not like breath or like body” (trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, pp. 369-71). One may think that Plotinus' objection fails to really undermine the Stoic position, in so far as it opposes it with the Platonic-Aristotelic “priority scale”, that Stoics do not accept. In reality, Plotinus' argument is properly elenctic here, because the Stoic monism is indeed grounded on the idea that the omnipervasive Logos is God: thus, Plotinus' argument is that the Stoics work with the assumption of a rational principle that gives rise to the evolution of the pneuma, but the also state that this principle arises, in turn, only at the end of the process which is directed by it. Should the Stoics be right, the divine Intellect of their system could not initiate the evolution process, since it would appear only at its end.

⁴³ I.e. at the beginning of the Ficinian chapter 2: see above, n. 39.

⁴⁴ I.e. in section 3 of the part which is transmitted in Greek by Eusebius, labelled 8³: see above n. 40.

we shall focus on the third one. It runs as follows: if a body mixes with a body, and one is not ready to admit that the total size increases, one has to admit that a body can undergo actual infinite dissection.

τὸ δὲ δὴ σῶμα ὃν σώματι κερᾶσθαι ὅλον δι' ὅλων, ὡς ὅπου ἂν ᾗ θάτερον, καὶ θάτερον εἶναι, ἴσον ὄγκον ἀμφοτέρων καὶ τόπον κατεχόντων, καὶ μηδεμίαν αὐξήν γεγονέναι ἐπεμβληθέντος τοῦ ἑτέρου, οὐδὲν ἀπολείπει ὁ μὴ τέμνη. οὐ γὰρ κατὰ μέγαρα μέρη παραλλάξ ἡ κρᾶσις – οὕτω γὰρ φασι παράθεσιν ἔσεσθαι – διεληλυθὸς δὲ διὰ παντός τὸ ἐπεμβληθέν, ἔτι εἰ σμικρότερον – ὅπερ ἀδύνατον, τὸ ἔλαττον ἴσον γενέσθαι τῷ μερίζονι – ἀλλ' οὖν διεληλυθὸς πᾶν τέμοι κατὰ πᾶν ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἰ καθ' ὅτιοῦν σημεῖον καὶ μὴ μεταξὺ σῶμα ἔσται ὁ μὴ τέμνηται, εἰς σημεῖα τὴν διαίρεσιν τοῦ σώματος γεγονέναι, ὅπερ ἀδύνατον. εἰ δέ, ἀπείρου τῆς τομῆς οὐσης – ὁ γὰρ ἂν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαιρετόν ἐστιν – οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ ἄπειρα ἔσται· οὐ τοίνυν ὅλον δι' ὅλου χωρεῖν δυνατὸν τὸ σῶμα· ἢ δὲ ψυχῇ δι' ὅλων ἀσώματος ἄρα (IV 7[2], 8².7-22).

But if it is a body and is mixed with the body “whole through whole” so that wherever the one is, the other is also, with both bodily masses also occupying an equal amount of space, and if no increase takes place when the other one is inserted, this will leave nothing undivided. For mixture is not by large parts placed side by side – for in this way [the Stoic] says it will be juxtaposition [not mixture] – but what is inserted penetrates through every part, even if it is smaller – this is impossible, for the less to be equal to the greater – but, anyhow, in penetrating it all it divides it everywhere; it is necessary, therefore, if it divides it at any geometrical point, and there is no body in between which is not divided, that the division of the body must be into geometrical points, which is impossible. But if this is so, since the division is infinite – for whatever body you take is divisible – the infinity of parts will exist not only potentially but actually. It is impossible therefore for one body to penetrate another “whole through whole”: but soul penetrates through whole bodies, therefore it is immaterial (trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, p. 369).⁴⁵

The arguments against the Stoic κρᾶσις δι' ὅλων are famously a strong suit of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who devotes to the issue a specific treatise, the *De Mixtione*,⁴⁶ and never loses the opportunity to criticize this theory, even in other writings of his. The κρᾶσις δι' ὅλων counts for him as the backbone of Stoic physics, and he has to undermine it in order to reaffirm the truth of Aristotle's physics, based on the hylomorphic composition of reality.⁴⁷ That Plotinus endorses the anti-Stoic arguments by Alexander – in particular his criticisms of the “central feature of the theory of pneuma”, namely “the motion of a body through a body”⁴⁸ – has been noticed in scholarship from Bréhier onwards⁴⁹ and comes as no surprise, because Porphyry says that Plotinus had Alexander and

⁴⁵ Plotinus' IV 7[2], 8².1-22, except for lines 16-20, features in the *SVF*, II 799, as a testimony to the Stoic theory of total blending in a section labelled by von Arnim “*De Mixtione*”, whose main source is predictably the *De Mixtione* by Alexander of Aphrodisias (see the following note).

⁴⁶ *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter Commentaria Scripta minora. Quaestiones. De Fato. De Mixtione* (...) edidit I. Bruns, Reimer, Berlin 1892 (Supplementum Aristotelicum, II). Translations and commentaries: R.B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics. A Study of the De Mixtione with Preliminary Essays*, Text, Translation and Commentary, Brill, Leiden 1976 (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 28); Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *Sur la mixtion et la croissance (De Mixtione)*, texte établi, traduit et commenté par J. Groisard, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2013 (CUF).

⁴⁷ Cf. I. Kupreeva, “Alexander of Aphrodisias On Mixture and Growth”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 27 (2004), pp. 297-334.

⁴⁸ Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics*, p. 36.

⁴⁹ Bréhier, Plotin, *Ennéades*, IV (quoted above, n. 14), pp. 182-3; cf. R. Chiaradonna, “L'anima e la mistione stoica.

other commentators, both of the Platonic and the Peripatetic schools, read aloud for his audience before he started his class.⁵⁰ On closer inspection, however, another point appears which is telling as to the way in which Plotinus composed the *pars destruens* of IV 7[2]: not only he endorsed Alexander's argument, but also another one, which had been advanced by Plutarch. Before Alexander, Plutarch had repeatedly written against the Stoics;⁵¹ now, in IV 7[2], 8² a topic coming from Plutarch is encapsulated between the two main points of Alexander's argument against total blending. Thus, Plotinus' argument of IV 7[2], 8² results from combining a Peripatetic and a Platonic objection.

Let us first compare Plotinus and Alexander on the issue of the necessary increase of the mass resulting from the addition of two bodies. Alexander's argument⁵² is that if a body mixes with a body, the total mass increases; now, the Stoics do not accept this increase, because their idea of total blending implies that the total mass remains the same; consequently, they cannot but admit that bodies are divisible to infinity. Alexander does not draw explicitly the conclusion that division to infinity is absurd, neither does Plotinus: for both this goes without saying. The first point of Plotinus' argument consists

Enn. IV 7[2], 8², in Chiaradonna (ed.), *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, pp. 127-47; J. Lacrosse, "Trois remarques sur la réception de la *καθ'ἑαυτὴν* stoïcienne chez Plotin", *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 25 (2007), pp. 53-66; Lacrosse, p. 58, advances the hypothesis that another treatise by Plotinus – II 7[37], *On Total Blending* – was in fact a course given on Alexander's *De Mixtione*; according to V. Cordonnier, "Du moyen platonisme au néoplatonisme: sources et postérité des arguments d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise contre la doctrine stoïcienne des mélanges", in Bénatouïl - Maffi - Trabatttoni (eds.), *Plato, Aristotle, or Both?* (quoted above, n. 23), pp. 95-116, Alexander was in his turn indebted to the Academic and Platonist criticisms against the Stoic doctrine of total blending. On the Academic roots of the anti-Stoic arguments see below, n. 51.

⁵⁰ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 14.10-14. Immediately before, Porphyry says that in the Plotinian treatises Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is omnipresent (*VP*, 14.5-7) an attitude which is unprecedented in the Platonic school: see R. Chiaradonna, "Interpretazione filosofica e ricezione del corpus. Il caso di Aristotele (100 a.C. - 250 d.C.)" *Quaestio* 11 (2011), pp. 83-114; Id., "Medioplatonismo e aristotelismo", *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 70 (2015), pp. 425-46.

⁵¹ The anti-Stoic writings by Plutarch include *On Stoic Self-contradictions*, *The Stoics talk more paradoxically than the Poets*, and *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions: Plutarch's Moralia in Seventeen Volumes*, XIII, Part II. 1033 A - 1086 B, with an English trans. by H. Cherniss, Harvard U.P. - Heinemann, Cambridge Mass. - London 1976 (Loeb Classical Library). In his seminal study M. Pohlenz, "Plutarchs Schriften gegen die Stoiker", *Hermes* 74 (1939), pp. 1-33 sided with von Arnim's idea that "die Grundlage für diese Polemik in Karneades' Zeit geschaffen worden ist" (p. 32). Pohlenz traced back the main points of Plutarch's criticism to that age, when both the essentials of the Platonists' attack and the establishment of the Stoic doctrines were settled: "Damals sind die großen Kämpfe zwischen Akademie und Stoa ausgefochten worden; damals hat auch die orthodox-stoische Lehre die Formulierung erfahren, die sich dann in fester Schultradition allen Ketzereien des Panaitios und Poseidonios zum Trotz durch die Jahrhunderte erhielt und gerade in Plutarchs Zeit wieder die Alleinherrschaft errang. So behielten auch die Gegenargumente des Karneades ihre aktuelle Bedeutung und konnten sich bis zu Cicero und zu Plutarch und Sextus fortpflanzen, ja bis in eine Zeit, in der es längst keine lebendige Stoa mehr gab" (*ibid.*). On the relationship between Platonism and Stoicism on the issue of common conceptions, cf. R. Chiaradonna, "Platonismo e teoria della conoscenza stoica tra II e III secolo d. C.", in M. Bonazzi - Ch. Helmig (eds.), *Platonic Stoicism - Stoic Platonism: The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity*, Leuven U.P., Leuven 2007, pp. 209-42.

⁵² Alexander's point is better understood against the background of the Stoic classification of the kinds of mixture from juxtaposition to blending, based in itself on Aristotle's *De Gen.*, I 10, 327 b 31 - 328 b 22, with the crucial addition that for blending to be total, the ingredients must reach a complete coextension: cf. J. Mansfeld, "Zeno and Aristotle on Mixture", *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983), pp. 306-10, E. Lewis, "Diogenes Laertius and the Stoic Theory of Mixture", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 35 (1988), pp. 84-90, and Kupreeva, "Alexander of Aphrodisias On Mixture and Growth", pp. 298-301. See also R.B. Todd, "Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Alexandrian *Quaestiones* II.12", *Philologus* 116 (1972), pp. 293-305 and Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics*, pp. 73-88. Kupreeva, "Alexander of Aphrodisias On Mixture and Growth", sums up Alexander's argument as follows: "In his refutation, Alexander exposes inconsistencies and physical impossibilities involved in the concept of coextension, exploiting the ambiguities of formulation in the reports of the doctrine: 'total pervasion' as described by the Stoics is in conflict with the geometrical notion of addition (...) He uses the tactics standard in contemporary anti-Stoic polemic, criticizing Stoic doctrines in versions often already suitably adapted for such criticism" (p. 301).

in establishing that total blending implies that the mass of two bodies that are mixed with one another does not increase; a comparison sentence by sentence shows how close Plotinus is to Alexander.

Alex. Aphr., <i>De Mixt.</i> , pp. 220.5-8; pp. 220.37-221.4 Bruns	Plot., IV 7[2], 8 ² .7-11
<p>ἐπὶ μηδενός τινος σώματος ἢ μίξις τῶν σωμάτων ἴσον τηρεῖ τὸν ὄγκον ἐνὶ τῶν μιγνυμένων. ἐφ' ὧν γὰρ ἴσον δοκεῖ μένειν, ἐπ' ἐκείνων οὐ σωμάτων μίξις ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἢ εἰδός ἐστι καὶ ὕλη τὰ λαμβανόμενα, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα, ἢ σῶμα καὶ πάθος (...).</p> <p>There is no body for which the mixture of bodies preserves a mass equal to one of the constituents; for where it seems to remain equal there is no mixture of bodies but the cases involve either form and matter (as soul and body) or body and quality (...) [trans. Todd, p. 125].</p> <p>εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὅλα δι' ὅλων τὰ κεκραμένα μέμικται καὶ μὴ ἕτερον αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ μίγματι ἄμικτον θατέρου μορίου ἔχει, ἀδύνατον αὐτῶν ἐκάτερον ὑπὸ ἰδίας ἐπιφανείας περιέχεσθαι· πᾶν γὰρ μέρος αὐτῶν, τὸ ὑπὸ οἰκείας ἐπιφανείας περιεχόμενον, ἄμικτον ἔσται θατέρου.</p> <p>Now if the blended bodies are totally mixed and neither of them has a part unmixed with the other, it is impossible for either to be contained by its own surface; for each of their parts, insofar as it is surrounded by its own surface, will be unmixed with the other (...) [trans. Todd, p. 127].</p>	<p>τὸ δὲ δὴ σῶμα ὃν σώματι κεκρασθαι ὅλον δι' ὅλων, ὡς ὅπου ἂν ᾗ θάτερον, καὶ θάτερον εἶναι, ἴσον ὄγκον ἀμφοτέρων καὶ τόπον κατεχόντων, καὶ μηδεμίαν αὐξήν γεγενῆσθαι ἐπεμβληθέντος τοῦ ἑτέρου, οὐδὲν ἀπολείψει ὁ μὴ τέμνη.</p> <p>But if it is a body and is mixed with the body “whole through whole” so that wherever the one is, the other is also, with both bodily masses also occupying an equal amount of space, and if no increase takes place when the other one is inserted, this will leave nothing undivided [trans. Armstrong, p. 369].</p>
<p>Alex. Aphr., <i>Mant.</i>, p. 140.10-17 Bruns</p>	
<p>ἔτι εἰ ὅλα ὅλοις παρεκτείνεται καὶ τὰ βραχύτατα τοῖς μεγίστοις μέχρι τῆς ἐσχάτης ἐπιφανείας, ὃν κατέχει τὸ ἐν τόπον, τὸ συναμφοτέρον καθέξει. (...) ἐκάτερον γὰρ αὐτῶν τὸν πάντα καθέξει τόπον, ὃν καὶ θάτερον κατεῖχεν πρὸ τῆς μίξεως καὶ μετὰ τὴν μίξιν τὸ συναμφοτέρον.</p> <p>Further, if wholes are extended equally with wholes, and the smallest things with the largest right up to their extreme surface, then the place that is occupied by one thing will be occupied by the combination of both. (...) For each of them will occupy the whole place which the other one occupied before the mixing and [which] the combination [occupies] after the mixing [trans. Sharples, p. 123].</p>	

Alexander's *De Mixtione* provides Plotinus with the topic of the impossibility for bodies to mix with one another and to preserve the mass equal, while the *Mantissa* provides him with the criticism of the Stoic assumption that the mass of two bodies totally interpenetrated with one another occupies exactly the same place that was occupied by one of the two bodies before they became mixed up. The quotations from both the *De Mixtione* and the *Mantissa* are literal, and Plotinus' own contribution consists only in combining the two remarks by Alexander. While in the *De Mixtione* the latter points to the impossibility that mixture preserves the mass equal, ἴσον τηρεῖ τὸν ὄγκον, in the *Mantissa* he points to the impossibility that the mixed bodies occupy the same place, ἐκάτερον γὰρ αὐτῶν τὸν πάντα καθέξει τόπον, ὃν καὶ θάτερον κατεῖχεν, and Plotinus has: ὅπου ἂν ᾗ θάτερον, καὶ θάτερον εἶναι, ἴσον ὄγκον ἀμφοτέρων καὶ τόπον κατεχόντων. Thus, Plotinus seems to be completely reliant on Alexander.

If, however, we compare IV 7[2], 8² also with Plutarch, we realize that Plotinus has read and treasured also the latter. Indeed, it is Plutarch who insists on the paradox of having a smaller body

completely coextended with a much larger one: were total blending possible, nothing would prevent a small body from expanding to the point where it reaches the entire extension of another body which is much larger. True, this paradox features also in Alexander's *Mantissa*;⁵³ it seems to be omnipresent in interschool polemics, and there is scholarly consensus that its remote origin was in the objections against Stoic physics raised by the sceptically-oriented Platonic Academy.⁵⁴ But Plotinus' phrasing clearly echoes that of Plutarch, so that one can confidently list his *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* among Plotinus' sources.

⁵³ In addition to the passage quoted above, in the chart of p. 177, see Alex. Aphr., *Mant.*, p. 141.9-19 Bruns: ἔτι, ὅταν οἴνου κοτύλη δύο κοτύλαις ὕδατος μιχθῆ γίνεται μὲν τὸ πᾶν κρᾶμα καὶ μῖγμα τρικοτυλιαῖον. πῶς δὲ κατ' ἐκείνους οἶόν τε; εἰ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ οἴνου κοτύλη διὰ παντός τοῦ ὕδατος ἐχώρησεν καὶ παρισώθη αὐτῷ, ἡ τέσσαρες ἔσονται κοτύλαι τὸ πᾶν (καὶ γὰρ ὁ οἶνος τῷ ὕδατι ἴσος γέγονεν κατὰ τὸ ποσόν, ὥστε δύο κοτυλῶν· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἰσωθεὶς κοτύλαις δύο κοτυλιαῖος ἔτι ἔσται· ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἦν τὸ διπλάσιον ἴσον τῷ ἡμίσει εἶναι), ἡ ἀνάπαλιν τὸ ὕδωρ τῷ οἴνῳ ἴσον ἔσται καὶ ἔσται κοτύλης· καὶ οὕτως πάλιν τὸ μῖγμα δύο κοτυλῶν. τὸ γὰρ λέγειν τὸν μὲν οἶνον ἐκτείνεσθαι, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ συστέλλεσθαι καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὸ μέσον ἤκειν, τοῦ μὲν ὕδατος ἀποβάλλοντος ἡμισυ κοτύλης, τοῦ δ' οἴνου προσλαμβάνοντος τὸ τοσοῦτον, λίαν ἄτοπὸν ἔστιν αἰτούμενον. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Supplement to On the Soul*, trans. by R.W. Sharples, Duckworth, London 2004, p. 126: "Further, whenever a measure of wine is mixed with two measures of water, the whole blend and mixture becomes three measures. But how is it possible on their [theory]? For if the measure of wine passes through all the water and is made equal to it, then either the whole will be four measures (for the wine has become equal to the water in quantity, so that [it is] two measures; for it will certainly not, when it has been made equal to two measures, still be one measure; for it is impossible for double to be equal to half). Or, conversely, the water will be equal to the wine and will be [one] measure; and in this way, conversely, the mixture will be two measures. For to say that the wine is extended and the water contracts and that thus [they] arrive at the mean, the water losing half a measure and the wine gaining this amount in addition, is an excessively absurd think to ask". This passage has a clear parallel in Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh. hyp.*, III, 60-62: εἰ δὲ ἐπιμίγνται τὸ κώνειον παντὶ μέρει τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ παρεκτείνεται αὐτῷ ὅλον ὅλῳ κατὰ τε τὴν τῶν οὐσιῶν καὶ τῶν ποιότητων αὐτῶν δι' ἀλλήλων διδοῦν, ἔν' οὕτως ἡ κρᾶσις γένηται, τὰ δὲ παρεκτείνόμενα ἀλλήλοις καθ' ἅπαν μέρος τὸν ἴσον ἐπέχει τόπον, διὸ καὶ ἴσα ἀλλήλοις ἔστί, ἴση ἔσται ἡ κοτύλη τοῦ κωνείου ταῖς δέκα κοτύλαις τοῦ ὕδατος, ὡς εἴκοσι κοτύλας ὀφείλει εἶναι τὸ μῖγμα ἢ δύο μόνας, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῆδε τῆ ὑποθέσει τοῦ τρόπου τῆς κρᾶσεως· καὶ κοτύλης πάλιν ὕδατος ταῖς εἴκοσι κοτύλαις ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐπεμβληθείσης τεσσαράκοντα κοτυλῶν ὀφείλει τὸ μέτρον εἶναι ἢ πάλιν δύο μόνον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὴν κοτύλην εἴκοσι κοτύλας ἐνδέχεται νοεῖν, ὅσαις παρεκτείνεται, καὶ τὰς εἴκοσι κοτύλας μίαν, ἢ συνεξινοῦνται. δυνατὸν δὲ οὕτω κατὰ μίαν κοτύλην ἐπεμβάλλοντα καὶ ὁμοίως συλλογίζόμενον συνάγειν ὅτι αἱ εἴκοσι ὁρώμεναι τοῦ μίγματος κοτύλαι διςμυρίαὶ που καὶ πρὸς ὀφείλουσιν εἶναι ὅσον ἐπὶ τῆ ὑποθέσει τοῦ τρόπου τῆς κρᾶσεως, αἱ δὲ αὐταὶ καὶ δύο μόναι· ὅπερ ἀπεμφάσεως ὑπερβολὴν οὐκ ἀπολέλοιπεν. οὐκοῦν ἄτοπὸς ἔστι καὶ αὕτη ἡ ὑπόθεσις τῆς κρᾶσεως. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, trans. by J. Annas and J. Barnes, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge Mass. 1994, p. 160: "But if the hemlock is mixed up with every part of the water and extends as a whole over the whole of it inasmuch as both their qualities and their substances pass through one another in order for the blending to come about, and if items which extend over one another in every part occupy an equal space, so that they are actually equal to one another, then the cup of hemlock will be equal to the ten cups of water – and the mixture ought to be twenty cups or only two, so far as the present hypothesis about the mode of blending goes. And if a cup of water were again added to the twenty cups (so far as this version of the hypothesis goes), then the measure ought to be forty cups or again only two, since it is possible to think of the cup as twenty cups (as many as those over which it extends) and the twenty cups as one (with which they are made equal). By adding one cup at a time in this way, and arguing in the same fashion, it is possible that the twenty cups of the mixture we see ought to be 200,000 and more, so far as the hypothesis about the mode of blending goes, and that the same cups should be just two; and this is the height of incongruity. Thus this hypothesis about blending is also absurd".

⁵⁴ See above, n. 51 and Cordonier, "Du moyen platonisme au néoplatonisme"; the parallel passages quoted in the preceding note suggest that Alexander was acquainted directly with Sextus Empiricus or (more probably on chronological grounds) with the latter's source, while the literal relationship between Alexander's and Plutarch's arguments seems to be less cogent. An echo of the Academic anti-Stoic polemics features also in Alcin., *Didask.*, XI, p. 166.25-27 Hermann = 166.25-27 (p. 26) Whittaker, as well as in the pseudo-Galenic *De Qualitatibus incorporeis* and, once again, in Alexander, *Mantissa*, pp. 123.35-124.1 and 124.21-27 Bruns, under the form of the argument that were the qualities bodies, their presence in a body should either produce an increase in size, or require total blending, something that Alcinous in the *Didask.* declares to be most absurd (ἄτοπώτατον).

Plut., <i>De Comm. not.</i> , XXXVII, 1077 e – 1078 a	Plot., IV 7[2], 8 ² .7-15
<p>παρὰ τὴν ἔννοιάν ἐστι σῶμα σώματος εἶναι τόπον καὶ σῶμα χωρεῖν διὰ σώματος, κενὸν μηδέτερου περιέχοντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πλήρους εἰς τὸ πλήρες ἐνδυσόμενου καὶ δεχομένου τὸ ἐπιμιγνύμενον τοῦ διάστασιν οὐκ ἔχοντος οὐδὲ χώραν ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὴν συνέχειαν. οἱ δ' οὐχ ἓν εἰς ἓν οὐδὲ δύο οὐδὲ τρία καὶ δέκα συνωθοῦντες ἀλλὰ πάντα μέρη τοῦ κόσμου κατακερματισθέντος ἐμβάλλοντες εἰς ἓν ὅ τι ἂν τύχῃσι, καὶ τουλάχιστον αἰσθητὸν ἀποφάσκοντες ἐπιλείψειν ἐπιόντι τῷ μεγίστῳ, νεανιεύονται δόγμα ποιούμενοι τὸν ἔλεγχον ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς, ἅτε δὴ μαχομένας ὑποθέσεις ταῦς ἐννοίας λαμβάνοντες. (...) τοῦτο δὴ συμβαίνει τὸ καλὸν αὐτοῖς, ἐμβάλλουσιν εἰς σῶμα σώματα, καὶ τὸ τῆς περιοχῆς ἀδιανόητον. ἀνάγκη γάρ, εἰς ἀλλήλα χωροῦντων τῷ κεράνυσθαι, μὴ θάτερον μὲν περιέχειν περιέχεσθαι δὲ θάτερον, καὶ τὸ μὲν δέχεσθαι τὸ δ' ἐνυπάρχειν· οὕτω γὰρ οὐ κρᾶσις ἀφή δὲ καὶ ψαῦσις ἔσται τῶν ἐπιφανειῶν (...)· ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη, γιγνομένης ὥσπερ ἀξιούσι τῆς ἀνακράσεως, ἐν ἀλλήλοισι τὰ μιγνύμενα γίγνεσθαι καὶ ταῦτὸν ὁμοῦ τῷ ἐνυπάρχειν περιέχεσθαι καὶ τῷ δέχεσθαι περιέχειν θάτερον· καὶ μηδέτερον αὐτῶν αὖ πάλιν δυνατὸν εἶναι συμβαίνει, ἀμφότερα τῆς κράσεως δι' ἀλλήλων διέναι καὶ μηδὲν ἐπιλείπεσθαι μηδενὸς μέρους ἀλλὰ <πᾶν> παντὸς ἀναπίμπλασθαι βιαζομένης.</p> <p>It is at odd with the common conception for one body to be place for another and for one to pass through another if void is contained in neither but plenum enters into plenum and the admixture is received by that which because of its continuity has no interval within itself. These men, however, compressing into one thing not one other and not even two or even three or ten but stuffing all parts of the finely shredded universe into any single thing they find and denying that the slightest perceptible thing would be inadequate for the largest that encounters it, recklessly make themselves a doctrine of the objection advanced to refute them just as they do in many other cases, inasmuch as they make assumptions that are in conflict with the common conceptions.(...) This pretty pass they come to, then, by stuffing bodies into body – and to the inconceivability of encompassment. For it is necessarily not the case that of bodies permeating each other in being blended one encompass and the other be encompassed or one be the receptacle and the other be in it, since in that case there would be not blending but contact, that is, contiguity of the surfaces (...). If blending occurs in the way they require, however, it is necessary that the things being mixed get into each other and the same thing be at once encompassed by being in the other and encompass it by being its receptacle; and on the other hand again it follows that neither condition is possible, since the blending constrains both things to penetrate each other and no part to lack any part but <every part> to be filled full of all [trans. Cherniss, pp. 803-9].</p>	<p>τὸ δὲ δὴ σῶμα ὃν σώματι κεκρᾶσθαι ὅλον δι' ὅλων, ὡς ὅπου ἂν ἦ θάτερον, καὶ θάτερον εἶναι, ἴσον ὄγκον ἀμφοτέρων καὶ τόπον κατεχόντων, καὶ μηδεμίαν αὔξην γεγενῆσθαι ἐπεμβληθέντος τοῦ ἐτέρου, οὐδὲν ἀπολείψει ὁ μὴ τέμνη. οὐ γὰρ κατὰ μεγάλα μέρη παραλλάξ ἡ κρᾶσις – οὕτω γὰρ φασι παράθεσιν ἔσσεσθαι – διεληλυθὸς δὲ διὰ παντὸς τὸ ἐπεμβληθέν, ἔτι εἰ σμικρότερον – ὅπερ ἀδύνατον, τὸ ἔλαττον ἴσον γενέσθαι τῷ μείζονι – ἀλλ' οὖν διεληλυθὸς πᾶν, τέμνη κατὰ πᾶν.</p> <p>But if it is a body and is mixed with the body “whole through whole” so that wherever the one is, the other is also, with both bodily masses also occupying an equal amount of space, and if no increase takes place when the other one is inserted, this will leave nothing undivided. For mixture is not by large parts placed side by side – for in this way [the Stoic] says it will be juxtaposition [not mixture] – but what is inserted penetrates through every part, even if it is smaller – this is impossible, for the less to be equal to the greater – but, anyhow, in penetrating it all it divides it everywhere [trans. Armstrong].</p>

Surprisingly enough, Plutarch is not mentioned by Porphyry among the texts read in Plotinus' classroom,⁵⁵ and the *Index fontium* of the definitive edition of his writings⁵⁶ lists only one passage from the *Stoic Self-contradictions*, plus a handful of other quotations;⁵⁷ on the basis of the above comparison, the passage from *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* can be added to this list.

As he explains a bit later, Plutarch is echoing here the argument of the leg and the naval battle that had been advanced by Arcesilaus.⁵⁸ Imagine a small body, the amputated leg of a soldier, that after its corruption totally interpenetrates a much larger body, that of the sea. Were total blending possible as the Stoics pretend, nothing would prevent the sea battle between Xerxes and the Greeks from occurring within a leg.⁵⁹ What has been aptly defined as “the paradoxicality of a small

⁵⁵ See above, n. 48: the authors listed by Porphyry are the Platonists Severus, Cronius, Numenius, Gaius, and Atticus, and the Peripatetics Alexander of Aphrodisias and Adrastus; cf. L. Brisson, “Notices sur les noms propres”, in Porphyre, *La Vie de Plotin, I. Travaux préliminaires et index grec complet*, par L. Brisson, M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, R. Goulet et D'O'Brien, Vrin, Paris 1982 (Histoire des Doctrines de l'Antiquité Classique, 6), pp. 51-140, *sub vocem*; Porphyre, *La Vie de Plotin, II. Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, par L. Brisson, J.-L. Cherlonneix, M.O. Goulet-Cazé, M.D. Grmeck, J.-M. Flamand, S. Matton, D. O'Brien, J. Pépin, H.D. Saffrey, A.-Ph. Segonds, M. Tardieu, P. Thillet, Vrin, Paris 1992 (Histoire des Doctrines de l'Antiquité Classique, 16), pp. 263-4.

⁵⁶ *Si licet parva componere magnis*, I would like here to join Cherniss' adjective for the edition by Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer: H. Cherniss, “Plotinus: A Definitive Edition and a New Translation”, *The Review of Metaphysics* 6 (1952), pp. 239-56.

⁵⁷ In *Plotini Opera* ediderunt P. Henry et H.-R. Schwyzer, Tomus III, *Enneas VI*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 1982 (Scriptorium Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis), *Index fontium*, p. 365, Henry and Schwyzer list two passages from the *Lives* (“Alexander” and “Pericles”), plus the following passages from the *Moralia: An Vitiositas ad infelicitatem sufficiat*, 499 D; *De Animae procreatione in Timaeo*, 1015 B; *De E apud Delphos*, 393 C; *De Facie in orbe lunae*, 943 D and 944 F; *De Iside et Osiride*, 374 D and 381 F; *De Primo frigido*, 952 B and 954 F, and *De Stoicorum repugnantis*, 1046 C. No additional quotations from Plutarch are included in the *Fontes addendi* listed by H.-R. Schwyzer, “Corrigenda ad Plotini textum”, *Museum Helveticum* 44 (1987), pp. 191-210, esp. pp. 192-5.

⁵⁸ Plut., *De Comm. not.*, XXXVII, 1078 C-D. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics*, p. 73 n. 200 and p. 87 n. 251, calls attention to a similar argument in Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh. hyp.* III, 56-62 (partly quoted above, n. 51), and *Adv. math.*, IX, 261. He suggests that the arguments that point to the paradoxicality of interpreting mixture of unequal quantities as total blending “could well have originated in the sceptical tradition” (p. 87 n. 251). In the same vein, see also Groisard, in Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *Sur la mixtion et la croissance*, pp. xcvi-xc.

⁵⁹ Plut., *De Comm. not.*, XXXVII, 1078 C-D: ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη, γιγνομένης ὡσπερ ἀξιούσι τῆς ἀνακράσεως, ἐν ἀλλήλοις τὰ μινύμενα γίνεσθαι καὶ ταυτὸν ὁμοῦ τῷ ἐνυπάρχειν περιέχεσθαι καὶ τῷ δέχεσθαι περιέχειν θάτερον· καὶ μηδέτερον αὐτῶν αὐτὸ πάλιν δυνατὸν εἶναι συμβαίνει, ἀμφοτέρω τῆς κράσεως δι' ἀλλήλων διέναι καὶ μηδὲν ἐπιλείπεσθαι μηδὲν ὁμοῦ ἀλλὰ <πᾶν> παντὸς ἀναπλήρασθαι βιαζομένης. ἐνταῦθα δῆπου καὶ τὸ θρυλούμενον ἐν ταῖς διατριβαῖς Ἀρκεσιλάου σκέλος ἦκει ταῖς ἀτοπίαις ἐπεμβαῖνον αὐτῶν μετὰ γέλωτος. εἰ γὰρ εἰσιν αἱ κράσεις δι' ὅλων, τί κωλύει, τοῦ σκέλους ἀποκοπέντος καὶ κατασαπέντος καὶ ῥιψέντος εἰς τὴν θάλατταν καὶ διαχυθέντος, οὐ τὸν Ἀντιγόνοιο μόνον στόλον διεκπλεῖν, ὡς ἔλεγεν Ἀρκεσίλαος, ἀλλὰ τὰς Ἑέρξου χιλίας καὶ διακοσίας καὶ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς ὁμοῦ τριακοσίας τριῆρεις ἐν τῷ σκέλει ναυμαχοῦσας; οὐ γὰρ ἐπιλείψει δῆπουθεν προῖον οὐδὲ παύσεται ἐν τῷ μείζονι τοῦλαττον· ἢ πέρας ἢ κρᾶσις ἔξει καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον αὐτῆς ἀφήν ὅπου λήγει ποιησάμενον εἰς ὅλον οὐ δίδεισιν ἀλλ' ἀπαγορεύσει μινύμενον. “If blending occurs in the way they require, however, it is necessary that the things being mixed get into each other and the same thing to be at once encompassed by being in the other and encompass it by being its receptacle; and on the other hand again it follows that neither condition is possible, since the blending constrains both things to penetrate each other and no part to lack any part but <every part> to be filled full of all. Here, I presume, is where the leg too that Arcesilaus made a commonplace in his discourses enters trampling in mockery upon their absurdities. In fact, if blends are thorough, what is to prevent not only the fleet of Antigonos, as Arcesilaus said, from sailing through the leg that has been amputated, decayed, flung into the sea, and dissolved but the 1200 triremes of Xerxes together with the 300 of the Greeks from fighting a naval battle within

body pervading or being blended with a larger one”⁶⁰ is presented by Plutarch as one among the numerous examples of Stoic extravagant tenets. Now, it is clear that Plotinus has Plutarch’s passage in mind when he says that within the Stoic assumption a smaller body is stuffed into a larger one, ἐπεμβληθέντος τοῦ ἑτέρου, and when he remarks that with the Stoic total blending it is precisely the case of a real κρᾶσις, not of a mere contact, ἀφή (Plutarch) or παράθεσις (Plotinus). Not only the terminology, but also the flow of the argument is inspired by Plutarch.⁶¹ However, there is a great difference between him and Plotinus: with the latter the point is not, as with the former, to ridicule the whimsical idea. Rather, Plotinus’ point is that omnipresence cannot, under any circumstance, be the property of a body, unless one is ready to admit such an absurdity as that of a smaller body that, once inserted, can reach every part of a larger body. Plutarch’s objection turns out to be part and parcel of a unique argument to which both Alexander and Plutarch contribute, with Alexander pointing to the impossibility that the total mass and the space occupied do not increase when a body joins another body, and Plutarch pointing to the fact that the smaller body should be coextended with the larger body, so that the whole of the larger body is filled in by the whole of the smaller body.

Finally, Plotinus has once again recourse to Alexander’s *De Mixtione*, and follows his lead in asserting that total blending implies division to infinity.

the leg? For surely the lesser spreading in what is greater would not run short, and would not stop either; otherwise the blend would have a limit, and its extremity, having made contact at the point where it terminates, would not penetrate the whole but would leave off being mixed” (trans. Cherniss, quoted above, n. 51, p. 807-9).

⁶⁰ Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics*, p. 67.

⁶¹ The paradox of a smaller body coextended with a larger one features also in Alexander. In addition to the passage from the *Mantissa* quoted in the chart on p. 177, see also Alex. Aphr., *Qu.*, II 12, 57.22-30 Bruns: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ τῶν σωμάτων χωρήσει δι’ ἀλλήλων ἐγίνετο φθορά τις [καί] ἢ μεταβολὴ εἰς παχυμερέστερα σώματα, ὥσως ἂν ἐδύνατο ὄν τέως τὸ ἕτερον κατεῖχεν τόπον, τοῦτο ὕστερον κατέχειν τὸ ἐκ τῆς ἀμφοτέρων μίξεως γινόμενον (...). ἔτι ἔνια μινύμενα, οὐ μόνον οὐ παχύτερον ἀλλὰ καὶ λεπτότερον αὐτὸ ἢ πρόσθεν ἦν ποιεῖ, ὥστε ἔδει αὐτὸ ἐπὶ μείζονος γινόμενον ὄγκου καὶ τόπον κατέχειν πλείονα. “So if in the passing of bodies through one another there came to be some passing away and change to denser body, [then] perhaps that which comes to be from the mixture of both [bodies] would be able subsequently to occupy the place which was occupied for a time by one [body]. (...) Moreover some things when mixed make something not only not denser but actually rarer than it was before, so that it would have, coming to be greater in bulk, to occupy a larger place, too”: trans. R.W. Sharples, *Alexander of Aphrodisias, Quaestiones I.1-2.15*, Duckworth, London 1992 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle), p. 111. The Alexandrian authorship of this question is challenged by R.B. Todd, “Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Alexandrian *Quaestiones* II.12”, *Philologus* 116 (1972), pp. 293-305, but this specific idea is genuinely Alexander’s, as shown by the passages from the *De Mixtione* quoted above. However, Plotinus’ phrasing points to Plutarch, because Alexander’s verbs are χωρεῖν and παρεκτείνεται, while Plotinus’ ἐπεμβάλλειν echoes Plutarch’s ἐμβάλλειν. The verb ἐμβάλλειν occurs also in the passage by Sextus Empiricus quoted above, n. 51, and this might raise the question of the relationship between the passage by Plutarch and that by Sextus: following the suggestion advanced by Todd (see above, n. 58), one may imagine a common source in the sceptic tradition, but it seems clear to me that Plotinus is inspired here by Plutarch and not by Sextus, even though the latter counts among his sources on epistemological issues, as has been remarked by R.T. Wallies, “Scepticism and Neoplatonism”, in *ANRW* (see above n. 11), II.36, 2, pp. 911-54, and by W. Kühn, *Quel savoir après le scepticisme? Plotin et ses prédécesseurs sur la connaissance de soi*, Vrin, Paris 2009 (Histoire des doctrines de l’Antiquité Classique, 37).

Alex. Aphr., <i>De Mixt.</i> , p. 222.4-16 Bruns	Plot., IV 7[2], 8 ² .18-20
<p>ἔπεται δὲ τοῖς λέγουσιν ἐπ' ἄπειρον τὴν τομὴν καὶ τὸ [ῆ] ἀδύνατον λέγειν πάντη διαιρεῖσθαι τι σῶμα ἐνεργείᾳ, οὕτως δὲ καὶ μίγνυσθαι δι' ὅλων τῷ εἰς ἄπειρα ἐνεργείᾳ διαιρεῖσθαι τὰ σώματα. εἰ μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν ἐπ' ἄπειρον εἶναι διαιρετὰ τὰ σώματα τῷ μηδέποτε ἐπιλείπειν τὴν τομὴν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἐκ τῶν τεμνομένων περιλείπεσθαι τι τέμνεσθαι δυναμένων, οὐχ οἷόν τε ἔσται σῶμά τι παντὶ διηρηῆσθαι ὡς μηκέτι ὑπολείπεσθαι τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ τομὴν ἀναδέξασθαι δυνάμενον (...). εἰ δὲ λέγοιεν ἐπ' ἄπειρον εἶναι τὰ σώματα διαιρετὰ, τῷ εἰς ἄπειρον δύνασθαι διαιρεῖσθαι [τὸ] πᾶν διηρημένον σῶμα, κατ' αὐτοῦς εἴη ἂν εἰς ἄπειρα ἐνεργείᾳ διηρημένα τὰ κεκραμένα ἀλλήλοις.</p> <p>The consequence for those who describe division as continuing to infinity is that it is impossible to speak of a body being in actuality divided through and through and of bodies being in this way also totally mixed by being in actuality divided into infinities. For if they say that bodies are divisible to infinity through the division never letting up, but there always being a residue from what is undergoing division capable of being divided, then it will be impossible for a body to be divided through and through so that it leaves no remainder able to undergo division. (...) But if they claimed that bodies were divisible to infinity in that every body that has been divided can be actually divided to infinity, then according to them the bodies that have been blended with one another would be actually divided into infinities [trans. Todd, p. 131].</p>	<p>εἰ δέ, ἀπείρου τῆς τομῆς οὐσης – ὃ γὰρ ἂν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαιρετόν ἐστιν – οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ ἄπειρα ἔσται.</p> <p>But if this is so, since the division is infinite – for whatever body you take is divisible – the infinity of parts will exist not only potentially but actually [trans. Armstrong].</p>

The elenctic nature of the whole argument deserves attention: Plotinus provisionally endorses the total blending of the Stoics and argues that it contradicts their own assumption that the soul is a very fine body. If the soul is such a body totally interpenetrated with another one, both bodies do something that is incompatible with the behaviour of a body, and this on three counts: (i) the mass of a body does not increase when another body coalesces with it, (ii) the smaller body coextends with the larger body, and (iii) the resulting body turns out to be an actual infinite, in so far as it is infinitely divisible. This move is typical of interschool polemics which is so prominent a feature of Hellenistic philosophy; but what is new, and peculiar of Plotinus, is the conclusion that what is impossible for bodies is indeed what the soul does all the time, namely to be omnipresent in whatever body is animated, the reason being precisely that soul is not a body: ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ δι' ὅλων· ἀσώματος ἄρα (“But soul penetrates through whole bodies, therefore it is immaterial”).

Nothing similar features in Plotinus’ sources. Alexander has obviously no reason to draw the conclusion that the soul can indeed pervade the entire body because of its affinity with the intelligible Forms;⁶² and Plutarch, who would in principle subscribe to this Platonic tenet, shows no concern for

⁶² Alexander insists on the soul as the form of the body, hence immaterial; there is also a section of the *Mantissa* devoted to establishing this point: ὅτι ἀσώματος ἡ ψυχὴ, pp. 113.25-118.4 Bruns. However, he insists also on the fact that this form is inseparable from its body, as in *De An.*, p. 21.22-24 Bruns: οὐσα δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ εἶδος τοῦ σώματος, ὁποῖον προεῖρηται, τῷ ἀχώριστον εἶναι τοῦ σώματος τὸ τοιοῦτον εἶδος καὶ συμφθίρειτο ἂν τῷ σώματι, ὅση γε αὐτῆς φθαρτοῦ σώματος εἶδος

it in his anti-Stoic polemics. On the contrary, if we turn to the post-Plotinian writings on the soul, what we find is a general consensus on the fact that the soul mixes with the body in precisely this way, performing with it that total blending that keeps intact its difference of nature, and is impossible for bodies to perform: the ἀσύγχυτος ἔνωσις, *unio inconfusa*, that Dörrie rightly detected in three readers of Porphyry's Σύμμικτα ζητήματα: Nemesius, Calcidius, and Priscian of Lydia – the *unio inconfusa* that he thought he could trace back to a pre-Plotinian source. It is time to reconsider, even in short, the question of the alleged “Middle-Platonic textbook” on the soul. It is true that the topic of the ἀσύγχυτος ἔνωσις antedates Plotinus: as we are told in as many words by Nemesius, this doctrine was taught by Ammonius Saccas,⁶³ and there is no reason to challenge this testimony. However, in Ammonius, according to Nemesius' testimony, there is no trace of the anti-Stoic arguments advanced by Plotinus in IV 7[2]. Indeed, it is only with Plotinus that the anti-Stoic arguments of Alexander and Plutarch have been put into the service of the Platonic soul. As Dörrie has demonstrated, Nemesius, Calcidius, and Priscianus of Lydia share in the claim of the soul's omnipresence in a way that suggests a common source;⁶⁴ but this source, namely Porphyry's ζήτημα, in its turn depends upon Plotinus.⁶⁵

On a more general count, what is typical of Plotinus is the structure of the *Immortality of the Soul*, with its focus on the systematic refutation of the rival definitions of soul before the Platonic

ἔστιν, “Soul is therefore form of the body, in the sense in which we have explained. Because a form of this sort is inseparable from its body, it must consequently perish along with its body – that part of it, at least, which is the form of a corruptible body”, trans. A. Fotinis, *The De Anima of Alexander of Aphrodisias. A Translation and Commentary*, University Press of America, Washington 1979, p. 31. Plotinus openly criticizes Alexander's position: see I 1 [53], 4.18-19: ἀλλ' ὡς εἶδος ἐν ὕλῃ ἔσται ἐν τῷ σώματι; πρῶτον μὲν ὡς χωριστὸν εἶδος ἔσται, εἴπερ οὐσία “Will it then be in the body like form in matter? First of all, it will be like a separable form, assuming it to be a substantial reality” (trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, I, p. 103).

⁶³ *Nemesii Emeseni De Natura hominis* ed. M. Morani, Teubner, Leipzig 1987 (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), pp. 39.16-40.2: Ἀμμώνιος δὲ ὁ διδάσκαλος Πλωτίνου τὸ ζητούμενον τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἐπελύετο· ἔλεγε τὰ νοητὰ τοιαύτην ἔχειν φύσιν ὡς καὶ ἐνοῦσθαι τοῖς δυναμένοις αὐτὰ δέξασθαι, καθάπερ τὰ συνεφθαρμένα, καὶ ἐνούμενα μένειν ἀσύγχυτα καὶ ἀδιάφορα, ὡς καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα. ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ σωμάτων ἢ ἔνωσις ἀλλοίωσιν τῶν συνιόντων πάντως ἐργάζεται, ἐπειδήπερ εἰς ἄλλα σώματα μεταβάλλεται ὡς τὰ στοιχεῖα εἰς τὰ συγκρίματα, καὶ αἱ τροφαὶ εἰς αἷμα, τὸ δὲ αἷμα εἰς σάρκα καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ μέρη τοῦ σώματος. ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν νοητῶν ἔνωσις μὲν γίνεται, ἀλλοίωσις δὲ οὐ παρακολουθεῖ (“Ammonius, the teacher of Plotinus, gave the following solution to the question: he said that intelligible things had such a nature as to be both unified with things capable of receiving them, as are things which perish together with one another, and when unified, to remain unconfused and not perish, like things which are juxtaposed. For in the case of bodies unification certainly brings about the alteration of the ingredients, since they are transformed into other bodies, as are the elements into their compounds, foods into blood, and blood into flesh and the other parts of the body. But in the case of intelligible things unification occurs, but alteration does not follow with it”: *Nemesius. On the Nature of Man*, translated with an introduction and notes by R.W. Sharples and P.J. van der Eijk, Liverpool U.P., Liverpool 2008, p. 80).

⁶⁴ See above n. 19.

⁶⁵ To fully substantiate this claim goes beyond the scope of this article, but a telling example is provided by Priscianus of Lydia, who quotes explicitly the Porphyrian ζήτημα as his source at the beginning of the *Solutiones ad Regem Chosroem* (extant only in Latin): *Prisciani Lydi Solutiones eorum de quibus dubitavit Chosroes Persarum rex* ed. I. Bywater, Reimer, Berlin 1886 (Supplementum Aristotelicum, I 2), pp. 39-104, esp. p. 42.16-17: “et Porphyrius ex Commixtis quaestionibus”. Priscianus accounts for the union of the soul with the body in a way which is clearly reminiscent of Plotinus' arguments against total blending: “Anima enim a se animato animali aut apponitur aut miscetur aut concreta est. Sed si quidem quasi tangens apponitur, non fortassis esset animal totum animatum; impossibile enim est corpus totum corpori toti apponi: sed animal totum animatum: non igitur apponitur anima, ac per hoc corpus non est. Si autem miscetur, non iam unum erit anima, sed quiddam divisorum et partitorum: unum autem esse oportet animam; non igitur miscetur. Si vero concreta est, corpus totum per corpus totum pertransivit: impossibile autem hoc; duo enim in eodem corpora erunt. Itaque neque apponitur neque miscetur neque concreta est: et necessario neque corpus est; sed pervenit ut essentia quaedam incorporalis: proprium vero incorporalis pervenire per totum corpus”, *ibid.*, p. 44.16-25.

definition takes the floor, and with it the true basis – this is Plotinus' conviction – for the assessment of its immortality.

Due to the fact that Plotinus' treatise was translated into Arabic within the circle of al-Kindī,⁶⁶ the Platonic doctrine of the soul cast in this way reached the Arabic-speaking world at an early stage of the constitution of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. In the second section of this paper I will focus on the Arabic translation of this specific passage; then, I will try to outline the impact of Plotinus' anti-Stoic polemics.

2. Plotinus' argument against total blending in ninth-century Baghdad

Parts of the *Enneads* were translated into Arabic in Baghdad, within the first half of the 9th century. Both the place and the *terminus ante quem* of the translation are provided by the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, by far the widest among the texts that contain the Arabic version of Plotinus. In addition to Aristotle, its alleged author, and Porphyry, its alleged commentator, this work mentions at the outset the translator into Arabic: Ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimṣī; the dedicatee of the work: Aḥmad the son of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 833-842); and also its revisor: the philosopher al-Kindī.⁶⁷ All this points to the forties of the 9th century as to the date when the translation was already completed. Other texts containing parts of the Arabic version of Plotinus (with partial overlaps with one another) include the so-called "Sayings of the Greek Sage"⁶⁸ and an *Epistle on the Divine Science*.⁶⁹

As mentioned before, most of the Arabic Plotinus came down to us in the form of a work allegedly by Aristotle: his *Theology*. The disparate hypotheses about the origin and composition of this work

⁶⁶ See above n. 6.

⁶⁷ "The first chapter of the book of Aristotle the Philosopher, called in Greek *Theologia* (*Uṭūlū ḡīyyā*), being the discourse on Divine Sovereignty: the interpretation of Porphyry of Tyre, translated into Arabic by 'Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Nā'ima of Emessa and corrected for Aḥmad ibn al-Mu'taṣim billāh by Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī": 'A. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab. Plotinus apud Arabes. Theologia Aristotelis et fragmenta quae supersunt*, Dār al-Naḥḍa al-Miṣriyya, Cairo 1955 (Dirāsāt Islāmiyya, 20), 2nd edition Cairo 1966, p. 3.3-9; English trans. by G. Lewis: *Plotiniana Arabica ad codicum fidem anglie vertit G. Lewis*, in *Plotini Opera II, Enneades IV-V* ediderunt P. Henry et H.-R. Schwyzer, Desclée de Brouwer - L'Édition Universelle, Paris-Bruxelles 1959 (Museum Lessianum series philosophica, 34), p. 486.

⁶⁸ The "Sayings" attributed to a "Greek Sage" feature, among many other doctrines of Greek and Arab philosophers, in a compilation preserved in a *unicum*, the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Marsh* 539, on which called attention F. Rosenthal, "On the Knowledge of Plato's Philosophy in the Islamic World", *Islamic Culture* 14-15 (1940-41), pp. 387-422, esp. p. 396; later on, this manuscript and the "Sayings" were extensively studied by Id., "Aṣ-Ṣayḥ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source", *Orientalia* 21 (1952), pp. 461-92; 22 (1953), pp. 370-400; 24 (1955), pp. 42-65; both studies are reprinted in Id., *Greek Philosophy in the Arab World. A Collection of Essays*, Variorum, Aldershot - Brookfield (VE) 1990 (Collected Studies, 322), same pagination. The compilation has now been edited by E. Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader from the Circle of Miskawayh*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2014; the manuscript is incomplete at the beginning and contains no date, but, as E. Wakeling has it (p. 53), "Rosenthal dated the manuscript to the thirteenth century and Savage Smith narrowed it down to the first half of this century, as the existence of catchwords points towards 1200, whereas the absence of chain lines places it before 1250".

⁶⁹ The *Epistle on the Divine Science* was discovered by P. Kraus, "Plotin chez les arabes. Remarques sur un nouveau fragment de la paraphrase arabe des *Ennéades*", *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 23 (1940-41), pp. 263-95 (reprinted in Id., *Alchemie, Ketzerrei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam*. Gesammelte Aufsätze hrsg. u. eingeleitet von R. Brague, G. Olms, Hildesheim - Zürich - New York 1994, pp. 313-45), and has been edited twice, by Kraus himself and by Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab* (quoted above, n. 67), pp. 167-83. The edition by Kraus was published posthumously by G.C. Anawati, "Le néoplatonisme dans la pensée musulmane. État actuel des recherches", in Id., *Études de philosophie musulmane*, Vrin, Paris 1974 (Études musulmanes, 15), pp. 155-221, as well as in the Proceedings of the Conference *Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente*, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Roma, 5-9 ottobre 1970*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma 1974 (Problemi attuali di scienza e cultura, 198), pp. 339-405.

that have been advanced in scholarship depend not only upon this blatant pseudepigraphy, but also from the fact that the translation is heavily adapted, hence the riddles about the date, the milieu, and purpose of such changes with respect to the Greek text.⁷⁰

The pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* begins with a long chapter containing three items: (i) a section with no Greek counterpart, that accounts for the main scope of the work;⁷¹ (ii) a list of numbered topics, labelled “Headings of the Questions”,⁷² and (iii) an account of the presence of the soul in the lower world, which in its turn results from combining sections extracted from two Plotinian treatises. One is our *Immortality of the Soul*, IV 7[2], and the other is the *Descent of the Soul into the Bodies*, IV 8[6]. The final part of IV 7 and the initial part of IV 8 are joined together; then another section follows which, once again, has no Greek counterpart, and with this section the first chapter of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* comes to an end.⁷³ The rest of the work is subdivided into nine further chapters that present more or less the same layout as the first one, with the exception of the “Headings of the Questions”, that feature only in Chapter I. The Arabic adapted versions of sections extracted from a number of Plotinian treatises – all of them situated in *Enneads* IV-VI⁷⁴ – are connected by passages of varying length with no counterpart in Greek.

⁷⁰ For a *status quaestionis* one can see my “La Teologia neoplatonica di “Aristotele” e gli inizi della filosofia arabomusulmana”, in R. Goulet - U. Rudolph (eds.), *Entre Orient et Occident. La philosophie et la science gréco-romaines dans le monde arabe*, 57^e Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique, Fondation Hardt, Vandœuvres - Genève 2011, pp. 135-90.

⁷¹ The main scope of the work is presented by an authoritative philosopher who is introduced by another author saying “*qāla al-ḥakīm*, the Sage said” (ed. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘arab*, p. 4.3). The “Sage” presents himself as the author of the *Metaphysics* (ed. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘arab*, p. 5.1-2 and 12). The title of the pseudo-*Theology* says that it is the work on divine sovereignty by Aristotle with the commentary of Porphyry (see above, n. 67), hence the conclusion that the words “the Sage said” in the fiction of the text are Porphyry’s, and that the *ḥakīm* who presents the scope of the *Theology*, once again in the fiction of the text, is Aristotle.

⁷² This numbered list of topics is the Arabic version of the Porphyrian κεφάλαια and ἐπιχειρήματα of *Enn.* IV 3-5[27-29]. On this item of the pseudo-*Theology* one may see my “The Textual Tradition of the Arabic Plotinus. The *Theology of Aristotle*, its *ru‘ūs al-masā’il*, and the Greek Model of the Arabic Version”, in A.M.I. van Oppenraay – R. Fontaine (eds.), *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2012, pp. 37-71. The main topics enumerated in the “Headings of the Questions” are: the cognitive faculties of the soul in the intelligible world; those of the separated substances; the sensitive and cognitive faculties of the soul united with the body; the animation of the body of the universe.

⁷³ On this layout one may see my “Pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter I: Structure and Composition”, *Oriens. Zeitschrift der internationalen Gesellschaft für Orientforschung* 36 (2001), pp. 78-112.

⁷⁴ Two explanations of this fact are possible: either the first volume (σωμάτων, see *Vita Plotini*, 25.1, 26.2, 3, 4, 6) that in Porphyry’s edition contained the *Enneads* I to III was lacking in the Greek manuscript available in Baghdad, or the selection that pointed to *Enneads* IV, V and VI was intentional. This is my favoured explanation, first on the ground of the contents of these *Enneads*, devoted by Porphyry to gather the Plotinian treatises on the soul, the intelligible world, and the first principle (*Vita Plotini*, 24.5-11; 24.17; 37-39; 59-60; 25.10-11; 32-33; 26.2-3): these are precisely the topics enumerated by “Aristotle” as those to be dealt with in his own “*Theology*” (ed. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘arab*, p. 6.7-12); second, because there is good reason to think that the manuscript of the *Enneads* out of which the translation was made was complete and included the beginning. Otherwise one could hardly explain how it was possible for the author of the pseudo-*Theology* to connect with the *Enneads* the name of Porphyry, which features in the title of this work (see above, n. 67). In fact, Porphyry’s *Vita Plotini* does not have an independent circulation, apart from the *Enneads*: if in the Arabic Plotinus Porphyry is mentioned as the commentator of Aristotle’s *Theology*, this means that the Greek manuscript which was at the disposal of the translator contained also the *Vita Plotini* and, by extension, *Ennead* I. One may of course think that *Enneads* II and III were lacking, or even that *Ennead* I was incomplete in this manuscript; but all this is speculation. Thus, one is left with the idea that the learned men of the circle of al-Kindi had at their disposal the *Enneads* in their entirety, and made a selection of treatises to be translated into Arabic. On the knowledge of Porphyry’s *Vita Plotini* in the Arabic-speaking world see P. Thillet, “Was the *Vita Plotini* known in Arab Philosophical Circles?” in S. Stern-Gillet - K. Corrigan (eds.), *Reading*

The opinion that this composite work was created in the 9th century Arabic-speaking world has gained firm footing in scholarship; the analysis of the translation technique provided by Gerhard Endress in his *Proclus Arabus*⁷⁵ powerfully contributed to ruling out the idea that the changes in Plotinus’ wording and thought, as well as the attribution to Aristotle, occurred at an earlier date and in intermediate adaptations, be they Greek or Syriac.⁷⁶ In sum, there is nowadays a general agreement that the text had been translated directly from Greek in Baghdad, within the circle of al-Kindī.

The treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* is included in this Arabic translation almost in its entirety. Its chapters are scattered in various places of the pseudo-*Theology*: first comes the end, namely the Ficinian chapters 13-15, whose translation is located in Chapter I of the pseudo-*Theology*; then comes *the pars destruens*, that is attested in two chapters of this work: in Chapter III one can read the Ficinian Chapter 8 and that part (8¹-8⁵) which in Greek is preserved by Eusebius; finally, the initial chapters (1-4), with the beginning of the anti-Stoic polemics, are reflected in Chapter IX, near to the end of the pseudo-*Theology*. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are not attested in Arabic, nor are chapters 9-12. All in all, the *Immortality of the Soul* had a bizarre destiny: its early extensive quotation by Eusebius unwittingly saved its central part from oblivion in Greek, and the same central part is attested also in Arabic; the final section, that did not attract Eusebius’ attention, is attested in Arabic, even though only in part. A chart can help to summarize this rather complicated situation.⁷⁷

<i>Enneads</i> , direct tradition	Eusebius, <i>Praep. ev.</i>	ps.- <i>Theol. Arist.</i>
1-4	XV, 22	Chapter IX
5-7	XV, 22	—
8	XV, 22	Chapter III
—	8 ¹ -8 ⁵ : XV, 10	Chapter III
9-12	—	—
13-15	—	Chapter I

Section 8², with the tripartite argument against total blending, is reproduced in Arabic in its entirety, even though in uneven degrees of understanding. In addition to the pseudo-*Theology*, where it features in Chapter III (see the chart above), the Arabic rendition of section 8² features also in the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”.⁷⁸

Ancient Texts, II: Aristotle and Neoplatonism. Essays in Honour of Denis O’Brien, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2007 (Brill’ Studies in Intellectual History, 162), pp. 199-210.

⁷⁵ See above n. 3.

⁷⁶ That the Arabic translation was made out of the *Enneads*, i.e. the layout given by Porphyry to Plotinus’ treatises, has been established by H.-R. Schwyzer, “Die pseudoaristotelische *Theologie* und die Plotin-Ausgabe des Porphyrios”, *Rheinisches Museum* 90 (1941), pp. 216-36; this article ruled out the alternative ideas advanced by previous scholarship, such as that of a Greek adaptation of Plotinus’ doctrines based on the records of his oral teaching. The hypothesis of a Syriac adaptation as the intermediate step between Plotinus’ works and the pseudo-*Theology* met Sebastian Brock’ scepticism: see his “A Syriac Intermediary for the Arabic *Theology of Aristotle*? In Search of a Chimera”, in C. D’Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2007 (Philosophia Antiqua, 107), pp. 293-306.

⁷⁷ The situation is even more complicated than this, because four Greek manuscripts of the *Enneads* made good, but only in part, for the lacuna; in all likelihood, they did so taking the text from Eusebius. For more details on the scholarship on this point, one can see my “The Arabic Version of *Ennead* IV 7(2) and its Greek Model”, in J.M. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy. From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, Peeters, Leuven 2006 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 152), pp. 127-56, esp. pp. 135-7 with n. 52-63.

⁷⁸ Edited by E. Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*: see above, n. 68.

The first seven lines of section 8² of the *Immortality of the soul* have not been quoted before; it is time now to quote them, accompanied by Armstrong's translation.

Ἔτι εἰ σῶμα οὐσα ἡ ψυχὴ διήλθε διὰ παντός, καὶ κραθεῖσα εἴη, ὄν τρόπον τοῖς ἄλλοις σώμασιν ἡ κραῖσις. εἰ δὲ ἡ τῶν σωμάτων κραῖσις οὐδὲν ἐνεργεῖα ἔῃ εἶναι τῶν κραθέντων, οὐδ' ἂν ἡ ψυχὴ ἔτι ἐνεργεῖα ἐνείη τοῖς σώμασιν, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει μόνον ἀπολέσασα τὸ εἶναι ψυχῆ· ὥσπερ, εἰ γλυκὺ καὶ πικρὸν κραθείη, τὸ γλυκὺ οὐκ ἔστιν· οὐκ ἄρα ἔχομεν ψυχὴν (8².1-7).

Again, if soul was a body and permeated the whole body, it would be mixed with it in the way in which other bodies are intermixed. But if the mixture of bodies allows none of the bodies which are mixed to exist in actuality, the soul would not be actually present in bodies either, but only potentially, and would lose its existence as soul, just as, if sweet and bitter are mixed, the sweet does not exist; we shall not then have a soul (trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, pp. 367-9).

These lines are reproduced, in the adapted way that is the landmark of the Arabic Plotinus, in both the works mentioned above: the pseudo-*Theology* and the "Sayings".

On the basis of the collation of 43 manuscripts of the some 100 that constitute the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology*, it is now possible to say that this tradition is subdivided into two main branches, designated in this article by the siglas of the respective subarchetypes, Δ and Σ.⁷⁹ Letter Δ has been chosen for the lost subarchetype of this branch because it is to this branch that belongs the manuscript Tehran, Kitābhāna-i Markazī-i Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, Dāniškada-i Tihirān 5392, dated 1067/1657, that contains the "Prologue" to the pseudo-*Theology* by Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Daštakī (d. 1541). As shown by M. Di Branco,⁸⁰ Daštakī's "Prologue" attests the early circulation of the pseudo-*Theology* in pre-Safavid Persia, and contains many elements that contribute to explaining its spread in this area. Indeed, it is to branch Δ that belong most manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology*, especially (but not exclusively) those housed in Iranian libraries. Letter Σ has been chosen for the lost subarchetype of the other main branch because it is to this branch that belongs the manuscript Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 2457, dated 863/1459; this is the oldest dated manuscript of the pseudo-*Theology*, and has been labelled ص in the apparatus by Badawī, hence our label Σ for the

⁷⁹ The collations have been conducted in view of the critical edition of this work currently being prepared by a research team of the ERC AdG 249431 "Greek into Arabic. Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges". On the basis of the study conducted by R. Arnzen, "Some dates for the – allegedly or truly – undated manuscripts of the *Theology*", research seminar held on the occasion of the 2nd International Workshop of the ERC project mentioned above (Pisa, November 12-14, 2012), one may safely say that very few manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology* date from the 15th and 16th centuries, while most of them date from the 17th century. There are also some manuscripts that date from the 18th and 19th centuries, and two manuscript copies have been made in the first decades of the 20th century.

⁸⁰ This manuscript attests the circulation of the pseudo-*Theology* in Persia on the eve of the Safavid era, and the *Prologue* by Daštakī provides an important clue to the understanding of the spread of this text under the Safavids. On the broad context of this circulation, as well as on the historical and textual details, accompanied by the transcription, translation and analysis of the *Prologue* by Daštakī, see M. Di Branco, "The 'Perfect King' and his Philosophers. Politics, Religion and Graeco-Arabic Philosophy in Safavid Iran: the Case of the *Utūlū ġiyā*", *Studia graeco-arabica* 4 (2014), pp. 191-217; description of the manuscript, p. 213.

subarchetype.⁸¹ The *editio princeps* by Dieterici⁸² is based on two manuscripts of the branch Δ,⁸³ the edition published by 'A. Badawī, although allegedly offering a wider textual basis which includes the manuscript ص, is in reality heavily dependent upon the *editio princeps*; when it parts company with the latter, this often happens in a non-critical way.⁸⁴

The text of the pseudo-*Theology* printed below incorporates, when needed, the readings attested by the indirect tradition represented by the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”. As we have seen before (p. 184), the “Sayings” are attested in a compilation – labelled *Philosophy Reader* by its editor Elvira Wakelnig – which has come down to us in only one manuscript, dated to the first half of the 13th century.⁸⁵ The overlapping passages count as the indirect tradition of the pseudo-*Theology*.

In what follows Δ and Σ stand respectively for the two main branches of the direct tradition of the pseudo-*Theology*; PR stands for the “Sayings” as attested in the *Philosophy Reader*; Di and Ba stand respectively for the editions by Dieterici and Badawī.

⁸¹ This miscellaneous manuscript has been repeatedly described; see M. Plessner, “Beiträge zur islamischen Literaturgeschichte I. Studien zur arabischen Handschriften in Istanbul, Konia und Damaskus”, *Islamica* 4 (1931), pp. 525-61, in part. pp. 526-28; Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab* (quoted above, n. 67), *Introduction*, pp. 49-51. The pseudo-*Theology* is contained at ff. 105 r - 198 v, and in the colophon the copy is dated 863/1459. This manuscript is indicated by Lewis as the *codex optimus* of the pseudo-*Theology* in the *Praefatio* to the *editio maior* of the *Enneads* (see above, note 67), p. XXXIX: “Hunc codicem omnium vetustissimum ceteris praestare G. Lewis iudicat”, as well as in his review of the edition by Badawī, *Oriens* 10 (1957), pp. 395-9, esp. p. 396: “the oldest (863/1459) and best of all”.

⁸² F. Dieterici, *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles aus arabischen Handschriften zum ersten Mal herausgegeben*, J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1882 (reprint: Rodopi, Amsterdam 1965).

⁸³ In the preface to his edition, pp. VII-VIII, Dieterici says that his text is based on the manuscripts Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, *Sprenger* 741, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ar. 2347 (olim *suppl.* 1343, the shelfmark indicated by Dieterici), plus an unknown manuscript from Tabriz, recopied for him by a Persian pupil of his, Murteza Ghūli Khan. Dieterici declared he made use of the Paris manuscript to fill in the gaps of the manuscript *Sprenger* 741; both manuscripts are among the oldest testimonies of the pseudo-*Theology*, and both belong to branch Δ. The manuscript *Sprenger* 741 is n. 5121 in W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniß der arabischen Handschriften. Die Handschriftenverzeichnisse der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 16. Berlin 1892, vol. 4, pp. 446-7, where it is dated to the year 1591 ca.; the manuscript Paris, BnF ar. 2347 is dated 1624: cf. W. MacGuckin De Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris 1833-1895, *Supplément*, p. 411.

⁸⁴ Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'arab*, quoted above, n. 67; in his *Introduction*, pp. 43-55, Badawī affirms that the text has been established on the basis of the following manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ar. 2347 and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, *Sprenger* 741 (see the preceding note); Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Kütüphanesi, *Aya Sofya* 2457 (see above, n. 81), plus: Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, *hikma wa-falsafa* 617; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, *Tal at* 384; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, Taymūr, *hikma* 102; Istanbul, Süleymaniye kütüphanesi, Hamidiyye 717 bis; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *supplément persan* 1640. In this article I cannot substantiate my claim that the basis of the text edited by Badawī is that of the *editio princeps*, occasionally corrected on one or another manuscript; thus, I will limit myself to addressing the reader to the remarks by Lewis in his review (quoted above, n. 81) of Badawī's edition, where the main criticism of the reviewer – the translator of the Arabic *Plotiniana* into English – is precisely that of having only seldom taken into account the readings of *Aya Sofya* 2457. Also the question discussed below n. 89, minor though it be, shows that the main text of Badawī's edition is that of the *princeps*. In what follows, the text as edited by Badawī will be quoted from the 2nd edition (1966): the occasional differences with the 1st edition (1955) will be accounted for in due course.

⁸⁵ Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader* (quoted above, n. 68), p. 3; also for the date of the manuscript see above n. 68. As for the origins of the *Philosophy Reader*, E. Wakelnig points to the milieu of Miskawayh (10th century): “Finally, it should be mentioned that much of the Greek material contained in the PR overlaps with Miskawayh's own philosophical discussions, and in some instances the PR seems to present Miskawayh's source texts before giving the latter's own account of a doctrine. This makes one wonder whether the compiler copied Miskawayh's personal notes, in which he may have jotted down excerpts from his source texts as well as from his own works. (...) It is highly plausible that the compiler of the PR was part of Miskawayh's circle, and maybe his student or a student of one of his students” (p. 7).

Ed. Dieterici, pp. 34.18-35.9; ed. Badawī, p. 47.8-16 = p. 184.8-17 Wakelnig

ونقول^٤ إن كانت النفس جرمًا، فلا بد لها من أن تنفذ في جميع^٥ البدن وتمتزج به^٤ كما امتزاج الأجرام إذا اتّصل بعضها ببعض، وإنما تحتاج النفس <إلى>^٤ أن تنفذ في جميع البدن لتنبيل الأعضاء كلها من قوتها. فإن كانت النفس تمتزج بالبدن كما امتزاج بعض الأجرام ببعض، لم تكن النفس نفسًا بالفعل. وذلك أنّ الأجرام إذا امتزج بعضها ببعض واختلطت، لم يبق واحد منها على حاله الأول^٤ بالفعل، لكنها تكون^٤ في الشيء بالقوة. فكذلك النفس إذا امتزجت بالبدن لم تكن نفسًا بالفعل، بل إنما تكون بالقوة فقط، فتكون قد أهلكت ذاتها كما تهلك الحلاوة إذا امتزجت بالمرارة. فإن كان هذا هكذا، وكان الجرم إذا امتزج بالجرم لم يبق واحد منهما على^٤ حاله، فكذلك النفس إذا امتزجت بالبدن^٥ لم تبق على حالها الأولى^٥، فإذا لم تبق على^٤ حالها الأولى لم تكن نفسًا.

a) ويقول ΔΣ DiBa: ونقول PR

b) سائر Δ DiBa: جميع Σ PR

c) Δ PR DiBa: om. Σ به

d) addidi ex PR: om. ΔΣ DiBa إلى

e) ΔΣ DiBa: حالها الأولى PR حاله الأول

f) DiBa: لكنهما تكونان ΔΣ PR لكنها تكون

g) Δ DiBa: om. hom. Σ حاله ... على PR

h) Δ DiBa deest Σ PR: لم تبق على حالها الأولى

He says: if the soul were a body, then it would inevitably permeate the whole body and mix with it like bodies mix when one of them is joined to another. However, the soul only needs to permeate the whole body so that all body parts obtain [something] from its power. If the soul mixed with the body like one body mixes with another, the soul would not be soul in actuality. For when a body mixes and mingles with another, neither of them remains in its previous condition in actuality, rather [the previous condition] exists in the [new mixed] thing only in potentiality. So if the soul mixed with the body, it would likewise not be soul in actuality, but it would rather be it only in potentiality, since its essence would have certainly perished, just as sweatness perishes when it mixes with bitterness. If it is like that and a body when mixing with another body does not remain in its condition, then the soul when mixing with the body would likewise not remain in its previous condition. Yet if it does not remain in its previous condition, it will not be soul (trans. Wakelnig, p. 185, slightly modified).⁸⁶

In this passage, the sentence “However, the soul only needs to permeate the whole body so that all body parts obtain [something] from its power” has no counterpart in Greek. As for the rest, Plotinus’ concise sentence of lines 1-7 has been amplified, but with no changes in the meaning. Then the anti-Stoic argument comes, and here there is room for several substantial differences between the Greek and Arabic texts, that may suggest an inept rendering on the part of the Arabic translator, but are also open to another explanation. Let us proceed step by step.

As we have seen before, the beginning of the anti-Stoic argument consisted in combining the two criticisms advanced by Alexander in the *De Mixtione* and in the *Mantissa*. Plotinus’ synthesis was that if a body might mix with another body “whole through whole so that wherever the one is, the

⁸⁶ At the beginning of the sentence the PR, as it does almost everywhere when it accounts for the “sayings” of the “Greek Sage”, modifies the first plural person “we say” of the pseudo-*Theology* into the third singular person “He says”; here Elvira Wakelnig, p. 185, translates accordingly.

other is also, with both bodily masses also occupying an equal amount of space, and if no increase takes place when the other one is inserted, this will leave nothing undivided” (see above, p. 177). The Arabic rendering of this Plotinian sentence is *prima facie* disappointing. In both editions it runs as follows:

Ed. Dieterici, p. 35.10-14; ed. Badawī, pp. 47.17-48.3

ونقول إنَّ الجرم إذا امتزج بجرم آخر احتاج إلى مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل، لا ينكر ذلك أحدٌ ولا يدفعه. والنفس إذا صارت إلىّ البدن لن يحتاج البدن إلى مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل. وكذلك إذا فارقت النفس البدن لم يأخذ البدن مكاناً أقل من مكانه الأوّل. ولا ينكر ذلك أحدٌ ولا يدفعه.

We say that when a body mixes with another body it needs space greater than its original space as nobody denies or gainsays, whereas when the soul joins the frame the frame does not enlarge or need more ample space. So too when the soul leaves the frame, the frame does not take less space than its original space as nobody denies or gainsays (trans. after Lewis with substantial changes).⁸⁷

In the Arabic version, Plotinus' initial step of the argument is transformed into the platitude that an equal space is occupied by a body when it is ensouled and when it is not. Far from reinforcing the argument, the repetition of the clause “as nobody denies or gainsays” transforms the aporia into the *petitio principii* of the immateriality of the soul, which is allegedly demonstrated by the unchanging space occupied by the living body and after death. The empirical evidence that the space occupied by two bodies increases after their mixture is put on equal footing with the claim that the amount of space does not change when the body is ensouled and when it is not – something which is particularly disappointing. Even without questioning the degree of faithfulness to the original Greek text, and limiting oneself to evaluating the argument in and by itself, one cannot fail to see that the sentence quoted above produces a blatant *non sequitur*, because the fact that the soul does not alter the bodily mass by its presence or absence, which is the demonstrandum, plays the role of an empirical evidence that “nobody denies or gainsays”. If, however, one turns to the manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology*, some differences appear with respect to the edited text, that may induce a less severe judgement on the degree of understanding on the part of the translator.

The edition by Dieterici reflects branch Δ,⁸⁸ with a silent correction on the part of Dieterici that, minor as it might be, is of some importance.⁸⁹ Badawī follows in Dieterici's footsteps and prints the same text as his, including the correction just mentioned. On the other hand, branch Σ reads here:

⁸⁷ *Plotiniana Arabica* ad codicum fidem anglice vertit G. Lewis, p. 203 (quoted above, n. 67). The translation quoted is Lewis', but I have modified it in order to make it correspond to the text as edited by Dieterici and Badawī. Lewis translated into English a text that he had checked against some manuscripts, among which Istanbul, *Aya Sofya* 2457, which he deemed to be the *codex optimus* of the pseudo-*Theology* (see above, n. 81), and whose readings in this sentence are different from those of the two editions. This manuscript belongs to the branch here labelled Σ, of which it is the earliest representative; its reading in this place will be discussed below. The genuine translation by Lewis is reproduced below, p. 191, under the text as attested by branch Σ.

⁸⁸ See above, n. 83.

⁸⁹ While the manuscripts of branch Σ read, at the end of the sentence quoted above, the words *ولا يدفعه*, in the edition by Dieterici the particle *wa-* is added, in order to have this sentence connected with what precedes. The reading *ولا يدفعه* also features in the edition by Badawī; more on this below, p. 192.

ونقول إنّ الجرم إذا امتزج بجرم آخر احتاج إلى مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل وإذا انفصل منه وفارقه يكفيه مكان أقل وليست النفس إذا اتصل بالبدن يعظم البدن ويحتاج إلى مكان أوسع وكذلك إذا فارقت النفس البدن لم يأخذ البدن مكاناً أقل من مكانه الأوّل لا ينكر ذلك أحد ولا يدفعه.

We say that when a body mixes with another body it needs space greater than its original space, and when it parts from it and leaves it a smaller place is enough for it,⁹⁰ whereas when the soul joins the frame the frame does not enlarge or need more ample space. So too when the soul leaves the frame, the frame does not take less space than its original space as nobody denies or gainsays (trans. Lewis, p. 203).⁹¹

Compared with that of branch Δ , this text displays two main differences: (i) it has the words “and when it parts from it and leaves it a smaller place is enough for it”, that the branch Δ does not have; (ii) it does not have the first occurrence of the words “nobody denies this or gainsays it”, that the branch Δ on the contrary has. Indeed, in the text of branch Δ these words feature twice, while in the text of branch Σ they feature only once, at the end of the sentence.

That the words “and when it parts from it and leaves it a smaller place is enough for it” represent a sound text that must be printed in the critical edition of the pseudo-*Theology* is quite sure, if one takes into account (i) the fact that their lack in branch Δ depends upon the quasi-homeoteleuton produced by the similar shape of the couple of words *مكانه الأوّل* and *مكان أقل* that precedes them, and (ii) the fact that in this place the “Sayings of the Greek Sage” have these words.⁹² Thus the sound, original text of the pseudo-*Theology* here claimed that when a body joins another body the space they need increases, while when a body leaves another body the space occupied diminishes. Branch Σ , confirmed by the indirect tradition, preserves here a reading lost in Δ due to a scribal error.

Let us now consider the difference (ii) between the text as transmitted by Σ and as transmitted by Δ . As we have just seen, Σ does not have the words “as nobody denies or gainsays” after the sentence “We say that when a body mixes with another body it needs space greater than its original space, and when it parts from it and leaves it a smaller place is enough for it”. The lack of the words “as nobody denies or gainsays” at this point of the text is an omission of Σ . Not only the right place for claiming that it is impossible to deny such evidence is this one, but also these words feature in the parallel passage of the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”.⁹³ Branch Δ , which has this sentence, preserves the sound, original text, and its lack in Σ is an omission, once again due to homeoteleuton.

As for the second occurrence of the same words, that which both in Δ and Σ is located at the end of the passage, after the sentence “so too when the soul leaves the frame, the frame does not take less space than its original space”, the choice is between thinking that the words “nobody denies this or gainsays it” were indeed in the original text, and thinking that their presence in this place is a dittography, due once again to homeoteleuton. Note that both in the first and in the second occurrences the words “nobody denies this or gainsays it” follow the syntagm *مكانه الأوّل*.

⁹⁰ Badawī was acquainted with this sentence, that features in the manuscript Istanbul, *Aya Sofya* 2457, namely one of the representatives of branch Σ , but he relegated it to the apparatus.

⁹¹ See n. 87 above; Lewis (cf. n. 81) was convinced of the superiority of the manuscript Istanbul, *Aya Sofya* 2457, and adopted this reading in his translation.

⁹² Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*, p. 184.19-20.

⁹³ Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*, p. 184.19.

Dittography is my favourite explanation, and this is on two grounds. (i) In the manuscripts (of both branches) the second occurrence of the words “nobody denies this or gainsays it” are not connected with what precedes by the particle *wa-*, which has been added by Dieterici and reproduced by Badawī (respectively, p. 35.13 and p. 48.3).⁹⁴ This tips the scale in favour of dittography, because these words follow the preceding sentence in a non-syntactical way. (ii) The second occurrence of these words does not feature in the parallel text of the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”.⁹⁵ If, on the other hand, this second occurrence is not a scribal error, but was indeed the original text of the pseudo-*Theology* (in which case the “Sayings” omitted them by homeoteleuton) the consequence is that the translator produced a weak sentence, where the claim that the space occupied by a body remains unchanged when it is ensouled and when not was considered as uncontroversial as the claim that the space occupied by a body increases when another body is added, and diminishes when it is removed.

The second step in Plotinus’ tripartite argument was inspired by Plutarch and consisted in raising the difficulty of a smaller body inserted into a larger one: a situation that, were total blending possible, would have as a consequence the coextension of the smaller and the larger. As we have seen before, Plotinus’ point was less to follow Plutarch in ridiculing this idea than to raise the aporia of the subdivision of the whole of a larger body by a smaller one. He said: “(...) but what is inserted penetrates through every part, even if it is smaller – this is impossible, for the less to be equal to the greater – but, anyhow, in penetrating it all it divides it everywhere” (see above, p. 179). Here too the Arabic rendering verges on trivialization:

Ed. Dieterici, p. 35.14-17; ed. Badawī, p. 48.3-6

ونقول أيضاً إذا صار الجرم في الجرم وامتزجا كبرت جثتهما وعظمت والنفس إذا صارت في البدن لم تكبر جثة البدن، بل هو أحرى أن يجتمع بعضه إلى بعض ويقل. والدليل على ذلك أن النفس إذا فارقت البدن انتفخ وعظم، غير أنه عظم فاسد، فليست النفس إذا بجرم.⁹⁶

We say also that when body enters body and they mix, their bulk increases and enlarges, while when the soul enters the frame the bulk of the frame does not increase; indeed, it is more likely that part of it would coalesce with another part, so that it would diminish. The proof of that is that when the soul leaves the frame the frame swells and grows great, but it is the greatness of corruption. Therefore the soul is not a body (trans. Lewis, p. 203).

While presented under the form of an additional argument (*wa-naqūlu ayḍan*), this is nothing if not a rewording of the sole idea that the translator has really grasped from this passage as a whole, namely that, at variance with what happens with bodies, when the soul joins the body the mass of the latter does not increase. Plotinus’ couple τὸ ἕλαττον / τὸ μεῖζον (“this is impossible, for the less to be equal to the greater”) is rendered in quite a distorted way: in the Arabic text, the presence of the soul produces a more compact body, while when the soul leaves the body the corruption of the corpse results in an increase in size: an attempt at overcoming the difficulty of Plotinus’ passage having recourse to an empirical evidence which is of little or no value.

⁹⁴ See above, n. 84.

⁹⁵ Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*, p. 186.1.

⁹⁶ There is only a minor difference between the two editions in this place: عظيم Dieterici, عظم Badawī; the manuscripts support Badawī’s text, reflected in Lewis’ translation “the greatness”, and confirmed by the “Sayings”; cf. Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*, p. 186.2-5, with the customary rendering of the formula “We say” in the third person “He says” (see above, n. 86).

But where one gets the impression that the Arabic translation is really inept is in the rendering of the final sentence, that in which Plotinus went back to Alexander's *De Mixtione* and endorsed its conclusion that total blending implies actual division to infinity: "but if this is so, since the division is infinite – for whatever body you take is divisible – the infinity of parts will exist not only potentially but actually. It is impossible therefore for one body to penetrate another whole through whole: but soul penetrates through whole bodies, therefore it is immaterial" (see above, p. 182). At variance with the two Arabic sentences quoted above, here the *editio princeps* and the edition by Badawī read differently from one another.

Ed. Dieterici, p. 35.17-19:

ونقول إن الجرم إذا امتزج بالجرم فإنه لا ينفذ بالجرم كله لأنه لا يقطع جميع أجزاء الجرم والنفس يقطع (sic) التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية له .

Auch behaupten wir, dass, wenn ein Körper sich mit einem anderen vermischt, er den Körper nicht ganz durchdringt, denn er durchschneidet (erfasst) nicht alle Theile desselben. Die Seele thut dies aber bis in's Unendliche hinein (trans. Dieterici).⁹⁷

Ed. Badawī, p. 48.7-8:

ونقول إنَّ الجرم إذا امتزج بالجرم فإنَّه لا ينفذ بالجرم كله، لأنَّه لا يقطع جميع أجزاء الجرم، والجرم قد يقبل التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية.⁹⁸

We say that when body mixes with body it does not penetrate the whole of the body because it does not dissect all the parts of the body, while body admits of infinite dissection (trans. after Lewis with substantial changes).⁹⁹

In the first section of this article, I have tried to argue that Plotinus concocts a unique argument out of three objections against total blending, two by Alexander and one by Plutarch. This unique argument culminates in the claim that total blending is impossible, implying as it does an actual division of the body to infinity. The Arabic rendition of this decisive step is *prima facie* really inaccurate.

The text as edited by Dieterici seems to be closer to Plotinus, because the soul is mentioned in the final clause, as in the Greek passage (οὐ τοίνυν ὅλον δι' ὅλου χωρεῖν δυνατὸν τὸ σῶμα· ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ δι' ὅλων· ἀσώματος ἄρα).¹⁰⁰ However, instead of saying – as the Greek does – that the soul pervades the whole body because it is incorporeal, the Arabic passage in Dieterici's edition says that the soul dissects the dissection to infinity, which is nonsense. If, on the other hand, one turns to the text as edited by Badawī, one finds something that openly contradicts Plotinus, namely the idea that the body admits infinite dissection.

⁹⁷ F. Dieterici, *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles aus dem arabischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen*, J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1883 (reprint: Druckerei Lokay, Reinheim/Odw., no date), p. 36. In the Arabic text as printed by Dieterici, والنفس يقطع is the reading of the manuscript Paris, BnF, ar. 2347 (see above n. 83); other manuscripts of branch Δ either have the correct reading والنفس تقطع, or leave the verb undotted.

⁹⁸ In the 1st edition (1955) Badawī prints here له, lacking in the 2nd edition (1966).

⁹⁹ Once again, I have taken as a basis of the English version the authoritative translation by Lewis, but the latter here implicitly corrects the Arabic text of the last sentence, and translates: "while the soul admits of infinite dissection".

¹⁰⁰ This is in all likelihood the reason why Lewis adopted this reading (see the preceding note). Lewis' typographical device to indicate to the reader the passages in the Arabic that depend literally upon the Greek was to put them in italics, and the words "the soul admits of infinite dissection" are in italics in his translation.

The impression of oddity fades, however, if we realize that both editions reproduce a faulty text. As is attested in both branches, the text of the pseudo-*Theology* is corrupted here, although in different ways.

The reading *والنفس تقطع التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية له* (“and soul dissects the dissection to infinity”), in itself absurd, is that of the branch Δ. Faulty though it is, this reading cannot be completely discarded, because it contains the word “soul” at the end of the sentence, a word that corresponds to the Greek and whose presence here cannot reasonably be ascribed to a copyist.

The reading *والجرم قد يقبل التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية* (“and body admits infinite dissection”) is that of branch Σ. This reading gives a hint towards the fact that in the original reading the issue at hand was indeed the divisibility of the body, as in Plotinus’ original sentence, where an intermediate step of the argument was that body is divisible (ὁ γὰρ ἄν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαιρετόν ἐστιν).

My proposal is that the two branches Δ and Σ preserve each a part of the original statement in the pseudo-*Theology*, and that the latter was something like a comparison between the behaviour of the body and that of the soul, with the body presented as unable to dissect another body to infinity, even though the body is capable of being dissected to infinity, and the soul, on the other hand, presented as capable of performing such a dissection to infinity. Part of the original sentence went lost in branch Δ and part in branch Σ, thus creating two ill-formed sentences. The main idea of the translator was, in my opinion, that the body does indeed admit dissection to infinity, but it is not a body that is the agent capable of performing such a dissection: only the soul can pervade the entire body, subdividing it to infinity. Unfortunately in this passage the “Sayings of the Greek Sage” are of no help, because this specific sentence is not attested in that compilation.

In sum, the Arabic text of this passage can be tentatively established as follows:

ونقول إنّ الجرم إذا امتزج بجرم آخر احتاج إلى مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل^a وإذا انفصل منه وفارقه فكيفه مكان أقل^a لا ينكر ذلك أحد ولا يدفعه،^b والنفس إذا صارت إلى البدن لن^c يعظم البدن^d ويحتاج^e إلى مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل^f؛ وكذلك إذا فارقت النفس البدن^g لم يأخذ البدن مكاناً أقل من مكانه الأوّل [لا ينكر ذلك أحد ولا يدفعه]^h والنفس فيهⁱ. ونقول أيضاً إذا صار الجرم في الجرم وامتزجا كبرت جثتهما وعظمت، والنفس إذا صارت في البدن لم تكبر جثة البدن، بل هو أحرى أن يجتمع بعضه إلى بعض ويقل^j. والدليل على ذلك أن النفس إذا فارقت البدن انتفخ البدن^k وعظم، غير أنه عظم فاسد، فليست النفس بجرم إذن^l. ونقول إنّ الجرم إذا امتزج بالجرم فإنه لا ينفذ في الجرم كله، لأنه لا يقطع جميع أجزاء الجرم، والجرم قد يقبل^m التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية لهⁿ والنفس تقطع^o <...>^p.

a) ΣPR : om. hom. Δ DiBa وإذا انفصل ... أقل

b) ΔPR DiBa: om. hom. Σ لا ينكر ذلك أحد ولا يدفعه

c) ΔPR DiBa (loco لن scr. لم PR): وليست النفس إذا اتصل بالبدن

d) Σ : om. ΔPR DiBa يعظم البدن

e) ΔPR DiBa يحتاج Σ : ويحتاج

f) Σ مكان أوسع ΔPR DiBa: مكان أعظم من مكانه الأوّل

g) $\Delta \Sigma$ DiBa: om. PR البدن

h) $\Delta \Sigma$ DiBa: addunt من مكانه الأوّل (qui om.): ex hom. post لا يدفعه ΔPR (loco لا $\Delta \Sigma$ لا scr. DiBa)

i) PR : om. $\Delta \Sigma$ DiBa والنفس فيه

j) $\Delta \Sigma$ DiBa: ويصغر PR ويقل

- k) البدن ΣPR : om. Δ DiBa
 l) بجرم إذن ΣPR : إذا بجرم Δ DiBa. Ex بجرم *usque ad finem deest in PR*
 m) والجرم قد يقبل Σ Ba: om. Δ Di
 n) له Δ DiBa (1955): om. Σ Ba (1966)
 o) والنفس تقطع Δ والنفس يقطع: Di om. Σ Ba
 p) lacunam statuimus, forsan الجرم بالتقطع إلى ما لا نهاية له *supplendum*

We say that when a body mixes with another body it needs space greater than its original space and when it parts from it and leaves it a smaller place is enough for it, as nobody denies or gainsays, whereas when the soul joins the frame the frame does not enlarge or need space greater than its original space. So too when the soul leaves the frame, the frame does not take less space than its original space [nobody denies or gainsays], when the soul was in it. We say also that when body enters body and they mix, their bulk increases and enlarges, while when the soul enters the frame the bulk of the frame does not increase; indeed, it is more likely that part of it would coalesce with another part, so that it would diminish. The proof of that is that when the soul leaves the frame the frame swells and grows great, but it is the greatness of corruption. Therefore the soul is not a body. We say that when body mixes with body it does not penetrate the whole of the body because it does not dissect all the parts of the body; and body does admit infinite dissection, and the soul dissects <...>. (trans. after Lewis, p. 203, modified).

That this was indeed the way in which Plotinus' final argument was understood by the translator into Arabic is shown by the fact that a passage that reflects the same Greek sentence reappears some 20 lines later in the Arabic text. It is time to recall that the alteration in the order of the passages taken from the *Enneads* is typical of the pseudo-*Theology*; however, this specific change of place is particularly intriguing, because one and the same passage seems to be translated twice: first at p. 35.17-19 Dieterici = p. 48.7-8 Badawī (the passage just discussed), and then at p. 37.2-9 Dieterici = p. 49.9-14 Badawī. If this second occurrence is longer than the first one (two lines in the first occurrence, seven in the second), this is because an amplification with no Greek counterpart is added in the second occurrence.

This second occurrence, that echoes the Plotinian rebuttal of total blending as an instance of actual infinity, is attested also in the "Sayings of the Greek Sage", with some textual differences that will be discussed later on. What is important to remark for the moment is that in the "Sayings" the passage related to this Plotinian tenet features only once and in the right place, namely immediately after the version of the Greek sentences that precede the lines 16-22 of IV 7[2], 8², while in the pseudo-*Theology* the same Plotinian passage is reflected twice, and the first time with textual problems. While in the "Sayings" this first occurrence is not attested, the second one is attested, but only in part, as we shall see in a while.¹⁰¹ Once again, where the two Arabic passages overlap, their correspondence is literal. A chart may help to clarify this rather puzzling state of affairs.

Plot. IV 7[2], 8 ²	ps.- <i>Theology</i>	"Sayings"
lines 13-15	p. 35.14-17 Di = p. 48.3-6 Ba	<i>PR</i> , p. 186.2-5 Wakelnig
lines 16-22	p. 35.17-19 Di = p. 48.7-8 Ba and p. 37.2-9 Di = p. 49.9-14 Ba	<i>PR</i> , p. 186.6-10 Wakelnig

¹⁰¹ See below, p. 199.

Let me quote again, for the sake of clarity, Plotinus' text:

ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἰ καθ' ὅτιοῦν σημεῖον καὶ μὴ μεταξὺ σῶμα ἔσται ὃ μὴ τέτμηται, εἰς σημεῖα τὴν διαίρεσιν τοῦ σώματος γεγονέναι, ὅπερ ἀδύνατον. εἰ δέ, ἀπείρου τῆς τομῆς οὔσης – ὃ γὰρ ἂν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαίρετόν ἐστιν – οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ ἄπειρα ἔσται· οὐ τοίνυν ὅλον δι' ὅλου χωρεῖν δυνατὸν τὸ σῶμα· ἢ δὲ ψυχῇ δι' ὅλων· ἀσώματος ἄρα (8².16-22).

It is necessary, therefore, if it divides it at any geometrical point, and there is no body in between which is not divided, that the division of the body must be into geometrical points, which is impossible. But if this is so, since the division is infinite – for whatever body you take is divisible – the infinity of parts will exist not only potentially but actually. It is impossible therefore for one body to penetrate another whole through whole: but soul penetrates through whole bodies, therefore it is immaterial (see above, p. 00).

At variance with the first occurrence, i.e. that which is present only in the pseudo-*Theology*, here the translator proves to be completely at ease with the Greek text. His understanding of the core of Plotinus' argument is correct: total blending among bodies ends in an infinite number of bodily parts – something that, echoing Plotinus' ὅπερ ἀδύνατον, is labelled *but!*, absurdity.

Ed. Dieterici, p. 37.2-9; ed. Badawī, p. 49.9-14

فإن كان هذا هكذا، وكان الجرم ينفذ في الجرم كله، فإنه ينفذ في الأجزاء ولا يتناهى. وهذا بطل، لأنه لا يمكن أن تكون الأجزاء غير متناهية بالفعل. فإن لم يكن ذلك، فإن الجرم لا ينفذ في الجرم كله، والنفس تنفذ في البدن كله وفي جميع أجزائه، لا تحتاج في نفاذها في الجرم إلى أن تقطع الأجزاء كلها قطعاً جزئياً بل تقطعها قطعاً كلياً، أي تحيط بجميع أجزاء الجرم لأنها علة للجرم، والعلة أكبر من المعلول. ولن تحتاج إلى أن تقطع معلولها بنوع المعلول، بل بنوع آخر أعلى وأشرف.

If this is so and one body penetrates the whole of another body, then it penetrates among the parts without coming to an end, which is absurd, because it is impossible for the parts to be infinite in actuality, and unless this is so one body cannot penetrate the whole of another body. But the soul penetrates the whole of the frame and all of its parts without needing, in her penetration of the body, to cut through the parts bit by bit; on the contrary she cuts through them as a whole, that is, she encompasses all the parts of the body because she is the cause of the body and the cause is greater than the effect and does not need to cut through its effect in the way of the effect, but in another way that is loftier and more sublime (trans. Lewis, p. 203).

If the truth be told, on the basis of this passage one might be tempted to correct the passage quoted above, where after discussion of the two branches of the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology* a text has been retained, which says that the body accepts division to infinity. In the present passage, the Arabic version faithfully reproduces Plotinus' rebuttal of the actual division of a body to infinity, and one may wonder whether it was a scribal error that was at the origin of the sentence quoted above.¹⁰² I think one should resist the temptation, and allow the Arabic

¹⁰² In the sentence *والجرم قد يقبل التقطيع إلى ما لا نهاية له* towards the end of the passage quoted above, an original hypothetical لا (that would have implied “and the body does not admit infinite dissection”) might have been corrupted into

version to say both that the body admits infinite dissection (in the sentence quoted above) and that actual dissection to infinity is absurd (here), because the genuine meaning of that sentence was, so it seems to me, that the infinite dissection that the body can undergo is that which is performed not by another body, but by the soul. In other words, according to the translator it is not the case that the body admits a physical dissection into an actually infinite number of parts; rather, it is an incorporeal reality – the soul – that can be present in every part of the body, no matter how tiny: a situation that he thought he could describe as the soul’s capacity to dissect the body to infinity. If so, the previous sentence does not really contradict the present one, where the actual infinite dissection of a body by a body is rebutted as absurd, and the pervasiveness of the soul is explained, in a passage with no counterpart in the Greek, as the qualitative difference between the actions performed by bodies and those performed by the soul, the latter being actions “loftier and more sublime”.

Be that as it may, the wording *wa-l-ğirmu qad yaqbalu al-taqṭī‘a ilā mā lā nihāyata lahu* in the sentence discussed above can hardly be discarded as a later corruption, because it has left its trace in early *kalām*. Later records of atomism refer to the doctrine held by al-Nazzām (d. before 847) in a way that is clearly reminiscent of the passage discussed above. The tenet that “simple body (*al-ğism al-basīṭ*) admits (*yaqbalu*) division” is articulated into four possibilities, one of them being that “the parts are actual (*bi-l-fi‘l*) and infinite: that is al-Nazzām’s doctrine”.¹⁰³ In consideration of the fact that al-Nazzām’s lifetime and milieu was the same as that in which the pseudo-*Theology* was created,¹⁰⁴ one may seriously consider the possibility that the topic of a body that *yaqbalu al-taqṭī‘a ilā mā lā nihāyata lahu* originated in this passage of the Arabic Plotinus; if so, the sentence

ق, i.e. the reading of branch Σ (“and the body does admit infinite dissection”). Remember that this part of the sentence is lacking in branch Δ.

¹⁰³ This is the record of the position held by al-Nazzām according to two later reports, that by Ibn Mattawayh (first half of the 11th century), both in his *Tadhira* and in the *Šarḥ al-tadhira*: see A. Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām. Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu‘tazili Cosmology*, Brill, Leiden - New York 1994 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, 14), p. 148 with n. 25, and that by al-Īğī (d. 1355): see A.I. Sabra, “*Kalām* Atomism as an Alternative Philosophy to Hellenizing *Falsafa*”, in J.E. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic Philosophy, Arabic Theology* (quoted above, n. 77), pp. 199-272, esp. p. 263, quoting al-Īğī, who in turn refers to al-Nazzām’s claim that the parts of the body are an actual infinite. The opinion of philosophers (*al-ḥukamā*), according to al-Īğī, was that the parts are “potential and infinite” (*ibid.*, p. 264).

¹⁰⁴ On Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār al-Nazzām cf. J. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens in frühen Islam*, I-VI, De Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1991-1995, III, Teil C, pp. 296-418; on his relationship with the court of al-Ma‘mūn, pp. 300-2. On al-Nazzām’s position towards atomism there is no general consensus among scholars; according to H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge Mass. - London 1976, p. 467, he rejected it, an account based on the testimony of *al-Aš‘arī’s Maqālāt al-islāmīyyīn* (quoted *ibid.*, p. 469 with n. 22); according to Sabra, “*Kalām* Atomism”, p. 226 “(...) all modern studies assume that al-Nazzām – alone among the Mu‘tazila, rejected atomism, thus ignoring the possibility that he may have considered the atoms in a single body to be actually infinite in number, which, I think, is more than likely. His doctrine would then be that bodies are actually divided into an infinite number of parts, as distinguished from the philosophers’ infinite divisibility ‘in potentiality’. As al-Ījī said with his characteristic conciseness, ‘For al-Nazzām, the parts are actual, and they are infinite’ (*al-ajzā’ bi-l-fi‘l wa-ghayr mutanāhiya*)”. On this specific point, however, there is no real opposition to Wolfson, who discusses al-Nazzām’s claim (still in al-Aš‘arī’s report) that “there is no part (*juz*) but that there is a part thereof and there is no portion (*ba‘d*), but there is a portion thereof and there is no half but that there is a half thereof, and the part may be divided by a divisor for ever, for it is infinite with respect to divisibility” (trans. Wolfson, p. 496). For a detailed discussion of the testimonies about al-Nazzām and atomism, cf. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, Teil C, pp. 309-23. Y.T. Langermann, “Islamic Atomism and the Galenic Tradition”, *History of Science* 47 (2009), pp. 277-95, points to al-Nazzām’s acquaintance with Galen’s reports about ancient atomism, but in the passages quoted there is no reference to the issue of infinite divisibility of the bodies.

as attested by branch Σ of the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology* gets an external support, as indirect as it might be, and one that goes back to the age and milieu of the translation of Plotinus into Arabic. This elicits the conclusion that in the original translation of IV 7[2], 8².16-22 there was not only the idea (correctly derived from Plotinus) that an actual infinite subdivision of bodily parts is absurd, but also the idea that the body can undergo subdivision to infinity, provided that it is that special kind of subdivision that is performed by the soul. The doxographical report that I have just alluded to clearly states that philosophers deny that actual subdivision to infinity might actually exist, because for them subdivision to infinity can be only potential,¹⁰⁵ while for al-Nazzām it was indeed the case that a body can be subdivided to infinity *bi-l-fi'l*, actually.

All in all, the Arabic rendition of IV 7[2], 8² is less inept than it appears to be on the basis of the edited text. It is true that Plotinus' tripartite argument – echoing the anti-Stoic claims by Alexander and Plutarch and concisely reconducting them to the statement that total blending is nothing if not the *oppositio in adiecto* of a body whose behaviour is impossible for a body – seems at first sight to be obscured. What remains of it is the general idea of the incapacity of the body to do what the soul does every time, namely to totally interpenetrate a body, leaving nothing of it not ensouled. The comparison of the body, endowed with a mass and in need of space, with the soul, not submitted to physical laws, is the main idea that the translator extracted from Plotinus' argument. His attempt to support the philosophical argumentation having recourse to the empirical example of the inflation of the corpse suggests that he felt uneasy with his own rendering of the Greek. As for the core of the argument, the translator seems *prima facie* to be incapable of mastering the topic of division to infinity; but if one goes back to the original text as the direct and indirect tradition preserve it, and mostly if one reads together the first and second passages that are split in the pseudo-*Theology*, one can perhaps go beyond the face value of the ill-formed sentences printed in the two editions of the pseudo-*Theology* available, and advance the hypothesis that the translator's idea was that of denying to the body the capacity to perform division to infinity, while granting it to the soul. This is especially true in the case of the “second” translation of the same Plotinian lines, that which features later on in the text of the pseudo-*Theology*, where the impossibility for a body to be actually subdivided to infinity by another body is clearly stated, and where the reasoning of the previous passage – that can be only tentatively reconstructed out of both branches of the textual tradition – is presented in as many words: what is impossible for a body is precisely what soul does, namely pervade the whole of the body, but in a way which is “loftier and more sublime”.

Thus, the real problem is why on earth the question of the subdivision to infinity is raised twice in the pseudo-*Theology*, while in Plotinus' passage it is raised only once. I will try to answer this question first by addressing that of the differences between the second occurrence of this topic in the pseudo-*Theology*, and the same text as it is attested in the “Sayings”.

¹⁰⁵ See above n. 103.

Plot. IV 7[2], 8 ² .16-22	ps.-Theol., p. 37.2-9 Di = p. 49.9-14 Ba	"Sayings", p. 186.6-10 Wakelnig
<p>ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἰ καθ' ὅτιοῦν σημεῖον καὶ μὴ μεταξὺ σώμα ἔσται ὃ μὴ τέτμηται, εἰς σημεῖα τὴν διαίρεσιν τοῦ σώματος γεγονέναι, ὅπερ ἀδύνατον. εἰ δέ, ἀπείρου τῆς τομῆς οὐσης – ὃ γὰρ ἂν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαιρετόν ἐστιν – οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ ἄπειρα ἔσται· οὐ τοίνυν ὅλον δι' ὅλου χωρεῖν δυνατόν τὸ σῶμα· ἢ δὲ ψυχὴ δι' ὅλων ἀσώματος ἄρα.</p> <p>It is necessary, therefore, if it divides it at any geometrical point, and there is no body in between which is not divided, that the division of the body must be into geometrical points, which is impossible. But if this is so, since the division is infinite – for whatever body you take is divisible – the infinity of parts will exist not only potentially but actually. It is impossible therefore for one body to penetrate another whole through whole: but soul penetrates through whole bodies, therefore it is immaterial (trans. Armstrong, see above, p. 175).</p>	<p>فإن كان هذا هكذا، وكان الجرم ينفذ في الجرم كله، فإنه ينفذ في الأجزاء ولا يتناهى. وهذا بطل، لأنه لا يمكن أن تكون الأجزاء غير متناهية بالفعل. فإن لم يكن ذلك، فإن الجرم لا ينفذ في الجرم كله، والنفس تنفذ في البدن كله وفي جميع أجزائه، لا تحتاج في نفاذها في الجرم إلى أن تقطع الأجزاء كلها قطعاً جزئياً بل تقطعها قطعاً كلياً، أي تحيط بجميع أجزاء الجرم لأنها علّة للجرم، والعلّة أكبر من المعلول. ولن تحتاج إلى أن تقطع معلولها بنوع المعلول، بل بنوع آخر أعلى وأشرف.</p> <p>If this is so and one body penetrates the whole of another body, then it penetrates among the parts without coming to an end, which is absurd, because it is impossible for the parts to be infinite in actuality, and unless this is so one body cannot penetrate the whole of another body. But the soul penetrates the whole of the frame and all of its parts without needing, in her penetration of the body, to cut through the parts bit by bit; on the contrary she cuts through them as a whole, that is, she encompasses all the parts of the body because she is the cause of the body and the cause is greater than the effect and does not need to cut through its effect in the way of the effect, but in another way that is loftier and more sublime (trans. Lewis, p. 203).</p>	<p>فيقل إن الجرم لا ينفذ في الجرم كله لأنه لا يقطع جميع أجزائه، والنفس تنفذ في البدن كله وفي جميع أجزائه لأنها لا تحتاج في نفاذها إلى أن تقطع الأجزاء قطعاً جرمياً، بل تقطعها قطعاً علياً، أي تحيط بجميع أجزاء الجرم، لأنها علّة للجرم، والعلّة أكثر من المعلول ولن تحتاج إلى أن تقطع معلولها بنوع المعلول بل بنوع آخر وأعلى وأشرف.</p> <p>He says that a body does not permeate an entire body, because it does not cut through all its parts, whereas the soul permeates the entire body and all its parts. For when it permeates it does not need to cut through the parts in a bodily way, but cuts through them in a causative way, i.e. it encompasses all parts of the body, because it is a cause for the body. The cause is more abundant than the effect and it does not need to cut through its effect in the manner of the effect, but in another manner which is more elevated and nobler (trans. Wakelnig, p. 187).</p>

Several remarks are in order here. First and foremost, the text of the pseudo-*Theology* is closer to the original Plotinian passage, and is so on the following counts: (i) it preserves the hypothetical structure of the Greek sentence (εἰ δέ / *fa-in kāna bādā hākadā*) while in the "Sayings", due to their nature of doxographical compilation, this is transformed into the declarative sentence *fa-yaqūlu inna*; (ii) it is only the pseudo-*Theology* that presents a passage corresponding to Plotinus' rebuttal of actual division to infinity, while these lines do not feature in the passage of the "Sayings"; (iii) in the case of the two minor differences that occur in the overlapping sentences, the text as attested in the "Sayings" can be explained as a misunderstanding of that of the pseudo-*Theology*, not viceversa: the subdivision "bit by bit", *qaṭ' ḡuz'iyy*, reflects (although not literally) the Greek εἰς σημεῖα, "into geometrical points", while the "material" subdivision of the "Sayings", *qaṭ' ḡirmiyy*, is patently a trivialization of it; also, the claim of the pseudo-*Theology* that the cause is "greater" than the effect, *akbar*, is clearly misunderstood in the "Sayings", that read here *aktar*, "more abundant".

This is really puzzling. On the one hand, the "Sayings" are closer to the Greek because they present the Arabic text corresponding to Plotinus' lines 16-22 in their right place (see the chart on

p. 195), while in the pseudo-*Theology* the translation appears twice: with a serious textual problem in the first occurrence, and also in a second, better version, that however is misplaced with respect to the Greek original. On the other hand, the “Sayings” present a version that is clearly derivative with respect to that of the pseudo-*Theology*, were it only for the fact that there is more genuine text in the pseudo-*Theology* than in the “Sayings”. A tentative solution for the riddle is possible only taking into account the fact that the entire section of the pseudo-*Theology* that corresponds to the anti-Stoic arguments of Plotinus’ Chapters 8-8² is affected by various changes in the order of the sentences.

In the following chart the central column contains the sections of the text of the pseudo-*Theology*, numbered in order to show the succession of the passages; the left column contains the Greek passages that are the source of each of them, and the right column contains the corresponding passages of the “Sayings”. This chart is meant to display the alteration in the order of the Greek passages in Chapter III of the pseudo-*Theology*, and I have dispensed from referring to both editions: the pages and lines are respectively those of the editions by Badawī and Wakelnig.

IV 7[2], 8.-8 ²	ps.- <i>Theol.</i> , Chapter III	“Sayings”
—	1. p.45.3-7	—
8 ¹ .11-23	2. p. 45.7-46.7	—
8 ¹ .23-34	3. p. 46.7-47.1: We say that...	1. p. 182.9-19: The Greek Sage says...
—	4. p. 47.1-7	2. p. 182.19-184.7
8 ² .1-7	5. p. 47.8-16: We say that...	3. p. 184.8-17: He says...
8 ² .7-9	6. p. 47.18-48.3: We say that...	4. p. 184.18-186.1: He says...
8 ² .10-15	7. p. 48.3-6: We say also...	5. p. 186.2-5: He also says...
8 ² .18-19	8. p. 48.7-8: We say that...	—
8.38-44	9. p. 48.8-17	—
8 ¹ .1-11	10. p. 48.17-49.9	—
8 ² .16-20	11. p. 49.9-10	—
8 ² .20-22	12. p. 49.11-14: If this is so...	6. p. 186.6-10: He says...

Passage 1 in the pseudo-*Theology* coincides with the beginning of Chapter III, and all the subsequent items, until passage 12, go back and forth in the Plotinian Chapters 8-8². The beginning of Chapter III is a sentence with no counterpart in Greek; then, two sections of 8¹ are reproduced, one of them attested also in the “Sayings”; then again, another passage with no Greek source comes, and this passage too is attested in the “Sayings”. The version of Plotinus’ Chapter 8² that has been discussed follows, in both Arabic works: passages 5-7 in the pseudo-*Theology*, and 2-5 in the “Sayings”. Then the pseudo-*Theology* reflects, confusedly as it might be, the Plotinian words

of 8².18-19 ἀπείρου τῆς τομῆς οὐσης: this is passage 8 in the chart above. This sentence is not reproduced in the “Sayings”, but in the latter the passages 5-6 reflect, although with omissions, the original sequence of the Greek chapter 8², while passages 9 and 10 of the pseudo-*Theology* go back to Plotinus’ chapter 8 and to the part of 8¹ that had not yet been reproduced before; only then (passage 12) the pseudo-*Theology* returns to the final sentence of 8². The latter, as we have just seen, is attested in a more complete way here, in the pseudo-*Theology*, than it is in the “Sayings”.

The literal overlapping of the two Arabic texts and the systematic change of “we say” into “The Greek Sage/he says” rule out the possibility that the compiler of the “Sayings” had access to an Arabic version of Plotinus different from that which is attested by the pseudo-*Theology*;¹⁰⁶ on the other hand, the fact that the correct sequence of the Greek is reflected in the “Sayings” rules out the possibility that the pseudo-*Theology* as such was its source, because this sequence is altered there. This situation is best accounted for under the hypothesis that the compiler had at his disposal the same adapted version of Plotinus out of which the pseudo-*Theology* was created, but not in the order displayed by the latter: rather, in the original sequence of the translation which predictably reflected the Greek order.¹⁰⁷

Discussing the question of the source out of which was extracted the compilation that contains the “Sayings of the Greek Sage” goes beyond the limits of this article.¹⁰⁸ For the present purpose, I will limit myself to remark that the alteration of the order of the Greek passages helps to explain why the sentence discussed before, pp. 193-4, is corrupted in both branches of the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology*: that sentence immediately precedes a cut in the flow of the original translation, and this in my opinion gives support to the correction proposed above, p. 194. The Arabic version in that place, although parting company with the original Greek text, is not inept. True, the translator was not able to completely master the concise argument produced by Plotinus, *magis quam quisquam verborum parcus*,¹⁰⁹ and added here and there explanations that often verged on trivialization. As we have seen before, his own way of dealing with Plotinus’ tenets that (i) total blending equals actual subdivision to infinity and (ii) the soul’s pervasiveness demonstrates that it is incorporeal was that of balancing the subdivision to infinity that the body can undergo with the subdivision to infinity that the body cannot perform: this was not at all Plotinus’ idea, but is neither absurd nor stupid. If this appears to be so, it is due to a double error in both branches of the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology*. In fact, the rest of the original translation, adapted as it might have been, faithfully reflected Plotinus’ rebuttal of actual division to infinity: ὅπερ ἀδύνατον, *wa-hāda butl*. This is said 20 lines later in the pseudo-*Theology*; the text tentatively established before, p. 194, presents a doctrine which is consistent with this correct rendering of Plotinus’ lines 16-22.

On a more general count, the alteration in the order of the passages that affects the entire initial section of Chapter III of the pseudo-*Theology* also gives a clue to understanding the way in which Plotinus’ anti-Stoic arguments were assimilated in the formative period of Arabic philosophy.

¹⁰⁶ This is why Rosenthal, in his foundational study “Aš-Šayḥ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source” (see above, n. 68), p. 467, claimed that the compilation of the “Sayings of the Greek Sage”, the *Epistle on the Divine Science* and the pseudo-*Theology* depend upon one and the same “common Plotinus source”.

¹⁰⁷ This hypothesis fits with another major feature of the “Sayings”, namely the fact that they preserve parts of the same adapted translation of Plotinus that are not present in the pseudo-*Theology*, e.g. chapters 3-5 of IV 8[6].

¹⁰⁸ On this complicated issue see, below in this volume, the article by Elvira Wakelnig, pp. 205-45.

¹⁰⁹ Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* II, 12, 7.

3. "The Materialists say". *The place of Plotinus' anti-Stoic arguments in pseudo-Theology, Chapter III*

The chart at p. 200 shows the convoluted relationship of Chapter III of the pseudo-*Theology* with sections 8-8² of IV 7[2], and I have alluded also to the fact that the first passage of this Arabic chapter has no counterpart in the Greek text. In the quotation below, taken from the beginning of Chapter III, also the first sentence taken from the Greek is included, namely lines 8¹.9-11, where Plotinus says that the Stoics "by transferring, therefore, the powers of bodiless realities to bodies, leave nothing for the bodiless (τὰς οὐκ δυνάμεις τῶν ἀσωμάτων μεταβιβάσαντες εἰς τὰ σώματα οὐδεμίαν ἐκείνοις καταλείπουσιν)" (trans. Armstrong, p. 365). The Arabic says:

Ed. Dieterici, p. 32.9-16; ed. Badawī, p. 45.3-9

إذ قد بينا على ما وجب تقديمه من القول على العقل والنفس الكلية والنفس الناطقة والنفس البهيمية والنفس النامية والطبيعة، ونظمنا القول فيه نظماً طبيعياً على توالى مجرى الطبيعة، فنقول الآن على إيضاح ماهية جوهر النفس. ونبدأ بذكر مقالة الجرميين الذين ظنوا بخسارة رأيهم أن النفس ائتلاف اتفاق الجرم واتحاد أجزائه. ونكشف عن دحوض حججهم في ذلك، ونظهر قبح ما يجري إليه مذهبهم، فإنهم نقلوا قوى الجواهر الروحانية إلى الأجرام، وتركوا الأنفس والجواهر الروحانية معرأة من كل قوة.

Now that we have completed such introductory remarks as are necessary, concerning mind, the universal soul, the rational soul, the brute soul and the growing soul and natural soul, and have arranged the discussion on it in a natural order, following the way of nature, we shall now speak about the explanation of the quality of the soul. We begin by mentioning the doctrine of the Materialists, who think, in the error of their opinion, that the soul is the harmony of the concord of the body and the union of its parts. We shall reveal the invalidity of their argument on this, and shall make plain the bad part of the doctrine held by their school. For they transfer the faculties of the spiritual substances to the bodies, and leave the souls and the spiritual substances denuded of every faculty (trans. Lewis, p. 199).

This initial move explains why the flow of the Greek has been altered in the pseudo-*Theology*. Its author, "Aristotle", affirms he has presented the hierarchy of the spiritual substances, namely the Intellect and the various degrees of souls, from the cosmic soul to the vegetative one; it is now time to deal with the definition of the substance of the soul, *mābiyya ḡawhar al-nafs*. The structure given by Plotinus to his treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* had indeed far-reaching consequences, if "Aristotle" here sets for himself the task of describing the essence of the soul because there are erroneous doctrines on it, that have to be refuted. The "Materialists", *al-ḡirmiyyūn*, consider that the soul arises from the body as the harmony or union of the latter's parts, and this sentence counts as a proof, if proof is needed, that the person who wrote the sentences with no Greek counterpart in the pseudo-*Theology* was acquainted each time with the entire Plotinian treatise: here, although quoting 8¹, this scholar puts in "Aristotle's" mouth a synthesis of 8⁴ (discussion of the soul as harmony of the body). Within this general frame, Chapter III of the pseudo-*Theology* lists, and refutes, the errors of the "Materialists", a label that reappears several times in the rearrangement of Plotinus' chapters 8-8².¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ In addition to the passage quoted, where the "Materialists" are presented as a "school (*madhab*)", the label *al-ḡirmiyyūn* features also at pp. 45.13, 48.18, 49.8, 55.13 and 55.17 Badawī; as a consequence, all the Stoic tenets discussed by Plotinus, that in the Arabic rendering are quoted here by "Aristotle" under the form "They say", are attributed to the "Materialists".

This interesting feature of the pseudo-*Theology* has already been commented upon by F.W. Zimmermann, and I can limit myself to focusing on its relevance for the issue of total blending. As we have seen before, total blending, with its implication of the divisibility of a body by a body, is stigmatised as an absurdity. What I have not yet stressed is that such a criticism is made by “Aristotle”, who thus advocates a squarely anti-materialistic ontology and a bold allegiance to the doctrine of the spirituality and immortality of the substance of the soul. Having “Aristotle” who endorses the criticism of entelechy, if intended as the denial of the substantial nature of the soul, is one of the most important moves in the entire pseudo-*Theology*, and I have nothing to add to what Zimmermann has said on this.¹¹¹ Here, at the beginning of Chapter III, we are faced with an “Aristotle” who attacks the “Materialists” and their idea that if the body is totally ensouled, it is because the soul is a very fine body that can totally pervade another body. In doing so, “Aristotle” adopts a clear anti-atomistic stance.

In his research on the *vexata quaestio* of the origins of *kalām* atomism,¹¹² A. Dhanani raises the question of the acquaintance of al-Nazzām with the theory of total blending, wondering whether Alexander’s *De Mixtione* was translated into Arabic.¹¹³ I think the discussion above shows that one can dispense with this, once one is aware that as early as in the forties of the 9th century it was “Aristotle” himself who discussed in depth the doctrine of total blending and its disadvantages. The change in the order of the Greek passages at the beginning of Chapter III of the pseudo-*Theology*

¹¹¹ F.W. Zimmermann, “The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*”, in J. Krayer, W.F. Ryan, C.-B. Schmitt (eds.), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the “Theology” and Other Texts*, The Warburg Institute, London 1986, pp. 110-240. Zimmermann thinks that the author of the manipulation of Plotinus’ text is the translator himself, ‘Abd al-Masih ibn Nā’ima al-Ḥimṣī, thus he says: “Unlike Plotinus, Ḥimṣī criticizes, not what he takes to be Aristotle’s own view, but an alleged misrepresentation to what he imputes to the ‘materialists’ (lit. corporealists) criticized in earlier chapters for denying that soul is an immaterial, incorporeal substance. Unlike Plotinus, who is sceptical about the propriety of the whole concept of entelechy, Ḥimṣī supports what he claims to be the correct understanding of it. The correct concept he attributes to the ‘most excellent philosophers’ (...) and to ‘the philosophers’ tout court (...). That reconciliation of Plotinus with Aristotle turns on a distinction drawn in the Kindī-circle epitome of Aristotle’s *De Anima*” (p. 124). The epitome of the *De Anima* that Zimmermann alludes to has been edited: see R. Arnzen, *Aristoteles’ De Anima. Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung. Arabischer Text nebst Kommentar, quellen-geschichtlichen Studien und Glossaren*, Brill, Leiden - New York - Köln 1998 (Aristoteles Semitico-latinus, 9), in part. p. 217.13-16 (Arabic text), p. 216 (German trans.) and pp. 379-80 (comm.).

¹¹² After the seminal study by O. Pretzl, “Die frühislamische Atomenlehre”, *Der Islam* 19 (1931), pp. 117-30, the acquaintance of Muslim theologians with atomism has been studied by S. Pines in his path-breaking *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre*, Heine, Gräfenheinen 1936 (reprint Garland Publishing, New York - London 1987), English transl.: *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, trans. M. Schwarz (ed. T. Langermann), The Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1997. Pines took into account the hypothesis of an Indian origin of the peculiar doctrine of unextended atoms that prevailed at a given moment in the development of the *Kalām*, still considering that the main source for the Arabic acquaintance with atomism was Greek philosophy in translation. Another foundational study is Chapter VI of Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (quoted above, note 104), pp. 466-517; Wolfson points to the Greek sources, and in particular to Aristotle’s report of Democritus’ doctrine in *Metaph. Z* 13, 1039 a 10-11, as well as to the *Placita Philosophorum* of the pseudo-Plutarch, whose Arabic translation was later on edited by H. Daiber: see above, note 10. C. Baffioni, *Atomismo e antiatomismo nel pensiero islamico*, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli 1982 (Seminaro di studi asiatici. Series minor, 16), points to the tradition of the pseudo-Aristotelian *περὶ ἀτόμων γρομμῶν*. Finally, Langermann, “Islamic Atomism and the Galenic Tradition” (quoted above, n. 104), points to Galen’s *On the Elements according to Hippocrates* (translated by Ḥunayn).

¹¹³ A. Dhanani, *Kalām and Hellenistic Cosmology. Minimal Parts in Basrian Mu’ tazilī Atomism*, PhD Thesis, Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, Cambridge Mass. 1991, p. 90 with n. 68. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, pp. 507-8, acutely recognized that al-Nazzām’s position was akin to the Stoic total blending. Commenting upon al-Šahrastānī’s report of the latter’s doctrine, he wrote: “knowing (...) that Nazzām’s view that accidents are bodies and that bodies are interpenetrable has its origin in Stoicism, we may take Shahrastānī’s statement (...) to mean that Nazzām’s theory of latency, insofar as it maintains that accidents (...) are bodies and that bodies are interpenetrable, is based upon the teaching of the Stoics”.

can be disturbing for the philologist, but for the historian of philosophy it is instructive. On the one side, it represents an echo of the interschool polemics of the Imperial age. On the other, it provides an early attestation of the acquaintance of the Arabic thinkers with the different, at times harshly competing views that coexisted in Greek philosophy. To our surprise, this feature has been transmitted to the Arab philosophers first and foremost by Plotinus,¹¹⁴ and one can even venture to say that it is to Neoplatonism that al-Kindī owes his awareness that on crucial issues there was room for contradictory statements in Greek philosophy.¹¹⁵ Plotinus' writings informed him about dissensions on the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and Philoponus' revealed to him the existence of a struggle about the eternity of the cosmos versus creation in time.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Later on, translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias' works giving room to polemics on various points among rival schools made Arab philosophers acquainted with this feature of Greek philosophy, as shown by C. Martini Bonadeo, *Al-Fārābī, L'armonia fra le opinioni di Platone e di Aristotele, testo arabo, traduzione italiana e commento*, Plus, Pisa 2008 (Greco, Arabo, Latino. Le vie del sapere, 3), pp. 149-62; also, the translation of Philoponus' *Against Aristotle on the Eternity of the Cosmos* (lost in Greek) revealed the struggle in the camp of Greek philosophy on the crucial issue of the creation in time versus the eternity of the cosmos: see J.L. Kraemer, "A Lost Passage from Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem* in Arabic Translation (Simpl., *De Caelo* I, 3, 270b5-11)", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85 (1965), pp. 318-27; M. Mahdi, "Alfarabi against Philoponus", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 26 (1967), pp. 233-60; Id., "The Arabic Text of Alfarabi's Against John the Grammarian", in S.A. Hanna (ed.), *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya*, Brill, Leiden 1972, pp. 268-84. The Arab readership was acquainted also with Alexander of Aphrodisias' polemics against Galen, who in turn had criticized Aristotle's theory of motion: cf. S. Pines, "Omne quod movetur necesse est ab aliquo moveri. A Refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Theory of Motion", *Isis* 52 (1961), pp. 21-54; Arabic text and English trans.: N. Resher - M. Marmura, *The Refutation by Alexander of Aphrodisias of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion, translated from the Medieval Arabic Version with an Introduction, Notes, and an Edition of the Arabic Text*, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad 1965.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is the main source for al-Kindī's idea that philosophy consists in the conquest of truth step by step (*ʿaşran baʿda ʿaşrin*): see al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, in *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafīyya*, ed. by M.ʿA. Abū Rīda, Dār al-fikr al-ʿarabī, Cairo 1950-1952, vol. I, p. 102.10-16 (the expression quoted, p. 102.15) = pp. 11.16-13.14 (the expression quoted, p. 13.7) in R. Rashed - J. Jolivet, *Ceuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī. II. Métaphysique et cosmologie*, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Sciences, 29.1-2); A.L. Ivry, *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics. A Translation of Yaʿqub ibn Ishāq al-Kindī's Treatise On First Philosophy (fī al-falsafah al-ūlā)*, with Introduction and Commentary, SUNY Press, Albany 1974, p. 125, rightly points to *Metaph.* α 1, 993 b 11-14. The topic of the accumulation of knowledge features also in another writing by al-Kindī, *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books*: see M. Guidi - R. Walzer, "Studi su al-Kindī, I. Uno scritto introduttivo allo studio di Aristotele", *Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei* VI 6 (1937-40), pp. 376-419, in part. p. 395.1-12; cf. also R. Arnaldez, "L'histoire de la pensée grecque vue par les Arabes", *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 72 (1978), pp. 117-68. This obviously implies dissensions among philosophers; however, the emphasis in Aristotle's passage is more on the progress of knowledge than on the disagreement of philosophers; on the contrary, the "Aristotle" of the pseudo-*Theology* boldly criticizes the doctrines that make the soul either a body or something dependent upon the body. When al-Kindī announces his plan of rewriting and emending the doctrines of the Ancients, he shows a sort of awareness of some shortcomings in Greek philosophy: in the prologue of *On First Philosophy* he describes his endeavour of "presenting the ancients' complete statement on this subject according the most direct approach and facile manner of the disciples of this approach; and completing that which they did not state completely, following the custom of the language and contemporary usage, and insofar as is possible for us" (*On First Philosophy*, p. 103.9-11 Abū Rīda = p. 13.20-22 Rashed-Jolivet, trans. Ivry, p. 58).

¹¹⁶ Cf. R. Walzer, "New Studies on al-Kindī", in Id., *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Cassirer, Oxford 1962, in part. § 3b, "Al-Kindī and John Philoponus", pp. 190-6; H. Davidson, "John Philoponus as a Source of Medieval Islamic and Jewish Proofs for Creation", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89 (1969), pp. 357-91 (also in Id., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Oxford U.P., New York - Oxford 1987, pp. 86-153); A. Hasnawi, "Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon: notes sur quelques traités d'Alexandre 'perdus' en grec, conservés en arabe", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994), pp. 53-109; E. Wakelnig, "The Other Arabic Version of Proclus' *De Aeternitate mundi*. The Surviving First Eight Arguments", *Oriens* 40 (2012), pp. 51-95; E. Gannagé, "Philopon, Jean. Tradition arabe", in R. Goulet (ed.), *DPhA*, Va [2012] = P 164, pp. 503-63, in part. pp. 535-7.