

Marc-Antoine Gavray

From the particular soul to the World Soul: Some puzzles in Philoponus

In the wake of Proclus' unforgiving cosmological demonstration, how could one deny the necessity of a World Soul?¹ Had it not become self-evident? Subsequent Platonists evidently had not the slightest doubt, and for this reason, did little more than clarify certain details that the Lycian philosopher had left unresolved, without really challenging the validity of his teachings.² Yet, with John Philoponus, we have notable exception to this orthodoxy. Rather than shore up the fringes of Proclus' theory, Philoponus instead puts it to the test in order to grasp its scope, particularly the definition of soul that underlies it.

Philoponus questions of the validity of reasoning by analogy: can one move from the World Soul to the particular soul? Should it not be the inverse? Should one not begin with particular experience, on later to determine its universality? But is the World Soul really so similar to our own? Do these two souls indeed have the same functions, the same composition, and the same nature? For instance, does the World Soul know in the same way as we do? What form of motion does it have? These are the questions raised by Philoponus, as he wonders what it means to be a soul, if one must take into account both the World soul and the particular soul. It is thus these questions that I shall here investigate, drawing largely on two fundamental texts of Philoponus: the Commentary on the *De anima* and the treatise *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*.

1 E.g. Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 102.7–316.4. See also Dirk Batlzy's paper in this volume.

2 In truth, my research on the subject of the World Soul in post-Procline Neoplatonism turned out to be unfruitful, not to say disappointing: references to this issue are rare, even in Simplicius' Commentaries on the *Physics* and on *De Caelo*. The result is hardly different in the case of the Commentary on the *De anima* attributed to Simplicius, which remains almost silent on this issue or, at least, just paraphrases Aristotle's argument without any further reference to Neoplatonic theory (*In De anima* 27.25–31.6, on 404b8–405a7; the Soul of the Universe does not even appear in *In De anima* 40.1–47.3, commenting on 406b25–407a22, where just such a soul is mentioned). Obviously, the influence of Proclus' thought on the subject was so profound that any further development became pointless – unless the reason for this silence was simply a lack of interest.

Note: I thank Simon Fortier for translating this text into English. All remaining mistakes are mine. I also thank Andrea Falcon and Stephen Menn for their precious suggestions during a seminar held in McGill Universit. Their contribution to this paper cannot be underestimated.

1 Evolution or rupture? The thesis of K. Verrycken

Before we look to the substance of Philoponus' doctrine, we must examine the matter of its consistency, in so far as the question of a possible doctrinal evolution has been recently the subject of some debate among scholars.

In a landmark article published in 1990, K. Verrycken suggested that the work and thought of John Philoponus could be divided into two distinct periods.³ In the first, which encompasses his exegetical texts, Philoponus appears as a Neoplatonic commentator on Aristotle generally faithful to the thought of his master Ammonius. In the second period, however, he assumes the mantle of a Christian philosopher who, on many an occasion, denies his philosophical past. The suggested turning point is the year 529, which saw the publication not only of the imperial decree of Justinian proclaiming the closure of the School of Athens, but also of Philoponus' treatise entitled *De Aeternitate contra mundi Proclum*. In an article published the following year, in 1991, K. Verrycken analyses Philoponus' change of heart on questions of psychogony, i.e. of the soul and its genesis.⁴ He speaks of a 'retraction' of which one of the consequences was the disappearance of the concept of the World Soul from the later treatises.

The thesis of K. Verrycken consists thus in the rejection of the idea of a doctrinal evolution in favour of a sudden rupture on the grounds that the Philoponine corpus bears no trace of a progressive doctrinal shift.⁵

There exists, however, an alternative to this reading of chronology of Philoponus, one which was developed by É. Évrard in 1953 before being recently brought to the fore by P. Golitsis.⁶ According to this hypothesis, one must indeed

³ Verrycken, K.: 'The Development of Philoponus' Thought'.

⁴ Verrycken, K.: 'La Psychogonie platonicienne'. And more recently Verrycken, K.: 'Philoponus' Neoplatonic Interpretation'.

⁵ Verrycken has to admit this evolution, since he distinguishes in the second half of Philoponus' life between two levels, the one related to the *De aeternitate mundi*, the other related to the *De opificio mundi*, because he sees the disappearance, between these two texts, of the World Soul. Why then does he talk about a rupture, instead of an evolution, as it is an on-going process? Verrycken rather talks of a later withdrawal 'sous la contrainte de la logique meme de son nouveau système' (Verrycken, K.: 'La Psychogonie platonicienne', 233).

⁶ Évrard, É.: 'Les Convictions religieuses de Jean Philopon'. This thesis was recently taken anew in Golitsis, P.: *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon*, 27–37; Golitsis, P.: 'John Philoponus' Commentary', 402–403; Golitsis, P.: 'Simplicius and Philoponus', 433–434; and Golitsis, P.: 'John Philoponus as an editor', where he distances himself from Évrard in showing that the Commentary on the *Meteorology* must predate the *Contra Proclum*. Following his chronology, the Commentary on *De anima* (I–II) is to be considered as an early work (before 517), while the *Contra Proclum* belongs to Philoponus' late production.

speak of an evolution in Philoponus' thought, as his corpus of exegetical works was begun before the decree of Justinian and continued to grow in its wake. I will opt here for this second thesis and will insist on the continuity of the Philoponus' thought over the course of his oeuvre. Without hazarding to explain the absence of the theory of the World Soul from a late treatise such as the *De opificio mundi* (for justifying the absence of a given doctrine is always delicate, if not dangerous, work), I wish to show the continuity of Philoponus' project, which culminates, in many ways, in a doctrinal continuity.

The guiding theme of my argument will be the opposition that characterizes Philoponus and Proclus' relationship. Although it is most apparent in the *De aeternitate mundi*, which, after all, is written *contra Proclum*, this opposition is already present in the Commentary on the *De anima* where, by means of an exegesis of Aristotle, Philoponus discusses and questions interpretations that may be traced ultimately back to Proclus. I do not propose, however, to offer a complete interpretation of the seventh question of the *De aeternitate mundi*, where the problem of the World Soul receives its most continuous treatment. I will instead concentrate on the main lines of the polemic that runs through this question and, in consequence, on the definition of the soul in general, but also on the manner in which it is carried on.

The difference in focus of the two texts, the Commentary on the *De anima* and the *De aeternitate mundi*, is clear. Their respective reflections revolve, on the one hand, around the *Timaeus* and the question of the mathematical structure of the soul, and, on the other, around the *Phaedrus* and the problem of its definition of the soul. And if the coherence of the dialogues, which implies understanding why Plato offers different solutions to similar problems, is one of the fundamental philosophical issues in both contexts, the difference in perspective appears to be a major cause of this variation. To a great extent, the interpretation of the dialogue's psychology, and more particularly its application to the World Soul, is the result of emphasis being placed either on the cognitive function of the soul (in the *Timaeus*), or on the kinetic or motive function (in the *Phaedrus*).⁷ Relatively speaking, the situation is analogous to that of contemporary interpretations of Plato's political philosophy: according to the dialogue on which the emphasis is placed, be it the *Republic*, the *Statesman*, or the *Laws*, commentators tend to find in Plato either a totalitarian idealist, a political scientist, or a pragmatic legalist. We must at least concede that Philoponus was conscious of the impact of a difference of perspective.

⁷ In *De anima* 81.17–31.

2 An innovative commentator?

Let us begin with the Commentary on the *De anima*, in which, while remaining faithful to Ammonius and his project of the harmonization of Plato and Aristotle, Philoponus does not

limit himself to reproducing the psychology inherited from Proclus.⁸ This exegetical framework in fact offers him the occasion for original developments, which seem to stem from his sounding of the work of his predecessors. All the references to the World Soul concentrate on the same passage in Aristotle, which begins as follows:

In the same way Timaeus gives a physical account of how the soul moves the body. For, by its own motion, it moves the body also through its connection with it.⁹

This lemma raises two difficulties for Philoponus. The first concerns the level at which the interpretation should be situated, which will determine these sense of the underlying content. The second concerns the scope of the World Soul and its relation to the particular soul.

2.1 The symbolic exposition of the structure of the soul

The *Timaeus* develops its psychogony according to the symbolic method of the Pythagoreans. One must therefore search for the hidden sense, and not interpret the mathematical notions literally, which would be as foolish as comparing a poetic depiction with nature. It would be equally foolish to imagine Aristotle guilty of such an error, who, according to his usual habit, criticizes instead those interpretations based on only the apparent meaning in order to dissuade those interpreters incapable of grasping the sense of such symbols.¹⁰ On this point, Philoponus takes similar line to that of commentary attributed to Simplicius and

8 This commentary is regarded as a collection of notes taken during a course of Ammonius, who were rewritten by Philoponus with the addition of personal reflections, or criticisms (μετά τινων ιδίων ἐπιστάσεων) – as the manuscripts say.

9 *De anima* I 3, 406b26–28: τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ὁ Τίμαιος φυσιολογεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν κινεῖν τὸ σῶμα· τῷ γὰρ κινεῖσθαι αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ σῶμα κινεῖν διὰ τὸ συμπεπλέχθαι πρὸς αὐτό. See *Timaeus* 35a1–37c5.

10 In *De anima* 116.21–30. Philoponus paraphrases the psychogonie in the previous lines (116.1–21).

upholds the exegetical principles of the school of Ammonius.¹¹ He thus partakes of a predetermined hermeneutical framework: the cosmological reading of a passage of the *Timaeus* in the midst of an Aristotelian treatise on psychology, which demands that the commentator determines the meaning of mathematical symbols and pushes beyond the absurdities that emerge from a literal reading. Philoponus cites five such absurdities:¹²

1. How to divide a straight line in two, if it is a length without extension?
2. How, once it had been divided into numbers, can the straight line be split or rolled into a circle?
3. How can it become into a circle?
4. How is the outer circle larger if the two straight lines are initially equal?
5. How can these circles stretch from the centre as far as the extremities?

Philoponus responds to these questions with the following interpretation.

The Soul of the Universe is intellectual life, that which sets in motion two opposed geometric symbols: the line and the circle.¹³ Life is symbolised by the line as the procession and flow of that which gives (life) towards that which receives it. Its intellectual dimension is itself represented by the circle, as intellectual movement contracts in upon itself, departs from itself, and comes to a stop in itself, like a conversion and contemplation of oneself. In other words, the World Soul is at once a line and a circle, because through its productive activity it resembles the linearity of the gift of life, while through its cognitive activity it resembles the circularity of contemplative intellection (for it is by referring to the intelligible that it organises life, which is, for it, a form of self-knowledge). As a rational soul, it is distinguished by its movement, since irrational souls (be they nutritive, appetitive, or sensitive) have a linear motion according to which they move towards their desired object.¹⁴ While retaining an interpretation similar to

¹¹ ‘Simplicius’, *In De anima* 28.12–20. However we find in ‘Simplicius’ nothing of what follows in Philoponus.

¹² *In De anima* 117.14–24.

¹³ *In De anima* 117.30–118.6. In this chapter, the phrases ἡ τοῦ κόσμου ψυχῆ (the World Soul) and ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆ (the Soul of the Whole or the Soul of the Universe) are considered equivalent. Philoponus makes no distinction and sometimes uses one after the other in a same context (e.g. in the seventh question of the *De aeternitat mundi contra Proclum*). Damascius and Simplicius use the same synonymy, preferring one instead of the other not because of a difference in nature, but of a difference of perspective. The World Soul is the soul considered in its unity and in relation with a (World) body, while the Soul of the Universe refers to its relations with its own parts (see Damascius, *In Parmenidem* II, 67.11–17 for the World Soul, and *De Principiis* III, 67.17–23 for the Soul of the Universe).

¹⁴ *In De anima* 124.29–125.31.

that of Proclus, Philoponus distinguishes himself by not making the processive structure explicit. The procession to which he refers is not the transmission of the life of the soul from superior entities, but only the linear causal chain that goes from producer to product.¹⁵ The explanation better preserves the parallel between the Soul of the Universe and the particular soul.

As for the division of the straight line in two, it may be explained by the ambivalent nature of the Soul of the Universe, which exists midway between two extremes: the intelligibles on the one hand, characterised by their identity and their unity, and the natural lives on the other, which are disseminated into bodies and turned towards plurality, according to duality. As a rational soul, principle of knowledge, the World Soul is intellective and immovable, by essence separable from bodies in its activities and, in this way, oriented towards unity. As the providential and conversive principle of animation, it is bound to the body and, for this reason, it is on the side of plurality and duality.¹⁶ It is therefore a reality at once indivisible and divided, one and many, whence the recourse to a geometric absurdity. On this point, Philoponus takes up the standard Neoplatonic doctrine.¹⁷

Next, the division of the World Soul into numbers capable of diverse relations symbolises the soul's ever harmonious movement, embodying identity. The same reasoning applies to our own soul, which must be able to harmonise its parts (ἐπιθυμία and θυμός) and, by its fundamentally harmonic nature, know the harmony behind the movement of the heavenly bodies.¹⁸ In this way Philoponus explains the structural analogy that allows the latter to arrive at (a knowledge of) the first – the Soul of the Universe having both the cognitive ability and the capacity to produce harmony, while our own can only recognize that harmony. Where the soul of all has productive and paradigmatic capabilities, ours has corresponding cognitive and representative powers (γνωστικός τε καὶ εἰκονικός), to the extent that they allow it to know the relationship of the movements of celestial bodies, their similarities, and their differences.¹⁹ The structural similarity

¹⁵ Cf. Proclus, *In Timaeum* II, 244.12–22; 245.15–17.

¹⁶ *In De anima* 118.6–20.

¹⁷ See Proclus, *In Timaeum* II, 196.19–197.14.

¹⁸ *In De anima* 118.28–38. In 118.20–28, Philoponus gives an account for the numerical relationships taken from Alexander of Aphrodisias' (lost) commentary, and he refers his reader to it for more details, Saffrey, H. D.: 'ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΖ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ', 79. However, unlike this latter, I take only these lines to be inspired by Alexander, since the reverse would be to consider that Alexander would try to save Plato from his geometric absurdities and would adopt the harmonising way of reading texts which characterises the late Neoplatonism.

¹⁹ *In De anima* 120.8–13; 123.7–12. It belongs to our soul to recognise what is harmonious.

becomes evident through the exercise of their powers, even if it is fundamentally by these very powers that the two types of souls differ.

Then comes the question of the circles, which extends the analogy. The outer circle symbolizes the anagogic powers (ἀναγωγοί) of the soul to ascend to the intelligible; the inner circle symbolizes its generative powers (γενεσιουργοί) oriented towards the world here below. Unsurprisingly, Philoponus associates these powers with the charioteer of the *Phaedrus*, associating the good horse with the circle of the Same, and the bad horse with that of the Other.²⁰ In doing so, he further reduces the difference between the particular soul and the World Soul, in so far as the latter appears subject to the same conditions required to reconcile centripetal and centrifugal forces. And although he admits that, in the *Timaeus*, the circles have an astronomical significance, describing the nesting and movement of the stars,²¹ he reinforces the structural analogy between the particular soul and the World Soul, allowing to some extent that we should be able to move from the former to the latter. Not only are they composed of the same materials, but they also obey the same opposing constraints. This symbolic analysis not only allows, on the basis of an explanation of Aristotle, to unfold the composition and functions of the Soul of the Universe, but also to determine the correspondences between its nature and that of the particular soul. Ultimately, it is the relation to harmony, and not harmony itself, which distinguishes our soul from that of the Universe: our soul recognizes it, while the Soul of the Universe produces it.²²

2.2 The extension of life and the limits of the World Soul

In the list of five geometric absurdities, the last – on the extension of circles – symbolically means there is nothing in the heavens that does not participate in life and does not participate in the illumination proceeding from the Soul of the

²⁰ *In De anima* 119.15–24. *Phaedrus* 246b. Verrycken, K: ‘La psychogonie platonicienne’, 224, thinks that the analogy only works for the particular soul. However, Philoponus never shows to extend the comparison he has made before between the Soul of the Universe and the particular Soul. He talks here of the ‘powers of the soul’, which are supposed to be the powers of every rational soul – be it particular soul or Soul of the Universe –, if we follow what he told us beforehand about the division.

²¹ *In De anima* 119.24–120.5.

²² If the parallel between the charioteer of the *Phaedrus* and the circles of the *Timaeus* can also be found in, e.g., Hermias, *In Phaedrum* 123.4–125.12 (Couvreur), explaining the relationship between the World Soul and the particular souls in terms of harmony seems to appear only in Philoponus’ Commentary (Hermias makes no reference to the World Soul in this context).

Universe, each according to its measure.²³ From this point of view, even inanimate being (τὰ ἄψυχα) participates in some form of life in the sense that it has certain powers (warmth, cold, dryness, wetness, movement as does the stone of Magnesia). According to Philoponus, the Soul of the Universe is responsible, directly or indirectly, for all forms of activity in the world. Moreover, this symbolic explanation justifies why Plato has united the Soul of the Universe with the World Body, in a mixture that is neither a juxtaposition (παράθεσις) nor fusion (κρᾶσις), but an intertwining (διαπλοκή), in the manner of a rope, a form of mixture midway between the other two where each keeps its specificity, all while being intertwined with each other. The Soul of the Universe is therefore deeply intertwined with the whole of the World Body. It affects this body, yet its powers remain separate. In this context, the accent is on the link. In the *Contra Proclum*, Philoponus will focus instead on maintaining the separation in the mixture in order to underline the independence of the soul from the body. The two readings are, however, not incompatible. With regard to knowledge, the Soul of the Universe is no different from any other (cognitive) soul. It indeed also possesses discursive intellection (μεταβατική), which moves from one intelligible to another in a kind of revolution (περιφορὰ).²⁴ Unlike our soul, however, its intellection is eternal, which does not mean that it knows the same intelligible permanently, nor that it would infinitely rediscover the same objects of knowledge. The eternity of its cognitive movement is a result of its circularity, in that at the end of its cycle, it returns to its starting point, an intelligible that it already knows. It is the result of its inability to grasp the intelligible in its entirety, as only the first intellect can. Knowledge of the Soul of the Universe does not differ from ours by its modality, but rather by its ability to focus indefinitely upon the intelligible, not in its entirety, but successively on each intelligible. This, at least, is the position that, according to Philoponus, Aristotle attributed to Plato.

2.3 The principles of the soul

In another famous passage of the *De anima*, Aristotle affirms that, ‘in the same way, Plato in the *Timaeus* constitutes the soul from the elements’.²⁵ Modern interpreters have understood this to be a reference to the constitution of the World

²³ In *De anima* 120.19–33.

²⁴ In *De anima* 132.26–133.7.

²⁵ *De anima* I 2, 404b16–27.

Soul (and the Platonic theory of numbers).²⁶ One should recall, however, that Aristotle speaks here only of the soul in general (unless we count the evocation of ‘the animal itself’ immediately after), and that the ancient commentators did not specify anymore than him to what soul the passage is referring. However, as its purpose is to make Plato one amongst the partisans of an epistemology which holds that like is known by like, one would expect, given the context – as Empedocles was just discussed and Democritus will follow –, that the commentators would refer to the four elements according to which the *Timaeus* explains sensation.²⁷ Instead, they mention the genera which are used by the Demiurge in order to initially create the World Soul, namely, Being, Same and Other.²⁸ Philoponus goes even further than the commentary attributed to Simplicius, as he adds to the three genera of the *Timaeus* two more in order to arrive at the list of the *Sophist*:

Plato, he says, on the basis of his own principles, from which he said everything exists, said on this very basis that soul exists as well, in order that, since it exists from the same principles, it recognises everything. So he said that the five genera were the principles of every being: the essence, the identity, the difference, the movement, and the rest.²⁹

We must conceive of these genera as ‘diacosmic’, to paraphrase the commentary attributed to Simplicius, i.e. as genera constituent of beings, and not merely as logical genera, in the manner of the Peripatetics. The commentators all agree on this point. As for the extension of the list of genera by Philoponus, it serves two purposes. First, it reinforces the doctrinal coherence, explaining Plato by means of Plato so as to show the complementarity between two lists of genera from two different dialogues: from the *Timaeus* to the *Sophist*, Plato develops the same explanation of the genera’s presence in the world, although he sometimes envisions this presence from an epistemological perspective (in the *Timaeus*), and sometimes from an ontological perspective (in the *Sophist*). Furthermore, it shows that the soul partakes of the same nature as all beings, which is for it the necessary condition for all knowledge.

We can see why, despite their careful harmonization of Plato and Aristotle, the ancient commentators, unlike their modern counterparts, felt no need to explicitly associate this passage with the World Soul. Why look to an intermediary being here in order to justify the twofold process of sensible and intelligible knowing,

²⁶ Robin, L.: *La théorie platonicienne*, 485–491; Cherniss, H.: *Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato*, 565–566; Brisson, L.: *Le Même et l’Autre*, 276–290; Bodéüs, R.: ‘Âme du monde’, 81–82; Gourinat, M.: ‘La Doctrine platonicienne’ (I 2, 404b16–27), 89–105.

²⁷ Plato, *Timaeus* 61c–68d.

²⁸ See ‘Simplicius’, *In De anima* 27.25–28.4.

²⁹ *In De anima* 74.32–75.1.

any more than the dissemination of the mathematical structure that makes it possible. Moreover, for Philoponus, τὸ αὐτοζῶον does not refer to the total living being whose soul is that of the world. According to him, Aristotle refers by this to only ‘the idea itself and the model of the living being’.³⁰ Again, there is no more trace of the World Soul here than there is of the World Body.

3 The polemic over the definition of the World Soul: The *Contra Proclum*

The opposition to Proclus is obviously more pronounced in the pamphlet *De aeternitate mundi*, a succession of eighteen essays in which Philoponus refutes the theses of Proclus on the eternity of the world. Regarding the World Soul, the seventh essay is of greatest interest, wherein Philoponus discusses the consequences of the relationship between the soul and the body of the world relative to their respective generation and corruption.

3.1 The argument of Proclus

Philoponus presents the argument that he intends to refute as follows:

If the soul of the universe is ungenerated and imperishable, the world too is ungenerated and imperishable. For the definition [of the soul of the universe], as of all soul, is ‘that which moves itself’; and everything which moves itself is a fount and source of movement. So if the soul of the universe is everlasting, the universe must always be being moved by it. For, despite always being a source of movement and being unable not to be a source of movement (for it is by its essence self-moved and therefore a source of movement), it would not be a source for movement should the universe either previously or subsequently not exist. But soul is, by virtue of this very self-movement, ungenerated and imperishable. Therefore the universe too is ungenerated and imperishable. [And] from this it is quite clear that all soul is in the first instance mounted upon everlasting body and moves it for ever and that whenever it is present in perishable bodies, it moves them through the agency of those [sc. the everlasting ones] which are for ever moved [directly] by it.³¹

The argument rests on the definition of the soul as self-moving, from which Proclus deduces that it is the motive principle of other things. The reasoning that

³⁰ In *De anima* 77.6: αὐτὴ ἢ ἰδέα τοῦ ζώου καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα.

³¹ *De aet. mund.* 243.2–19, tr. M. Share.

follows results from this deduction: if, by definition, the World Soul is a principle of motion and if by definition also, since it is self-moving, it is eternal, then what it is the principle of and what it provides the movement of the World Body to, must also be eternal, or it will be nothing principle, at least some portion of the time. The discussion revolves around three major issues: the definition of the soul and its extension, the nature of its activity, and its character as a principle. Throughout this refutation, Philoponus' approach is characterized by a refusal to admit any argument from authority, whether it comes from Proclus or even from Plato himself, unless it has been proven valid by experience or by logical necessity.

3.2 Self-moving principle or principle of motion

Philoponus is clear: since Proclus' sophisms take their origin in the double affirmation of Plato according to which the soul is self-moving and a principle of motion, the first thing to do is to examine the veracity of this affirmation, in so far as an opinion alone, even if it be that of Plato, is insufficient as an argument – Philoponus thus takes up the precept of Aristotle *amicus Plato* [...].³² The difficulty arises from the application of the definition of the soul drawn from the Phaedrus to the particular case of the World Soul. Philoponus concedes the thesis (συγχωρήσαντες), albeit with the intention of testing it by its own criteria and of focusing on the implications of the second part, i.e. on the idea of the World Soul as a principle of movement.³³ His first demonstration examines whether to be a principle of motion exactly corresponds to the being (εἶναι) and the essence (οὐσία) of the soul, or, to put it otherwise, if being a principle of motion belongs to its definition or if it is a non-essential property of the soul. Plato's affirmation is thus laid out in terms of logical necessity, and the consequences of each term of the alternative are carefully considered.

Making the soul by essence a principle of motion, as Proclus has done, amounts to linking, if not subordinating, the soul to the body and thus denying it the possibility of a separate existence. If that is indeed its essence, it can not simply possess this property in potency. It must instead exercise it without interruption, otherwise its essence would not (always) be fully realized. In these

³² *De aet. mund.* 248.7–21 (13–15: ἀμφοῖν γὰρ ὄντων φίλων, ἢ φησιν ὁ τοῦ Πλάτωνος μαθητής, ὅσιον πανταχοῦ προτιμᾶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν); see Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* I 4, 1096a16–17. Proclus' thesis makes a logical mistake because it goes away from facts (ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων), instead of reasoning from what everyone admits (what is obvious) to what is ignored (non-evident).

³³ Philoponus often talks of soul without specifying whether he means the World Soul.

circumstances, the soul would need the body to exist, and conversely, its own eternity would necessarily imply that of the body. Such a conclusion clearly contradicts the Platonic premise – that Proclus admits by principle, although at this stage of the examination it is not yet possible to determine if Philoponus does also – that the soul (including the World Soul) must be able to exist separately from the body it moves and, above all, that its being can in no way depend on the body. Between these two clearly inconsistent premises – the soul as the motive principle and the soul as a separate entity – one must therefore choose which belongs to the definition of the soul, the latter allowing for the soul to be the source movement only in potency and ensuring that this property is not part of its essence (or of its definition). However, as it retains them both, the thesis of Proclus appears logically inconsistent.

Philoponus then attempts to show the inconsistency of the position of Proclus with regard to Platonic doctrine. In so far as it establishes a dependency between the soul and the body being moved, it degrades it to the level of the material life of the body (ἡ ἔνυλον τῶν σωμάτων ζωή) and, in turn, brings the World Soul to the level of the irrational soul, that soul which, although it can move itself – at least as far as Plato is concerned –, cannot exist outside the body it moves and animates.³⁴ It also prohibits the soul having a separate activity, since its essence cannot remain absolutely separate from the body. Philoponus reasons once again in the Neoplatonic fashion so dear to Proclus: if the essence is a cause whose activity is an effect, the activity cannot be greater than the cause and, consequently, cannot exist separately from the latter. The proposal evidently supposes, as the Platonists would have it, the superiority of what is separate. However, Philoponus calls instead upon (philosophical) common sense: it would be wrong to deny that the soul has at least one separate activity (e.g. intellection) while considering at the same time that it may not be separated from the body.³⁵ The reader inevitably thinks of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*:³⁶ Philoponus then attempts once more to hoist Proclus by his own petard. In his opinion, Proclus' thesis appears inconsistent with his own Neoplatonism, whereas his own fits it perfectly: it seems ontologically superior to move oneself rather than to move another and, therefore, the second property can only be added in an accessory manner to the first since some realities are causes of motion without being the principles of their proper motion. Similarly, in order to preserve the intellectual essence of the soul, i.e. the

³⁴ *De aet. mund.* 251.4–16.

³⁵ Philoponus (*De aet. mund.* 251.16–252.9) invokes Aristotle too (cf. *De anima* I 3, 403a4–16). He will deal with the separation within intellection in the next paragraph (252.10–15).

³⁶ Proclus, *Elements of theology* prop. 7 and 75.

activity it exercises independently of the body, one must deny that the essence of the body *qua* body can exist outside the soul, although the inverse is true.

The third demonstration that Philoponus develops takes an exegetical turn. Throughout his writings, Proclus recognizes the distinction between the essence (what it is, ἡ οὐσία) and activity (what it does, ὄτι) of the soul. In his commentary on the *Phaedrus*, he admits that what constitutes the essence of the soul is its self-motion (ἡ αὐτοκίνησις).³⁷ Contemplation, recollection or animation of the body are, however, only activities which do not belong to its definition. Hence the superiority, according to him, of the demonstration of the *Phaedrus* over that of the *Phaedo*, as a demonstration from the soul's essence proves superior to one from its sole activities. Proclus not only misunderstands Plato's original doctrine, but he contradicts himself from one text to another, since he confuses here the essence and the activity of the soul by including in its essence one of its activities (i.e. the fact that it is a source of motion). Philoponus shows himself not only to be a better reader of Plato, but also better reader of Proclus himself.

If, over the course of his demonstration, Philoponus appears intent only on testing the logical value of the Platonic thesis and its use by Proclus, the coherence of Plato's texts nevertheless plays out in his favor. We need look only to the definition of the soul that gives the *Phaedrus*:

All soul is immortal. For that which is always moving is immortal; and that which moves something else and is moved by something else, since it has a stopping of motion, has a stopping of life. Only that which moves itself, then, since it does not abandon itself, never ceases from moving, but this is also the source and principle of motion for whatever other things are moved. [...] Now, since that which is moved by itself has been revealed as immortal, one will feel no sense of shame in saying that this very thing is the essence and definition of the soul (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν τε καὶ λόγον). [...] If this is indeed the case, that that which itself moves itself is nothing other than soul, soul would of necessity have no coming into being and be immortal.³⁸

In defining the nature of the soul, Plato justifies its immortality by the fact that only that which is in itself the cause of its own movement can always be in motion. Plato's entire demonstration consists in presenting the soul as a self-moving principle without beginning or end. It follows that only the soul can be the true principle of motion because it ensures its own continued existence in the world. Thus the distinction advanced by Philoponus – that between the definition and essence of the soul on the one hand, and its property on the other – seems justified by the

³⁷ *De aet. mund.* 253.9–254.18. Philoponus quotes a passage from Proclus' (lost) commentary on the *Phaedrus*.

³⁸ *Phaedrus* 245c5–9, 245e2–4 and 245e6–246a2, tr. S. Scully, modified.

text of the *Phaedrus*: only immortality and self-motion are essential features of the soul, whereas the fact of moving something else is only the consequence at the origin of the demonstration. In addition, the opposition to Proclus over the definition of the soul becomes a way to reconcile – implicitly – the *Phaedrus* with Book X of the *Laws*, or at least to read the former as in agreement with the latter, where Plato defines the soul as ‘the movement capable of moving itself’.³⁹ In this passage, Plato indeed removes from the definition of the soul the notion of principle to insist on movement, which supports the interpretation of Philoponus: before being principle of motion for that which depends on it, the soul is what moves itself, self-moving motion. Put otherwise, if Plato in the *Phaedrus* uses the term ἀρχή, it is primarily in reference to the soul itself and is meant to show the soul depends on nothing else rather than to highlight any role of as a producer of external effects: before moving anything else, the soul is its own principle. Proclus seems to overemphasize its status as an ἀρχή for others by considering this as part of its definition – of its nature and essence.

There remains a point to clarify that Philoponus seems to leave open: does the definition of the soul in the *Phaedrus* apply to the World Soul as well? To put it another way, how do we arrive at a cosmological application of the particular definition of the *Phaedrus*, while avoiding the difficulty raised by Philoponus that is inherent to the position of the soul as a principle of motion? At no time does Philoponus deny them having the same definition, but he admits the continuity between the particular soul and the World Soul. Again, the text of *Laws X* justifies his reading, in so far as it is possible to interpret it in a cosmological manner. The soul is in fact described as the source of the movements of the world.⁴⁰ However, since its definition is that of a movement that moves itself, the definition of the *Phaedrus* must *a fortiori* apply to the World Soul. Philoponus is therefore entitled to accept the Platonic postulate of a continuity of definition between the particular soul and the World Soul. Better still, the properties applied to the particular soul will be *a fortiori* applicable to the World Soul. Therefore, if there is something like a World Soul, in the same way as every other soul, it must be able to exist separately from the body, to carry on an activity separately from the body, and to exist independently of any body. In these circumstances, it must be conceived of as a soul before being conceived as ‘of the world’. The animating principle does not exist as a principle and depending on what it animates prior to existing in the own, mobile nature of movement: if it exists, the World Soul will be, before any subsequent movement, selfmoving.

³⁹ Plato, *Laws X*, 896a1–2: τὴν δυναμένην αὐτὴν αὐτὴν κινεῖν κίνησις.

⁴⁰ *Laws X* 897b–c.

3.3 The activities of the World Soul

Once it has been demonstrated that the essence and the activity of the soul are two different things, the question arises as to whether the soul can exercise one of its activities in a continuous and eternal way, given that being source of motion is, for it, the exercise of a power – or an activity. Philoponus reasons *a fortiori*, first concerning the powers themselves and their objects, then concerning the level of the soul to which these powers correspond.⁴¹ To prove that the lower activity of the soul, those activities that it exercises in its relationship to the body, can be eternally exercised, it is necessary to prove beforehand that its higher activities can be so as well. Philoponus distinguishes three levels according to an ever greater transcendence of the body, which therefore surpass all bodily activities: cognitive (αἱ γνωστικαί) and practical (αἱ πρακτικαί) activities, self-reflexive (or conversive) activities αἱ ἐπιστρεπτικαί, and finally the intellective activities that elevate the soul to the divine (αἱ νοερώτεραι καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀναγωγαί). Yet none of them is exercised continuously and eternally: the first two, cognitive and practical, assume the passage from one contrary to another – from ignorance to knowledge, from vice to virtue, and vice-versa – and therefore imply a process with clear ending. In the case of the final two categories, Philoponus once again invokes common sense:⁴² it is clear to all that the soul cannot remain permanently in a state of conversion and intellection of divine objects. If these superior, divine activities, despite their transcendence of the body, cannot be exercised eternally, then neither can the lower, bodily activities – and this to an analogous degree to the ontological gulf between the lower bodies from the higher realities.

The conclusion appears identical with regard to the part of the soul concerned with these activities. If the rational activities of the soul cannot be exercised eternally, neither can its irrational activities. Indeed, for the soul, moving a body is a lower, unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν) activity, which does not contribute to the perfect realization of its essence. The soul, particular as well as that of the world, is characterized above all by its rational power, unlike the power to move bodies, which is an irrational power found in nature. It appears that the soul of the world, like every soul, is simply a soul before being the soul of a given body and that its first activities are those that concern itself alone in its intelligible nature, before the activities that put in relation to the body. It may therefore exist independently of the world. The World Soul is not a soul *for the world*. Rather, it is capable of fully realising itself in its proper psychic activities.

⁴¹ *De aet. mund.* 254.19–256.3 and 256.4–17.

⁴² *De aet. mund.* 255.14: παντί δῆλόν ἐστιν.

In this argument, Philoponus never distinguishes the World Soul from particular souls. Better still, he never invokes the World Soul as such, although it is around its motive activity that he constructs his refutation of Proclus. However, his conclusion should apply to the World Soul, given that it is the possibility of an eternal activity on its part that is the real object of his investigation. But the demonstration was carried out on the basis of human activities, knowledge, virtue and vice, etc. As a result, from the perspective of Philoponus, the World Soul should not be seen as a different kind of soul whose activities would be exercised in different manner, for example, in a more perfect manner than the psychic activities of man. The World Soul is simply a particular soul which has exactly the same capabilities as any particular soul, employing them in the same way and with the same limitations.

It would seem that the soul, especially the World Soul, does not exercise any of its activities in a continuous and eternal way. Therefore it moves in an way that still has to be determined. The transition from ignorance to knowledge, from vice to virtue, is more like rectilinear motion. But is it the only possible movement of the soul? On closer examination,⁴³ Philoponus refuses that any movement that the soul imparts to the body – whether generation and corruption, alteration, growth and decline, linear or circular movement – should be exercised eternally for abovementioned reasons.⁴⁴ Unlike the soul, which does not need to exercise its activities in order to exist, the world body exists in time, for it could in no way be moved continuously and eternally. The World Soul can therefore exist eternally without this being the case for the World Body.

3.4 The World Soul as a principle

The third and final question concerns the causal nature of the soul and its effects. Firstly, it is not because the soul has the property of being a principle of motion that the resulting motion is only the spontaneous consequence of its status as a principle. Philoponus thus expresses his opposition to the concept that he attributes to Proclus (and which is, in his opinion, absurd), that the soul's function as motor is only a consequence of its status as a principle: it moves simply by being a principle of motion, without this action being the object of a decision

⁴³ *De aet. mund.* 256.18–259.10. This analysis reminds of Aristotle, *De an.* I 3, 406a13–b5.

⁴⁴ Regarding circular movement, Philoponus only refers to his (lost) treatise *Contra Aristotele On the Eternity of the World*, without giving here any further arguments (see *De aet. mund.* 258.23–259.6).

on its part (ἀπροαιρέτως καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι).⁴⁵ In the same way that the Sun is a source of light by its mere appearance or fire a source of heat by its mere presence, the rational soul would be involuntarily a source of life and motion for that to which it is linked.⁴⁶ The thesis has the advantage of making the motor function of the soul permanent. Nevertheless, it reduces the soul's organizing function to no more than an existence where all movement would already be determined without the soul exercising any genuine psychic activity, that is to say, intellectual or rational. Philoponus therefore undertakes a refutation based on empirical observation and that proceeds *a fortiori* from individual bodies to the Soul of the Universe.

If the motor activity of the soul stemmed only from its nature as a principle, it would be constantly exerted on the living body to which the soul is attached. This body should therefore be in constant motion, because of the immortality and continuity of motion that characterizes the motor principle on which it depends. This, however, is contrary to observed reality, where we witness resting phases in the movement of bodies.⁴⁷ (Philoponus reduced his refutation to the rectilinear motion, which he has just established as finite, with a beginning and an end, without considering the possibility of another continuous movement, such as breathing.)⁴⁸ Such an alternation in bodily movement must therefore be explained by a decision on the part of the soul. Therefore, as soul itself, and more precisely as rational soul, the motor action of the World Soul is *a fortiori* the result of an impulse, or a decision (κατ' ὄρεξιν καὶ προαίρεσιν): the Soul of the Universe decided to move the World (body) in the same way that every soul moves the body that depends on it. And it is by this decision that it differs from nature, whose principles of motion are immanent and irrational. The World Soul is the source of movement resulting from a deliberate act, whereas nature presides over involuntary and spontaneous movements, such as those of bodies towards their proper place or those from the *logoi*.

Secondly, the motor action of the soul does not have to be permanent, but it can remain potential, because of the distinction between essence and property, between being self-moved and being a principle of movement. By virtue of its quality as a motor principle, moving another is for the soul a power that it exercises or not, as building is for the architect or teaching a student for the teacher.⁴⁹ However, it can exist as a principle regardless of the actualisation of its power,

⁴⁵ *De aet. mund.* 260.3–8.

⁴⁶ *De aet. mund.* 269.9–18.

⁴⁷ *De aet. mund.* 260.8–261.13.

⁴⁸ *De aet. mund.* 258.11–22. Philoponus refers to Aristotle, *Physics* VIII 8, 262a12–263a3.

⁴⁹ *De aet. mund.* 262.1–10.

which results from a decision, just as much as the correlate upon which it may exert its action. The World Soul as well, in and of itself, does not need to exercise its motor activity to exist. As an unbegotten and immortal principle, according to Plato, it does not even need the World Body which, in turn, is generated and perishable – while, conversely, no animated body can exist without a soul.⁵⁰

Philoponus thus establishes the relationship between the psychic principle and its correlate as one of relative independence, which he expresses in terms of potentiality. Three aspects emerge from his refutation of Proclus. Firstly, as a principle, and because of his movements, the soul provides the body with the vital functions that distinguish it from an inanimate body (sensation, nutrition, reproduction, desire, and voluntary movement). These functions correspond to capacities and are, in this regard, forms of rest. Movement occurs with their activation. Therefore, if the soul is the principle and source of movement for the world, it is not that it directly moves the world, but that it gives it a capacity for movement that remains to be actualised.⁵¹ Secondly, the soul (of the world) is not the cause of bodily movements, but the cause of the order that occurs in bodily movements. There are in fact some bodily movements that are unrelated to rationality, such as vital faculties or the senses of which irrational animals also make use, sometimes even better than we do. The motor function of the rational soul is to order them, as in *Phaedrus*, as Philoponus points out, it is the horses that put the chariot in motion, whereas it is the role of the charioteer to direct and moderate them.⁵² Therefore, it is through the order that it imprints on the irrational faculties that the soul (of the world) is the cause of the movement of the body (of the world). Philoponus thus explains the organization of the world at the same time as the disturbances that occur, without, however, making them depend on the rational soul. Moreover, he does not contradict what he wrote while commenting on the *De anima*. Rather, he specifies what is meant by the illumination from the Soul of the Universe that passes through all things, giving them life. Thirdly, it is not the fact of moving but that of being a principle of movement that is involuntary for the soul – although this is not its essence (as the essence of the Sun or fire is one thing, while their illumination or heat is another). Therefore, it falls to him to foster the encounter between the active principle (the soul and its ordering

⁵⁰ *De aet. mund.* 267.10–20.

⁵¹ *De aet. mund.* 263.24–264.28. Philoponus concludes that ‘self-movement is always potentially the source of movement, but not always actually’, which allows him, against Proclus but with Plato, to underline that, unlike soul, body is neither always moving, nor ungenerated and imperishable.

⁵² *De aet. mund.* 265.1–267.9. See *Phaedrus* 246a–d. Philoponus takes an obvious care to make sense of Plato’s text. Cf. 271.14–272.18.

movement) and the passive principle (the body and its disorderly movement) so as to activate its motor capacity.⁵³

In this section of the treatise Philoponus employs a hypothetical argument that seeks a proper interpretation of the Phaedrus, that is to say one that not only seeks to provide a coherent reading of the text but one that also accords with experience, unlike the interpretation of Proclus.⁵⁴ However, beyond his opposition to Proclus over Plato's doctrine, the core of this argument is the relation to the principle of order. The consequence of Philoponus' position against Proclus is that the order of the world, that produced by the soul (of the world), does not need to be embodied (by the world) to exist, for, as an order, it is true for all eternity and there may even potentially, while the position of Proclus, which is reminiscent of that of the Megarics, assumes that a principle is only really a principle when it is the active principle of something. The World Soul, at least if there is something like this, remains the soul of the world, the source of this organization which we constantly experience, whether the world exists or not.⁵⁵

3.5 Nature and movement of the World Soul

In several demonstrations, we saw Philoponus reason a fortiori with reference to intellective activities of the soul. On what basis, however, does he found this mode of argumentation? Philoponus does not use the principle of procession common to the Neoplatonists.⁵⁶ He instead employs a distinction based on the mode of activity:⁵⁷ the rational soul, the category to which, as we have seen, the World Soul belongs, is at the level of intelligible substance (ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ τῆς νοητῆς οὐσίας τυγχάνουσα) and it is distinguished from the intellect only with regard to its relation to the body. It is intellect when it directly grasps objects and operates in a completely separate manner, in itself. It is soul when it animates and vivifies the body. In the first case, it is intellect in act; in the second, it is

53 *De aet. mund.* 269.4–271.13.

54 We find the phrase *κἂν συγχωρηθεῖη κατὰ Πλάτωνα* (261.28–29). See also 264.26–27.

55 The remainder of the seventh question has no direct connection with our purpose here. Philoponus leaves soul aside and refutes Proclus' hypothesis of an eternal body capable of being eternally moved.

56 *De aet. mund.* 195.13–196.4. For the place of the Soul of the Universe within procession after Proclus, see Damascius, *De Principiis* I, 59.15–18.

57 In *In Categorias* 327.35–328.3, Simplicius gives a list of actions resulting only from the being (illuminating for the Sun), from the thinking (for the World Intellect) of from the reasoning (for the Soul of the Universe), without saying anything more about the difference between the two latter.

intellect in potency. Philoponus does not speak about a descent of the soul, nor of an undescended part of the soul. He speaks of the intellect and the soul as a single being which differs depending on the type of relationship it assumes, on the basis of whether it refers to itself or to something else, as an individual can be at the same time a man and a pilot, on the basis of whether he is considered in himself or in relation to the boat. Accordingly, given that the soul is fundamentally intellect, Philoponus is justified in reasoning *a fortiori* on the basis of the activities that are truly its own.

Such an explanation allows him to justify why Plato introduced a psychogony in the *Timaeus* while, according to the *Phaedrus*, he claims that the soul is uncreated and indestructible, all while separating the questions on the generation of the Soul and of the World Body.⁵⁸ Philoponus has recourse to two readings, one hypothetical (ἐν ὑποθέσει), and the other symbolic (τὸν συμβολικὸν τρόπον). First, Philoponus takes up the argument of his opponents (Porphyry, Taurus, and Proclus) in order to refute it. The last of these thinkers indeed concludes from the hypothetical nature of the psychogony that the cosmogony must be equally hypothetical. Yet, for Philoponus, if the *Timaeus* assumes a birth of the soul, it is in the sense that it is there being considered in its intellectual nature and not according to its relationship with the body. The soul becomes soul, or more accurately the intellect / soul is born as a soul in the moment that it comes into relation with the body, which it orders and moves.⁵⁹ However, unlike this latter entity, the soul is not born in an absolute sense; it only takes on a form different from its own.

Secondly, one must not take literally the idea that the soul transmits a motion to the heavenly bodies, in so far as it is incorporeal and therefore unable to move according to local movements of bodies.⁶⁰ This symbolic, enigmatic mode, is a way for Plato to explain how what exists in the copies, i.e. bodies, exists first and foremost in causes considered as paradigms: the movement exists in the soul, the movement of the Same, before it occurs in the heavenly body it animates and that move circularly, remaining in the Same. In this sense, the psychogony is pure animation. Once again, the opposition is part of an exegetical framework, motivated by an argument of Proclus, and the result is largely in agreement with the arguments encountered earlier. The differences are from the fact that the interpretation no longer is anchored in the criticism of Aristotle but seeks to refute the reading of Proclus.

⁵⁸ *De aet. mund.* 243.9–16. Philoponus' psychogony has been studied in Verrycken, K.: 'La Psychogonie platonicienne' and Verrycken, K.: 'Philoponus' Neoplatonic Interpretation'.

⁵⁹ *De aet. mund.* 196.4–19. Thus soul is the principle of order for the world, and it is produced, as a soul, by God (179.22–180.10).

⁶⁰ *De aet. mund.* 196.19–198.2 and 487.20–489.2.

4 Conclusion

Regarding Plato, Philoponus appears to be a more careful reader than Proclus. The double error of the latter is to have neither sufficiently confronted his interpretation with the sensible experience, nor to have sought the real coherence between the dialogues. Philoponus meanwhile manages not only to clarify Plato via Plato by showing the agreement between the dialogues, but also satisfies the demands of logic and of sensible experience. What may be deduced about the position of Philoponus on the World Soul? In both of the works that we examined, he offers demonstrations that are in perfect agreement with Plato's doctrine. It seems that two options may be envisaged: either Philoponus behaves from beginning to end as a Platonist, or, on the contrary, he simply adopts the vocabulary and theory of his interlocutors in order to discuss their arguments in their own terms. In so far as Philoponus often remains in the hypothetical or concedes an argument in order to test its validity, the second option seems the more plausible.

The question for Philoponus is therefore not so much whether the World Soul exists or not, as whether the arguments of his interlocutors are empirically sound and logical consistent or not. In other words, if Philoponus speaks of the World Soul, it is never of his own initiative, but always to explain or refute the position of the author upon whom he is commenting, whether it be Aristotle or Proclus. And it is no surprise, as a World Soul seems to be of no use in a Christian (even Platonic) system of thought. However, Philoponus' situation is similar to that of his contemporary Simplicius, who discusses this notion only because it is found in the passage upon which he is commenting.⁶¹ Conversely, when the discussion is purely personal initiative, the notion disappears – as is also the case with Simplicius who, for instance, over the course of a cosmological digression which examine all of procession from the first principle downwards, indeed speaks of the self-moved, but without mentioning the World Soul.⁶² For these reasons, it seems premature to conclude, concerning the gradual disappearance of the concept in the Philoponus later treatises, that there is a radical break in his thought to which his works bear witness. There is certainly an evolution in his thought, but one which seems greater than simply personal development, given that it also found in the texts of his contemporaries. In some ways, the World

⁶¹ Simplicius, *In De caelo* 377.35–378.10 (objecting against Alexander of Aphrodisias); *In Cat.* 327.35–328.4 (paraphrasing Iamblichus); *In Phys.* 615.33–35 (paraphrasing Porphyry's interpretation of a passage taken from the *Republic*). The only exception is *In Ench.* 100.26–30. On this last text and the relationship between soul and self-movement in Simplicius, see Hadot, I.: *Le Problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin*, 167–181.

⁶² Simplicius, *In De caelo* 94.1–8.

Soul appears as a vestigial doctrine that periodically resurfaces in specific contexts, where the lexicon is borrowed from an earlier interpreter of the doctrine of Plato, and for which it is possible to find a logical coherence. But this doctrine is no longer part of the conceptual framework by which the sixth-century Platonist explain the world. The question of reasoning by analogy also ceases to be a problem, provided that it is consistent with experience, in so far as the World Soul is (at best) a soul at work in only a particular case.

References

- Bodéüs, Richard: 'Âme du monde ou corps céleste ? Une interrogation d'Aristote', in: Gilbert Romeyer-Dherbey (ed.), *Corps et Âme. Sur le De Anima d'Aristote*, Paris 1996, 81–88.
- Brisson, Luc: *Le Même et l'Autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon. Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon*, Sankt Augustin 1983.
- Cherniss, Harold: *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Ancient Academy*, New York 1944.
- Évrard, É.: 'Les Convictions religieuses de Jean Philopon et la date de son Commentaire aux Météorologiques', *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* 39 (1953), 299–357.
- Évrard, É.: *L'École d'Olympiodore et la composition du Commentaire à la Physique de Jean Philopon*, Liège 1953. [unpublished]
- Golitsis, Pantelis: *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote*, Berlin – New York 2008.
- Golitsis, Pantelis: 'John Philoponus' Commentary on the Third Book of Aristotle's *De Anima*, Wrongly Attributed to Stephanus', in: Richard Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Re-Interpreted, New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators*, London – Oxford 2016, 393–412.
- Golitsis, Pantelis: 'Simplicius and Philoponus on the Authority of Aristotle', in: Andrea Falcon (ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*, Leiden – Boston 2016, 419–436.
- Golitsis, Pantelis: 'μετά τινων ἰδίων ἐπιστάσεων: John Philoponus as an editor of Ammonius' lectures', in: Katerina Ierodiakonou / Pantelis Golitsis (eds.), *Aristotle and His Commentators: Studies in Memory of Paraskevi Kotzia*, Berlin – Boston 2019, 167–194.
- Gourinat, Michel: 'La Doctrine platonicienne de l'âme du monde d'après le *De Anima* d'Aristote (I, 2, 404b16-27)', in: Gilbert Romeyer-Dherbey (ed.), *Corps et Âme. Sur le De Anima d'Aristote*, Paris 1996, 89–05.
- Haas, Frans A.J. de: *John Philoponus' New Definition of Prime Matter, Aspects of its Background in Neoplatonism and the Ancient Commentary Tradition*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1997.
- Hadot, Iseltraut: *Le Problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Paris 1978.
- Judson, Lindsay: 'God or Nature? Philoponus on Generability and Perishability', in: Richard Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, London 2010, 221–237.
- Robin, Léon: *La théorie platonicienne des idées et des nombres d'après Aristote: Étude historique et critique*. Paris 1908.
- Saffrey, Henry Dominique: 'ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΖ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ. Une inscription légendaire', *Revue des études grecques*, 81 (1968), 67–87.

- Share, Michal: *Philoponus, Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World 6–8*, translated by Michael Share, London – New York 2005.
- Verrycken, Konrad: 'The Development of Philoponus' Thought and its Chronology', in: Richard Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, Ithaca 1990, 231–274.
- Verrycken, Konrad: 'Philoponus' Neoplatonic Interpretation of Aristotle's Psychology', *Apeiron*, 48.4 (2015), 502–520.
- Verrycken, Konrad: 'La Psychogonie platonicienne dans l'oeuvre de Philopon', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 75 (1991), 211–234.
- Wildberg, Christian: *John Philoponus' Criticism of Aristotle's Theory of Aether*, Berlin – New York 1988.
- Wildberg, Christian: 'Prolegomena to the Study of Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem*', in Richard Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, London 2010, 239–250.

