Ancient Philosophy 8

An Annotated Translation of Plotinus *Ennead* iii 7:

On Eternity and Time

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Introduction

This treatise is of great significance for the history of philosophy. In it, Plotinus presents for the first time a systematic articulation of the concept of eternity as a life existing in a timeless and durationless 'now', together with a detailed idealist theory of the nature of time.[1] In addition to their intrinsic philosophical interest, both these conceptions have been immensely influential in the philosophical and theological traditions of Islam and the Latin West. For example, in the West the doctrine of eternity as the eternal 'now' which derives from this treatise appears in the writings of Augustine and Boethius, and through them the conception of the *nunc stans* and *totum simul* of eternity passes into medieval thought. Plotinus' dialectical investigation of time is a brilliant critique of the views of his predecessors, especially those of Aristotle.

But despite the historical importance and the relative popularity of iii 7 among the treatises of the *Enneads*, it is a difficult work employing difficult and complex arguments to justify its conclusions. Our main goal in this translation has been to keep these lines of argument clear. Plotinus does not merely examine the views of his predecessors: he offers original arguments which pulsate with a characteristic dynamic of their own. But too often the details of Plotinus' argumentation fail to be captured in translations, so that philosophical understanding of him is obscured. This is true even in the case of the better recent translations, those of Armstrong, Beierwaltes, Cilento, and Harder, none of which can be considered satisfactory in this regard.[2] But without translations that are adequate to the philosophical nuances of his text, a proper grasp of Plotinus' arguments cannot be forthcoming. We present our translation, therefore, in the hope of furthering the aim of a better understanding of Plotinus as a philosopher.

Ennead iii 7 (45th in the chronological list of Plotinus' writings) is one of the most self-contained and accessible of Plotinus' works, presupposing relatively little knowledge of the details of his system or of its immediate historical background. More important for the reader is an acquaintance with Aristotle's discussion of time and with Plato's views about the relation between time and eternity and intelligible Being. Plotinus is a committed Platonist who subscribes fully to what he takes to be the Platonic conception of intelligible reality. But he treats this in a non-dogmatic way within the dialecti-

cal framework of his inquiry. He assumes that Plato's doctrines about these matters can serve as a reliable guide for investigating the nature of reality—an assumption he thinks withstands trial in this treatise.

The treatise is divided into thirteen chapters.[3] Chapters 2 to 6 consider the nature of eternity, while chapters 7 to 13 investigate time. Throughout, Plotinus' discussion is guided by Plato's statement at *Timaeus* 37d that time is the moving image or εἰκών of eternity. He takes this to mean that eternity and time are analogues of one another, so that their respective properties will stand in analogical correspondence to one another. He also assumes, following *Timaeus* 30c-31b, that the sensible cosmos of Becoming as a whole is an image of the intelligible world of Being, the world of Forms that he identifies with the Animal Itself of the *Timaeus*. Given this, he holds that eternity stands in the same sort of relation to intelligible Being that time stands in to sensible Becoming. Consequently, Being can be understood to exist *in* eternity, as Becoming exists *in* time. And since eternity is the original of which time is the image, Plotinus considers that a prior understanding of eternity can help in understanding the features of its image. Hence he investigates the nature of eternity first, before turning to the nature of time.

The main focus of interest in the first part of the treatise is the question of what the properties of intelligible Being are in virtue of which it is said to be eternal and to exist in eternity. Chapters 2 and 3 present what is, in effect, an argument by elimination that these properties consist in three of the five greatest genera (μέγιστα γένη) of Plato's *Sophist*, which Plotinus holds to be the categories of the intelligible world.[4] These are κίνησις (Motion), στάσις (Rest), and ταὐτόν (Sameness). Plotinus identifies κίνησις with the life (ζωή) or activity (ἐνέργεια) of νοῦς or Intellect (which is the same as intelligible Substance [οὐσία]), στάσις with its fixity or changelessness, which is a consequence of its perfection, i.e., that it attains its τέλος or end fully, and ταὐτόν with its lack of any sort of extension. These properties are then connected in the remainder of chapter 3 with Parmenides' argument for the timelessness of Being,[5] leading up to Plotinus' first characterization of the nature of eternity in 3.36-38 as 'the life (ζωή) that belongs to the essence of Being, that is all at once (ὁμοῦ πᾶσα), and is everywhere full yet unextended (πλήρης ἀδιάστατος πανταχῇ)'. This preliminary definition of eternity is further developed in chapters 4 and 5, and a reformulation of it is given in 5.25-28. Chapter 6 is then devoted to reconciling Plotinus' definition of eternity with the text of *Timaeus* 37-38.

Two related objections are commonly raised against Plotinus' conception of the timeless, durationless life of νοῦς or Intellect.[6] First, it is said that the notion of a life apart from duration and change is self-contradictory or incoherent. Second, it is objected that Plotinus constantly uses temporal language in describing eternity. Plotinus himself attempts to answer the second objection in 6.21-36. In reply to the first objection, he could appeal to the Aristotelian conception of ἐνέργεια. At *Metaphysics* Θ 1048b21-23, Aristotle distinguishes between two sorts of actuality (which he calls κίνησις and πρᾶξις): the first sort *has* an end or τέλος, while the second sort *is* an end. Seeing, for example, is an activity of the latter sort. As such, it cannot be analyzed into stages leading to its actualization, since it is by its nature complete at every point. Hence, in a complete activity like seeing, which is itself an end, there is no distinction between coming to actualize a potential for seeing, and the completion of this actualization. Hence no duration need be involved in such an activity: its actualization is instantaneous. This Aristotelian notion of ἐνέργεια is clearly the model for Plotinus' conception of the eter-

nal life of νοῦς, and he seems right to suggest that there need be nothing intrinsically durational or temporal about it.[7] Thus Plotinus' use of tensed constructions need not itself imply any duration or temporalization of eternity, as the second objection charges.

In chapters 7 and following, Plotinus turns to the question of the nature of time. In chapters 8 to 10, he argues that the theories of time offered by the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Epicureans, all of which make time something dependent upon physical motion or change, are unsatisfactory and cannot be made clear. His critique of the Peripatetic conception of time as the measure of physical motion is especially interesting, because it exploits difficulties in the account of time in *Physics* Δ 10-12 that have also disturbed modern interpreters.[8] Plotinus suggests that insofar as the Stoic and Peripatetic definitions, both of which take time to be a measuring concept, manage to shed any light upon our conception of time, they show it to be somehow connected with and dependent on the activity of soul. His own account in chapters 11 and 12 indicates why this is so: time *is* the activity or life of soul, the extended and changing image of the fixed and durationless life of eternity. Time exists as a result of the soul's descent from the intelligible world and its creation of the physical world. For this reason, the physical world is in time. This is argued and explained in detail, and the treatise then closes with a discussion of various problems connected with this conception of time (chapter 13).

The line numbers are those of Henry and Schwyzer's OCT text (H-S²). Places where the text we translate differs from that of H-S² are signaled in the notes. While we have tried to improve on A.H. Armstrong's Loeb version, we have found it extremely helpful throughout.[9] The aim of our translation is to be as literal as possible without sacrificing argumentative clarity. The notes, where not textual, are intended to help illuminate the arguments and to provide information necessary for their understanding. Criticism of other translations and interpretations has been kept to a minimum.[10]

Ennead iii 7: *On Eternity and Time*

1. When we say that eternity and time are different things, and that eternity pertains to the eternal[11] nature, while time pertains to what comes to be and to this universe, we immediately think, as we do in the case of more cursory conceptual apprehensions,[12] that we possess [5] a clear impression of them in our souls, since we are always talking about them and referring to them everywhere. But when we try to go on to examine them and, as it were, get close to them, we once again find ourselves at a loss what to think: different ones of us fix upon different declarations of the ancient philosophers about them, and perhaps [10] even disagree about how to interpret these statements. So we stop here, and deem it sufficient if when asked we can state their views about them. Content with this, we give up inquiring any further about these matters. Now we must indeed think that some of the ancient and blessed philosophers have found the truth. But who among them [15] most attained to it, and how we might gain an understanding of these things for ourselves, needs to be investigated.[13]

We should inquire first about eternity, what those philosophers think it is who claim it is something different from time.[14] For when we have grasped that which stands as the paradigm, perhaps also the nature of its image, which [20] they say is time, will become clear. If, however, someone were to form a conception of the essence of time before contemplating eternity, it would be possible for him also to contemplate that to which time is similar, passing from this realm to that one[15] by means of recollection,

if time indeed does have a likeness to eternity.

2. So what should we say that eternity is? Is it intelligible Substance[16] itself, as someone might say that time is the whole of the heaven and the cosmos? For they say that there are some who have held this opinion about time.[17] [5] For since we conceive and understand eternity to be something most majestic,[18] but the intelligible nature is also something most majestic, and it is not possible to say that either of them is more majestic than the other[19]—for we must not predicate even this of what lies beyond them[20]—one might on these grounds be led to identify the two. Also, both the intelligible universe and eternity [10] include the same items.

But when we say that these items are present in the other of these two, i.e., in eternity, and when we predicate 'eternal' of them—for he says that 'the nature of the paradigm was eternal'[21]—we [15] are saying that eternity is something different from intelligible substance, but that it pertains to it or is in it or is present to it. And that both are majestic does not show that they are the same, for perhaps one of them derives its majesty from the other. And one of them includes the intelligible items as its parts,[22] while the whole of intelligible substance is present to eternity at once, not as a part of it, but because every such thing is eternal in virtue of it.

[20] Then should we say that eternity exists in virtue of Rest in the intelligible realm, as some[23] say that time exists in virtue of motion[24] in this realm? But one could reasonably ask whether we mean that it is the same as Rest, or whether we do not mean this in an unqualified sense, but rather that it is the same as the Rest that pertains to Substance. For if it is the same as Rest, first of all [25] we will not be able to say that Rest is eternal, just as we do not say that eternity is eternal, for what is eternal is what participates in eternity.[25] Furthermore, how will Motion be eternal? For if it is eternal in this way, it will also be at rest.[26] And how does the conception of Rest contain within itself the notion of 'always'?[27] I do not mean the 'always' that is in time, but that which we have in mind when we speak of the eternal.[28] If [30] on the other hand eternity is the same as the Rest that belongs to Substance, we will again be forcing the other genera to lie outside eternity. Moreover, we should not think of eternity as consisting in Rest alone, but also as existing in a unity,[29] and moreover as unextended, so that it is not the same as time.[30] But Rest *qua* Rest does not contain within itself the concept of unity or of lack of extension. Moreover, [35] we predicate 'remaining in a unity'[31] of eternity, so that it would participate in Rest, but not be Rest Itself.

3. So what could this be in virtue of which we say that the whole of the intelligible cosmos is of the nature of eternity and is eternal,[32] and what is eternality—is it one and the same thing as eternity, or does eternity exist in virtue of it?[33] Must eternity then exist in virtue of some one thing, which is [5] an act of intellect that is an aggregate of many elements? Rather, it is itself a nature which either follows upon objects in the intelligible realm, or exists with them and is seen in them.[34] All of them are this nature, which is itself one, but possesses a multiplicity of powers and is thus also many. Someone who has contemplated this manifold power will call Substance that aspect of it which is analogous to its substrate, and will call that in virtue of which he [10] sees life Motion, and call its always being the same Rest, and will speak of Different and Same in so far as these things are altogether one,[35] and having put all of these aspects together again, as the simultaneous unity of a single life that inheres in these things, minimizing their differ-

ence,[36] and seeing the inexhaustibility of their activity, the same thing, never different, which does not pass from one thought or [15] stage of life to another, and is always in the same condition and is always without extension: in seeing all these things, he will see eternity, in seeing a life which remains always in the same state, always having the whole present to it—not one thing now and then another, but everything at once, and not different things now, and afterward different things, but a partless completion, as if all things [20] existed together in a single point, and never flowed forth, but remained there in the same state, and did not change, but were always in the present, because none of it has gone by, nor shall it come to be, but it is just what it is. Hence eternity is not the substrate, but is that which, as it were, shines forth from the [25] substrate itself, in virtue of that sameness that it proclaims as belonging to[37] what is not going to be, but already is, that is, that it is just the way it is and not otherwise. For what could happen to it afterwards which does not occur now? Nor will it be something later on that it is not already. For there is no point from which it has passed to the present. For that could be [30] nothing other than it itself. Nor is there going to be anything which it does not now possess. Necessarily, 'was' will not apply to it, for what could there be which it had and has gone by? Nor will 'will be' apply to it, for what could it come to have? There remains that it is in the condition of being just what it is.[38] What neither was nor will be, but just is, which [35] has a being which is fixed, since it neither changes into what will be nor has changed, is eternity. So it turns out that the life that belongs to the essence of being, is all at once, and is everywhere full yet unextended, is what we are seeking, that is, eternity.

4. One should not think that eternity[39] belongs to that intelligible nature accidentally, from outside it, but that it is in that nature[40] and arises from it and exists with it. For eternity is seen to exist in that intelligible nature and to arise from it,[41] since it is because we see [5] all the other things that we say are in that realm inhering in that nature that we say that they too all come from Substance and exist with Substance. For things that have primary being must exist with the primary beings and must be in the primary beings. Thus Beauty too is in them and arises from them, and Truth is also in them. Some things are, as it were, in a part of the whole of Being, and some are in the whole of it, as Being too, which is truly a whole, is not [10] composed out of its parts, but has itself produced its parts, so that in this way too it may truly be a whole.[42] Truth in that realm does not consist in correspondence to something else, but belongs to each thing of which it is the truth.[43] It is necessary, then, that this true whole, if it is really going to be a whole, should not merely be a whole in that it is all things, but should also be a whole [15] in that it is lacking in nothing.

If this is so, nothing will be future for it, for if there is something that will be future for it, it will have been lacking in that respect, so that it will not have been whole. And what could happen to it contrary to its nature? For it does not undergo affection.[44] If, then, nothing can happen to it, it is not about to be, nor going to be, nor did it come to be. In contrast, things that come into being, if you take away the 'will be' from them, immediately cease to be, since they are [20] continually acquiring their being. But if you add 'will be' to things that are not of this kind, they vanish from the seat of being.[45] For it would be clear that being was not part of their nature, if they came to be in a state of being about to be and having come to be and of going to be afterwards. For the [25] essence of things that come into being seems to consist in their existing from the start-

ing point of their coming to be, until they reach the end of their time, at which point they cease to exist.[46] This is what it is for them to be, and if one takes this away, their life is diminished, and so is their being.

It is necessary that the universe, too, have a future in which it will be in this same way. So it too hastens toward what will be, [30] and wishes not to stand still, and it draws being to itself in performing one action after another, and moves in a circle on account of a sort of aspiration toward essence. So we have also discovered the cause of its movement, which hastens in this way toward a being that is everlasting, by means of what is going to be.[47] But for the primary and blessed beings there is no aspiration for what is going to be, for they [35] are already the whole of what they are, and already have all of the life that, as it were, is their due. Hence there is nothing that they seek, because there is nothing that is going to be for them, nor, consequently, is there that in which what is going to be will be. So the complete and entire essence of being, not only that which is in the parts, but also that which consists in its not having any deficiency and never having any [40] non-being added to it[48]—for not only must the whole have all beings present to it, but it must not have present to it anything that ever is not—this condition and nature of being would be eternity. For 'eternity' (αἰών) is derived from 'always being' (ἀεὶ ὄν).[49]

5. But whenever in applying my soul's attention to something I am able to say this about it, or rather to see it to be something of a kind such that nothing about it has come to be—for if something had, it would not always be, or not always be a complete being—if this is so, is it then on this account eternal, if there does not also inhere [5] in it a nature of such a kind as to give assurance about it that it will be this way and never be otherwise, so that if you were to attend to it again, you would find that it was of this same kind? What if one does not cease one's contemplation of it, but remains present to it, admiring its nature, and is able to do this by virtue of a tireless nature? In that case, one would oneself be approaching [10] eternity, and not in any way be turning away from it,[50] so that one would be like it and eternal, and would be contemplating eternity and what is eternal by what is eternal in oneself.

If, then, what is in this state is eternal and always is,[51] that is, what does not turn away in any respect toward another nature, and has a life which it possesses already as a whole, and has not received and does not receive and [15] will not receive any addition, what is in this state will be eternal, and eternality will be the corresponding state of the substrate which arises from it and exists in it, while eternity will be the substrate with this state manifested in it.[52]

Hence eternity is majestic, and our concept of it declares it to be identical with god—that is, it declares it to be identical with this god.[53] Indeed, [20] eternity could well be said to be a god manifesting himself and revealing himself to be what he is, a being that is imperturbable,[54] the same, and so also has the property of being stable in its life. But one should not be surprised if we say that it is composed out of many things.[55] For each of the things in that realm is many, because of its unlimited power. For 'unlimited' also signifies that it can never give out, and it is unlimited in the primary sense, because [25] it never expends anything of itself. If someone were to speak of eternity in this way, as a life that is unlimited in virtue of being actually complete and expending nothing of itself, since none of it has gone by nor is any of it going to come to be—for in either case, it would not be a complete life—he would be near to defining it.[56]

6. Since the nature of this kind, which is so beautiful and eternal, surrounds the One and arises from it and is directed toward it, and never departs from it, but always remains around it and in it and lives in conformity with it—and this was stated by [5] Plato, I think, finely and with deep meaning, and not without purpose, in these words: 'eternity remains in a unity'[57]—so that it does not merely bring itself into a unity in relation to itself, but the same holds of the life of Being that exists about the One,[58] this then is what we are seeking, and what remains in this manner is eternity.[59] For that which remains as this and in this way, and [10] is what it is to remain what it is, which is an activity of life that remains directed from itself toward the One and in the One, and is false neither to its being nor its life, would be what possesses the essence of eternity. For to be truly is never not to be and never to be otherwise. And this is to be always the same, and this is to be without any difference. [15] So it does not possess any sort of succession, nor can you extend it, nor unroll it, nor prolong it, nor stretch it out, nor, consequently, are you able to conceive any part of it as being before or after. If, then, 'before' and 'after' do not apply to it, but 'it is' is the truest thing to say about it, and is what it is, and in such a way that [20] this is its essence or its life,[60] then we have again reached what we call eternity.

But when we use 'always'[61] of it, and say that it is not the case that it is at one time and is not at another time, we should be understood to be speaking in this way for the sake of clarity for ourselves.[62] For 'always' is perhaps not being used in its strict sense,[63] but it is used to indicate the imperishable, and this [25] could mislead the soul into imagining an increase of extension,[64] and moreover one that was never going to give out. It would perhaps have been better to have used just the word 'being'. But even though 'being' was sufficient to indicate substance, since people also thought that becoming was substance, it was necessary to add 'always', so that what was being said could be understood. For 'being' is not something [30] different from 'always being', just as a philosopher and a true philosopher are not different. But since there is also the pretense of philosophy,[65] the word 'true' was added. Thus also 'always' was added to 'being', that is, ἀεί to ὄν, so that we say ἀεὶ ὄν.[66] Hence this must be understood as meaning 'truly being', and the 'always' must be contracted into an unextended power that in no way requires anything beyond [35] what it already possesses: it possesses the whole.

So this sort of nature is whole, and is Being, and is not deficient anywhere throughout itself, and is not full in one way and lacking in another.[67] For what is in time, even if it seems to be complete, in the way that a body that is adequate for [40] a soul is complete, still has need of the future, since it is deficient in respect of time, which it needs because it exists along with time, if time is present to it and runs alongside it, since it is incomplete. Being incomplete in this way, it could only homonymously be said to be complete. But what has the property of not needing the future, neither any definite length of time nor an infinite time, a time that is unlimited [45] in its futurity, but is precisely what it should be, this is what our conception is striving for: something which does not get its being from any extent of time, but is prior to any extent of time. For since it is not itself of any temporal extension, it ought not to be in any way in contact with anything temporally extended, so that its life does not become something divided and thus destroy its pure partlessness, but it is partless both in its [50] life and in its substance.

But Plato's phrase 'He was good'[68] takes us back to the conception of the whole, since

it signifies concerning the transcendent whole that it does not begin at any time. So the cosmos had no temporal beginning either, since what is prior to it provides the cause of its being. But having said this for the sake of explanation,[69] he nevertheless later [55] finds fault with this expression as well,[70] as not being wholly correctly applied to things that participate in what we speak and think of as eternity.

7. Do we say these things, then, as if we were bearing witness for others, and about things that are foreign to us?[71] How could we? For how could we have any comprehension of them unless we were in contact with them? And how could we be in contact with things that were foreign to us? Hence we too must participate in [5] eternity. But how can we, if we are in time? But how it is possible for us to be in time and how it is possible for us to be in eternity can be understood if we first find out what time is.

Accordingly, we must descend from eternity to the investigation of time and to time. For previously the way led upward, but now we must speak, not [10] having descended entirely, but in just the way that time has descended.

Now if the blessed men of antiquity had said nothing about time, it would be necessary for us to take eternity as our starting point and connect it with our subsequent account of time, endeavoring to fit the [15] opinion of it that we state with the conception of it that we possess. But as it is, it is necessary first to take the most notable statements that have been made about time, and to consider whether our own account will be in agreement with any of them.[72]

Perhaps we should make an initial threefold division of the accounts of time that have been given. For either time is what is called motion, or one might say that it is what is moved, or [20] that it is something belonging to motion.[73] For to say either that it is rest or is what is at rest or is something belonging to rest would be altogether remote from our conception of time as something that is never the same. Now of those who say it is motion, some would say that it is all motion, while others would say that it is the motion of the universe. Those who say that it is what is moved [25] would say that it is the sphere of the universe. Others say it is something that belongs to motion: either the extension of motion,[74] or the measure of motion, or more generally a concomitant of motion, and either of all motion or of orderly motion.

8. It is not possible for it to be motion,[75] whether one considers all motions together and makes a single motion out of them, or whether one considers orderly motion. For what we call motion of either kind is in time. If there is a motion that is not in time, this would be even farther removed from [5] being time.[76] For that in which motion takes place is one thing and motion itself is another. And though other arguments have been and could be brought forward, this one is sufficient, as well as the observation that motion can stop or be interrupted but time cannot. But if someone claims that the motion of the universe cannot be interrupted,[77] it will still be the case that it would go round to the same point—if he [10] means the rotation—in a certain length of time, and not in the time in which half its rotation was completed:[78] the one time would be half, the other double, and each would be a motion of the universe, one of them from a point to the same point again, the other reaching the halfway point.[79] To say that the motion of the outermost [15] sphere is the quickest and fastest supports our claim that it is different from time. Clearly, it is the fastest of all motions because it covers a greater distance than the others, in fact the greatest, in a lesser time, while the others are slower

because they cover only a part of the distance that the outermost sphere does in an even greater length of time.

[20] If, however, time is not the motion of the sphere, it could hardly be the sphere itself, which was reckoned to be time because it is in motion. Is it then something belonging to motion? If it is the extension of motion,[80] in the first place this is not the same for all motion, not even motion that is the same in kind. For [25] motion is faster and slower; so too is motion in place. The extensions both of faster and of slower motions will be measured by something else, and this would more correctly be said to be time. Of which of these two motions will the extension be time, or rather of which of all of them, since they are infinite in number? If, however, time is the extension of orderly motion, it cannot be the extension of all orderly motion, for [30] there are many, so that there will be many simultaneous times. If it is the extension of the motion of the universe,[81] if by this is meant the extension that inheres in the motion, what could this be except the motion itself?

In any case, motion will be of a certain quantity, and this quantity will either be measured by the quantity of place that it has traversed, and this will be the extension of the motion—but this is not [35] a time, but a place—or the motion itself, by virtue of its continuity and the fact that it does not immediately stop, but continually keeps on going, will contain the extension. But this will be the amount of motion, and if someone looks at the motion and declares that there is a large amount of it—as if someone said that there was a great deal of heat—there would in that case be no [40] appearance or perception of time, but only more and more motion, like more and more water flowing, and the extension that is observed upon it. This 'more and more' would then be a number, such as two or three, while the extension would belong to the bulk of the water. Time would then be a multiplicity of motion, like the number ten, or else it [45] would be the extension that appears upon the bulk, as it were, of the motion. But this would not contain the conception of time, but will be a quantity occurring in time. Otherwise time will not be everywhere, but will be in the motion as a substrate, and we once more end up saying that time is motion. For the extension does not lie outside the motion, but rather it is [50] motion that is not instantaneous. But it is in time that we compare what is not instantaneous to what is instantaneous.[82] How will the non-instantaneous differ from what is instantaneous, except by its being in time? Therefore extended motion and its extension are not themselves time, but are in time.

But if someone were to say that time is the extension of motion, not in the sense of the extension of the motion itself, [55] but that measured against which the motion has its extension, as it were running alongside it, it has not been stated what this is. For it is clear that time is that in which motion occurs. But this was what our discussion was seeking from the beginning, that is, what time is. For this becomes like saying and in fact comes to the same thing as if [60] one said, when asked what time is, that it is the extension of motion in time. What then is this extension that you are calling time, and placing outside the proper extension of the motion? But again, someone who puts the extension of motion in the motion itself will be at a loss as to where to put the extension of rest. [65] For it is possible for one thing to move and another to be at rest for the same length of time, and one can then say that the time of each is the same, clearly as something different from both. What, then, is this extension, and what is its nature? For it cannot be spatial, for this too lies outside motion.

9. We must consider how time is the number or measure of motion—for it is better to speak of it in the latter way, since motion is something continuous.[83] First, there is a difficulty here too about how it is the measure of every motion in the same way, as there was about the definition of time as the extension of motion, if this is supposed to apply to all motion. [5] For how could one count disorderly and irregular motion? What is its number or measure, and to what would this measure apply? If one uses the same measure to measure both orderly and disorderly motion, and in general all motion, both fast and slow, this sort of number and measure will be like the number ten when it is used to measure both horses and cows,[84] and like the same measure [10] for both liquids and solids. If it is a measure of this sort, it has been stated of what time is the measure, that is, that it is the measure of motions, but it has not thereby been stated what time itself is. But if, just as one can think of the number ten apart from the ten horses and the ten cows, and a measure is a measure as having a certain nature, even if it has not been used to measure anything, then [15] time too must have such a nature, since it is a measure. But if it is of this kind when considered by itself, like a number, how would it differ from the number ten or any other abstract number?[85] But if it is a continuous measure, it will be a measure of a certain quantity, like a length of one cubit.[86] Clearly, therefore, it will be a length, like a line which runs alongside [20] the motion. But how will this line measure that which it runs along with?[87] Why should it measure the other rather than vice versa?[88] And it is better and more plausible to take this line not as measuring all motions, but only the one it runs along with. This must be continuous, or the line that runs along with it will stop.

But one ought not to take what measures motion to lie outside motion or apart from it, [25] but one ought to consider measured motion as a whole. But what will do the measuring? The motion will be measured, but what has measured it will be a magnitude. Which of these will be time? Will this be the motion that is measured, or the magnitude that measures it? For either the motion that is measured by the magnitude will be time, [30] or the magnitude that measures it, or whatever it is that uses the magnitude to measure it, as if one could use a cubit length to measure the motion.

But in all these cases one must assume, what we said was more plausible, that the motion is uniform, for without the assumption that the motion is uniform, and moreover that it is a single motion and indeed the motion of the universe, the account of time becomes much more difficult for anyone claiming that time is any sort of measure.

But if time is measured [35] motion, that is, motion measured in terms of quantity, then just as the motion, if were to be measured, could not measure itself, but would have to be measured by something else, so also it is necessary, if motion is to have a measure other than itself—and this is why we needed [40] a continuous measure to measure it—in the same way, a measure is required for this magnitude itself, so that the motion will be measured when that in virtue of which it is measured comes to have a certain quantity. And the time we are seeking will be the number of this magnitude that accompanies the motion, and not the magnitude [45] that runs alongside it. But what could this be besides abstract number? And here a difficulty arises as to how this will measure. Even if one finds out how this is so, one will not discover the time which does the measuring, but only a time of a certain extent. But this is not the same as time. For it is one thing to speak of time, and another to speak of a certain extent of time. For before [50] one speaks of something as having a certain extent, one ought to say what it is that is of this extent.[89]

But perhaps time is the number that measures the motion from outside the motion, like the number ten by which the horses are counted, considered apart from the horses. But it has not been stated what this number is, though it is what it is before it begins to measure, as in the case of the number [55] ten. Perhaps it is the number which measured the motion according to the before and after in it, by running along beside it. But it is not yet clear what this number is that measures according to the before and after. But whether it measures according to the before and after either by using a point or in any other way, it will in any case be measuring according to time. Therefore [60] this time that measures motion by the before and after will lie alongside time and be in contact with time in order to measure. For either we must understand the before and after in a spatial sense, for example the starting point of a race course, or we must understand it temporally. For in general, 'before' and 'after' mean respectively the time [65] leading up to the now, and the time that begins from the now. Time, therefore, differs from the number that measures motions according to the before and after—not only motion in general but also orderly motion.

Then why is it that when number has been added to motion, either the number in respect of what is measured or that in respect of the [70] measurer—for again[90] it is possible that the same number could be both what is measured and what does the measuring—why is it that time exists as soon as number has come to be, even though when motion exists, with the before and after clearly belonging to it, there will not be time? That is like someone saying that a magnitude is not the extent that it is unless [75] someone notices that it is that size. Again, time is and is said to be infinite, so how can it have any number? Unless, of course, someone took a piece from it and measured this, but time is in that piece as well even before it is measured. But why will time not also exist prior to the soul that measures it?[91] Unless one says that it [80] arises from the soul. Yet it is not in any way necessary that the soul exists to measure it, for it exists with the extent it has even if no one measures it. Someone might say that it is the soul which uses magnitude to measure time. But how could this help with the conception of time?

10. To say that time is a concomitant of motion[92] is not to explain what it is, nor to state anything about it, until one says what this is that is a concomitant of motion, for perhaps this might be time. But we need to inquire whether this concomitant [5] is posterior to or simultaneous with or prior to the motion that it accompanies—that is, if there is such a concomitant. For whichever reply one gives, one will be saying that it is in time. But if this is so, then time will be a concomitant of motion in time.[93]

But since we are not seeking what time is not, but what it is, [10] and since there are many things that have been said by our predecessors about each of these positions, and if one went through them all, one would rather be making an historical inquiry,[94] and inasmuch as we have already made a cursory survey of the various positions, and it is possible from what we have already said to refute him who says that time is the measure of the motion of the universe,[95] as well as by using all the arguments we have just given concerning the thesis that time is the measure [15] of motion—for apart from the argument from irregularity, all the others will be suitable—it would be appropriate to consider at this point what we ought to take time to be.

11. We must return again to that condition which we said obtained in the case of eter-

nity, to that unperturbable life, which is all at once, and is altogether fixed and actually unlimited, which is without any sort of turning away,[96] and rests in and is directed towards the One.[97] There [5] was not yet time, at least for the things of that realm, but we shall generate time by the account and nature of what is posterior to it.

Since these beings were at rest in themselves, one could hardly call upon the Muses, who did not yet exist, to tell us this, that is, 'how time first issued forth'.[98] But perhaps—even if the Muses did exist then after all—[10] one might ask Time itself, when it had come into being, how it is that it was revealed and had come into being. It might say something like this about itself:[99] that before, when it had not yet generated this 'before' or felt a need of the 'after', Time rested along with Eternity in Being, but was not yet Time, but it too was at rest in Eternity.[100] [15] But since there was an officious nature[101] that wished to rule itself and belong to itself and that chose to seek for more than it presently had, this nature[102] moved, and time moved with it, and in always moving on to what came next, to what comes after and is not the same, and having made progress in this journey, [20] we[103] produced time as the image of eternity.

For since the soul possessed a unquiet power, which always wished to transfer what it saw in that realm to something else, the soul did not wish to have all of it be present to it at once. Just as a *logos* unfolding itself from a quiet seed [25] makes an advance, as it thinks, toward largeness, but actually destroys largeness by making it to be divided, and instead of maintaining its unity within itself expends its unity outside itself by going forward into a weaker extension,[104] so also the soul in making the sensible cosmos imitates that other cosmos, moving with a motion that is not the Motion of the intelligible realm, but is like the Motion of that realm and wants to be an image of it: first of all [30] the soul temporalized itself, and produced time instead of eternity, then it also made what came into being a slave of time, by making the whole of it to be in time, and by including all of its processes in time. For the sensible world moves within the soul—for there is no other place for it except the soul[105]—[35] and it also moves in the soul's time. For as the soul presented its activities one after another, and then another in sequence, it also generated the sequence along with the activities, and there comes forward, along with another thought after the preceding one, what did not exist previously, because the thought was not yet in act, nor is the soul's present [40] stage of life like the one previous to it. So there is a different life, and this difference at once includes a different time. So extension of life brings with it time, and the fact that life is always progressing brings with it that there is always time, and life that is past brings with it past time.

So if one were to say that time [45] was the life of the soul in a motion of change from one stage of life to another, would he not seem to make sense? For if eternity is life at rest in itself and always the same, and actually unlimited, and time must be an image of eternity, and stand in the same sort of relation to eternity that this universe stands in to that one, then instead of the life of the intelligible realm, one ought to [50] say that there is another life, the life of this power of the soul, which is a homonym of that life,[106] and instead of intellectual motion, one should say that there is the motion of a part of the soul, and instead of sameness and always being and remaining the same, that which does not remain in itself, but produces one act after another, and instead of that which is unextended and a unity,[107] there is the image of that unity, that which is one in continuity, and instead of that which is an actually unlimited whole, that which

is unlimited in the sense of a [55] constant succession, and instead of a whole that is all together, a whole which will always be coming to be part by part,[108] and which will always be. For in this way time will imitate that which is already a whole and is all together and actually unlimited, that is, by wanting always to be acquiring new being. For this is how its being will imitate the being of the intelligible realm. One should not suppose that [60] time lies outside the soul, just as one should not suppose that eternity in the intelligible realm lies outside Being. Nor is it a concomitant of soul nor posterior to soul, just as eternity is not a concomitant of or posterior to Being in that realm, but it is seen in it and exists with it, as does eternity in the intelligible realm.

12. And hence we must understand that this nature is time, that is, the extent of this sort of life as it proceeds, progressing quietly by regular and homogenous changes and possessing continuity in its activity. Now if we were to make [5] this power turn back again in our account and put a stop to this life, which as it is is unceasing and never leaves off, since it is the activity of a soul that always exists, an activity that is not directed toward the soul itself nor in it, but is involved in making and generation—if, then, we were to consider this as no longer active and having ceased this activity and [10] this part of the soul as turned back toward the intelligible realm and toward eternity, and as remaining at rest, what would there be any longer besides eternity? What sort of succession could there be, given that all things remained in a unity? What could be before anything else? What could be later than anything else, or in the future?[109] What could the soul any longer attend to, other than [15] that in which it was? Rather, it could not even attend to this, for it would first have to separate itself from it so that it could attend to it. For the heavenly sphere itself would not exist, inasmuch as time did not exist prior to it,[110] for the sphere too is in time and moves in time, and if the sphere were to come to a stop while the soul was still active, we would measure the extent of its rest, [20] as long as the soul was outside of eternity.[111] If, then, when the soul departs from this activity and returns to unity, time is done away with, it is clear that the beginning of the soul's motion toward the objects of this realm and toward this life is what generates time.

This is why it is said that time came into being along with this universe,[112] because soul generated it along with this universe. For this universe too has come into being in this sort of activity, [25] and the activity is time and the universe is in time. But if someone objects that he himself[113] says that the courses of the stars are 'times', let him recall that he says they have come into being in order to reveal the division of time, and so that there might be a clear measure of time.[114] For since it was impossible for the soul to mark off time itself or for people to measure each part of time [30] on their own, since it is something invisible and cannot be apprehended, and especially since they did not know how to count, the god made day and night, by means of which, in virtue of their difference, it was possible to grasp the notion of 'two', from which, as he says, came the conception of number.[115] Then, by fixing upon the length of time between one sunrise to another, since the movement we fix upon [35] is a regular one, it was possible to use this amount of time as a measure, but this is a measure of time, for time itself is not a measure. For how could time measure, and what would it say as it was measuring?[116] 'This is as large as this much of me'? Who is the 'I' here? Is it that according to which the measuring is done? Then this exists in order to measure, [40] even if it is not a measure.[117] So the motion of the universe will be measured accord-

ing to time, and time will not be the measure of motion essentially, but accidentally, and will exist as something else prior to providing an indication of the extent of the motion. By counting a single motion repeated many times in a given amount of time, [45] we shall arrive at the conception of how much time has elapsed.

Therefore if one said that motion and the rotation of the heaven in a way measure time, in so far as it is possible for it to be measured, in that the rotation reveals by its extent the extent of the time, which it would not be possible to apprehend or know otherwise, this explanation would not be an inappropriate one. So what is measured [50] by the rotation of the heavens—what it reveals—will be time, which is not generated by the rotation, but is merely revealed by it. This is how time is a measure of motion,[118] in that it is measured by a definite motion, and since it is measured by this, it is something different from it. For *qua* measuring something it is one thing,[119] and *qua* itself being measured [55] it is another and is measured accidentally. Saying that time is the measure of motion is like saying that length is what is measured by a cubit: this is not to say what it is, but merely to determine its length. It is also as if one were not able to make clear what motion is, since it is something indefinite, but said that it is what is measured by [60] place. One could take a particular place that was traversed by the motion, and say that it was of the same extent as the place.

13. The rotation of the heavens, therefore, indicates time, in which it itself is. But time itself must not in turn have anything in which it is, but it must be what it is primarily, namely that in which other things move and stand still in a regular and orderly way, and it can be [5] revealed by something orderly, and be made manifest so that we can form a conception of it, but it cannot come to be in this way. This orderly thing can either be something that is at rest or something that is moving, but it is preferable that it be something that is moving. For motion rather than rest would be more likely to induce us to recognize and formulate the conception of time, for it is easier to recognize how long something has been moving than how long it has stood still.

For this reason people were led [10] to say that time is the measure of motion, instead of saying that it is measured by motion, and then adding what it is that is measured by motion, and not merely indicating something that pertains accidentally to an aspect of time, and even getting that the wrong way round. But perhaps they did not get it the wrong way round, but we fail to understand them, and when they plainly meant 'measure' in the sense of 'what [15] is measured', we do not grasp their meaning. The reason that we do not understand them is that they did not make clear in their writings what it is, whether it measures or is what is measured, since they were writing for people who knew this and who had heard their lectures.[120]

Plato, however, spoke of [20] the essence of time neither as measuring nor as measured by anything, but said that for the purpose of indicating time, a smallest part of the rotation of the heavens has been brought into relation with a smallest part of time,[121] so that from this we can come to know the quality and extent of time. But when Plato wants to indicate the essential nature of time, he says that it came into being along with the heavens, according to the paradigm of eternity, and as its [25] moving image, since time does not stand still, nor does the life along with which it runs and keeps pace. It comes into being along with the heavens because this kind of life is what produces the heavens, and a single life creates both the heavens and time.

So if this life could revert to a unity, time would stop along with it, since it has its

existence in [30] this life, and so would the heaven, if it did not have this life.[122] But if someone were to take the before and after belonging to this motion and say that this was time, because it is something that exists, but denied that the before and after of the truer motion existed, he would be most unreasonable, in that he would be [35] granting that a soulless motion possesses a before and after and a time that accompanies it, but refusing to grant this about the motion in imitation of which the soulless motion has come into being, from which before and after exist primarily, since it is a self-caused motion and generates, as it were, each of its activities, and so also generates [40] their sequence, and along with their generation, the passage from one of them to another.

Why is it, then, that we refer this motion, that of the universe, back to the soul that contains it,[123] and say that it is in time, but we do not say that the motion of the soul within itself, which is in eternal progression, is in time? This is because what is prior to the motion of the soul is eternity, which does not [45] run along with it or stretch out alongside it. Thus the motion of the soul was the first to enter into time, and it generated time and has time together with its activity. How is time everywhere? Because the soul is not absent from any part of the cosmos, just as soul in us is not absent from any part of us. But if someone were to say that [50] time does not exist or that it is unreal,[124] we must declare[125] that he is clearly saying something false whenever he says that something was or that something will be, for that thing 'will be' or 'was' in precisely the same way as what he says it is in. But against persons like this another sort of argument is required.

In addition to everything that has been said, we should also note this: that when one [55] considers the distance that a moving man has advanced and the amount of this motion, and when one considers the motion, for example, that is produced by his legs, one should also notice that the motion in him that is prior to this motion[126] is of the same extent, supposing that he continued the motion of his body for this amount. One will refer the body that is moved for this amount of time back to the [60] motion that is of this extent—for this is the cause of it—and to the time belonging to this motion, and this to the motion of the soul, which is of equal extension with it, but to what will one refer the motion of the soul? For that which one will want to refer it to is unextended. So this[127] is what primarily has extension, and is that in which the other motions are, but it is itself no longer in anything else,[128] for there is nothing for it to be in. [65] So this is what is primarily extended.[129] The same will apply to the soul of the universe.

So is time also in us? It is in every soul of this kind,[130] and is the same in them all, and all of them are one.[131] Therefore time will not be divided up, since neither is eternity, which is also in every being of this same kind in another way.

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NOTES

[1] Neither conception is completely original with Plotinus. Rather he seems here, as elsewhere, to be giving clear and definitive formulation to ideas that were already present in the Middle Platonic and Neopythagorean traditions. The notion of eternity as a sort of life seems already present in Plato's use of the term αἰών in the *Timaeus*, but eternity as an eternal, durationless 'now' makes its first clear appearance in Plutarch (*De E apud Delphos* 393ab). Persuasive arguments for this, along with a wealth of evidence, can be found in the papers of Whittaker cited in the bibliography. Plotinus' conception of time as the life of the soul is also anticipated in Plutarch: cf. *Plat. Qu.* 1007bc with Cherniss' note. To this passage may be added

Calcidius *In Tim.* ch. 101, which probably depends upon a Middle Platonic source.

[2] Bréhier's Budé translation is unfortunately often quite inaccurate. The commentaries of Beierwaltes and of Beutler and Theiler are usually not helpful on details of the arguments, and Beierwaltes' commentary is often misleading. We were unfortunately only able to consult the excellent Spanish translation by J. Igal after our translation was completed and had been submitted for publication. Some agreements and differences with Igal's readings have been signaled in our notes.

[3] A more complete discussion of the content and arguments of the treatise, addressing more general questions concerning Plotinus' methodology and his relation to his predecessors, is contained in the paper by Strange cited in the bibliography, which is independent of but complementary to our translation.

[4] This is argued in detail in the work that immediately precedes this one in the chronological order of Plotinus' writings, *Ennead* vi 2, the second book of his treatise *On the Genera of Being* (the three books of which are 42-44 in the chronological list of Plotinus' treatises).

[5] See the table of correspondences between the text of Plotinus' treatise and Parmenides B8 given by Beierwaltes 178.

[6] The first objection has perhaps been raised most forcefully by Kneale. For the philosophical issues involved in both objections and their connections with other key ancient texts, see chapter 8 of Sorabji 1983, 98-130.

[7] Cf. *Enn.* vi 1.16.14-15: ἡ λεγομένη ἐνέργεια οὐ δεῖται χρόνου. This is not to imply that Aristotle himself is clear on this point. His god or νοῦς is not subject to time because it does not undergo any sort of change, but he does appear to conceive of it as enduring. Cf. *Metaphysics* 1072b14-1073a13, *De caelo* 279a12-b3, and Whittaker 1968, 142.

[8] Hussey's commentary is a particularly good example of this. For a full discussion of Plotinus' critique and its sources, cf. Strange.

[9] Some important disagreements with Armstrong's translation—the only serious translation in English—are mentioned in the notes.

[10] The authors are grateful to Tad Brennan, Michael Frede and an anonymous referee for *Ancient Philosophy* for their suggestions, and especially to Robert Sharples for his detailed comments on a previous draft.

[11] Plotinus uses ἀίδιος and αἰώνιος as synonyms in this treatise: cf. Jonas 1962, 297n3. We translate both by 'eternal', except where they occur together in the same clause (at 3.2). 'Αιδιότης we render by 'eternality', and two occurrences of the neuter abstract τὸ αἰώνιον by 'what is eternal'. Since Plotinus denies that eternity involves duration, it is misleading and inappropriate to translate ἀίδιος as 'ever-lasting', as do Armstrong and Beierwaltes.

[12] For the idea that a complex act of apprehension that is ἀθρόος or 'all at once' is also superficial, hence cursory, cf. v 5.10,8 and ii 8.1,40. See also the next note.

[13] As the remarks on methodology at 7.10-17 show, Plotinus accepts as conditions on the adequacy of a philosophical theory (1) that it be consistent with the texts of the most authoritative of the παλαιοί, the ancient philosophers, on the matter in question, (2) that it be in agreement with our common conceptions (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι) about the subject (see Beierwaltes' note on that passage). But we must ensure that these conceptions are clear (ἐναργές) by careful philosophical examination of them, since our initial unreflective ('cursory') formulations of them can be confused and misleading: with ἀθροωτέραι ἐπιβολαί here, compare, in addition to the passages cited in the previous note, the πρῶτη τῆς διανοίας ἐπιβολή concerning the nature of the soul of vi 2.4,21-24, which is a confused and incorrect apprehension of it. These passages are enough to prove that Beierwaltes (1967, 58n42 and 83) is wrong to follow Becker's misguided attempt to connect the notion of an ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή with the direct intuition of the nature of a thing (cf. Becker 1940, 14-21). For a full and useful discussion of Plotinus' use of the theory of common conceptions, see the paper by Phillips (1987), who however denies (40-41) that Plotinus in this passage takes our prephilosophical common conceptions to be confused or inarticulate. He is misled by his acceptance of Beierwaltes' endorsement of Becker's interpretation of ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή (cf. his n29 to 41).

[14] This means Plato and Parmenides, as can be seen from references to Parmenides' poem and the *Timaeus* in chs. 3 to 6 below, and probably also Aristotle: see n49 to 4.42-43 below. Plotinus' references to the *Timaeus* are noted in Henry and Schwyzer's apparatus; for his allusions to Parmenides, see the table given by Beierwaltes 1967, 178.

[15] We render Plotinus' characteristic use of ἐκεῖ and ἐνταῦθα to indicate, respectively, the intelligible and the sensible worlds by the contrast between 'that realm' and 'this realm'.

[16] The Substance (οὐσία), Rest (στάσις), and Motion (κίνησις) in the intelligible world discussed in ch.

2 are the Forms of Substance, Rest, and Motion, which Plotinus identifies with the corresponding μέγιστα γένη of the *Sophist*: see our remarks in the Introduction.

[17] Cf. *Physics* 218b1 and 7.24-25 below. The reference is to Pythagoras or the Pythagoreans according to Simplicius *In phys.* 700.18-19, Stobaeus I.207.17, and ps.-Plutarch *Placita* 884b (for the latter two passages, cf. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 318.4-5).

[18] The σεμνότης of νοῦς or intelligible substance is connected with its divinity: see n53 with 5.18 below.

[19] Reading ὅτι for ὅ τι 2.7, with H-S^3.

[20] The One according to Plotinus can have nothing predicated of it, since a predicate that is true of a subject must correspond to a property that is actually present in it, and this entails that the subject is internally complex, since it contains something different from itself. The One, however, since it is Unity Itself, is in no way multiple. Cf. v 3.13,4, vi 7.41,37-38, and vi 2.9,6.

[21] 'He' here is of course Plato, as at 12.26-27 and 33 below: the quotation is from *Timaeus* 37d7. Note that Plotinus assumes the reader's intimate acquaintance with the text of Plato.

[22] The intelligible items under discussion here are the μέγιστα γένη of the *Sophist*, which are conceived both as the constituents (cf. vi 2.2,9-10) and as properties (cf. below, 3.8-9 and 24-25) of intelligible Substance or νοῦς.

[23] Cf. *Physics* 219a9-10 and below, 8.1 with n75.

[24] Κίνησις can mean either spatial movement or change in general, including qualitative alteration. Plotinus, like Aristotle (*Phys.* 218b19-20), does not distinguish the two senses of κίνησις in his discussion of time. We translate κίνησις throughout as 'motion'.

[25] This shows that Plotinus denies the assumption of 'self-predication', i.e., that Forms are themselves characterized by the very same properties that they are Forms of: cf., e.g., ii 4.9,5-6 (Quantity Itself is not a quantity), vi 6.17,25-26 (intelligible Shapes do not themselves have shape).

[26] Cf. *Sophist* 252d6-11.

[27] 'Αεί, attributed to eternity by Plato at *Timaeus* 38a3.

[28] Cf. below, 6.21-36, where Plotinus attempts to explicate this non-temporal sense of ἀεί.

[29] 'Εν ἑνί: an allusion to *Timaeus* 37d6, cf. line 35 below. Plotinus is implying that the concept of eternity must involve the intelligible category of ταὐτόν or Sameness: cf. below, 3.10-11.

[30] The principal point of distinction between eternity and time, according to Plotinus, is therefore that time is something extended while eternity is in no way extended.

[31] *Timaeus* 37d6: cf. n29 above.

[32] Cf. n11 above.

[33] This is answered at 5.12-18.

[34] Punctuating at 3.5 and 3.7 with Igal. On this characteristic use of ἑνορᾶσθαι by Plotinus to signify the contemplation of relations between intelligible objects, cf. Smith 1981, 104n18.

[35] Again, the reference is to the μέγιστα γένη of the *Sophist*: cf. Introduction and n16 above.

[36] We take ἐν τούτοις at 3.12 with the preceding words, as do H-S^3, but retain the comma after συστείλας in the following line.

[37] The text here is somewhat uncertain. We take τὸ ὑποκειμένον to be the subject of ἐπαγγελλέται at 3.25, which is probably middle, not passive as Armstrong seems to take it. S-P 399.23-25 propose taking αἰών as the subject of this verb, but this is unlikely, as it is the existence of αἰών that is to be explained here.

[38] An apparent allusion to Parmenides B8.2, λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν.

[39] Τοῦτο is misprinted for τοῦτον at 3.1 in both H-S^1 and H-S^2.

[40] Reading <ἐν> ἐκείνῃ at 4.2 with the *editio princeps*: compare ἑνορᾶται and ἑνών (or ἑνοῦσα: see next note) in line 3. The Mss. text, retained by H-S^2, is inconsistent with the claim of 3.23-24 that eternity is not the substrate, i.e., intelligible Substance itself, but rather is an attribute of it.

[41] Reading ἑνών for ἑνοῦσα at 4.3 with H-S^3. But perhaps we should retain ἑνοῦσα with the Mss. and H-S^2 and translate 'for that life [*sc.* of eternity] is seen to exist in that intelligible nature and to arise from it'.

[42] This doctrine of true wholes (cf. also lines 12-15 below) seems to have been constructed as a solution to the *aporiai* about the relation of parts to wholes found at *Parmenides* 157c-e and *Theaetetus* 204a-205c.

[43] For Plotinus' denial that intelligible truth involves any sort of correspondence, cf. v 5.2,18-19 and v 3.5,23-26.

[44] Plotinus here imagines someone raising an objection to the preceding argument, namely that intelligible substance might acquire a property without that property affecting its wholeness or adding to the whole that it previously was. But such a property could then only be an affection of it, which is impossible.

[45] A verbal allusion to *Philebus* 24d1-2.

[46] Punctuating at 4.26-27 as in H-S^3.

[47] Armstrong's note to this sentence is misleading: he cites the earlier treatise ii 2 (number 14 in chronological order) as giving 'a fuller discussion of the circular motion of the universe and its cause'. But in fact the explanation of the circular motion given in this passage, which is a consequence of Plotinus' theory of the nature of time (stated more fully in 11.20-43 below) is quite different from that endorsed in ii 2.1 and 3,1-13.

[48] Deleting τὸ at 4.39 with H-S^3.

[49] Cf. *De caelo* 279a25-28.

[50] With οὐκ ἀποκλίνων 5.10, μὴ ἀποκλῖνον 5.13, and ἀκλινῆ πάντη 11.4, compare ii 9.2,3, vi 8.9,33 and ἀνέγκλιτον used of eternity at Plutarch *De E* 393a.

[51] 'Αεὶ ὄν: cf. 4.42-43.

[52] This answers the questions posed in 3.1-3 above.

[53] That is, νοῦς, the god that has been the subject of the previous discussion, not the One, which for Plotinus transcends the intelligible realm and thus also eternity.

[54] 'Ατρεμές, 'imperturbable', at 5.21 is an allusion to Parmenides B1.29, where the word is used of Parmenides' One Being: ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμές ἦτορ, 'the imperturbable heart of well-rounded truth (or reality)'.

[55] Cf. above, 3.4-5.

[56] The manuscripts add here the sentence, 'For that which follows, ''in virtue of being actually complete and expending nothing of itself'', would be an explanation of the phrase ''as a life that is unlimited''', which is clearly a gloss on lines 26-27.

[57] *Timaeus* 37d6.

[58] The life of Being or νοῦς, which is eternity, consists in its eternal contemplation of the One: cf. n97 to 11.1-4 below.

[59] Retaining καὶ τὸ οὕτω μένον αἰων εἶναι at 6.9-10, as in H-S^2.

[60] Reading ὡς οὐσία ἢ τὸ ζῆν at 6.20. Τὸ ζῆν appears in two principal Mss. from different families, and ὡς οὐσία is a conjecture accepted by all editors prior to Henry and Schwyzer.

[61] 'Αεί.

[62] Reading ἡμῖν ἕνεκα τῆς σαφηνείας at 6.22: see iv 3.9.15 and n69 to line 54 below.

[63] *Sc.* by Plato at *Tim.* 38a3.

[64] Reading ἔκτασιν in 6.25 with Bury and H-S^2. But the ἔκβασιν of the Mss. is perhaps not impossible ('an unfolding of extension'?): cf. Porphyry, *Sententiae* §35, 39.15 Lamberz.

[65] That is, sophistry: cf. *Metaphysics* 1004b18.

[66] Cf. above, 4.42-43.

[67] Cf. Parmenides B8.33 and 44-48.

[68] *Timaeus* 29e1. Plotinus understands this phrase to refer to the Demiurge and therefore to the intelligible cosmos: cf. Jonas 1962, 306n11 and HBT *ad loc.*

[69] Cf. *De caelo* 280a1: Plotinus is here endorsing the view of Aristotle's opponents in that passage (including Xenocrates: cf. Simplicius *In de caelo* 303.33-34), that Plato's talk of creation in the *Timaeus* is not meant to be taken literally: cf. also iv 8.4, 40-42.

[70] *Sc.* 'was' in 'He was good'; cf. *Timaeus* 37e-38a. Armstrong is wrong in taking Plotinus to recur here to his previous discussion of ἀεί (lines 21-36 above).

[71] This would be the case if we did not possess first-hand experience of eternity, but it is a consequence of Plotinus' doctrine of the undescended soul that we do have such experience. For μαρτυρεῖν with a dative of person, cf. ii 9.15.27 and S-P 621.33-36.

[72] Cf. n13 above.

[73] Plotinus classifies previous opinions on the nature of time in terms of how they conceive of the relation between time and κίνησις. He then refutes each class of view in turn. His classification of previous views is closely modelled upon Aristotle's doxography of time at *Physics* 218a30-b20. What is common to these accounts is that they all connnect time with *physical* motion. The phrase κίνησις ἡ λέγομενη in line 19 is probably intended to indicate this restriction: cf. below, 8.3-4. For the holders of the various views, cf. Henry and Schwyzer's apparatus and nn74, 75, 77, 81, 83, 92, and 95 below.

[74] Διάστημα κινήσεως: the Stoic view that time is the extension of physical motion itself, considered as a special sort of continuous quantity, as just 'so much motion' (τὸ πολύ τῆς κινήσεως), as Plotinus puts it below (8.37). This is not the same as the distance covered by the motion, as in Armstrong's translation.

[75] Aristotle refers to holders of this view at *Physics* 218a34. According to ps.-Plutarch *Placita* 884b and Stobaeus I.102.19 (both in Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 318.24-25), it was later held by many Stoics.

[76] Punctuating at 8.3-5 as in H-S^3.

[77] Alexander of Aphrodisias apparently claimed that Eudemus and Theophrastus had attributed to Plato the view that time was the motion of the universe (cf. Simplicius *In phys.* 700.17-19), obviously as an interpretation of the *Timaeus*: cf. also ps.-Plutarch *Placita* 884b (Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 318.9-10). It is clear, however, that Plotinus does not accept this way of reading the *Timaeus*.

[78] Reading καὶ αὕτη <περιφέροιτο ἂν εἰς τὸ αὐτό>, εἴπερ τὴν περιφορὰν λέγοι, ἐν χρόνῳ τινί [καὶ αὕτη περιφέροιτο ἂν εἰς τὸ αὐτό], οὐκ. . .at 8.9-11 with H-S^3, after Igal.

[79] Cf. *Physics* 218b1-3.

[80] Cf. n74 above.

[81] As was claimed by Chrysippus (*apud* Stobaeus *Ecl.* I.106.5-7), followed by the *Didaskalikos* (§14, 170.21 Hermann).

[82] This translation shows that the Mss. text of 8.50-52 can be retained, against the doubts of Beierwaltes and H-S^3: cf. also 6.43-44. We place a half stop after χρόνῳ in 8.51, and take the following words τὸ. . .χρόνῳ as a single question, as does Igal.

[83] Cf. Strato of Lampsacus *apud* Simplicius *In phys.* 789.2-4.

[84] Cf. *Physics* 223b4-6, 224a2-17.

[85] Μοναδικός or 'counting' number, made up of abstract units (cf. *Metaphysics* 1083b17, *Philebus* 56d-e). Aristotle claims that time as the number of motion is the concrete number of units of motion that is counted, not the abstract number that is used to count them (*Physics* 219b5-9, 220b8-9).

[86] Retaining μέγεθος$_1$ at 9.19, as in H-S^2.

[87] Punctuating at 9.21 and 23 as in H-S^3.

[88] Cf. *Physics* 220b14-16.

[89] With ὅ τί ποτ' ἐστὶν. . .ἐκεῖνο in 9.50, cf. τοῦτο ὅ ποτε ὂν ἔστιν ὁ χρόνος, *Physics* 223a27.

[90] Retaining αὖ 9.70, as in H-S^2.

[91] Cf. *Physics* 223a21-29.

[92] Cf. Epicurus fr. 294 Usener (Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 318.19-21).

[93] So that the proposed definition turns out to be circular.

[94] *Sc.* instead of a philosophical one: cf. 1.1-16.

[95] This probably means Alexander of Aphrodisias: cf. Alexander *On Time* §10 (Sharples 1982, 62). Cf. above, 9.34.

[96] Ἀκλινῆ πάντη: cf. n50 to 5.10 above.

[97] Not 'towards eternity' (Armstrong): cf. above, 6.1-4 with n58.

[98] An allusion to Homer's invocation of the Muses at *Iliad* 16.112-113, modelled upon Plato's adaptation of the same lines at *Republic* 545d. For a similar use of ἐκπίπτειν, see iii 8.4,10.

[99] Lines 12-20 give a mythical account of the generation of time; in the succeeding lines (20 ff.), Plotinus offers a point-by-point philosophical interpretation of his own myth. Commentators have found difficulty in the fact that the passage speaks of Time in the third person, even though it is supposed to be a report given by the mythical personification of Time (cf. Jonas 1962, 309n16; Manchester 1978, 121-123 even claims to find deep implications in Time's unexpected 'silence'). But the most plausible interpretation seems to have been overlooked, namely, that we are thought of as reporting at second hand Time's account of its own generation.

[100] We take ἐκείνῳ in 11.14 to be co-referential with αὐτῳ in line 13, with H-S^2: read this way, the text claims the initial lack of distinction between time and eternity in the order of being.

[101] This 'officious nature' (φύσις πολυπράγμων 11.15: we borrow this phrase from Clark 1944, 350) is identical with the soul's 'unquiet power' (δύναμις οὐκ ἥσυχος) of lines 20-21 below, and is to be identified with ὄρεξις: see Jonas' 'Exkurs' on the fall of the soul, 1962, 314-319, and iv 8.3,23-24 with iv 7.13,3-5.

[102] This is a typical example of Plotinus' flouting of the usual rule concerning the antecedent of the subject of a genitive absolute: cf. Manchester 1978, 117n41, and for other examples of this sort of construction in Plotinus, Schwyzer 1951, 518.53-68 and Atkinson 1983, 137 *ad* v 1.6,17-19.

[103] 'We' are here identified with soul as the generator of time: cf. Jonas 1962, 309-310n17; contrast Beierwaltes 1967, 241-242. As Jonas sees, this need not mean that individual souls generate times (which would conflict with iv 4.15,12-13), since Plotinus holds that all souls are one: cf. below, n131 to 13.67.

[104] For the comparison of the creation of the sensible world from the intelligible Forms with the unfolding of a spermatic *logos*, cf. iii 2.2,18-23, where, as here, this is said to involve a loss of perfection. Plotinus

often characterizes sensible magnitude as an imperfection in comparison with the unextendedness of intelligible being: cf., e.g., v 8.1,27-30, v 5.11,8-10, and ii 9.17,9-10.

[105] We take τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς at 11.34 to be a gloss on αὐτοῦ as suggested by H-S² in their apparatus. For the doctrine that the sensible world is contained within the soul (an interpretation of *Timaeus* 34b4 and 36e2), cf. iii 9.3,1-4, v 5.9,29-32, and Atkinson 1983, 222 *ad* v 1.10,21-23.

[106] Compare, for example, vi 2.7,8-11, where the being of the sensible world is called 'a shadow (σκία) and homonym of true being'.

[107] That is, the unextended unity of eternity. There is no reference here to the One, *pace* Aubenque 1976, 83.

[108] Retaining ἐσόμενον 11.55, as in H-S².

[109] Retaining Page's emendation at 12.13, with H-S¹ and H-S².

[110] Reading ἢ οὐ πρώτως ὑπάρχει χρόνος· ἐν χρόνῳ καὶ αὕτη καὶ ἔστι καὶ κινεῖται at 12.15-16, with Igal and H-S³.

[111] Cf. Alexander *On Time* §5 (Sharples 1982, 60-61). Plotinus perhaps borrowed this argument from Galen: cf. Sharples 1982, 73.

[112] *Timaeus* 39d1.

[113] That is, Plato (*Tim.* 38c6): cf. n21 to 2.12-13 above.

[114] Cf. *Timaeus* 39b2.

[115] Cf. *Timaeus* 39b6-c1.

[116] Placing a question mark after μετρῶν 12.38, with H-S³.

[117] Punctuating at 12.39-40 as in H-S³.

[118] Punctuating at 12.52-54 as in H-S³.

[119] Reading ἢ μετροῦν for εἰ μετροῦν at 12.54. H-S² already accept Kirchhoff's ἢ μετρούμενον for εἰ μετρούμενον later in this line, but the two expressions are parallel, since ἕτερον in line 55 corresponds to ἄλλο in line 54.

[120] Note that Plotinus is unwilling to attribute to Aristotle the theory of time found in *Physics* Δ 10-14: he prefers to believe that Aristotle had not expressed himself clearly and has been misunderstood!

[121] Taking τὴν περιφορὰν as subject of εἰλῆφθαι at 13.21 (passive, as in H-S³, not middle, as in H-S¹, H-S², and Armstrong), with ἐλάχιστον τι adverbial. The reference is to *Timaeus* 39b-c.

[122] Cf. above, 12.19-22 with n111.

[123] Cf. n105 to 11.34 above. We read αὐτὸ for αὐτὸν at 13.52 with Igal.

[124] Cf. Critolaus fr. 14 Wehrli (Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 318.22-23): 'Αντιφῶν καὶ Κριτόλαος νόημα ἢ μέτρον τὸν χρόνον, οὐχ ὑπόστασιν, and Proclus *In Tim.* III.95.7-15 Diehl (SVF 2.521).

[125] Reading καταθετέον for †καὶ τὸ θεόν at 13.50 with van Winden and H-S³: cf. Parmenides B8.39.

[126] That is, the motion of the soul that produces this deliberate bodily motion.

[127] The motion of the soul.

[128] Retaining Dodds' τῳ 13.64, with H-S².

[129] Retaining τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ πρώτως at 13.65: Plotinus here restates this conclusion, already stated in the same words at line 63, after giving an additional argument for it. There is therefore no need to consider these words a gloss, as do Kirchhoff and H-S².

[130] That is, rational soul, which produces voluntary motion.

[131] A reference to Plotinus' doctrine that different souls are yet somehow all numerically the same soul: cf. iv 9 *passim* and vi 4.4,34-39. Here he appeals to the doctrine to explain how one and the same time can be simultaneously everywhere: cf. Aristotle, *Physics* 223b3-4.

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