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The ἐξαιφνης in the Platonic Tradition: from Kinematics to Dynamics

(Draft)

Studies on Platonic ‘Theoria motus abstracti’ are often focused on dynamics rather than kinematics, in particular on psychic self-motion. This state of affairs is, of course, far from being a bland academic accident: according to Plato, dynamics is the higher science while kinematics is lower on the ‘scientific’ spectrum. Furthermore, when scholars investigate Platonic abstract kinematics, in front of them there is a very limited set of texts. Among them, one of the most interesting undoubtedly remains a passage of Parmenides in which Plato challenges the puzzle of the ‘instant of change’, namely the famous text about the ‘sudden’ (τὸ ἐξαιφνης).

Plato’s ἐξαιφνης actually is a terminus technicus and a terminus mysticus at once, in such a way that from Antiquity until today this Platonic concept has been interpreted in very different fashions, either in a physical fashion or in a mystical one. Nevertheless, it has not been analysed how those two directions have been already followed by the Platonic Tradition. So, the aim of this paper is to provide some acquaintance with the exegetical history of ἐξαιφνης inside the Platonic Tradition, from Plato to Marsilio Ficino, by way of Middle Platonism and Greek Neoplatonism.

After exposing Plato’s argument of Parm, 156c-157b and its various interpretations (1), I shall investigate the ways by which Middle Platonists (especially Taurus) and Early Neoplatonists as Plotinus and Iamblichus have understood Plato’s use of ἐξαιφνης (2), and finally how this notion had been transferred from kinematics to dynamics in Later Neoplatonism (3).

1. Plato’s Parm, 156c-157b: The puzzle of the ‘instant of change’

1.1. The Text: Parmenides, 156c1-157b5

Plato’s treatment of the ἐξαιφνης appears at the end of the Second Hypothesis of Parmenides, in a passage which is interpreted by some Platonists to be a genuine Hypothesis (so, the Third) but which likely is a kind of corollary or an appendix, linked to the Second Hypothesis. Of course, other texts can be found in which Plato uses the word ἐξαιφνης, but that is in Parmenides wherein it seems to have a very technical meaning (notably because that is the only text in which ἐξαιφνης is used as a substantive and not as an adverb). It is why I am firstly focusing on this passage.

2 Plato, Laws, X 893b-898e
5 All Plato’s and Plotinus’ uses of ἐξαιφνης are so-called ‘analysed’ in a recent monography which can only be credited to have enumerated these texts: J. Cimakasky, The Role of
And when being in motion it comes to rest, and when being at rest it changes to motion, it must itself be in no time at all. "How is that?"

"It is impossible for it to be previously at rest and afterwards in motion, or previously in motion and afterwards at rest, without changing." "Of course." "And there is no time in which anything can be at once neither in motion nor at rest." "No, there is none." "And certainly it cannot change without changing."

"I should say not." "Then when does it change? For it does not change when it is at rest or when it is in motion or when it is in time." "No, it does not." "Does this strange thing, then, exist, in which it would be at the moment when it changes?" "What sort of thing is that?" "The sudden. For the sudden seems to indicate a something from which there is a change in one direction or the other. For it does not change from rest while it is still at rest, nor from motion while it is still moving; but there is this strange instantaneous nature, something interpolated between motion and rest, not existing at any time, and into this and out from this that which is in motion changes into rest and that which is at rest changes into motion."

"Yes, that must be so." "Then the one, if it is at rest and in motion, must change in each direction; for that is the only way in which it can do both. But in changing, it changes instantaneously, and when it changes it can be in no time, and at that sudden it will be neither in motion nor at rest." "No." "And will the case not be the same in relation to other changes?"

"When it changes from being to destruction or from not being to becoming, does it not pass into an intermediate stage between certain forms of motion and rest, so that it neither is nor is not, neither comes into being nor is destroyed?" "Yes, so it appears." "And on the same principle, when it passes from one to many or from many to one, it is neither one nor many, is neither in a process of separation nor in one of combination. And in passing from like to unlike or from unlike to like, it is neither like nor unlike, neither in a process of assimilation nor in one of dissimilation; and in passing from small to great and to equal and vice versa, it is neither small nor great nor equal, neither in a process of increase, nor of diminution, nor of equality." "Apparently not."

Exaiaphes in Early Greek Literature. Philosophical Transformation in Plato’s Dialogues and Beyond, Lexington Books, 2017
I.2. The Puzzle of the ‘Instant of Change’: A Very Brief Summary

Plato is usually credited to be the first to have challenged the Puzzle of the ‘Instant of Change’. Nonetheless, as Strobach has recently suggested, a passage of Aristophanes’ Comedy The Clouds may be the first occurrence of the problem. Anyway, the point remains that the puzzle has a long history, from Antiquity to today, by way of medieval instances and Leibniz’ reflections.

The puzzle can be shortly summarized as follows: let a continuous change between two states, which state obtains at the temporal limit between the old state and the new? In fact, this puzzle accurately is the temporal equivalent of the topological ‘Diodorean-test’: the first asks ‘when?’ change is occurring, the second ‘where?’.

Philosophical Tradition offers us several illustrations to this, haphazardly: the passage between the old and the new day, the death of Socrates or Dion, the whiteness of Socrates, etc. In Antiquity, the most famous incontestably was the instant of death either of Socrates11, or, in a more Stoic way, of Dion12 (‘when Socrates is dying? Is it when he is still alive or when he is already dead?’), while, in Middle-Age scholarship, the whiteness of Socrates (inspired by Phys, 8.8) became fashionable, notably at Merton College. Yet, more often, these examples are understood as solely seemingly different, namely as referring to a same and more general puzzle. For instance, when Simplicius gives a commentary on a passage of the Physics in which Aristotle discusses the last instant of change, he immediately draws a parallel with Plato’s ἐξήγησις and the Hellenistic enigma of the death of Dion, notably by exposing Alexander’s solution. However, as

9 ARISTOPHANES, The Clouds, 1178-1201
11 Sextus Empiricus, AM, IX 269, 344-50, PH III 110-114
12 Simplicius, In Phys, 982.1-984.2, 1299.36-1300.36
14 Aristotle, Phys, 6.5 235b32-236a7
15 Simplicius, In Phys, 982.1-984.2
Sorabji has demonstrated\(^\text{16}\), the case of the transition between moving and resting is quite different to the precedents, in a sense more problematic because this case challenges with the ideas of changing at an instant and of instantaneous velocity. But, here, the difference can be laid aside because, unlike Aristotle\(^\text{17}\), Plato was not aware of this subtlety (the opposition between motion and rest is presented as an opposition amongst others\(^\text{18}\)).

I shall explain in detail neither the deep meaning of the puzzle, nor weigh up the pros and cons of its various readings\(^\text{19}\), I shall just present in few words the possible answers.

Obviously, there are only four possibilities to conceive the description of the ‘instant of change’. Given a change between A and \(-A\), either the instant of change \(i\) belongs to only a ‘side’ (1 and 2), or neither (3), or both (4):

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
\ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} & \ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} \ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} \ldots i_{\Lambda} \ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} \ldots i \ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} \ldots \Lambda_{\ldots} \\
\hline
A & \neg A \\
1. i = i_{\Lambda} & 3. i = i_{\Lambda} \Lambda_{\neg \Lambda} \\
2. i = i_{\neg \Lambda} & 4. i = i_{\Lambda} \Lambda_{\neg \Lambda}
\end{array}
\]

Not surprisingly, all of these four answers had been – and are again –, supported, even if 3 and 4 seems to infringe some logical laws, respectively, of Excluded Middle and of Contradiction\(^\text{20}\). By virtue of this possible unfortunate consequence, the either/or-option (namely solutions 1 and 2) has been preferred for a long time, notably by Aristotle (solution 2) whose authority was followed by the majority of Medieval thinkers\(^\text{21}\), sometimes, of course, with great amendments.

More interesting, each of the four answers have been sustained in very various ways. For instance, Stoicism sustained a kind of Both-states-option by analysing tensed complex propositions which can modify their truth-value according to the circumstances (\(\ddot{\alpha}_{\ddot{\xi} \ddot{\omega} \mu \ddot{\omicron} \mu \ddot{\tau} \alpha \ddot{\iota} \mu \ddot{\omicron} \tau \nu \ddot{\iota} \mu \ddot{\alpha} \nu \ddot{\iota} \mu \ddot{\tau} \alpha \ddot{\iota} \nu \ddot{\iota} \mu \ddot{\alpha} \nu\))\(^\text{22}\), Medieval theologians – as Henry of Ghent\(^\text{23}\), John Baconthorpe, Hugh of Novocastro and Landolfo Caracciolo – by having recourse to the very Scotist distinction between ‘instant (or signs) of nature’ and ‘instant


\(^{18}\) PLATO, *Parmenides*, 15a-c, 156e-157b. However, for a precision on this Platonic indifference which is in fact highly sustained by the distinction between several levels of processes, namely one for the becoming taken as a whole, and another for the motions and rests of the particular items, see the footnote 407.


of time\textsuperscript{24}, and modern Hegelianism as Graham Priest’s dialetheism by elaborating a paraconsistent logic\textsuperscript{25}. It must be remarked that only the later supports the both-states-option in its strongest fashion according to which motion involves the rejection of the logical law of Contradiction, so that this principle is sometimes, in very circumscribed cases, irrelevant (of course, dialetheism does not imply the \textit{ex falso quodlibet}).

It was happened that these answers had been simultaneously supported by rival schools, notably in Hellenistic period in which the both-states-option was espoused by Stoicism, a kind of \textit{either/or}-option by Aristotelianism, and, as I shall argue, a \textit{neither/or}-option by Platonism. There is, of course, a great absent in this Hellenistic overview. Indeed, Epicureanism, by denying on Platonism. There is, of course, a great absent in this Hellenistic overview. Indeed, Epicureanism, by denying on Platonism. There is, of course, a great absent in this Hellenistic overview. Indeed, Epicureanism, by denying on

\textit{1.3. Plato’s Solution and Its Various Interpretations}

\textit{Parm}, 156c-157b has been interpreted by modern scholars in various ways. Notably, it had been manipulated by them in their debates about a so-called time-atomism in Plato’s thought\textsuperscript{26}, or for sustaining their own views on the philosophical tradition to which Plato belongs\textsuperscript{27}.

Even if Plato would have admitted a kind of time-atoms (as Strang, Iamblichus and Damascus have argued in their commentaries), the discussion on the ‘instant of change’ shows enough that he would consider that those time-atoms must come one after one by a continuous chain and surely not by a contiguous one: insofar as the transition from motion


\textsuperscript{26} See: M. RASHED (ed.), \textit{Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (livres IV-VII)}. Les scholies byzantines, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 109-112


to rest does not occur at any time-atom, but at a durationless ‘sudden’, time-atoms must constitute together a continuum\(^{30}\). At any rate, since the puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ mainly is a continuum-problem\(^{31}\), Plato’s ἐξαίφνης should be described according to one of the four possibilities introduced above.

Unfortunately, Plato’s text is not very clear-cut, notably on the ontological and logical status of the ἐξαίφνης. By virtue of this relative obscurity, scholars have more or less explicitly provided no fewer than three kinds of solutions.

1. The ἐξαίφνης is a kind of proto-Hegelian Aufhebung-item, namely the ‘sudden’ is beyond the time and ‘puts aside/away’\(^{32}\) (namely ‘destroyed-and-preserved’) both the earlier and later states\(^{33}\). This solution entails a rejection of the logical laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middle at once.

2. The ἐξαίφνης is outside of time, and is neither in the earlier state, nor in the later\(^{34}\).

3. The ἐξαίφνης is apart from time, because, strictly speaking, time is not composed out of durationless instants, and is neither in the earlier state, nor in the later, in such a way that Plato would have supported a variant of the Neutral-Instant Analysis\(^{35}\). This interpretation seems to involve a local rejection of the law of Excluded Middle, since it is false that at any instant an item must be either in A or in ¬A\(^{36}\).

Deciding between these interpretations requires to come back to Parmenides, 156c-157b. It is astonishingly not very difficult to find a lot of textual evidences sustaining the view according to which the ‘sudden’ firstly is apart from time, and secondly is neither in A-state nor in ¬A-state.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ‘sudden’ is apart from time</th>
<th>The ‘sudden’ is neither in A nor in ¬A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>156c1-3: Ὄταν δὲ κινούμενον τε ἡμεταρτά καὶ ὅταν ἲστος ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖται μεταβάλλη, δεὶ ὅπου αὐτὸ ὅποι νῦν χρόνος εἶναι.</td>
<td>156c6-7: Χρόνος δὲ τὸ ὄντα ἢταν, ἢ τὸ ὄν τε ἡμέρας μῆτε κινεῖται μῆτε ἢστάναι.</td>
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30 R. SORABJI, Time, creation and the continuum, Duckworth, 1983, p. 361

31 As Natorp has perfectly noted: P. NATORP, Platos Ideelehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus, Leipzig, 1921, p. 261-263. Following some suggestions of Natorp, Cherniss interprets the ἐξαίφνης in a very simulating mathematical way, namely as a kind of infinitesimal; H. F. CHERNISS, “Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato”, in The American Journal of Philology, 53-2, 1932, p. 132 n. 25


36 This local rejection seems to be accepted by Owen: G. E. L. OWEN, “Notes on Ryle’s Plato”, in O. P. WOOD, G. PITCHER (eds.), Ryle, MacMillan, 1970, p. 358-359
Yet, the question is: what is the meaning of the two theses? Indeed, claiming that the ‘sudden’ is apart from time is very underdetermined. Albeit the text explicitly draws a clear opposition between χρόνος and ἑξαίφνης, Plato makes such a distinction without explaining this in detail. Likewise, asserting that the ‘sudden’ is neither in A-state nor in ~A-state which can involve different logical status for the ‘sudden’.

Now, I shall follow the great lines of Strobach’s analysis of the passage\textsuperscript{37}, in my view Strobach had wonderfully and completely summarized and challenged all the logical twists and turns of Plato’s text.

The difference between χρόνος and ἑξαίφνης, and the thesis according to which the ‘sudden’ is apart from time can be understood as the ‘sudden’ is not an entity belonging to the set of χρόνοι but remains a kind of temporal-entity, since saying ‘a thing is changing suddenly’ apparently constitutes a relevant answer to the question ‘when a thing is moving?’, in such a way that χρόνοι and ἑξαίφνης are two mutually exclusive subsets of the higher set of temporal-entities. Thus, a χρόνος could be conceived as a period or as a phase, namely a temporal stretch with duration, whereas an ἑξαίφνης could be a durationless item like an instant or moment which would be a kind of limit between two χρόνοι\textsuperscript{38}. Such a very common interpretation, which entailing that Plato’s ἑξαίφνης is very


harmonized with Aristotle’s χρόνος, was explicitly favoured by Simplicius when he was commenting the *Physics*. Notwithstanding, ‘apart from time’ might also mean ‘beyond the time’ or ‘outside of time’, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ would not be a temporal-entity but something else which rather belongs to an everlasting realm. According to such an interpretation, χρόνος would not be just a period but more generally any temporal-entity, that is to say χρόνος is equivalent of ‘time’ with all its various meanings. In this case, of course, how the ‘sudden’ can remain a relevant answer to the question when (πότε) an object is changing? Well, Plato has precisely introduced the ‘sudden’ to answer this issue:

156c8-d1: Πότ' οὖν μεταβάλλει; οὔτε γὰρ ἐστὸς ὁ ὡς κινούμενον μεταβάλλει, οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ ὁ ὡς.

Furthermore, what is the meaning of an eternal switch occurring beyond time? What is an extratemporal event? Unless arguing that Plato was a pioneer for Loop Gravity Theory, that makes utterly no sense. Those who support this view seem in fact either banishing the idea of switching from ἐξαίφνης, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ becomes merely a changeless entity, or sustaining that the ‘sudden’ is both a stuff in which a change is occurring and in which it does not occur on the one hand, and a stuff in which a change neither occurs nor does not occur on the other, because the ‘sudden’ ‘puts away’ motion and rest, eternity and time. But scholars claiming such a proto-Hegelian interpretation were doing bad poetry rather than challenging seriously Plato’s argument. Contrary to them, as we will see, Damascius had rigorously elaborated this kind of interpretation in his commentary on *Parmenides*. Indeed, he did it in a very specific and, above all, Platonistic framework, sustaining his very original view notably by taking account of the intermediary and very uncatchable nature of soul.

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39 ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.11, 13
40 SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 982.6 (see also, for an opposition between durationless change (whose Simplicius says it happens ἐξαίφνης) and change with duration: *In De Caelo*, 119.28-121.4)
45 For instance, Brisson writes: “L’instant est la fissure par laquelle l’éternité permet le déploiement du temps. C’est la chaîne d’or qui rattache le temps à ce point immuable qu’est l’éternité. Bref, cette explosion figée et continue qu’est l’éternité n’apparaîtrait dans le temps que comme un crémentement incessant d’instants discrets. L’éternité est l’instant absolu ; le temps, l’instant toujours remis en cause” (p. 394). I have a preference for Novalis.
Nonetheless, the first interpretation should not be favoured only for its conceptual consistency, since there are other Platonic texts in which χρόνος and ἔξαίφνης play the same role of mutual exclusive subsets of temporal-entities. Remarkably those texts are all present in the last Plato’s dialogue, namely the Laws. For instance, when Plato was discussing the moral condition of men during the Great Period of Disasters⁴⁷, he has consciously built an opposition between a moral evolution without any duration and a moral evolution which requires duration, for concluding that the advancement toward the moral condition typical of 4th-Century BC must have been being progressive and step by step⁴⁸:

\[\begin{align*}
&\text{ATH. As time went on and our race multiplied,} \\
&\text{all things advanced – did they not? – to the} \\
&\text{condition which now exists.} \\
&\text{CLIN. Exactly.} \\
&\text{ATH. But, in all probability, they advanced, not} \\
&\text{suddenly <all at once>, but by small degrees,} \\
&\text{in the course of an immense period of time.} \\
&\text{CLIN. Yes, that is most likely.⁵⁹}
\end{align*}\]

Further, even if the link with Parmenides is less obvious, Plato drew a distinction between two kinds of crimes of passion, one which occurs ‘suddenly’ without any premeditation and another which occurs with a period of premeditation⁵⁰. Thus, it appears that the Laws keeps a record of the kinematic lessons of Parmenides, in such a way that the last dialogue of Plato sustains the view according to which the ‘sudden’ is ‘apart from time’ inasmuch as it is a durationless temporal-entity and in no way a kind of everlasting entity beyond the γένεσις-realm.

I shall now follow Strobach logical analysis of the text⁵¹ to clarify the logical status of the ‘sudden’. Let $M_x$ (from μεταβάλλει) as being a statement which must be read as ‘the item $a$ is changing at…’. $A_x$ means ‘the item $a$ is in A-state’, while $-A_x$ means ‘the item $a$ is in $-A$-state’. $\Pi$ (from πότε) is the set of relevant things wherein an item can be and satisfying the question ‘when?’. One subset of $\Pi$ is $X$ (from χρόνος) – namely the subset of all temporal items which have duration – and another is $E$ (from ἔξαίφνης). The logical structure of Parm, 155e-156e may be reconstructed as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
155e6-9 & \neg \exists x \exists y [ ( x \in \Pi ) \land ( y \in \Pi ) ] \land [ \forall x \forall y [ ( x \in X ) \land ( y \in X ) ] \land [ ( A_x \land \neg A_y ) \land ( \neg ( A_x \land A_y ) ) ] \land ( x = y ) ] \quad \text{Law of Contradiction} \\
155e6-11 & \forall x \forall y [ ( x \in X ) \land ( y \in X ) ] \land [ ( A_x \land \neg A_y ) \Rightarrow ( x = y ) ] \\
156c1-7 & \neg \exists x [ ( x \in X ) \land ( \neg A_x ) ] \\
156c8-d1 & \neg \exists x [ ( x \in X ) \land M_x ] \\
156d1-e3 & \forall x ( x \in E ) \land ( M_x ) \\
156e3-6 & \exists x ( x \in E ) \land M_x \\
156e6-7 & \exists x ( x \in E ) \land ( \neg A_x \land \neg A_x ) \\
\end{align*}\]

Law of Contradiction
Law of Contradiction for χρόνος
Plato’s Premiss
Law of Excluded Middle for χρόνος
Negative thesis
Positive thesis
Existence claim for ἔξαίφνης
Logical status of ἔξαίφνης

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⁴⁷ PLATO, Laws, III 677a-681b
⁴⁸ PLATO, Laws, III 678b5-c1
⁵⁰ PLATO, Laws, IX 866b-872c (the word ἔξαίφνης appears in 866d7, 867a3 and 867b6)
The logical conclusion of Plato’s argument is quite questionable. Perhaps, it is possible to infer from \( \neg A_1(x) \land \neg A_2(x) \) that Plato infringes the laws of Contradiction and of Excluded Middle at once, namely that \( \neg A_1(x) \land \neg A_2(x) \) necessarily involves both \( A_1(x) \land \neg A_2(x) \) and \( \neg (A_1(x) \lor \neg A_2(x)) \)\(^{53}\). But it is in fact more complex, because \( A_2(x) \land \neg A_1(x) \) is produced by applying a rule of double-negation (namely: \( \neg \neg A \Rightarrow A \)), while \( \neg (A_2(x) \lor \neg A_1(x)) \) is obtained by applying one of De Morgan’s Laws (namely: \( \neg A \lor \neg A \Rightarrow \neg (A \land A) \)). Yet, and that is the point, Intuitionism is precisely characterized by the rejection of the universality of the Law of Excluded Middle (notably in the case of infinite collections)\(^{54}\) and some rules of double-negation at once, but does not deny the validity of all De Morgan’s Laws\(^{55}\). In fact, the most fundamental rule denied by intuitionism precisely is \( \neg \neg A \Rightarrow A \), viz. the logical fact that two negations cancel each other, involving a reduction from double negation to assertion.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intuitionistic Logic</th>
<th>Non-Valid Theorems</th>
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<td>Valid Theorems</td>
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<tr>
<td>( A \Rightarrow \neg \neg A )</td>
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<td>( \neg A \Rightarrow \neg \neg A )</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \neg A \land \neg B \Leftrightarrow \neg (A \lor B) )</td>
<td>( \neg (A \land B) \Rightarrow \neg A \lor \neg B )</td>
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Thus, an Intuitionist, who is interpreting Plato’s argument, would conclude that it involves only the rejection of the Law of Excluded Middle without denying the Law of Contradiction. He might justify his claim by distinguishing the ‘empirically accessibility’ of \( \gamma \rho \nu \omicron \nu \) of which it is possible to discriminate by experience whether or not something is the case at a \( \gamma \rho \nu \omicron \nu \) which has duration and thus ‘empirically inability’ of durationless \( \xi \alpha \iota \gamma \iota \nu \rho \omicron \kappa \nu \) in a such a way that this ‘empirically verifiability’ plays the same role as the ‘provability’ in Intuitionistic Mathematics\(^{56}\).

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\(^{53}\) N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 28. In his dialectic reading of the Parmenides, Graham Priest sustains that the Platonic \( \xi \alpha \iota \gamma \iota \nu \rho \omicron \kappa \nu \) necessarily infringes the Law of Contradiction: G. PRIEST, *One. Being an Investigation into the Unity of Reality and of its Parts, including the Singular Object which is Nothingless*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 134-137. But, from a logical point of view, his justification is too naive (and very partial) in comparison with the one of Strobach.


\(^{56}\) N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 28-29 (Furthermore, Strobach pertinently remarks that if \( \neg A_1(x) \) is substituted by \( A_1(x) \), then T1 becomes \( A_2(x) \land \neg A_1(x) \) which infringes the Law of Contradiction. In fact, strictly speaking, as \( A \lor \neg A \), \( \neg (A \land \neg A) \) is not an Intuitionistic thesis, contrary to \( \neg (A \land \neg A) \). But, of course \( \neg (A \land \neg A) \) is intuitionistically not equivalent to \( A \land \neg A \); see: A. HEYTING, *Intuitionism. An Introduction*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971, p. 105 and J. FISHER, *On the Philosophy of Logic*. Thomson Wadsworth, 2008, p. 126-128. Sustaining desperately the view presented above, I may note that the distinction between negation – understood as a logical functor – and rejection – understood as a theoretical belief, so as a metalogical act – is perhaps not as well clear-cut as expected, especially in an un-formalized logical context as it is obviously the case in *Parmenides*).
Perhaps Plato had in mind a kind of intuitionistic reasoning when he is asserting that in the ‘sudden’, an item holds neither the A-state, nor its negation, but without holding both A-state and its negation. However, Plato was probably not as well accommodating with Intuitionistic Logic as Anaxagoras\(^{57}\) or Epicurus\(^{58}\) who denied together the universal validity of the Excluded Middle and, at least for Epicurus, elaborated an Intuitionistic epistemology.

That is why it is surely better to take account of the following textual fact\(^{59}\): Plato has only written that at a χρόνος anything must be either in A-state or in ¬A-state (156c1-7), in such a way that the Excluded Middle must be applied for χρόνος but not necessarily for ξαίφνης, in the same way as every surface should be coloured but the lines should not. In other words, the ‘sudden’ is simply not an item for which A-state or ¬A-state must necessarily be used\(^{60}\). So, strictly speaking, Plato had infringed neither the Law of Contradiction nor the Law of Excluded Middle which are logical principles explicitly held by him elsewhere\(^{61}\). Here, however, Plato was not as well clear-sighted as Aristotle\(^{62}\). Indeed, if at each ‘sudden’, by its very nature, a thing can be either moving or resting or neither-moving-nor-resting, what is the meaning of moving at a ‘sudden’? And whether at each ‘sudden’, by its very nature, a thing cannot be either in A-state or ¬A-state but can be only neither-in A-state-nor-in ¬A-state, what is the difference between any ‘sudden’ and the ‘instant of change’?

Of course, according to this last reading, the nature of ξαίφνης is negatively exhibited by contrast with χρόνος rather than positively clarified in itself. So, its φύσις remains very άτομπον (156d6-7). Yet, Plato did not look to be burdened with such a weirdness, insomuch as he did not return further or elsewhere on the ‘sudden’ to shedding light on its odd nature

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Negation of the Law of Excluded Middle</td>
<td>Conclusion: Negation of the Law of Contradiction</td>
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\(^{57}\) ARISTOTLE, Met, Γ 7, de Interp, 9 18b16-25. On Anaxagoras and Intuitionism, see: J. VUILLEMIN, Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument, CSLI Publications, 1996, p. 140 n.11. p. 174


\(^{59}\) To be exhaustive, Strobach provides another possible logical interpretation, according to which Plato may have elaborated a kind of three-valued logic (true, false, neither-true-nor-false), but that sounds very odd. See: N. STROBACH, The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time, Springer, 1998, p. 29-30


\(^{61}\) For instance, see: PLATO, Republic, IV 436b, d-e (Plato sustains his view by a spinning-top which is not simultaneously moving and resting in the same regard)

\(^{62}\) Aristotle treats the very special case of moving/resting at an instant in: ARISTOTLE, Phys, 6.3, 234a24-b9, 8 239a10-b4 (see: R. SORABJI, Time, creation and the continuum, Duckworth, 1983, p. 409-415)
– quite the reverse of his best pupil who shall deploy a wealth of subtleties to catch the very nature of the νοῦς63.

1.4. The Irreducible Weirdness of ἐξαίφνης: Platonism and Aristotelianism on the Status of Physical Sciences

Actually, such a state of affairs is far from being an accidental failure. The weirdness of ἐξαίφνης is in fact just a consequence of Plato’s flimsy esteem for kinematics, by contrast with the very importance of dynamics64. In other words, as Vuillemin had brilliantly argued65, that is a consequence of Platonic hierarchy of physical sciences resulting from Plato’s multi-layered vertical ontology.

For Platonism, sensible motion and its trajectory resort to the calculations of more or less perfect souls, in such a way that the more perfect soul is, the more circular trajectory is66. By its self-motion, the dynamic principle – viz. the soul67 – communicates motion into sensible realm, without being itself extended or locomotive. Hence, Platonism draws a strong division between two kinds of processes belonging to two separated ontological levels: from one perspective, there is a purely spiritual process without relation to place or extension which is the psychic self-motion; and from another, there are sensible motions proceeding from place to place and having quantifiable extension which are corporeal movements.

By virtue of this separation between dynamics’ and kinematics’ realms, namely between the psychic and the corporeal levels, the puzzles about motion objectied by Zeno and Diodorus Kronus are less offensive for Platonism, because they deal only with sensible and extended motion. Here, Platonism seems to have the advantage over rival Hellenistic physics68. Indeed, Plato does not consider every motion results from the affection of a sensitive moved by a sensible mover, but rather from a production of a sensible and communicated motion by an intelligible and non-extended self-mover. Consequently, given that Zeno’s and Diodorus’ puzzles are purely kinematic (in the sense according to which they fall under metrical or topological considerations), and since spiritual dynamics is not in the least degree dependent on kinematics (that is quite the reverse), an orthodox Platonist can ignore those arguments without threatening his theory of self-motion. In contrast to Platonism, for Aristotelianism, kinematics is the condition of dynamics, because all movers are subject to the laws of kinematics69, in such a way that Zeno’s and Diodorus’ puzzles must be neutralized in one way or another.

Moreover, this Platonic distinction between dynamics and kinematics goes with a strong epistemological and ontological thesis, namely that there is always an irrational residue of approximation in all sensible facts. Indeed, Platonism does not split sensible realm into

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63 ARISTOTLE, Phys, 4.11, 13
64 For instance, all the kinematic development in Laws, X 893b–898c aims at the self-motion of the dynamic principle.
66 PLATO, Laws, X 893b-899b (see also: PLOTINUS, Enneads, II 2 [14], 1, 2-19; 39-51; 2, 5-27 and, on this text: M. RASHED, “Contre le mouvement rectiligne naturel: trois adversaires (Xénarque, Ptolémée, Plotin) pour une thèse”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism, Brill, 2009, p. 34-41)
67 PLATO, Phaedrus, 245c-e, Laws, X 894b, 895c, 895e-896a
two very incommensurable parts, as Aristotelianism does by separating perfect and necessary celestial phenomena from imperfect and contingent sublunary phenomena\(^{70}\). So, for Platonists, even the astronomical revolutions keep an unknown waste, unlike Aristotle’s cosmology. Such an irrational residue is ultimately due to the conjunction of \(χώρα\)’s paroxysmal and fuzzy instability\(^{71}\), and imperfections of psychic mover which introduces a supplementary element of disorder and irregularity into sensible realm. Insofar as \(χώρα\)’s dyadic mutability\(^{72}\) and \(ψυχή\)’s self-motion yield sensible \(άνυόμαλα\)^{73}, kinematics which studies sensible movements is condemned to be an imperfect science, either because an infrasensible effervescence, or because a suprasensible pressure onto a refractory matter. This defective accuracy of kinematics is explicitly claimed by Plato in \textit{Timaeus}\(^{74}\), when he declares that his physical exposition is only plausible and not undoubtedly true because a veracity of a science is proportional to its subject’s stability and reliability. This unknowkthg or irrationality of sensible motion actually explains the irreducibility of the “weirdness”\(^{75}\) of \(ἐξαίφνησις\): as all sensible events by virtue of their sensibility, the ‘instant of change’ is not in itself fully understandable.

By virtue of this restriction about kinematics’ scientifcycy, the status of kinematic puzzles is not the same for Platonism and for Aristotelianism. For the first, we must accept that sensible motion implies insoluble puzzles, as the precise nature of “instant of change”, and we should consider that dynamics is in itself more scientific and less aporetic than kinematics, but also more enigmatic for us who sail on sensible water. For the second, because of the predominance of kinematics upon dynamics, and of the rejection of the separated intelligible realm, all motions are sensible, and kinematics must be a genuine science. Admittedly, by virtue of its complex matters, sublunary kinetics is imperfect and has an unknown residue, but it is not the case with the perfect celestial uniform revolutions produced by substance whose matter is reduced to place. Thus there must be a high scientific theory of kinematics to explain them. In other words, Aristotelianism must not admit the insolubility of kinematic puzzles: it is necessary to solve them, since Aristotelianism must save the ontological and epistemological privileges of Heavens’ sempiternal items\(^{76}\). So, the unicity of \textit{abstract} kinematics which studies all kinematic phenomena wherever they are\(^{77}\) involves that kinematic puzzles restricted to sublunary realm (which is the place of rectilinear and non-uniform motions), as the aporia of kinetic starting, must be solved if Aristotelianism wants to preserve the scientificity of astronomy. On the contrary, Platonism, with his doctrine of sensible homogeneity, must not.

\(^{70}\) On the principle of the conservation of modal status in Aristotelianism, see: J. VUILLEMIN, \textit{Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument}, CSLI Publications, 1996, p. 16-17; p. 30 (see also, for the same principle in Platonism: p. 226 n. 3)

\(^{71}\) PLATO, \textit{Timaeus}, 49b-50a, 52d-53b

\(^{72}\) PLATO, \textit{Timaeus}, 57d-58c (see also: \textit{Phaedo}, 110a-114a)

\(^{73}\) PLATO, \textit{Menexenus}, 238e, \textit{Republic}, VIII 547a, \textit{Timaeus}, 52c, 57e, 58a, c, \textit{Laws}, VI 775d

\(^{74}\) PLATO, \textit{Timaeus}, 29b-d (see also: \textit{Republic}, VI 511d-e, VII 533c-534a)

\(^{75}\) PLATO, \textit{Parmenides}, 156d


\(^{77}\) However, it must be noted that some cosmological theses of Aristotle dangerously threat such a \textit{unicity} of kinematics, for instance the fact that, as Philoponus had pointed, the definition of change seems to be hardly applicable for infinite celestial revolutions, see: H. CHERNIS, \textit{Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato and the Academy}, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944, p. 582-583; L. ROBIN, \textit{Aristote}, puf, 1944, p. 132 and S. WATERLOW, \textit{Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle’s Physics}, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1982, p. 249-256
Albeit the privilege of kinematics was a characteristic of the majority of Hellenistic schools, as Aristotelianism, Epicureanism and Stoicism, kinematics is just a very inferior science for Platonism which claims that the genuine science of motion is only dynamics\textsuperscript{78}, while sensible trajectories must be studied only geometrically, that is to say abstractly to its movable and unknowable aspect\textsuperscript{79}. In fact, for Platonism, kinematics’ status in the hierarchy of sciences is close to constructive mechanics, namely nonentity\textsuperscript{80}. By virtue of this, Plato can stop his analysis of the ἐξήγησις on the brink of the apparition of its oddity and can do not shed light on it, given that its very nature keeps an irreducible residue of irrationality. Hence also the contrast between Aristotle’s elaborated concept of the νῦν and Plato’s simple adumbration of the ἐξήγησις that takes root in their opposite epistemological and ontological underpinnings.

2. FROM PLATO TO EARLY NEOPLATONISM: TAURUS, PLOTINUS AND IAMBLICHUS

2.1. The Middle-Platonism and Its Focusing on Timaeus: The Case of Taurus

Despite the great number of Platonists from 1\textsuperscript{st}-Century BC to AD 2\textsuperscript{nd}-Century – who are more often and unfortunately known only by few testimonies\textsuperscript{81} –, it is very hard to discover in their thoughts an interest in abstract kinematics. Indeed, Middle Platonist Physics, in agreement with its Timaeus-focusing, is mainly concerned by the debate about the creation or the eternity of the world, by the number of the elements – namely the question whether the aether is a genuine fifth element or not –, by cosmological issues induced by their multi-layered ontology, or by classic and platonizing issues about the soul\textsuperscript{82}. As far as I know, only one exception can be found, that is an anecdote about Lucius Calvenus Taurus\textsuperscript{83} reported by Aulus Gellius in which the Middle Platonist explicitly refers to Parm, 156c-e and deals with the puzzle of ‘instant of change’ as a kinematic problem.

Taurus was a paradigmatic Middle Platonist by virtue of his obvious Timaeus-focusing, which historically succeeds the Theaetetus-focusing of Arcesilaus and Carneades\textsuperscript{84}, and predates the Parmenides-focusing characterizing Neoplatonism from Plotinus. By ‘x-focusing’, here, I simply mean the centre of gravity of their diverse understandings of the

\textsuperscript{78} M. RASHED (ed.), Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (livres IV-VIII), Les scholies byzantines, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 115-116

\textsuperscript{79} PLATO, Republic, VII, 527c-d, 528d-530c (kinematics is nothing but the examination of the geometrical figures of the completed movements)

\textsuperscript{80} As the dispute between Speusippus (who supports Republic, VII 527a) and Menaechmus shows: G. MOLLAND, “Implicit versus explicit geometrical methodologies: the case of construction”, in R. RASHED (ed.), Mathématiques et philosophie de l’Antiquité à l’âge classique: hommage à Jules Vuillemin, CNRS, 1991, p. 182-190


\textsuperscript{82} For an introduction, see: J. M. DILLON, The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220, Duckworth, 1977

\textsuperscript{83} On Taurus, see: F. PETRUCCI, Taurus of Beirut. The Other Side of Middle-Platonism, Routledge, 2018

Corpus Platonicum, which had, of course, varied through the history of Platonism, but without breaking off the deep continuity of their adherence to the Platonic hard core.

The Timaeus-focusing of Middle-Platonism, beyond its wealthy variety, is expressed enough by the high number and the high level of Middle-Platonic full commentaries on the dialogue: after Cantor who wrote his own before Arcesilaus’ fellowship, Derkyllides, Clemens, Gaius, Albinus, Cronius, Severus, Harpocration, and, of course, Taurus seem to have explained Plato’s Timaeus. By comparison, the second Platonic dialogue which had been massively commented from 1st-Century BC to AD 2nd-Century is Republic – however that commentary is more often only devoted to the Myth of Er (Derkyllides, Gaius, Albinus, Maximus of Nicea, Harpocration, Euclides, Clemens, Cronius, Taurus). Thus, whether the history of the commentaries on Parmenides as a key of Plato’s Thought (so, after the dialectical reading of Albinus) seems really to have begun from Plotinus – with those of Amelius and Porphyry, the ‘historiography’ of Timaeus had begun long before.

Taurus’ commentary on Timaeus had durably influenced the reading of the dialogue, notably on the question whether or not the world had had a beginning, that is to say of its temporal creation. For instance, see: J. M. DILLON, The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220, Duckworth, 1977, p. 428

PROCLUS, In Tim, I 209.9-11


PROCLUS, In Tim, I 340.23-341.4

PROCLUS, In Tim, I 340.23-341.4

PROCLUS, In Tim, II 22.20-23.5

PROCLUS, In Tim, I 204.16-18


PROCLUS, In Remp, I 96.10-15

PROCLUS, In Remp, II 110.2-7

PROCLUS, In Remp, II 110.2-7

PROCLUS, In Remp, II 110.2-7

Debate based on PLATO, Timaeus, 27c-28c

J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclus, 121.18-21, 123.15-23, 145.1-147.9, 186.17-189.9, 191.15-193.9, 223.1-224.12, 520.4-521.25

J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclus, 144.16-145.8, 147.25-148.7 (see: PROCLUS, In Tim, I 279.30-296.12 (see also: 276.30-277.32))
‘created’\textsuperscript{(103)}, (1) either insofar as the sensible world belongs to the same genus as things that are really created – namely the genus of ‘sensible being’ –, (2) or, in a more Neopythagorean fashion\textsuperscript{(104)}, insofar as the world is theoretically composite even if it has not in fact combined, (3) or insofar as the sensible world is always in process of γένεσις on the contrary to the intelligible realm, (4) or insofar as the sensible world is ontologically dependent on its outside source, namely God. It appears that meanings 3 and 4 have been adopted by Alkinos\textsuperscript{(105)} and Proclus\textsuperscript{(106)}, meanings 2 and 4 by Albinus\textsuperscript{(107)} and Porphyry\textsuperscript{(108)}, meaning 4 by Calculidus\textsuperscript{(109)}, and meaning 1 has been favoured by Apuleius\textsuperscript{(110)}. But, on the other, Philoponus is also aware that he can take advantage of the authority of Taurus on another point, namely on the rejection of aether as a real fifth element\textsuperscript{(111)}. Ironically, Philoponus uses this second thesis of Taurus for justifying his denial of the first\textsuperscript{(112)}.

Albeit Taurus was undoubtedly very influential in the exegetis of Timaeus, the situation is quite different in regard of his importance on the interpretation of Parmenides. By the way, he did not write a commentary on this dialogue, and only one testimony keeps a record of its Taurus’ reading, namely the dinner-anecdote presented below. This anecdote about Taurus is found in Aulus Gellius’ Noctes Atticae (7.13)\textsuperscript{(113)} whose text is as follows:

Quaesitum est, quando moriens moreretur? cum iam in morte esset, an cum etiamtum sederet? et qui artem disceret, quando artifex fieret? cum iam esset, an cum etiamtum non esset. Utrum enim horum dices, absurde atque ridicule dixeris, multoque absurdius videbitur, si aut utrumque esse dicas aut neutrum.

Sed ea omnia cum captiones esse quidam

The question was asked, when a dying man died – when he was already in the grasp of death, or while he still lived? And when did a rising man rise – when he was already standing, or while he was still seated? And when did one who was learning an art become an artist – when he already was one, or when he was still learning? For whichever answer you make, your statement will be absurd, if you say either ‘both’ or ‘neither’.


\textsuperscript{(104)} STOBAEUS, Anthology, I 186.14


\textsuperscript{(106)} J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum, 166.26-167.2

\textsuperscript{(107)} PROCLUS, In Tim, I 219.1-12

\textsuperscript{(108)} J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum, 149.16-21

\textsuperscript{(109)} CALCIDIUS, In Tim, §23

\textsuperscript{(110)} APULEIUS, De Platone et eius Dogmate, I 8.198

\textsuperscript{(111)} J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum, 520.4-521.25


Here, Taurus alludes to the very fashionable case of the instant of death to show the superiority of Plato’s ἔξαψις. Perhaps Taurus, here, had additionally in mind a passage of Gorgias in which Plato briefly mentions the ἔξαψις of dying which coincides with the separation of the soul from the body. Since Taurus had fully explained this dialogue, he might have commented Gorg, 523e by referring to Plato’s solution found in Parm, 156c-d, and perhaps might have seized the opportunity for discussing Hellenistic alternative solutions too. Indeed, as Rashed has argued, this question of the instant of death is far to be trivial, but was a critical point in Hellenistic polemics on the continuum and kinematics. And precisely, Taurus said to his guests that this puzzle is not just a sophist puerility but a very important query which had been examined by the most earnest philosophers. So, Taurus surely had in mind the Hellenistic debate on the death of Dion, and the discussions on the ‘instant of change’. This is demonstrated enough by his quick overview of the various rejected solutions which is occurring in two parts:

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114 See: AULUS GELLIIUS, Noctes Atticae, 6.21
115 AULUS GELLIIUS, Noctes Atticae, 6.21 5-12
117 PLATO, Gorgias, 523e-2: καὶ τὸν κριτήν δὲ γενον ἔτι, τεθενώντο, αὐτὴ τῇ μυκῆ ἀπὸ τῆς μυκῆ ἄποιθεντὼν ἔξαψιν ἀποθανόντων, ἐκάστου, ἢμην πάντων τῶν συγγενῶν καὶ καταλιπόντα ἔκιν τῆς γῆς πάντα ἔκιν τὸν κόσμον, ἢν δικαια ἢ κρίσις ἦ. 
118 AULUS GELLIIUS, Noctes Atticae, 7.14 5
120 M.-L. LAKMANN, Der Platoniker Taurus in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius, Brill, 1995, p. 77-78
Utrum enim horum dices, absurde atque ridicule dixeris, multoque absurdius videbitur, si aut utrumque esse dicas aut neutrum.

[...]

Gravissimi philosophorum super hac re serio quaesiverunt; et alii moriendi verbum atque momentum manente adhuc vita dici et fieri putaverunt; item de ceteris similibus in diversa tempora et in contrarias sententias discesserunt.

Afterwards, Taurus introduces Plato’s answer with a reasoning for sustaining it: since all other alternatives are meaningless, there remains only one understandable answer, namely the neither/nor-option. It seems very odd that Aulus Gellius reports Plato’s solution, whereas he has rejected few words before the neutrum-option. Of course, Aulus Gellius, whom the philosophical capacity is dubious, surely did not know a lot about the puzzle he reports, and we should not be too confident in his record.

The fact remains that Taurus still considers, as Plato did, ἐξαιφνῆς as a notion which merely belongs to kinematics. Besides, its logical and ontological status are rigorously circumscribed, since Taurus seems to say that the ‘sudden’ belongs to the set of temporal entities (quoddam novum in confinio tempus), namely a kind of boundary (confinium), which is neither in A-state nor in ¬A-state, in such a way that Taurus’ exegesis is absolutely in agreement with the common view defended above. Thus, there is at least one Platonist reader of Plato who had been perfectly aware of the kinematic background of ἐξαιφνῆς from 1st-Century BC to AD 2nd-Century.

Yet, perhaps Taurus was not the only Middle Platonist who alludes to ἐξαιφνῆς, the topic of ‘instant of change’ can be found notably in Apuleius (who maybe was a pupil of Taurus, as Dillon has suggested), albeit in a more encrypted way. But the fact is that, contrary to Taurus, Apuleius had mentioned this point into a moral framework, namely about the progress toward virtue and wisdom.

Eum qui per haec profectus fidenti et securo gradu virtutis via graderetur, adeptum solidam vivendi rationem, repente fieri perfectum; hunc repente praeteriti futurique aevi ultimas partes adtingere et esse quodammodo intempore.

Rejection of the both-states-option and of the neither/nor-option at once: the first targets certainly Stoicism, the second weirdly seems to target Plato himself.

Rejection of the either/or-option: the targets are probably either Peripatetic thinkers or Dialecticians or both.

The one who, after such a departure, walks with a confident and assured step in the path of virtue, in possession of an unshakable rule of life, suddenly becomes perfect; it suddenly reaches the extreme limits of the past and the future and is, as it were, timeless.

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123 M.-L. LAKMANN, Der Platoniker Taurus in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius, Brill, 1995, p. 78 n.25
125 Nothing can put us in mind that the Middle Platonists refer to Laws, III 678b5-c1 when they discuss this point.
126 APULEIUS, De Platone et eius Dogmate, II 20.248 (On the authorship of this essay, see the overview in: J. D. REDFORS, Echheitskritische Untersuchung der Apuleiien Schriften
Whether Apuleius had in mind Parm, 156c-d, then his reading is quite different from Taurus on the ontological status of the ‘sudden’ which Apuleius describes as ‘timeless’ (intemporalis). However, Apuleius might have in mind a Stoic doctrine rather than Plato’s Parmenides127. Indeed, Plutarch informs us that Stoics believe that it is possible for a new wise man does not realize that he has reached perfection128, precisely because becoming a sage can be imperceptible and happen instantaneously129, in such a way that the final transition toward wisdom can be unnoticeable for the new wise himself. Such a Stoic thesis was, of course, weightily mocked by Plutarch. But a textual fact should be remarked and makes the exegesis a little more complex, namely that Plutarch was using the word ἐξαιρετικὸς when he displayed the controversial Stoic position:

καὶ γὰρ ἅκερε ἅρμονος καὶ ὀρέας ἐκ τῆς ἀσέ ἐν μᾶλλον φιλόσοφος εἰς γὰρ ἐργολοων ἀποφθέγματι διάθεσιν μεταβάλλειν ὁ σοφός, ἂς οὐδὲν χρόνον πολλὸν μέρος ἁρτί λιγὸς κατήκυς, ἀμα πᾶσαιν ἐξαιρετικῶς ἐκπαύειν.130

Why, if this be so, the wise man in a moment or a laps of time changes from the lowest possible depravity to an unsurpassable state of virtue; and all his vice, of which he has not in long years succeeded in removing even a small portion, he suddenly leaves behind for ever.131

Surprisingly, when Plutarch was challenging with the paradoxes of time and change in another essay, he did not allude to Plato’s ἐξαιρετικός132. How must be interpreted this state of affairs? Perhaps here ἐξαιρετικός is a terminus mysticus rather than a terminus technicus, more precisely an ironic one. By using a Platonic word to describe a Stoic thesis, Plutarch would play with his habitual tendency to sarcasm (like if he had said: ‘Gosh, Stoics believe that becoming wise happens very suddenly, so as a miracle’). Furthermore, in spite of an obvious syncretism133, since none of Apuleius’ evidences can really put us in mind that he had a radical and conscious inclination toward Stoicism to the detriment of Platonic ‘orthodoxy’, Apuleius’ parallel seems rather to highlight that the Platonic text which Plutarch and him have in mind is rather one of some passages in which Plato was talking about a ‘sudden acquisition/loss of knowledge’134 or one of the two ‘mystical’ passages I shall present in length below135 than Parm, 156c-d. In this case, the ‘atemporality’ (intemporalis) attributed to the wise man by Apuleius might result from a kind of

128 PLUTARCH, De communius notitis adversus Stoicos, 1062b
129 PLUTARCH, Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus, 75c-d
130 PLUTARCH, Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus, 75c-d
132 PLUTARCH, De E Delphico, 392a-393c
134 PLATO, Cratylus, 391a1, 396b4, c7, d3, Theaetetus, 162c3, 203e1
135 PLATO, Symposium, 210e, Seventh Letter, 341c
connection or union with the intelligible realm\textsuperscript{136} rather than being a characterization of ἐξαιρήσεις. Nevertheless, Apuleius had maybe consciously matched those Platonic passages with the Stoic doctrine tackled by Plutarch. Thus, according to Apuleius’ and Plutarch’s testimonies, Middle-Platonism’s ‘mystical’ understanding of ἐξαιρήσεις foreshadows forcefully Plotinus and Iamblichus’ readings.

2.2. Plotinus and Iamblichus: Predominance of the ‘Mystical’ ἐξαιρήσεις from Symposium and Seventh Letter

Indeed, when Plotinus and, to a lesser extent, Iamblichus employed the word ἐξαιρήσεις in their works, that is never into a kinematic background in which the puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ can rear its head. Quite the reverse, ἐξαιρήσεις appears in contexts very far from the sensible world and sensible motion, namely when Plotinus and Iamblichus were alluding to the highest level of their henologies, beyond being and intellect. So, they likely follow another Platonic text than Parm., 156c-d.

2.2.1. The Platonic ‘mystical’ Texts

The fact is that apart the Platonic passages in which ἐξαιρήσεις was used as a very common word without real technical or mystical connotation\textsuperscript{137}, there are two kinds of non-kinetic meanings for the ‘sudden’: the suddenness of mystic vision of the Idea and the suddenness of the acquisition or loss of knowledge. These two kinds of meanings, the ‘mystical’ and the ‘epistemological’, are actually not two separate and hermetic senses, as it is shown enough by the uncanny resemblance between Seventh Letter, 341c on the one hand, and Cratylus, 396c-d and Theaetetus, 162c on the other. Yet, that is useful to pull apart the passages in which Plato (or Ps.-Plato\textsuperscript{138}) was explicitly talking about the Intelligible realm or, even, beyond (i.e. about the One-Good-Beauty) from the passages in which Plato had something else in mind, more often a sarcastic or ironic literary effect (‘Gosh, I’m suddenly very smart. It happens like a miracle, right? Maybe, I’m a prophet now.’).

The suddenness of mystic vision

\textit{Symposium, 210e2-211a2: ὡς γὰρ ἂν μέρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ παιδαγωγήθη, θεόμενος ἤφεξα τε καὶ ὀρθός τὰ καλά, πρὸς τέλος ἡδὴ ἵκον τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαιρήσεις κατώτευτα τι θαυμαστόν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, τούτο ἐκέντο, ὦ Σάκρατες, οὐ δὴ ἐνεκέκακον καὶ οἶ}

When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things, in the right and regular ascent, \textit{suddenly} he will have revealed to him, as he draws to the close of his dealings in love, a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature; and

\textsuperscript{136} J. M. DILLON, \textit{The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220}, Duckworth, 1977, p. 335

\textsuperscript{137} This absence of mystical connotation should obviously be highly qualified, because in these passages Plato employs consciously this word to produce a certain kind of literary effect, for instance either for pastiching some literary styles or literary genres, or for laughing at some characters: PLATO, \textit{Symposium}, 212c6, 213c1 (the ‘sudden’ coming of the beautiful Alcibiades is obviously linked to the ‘sudden’ mystical vision of beauty of 210e4), 223b2 (last degradation of the mystical ‘sudden’, since many drunk revellers are ‘suddenly’ coming at Agathon’s banquet after Socrates’ speech about beauty and after the speech of the beautiful Alcibiades about Socrates. Thus, Alcibiades, by virtue of his physical beauty, seems to be a kind of caricature of the Idea of Beauty, and the revellers caricature themselves, by their drunkenness, the behaviour of Alcibiades). Other occurrences of ἐξαιρήσεις without explicit connotations: \textit{Republic}, V 453c7, 472a1, VII 515c6, 516a4, e5 (Alllegory of the Cave: those occurrences need more attention), VIII 553a10, IX 584b7, X 615d6, 621b6, \textit{Parmenides}, 164d3, \textit{Statesman}, 291b7, Laws, II 665b4, IV 712e4, VII 758d4, XII 994b2.

The suddenness of the acquisition/loss of knowledge

Cratylus, 396b3-d3: ΣΩ. τούτον δὲ Κρόνου ὑόν ὑβριστικάν μὲν ἢ τις δόξαν εἶναι ἀκούσαντα εξίμνησιν, εἴλαγον δὲ μεγάλης τινος διανοείς ἔχοντο εἶναι τὸν Δία κόρον γάρ σημαίνει, ἀλλά τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκόμην τοῦ νοῆ, ἐστὶ δὲ σύμφωνον Ὀςρανοῦ ὀϊς, ὡς λόγος: ἢ δὲ αὕτω καλῶς ἔχει τούτῳ τὸ ὅνομα καλείλθεται, ἑοραστήν, ὧντα τὰ ἄνω, ἢπεὶ δὲ καὶ φαντάζειν, ὡς Ἐρμήςεις, τὸν καθαρὸν νοῦν παραγγένεθαι οἱ μετεωρολόγοι, καὶ τῷ σύμφωνο ὅρθῳ τὸ ὅνομα κέασθαι αἰ δὲ ἐμμελέμενην τὴν Ἑσσίδου γεγογήσεω, τίνας ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνοτέρους προγόνους λέγει τούτον, οὐκ ἂν ἐπισκόπησι διϊκῶς ὡς ὅρθως αὐτοῦ τὰ ὅνομα κέαι, ἢοι ἀπεπταράθην τῆς σοφίας ταυτηρί τὸ ὅνομα κέαι, ἢοι ἀπεπταράθην τῆς σοφίας ταυτηρί τὸ ποίησα, ἢ ἢ ἢ ἢ ποιηθεὶς ἢ οὐ, ἢ ἢ ποιηθεὶς ἢ οὐ, ἢ ἢ ποιηθεὶς ἢ οὐ, ἢ ἢ ποιηθεὶς ἢ οὐ. ἘΡΜ. Καὶ μὲν δὴ, ὡς Σύκρατες, ἀπεργὸς γε μοὶ δικαίας ἢ πιθήκοι οἱ ἔνθουσίωντες εξίμνησις χρησμοδεῖν.

Theaetetus, 162c2-6: λέγε δή, ὁ Θεατήτης, πρῶτον μὲν ἤ νοινὴ διήλθες, ἀρα ὃ ὡς ἡθομαχίας εἰ εξίμνησιν οὕτως ἀναφράσθη μηδὲν χέριν εἰς σοφίαν στενοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἢ καὶ θεῶν; ἢ ἢπεὶ τὸ ἰδίον τὸ Πρωταγόρειον μέτοχον εἰς θεοὺς ἢ εἰς ἀνθρώπους λέγεσθαι; this, Socrates, is the final object of all those previous toils. First at all, it is ever-existent and neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes... 139

For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to suddenly birth in the soul, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself. 140

Tell me, Theaetetus, referring to the doctrine we have just expounded, do you not share my amazement at being suddenly exalted to an equality with the wisest man, or even god? Or do you think Protagoras’ ‘measure’ applies any less to gods than to men? 142

2.2.2. Plotinus and the ‘suddenness’ of the coming of the One

Except the passages in which Plotinus just considers a durationless switch without any consideration on the nature of ἐξαίφης, all his uses of this word are explicitly focused on the ‘sudden’ apparition of the One. Moreover, in those cases, the coming of the One is often illustrated by the metaphor of a flash of light. Of course, such a metaphor to exemplify the ‘suddenness’ of change is very commonplace, but there is no doubt about the fact that Plotinus had in mind the two ‘mystical’ Platonic texts in which the ἐξαίφης is directly linked to a ‘mystic experience’ of the transcendent realm understood as an illumination. In particular, given that Plotinus reserves the ‘sudden’ for describing the coming of the One (he never uses this word when he talks about the Intellect), he refers rather to Symposium, 210e in which Diotima teaches Socrates how to climb up the steps toward the highest principle (the Beauty-One). A sign of this focusing on Symposium can also be found in Porphyry, since when he tells us the mystical experiences of Plotinus, Porphyry directly makes the connection with Diotima’s speech.

One must believe one has seen, when the soul suddenly takes light: for this is from him [i.e. the One] and he is it; we must think that he is present when, like another god whom someone called to his house, he comes and brings light to us; for if he had not come, he would not have brought the light.

Just so Intellect, veiling itself from other things and drawing itself inward, when it is not looking at anything will see a light, not a distinct light in something different from itself, but a light by the metaphor of a flash of light. Of course, such a metaphor is very commonplace, but there is no doubt about the fact that Plotinus just considers a durationless switch without any consideration on the nature of ἐξαίφης, all his uses of this word are explicitly focused on the ‘sudden’ apparition of the One. Moreover, in those cases, the coming of the One is often illustrated by the metaphor of a flash of light. Of course, such a metaphor to exemplify the ‘suddenness’ of change is very commonplace, but there is no doubt about the fact that Plotinus had in mind the two ‘mystical’ Platonic texts in which the ἐξαίφης is directly linked to a ‘mystic experience’ of the transcendent realm understood as an illumination. In particular, given that Plotinus reserves the ‘sudden’ for describing the coming of the One (he never uses this word when he talks about the Intellect), he refers rather to Symposium, 210e in which Diotima teaches Socrates how to climb up the steps toward the highest principle (the Beauty-One). A sign of this focusing on Symposium can also be found in Porphyry, since when he tells us the mystical experiences of Plotinus, Porphyry directly makes the connection with Diotima’s speech.

...
καθαρὰν ἐφ’ αὐτοῦ 
εξαιρέτητα φανέν, διότι 
ἀπορεῖν θεν εἰρήνη, 
ἐξαιρέτην ἡ ἕνδον, καὶ 
ἐπελθόντος εἰσελθὼν “ἐνδον ἁρα ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἕνδον αὖ”.

VI 7 [38], 36, 15-21: Ἐνθα δή ἵππας τις πάν 
κάθηται, καὶ μέχρι του παραφυγότεσθαι καὶ ἐν 
καλῷ ἱδρύθης, ἐν φ’ μὲν ἔστι, μέχρι τοῦ 
νοι, ἐξενισθεὶς, δὲ τῷ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοι οὖν 
κῶματι καὶ ὕποι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀιδήσαντος 
ἀρκεῖς εἰσέδενεν ἐξαιρέτης οὐκ ἴδον ὅπου, ἀλλ’ 
ἡθα κλήσατα φωτός τα ὡματα οὐ ἢ αὐτοῦ 
πεποίηκεν ἄλλο ὅπαν, ἀλλ’ αὐτῷ τὸ φῶς τὸ 
όραμα ἦν.

Nonetheless, claiming that, when he alludes to the coming of the One, Plotinus remembers his reading of Symposium and Seventh Letter, does not mean that the depth of his comprehension of ἐξαιρέτης is fully clarified. For instance, it is very easy to link together the ‘mystical’ aspect of the ‘suddenness’ of the manifestation of the One and the fact that in Parm., 156c-d Plato had described the ‘sudden’ as ἀτόνον, viz. as ‘mysterious’.

In regard of Plotinus’ kinetics, there is also a great temptation to look in his theory of motion for a treatment on the ‘sudden’, notably in expecting to discover a link between the ‘sudden’ and the dynamic kernel of Plotinus’ theory. However, such a temptation remains unfortunately unsatisfied, because Plotinus never mentions the ἐξαιρέτης in his reasoning on kinematics and dynamics. Despite this state of affairs, insofar as Plotinus sowed the future Neoplatonist approach by distinguishing two kinds of motion – the

but suddenly appearing, alone, by itself in independent purity [the One], so that Intellect is at a loss to know whence it has appeared, whether it has come from outside or within, and after it has gone away will say “It was within, and yet it was not within”.

But when the soul has good fortune with it [i.e. the Good-One], and it comes to it, or rather, being there already, appears, when that soul turns away from the things that are there, and has prepared by making itself as beautiful as possible and has come to likeness (the preparation and the adornment are clearly understood, I think, by those who are preparing themselves) and it sees it in itself suddenly appearing (for there is nothing between, nor are there still two but both are one; nor could you still make a distinction while it is present; lovers and their beloveds here below imitate this in their will to be united).

It is there that one lets all study go: up to a point one has been led along and settled firmly in beauty and as far as this one thinks that in which one is, but is carried out of it by the surge of the wave of Intellect itself and lifted on high by a kind of swell and sees suddenly, not seeing how, but the vision fills his eyes with light and does not make him see something else by it, but the light himself [i.e. the Good-One] is what he sees.

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152 It is interesting to note that the current best specialist of Plotinus had formerly promised a specific study on the ἐξαιρέτης and Plotinus’ kinetics, but has never published it: R. CHIARADONNA, Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 187 n. 60
causative process and the sensible trajectory —. I shall give a brief account of his kinetics which had been masterly analysed by Chiaradonna.\footnote{153}

Plotinus illustrates wonderfully the genuine aspects of Plato’s kinetics presented above, notably the fact that Platonic dynamics is primarily vertical and depends on a multi-layered ontology.\footnote{154} Indeed, to reply to Alexander’s Neo-Aristotelian physics\footnote{155} and to the exegetical tendencies of his pupil Porphyry, Plotinus supports psychic self-motion by considering — in VI 1 [42], 16 — each kinetic process must be explained by means of two kinds of motion\footnote{156}: firstly, the recursive causative motion of the process, secondly the extensive process itself. In his view, motion in itself should be strongly distinguished from the extended process or trajectory accomplished by the sensible moving object. Indeed, the causative motion is a complete ἐνέργεια outside space\footnote{157} and time\footnote{158}, contrary to the second which is incomplete, derived and quantitative. Thus, there is the vertical causation of the process and the horizontal process itself, in such a way that dynamics studies the first and kinematics the second. So, Plotinus’ kinetics exemplifies perfectly the characteristics of an orthodox Platonism by separating dynamics and kinematics’ realms.

In the very anti-Aristotelian VI 1-3 [42-44] which are an indirect and elenchic proof of Platonism\footnote{159} Plotinus strategically did not explicitly clarify the metaphysical status of the causative motion, but in other treatises\footnote{160}, following Plato, he asserts that is extra-physical and psychic, namely the soul is essentially dynamical and principle of sensible and


\footnote{157} PLOTINUS, Enneads, V 2 [11], 2.10-24.


\footnote{160} PLOTINUS, Enneads, III 6 [26], 4.
quantitative process. Moreover, it is interesting to note that, as Plato said in the Laws\textsuperscript{161}, for Plotinus the soul, without being local, is accountable of circularity in extended motion, while the body moves naturally in a rectilinear way\textsuperscript{162}. In brief, as other phenomena\textsuperscript{163}, corporeal motions are explained via the reference to their extra-physical and intelligible causes, namely dynamical soul. To be truly exhaustive, beyond psychic self-motion, there is also the Great Genera or Idea of Motion in the Intelligible\textsuperscript{164}. So, Plotinus’ triadic theory of motion can be schematized as follows\textsuperscript{165}:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligible</th>
<th>Intellect:</th>
<th>Idea of Motion\textsuperscript{166} (dynamics)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensible</td>
<td>Soul:</td>
<td>psychic self-motion\textsuperscript{167} (kinematics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body:</td>
<td>quantitative motion\textsuperscript{168} (kinematics)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Later, I shall focus on the influence of Plotinus’ kinetics in Neoplatonism, notably for Damascius who has imposed a twist to Platonic ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics. Coming back to Plotinus’ understanding of ἕξαίφνης, I wish concisely return to Chiaradonna’s suggestion according to which the ‘sudden’ of Parm, 156c-d is, in an amphibious way, present in Plotinus’ conception of the causative psychic self-motion\textsuperscript{169}. Indeed, I actually think Chiaradonna’s intuition was historically followed by Damascius.

Plotinus would have interpreted the psychic dynamical causation in connection with the ἕξαίφνης for the following reasons: firstly, the soul (at least partially\textsuperscript{170}) as well as the ‘sudden’ is apart from time; and secondly, Plato had appealed to ἕξαίφνης for explaining change as well as the causation of the soul is employed as an explanation of the sensible motion by Plotinus. So, Plotinus would have conceived that Plato had said that the ‘sudden’ is ‘apart from time’ in the sense according to which that is a non-temporal entity outside of time or beyond the time. This characterization of ἕξαίφνης as timeless is obviously in total agreement with the mystic suddenness of the coming of the One.

The meeting between the soul and the One on the occasion of the psychic ascent occurs outside of time\textsuperscript{171}, in the same way that, for Apuleius, wisdom corresponds to a timeless (intemporalis) connection of the soul with the everlasting Intelligible realm\textsuperscript{172}. In the ‘sudden’, by virtue of such a union (which, strictly speaking, is a unification), the soul takes part in the super-eternity of the highest principle, while the soul partakes in time in

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\textsuperscript{161} PLATO, Laws, X 893b-899b
\textsuperscript{162} PLOTINUS, Enneads, II 2 [14], 1.2-19, 39-51, 2.5-27 (see: M. RASHED, “Contre le mouvement rectiligne naturel: trois adversaires (Xénarque, Ptolémée, Plotin) pour une thèse”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism, Brill, 2009, p. 34-41)
\textsuperscript{164} PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 2 [43], 7-8 (see: R. CHIARADONNA, “Movimento dell’intelletto e movimento dell’anima in Plotino (Enn. VI 2 [43], 8.10)”, in F. ALESSI, F. ARONADIO, C. DALFNO, L. SIMEONI, E. SPINELLI (eds.), Anthropine sophia. Studi di filologia e storiografia filosofica in memoria di Gabriele Giannantoni, Bibliopolis, 2008, p. 497-508)
\textsuperscript{165} Explicitly mentioned in: PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 1 [44], 22.16-18
\textsuperscript{166} PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 2 [43], 7-8
\textsuperscript{167} PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 1 [42], 16, 3 [44], 22-23 and 3 [44], 27.23-25
\textsuperscript{168} PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 3 [44], 21-27
\textsuperscript{169} R. CHIARADONNA, Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 187 n. 60
\textsuperscript{170} PLOTINUS, Enneads, III 7 [45], 7.1-7
\textsuperscript{171} PLOTINUS, Enneads, VI 7 [38], 31-35
\textsuperscript{172} APULEIUS, De Platone et eius Doxgmate, II 20.248
the course of the psychic fall toward the sensible world and its embodiment. These mystical experiences (according to Porphyry, Plotinus had lived at least four ‘unifications’174) happen in the life of the soul as a sandwiching a timeless activity between even, by virtue of the intermediary psychic nature according to which the soul is partaken between an intellective part and a sensible one175: inside – temporal ones176, in the same way that in Parm, 156c-d, the ἐξαίφνης occurs between two periods or stretches of time. So, albeit Plotinus position seems to be closest to Apuleius than Taurus, the possibility might remain, according to Chiaradonna’s suggestion, that Plotinus’ insistence on the ἐξαίφνης of Symposium was in fact linked to an unorthodox reading of the kinematic excursus of Parmenides, in the way of a transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics which was later explicitly followed by Damascius. However, the fact is that Plotinus keeps the ἐξαίφνης for describing the connection with the One; furthermore, none of his texts can really put us in mind that he had elsewhere employed this word for another specific and dynamic entity, notably for the soul. Thus, I think, in view of the available texts, the mystical understanding of Plotinus’ ἐξαίφνης should be favoured rather than the dynamical one.

2.2.3. Iamblichus: between Kinematics and Mysticism

Iamblichus draws a reading quite different of the ‘mystical’ ἐξάθητης. Besides, the word rarely appears in Iamblichus: in the chapter of Protrepticus in which Iamblichus copies the Platonic Allegory of the Cave almost word for word178, in few passages of De mysteriis, in one of De Anima, and in none of the preserved fragments of his commentaries on Plato179.

De mysteriis, I 7 21.1-5: Τὸ μὲν ἐστιν ἄρον καὶ ὑπερέχον καὶ ὀλοτελές, τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον καὶ ἄπολεπτόμενον καὶ ἀτέλεστρον καὶ τὸ μὲν πάντα δύναται ἠμι ἐν τῷ νῦν μονοιδός, τὸ δὲ οὔτε ὁλὰ οὔτε ἀθρόας οὔτε ἐξαίφνης οὔτε ἔμεριστος.

De mysteriis, III 13 130.8-14: ὄσπερ γὰρ ἡμᾶς καταλάμβανες οὐ πέρακε τὴν αὐτὴν For just as when the sun shines, the darkness by its nature is not able to resist its light, and

173 PLOTINUS, Enneads, III 7 [45], 11-13
174 PORPHYRY, Life of Plotinus, 23
177 PLOTINUS, Enneads, II 9 [33], 9.53, III 1 [3], 1.17, III 2 [47], 4.42, IV 6 [41], 3.37, V 8 [31], 7.14. In all these texts, ἐξαίφνης means ‘suddenly’ in the sense of a kinematic durationless switch.
178 IAMB LICHUS, Protrepticus, 15
Gorgias dying of daemons and heroes) 

Is it likely, then, that the substance of the gods should suffer any pollution from such vapours, seeing as it suddenly and at one blow, so to speak, cuts off the vapours emanating from matter as a whole and from material bodies? In three of these passages, Iamblichus makes a connection between the ‘suddenness’ of a change and the commonplace example of lightning flash as Ps.-Plato did in Seventh Letter, 341c, in such a way that Iamblichus’ uses taste almost like mystical ones. Such a taste is obviously reinforced by the fact that ἐξαίφνης, at least in De mysteriis, appears in contexts in which Iamblichus speaks about Gods. So, as Plotinus, Iamblichus keeps the ἐξαίφνης for the higher levels of his theology (he never uses it for the intermediary genus of daemons and heroes), in such a way that, contrary to later Neoplatonists, he does not interlace a specific meaning of ἐξαίφνης with the soul-level. However, such a ‘mystic’ overtone must be qualified by the fact that Iamblichus does not explain in detail his conception of ἐξαίφνης and uses it for instantaneous change understood as durationless switch in total agreement with Parm, 156c-d. Furthermore, in the quotation extracted from De Anima in which Iamblichus is focused on the event of dying, maybe, as I have suggested for Taurus, Iamblichus had in mind a passage of Gorgias in which Plato precisely discusses the ‘sudden’ separation of the soul from the body at the time of death. Anyway, as De mysteriis, I 7 21.1.5 shows, Iamblichus does not seem to really distinguish between Platonic ἐξαίφνης and Aristotelian νῦν when he has in mind a durationless event. Albeit Iamblichus’ conception of the νῦν, according to

180 = STOBÆUS, Anthology, I 384.2-8


185 PLATO, Gorgias, 523e2-6
Proclus’ and Simplicius’ testimonies of Iamblichus’ *In Timaeum*\(^{186}\) had been quite complex and very elaborated\(^{187}\), none of the evidences has preserved a substantial analysis either of the precise kinematic properties of the εξαίφνης/νίν, or of its logical status.

In conclusion, due to the status of our sources, that seems difficult to understand well Iamblichus’ reading of Plato’s εξαίφνης. In view of his strong tendency to mysticism, the father of theology would likely have insisted on Diotima’s speech rather than on the kinematic excursus of *Parmenides*. But in the absence of any evidence concerning his reading of these two passages (notably in the lost commentary on *Parmenides*), all interpretations of Iamblichus’ position remain highly and desperately conjectural.

Nevertheless, there stays few clear-cut points: from Middle-Platonism to Early Neoplatonism, the εξαίφνης had always been understood as belonging – more or less explicitly – to kinematics, and never expressly to dynamics on the one hand, and during that period Platonists seem to have particularly emphasized its ‘mystical’ overtone on the other.

3. LATER NEOPLATONISM: THE TRANSFER OF THE ΕΞΑΙΦΝΗΣ FROM KINEMATICS TO DYNAMICS

If the Platonist readings presented above, I apologize, are far from being very enthralling, especially by comparison with the original Platonic text, the situation is fortunately quite different for the following. Indeed, by virtue of the *Parmenides*-focusing of Later Neoplatonism, the interpretation of εξαίφνης becomes a significant issue for discovering the ‘true’ understanding of Plato’s thought, notably concerning the very nature of the soul.

3.1. *The σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis of Parmenides*

In several texts, Proclus draws an overview of the various readings of the Hypotheses of *Parmenides*, from Middle-Platonism to him\(^{188}\). These important testimonies, supported by their scholia\(^{189}\), show that there was a large consensus on the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis from Plotinus to Damascius, by way of Amelius, Porphyry, Plutarch, Syrianus

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and Proclus. Indeed, all agreed that in this Hypothesis, Plato had aimed at catching the intermediary nature of the soul. The only black sheep appears to be Iamblichus who thought that the σκοτός concerns the essence of the intermediary genus of a theological bestiary (heavily inspired by the Chaldaic Oracles), namely the nature of angels, daemons and heroes, while Plato would have treated with the soul in the Fourth and Fifth Hypotheses. Iamblichus’ position had been harshly rejected by his successors Proclus and Damascius in their commentaries, despite the usual claims about the ‘greatness’ of the father of theurgy. Thus, a Neoplatonist consensus seems to enclose together the soul-level and the brief passage on the ‘sudden’, in such a way that they must find a kind of connection between the very psychic nature and the ἑξαίφνης.

Despite this exegetical claim, that is hard to discover a high interest for the ‘sudden’ in their respective thoughts, as if they were discomforted with the content of the Third Hypothesis. I think the very reason why Neoplatonists had considered this text as referring to the soul, before anything else, was purely exegetical, so, in a sense, purely formal, without any preliminary scouring of its precise matter. In other words, such an interpretation above all results from their Parmenides-focusing.

The Neoplatonic Parmenides-focusing is utterly obvious, even if the intertwining of the exegesis of the dialogue with the elaboration of a genuine Platonic theology is still partially obscure. By the way, Proclus claims in the Platonic Theology that the complete theological thought of Plato can especially be found in the Parmenides rather than in the other dialogues. Following this statement and the alleged concordance between the levels of Neoplatonic multi-layered theology and the Hypotheses, the Third Hypothesis must match with a diacosm. What is the best candidate?

The answer must be discovered in the exegetical tradition of the Parmenides. Beyond the Middle-Platonic dialectical interpretations of the Parmenides, the Third Hypothesis had been typically commented as an arcane key of the soul’s realm from the Neopythagoreanism of Moderatus, and through him from his reader Plotinus. The deep influence of Plotinus upon his successors had quickly transformed the brief allusions

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192 PROCLUS, In Parm, VI 1055.17-1057.5
195 PROCLUS, Platonic Theology I 7
196 PROCLUS, Platonic Theology I 8-9, In Parm, I 630.37-635.27
198 PORPHYRY, Life of Plotinus, 20
of the schedule of the *Parmenides* present in the *Enneads*\(^{199}\) into extended commentaries of the dialogue that systematize Plotinus’ teaching. Thus, a consensus emerges from Plotinus according to which the ὀξυνοές of the First Hypothesis is the One, of the Second is the Intellect, and of the Third is the Soul. Iamblichus will be the single to interpret the Third Hypothesis differently. All other commentators, from earlier Neoplatonists as Amelius and Porphyry to the later who succeed to the teaching of Plutarch of Athens, had followed Plotinus, sometimes, of course, with great amendments aiming to erect a very ‘baroque’\(^{200}\) theology from the initial Plotinian bricks, notably by distinguishing several diacosms inside the three hypostases (intelligible, intelligible-intellective, intellective in the original homogeneous Intelligible realm). Thus, that is the respect for the tradition, and especially for Plotinus, which is primarily accountable for the conflation between the soul and the ἐξωθής – in other words, a purely formal reason.

The ‘formalism’ of the concordance between the Hypotheses and the diacosms is vivid in a very funny fact: albeit all Plotinus’ successors were in agreement both with the conflation of the soul-level and the Third Hypothesis and with the Plotinian schedule of the *Parmenides*, they had split the dialogue in different ways, in such a way that the Third Hypothesis is not the same text for all\(^{201}\). Consequently, for some Neoplatonists, the passage on the ‘sudden’ belongs to the Second Hypothesis rather than to the Third. According to Proclus, Amelius had divided the dialogue into eight Hypotheses\(^{202}\), while Porphyry and the majority of Plotinus’ heirs (Iamblichus, Plutarch of Athens, Syrianus, Proclus, and Damascius) into nine\(^{203}\), the ‘Anonymous of Rhodes’ into ten\(^{204}\). Therefore, for Amelius the Third Hypothesis likely corresponds to 157b6-159b\(^{205}\), for Porphyry and his followers to 155e4-157b5. Proclus judges the more consensual division into nine hypotheses as certainly more natural than the others, but given that the passage on the ‘sudden’ is likely a corollary or an appendix of the Second Hypothesis\(^{206}\), the true number is rather eight according to Amelius. Anyway, the various cuttings of Plotinus’ pupils show us that Plotinus had surely neither elaborated a precise exegesis of the Hypotheses, nor got closer together the essence of the soul and the ‘sudden’ (indeed, Plotinus seems to have rather kept the ‘sudden’ for the coming of the One). Consequently, directly after his teaching and in the absence of clear indications, his pupils Amelius and Porphyry had


\(^{200}\) R. WARDY, *Doing Greek Philosophy*, Routledge, 2007, p. 81

\(^{201}\) See: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 6, Les Belles Lettres, 2017, p. 1 n.5 (p. 164-168)

\(^{202}\) PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VI 1052.31-1053.35

\(^{203}\) PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VI 1053.36-1055.25, 1058.21-1064.12

\(^{204}\) PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VI 1057.5-1064.12

\(^{205}\) Corrigan considers that Amelius had neglected the last hypothesis (165c2-166c5) rather than regarded 155e4-157b5 as a part of the Second Hypothesis, see: K. CORRIGAN, “Plotinus and the Hypotheses of the Second Part of Plato’s *Parmenides*”, in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato’s Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 39-40

challenged in different ways the text about the ἐξαιρήσεις. But Amelius was unlucky, since his (possible) best heir – Iamblichus – had rejected his interpretation by favouring the division into nine sections. Yet, given that the σκοτεινοὶ of the next two hypotheses, for Amelius and Iamblichus, are the same (namely the superior/rational and the inferior/irrational souls), Iamblichus had probably kept from Amelius that the σκοτεινός of 155e4–157b5 is not the soul but the last divine genus – namely angels, daemons and heroes – before the rational soul possessed by men, in such a way his innovation had consisted to split the Second Hypothesis of Amelius into two separated hypotheses.

In conclusion, at least from Porphyry, commenting on the Third Hypothesis was become equivalent to challenging with the ‘sudden’, in such a way that the commentators should discover a psychic dimension for the ‘sudden’. Unfortunately, only Damascius’ commentary on the Third Hypothesis has lasted the centuries to us, in such a way that the fashion by which Porphyry or Proclus had proceeded for integrating the ἐξαιρήσεις into the study of the soul remains highly conjectural, especially as the ‘sudden’ is far from being very present in their other writings.

However, I wish to suggest a possible puzzle that would force the Neoplatonists to elaborate a non-usual understanding of the ἐξαιρήσεις. By virtue of their belief of an ideal harmony between Aristotle and Plato, they did not hesitate to have kinematics very strongly influenced by Aristotle’s (sometimes too influenced for some Neoplatonists themselves). Yet, interpreting the ἐξαιρήσεις kinematically as an Aristotelian νῦν or not doing that implies to mangle either the concordance between the Hypotheses and the diacosms, or the harmonization of Aristotle with Plato. Indeed, understanding the ἐξαιρήσεις as kinematic actually involves an invasion of Platonic doctrines in a sensible realm usually governed by Aristotelian laws (and, conversely, an intrusion of Aristotelian physics into a theological Platonic framework), so the cost will be at least a kind of confusion between the two philosophers’ jurisdictions, and – more intolerable – will highlight an evident tension between Aristotle’s and Plato’s teachings: Aristotle’s νῦν is merely physical, whereas Plato’s ἐξαιρήσεις should be, for exegetical reasons, psychic. So, the Neoplatonists have two options: either rejecting the conflation between the νῦν and the ἐξαιρήσεις for preserving the Plotinian schedule of the Hypotheses by supporting that the ἐξαιρήσεις is a psychic stuff, if so they miss an opportunity to harmonize Aristotle’s and Plato’s physics; or, as Simplicius did, preferring such harmonization by supporting that the νῦν and the ἐξαιρήσεις are the same item, if so that becomes very hard to interpret the Third Hypothesis as speaking about the Soul. The conjunction between their ideal of harmonization and their respect for the Plotinian exegesis entails a kind of Cornelian choice. So, perhaps, at least in the context of a commentary on the Parmenides, it becomes crucial to elaborate a clear distinction between the Aristotelian νῦν and the Platonic ἐξαιρήσεις to preserve the concordance between the Hypotheses and the hypostases. I shall argue that Damascius was perfectly aware of this dilemma and had chosen to strongly distinguish between a kinematic νῦν (that is true, not really in an Aristotelian fashion) and a dynamic ἐξαιρήσεις. Notwithstanding, the case of Proclus appears as being quite different.

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207 On this Neoplatonic ideal of a deep harmony between Plato and Aristotle, see: I. HADOT, Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism and the Harmonization of Aristotle and Plato, Brill, 2015

208 For instance, Simplicius found Proclus’ theory of motion too Aristotelian: SIMPLICIUS, In Phys, 404.16-33

209 SIMPLICIUS, In Phys, 982.6
3.2. The ἐξαίφνης as constituting the Essence of the Soul

3.2.1. Proclus’ Ambiguity

Given the loss of Proclus’ commentary on the Third Hypothesis, Proclus’ understanding of the ‘sudden’ should be discovered in his other works. The least that can be said is that Proclus was not very interested by the ἐξαίφνης, since he had used this word only seven times in his very vast oeuvre210. Such parsimony is rather surprising for Proclus. Fortunately, one of these occurrences is explicitly linked to the Third Hypothesis, and several of them are employed in a context in which Proclus had in mind either the journey of the soul, or the coming of Daemons or of the Forms, in such a way that they constitute a coherent and homogeneous corpus.

In Alc., 80.9-13: καὶ κατ’ αὐτήν τοῦ δαίμονος τὴν ἐνέργειαν οὐ τῇ διανοίᾳ μόνον οὐδὲ ταῖς δοξαιστικῖς δινόμενον ὑπεδέχετο τὸ ἐκεῖθεν προδόν φύος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πνεύματι, διὰ πάσης αὐτοῦ τῆς ᾠδής χοροφυσῆς ἐξαίφνης τῆς δαιμονίας ἐλλάμβανος καὶ αὐτὴν ἢδὲ τὴν αἰσθήσεων κινούσα.

In Tim., I 112.25-113.7: οὔδα μὲν οὖν, ὡς καὶ Πλούταρχος ὃς Χαρισκείτις ἀστειοίτες τοὺς περὶ τὴν Βρεττανίαν θηρίων κατὰ τινα μίαν ἑραν ἐστίν δοκοῦσαν καὶ ἁπλῶν καὶ διὰ τούτῳ ἀφεύμην ὑπὸ τῶν κρατοῦντων πολλάκις γίνεσθαι τοῦ ἀέρος συγχύσεως ἐξαίφνης καὶ καταπτώσεως ἢ ὁμίρουν ἢ κεραινόν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἐγχώριους, ὡς τῶν κρατοῦντων τις ἐξέλειπε, συνήθες ὡς τοῖς πάθοις τούτοις, ὁμολογεῖν δὲ κρείττονας ψυχῶν μετανοιασμοῖς καὶ ἀπολύμανοισι τοῦ γένεσιν, οὐ μὴν ἄλλα καὶ κατοικοῦν εἰς σύνωμα ψυχῶν τουσία τοιοῦτοι συμπεπερατέοις ὑπό ἀπογνωστόντων, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν μεγαλαύργων καὶ δαιμονιστέρων οὐσίας λαχωνίων, οὐάν καὶ τὴν τοῖς Φαεθόντος εἶναι ψυχῆν ὁ μίθους οὕτως ἤνεξάτω.

In Parm, IV 844.2-11: διὸ καὶ τὸ γυγνόμνων ἀλλ’ ἔγνεται παρ’ αὐτῆς ὁμοίως γὰρ τῷ ποιεῖται παντοτὸ γυγνόμνων ὄλον καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ χρόνον ὑφικεύμενοι ἐν τῇ ἐξαίφνης παραγίγνεται τὸ ἔδοξον τῶν πρὸ τῆς παροικίας αὐτοῦ ποιησάν τὰ ἐμπόδια μόνον τῆς παροικίας ἐξαρουσών· καὶ γὰρ ἢ μὲν ἐξαίφνης στὸν ἐμποδίαν κατὰ χρόνον

The least that can be said is that Plutarch of Chaeronea tells the story213 that, on one of the little islands around Britain – one that is reputed to be holy and inviolate, and has for this reason been left alone by those in power – there often suddenly occur disturbances of the air and the unleashing of either downpours or thunderbolts. Further he says the inhabitants who are used to such happenings say that one of the superior powers has passed on, meaning by ‘superior ones’ souls that are experiencing a change of bodies and are leaving one life-form. All the same one should not dismiss the idea that such things also occur when souls descend into bodies, especially in the case of those who are workers of greatness and have received a daemonic lot, such as this myth riddlingly suggests was the case with Phaethon’s soul.214

For this reason the thing that comes to be always comes to be from thought, for the being being made is everywhere together with its maker. Hence even in things that come to be in time the Form appears suddenly, the creative actions preceding its appearance serving only to remove the obstacles to its appearance. For the removal of obstacles <takes time, but the

210 PROCLUS, In Alc, 80.12, In Remp, II 353.2, 27, In Parm, IV 844.6, In Crat, 54.19, In Tim, I 112.30, In Eucl, 20.9
212 PLUTARCH, De defectu oraculorum, 419e-f
In Remp, II 352.23-353.7: εἰ δὲ ἄλλην ἄλλη καὶ ἐξαίφνης 211 ἵμμαν ʰφην, δὴν δὲ ἔρμωθεν ὡς διασπείρατο μὲν εἰς τὴν πελατηθόμενην καὶ διημημένην ἐν τῇ γενέσει ὑπον καὶ εἰς οἰκήσεις διαιρεθέντας καὶ μερίδας τῆς γῆς, άθρόος δὲ εἰσκηρίνεται πάση καὶ ἀρχόντως τὰ σώματα ἐμφανίζουσαν καὶ ἐνοικίζονται ἐν αὐτοῖς ὡς τῆς ἕξος τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τῆς ἐν σώμασιν τῶν διορισμῶν ἀναπαύσισθην ὑπάρχειν. τοιάντη γὰρ ἐν Παρμενίδῃ τοῦ ἐξαίφνης αὐτὸς ἴμμεν ἤρμηνευόμενοι φύσεως, ἐτοιμα δέ τινα ἴμμεν ὡς ἔκει λέγει, καθ' ἴνα αἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων εἰς τὰ ἀντικείμενα γίνονται μεταστάσεις, καὶ εἰκόνες ἐναὶ εἰς τὰ σώματα τῶν ψυχῶν ἐν τούτῳ δὴ τὸ ἐξαίφνης ἐπιτελοῦνται, καὶ πᾶσα μεταβολὴ ἐξ της στάσεως εἰς κινήσεως καὶ εἰς κινήσεας ἀπὸ τῆς στάσεως.

In Remp, II 353.26-354.2: Τὸ δ' οὖν ἐκείνης πάντων τούτων, ὅτι πώς μὲν ἐν τῷ σώματι γέγονεν, οὐκ οὐδὲν ἢ γὰρ ἐξαίφνης ὡς οὐκ ἐδοκοῦ ἐπιστάθησαν ἔρως οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐξαίφνης γενομένων ἐφικτημένων, χρόνου παράτατον τῆς ἐπιστάσεως ἀπατούσης, ἵνα παρακολουθήσῃ τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ τῷ μέσῳ καὶ τῷ τέλει τοῦ συμβαίνοντος, ἀναβλήνως δὲ ἐκεῖνος ἐδείξε ἐπὶ τῇ ποιή κείμενοις διδακταὶ, ὡς ἐγέρται ἐν προοιμίῳ.

While reading these texts, a conclusion is blindly obvious, namely that Proclus makes exclusively a kinematic use of ἐξαίφνης. In all these passages, he draws an opposition between ‘process that occurs suddenly’ and ‘process that needs a period of time’ (or a ‘duration/continuance of time’: χρόνου παράτασιν220), so he rediscovers Plato’s appearance of Form occurs in an instant, imitating in this the eternal genesis of all things at once through the principle of aptitude for reception.215

If [Plato] says that ‘<such soul> is rising on one side, another to another’, and ‘suddenly’216, it is clear, I suppose, that, on the one hand, souls are dispersed in pluralized and divided life of the becoming, into different places of residence and into different parts of the earth, and that, on the other hand, their entering into the body are made for all in one go, insofar as it takes no time for them to animate and settle in. So that the separation between life outside the body and life into the body actually is imperceptible. This is how Plato himself explains in the Parmenides the nature of the sudden, which is a sort of ‘weird’ stuff, as he says there, according to which the passages from a contrary to another happen. It is therefore in this sudden that the entering of souls in bodies are accomplished, and every change either from motion to rest, or from rest to motion.217

As a result of all this, it is said that Er ‘did not know how and in what way he returned to his body218 – the suddenness of the passage did not allow him to pay attention to it: in fact, in the other sudden events either, we cannot pay attention to how they happen, because the attention requires a certain duration of time, which allows us to observe the beginning, the middle and the end of what is happening – but that, having looked up ‘he saw himself at dawn lying on the funeral pyre’219 where he had been for twelve days, as it was said in the preamble.

211 ἐξαίφνης which has the same meaning of ἐξαίφνης is almost never employed by the Platonists. By the way, ἐξαίφνης is a hapax in Plato (Republic, X 621b3). Proclus uses this word only while he was explaining this passage of Plato.


216 PLATO, Republic, X 621b3

217 In absence of any English translation available, those of Proclus’ essays on Republic are my own, although they follow very closely the French translation of Festugière.

218 PLATO, Republic, X 621b5-6

219 PLATO, Republic, X 621b6-7

dichotomy between the subset of ἔξωθής and the subset of χρόνου that structures the set of ‘temporal-entities’. Additionally, he characterizes the set of χρόνου as the set of ‘temporal-items’ for which that is possible to discern a beginning, a middle and an end.\(^{221}\)

In regard of kinematics, the most important text is the passage of the Sixteenth Dissertation on the Republic in which Proclus explicitly alludes to Parm., 156c-d and claims that the ‘sudden’ is a ‘weird’ stuff in which the transition from contrary to contrary occurs. Taking the example of life and death (or, in a Platonic way, of embodiment and uplifting), Proclus seems to allude to the classic puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ already treated by Taurus, maybe too he had in mind the precise text of the Gorgias on the ‘sudden’ separation of the soul from the body at the time of death.\(^{222}\) So, according to Trouillard’s words, for Proclus the ‘sudden’ is the ‘neutral’ point in which occurs the transition between two phases, for instance between the phase of reversion and the phase of procession. Albeit he does not discuss the logical and the ontological status of the ‘sudden’ in the text extracted from the Sixteenth Dissertation, the short passage from his commentary on the Parmenides is eloquent enough. In this text, Proclus says very quickly that the εἶδος is coming into the sensible world suddenly and not in a period of time. The allusion must be understood in the light of another text of the same commentary.\(^{224}\)

Likewise the Forms transcend all time; they are present non-temporally and immediately to all their participants. Although, as we have said before, comings-into-being are conditions preparatory to participation in the Forms, and these are of course temporal events; nevertheless the Forms permit things in the world of generation to participate in them without any lapse of time at all, indiscernibly in an indivisible instant, which is a reflection of their eternal reality.\(^{225}\)

In the last text, the word ἔξωθής is replaced by τὸ νῦν. The understanding of Proclus appears very clearly. Challenging the usual Platonic puzzle of the μέθεξις to explain the causation of the Forms,\(^{226}\) Proclus supports the view that the Form is coming into the sensible realm suddenly, namely without any duration, because such a way is the most capable of imitating the eternity of the Forms.\(^{227}\) In other words, by virtue of the fact that the Forms belong to the everlasting realm, their coming-into-sensible should be the less temporal as possible, so the participation occurs durationless, of course, after a durative overcoming of the barriers that could prevent its sudden reception (so after the demiurgic kneading of the many stages of substrate).\(^{228}\) Given that the duration is a vivid sign of temporality, therefore of sensibility, avoiding duration must indicate a higher ontological

\(^{221}\) PROCLUS, In Remp., II 353.29-354.1

\(^{222}\) PLATO, Gorgias, 523e2-6

\(^{223}\) J. TROUILLARD, L’Un et l’âme selon Proclus, Les Belles Lettres, 1972, p. 152-153


\(^{226}\) PROCLUS, In Parm., IV 837.5-890.37

\(^{227}\) PROCLUS, In Parm., VI 844.10-12, 873.24-25

position and a greater likeness with the High Diacosms that reign beyond the becoming. For this reason, a durationless coming here below is more suitable for the Forms than a process with duration, even if their instantaneous coming arise after a preparatory demiurgic process with duration²²⁹. Thus, by their sudden appearance, the Forms do not depart from their eternal being, in such a way that their coming into the sensible world imitate as far as possible their being. This relation of μίμησις permit to escape the absurdities of the ‘proto-Hegelian’ interpretation of ἔξαιφνης presented above²³⁰, namely the fact that sensible change occurs beyond the time according to a meaningless extratemporal fashion, that is to say according to a view which sustains that the ‘instant of change’ is outside of time and belongs to the everlasting Intelligible realm. Indeed, for Proclus, there is just a relation of imitation between the eternity of the Forms and the suddenness of their coming into the sensible world, in such a way that the ἔξαιφνης belongs to the diacosm of becoming and keeps its kinematic explanatory strength. Furthermore, the fact that Proclus interprets the ‘sudden’ exclusively in a kinematic fashion is reinforced by the interchangeability between ἔξαιφνης and νῦν that seems to be very usual for the Neoplatonists (given that such interchangeability has already been discovered in Iamblichus and Simplicius).

Insofar as the suddenness of the coming is a characteristic of the appearance of the Forms, beyond the kinematic aspect of the ‘sudden’, Proclus’ understanding is not devoid of a mystical overtone. Following the examples of Plotinus who keeps the suddenness for the appearance of the One and of Iamblichus who often uses ἔξαιφνης when he was speaking about the Gods, Proclus has a deep tendency to link together the ‘suddenness’ of a change and the items belonging to non-sensible diacosms, especially to the soul-realm. Indeed, a list of examples of change for which Proclus uses the word ἔξαιφνης shows the link with the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis.

In Alc., 80.9-13  The demonic irradiation that enlightens suddenly all Socrates’ soul, with an allusion to the psychic triad: διάνοια-δῶξα-πνεύμα/αἴσθήσεις

In Tim, I 112.25-113.7  The transfers of the souls downwards or upwards occurring with changes in their pneumatic clothing²³¹, notably the descent of the soul into the last vehicle (ὄχημα), namely into the body²³². The ‘sudden’ meteorological changes observable on the occasion of their psychic transfers can be explained by the greater demonic nature of some souls and the chemical properties of the psychic vehicle, as that is the case for Phaethon.

²²⁹ Proclus’ solution for the coming of the Forms has an obvious ‘family-resemblance’ with the Aristotelian puzzle of the ‘instant of coming-to-be’, especially with the solution of Averroes, see: C. CERAMI, Génération et Substance. Aristote et Averroès entre physique et métaphysique, de Gruyter, 2015, p. 402-421 and, for Alexander: M. RASHED (ed.), Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 102-105


²³² See: PROCLUS, In Tim, III 298-299
The transfers of the souls downwards or upwards, more particularly the embodiment of the souls which occurs suddenly, without any duration, in such a way that the bodies become alive instantaneously. (Proclus comments the ἐξάπθης of Republic, X 621b6)

In Remp, II 352.23-353.7

Comment on Republic, X 621b5: Er did not remember how he has been embodied, owing to the suddenness of the embodiment.

The fact that Proclus’ uses of ἐξάπθης are often focused on the ascent and the descent of the non-divine soul, especially on its embodiment, points out the context of his reading, namely the exegesis of the Third Hypothesis (view, of course, already highly sustained by the explicit reference to Parm, 156c-d in the Sixteenth Dissertation). Damascius’ discussion on the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis seems to support this view, insofar as Damascius begins his purpose by saying that this hypothesis is concerned with “the soul which goes down into the becoming, then climbs back up”233, making an obvious reference to one of the last theorems of Proclus’ Elements of Theology234. Inasmuch as Damascius likely had Proclus’ In Parm in front of him when he was writing his commentary235, that seems rational to suppose that Proclus had linked together the Third Hypothesis and the journey of the souls.

Besides, in his division of the Parmenides, Proclus has followed his master Syrianus236, notably by distinguishing three kinds of souls237, in such a way that the Third Hypothesis is devoted only to the demonic and human souls which precisely accomplish procession and reversion, and plunge into sensible water (that is not completely the case for the divine souls, namely the unparticiped soul which is extra-mundane or hypercosmic238, the World-Soul239, the souls of the seven planets and of the fixed stars240, and the souls of the gods below the moon241). Then, Proclus would have emphasized the superior nature of these lower souls by claiming that the coming of these souls share the suddenness with the coming of the Forms that in themselves inhabit into the Intellegible realm. In this way, the suddenness of the appearance becomes a differentiating sign of the superior diacosms (in particular the Intellegible and the Psychic), insofar as one of their common characterististics is that their inhabitants enter into the sensible realm without any duration.

However, from an exegetical point of view, Proclus’ understanding of the ἐξάπθης seems to entail a difficulty concerning the ‘real’ σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis, inasmuch as, in Proclus’ interpretation, Plato would focus on the modalities of the psychic coming into the sensible world rather than on the very nature of demonic and human souls. For scrupulously respecting the schedule of the Hypotheses, he should have explained the

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233 DAMASCIUS, In Parm, 247.8-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 3.8-10)
234 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §206
236 PROCLUS, In Parm, VI 1063.5-1064.12 (Fragments of Syrianus’ In Parm are available in: S. KLITENIC WEAR, The Teachings of Syrianus on Plato’s Timaeus and Parmenides, Brill, 2011)
238 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §164
239 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 290.3-4
240 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 255.10-19
241 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 255.20-23
εξάιψθης as an element of the psychic ‘one-and-many’ nature. None of Procean texts in which εξαίψθης appears can put us in mind that Proclus had elaborated such an exegesis. However, Damascius alludes to that kind of explanation from Proclus. Indeed, at the beginning of his answer of the eighth issue devoted to the nature of the εξαίψθης, Damascius writes:

In Parm, 262.8-11:

What is this sudden and what is the timeless? That was the eighth issue. Is it the eternal of the soul and its very being, as [Proclus] says? And how can it manifest itself between the motions and the rests? He answers: insofar as it is anterior to both; at least, that is from it, he says, and around it that the becoming proceeds.

As Trouillard has perfectly seen, a brief passage of Proclus’ commentary on Timaeus can sustain Damascius’ testimony:

In Tim, III 215.17-23: ἀφανεῖ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἄμα τὸ οὐδὲν καὶ ἄλλον καὶ τίθησι πάλιν διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἀναρέσεως· τὰ γὰρ μέσα τοιαύτην ἐλάχιστον, οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένην τῶν τῶν ἄκρων λόγων καὶ πάλιν ἀμφότερα δικοῦσιν παρεχέν, ὅσπερ ἐξ τις καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀμεριστὸν τέ ἡμα καλον καὶ μερισθήν ὡς ἐς ἀμφότερον ὅσον μερισθήν ὡς τῶν ἄκρων ἐξηλατημένην.

For the Demiurge takes away from them together the immortal and the indissoluble, and again confers these on them through a subversion of their opposites. For media are allotted this nature, not receiving the nature of the extremes, and appearing to comprehend the whole of both. Just as if some one should call the soul together imperable and partible, as consisting of both, and neither imperable, nor partible, as being different from the extremes.

So, it must be noted that the kinematic aspect of Procean εξαίψθης has hidden a deepest understanding of the Third Hypothesis. Indeed, the fact that In Tim, III 215.17.23 and the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis are closely linked is blindingly obvious, given that, at least from Plotinus, the soul is understood as being both one-and-many and neither-many-nor-one (following Timaeus, 35a) and neither-many-nor-one (following Parm, 155e-156a). In Tim, III 215.17.23 shows us that the logical status of the ‘sudden’ has actually been transferred from his original background to the intermediary soul whose Proclus says that its φόρος consists to be neither divisible nor divisible, and both divisible and indivisible – that is to say; neither A nor ¬A, and both A and ¬A. Thus, in a sense, the soul ‘puts away’ or ‘destroys-and-preserves’ both the contrary states. In Proclus (and, as we will see, in Damascius), there is a kind of ‘proto-Hegelian’ understanding of the soul by virtue of its function of mediation between the indivisible higher principles and the divisible bodies. Such a ‘proto-Hegelian’ overtone should be qualified however, given that this logical description of the soul is only due to the difficulty for understanding his ‘strange’

243 In absence of any English translation available, those of Damascius’ commentary are my own, although they follow very closely the French translation of Westerink and Combès.
244 J. TROUILLARD, L’Un et l’âme selon Proclus, Les Belles Lettres, 1972, p. 152-154
246 PLOTINUS, Enneads, IV 2 [4], 2.52-55, V 1 [10], 8.24-27
247 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §190
intermediary and mixed nature. Naturally, insofar as it is logically characterized by its neutrality (neither in A-state nor in ¬A-state), the ‘sudden’ constitutes a very good candidate for expressing the psychic nature.

Following Damascius, it seems that Proclus would have brought the nature of the soul and the ‘sudden’ as follows: firstly, the ‘sudden’ would constitute the being of the soul, and, inasmuch as this being is eternal, the ‘sudden’ would be the dynamic kernel of the soul inasmuch as that is from the psychic ‘sudden’ that the becoming spreads out, and with it its inherent alternation from a contrary to another, in such a way that the psychic ‘sudden’ can be said ‘anterior to the opposites’; thirdly, the logical status of the psychic ‘sudden’ is to be neither in A-state nor in ¬A-state (because the ‘sudden’ is anterior to them) and both A and ¬A (because they proceed from the ‘sudden’) at once; and fourthly, Proclus would illustrate the nature of the psychic ‘sudden’ and its relation with the flow of becoming by the geometric image of a circle whose the psychic ‘sudden’ would be the centre and whose the becoming would be the periphery.

Unfortunately, in the rest of his very inspired analysis of the ‘sudden’, Damascius gives us almost nothing about the detail of Proclus’ conflation between the soul and the ‘sudden’, albeit he is not stingy with criticisms about the doctrine of his predecessor. His silence and his criticisms could easily be interpreted as a sign of the fact that Proclus’ conception was rationally unsatisfying, even for a Neoplatonist.

I shall argue that the key to understand the psychic ‘sudden’ can be found in Proclus’ kinetics (in this section, I focus only on the explanation of physical motion, laying aside the other kinds of motions allowed by Proclus, notably the intellectual one). Proclus’ conception of motion is quite different from Plotinus’, in particular he departs from his predecessor on the meaning of αἰρετικήν.

In the Elements of Theology, Proclus had a threefold ‘Plotinian’ classification of motion that he borrows from the earlier Neoplatonic scholarship (and that Damascius will


249 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, § 191-192

250 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 247.12, 20-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.5, 17-30.3). This image is confirmed by some texts of Proclus: PROCLUS, In Tim, II 130.27-28


252 As far as I know, before Proclus, such a terminology for this threefold classification can only be found in Apollinaris of Laodicea known for his Platonic erudition and its philosophical ability, in such a way that this terminology could at least go back to the teaching of some Middle-Platonist circle: GREGORY OF NYSSA, Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium, III 1192.9-23 and JUSTINIANUS, Contra Monophysitas, § 61 in E. SCHWARTZ (ed.), Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinianus, München, 1939, p. 17 (= H. LIETZMANN (ed.), Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule. Texte und Untersuchungen.
borrow too,

| Indivisibility | Intellect: unmoved mover | dynamics |
| Divisibility   | Body: moved and no mover | kinematics |

But, in other works, Proclus had a more elaborated hierarchy that respects more the Principle of Continuity in the course of the procession from the One to the matter. This principle means that "since the processions of beings leave no void, even less so than do the positions of bodies; everywhere there are intermediate natures between the extremes, which provide their connection with one another." We can schematize this second hierarchy as follows:

| Indivisibility | Intellect: self-mover and self-moved | dynamics & kinematics |
| Divisibility   | Body: moved and no mover | kinematics |

These two classifications are not mutually exclusive, since Proclus links them together in his commentary on Timaeus. However, their conflation is not devoid of trouble.

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254 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §14, §20.


258 PROCLUS, In Tim, I 373.4-18.
The three-part hierarchy emphasizes a strong separation between the sensible realm and the levels which are beyond by marking a symmetric boundary between dynamics and kinematics. In this way, such a division is in total agreement with Plato’s teaching. On the other hand, the four-part hierarchy sounds a little less Platonic. Indeed, it appears that Proclus’ physics is potentially platonically problematic, given that Proclus does not separate too drastically dynamics’ and kinematics’ realms. Furthermore, even if Proclus claims that only incorporeals are really causative, he seems to endorse entirely Aristotle’s kinematics, as it is obvious in the Elements of Physics (of course, that does not mean either that Proclus says that Aristotle’s and Plato’s kinetics are utterly devoid of any difference, or that the Elements of Physics are devoid of any Neoplatonic ingredient). Insofar as Plato and Aristotle made opposing choices in regard to the principles, the Neoplatonic realization of their harmonization can only be very difficult, especially in physics. Such a difficulty explains the weakness and the ad-hoc characteristic of some Neoplatonic attempts, for instance the Simplicius’ terminological one on the self-motion. That is clear that Proclus does not avoid the pitfall of Platonic heterodoxy with his four-part classification, inasmuch as such a hierarchy implies that the Aristotelian kinematics (more precisely: Phys, 8.4–5264) sets the tone to the distinction of the subordinated ontological levels.

For Proclus, the soul is both αὐτοκινητὸν and σαυθοποίητον. This last characteristic means that although the soul is not really a self-causative entity (by virtue of its dependence on the Demiurge), even so the soul remains highly active in its own process of constitution in the course of which the soul collaborates with its demiurgic cause, in

260 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §80
263 SIMPLICIUS, In Phys, 421.3-422.9, 1247.27-1250.31. On Simplicius and the ideal of harmonization when he discussed kinetics: P. Golitsis, Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon à la Physique d’Aristote. Tradition et innovation, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 114-121
264 Indeed, the kinematics of the Laws neglects the distinction between ‘unmoved mover’ and ‘self-mover’: Plato, Laws, X 893b-894d
266 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §20, In Alc, 225.14-226.8
268 The causal dependence of the soul on the Intellect is explicit in: PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §193 (see: §76) and In Tim, II 119.29-132.3
such a way that the soul can be said both constituted by itself and constituted by another. In the same way, its self-motion is subordinated to the immobility of its intellective cause, as if there is a residue of passivity into the being of the soul. Such a suspicion is strengthened by the fact that, following a distinction found in Aristotle’s Physics, Proclus claims that the soul is not an unmoved mover, but only a self-mover and self-moving. If so, given that the Aristotelian analysis of physical self-motion involves at least a conceptual differentiation into the ἐντοκίνητον between an active-mover and a passive-moved ‘parts’, Proclus seems to accept a genuine passivity of the spiritual soul. Of course, Proclus has tried to escape such an awkward consequence, by a conflation between self-motion and reversion (i.e. self-thinking) that involves the identity of the passive-moved with the active-mover ‘parts’ (which is permitted by its incorporeality), but this solution permits only to avoid the meroelogical fragmentation of the soul, surely not the fact that its self-activity goes hand in hand with a kind of self-passivity. And nothing is more foreign to Plato’s thought. Thus, when Proclus claims, along with Plotinus, that the soul is in itself unaffectable or impassive, contrary to its faculties and its acts, he would presumably be incoherent with his own theory of ἐντοκίνητον. But, in fact, in other texts, firstly Proclus rejects forcefully the Plotinian view

271 ARISTOTLE, Phys, 8.5 256b27-258b9 (for a commentary on this section, see: D. BLYTH, Aristotle’s Ever-turning World in Physics 8: Analysis and Commentary, Brill, 2016, p. 104-159)
272 ARISTOTLE, Phys, 8.5 257a31-258b4
275 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §15
276 PROCLUS, In Tim, II 147.33-148.2
278 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 330.9-331.2 and in his commentary on the Enneads as it appears in: M. PSELLUS, De omnifaria doctrina, §33.12-14
on psychic absolute impassivity\textsuperscript{279}, and, secondly, seems to restrain the impassivity for the substance\textsuperscript{280} of the soul, keeping quiet about the other superficial kinds of change\textsuperscript{280}. For Plato and, more clearly, for Plotinus, as we have seen, the soul is entirely active, inasmuch as the causative self-motion is a complete \textit{ἐνέργεια} outside space and time, in other words, without residual potentiality. In this sense, the Platonic soul is closest to Aristotle’s unmoved mover than to Aristotle’s self-mover. Thus, the soul entirely belongs to dynamics, and kinematics is just concerned with the sensible bodies. The state of affairs is quite different for Proclus. Indeed, the passivity of the soul — that can maybe be authorized by some passages of the \textit{Phaedrus} and of the \textit{Laws} however\textsuperscript{281} — forces the soul into kinematics (even if that is only a weird kind of spiritual kinematics\textsuperscript{282} of which the physical kinematics would be the offspring\textsuperscript{283}). And this is not avoided by the fact that the force acting on the soul is the soul itself, Proclus’ physics actually entails that the soul belongs both to dynamics and kinematics, or, in other words, that the soul is both its own cause and its own effect\textsuperscript{284}. They are not alone, the beings of the next level — namely the enmattered entities (as the enmattered forms and qualities) referring to the level of Nature\textsuperscript{285} — are still motive forces\textsuperscript{286}, in such a way that they are both dynamic and kinematic items too. This confusion between dynamics’ and kinematics’ realms\textsuperscript{287} is not without important repercussion on Proclus’ understanding of \textit{ἐξαίρησις} qua ‘eternal of the soul’.

Albeit its being is outside of time, the activity of the soul unfolds in time\textsuperscript{288}, while the preceding (intellelctual) levels of reality have both their beings and their activities in

\textsuperscript{279} PROCLUS, \textit{In Alc}, 227.2-228.7


\textsuperscript{282} PROCLUS, \textit{In Eucl}, 18.22-24, \textit{In Parm}, VII 1157.2-28

\textsuperscript{283} PROCLUS, \textit{Platonic Theology}, I 14 63.10-14

\textsuperscript{284} PROCLUS, \textit{Elements of Theology}, §46


\textsuperscript{286} PROCLUS, \textit{Platonic Theology}, I 14 62.1-12


eternity, and while the following levels of reality, namely the physical ones, have their being and their activities in time. By this way, the soul expresses very well its intermediary nature consisting to be both a being and a becoming. That has never been remarked that the Proclean distinction between the eternal άνεξάρθρος of the soul and its temporal γένεσις has a ‘family-likeness’ with the Leibnizian distinction between vis and actio. Of course, there is a great difference however, namely the fact that Leibniz integrates a principle of equivalence between full cause and entire effect within his dynamics, while Proclus respects the classic Neoplatonic doctrine of causation according to which the effect is always weaker than its cause.

What means the distinction between force and action? This innovation of the years 1689-1690 constitutes the final step of Leibniz’s analysis of motion. Before, at least since the dynamic turn of *De Concursu corporum* that succeed to the writing of the *Paucidius Philalethi*, Leibniz was focused on the force acting on the bodies rather than on their motions understood kinematically (viz. as trajectories analysed in geometrical or topological fashions). From then on, these corporeal motions are confined to the level of appearance, losing their status of genuine being, in such a way that the ‘true’ science of motion becomes dynamics, lowering kinematics at a lesser scientific rank. That Leibniz’s move is highly Platonizing is blindingly obvious. Yet, there is more. Indeed, the difference between force and action overlaps the Proclean differentiation between the being of the soul and its temporal activity. This final step of Leibniz’s dynamics appears

290 PROCLUS, *In Parm.,* III 795.25-796.11
291 PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §50, §107
to be fully grown from the *Essay in Dynamics* (around 1700)\(^{296}\) in which Leibniz describes the action as being both the exercise of the force over time, and the product of the formal effect of motion and the velocity\(^{297}\).

Such differentiation between force and action is, of course, present only in a very inchoative way in Proclus. Insofar as the soul contains the causes of physical changes\(^{298}\), and deploys its activity over time, albeit his being is eternal, a parallel can be drawn, on the one hand, between *vis* and *oūsia*, and, on the other, between *actio* and *ἐνέργεια*. In this way, the psychic *oūsia* can be understood as the dynamic timeless kernel which stretches itself over time by its activity\(^{299}\). In fact, for Leibniz, in the first instance, only the action is estimated as a function of the length travelled by the moving body, while the observable force\(^{300}\) is estimated as a function of the receptivity of the body on which the force acts and of the manifest strength of its influence, but could be estimated by an omniscient mind as the result of the composition of all the individual psychic strengths. That is such individual primitive dynamic power that I overlap with Proclean souls. Thus, in a certain fashion, Leibniz was a Proclus’ follower rather than a Plotinus’ one, despite the harshness of his judgment about the philosophical ability of the Neoplatonist\(^{301}\).

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\(^{296}\) G. W. LEIBNIZ, *Essay de dynamique sur les loix du mouvement, ou il est monstré, qu’il ne se conserve pas la même quantité de mouvement, mais la même force absolue, ou bien la même quantité de l’action motrice*, GM VI 215-231

\(^{297}\) GM VI 222. According to the demonstration and the notation of the *Dynamica de Potentia et Legibus Naturae Corporeae* (written in 1689-1690, GM VI 281-514), the definitions are as follows (GM VI 425-426):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>m</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Velocity</td>
<td>v</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal effect</td>
<td>f = m.l = m.v.t</td>
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<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>p</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>a</td>
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\(^{298}\) PROCLUS, *In Parm* VII 1157.26-28


\(^{300}\) *viz.*, the *vis viva*/*impetus* that is one of the two constituents of the *vis derivativa activa*/*itus* (as another part, the *vis mortua*/*onitas*). *Actio* is estimated, in second instance, as being this *vis viva* deployed over time. The *vis primitativa activa* cannot be estimated in itself, because in the Corporal World the influence of each *vis primitativa* is limited by the others. This taxonomy is perfectly and clearly explained by Leibniz in the *Specimen Dynamicum pro admirandis Naturae Legibus circa corporum vires et mutuas actiones detegendis et ad suas causas revocandis* (written in 1695, GM VI 234-254), see: GM VI 236-239. On the classification of the dynamic levels in Leibniz, see: A. ROBINET, *Architectonica disjunctive, automatæ systemæque et idéate transendentæ dans l’Œuvre de G. W. Leibniz*, Vrin, 1986, p. 253-283. Of course, laying aside these Leibnizian subtleties, I argue only that there is a ‘family-resemblance’ between the psychic *oūsia* and the *vis* which should be understood as a *vis primitativa activa*, in other words, I make an ontological comparison.

How such a parallel with Leibniz’ dynamics can to lighten the psychic ἐξαιρήσεις? Firstly, this parallel highlights the dynamic meaning of the psychic ‘sudden’. Secondly, that explains in what sense the soul by means of its acts is linked to kinematics. Indeed, to a certain extent, the action which is determined by a time-variable and the length travelled makes the connection of the new science of dynamics with the kinematics – given that the action can be estimated as a function of the force\textsuperscript{302} as well as a function of the quantity of motion\textsuperscript{303} which is soluble into the abstract kinematics of Cartesian Mechanics –, contrary to the force which is independent of time and belongs absolutely to dynamics\textsuperscript{304}.

Someone could object that the activity of the soul takes place in a non-physical time, namely in a higher time proper to the psychic diacosm, in such a way that the activity of the soul does not share anything with the corporeal motions. Such an objection is actually very Plotinian, given that Plotinus strongly distinguishes between a non-quantitative psychic time and the physical time in which occur the motions of bodies\textsuperscript{305}. Proclus, for


302 a = p.t = m.v\textsuperscript{2}.t
303 a = m.v.l
his part, is very clear on the fact that the time of psychic activity is the same of the one of corporeal motions\textsuperscript{306}. Furthermore, this common time is twofold: souls and bodies are enfolded both by the hypercosmic and the encosmic times\textsuperscript{307}. Thus, as long as the division into the soul between eternal being and temporal activity is genuinely Platonic\textsuperscript{308}, by denying own time for the soul\textsuperscript{309}, Proclus introduces a tension between dynamics and kinematics inside the soul itself. If so, there is also an internal tension in Proclus’ understanding of ἐξειδήσης.

Before suggesting a solution for this, that seems useful to sum up the views of Proclus set forth above:

1. Proclus always employs the word ἐξειδήσης with a kinematic meaning, namely a durationless switch that imitates the eternity of some beings. Consequently, Proclus considers such a suddenness as a property of non-sensible items – especially the Forms and the souls –, insofar as they come into the sensible world and leave from the sensible world without any duration.

2. The logical status of the ‘sudden’ is also transferred to the nature of the soul. The ‘sudden’ is not only durationless but now outside of time (since it is the eternal of the soul, so its being), and consequently its function ceases to be kinematic to become dynamic: as an element of the psychic nature, the ‘sudden’ is closely linked to the psychic self-motion, especially as the flow of becoming occurs from and around it. However, on the one hand, Proclus’ understanding of ωτοκιδήσης qua reversion involves a kind of self-passivity, and on the other, ωτοκιδήσης qua psychic activity occurs in time and, consequently, can be compared with the physical motions. In other words, Proclus’ theory of motion entails that, to some extent, self-motion can be studied by kinematics, in the same way that qualitative and topologic changes are studied by the same theory in Aristotle’s physics\textsuperscript{310}.

Moreover, according to the anti-Plotinian doctrine of the inseparability of the soul from

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\textsuperscript{306} PROCLUS, In Tim, III 21.6-24.30, 54.18-55.1, 58.23-59.14, Elements of Theology, §198-200

\textsuperscript{307} PROCLUS, In Tim, III 25.11-32.16, 53.6-59.14

\textsuperscript{308} PLOTINUS, Enneads, IV 4 [28], 15-17. Plotinus claims that only the affections and the <corporeal> outputs of the soul (viz. the physical process of the bodies) are enfolded by the physical time. See IV 4 [28], 15.16-17: ἐπεὶ οὐδ’ αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάθη αὐτὸν ἀπείρως εἰσί καὶ τὰ ποιήματα, and IV 4 [28], 16.4-9: ἢ ἐν τοῖς ποιημένοις τὸ πρῶτον καὶ παρελευθέρως, ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ σοφὸν παρελευθέρως, ἀλλὰ πάντες οἱ λόγοι ἡμᾶς, ὑποκερανεῖται. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ποιημένοις τὸ σύγχρονον ἡμᾶς, ἐπεὶ οὐδέ τὸ ὁμόνοια, καὶ εἰς τοὺς λόγους τὸ ὁμόνοια, ὅλον χείρισθαι καὶ πάπας οἱ ἐν λόγῳ ἐν δὲ τοῖς ισθηροῖς χαρᾶς. The activity of the soul, for its part, takes place in a more logical ‘time’ that Plotinus describes with a lot of metaphors in IV 4 [28], 16.9-31.

\textsuperscript{309} Proclus alludes to a ‘psychic time’ only in two short passages: PROCLUS, In Tim, II 129.6-9, III 25.1. But, in the first, Proclus had surely in mind only the temporal aspect of the soul which permits to distinguish the soul from the higher levels of being; and, in the second, Proclus refutes a concurrent exegesis that links together the ‘psychic time’ and the Circle of the Other. His rejection of a genuine ‘psychic time’ is, of course, due to the fact that he closely follows Iamblichus’ anti-Plotinian reaction. Contrary to Plotinus who had established the ‘primary time’ at the level of World-Soul (see: III 7 [45], 11-13), Iamblichus had elevated the ‘primary time’ from the level of the Soul to that of the Intellect (see: SIMPLICIUS, In Phys, 792.20-795.3). Simplicius was perfectly aware that Proclus had just followed Iamblichus (In Phys, 795.4-26). This Neoplatonic history is efficiently summarized in: P. DUHEM, Le Système du Monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic, Hermann, vol. 1, 1913, p. 246-263 and S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 11-17

\textsuperscript{310} ARISTOTLE, Phys, 7.4
The puzzle immediately arises: these two understandings of the εξαιρετικός are simply not compatible. Even more, these two conceptions hardly reconcilable are both present in the same writing, namely into In Parm (view 1 in IV 844.2-11, view 2 in Proclus’ commentary on the Third Hypothesis), the conflict is just barely dodged by the fact that the kinematic one does not explain the embodiment of the souls but solely the coming of the Forms into the sensible realm. Additionally, the passage of the Sixteenth Dissertation in which Proclus refers to the Third Hypothesis clearly supports the view 1, while the Third Hypothesis should bear the view 2. Admittedly and in spite of the lack of chronological precision, the fact remains that the Sixteenth Dissertation dedicated to the Myth of Er surely was written before In Parm (given that Proclus never alludes to In Parm, except in the Platonic Theology314, in such a way that In Parm had probably been written around AD 470-475315). That is maybe enough for supporting the view according to which Proclus would have modified his interpretation of the εξαιρετικός between the two redactions. For instance, while he was commenting on the Third Hypothesis, the exegetical and post-Plotinian pressure which imposes to connect the text with the nature of the soul would have led him for transferring the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics to link together more closely the πωροκινήτον and the εξαιρετικός. Indeed, the fact that Proclus alludes very explicitly to a precise passage of the Parmenides without mentioning his own teaching on this dialogue should likely be interpreted as the fact that, when he was writing these lines and the Sixteenth Dissertation, he did not still comment the Parmenides316. But, any

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311 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §196
312 PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §209-210
316 The only sure fact is that the Sixteenth Dissertation had been written after In Tim, since Proclus refers twice to In Tim (In Romp, II 220.9-11, 335.19-20). Following Marinus’ testimony (MARIUS, Life of Proclus, 13.14-17), Proclus would had written a first version of In Tim at the age of twenty-seven, so in AD 439 (H. D. SAffrey, A.-Ph. SEGONDS, C. LUNA (eds.), Marinus. Proclus ou sur le bonheur, Les Belles Lettres, 2001, p. 16 n.12). In Tim is itself anterior to In Parm (given that In Parm refers many times to In Tim: In Parm, III 802.2-5, 812.21-27, 819.30-31, IV 925.9-20, VII 1235.29-36, and C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. xx-xxiii). Therefore, the Sixteenth Dissertation should be written between AD 439 and 470. That is, of course, a very extended period. To reduce it, that is possible to follow Lamberton who has suggested that the Athenian School had got away from the Iamblichian curriculum of Platonic dialogues that every Platonic scholar should follow, notably by introducing the commentary of the Myth of Er, see: R. LamBerTon (ed.), Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems. Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato, Society of Biblical Literature, 2012, p. xv (on the Iamblichian curriculum, see: Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy, 26.13-44, M. Dunn, “Iamblichus, Thrasyllus, and the Reading Order of the Platonic Dialogues”, in
chronological consideration, whatever its subtlety, is not enough for deducing by itself a doctrinal evolution. It is highly preferable not to resort to such an expedient, and to try, as far as possible, to dissolve the supposed incompatibility by finding a mean of harmonizing the two views.

Another very deflationist – but also unsatisfying – solution would consist in sur-interpreting the lexical substitution of ἐξαιρήσις in IV 844.6 by τὸ γόνον in IV 873.24 as the fact that Proclus had two concepts of ἐξαιρήσις, namely the physical/kinematic and the psychic/dynamic. But, as I have argued, Proclus was both too Aristotelian and too Iamblichean for strongly separating the two realms, as the orthodox Platonists did.

I argue that the best way to reconcile these two meanings of ἐξαιρήσις is as follows: beyond the exegetical temptation to close together the ἐξαιρήσις and the nature of the soul, Proclus considers that the logical neutrality of the ‘sudden’ and the fact that it is durationless can explain that, beyond the variety of the psychic acts occurring in time, the ὀνόματα of the soul remains the one and the same. Indeed, in the course of its activities, the eternal being of the soul is not present for a limited period but always, as if the being of the soul appears always ‘suddenly’ through the psychic activity. For instance, if the activity of the soul as thinking corresponds to a ‘linear locomotion’ from a theorem to another, then claiming that the soul remains one and the same in its being at each step.

R. Baine Harris (ed.), The Significance of Neoplatonism, SUNY Press, 1976, p. 59-80; A.-J. Festugière, “L’ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon aux V-VIe siècles”, Museum Helveticum, 26, 1969, p. 281-296; P. Golitsis, Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon d’Aristote. Tradition et innovation, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 14-15 and L. G. Westerink, J. Trouillard, A.-Ph. Segonds (eds.), Prologeomènes à la philosophie de Platon, Les Belles Lettres, 1990, p. lxxii-lxxiii). If so, the lessons on the eschatological myth certainly would take place into the ‘theological’ step of the curriculum, namely between the lessons on Phaedrus-Symposium (Anonym. Proleg, 26.32-33) and the lesson on the Philebus (Anonym. Proleg, 26.21-23). But his argument for claiming that the Republic was scholastically taught in Proclus’ circle is only based on the fact that the Sixteenth essay consists of a sentence-by-sentence exegesis, contrary to the others. That is surely not enough to assert that Syrianus or Proclus had deviated from the Iamblichean model by including the study of the Myth of Er. Indeed, this section of the Republic had a long exegetical history, and Neoplatonic libraries held a lot of Middle-Platonist commentaries on it (a possible list: Derkyllides, Gaius, Albinus, Maximus of Nicea, Harpocration, Euclides, Clemens, Cronius, Taurus), in such a way that, more modestly, Proclus might have just in mind, beyond the inherent interests of Plato’s text, to continue the tradition, or to challenge the previous readings in the course of the always unsatisfied quenching of his thirst for Platonic knowledge. So, the only subsistence of an extended commentary of the Myth of Er is not enough to put us in mind that Proclus had perpetrated a kind of modification of the schedule in the course of his teaching. Moreover, a passage of the In Alc seems to indicate that Proclus scrupulously had followed Iamblichean curriculum (In Alc, 11.14-21). I think the mean objection against Lambert’s conjecture remains the fact that the Iamblichean curriculum is only focused on the Platonic dialogues, whereas Proclus considers that it is not strictly speaking the literary form of the Republic and of the Laws (Anonym. Proleg, 26.5-9), in such a way that incorporating the Republic in the Iamblichean canon of Plato’s dialogues is just meaningless. Nevertheless, Proclus had surely taught the Myth of Er to his pupils, by virtue of its Platonic importance, but the form of such a teaching would have oscillated between very various ways. Thus, the weak accuracy of the chronology seems to be unavoidable.

317 As Proclus would have said according to Damascus, In Parm., 262.12-13, 17-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.5-6, 12-14) : καὶ πως πανταχότερον τῷ αὐτῷ ἐνεργεῖ ἡ νοημία: ἔντον ἐντολήν ἀληθεύσεως πάρκεσθαι αἰώνιος σώμα καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐνέργειας

318 Proclus, In Parm., VII 1157.2-28 in which Proclus said that thinking is a ‘psychic locomotion’, and In Tim., II, 243.17-28 in which he said that this ‘psychic locomotion’ is like a geometric line (of course, an unextended one, see: In Tim., II 245.14-23). On the spiritual kinematics, see also: In Tim., II 124.17-19, 129.5-9 and J. Opsomer, “The
of the process must mean that the soul is essentially neither identical to the departure theorem nor the arrival one, and that the soul is able to be both the one and the other, albeit successively. That way, the being of the soul can be said, firstly, anterior to these theorems (ἡ ὁς πρὸ ἁμοφῶς), in such a way that the soul appears to comprehend the whole of both (πάλιν ἁμοφῶς δοκοῦσα παράξεων), and, secondly, not receiving their nature into its being (οὐκ ἔπαξομοιόν τὸν τῶν ἀκρόν λόγον), but only in its self-generated acts which occur from and around its unchangeable σύνης-διαφραγμένης (ἐπ’ αὐτόν γονόν καὶ πισθοί τούτο ἐπέγνων). Such a position involves that what appears at each step of the thinking-process is what is logically neutral in the soul, namely its being. And it appears in each period of the process, as small as this period is, in such a way that the duration of its coming must be smaller than any duration that can be given. Such an infinitesimal, smaller than any duration that can be assigned, can be said durationless. Precisely, this is what the ἐξαίφνης is. Thus, one the one hand, the logical features of the soul and of the suddenness are highly similar, and, on the other, the coming of the being of the soul in each of its acts should be durationless, in such a way that the suddenness wonderfully expresses the co-presence of the being of the soul with its activity throughout it, as varied as this activity is. In this way, the ἐξαίφνης keeps its kinematic meaning without losing all traces of dynamic overtones. Moreover, the suddenness of the self-coming of the soul imitates its eternity, in the same way that the sudden coming of the Forms into the sensible world imitates their eternal beings. There is a great difference however. Indeed, the Forms have neither the same logical feature of the suddenness, nor a similar natural ‘weirdness’. That is why the being of the soul is alone of which Proclus said that its eternal is the sudden, because the soul shares much more with the ἐξαίφνης than the Forms. Hence such a denomination appears to be a metonymy rather than an identification.

At any rate, all this explanation of Proclus’ understanding of the suddenness of the soul is compatible with Damascius’ laconic evidence:

In Parm, 262.14-17: Ὅσο δὲ τὸ ἐξαίφνης ἐρώτη καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐνεργείαις, εἰ μόνη ἐστὶν ἡ σύνη κατ’ συνόν αἰώνας; ἢ πρὸς ἐνα μοῖρα ἐκαθο τὸ σῶμα τῷ ἐκδολον τοῦτο ἐκθῇ εἰς τὰς ἐνεργείας πρὸς ἐνα μοῖρα τοῦ τοῦτο αἰῶνα καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς σώματι τὸ νῦν ἐκδολον αἰῶνος.

How can the sudden also be in the activities, if, according to Proclus, only the being of the soul is eternal? To that, we can answer that the sudden proceeds in the activities from the eternal, as its image; indeed, in the bodies also the now is an image of eternity.

According to Damascius, Proclus would have distinguished between the psychic ἐξαίφνης and the physical θέν. But the case of the coming of the Forms into the sensible world shows that he was not very rigorous with such a distinction. More probably, here, that is just a clarification: inasmuch as the ἐξαίφνης – used as a substantive and not as an

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319 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 262.10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.4)

320 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 215.20-21

321 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 215.20

322 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 262.10-11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.4-5)

323 In this way, Proclus’ conception of the sudden would be in agreement with Chemniss who interprets the ἐξαίφνης as a kind of infinitesimal: H. F. Chemniss, “Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato”, in The American Journal of Philology, 53-2, 1932, p. 132 n. 25. Maybe, here, Proclus might be under the influence of Aristotle’s brief definition of the adverb ‘suddenly’, see: ARISTOTLE, Phys, 4.13 222b15-222b26

324 PROCLUS, In Parm, VI 844.10-12, 873.24-25

325 = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.8-12
adverb – is understood as ‘what is coming suddenly’, the ‘sudden’ has the same relation of μίμησις with ‘what is eternal <in the soul>’ than the ‘now’ has with the ‘eternity’.

\[
\frac{\text{what is coming suddenly}}{\text{what is eternal}} = \frac{\text{now}}{\text{eternity}}
\]

This conception is *in fine* just a variation on *Timaeus*, 37d5-7 in which Plato defines time as the moving likeness of eternity.

To conclude, Proclus reconciles the two meanings of ἐξαίφνης, namely the *terminus technicus* and the *terminus mysticus* in a novel fashion. On the one hand, the suddenness of the coming is kept for the superior entities of its unbelievable theology, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ retains an irreducible mystical overtone\(^{326}\). On the other, despite a confusion – very little Platonic – between kinematics’ and dynamics’ realms which happens in the Psychic and Natural diacosms, the ‘sudden’ is rather a kinematic stuff, than a dynamic one, in such a way that the very meaning of the Third Hypothesis is not completely lost. The fact that the exegesis of the Third Hypothesis as focused on the nature of the soul does not entail a transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics must ultimately be explained, beyond the psychic blend of kinematics and dynamics, by the fact that Proclus distinguishes the temporal activity of the soul from its eternal being, and so must justify the co-presence of the soul with itself in the course of its activities. Such a requirement is specific to Syrianus’ students – as Hermias\(^{327}\) and Proclus –, by virtue of their rejection of any substantial change for the soul that entails a very peculiar understanding of αὐτοκινήσεως. Therefore, his understanding of the ἐξαίφνης cannot be extended to his predecessors – as Iamblichus and Hierocles of Alexandria – or to his successors – as Simplicius/Priscianus and Damascius –, inasmuch as they sustain the reverse Iamblichean thesis of the changing being of the souls\(^{328}\).

### 3.2.2. Damascus and the Dynamic ἐξαίφνης

Albeit Damascius has dedicated almost all his commentary on the Third Hypothesis to the nature of the ‘sudden’\(^{329}\), the word ἐξαίφνης rarely appears in his other works. Furthermore, Damascius always uses it as an adverb with a high mystical tone (sometimes with an obvious reference to the *Seventh Letter*, for instance: the sudden lighting of intelligible truth (i.e. the intellection of the Forms that necessarily occurs miraculously and suddenly by virtue of the limitation and the helplessness of the discursive investigation)\(^{330}\), the suddenness of the activity of some Intelligible-Intellective Gods\(^{331}\).

\(^{326}\) By the way, such a mystical overtone is highly corroborated by the *Life of Proclus* in which Marinus uses the word ἐξαίφνης for the miraculous recoveries caused by Proclus (those of Telesphorus in §7 and Asklepiogenis in §29). See also: §30 and §32


(namely the lynges of the *Chaldean Oracles*332 who correspond to the supercelestial place of *Phaedrus*, 243c3, at least since the exegesis of Proclus333). Damascius also follows Proclus on the suddenness of the coming of the Forms into the sensible world (after a durative overcoming of the material barriers that could prevent its reception), but, additionally, he compares such a suddenness to a magic trick334. Moreover, in the *Vita Isidori*, ἐξαιρήσεις is often employed for marking the surprise or the mysterious way by means of which an event happens335. In all these occurrences, Damascius has a kinematic understanding of the ‘sudden’ as a durationless switch. But, when he employs the word ἐξαιρήσεις as a substantive and not as an adverb in his commentary on the Third Hypothesis, the meaning of the ‘sudden’ changes radically.

In relation to Proclus, Damascius makes at once a return to Iamblichus and a return to Platonic orthodoxy: on the one hand, along Iamblichus, he maintains that the essence of the soul is neither outside of time nor immutable but, on the contrary, that the soul is subject to substantial change in the course of its procession and conversion336; on the other hand, it reacts against the Proclean kinetics by drawing a strong opposition between entities belonging to dynamics and those belonging to kinematics, taking Plato’s and Plotinus’ kinetics up again.

Indeed, Damascius supports the heavy lines of Platonic dynamics in his ‘archaeology’, namely the distinction between intellective immobility (τὸ ἀκίνητον), the causative process of psychic self-mover (τὸ ἀτοκείκισθαι)337, and the sensible and extended process of the other-moved (τὸ ἐτεροκίνησις)338, that is to say the ‘classic’ Neoplatonic scheme that Proclus had already supported in his *Elements of Theology*339. However, Damascius introduces several degrees of self-motion in accordance with the variety of the degree of separability from the body (under the influence of *Phys*, 8.5), in such a way that, for him, the irrational soul is only an ‘apparent self-mover’ while the rational soul is a ‘real self-mover’340. In other words, the irrational soul is the *formal* cause of physical motions (by virtue of the ἐμψυχία, viz. the transmission of being alive341) while the rational is their

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334 DAMASCIUS, *In Phil*, 135.1-136.4

335 DAMASCIUS, *Vita Isidori*, in PHOTIUS, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 242, 116.5 and 203.8


339 PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §14, §20


efficient cause\textsuperscript{342}. To some extent, such a division appears to cross-check the Proclean distinction between the soul (self-mover and self-moved) and the enmattered entities (mover and moved)\textsuperscript{343}. But by conflating the two kinds of self-motion and the twofold causality, Damascius seems to escape the confusion between kinematics and dynamics, inasmuch as, strictly speaking, the formal causation is not a genuine motive force acting upon an item, therefore, does not involve a dynamic causation. Anyway, an ‘apparent self-mover’ is in fine just a moved item of which the active-mover seems to be internal, while the ‘apparent other-moved’ seems to have an external mover\textsuperscript{344}, but they actually belong together to the set of the ‘real other-moved’ of which kinematics studies the extended and quantifiable motions.

Damascius favours the model of alteration for understanding the self-motion of the soul, to the detriment of the model of locomotion. Conceiving the genuine self-motion as a self-alteration (or self-modification)\textsuperscript{345} provides at least two benefits: first, to a certain extent, this model is less physical and more chemical, in such a way that it takes better the fact that the soul results from a mixture\textsuperscript{346} into account; and, second, such a model allows him to put aside the influence of the kinematic reasoning of Aristotle’s Phys, 8.5 in which the locomotion looks like a paradigm for all kinds of motions. In doing so, Damascius distances himself from Proclus who had a tendency to understand self-motion as a self-locomotion (albeit, strictly speaking, Proclus had sustained that the soul experiences both locomotion and alteration in the course of its self-motion, of course in a spiritual fashion\textsuperscript{347}).

\textsuperscript{342} On the distinction between the efficient (ὑπ’ οὐ/σωφρικῆς) that must be understood in an Empedoclean way rather than in an Aristotelian one and the formal (καθ’ ὅ/ὁριστικῆς) causes that go back to the teaching of Porphyry, see: SIMPLI CIUS, In Phys, 10.35-11.3 and PROCLUS, Pl atonic Theology, II 9. Understanding the soul as the formal cause of the ‘being alive’ for bodies can, of course, be found in Simplicius/Priscianus of Lydia: (Ps.) SIMPLI CIUS, In DA, 4.12-20 (on this passage, see: I. HADOT, Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Héiroclès et Simplicius, Études Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 197-198, n. 23), 51.28-52.10, 56.35-59.14, 87.9-35 (in which Priscianus distinguishes between a transcendent part of the soul that is the efficient cause of physical motions, and the soul quæ entelechy which is their formal cause), 301.30-304.7, etc. On the disputation about the authorship of the commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima that goes back at least to Francesco Piccolomini (Francisci Piccolomini Senensis commentarii in libros Aristotelis De coelo, ortu et interitu; adjecta lucidissima expositione, in tres libros eiusdem de anima, nunc recens in lucem prodeunt, Moguntia, 1608, p. 1001f), see: F. BOISSIER, C. STEEL, “Priscianus Lydus en de ‘In De Anima’ van Pseudo (?)-Simplicius”, in: Tijdschrift voor filosofie, 34, 1972, p. 761-822; J. O. URMSON, P. LAUTNER (eds.), Simplicius. On Aristotle, On the Soul 1.1-2.4, Bloomsbury, 1995, p. 2-4; I. HADOT, “Simplicius or Priscianus? On the Author of the Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima” (CAG XI): A Methodological Study”, in Mnemosyne, 55-2, 2002, p. 159-199 and M. PERKAMS, “Priscian of Lydia, commentator on the De Anima in the Tradition of lamblichus”, in Mnemosyne, 58-4, 2005, p. 510-530, etc.

\textsuperscript{343} PROCLUS, Pl atonic Theology, I 14


\textsuperscript{346} PLATO, Timaeus, 35a-37c, 41c-42a. According to Aristotle’s GC I 10 & II 7, the mixture results from the mutual alteration of the components.

\textsuperscript{347} PROCLUS, In Parm, VII 1157.2-28
The self-alteration consists for the soul to modify the quality of its essence (τοιοῦτος τῆς ὀυσίας), namely its essential participation (οὐσιωδὸς μέθεξις)\(^{349}\), especially on the occasion of its ascent or of its descent throughout the scale of being. Modifying its own essence, the soul is said self-moved (αὐτοκίνητον), self-changed (αὐτομετάβλητον) and self-generated (αὐτογενές) at once\(^{350}\). Here, perhaps, Damascius’ terminology is linked to a late Dionysian classification of motions that might go back to a Neoplatonic teaching\(^{351}\). This classification, entailing a threefold subdivision of qualitative change into alteration (ἀλλοίωσις), alterationation (ἐτέροιωσις) and transformation (τροπή)\(^{352}\), maintains that alteration is characterized by the fact that, unlike transformation, a kind of substantial permanence is involved\(^{353}\). In agreement with such a distinction, for Damascius, there

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\(^{353}\) Maximus the Confessor, commenting Ps.-Dionysius, rambles on the distinction between alteration and transformation by quoting Aristotle’s GC 14 319b10-14 and introducing into the quotation the word τροπή next to the Aristotelian words γένσεις and φθορά. The distinction between ἄλλοιωσις and ἐτέροιωσις constitutes a gloss on Phys, 4.9 217b24-27 (the ἐτέροιωσις of 217b26 is a hapax in Aristotle). To a certain extent, the distinction between τροπή and ἄλλοιωσις can be found in: PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §27 (Ps.-)SIMPLICIUS, In D4, 19.1-3, 169.31-36, and J. PHILOPONUS, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclus, 137.18-21, 203.20-25, 396.3-8, 415.11-15, 421.10-15. In D4, 441.6-11, etc. The three-way split between τροπή, ἄλλοιωσις and ἐτέροιωσις can also be found in: THEON OF
always remains something into the soul that is not subject to modification through the journey of the soul from the summit to the lower levels of being. Actually, that is a genuine property of the self-motion that the self-mover keeps its own identity throughout its odyssey. This psychic invariant is the psychic kernel that Damascius calls ἑιδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως (by contrast with its changing ἑιδός τῆς οὐσίας μεθέξεως), or τὸ προσεκτικόν (‘the faculty of decision’), or τὸ προσεκτικόν (‘the faculty of awareness’), and also, sometimes, ὑποκιμένων. Albeit Damascius employs elsewhere the expression τῆς ψυχικῆς τροπῆς, that would surely be – as Van Riel has suggested – a cutting remark against the Proclan thesis of the soul quasi ἄτρεπτον Rather than the sign of a deep evolution of his thought. At any rate, in his commentary on the Third Hypothesis, Damascius only draws a parallel between self-motion and ἔλλοιωσις. More precisely, the psychic self-modification is conceived on the Aristotelian model of the sensory alteration, especially on the model of the sight, which implies, on the one hand, that the perceptive faculty keeps its numerical identity and, on the other, its modification though the change of the perceived objects. By the way, the rejection of the psychic τροπή in favour of the psychic ἔλλοιωσις constitutes the central theme of the five conundrums that close his commentary on the Third Hypothesis.

The law of the essential participation-modification is as follows: the more the soul is illuminated by the divine light radiating from the higher levels of being, the more the soul is unified, concentrated, and dynamically powerful. Conversely, the more the soul moves away from this divine light, the more it is darkened, plural and scattered, hence the loss of its self-motive effectiveness. Thus, the law of the substantial modification of the soul is directly linked to a law of dynamics, given that the variable dynamic strength of the soul is proportional to its variable illumination (ἐλλαμψις) that should be understood as its...

SMYRNA, Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato, III, §22 (= J. DUPUIS (ed.), Hachette, 1892, p. 244-245; = J. DUPUIS, R. & D. LAWLO (eds.), Wizards Bookshelf, 1979, p. 98) and SECTUS EMPIRICUS, AM, 8.456

357 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 256.6-7 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.15-17)

360 DAMASCUS, In Phil, 126.8-9 (see also: In Phaed, I §71.4, §7261). Some editors, as Westerink (following the example of the editors of Plotinus, namely Henry-Schwyzer), had replaced τροπής by ροπής. On this point, see: G. VAN RIEL (ed.), Damascus. Commentaire sur le Philebe de Platon, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. 39, n. 6 (p. 133)
362 PROCLUS, Platonic Theology, I 19 92.5-16
363 ARISTOTLE, D4, II 5 417b2-27
364 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 255.11-15, 269.27-270.2 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 17.8-13, 43.16-22)
366 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 256.6-17, 270.6-19 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.18-19.6, 44.7-25)
distance from the Intelligible (in the same way as the moon is variably altered and illuminated according to its variable distance from the sun). By the way, the fall of the soul into the sensible world entails the differentiation of the essential participation into several kinds, which correspond to the various psychic faculties-forms acquired by the soul in the course of its degradation and as soon as the bodily influence grows: intellec
ttive modification, dianoetic modification, doxastic and sensitive modification. The loss of Damascius’ commentaries on the Myth of Er, on the Decree of Adrastee, or on the end of the Timaeus is highly regrettable, because his heterodox and Iamblichean thesis according to which the being of the soul is changeable and his law of essential modification have very interesting ethical consequences, and have surely profoundly revised the details of the understanding of the Platonic eschatological belief of cyclical reincarnation, therefore of the Neoplatonic Theodicy.

However, it must be remarked that self-motion is not always vertical, but can be horizontal, for instance when the soul first thinks of one intelligible form and then another, the modification of its essence does not always progress from the worst to the best, or vice versa. Thus, in the course of his process of thinking, the soul alters itself in agreement with the distinctive features of the thought form without modifying its own dignity, namely its degree of unity.

Regarding the logical status of the soul, which is a mixture and an intermediary item onto the scale of beings, Damascius says that its logical status is to be neither celestial nor terrestrial, and both celestial and terrestrial, and in the same way for all predicates to be neither A nor ~A, and both A and ~A. Thus, in a sense, for Damascius, the soul ‘puts away’ or ‘destroys-and-preserves’ both the contrary states in a very ‘proto-Hegelian’ fashion.

More precisely, the soul has in itself at once the affirmative and negative predicates such as they are possessed by the divine inhabitants of the Intelligible realm, namely in a paradigmatic way that involves their anteriority from the flowing encosmic time, while the negations involved by the ‘sudden’ seem to be only effective into the γένος-realm, so for the sensible and temporal entities:

373 DAMASCIUS, In Parm, 250.20-23 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 9.4-9)
375 The fact that, for Damascius, the soul is an Aufhebung-item has been well seen by Wahl, see: J. WAHL, Étude sur le Parménide de Platon, F. Rieder, 1926, p. 172
The essential negativity of the ‘soul’ is therefore not strictly the same as the negativity of the ‘sudden’. In this text, Damascius plays with several kinds of negations, as the quotation of the Sophist few lines above makes obvious. Indeed, following Proclus, Damascius strongly distinguishes three kinds of negation, from the hypernegation that concerns only the higher levels of reality and that can be found in the First Hypothesis to the privation that concerns the sensible world. While hypernegation is the generative...
principle of both assertions and negations, namely is beyond the predication itself, anterior and superior to all predicates, there remains two kinds of genuine negations: the first – exegetically sustained by the analysis of the *Sophist* about the non-being qua other — is a negative predicate that is neither inferior nor superior to its affirmative twin (given that, here, the negative predicate is nothing less than the *reflection* of the affirmative, in such a way that they are mutually mirrored in the same fashion as truthness and falseness are), and the second is a negative predicate that is inferior to the assertion insasmuch as this negative predicate is nothing more than the *privation* — or the *lack* — of the affirmative one. The real negative predicates seem to belong to the realm of the Forms, that is to say to the timeless level of Intelligible within which they share the same properties as the affirmative predicates and cohabit with them, whereas the privative predicates must be applied only to the *γίνεσις*-realm that experiences duration and flow.

Thus, saying that the soul is essentially both A and ¬A means that the negative predicate ¬A belongs to the first category, namely its ‘ontic’ dignity is the equal to the dignity of the affirmative predicate A, in such a way that, beyond the discursive oddity, ¬A can cohabit with A in the same <non-physical> place. Such cohabitation occurs in the soul in which the opposite predicates should be understood as anterior and paradigms of the sensible assertions and privations. Its logical structure explains why the soul is the only entity that travels throughout the multi-layered ontic hierarchy: being in itself all the predicates, the soul wants to successively take part in each of them, in such a way that the *Parmenides* can be read as the tale of the psychic odyssey. Damascus clarifies such a cohabitation by explaining that these opposite predicates are not *juxtaposed* as two separate layers into the soul, but are *blended* together to constitute a unique ‘amphibious nature’ which clearly is an *Aufhebung*-item that *anticipates* the opposite predicates such as they alternately appear in the sensible world. The metaphor of the mixture does not

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382 Sometimes, however, Damascus suggests that the soul is more adequately defined by its negative predicates insofar as they express its better nature, namely its eternal being, while the affirmative predicates show its temporal becoming. I guess the reason of why he says that is as follows: the negation may be interpreted as hypernegation, in such a way that the soul would have a ‘family-remnance’ with the higher levels of being: DAMASCIIUS, *In Parm*, 263.18-19, 266.5-7 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.9-11, 35.17-19)


mean that the soul is a compound being, but rather emphasizes the fact that the soul is an intermediary being within which the opposite properties cannot actually be separated, albeit their opposite ‘powers’ are both-together present. Indeed, according to the Neoplatonic Principle of Continuity, between the level of assertive predicates – the Second Hypothesis –, and the level of the purely negative ones – the Fifth Hypothesis –, there should be a level in which assertive and negative predicates are combined with an equal strength, in such a way that they really are indistinguishable. The mixture is therefore only a metaphor by means of which the identity of the opposites into the soul can be indicated or approximated. For instance, such an image can illustrate very well the uncatchable nature of the ἀοτρικὺς that is intermediary between the ἀξίωμα and the ἐπιτροπήτης. As Proclus, Damascius is perfectly aware that understanding the intermediate nature exceeds our discursive arsenal and needs the use of literary tools. Thus, both, on the one hand, the distinction between several kinds of negations and, on the other, the use of metaphor as a means for the asymptotic method of ἑνσεία that aims at approximating the stuff discursively inaccessible, allow to temper the ‘proto-Hegelian’ overtone and its threat on the law of Contradiction.

By contrast with the soul, the ‘sudden’ is said to be neither A nor ¬A, because in itself sensible assertions and their privations are equally denied. The soul is said to be neither A nor ¬A in the same way. Thus, it appears that the negativity of the soul is more complex and rich than the negativity of the ἐξάφωνης, albeit its negativity integrates the negativity of the ‘sudden’.

Furthermore, by virtue of its logical neutrality, the ‘sudden’ is a kind of keyhole by means of which the timeless predicates within the psychic kernel can be glimpsed, beyond the superficial alternation of the temporal predicates of the soul. By contrast, the logical determining of the stretches of time, namely the phases between which the sudden switch happens, that directly results from the Bivalence and the Excluded Middle, partially hides the psychic kernel either behind the temporal assertions or behind their privations. This recovering of the psychic core by the rapid change of sensible attributes involves the modification of the essential participation of the soul, in such a way that, although the soul always and at once bears the opposites within itself, the one or other property can alternately prevail (and it is this prevailing variable attribution which is expressed by the sensible waltz), and the soul can become more and less what it is without thereby losing

386 The model of the psychic mixture in Neoplatonism is far to be clear-cut, insofar as it seems to oscillate between the Aristotelian and the Stoic paradigms. Here, Damascius likely follows the Aristotelian model of GC I 10 & II 7 to which Alexander of Aphrodisias had devoted a full treatise. For instance, Damascius, as Aristotle, firstly rejects the combination understood as juxtaposition (atomism) in favour of fusion (continuum), and secondly considers that in the mixture the components keep their ‘powers’ (327b22-31). Moreover, Aristotle explicitly describes the mixture as an intermediary between the strengths of its components: ὅταν δὲ ταῖς δύναμισι ισαίη ποιῇ, τῶν μεταβάλλει μὲν ἐκάστορν ἕξις τοῦ κριτοῦν ἐκ τῆς σύνηθος φύσεως, οὐ γίνεται δὲ θάτερον, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο καὶ κοινὸν (328a28-31, see also: GC II 7 334b2-20). But, albeit Damascius seems rather to follow Aristotle, some properties of Chrysippus’ κράνος would have seduced the Neoplatonists.


388 DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 263.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.22-26)

389 PROCLUS, In Tim, III 25.19-24

390 On the link between ἑνσείας and the Euclidean algorithm of continual and alternated subtraction, see: V. BÉGUIN, “Ineffable et indicible chez Damascius”, in Les Études philosophiques, 4, 2013, p. 561, n. 37

391 DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 249.10-18, 251.11-14 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 6.23-7.10, 10.8-12)
its self\textsuperscript{392}. If so, the soul, in the course of its ascent and descent throughout the scale of being, experiences the indivisibility in varying degrees, from the genuine unity to almost worst scattering\textsuperscript{393}. Once again, the metaphor of the mixture can illustrate (better, I think, than the curious metaphor of the sponge\textsuperscript{394}) such a prevailing, given that one or another ingredient can predominate, insofar as its strength is intensified, without wiping out the blended unity. Such differentiation within the soul between – as it were – an invariant core and a modifiable surface is corroborated by Simplicius, insofar as the pupil of Damascius supports that although the \textit{οὐσία} is not in itself able of more and less, such a relativity is involved by the variation of its \textit{ουσιώδης} μέθεξις\textsuperscript{395}. That way, Damascius rejects both the theory of Plotinus that the higher part of the soul remains above, viz. in the intelligible world, because this theory breaks the psychic unity,\textsuperscript{396} and the Heracleitan theory that the soul falls entirely in the \textit{γένεσις}-realm wherein the soul runs the risk of losing quite identity.\textsuperscript{397}

Damascius’ idea can be depicted by a kind of truth-tree in which the specific kind of negation that can cohabit with its opposite assertion is indicated by \(\sim\), and the \textit{sensible} privation by \(\neg\). That is a Neoplatonic common belief that all possibilities can be exhausted somewhere into the multi-layered whole\textsuperscript{398}. According to both the Principles of Continuity and of Plenitude, if the ‘blended’ opposite predicates within the soul are in a way the paradigms of the posteriors happening into the sensible world, then the unrealization/priviation as well as the realization/assertion should happen somewhere\textsuperscript{399}.

\[
\begin{align*}
A_a(x) & \quad \sim A_a(x) \\
\sim A_a(x) & \quad (A_a(x) \sim A_a(x)) \\
A_a(x) & \quad \sim A_a(x)
\end{align*}
\]

Here, the rank of the deployment/breakdown can show the ‘distance’ from the psychic kernel. Inasmuch as \(x \in E\), it falls in the step of \(\sim (A_a(x) \sim A_a(x))\), and, if so, it is ‘closer’ to the \textit{εἴδος} of the soul, which is expressed by \((A_a(x) \sim A_a(x))\), than the durative phase \(x \in X\) for which the step is either \(A_a(x)\) or \(\sim A_a(x)\).

\textsuperscript{392} DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 263.14-18, 263.29-264.9, 271.3-21, 272.3-14 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.5-9, 32.1-15, 45.21-46.22, 47.15-48.8)
\textsuperscript{393} DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 251.29-252.6, 255.4-30 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 11.9-19, 16.21-18.9)
\textsuperscript{394} DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 255.5-8 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 16.23-17.4)
\textsuperscript{395} SIMPLICIUS, In Cat, 288.34-289.4: \textit{ἀλλ’} οὐ κατὰ τὸ ἐνύλην ἀλαμαί δεῖ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἢττον οὐσίωδες, ἄλλα κατὰ τὸ ἐπείσικτον καὶ ἢττον οὐσίωδες, καὶ γὰρ ἢ μὲν οὐσία κατ’ ἀυτὸ τὸ εἶναι ὑπὲρ λέγεται θεωρουμένη σου ἢταν τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἢττον, ἢ δὲ ποιότης κατὰ τὴν ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ μέθεξιν ὁστόσον ἐκχώρεται τοῦτο, καὶ μᾶλλον μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἢττον οὐσιώδεσιν, ἢττον δὲ ἐν τοῖς οὐσιωδιστέροις, ὑπὸ ποιὸς ἐν τοῖς σχήμασιν.
\textsuperscript{397} This alternative appears in a very clear-cut way in Simplicius, see: (Ps.)SIMPLICIUS, In DA, 5.38-6.17
\textsuperscript{399} DAMASCUSI, In Parm, 266.1-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 35.11-22)
Of course, if time is conceived in such a way that it is always possible to mark whenever a durationless boundary, Damascius’ conception remains, to some extent, very close to Proclus’, even though Damascius forcefully criticizes it. But, precisely, that is not the case for the last diadochus for whom time, as well as motion, is constituted by components that are genuinely extended and uncuttable.

Indeed, Damascius had challenged Zeno’s and Aristotle’s paradoxes by saying that the flux of motion and time cannot be continuous compounds of sizeless entities that are limits (viz. cannot be composed out of dimensionless components). That is undoubtedly the most original and best-known point of Damascius’ kinematics. Following Aristotle, Damascius supports the view according to which a continuous magnitude cannot be composed out of discrete and non-extended units. Consequently, if motion and time were extended and continuous, then they must be composed of extended components. Insofar as, from a Neoplatonist point of view, the encosmic world above all is characterized by its infinite divisibility that forcefully contrasts with the indivisibility of the inhabitants of the higher diacosms, the continuity highly befits time and, at least, corporeal motion. They therefore must be composed out of extended components and not of sizeless elements. These components are understood by Damascius as demiurgic extended cuts (called ‘sections/διαστήματα’, ‘leaps/ἀλματα’ or ‘jerks/τρήματα’) of a whole-time – which is a kind of aevernity present in the World-Soul and of a whole-becoming (viz. the flux

400 DAMASCius, In Parm, 262.8-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.1-30.0)
401 ARISTOTLE, Phys, 4.10 217b29-218a30
403 Some ‘Diodorean’ aspects of Damascius’ kinematics are examined in the last part of “Diodorus Cronus on Motion against Aristotle’s Kinematics: a crypto-defence of Plato’s Dynamics?”, 2017
of existence/τὴν ροήν τοῦ εἶναι)⁴⁰⁶. In doing so, Damascius guarantees their reality, or, at least, the fact that they are not just some arbitrary stretches resulting from the discriminating activity of the human mind that is very contingent and idiosyncratic⁴⁰⁷. In


⁴⁰⁶ The fluent γένεσις (also called 'flux of existence/τὴν ροήν τοῦ εἶναι' or 'duration/παράτασις') is a universal and underlying first-order process, whereas the categorical and transient motions (and rests) of particular items – for instance the heavenly revolutions – are second-order processes that supervene upon the flux of becoming by implementing their patterns on it. Indeed, for harmonizing Aristotle’s and Plato’s kinetics, the Neoplatonists thinkers hold that there are two kinds of motions, namely the four-categorical ones (in fact, there are more than four categorical motions, since Simplicius argue that relational change is also a motion per se), and the ‘motion’ of the becoming considered as a whole called duration or flux of existence. The unicity of time is involved and guarantee precisely by the fact that time is actually the measure of duration (παράτασις) of beings beyond the variety of their categorical or second-order processes. By virtue of this twofold kinetic level, the second-order processes, as are the celestial kinetic rotations (which belong to a subset of the categorical motions, viz. the local ones), cannot cut or break the first-order process in actuality, but only potentially (see the footnote below). The demiurgic quanta are the components of the first-order process, the fluent becoming, while the components of the second-order processes are kinetic leaps that are quantitatively equivalent to some divisions of the demiurgic quanta (either a rational or an irrational section) and therefore can be measured by them. On the following becoming as an underlying first-order process of which time is the measure, see: DAMASCUS, In Parm, 238.1-12, 240.23-241.8, 241.20-242.30 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 185.9-24, p. 189.13-190.8, p. 191.1-192.29); SIMPLICIUS, In Phys, 720.34-721.26, 731.7-20, 744.10-31, 767.23-25, 787.29-788.5. See also: S. WATERLOW, Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle’s Physics, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1982, p. 107-108. On the division of second-order processes into motions and rests, see: DAMASCUS, In Parm, 241.20-242.9 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 191.1-26). This last thesis reinforces the consistency of Platonist kinematics, insofar as the change from rest to motion – both understood as second-order processes – is not a special case of change anymore, and, consequently, the case of moving/resting at an instant either (against ARISTOTLE, Phys, 6.3, 234a24-b9, 8 239a10-b4 and R. SORABJI, Time, creation and the continuum, Duckworth, 1983, p. 409-415). Likely, Plato already had in mind this twofold kinetic level, and, for this reason, he was perfectly allowed to treat the transition from motion to rest in the same way as the other changes (Parm, 156a-c, 156e-157b).

⁴⁰⁷ For Damascius, dividing time into past, present and future is relative to the observatory reference frame, while time in itself is a single being. This relativistic claim means that the present now, viz. the indexical νῦν, is egocentric insofar as it results from a psychic cut. Moreover, egocentric divisions and now have only potential existence, inasmuch as they divide the flux of becoming and of time only in thought. This relativity of time is emphasized by some modern commentators as Duhem, but at the risk of making Damascius’ kinematics inconsistent. Indeed, this thesis seems to break the compatibility between Damascius’ and Simplicius’ testimonies. On the one hand, in his commentary on the end of the Second Hypothesis, Damascius claims first, that motion and time are constituted of real and actual ‘demiurgic’ leaps and, second, that the νῦν is such a demiurgic leap (In Parm, 236.2-236.12, 240.23-242.30, 243.18-20), whereas, on the other, Simplicius’ testimony depicts the νῦν as egocentric and merely potential (In Phys, 798.8-799.8). The apparent contradiction is connected to Simplicius’ dilemma in regard of his master’s position. Simplicius points that time is made up either of a segmented series of adjacent time-quotas (in agreement with Simplicius’ previous description of Damascius’ position: In Phys, 796.27-797.26), or of a continuous flowing item, but cannot be both (In Phys, 797.27-36). I argue that both evidences are compatible, even more are two different corollaries of Damascius’ physics. In fact, if all psychic cuts are activity of thought, there is a radical difference between a demiurgic activity of cutting and a non-demiurgic one. Unlike the activities of sensible beings, whether superlunary or sublunary, which live into the world produced under the demiurgic supervision without producing it in regard of the emanative multi-layered
fact, the lower souls only imitate the demiurgic cutting that grounds the composition of the various physical continua, but their cuts do not have the same ontological weight as those of the νοῦς δημιουργικὸς who products time and becoming by the welding of several extended νῦν and of several portions of γένεσις. These demiurgic ‘leaps’ allow Damascius to claim that motion and time proceed in extended sections that are not further cuttable, in other words they proceed by quanta\(^408\). That way, the metrical puzzle of the composition of continuum is resolved. Nevertheless, in a sense, each part of motion is both indivisible (ἄμεροντος) and divisible (μεριστόν), namely abstractly divisible because extended and indivisible because it is a concrete component of every motion, in such a way that, as its parts, continuous motion is also divisible and indivisible: for example, walk is concretely composed of a finite number of steps, and abstractly by miles or other units of length which are infinitely dividable in thought.

However, it must be remarked, for the first time I believe\(^409\), that the infinite division of the demiurgic quanta by human minds is the consequence of the phase difference between the perfect activity of the Demiurge and the imperfect activities of the lower souls which are, to some degree, corrupted by their – voluntary – company with the bodily infraworld and its disorderly agitation (occasioned, in a Proclean way, by the coalescence of the inchoate forms with matter\(^410\)). The divine and perfect souls of the seven planets and of the fixed stars which are described by the Second Hypothesis are in phase with the demiurgic cutting, hence the fact that the celestial bodies move by stellar ‘leaps’ which can serve as clocks for the enocosmic world. They indicate the true segmentation of time that ordinates and measures the fluent becoming, insofar as their ticks mark off the rhythm of the becoming in agreement with the demiurgic activity. Unlike them, the activities of the sublunary souls and the activities of the sublunary bodies play the role of additional and accidental clocks which are often out of phase with the heavenly clocks and, for this reason, break the rhythm of the becoming by putting their own divisions. Since the activities and the motions of these lower entities are very contingent and can take any


\(^{409}\) Nevertheless, Sorabji was close to do this claim: R. SORABJI, Time, creation and the continuum, Duckworth, 1983, p. 55-56. I have presented this point in Los Angeles: “Damascius’ Theodicy: Psychic Input of Disorder and Evil into the World", 16th Annual ISNS (International Society for Neoplatonic Studies) Conference, Loyola Marymount University, 14th June 2018

\(^{410}\) Such a mixture of inchoate and mutually disturbing forms with matter corresponds to the third substrate called ὁπερτῶν, see: PROCLUS, De malorum subsistencia, §34. On Proclus’ differentiation between matter and proto-corporeal substrate, see: G. VAN RIEL, “Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism, Brill, 2009, p. 231-257
The phase difference, in addition, introduces the geometrical incommensurability in the world, while it is absent from the higher levels of the ontic hierarchy. Indeed, the discovering of the irrational magnitude had deeply embarr the Pythagoreans, and Plato had tried to restrain it into the sensible place or, more precisely, to explain it by the dyadic ‘gap’ that occurs between the ontic layers. Damascius is in position to explain the coming of the incommensurability – and, consequently, of the disorder and of the evil – into a novel and coherent Platonistic framework, namely by the phase difference between the activities of the higher and of the lower inhabitants of the ontic scale. By virtue of this, the infinite divisibility of the continuum is not, axiologically, a neutral point, but directly results from the imperfection of the sublunary souls, insofar as the higher and divine souls do not experience the fall into the divisibility, and therefore into the unceasing divisibility of the χώρας-realm. The activities of lower souls and the sublunary bodily motions (and rests) are often out of phase with the real and demiurgic rhythm of the ceaseless becoming, and for this reason, they are able to cut – of course, only abstractly and not concretely – indefinitely the continuum into infinitely varying pseudo-quantas.

412 M. CAVEING, L’irrationalité dans les mathématiques grecques jusqu’à Euclide: la constitution u type mathématique de l’idéalité dans la pensée grecque, Septentrion, 1998, p. 320-331
414 This idea according to which irrationality, phase difference and theodicy are intimately linked can also be found in another context, namely the discussion about the Great Year (Avicenna, Averroes, Nicole Oresme, Leibniz), see: M. RASHED, “Théodicée et Approximation: Avicenne”, in Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, 10, 2000, p. 223-257. On the Great Year, see: G. DE CALLATAY, Anna Platonius. A Study of World Cycles in Greek, Latin and Arabic Sources, Peeters, 1996
415 The conflation between a disordered motion and irrationality to explain the presence of evil into the encosmic world is a commonplace of Neoplatonism. This doctrine takes root in Plato’s description of the ψύχα (Timaeus, 30a, 49b-50a, 52d-53b, 57d-58c, see also: Phaedo, 110a-114a). For instance, in Proclus, see: PROCLUS, De malorum subsistentia, §29, §34, §35. In Tim, I, 1283.27-284.23, 325.30-328.9, 367.30-368.11, 382.20-389.16, 294.22-395.10, 404.22-31, 417.27-32, 419.26-420.2, II 153.25-154.1, In Parm, IV 844.11-848.20 and J. PHILLIPS, Order From Disorder. Proclus’ Doctrine of Evil and its Roots in Ancient Platonism, Brill, 2007, p. 93-150. But the instantiation of this doctrine by means of the phase difference cannot be found elsewhere than in Damascius’ kinematics. In his commentary on the Parmenides, Damascius alludes to his earlier commentary on the Timaeus in which he had also expounded his kinematics (In Parm, 236.13-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 183.1-3)). Indeed, his quantum kinematics indubitably is very helpful for interpreting the demigury of the Timaeus, in particular, I think (without any evidence however), the harmonic constitution of the heavens, the intrinsic disordered motion of the ψύχα, and the constitution of the threefold mortal soul.
416 Here, Damascus’ idea seems to be very close to the construction of irrational numbers by Dedekind-cut: R. DEDEKIND, “Stetigkeit und irrationale Zahlen” (1872), in Gesammelte mathematische Werke, Band 3, p. 315-334. Yet, from a mathematical point of view, while the celestial revolutions can divide the demiurgic sections only in a rational way, in such a
This intimacy between the irrationality and the infinite divisibility is a well-known element of Greek Mathematics – the famous Theaetetus’ algorithm, viz. the ἄθροισμα τῆς ἔνωσεως of Euclid X 417–, and its importance for Plato’s thought is also well documented416, given that it seems to be an arcane key of his metaphysics419. That is once more a sign of Damascius’ originality to implement this mathematical theorem into his unusual kinematics420 in order to support his Theodicy by highlighting the responsibility of the self-moving souls whereby the evil by-product421 infiltrates the universe.

way that the set of all their possible cuts can only constitute the set of rational positive magnitudes (Q+), the sublunary beings can also cut the demiurgic sections in an irrational way and, in doing so, the set of all their possible cuts is the set of irrational positive magnitudes (R+). To borrow Poincaré’s distinction between several orders of continua (H. POINCARÉ, “Le continu mathématique”, in Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 1, 1893, p. 26-34), the set of heavenly pseudo-quanta could form a continuum of the first order with a countable cardinality (N0), whereas the set of sublunary pseudo-quanta is a continuum of the second order and has an uncountable or super-denumerable cardinality (N1). Both are dense, but only the sublunary set satisfies the Cantor-Dedekind axiom. Moreover, given that the number of celestial beings actually is limited, the set of heavenly pseudo-quanta is finite too (insofar as it depends on the number of different heavenly motions), hence the fact that the unceasing divisibility is a flavour specific to the sublunary realm.


420 On another possible use of the Euclidean algorithm of continual and alternated subtraction in Damascius’ thought, see: V. BÉGUIN, “Ineffable et indicible chez Damascius”, in Les Etudes philosophiques, 4, 2013, p. 561, n. 37

421 The general scheme of Neoplatonic Theodicy depicts evil as a παροπίστασις, viz. a parasitic existence that is produced derivatively in the course of the runoff of goodness from the Good itself. This parasitic and adventitious by-product is due to the limited receptivity of some beings that fail to fill up all the divine light and its goodness, and that are produced despite their essential deficiency in accordance with the universal validity of the Principle of Plenitude. God thereby wants neither imperfection nor evil, even more insofar as they appear surreptitiously during the production of last diacosms, they participate in spite of themselves to the total goodness of this production (in such a way that evil only exists from the perspective of parts, but not that of the whole). Thus, to borrow the neologism of Plato.
Anyway, Damascius’ kinematics is very different from Proclus’, notably because only the lower souls are able to mark whenever a durationless boundary in the time-continuum, and their cuts are far from having an ontic basis as the demiurgic *quanta* are. Thus, the ‘sudden’, understood as a real durationless switch, can only occur between two demiurgic *quanta* that are not in themselves composed out of a dense set of sizeless instants\(^\text{422}\). As a kinematic stuff, for Damascius, the διάφωνος appears just at the junction between the demiurgic ‘leaps’, in such a way that Damascius cannot understand it in similar fashion as Proclus.

The διάφωνος therefore is apart from time in the literal sense, inasmuch as it is situated between two temporal phases of durative processes which can be either some kind of *durative* motion or some kind of *durative* rest\(^\text{423}\). Strictly speaking, the ‘sudden’ does not belong to any phase of motion, insofar as it appears only at the durationless weld between two uncuttable periods, whether demiurgic or not.

However, as is often the case, Damascius makes the notion of διάφωνος more complex by proceeding to a bifurcation between, on the one hand, the psychic διάφωνος which is a

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\(^{422}\) S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 19

demiotic and vivifying form", and, on the other, the physical νός, which is an unreal halfway stage between past and future that mirrors the true 'sudden' only present into the soul. In doing so, Damascius supports a twofold understanding of the έξαίφνης, insofar as the psychic 'sudden' is rather dynamic – given that it is the key of the psychic causation – while the physical is kinematic. The psychic 'sudden' in fine belongs to the οὐσία of the soul, while the kinematic 'sudden' – that imitates it – is only present in its activities (ἐνέργεια) *nominally* in the processes produced by the soul qua efficient cause. This bifurcation of the 'sudden' into two highly separated meanings seems to be briefly lightened as follows:

In Parm, 264.21-265.3

The important points for distinguishing between the psychic and the corporeal 'sudden' seems to be first the fact that they result from very different causes, and the second their respective kinds of indivisibility. The psychic 'sudden', which is a demiotic and

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vivifying form that gets its dynamism from Hecate-Rhea (viz. the νόος ζωογόνος) is caused by the ‘unseen and transcendent causes’, namely it comes into the soul from the Ones of the First and Second Hypotheses, while the physical ‘sudden’ called νὸς comes from the demiurgic cutting of the complete and integral time (ὁ σοφότας γρόνος) that subsists into World-Soul and encloses altogether all past, present and future periods as a whole. That way, the psychic ‘sudden’ is produced both by the hypernegations of the First One and by the assertions of the Second (namely the three diacosms of the Intelligible, Intelligible-Intellective and Intellective). If so its production appears to be the same as the constitution of the Third One – the human soul – of which the essential characteristics are so much gifts from the various levels of gods. Furthermore, Damascius employs a formal criterion to separate the two ‘sudden’. Indeed, on the one hand, the psychic ‘sudden’ is truly indivisible, then it is durationless and, by virtue of this, timeless, whereas, on the other, the physical ‘now’ is not really indivisible but only uncuttable, given that it must have a genuine duration, in such a way that it is only a time-atom but not a partless and sizeless item.

But, in this text, the νὸς is a stretch of time (viz. a time-quantum) rather than a durationless switch between two durative phases as seems to be the physical image (ἐνδολογον) of the psychic ‘sudden’ in the γίνεσις-realm. The usual obscurity of Damascius about such a physical image can be to some extent lightened by considering that this image is itself an intermediary between the durative νὸς and the timeless ἐξαίφνης. With the first, the image shares the fact of being in time and the fact to be a limit, in other words to belong to the becoming, while, with the second, the image shares indivisibility – or at least it has some duration smaller than any duration that can be assigned – and logical neutrality. If it be so, the physical image of the psychic ‘sudden’ is the kinematic image of the dynamic ‘sudden’, in such a way that such an image fills a requisite of the consistency of Damascius’ kinematics that the atomic νὸς would leave unsatisfied – namely, the puzzle of the weld between two durative ‘leaps’. Moreover, it is only when the dynamic ‘sudden’ is reflected by its kinematic image that the encosmic assertions and privations are fully and equally denied.

Now, let focus on the dynamic facet of the ‘sudden’. The fact that the psychic ἐξαίφνης must be understood as dynamic rather than kinematic does not only follow from the conflation between the ‘sudden’ and the soul (since I have argued that it was not sufficient for Proclus). Actually, few passages of Damascius show us that Damascius has rather in mind the amalgam of the ‘sudden’ with the dynamic core that remains the same throughout the self-modification of the soul. When he was challenging with the idea of self-motion, Damascius first describes the ‘weird’ nature of the αὐτοκινητον as the intermediary
between the ἀκίνητον and the ἑτεροκίνητον, and, second, identifies the ‘sudden’ with the immobile-part of the self-mover:

In Parm, 263.8-10439: ὅστε καὶ ἀκίνητον κατὰ τὸ αἰώνιον, καὶ ἑτεροκίνητον κατὰ τὸ ἐγκόφον, καὶ αὐτοκίνητον ἁρά κατὰ τὸ σύγκρατον. Ἡ γὰρ κινοῦν, ἀκίνητον, καὶ ἡ κινουμένων, ἑτεροκίνητον, ἡ δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ ἁμρο, αὐτοκίνητον.

So that [the soul] is immobile for its eternity and other-moved for its temporality, and thus self-mover according to the mixture of the two. Indeed, as a mover, it is immobile; as a moved, it is other-moved; and as it is both in its identity, it is self-mover.

In Parm, 265.15-17440: Ἐτι δὲ τὸ τρίτον κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἰδιότητα τοῦ ἑξαίρεσθη ἀκίνητος ἐστιν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοκίνητος· κατὰ δὲ τὸ σύγκρατον εἴδος, ἀκίνητον ἔχει τὸ αὐτοκίνητον, ὡς καὶ τὸ γενητὸν ἁγένητον.

Moreover, thirdly, the soul is immobile according to the property of its sudden, it is self-mover according to the becoming, and its faculty of self-motion is immobile in its mixed form, just as what is generated in it is also ungenerated.

In Parm, 267.17-19441: τὸ δὲ “ὡς ἐξ ἑκείνου μεταβάλλον εἰς ἑκάτερον”, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ ὅντος προοίμιον τοῦ γνωμονέου, καὶ ὡς ἐκ τοῦ ἀνεματάβλητου τῆς μεταβολῆς γνωμονής. Ἄμα γὰρ ἄμετάβλητος ἡμῶν ἡ υἱεία καὶ μεταβλητή.

As for the sentence “from which there is a change in one direction or the other”442, it is explained by the fact that ‘what is becoming’ proceeds from the being and that change occurs from which is always immutable, because our essence is both immutable and changeable.

The manifold equivalence is blindingly obvious. Damascius makes the following identities:

In Parm, 263.8-10 ἀκίνητον = αἰώνιον = κινοῦν = σύγκρατον
In Parm, 265.15-17 ἀκίνητον = ἑξαίρεσθη = σύγκρατον εἴδος
In Parm, 267.17-19 ἄμετάβλητον = ὅντος = υἱεία
Thus: ἀκίνητον = ἄμετάβλητον = αἰώνιον = ὅντος = κινοῦν = ἑξαίρεσθη = σύγκρατον

As I have argued, the metaphor of mixture must be understood καθ’ ἐνδείξειν as approximating the very specificity of intermediary predication in which the opposite strengths are balanced and unified. In the same way, breaking the soul into an invariant core and a changing surface is nothing but a construct of the mind. The only relevant distinction, that I shall analyse in detail further, is the usual Platonic dichotomy between ὑπάρξεις and μεθὲξεις.443 Taking account of this qualification, the psychic ‘sudden’ corresponds to the invariant kernel of the soul, namely its εἴδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως, that is to say its eternal mixed form that takes on the efficient causation upon the physical world (given that the soul is in itself a ‘real self-mover’ and not only an ‘apparent’ one).444 Thus, the psychic ‘sudden’ is rightly the motive force acting upon the soul itself and its

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440 = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 34.17-20
442 PLATO, Parmenides, 156d3-4
subordinated items, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ assumes the psychic causation. In doing so, the temporal passage from a contrary to another proceeds from the ‘sudden’ that prevails over all the soul. It is by means of its ‘sudden’ that the soul, which is in itself a mixture of the opposite predicates, produces the temporal fluctuation of presence and absence, assertion and privation.

The identity of the ‘sudden’ and the psychic invariant kernel involves the following characteristics: in the same way as the intermingled opposite predicates within the psychic kernel are prior to the temporal assertions and privations, the psychic ‘sudden’ in itself precedes them. Of course, the psychic core always remains co-present with itself in the course of the journey of the soul, likewise the ‘sudden’ is always present – evidently in an amphibious way – though the temporal alternation from a contrary to another; albeit the ‘sudden’ can actually be glimpsed in all its splendour only at the durationless transition between two opposite phases, namely only when the psychic sudden is mirrored into the γένεσες-realm by its kinematic image.

What is the dynamic causation of the psychic ‘sudden’ qua psychic kernel?

“But this sudden, as a weird nature, is [firmly] seated. ‘Weird’, because it is essence that becomes both opposites <and neither>; ‘nature’, because [unlike the durative νόον] it is not a limit of time, nor a limit of becoming, but a certain demurgic and vivifying form; and it is “[firmly] seated”, because it is the most solid, the most stable and cohesive foundation of the soul; and [Parmenides] adds: “it is the point arrival and the point of departure”, because this property of the sudden is both the beginning of the procession and the end of the reversion. “Then the one, if it is at rest and in motion, must change in each direction; for that is the only way in which it can do both.” If, therefore, it is moving and resting, it is both at once; this is why it is the very last One [viz. the Third], sometimes nascent, sometimes persisting, obviously in agreement with the change of the foremost state, viz. of the divisible or the indivisible. The sudden gathers one and the other, and it mixes immutable with change.

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452 PLATO, Parmenides, 156d6-7
453 PLATO, Parmenides, 156e1
454 PLATO, Parmenides, 156e3-5
The ‘sudden’ qua psychic kernel – namely the cohesive and vivifying principle of the soul – carries out reversion and procession\(^455\), inasmuch as it is the junction point between these alternated processes that alternatively unify or scatter the soul. In short, to use the Neoplatonic metaphor of the soul as a pilot of the bodily vessel\(^456\), the ‘sudden’ is the pilot in charge of the direction of the efficient power of the soul toward the higher or the lower levels of the ontic hierarchy\(^457\). In doing so, the ‘sudden’ is thereby in charge of the self-modification of the soul\(^458\). Moreover, as the pilot of a ship, the ‘sudden’ within the soul also moves upwards and downwards with the ‘container’ that it steers and by which it is dragged away through the ontic spectrum. Thus, since the ‘sudden’ steers the soul, Abhel-Rappe\(^459\) is right to close together the psychic kernel of the commentary on the Parmenides and the ‘faculty of awareness’ (tò προσπεκτικόν) of the lectures on the Phaedo\(^460\).

The modalities of the psychic causation are exhibited as follows:

\(^{455}\) See also: DAMASCUS, In Parm, 249.27-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 8.1-3)
\(^{456}\) PLOTINUS, Enneads, III 4 [15], 6.48, IV 3 [27], 17.22-28, 21.3-11
\(^{460}\) DAMASCUS, In Phaed, I §269, §271, II §19, §21
\(^{461}\) = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 46.3-47.1
The psychic activities predictably come from the psychic ‘sudden’ insofar as it is the most immutable and most timeless ‘part’ of the soul which has within itself all the temporal predicates, albeit only in gestation (given that it has within itself all the predicates, even both-together (συναμφότερον) the two predicates of each opposite pair, in a paradigmatic way). This text clarifies how varying activities can proceed from the same seed, and, reversely, how the various activities lead to the self-modification of the soul. Such reciprocity brings out the function of supervenience for the consistency of any Neoplatonic theory, notably because the supervenience guarantees the continuity of the vertical causal chain from the highest to the lowest levels of the ontic scale.

Beyond the self-modification, the mechanism of the psychic causation is as follows: the activities of the soul are directly reflected into the physical world by the changes of its primary vehicle which is a luminous body more or less warmly dressed. Such a translation from the ‘psychic’ to the ‘vehicular’ explains the frequent use of the analogy between them in the course of Damascius’ explanation. The psychic causation thereby is relayed from the dynamic kernel to the bodily diacosm by means of a chain that includes incorporeal and corporeal activities:

ψυχή → αὐγοειδές δρχμα → σῶμα

This scheme is obviously a common view of Later Neoplatonism. The innovation (or the renovation) of Damascius takes place only in his understanding of the link between the essence of the soul and its activity, namely in the fact that, unlike Syrianus’ students, Damascius claims the validity of the Law of Supervenience for the souls which peregrinate throughout the scale of beings, and sustains it by a very technical framework. Porphyry had been very close to making this move, but, unlike Iamblichus, some scruple connected with the dignity of the soul had prevented it. What is this Law of Supervenience?

The activity proceeds from the essence and, by virtue of this, the activity necessarily is similar to the substance from which it originates, in such a way that if the substance is φ, its activities will also be φ. Conversely, if the activities are of some determined kind, that is because its substance is such. In short, a thing cannot differ in respect to its activities

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465 IAMBULCHIUS, in (Ps.)SIMPLICIUS, In DA, 89.33-35 (see also: PRISCIANUS, Metaphyr, 31.27-32)
without differing with respect to its substance, given that the activities ontologically depend upon the substantial properties of which they are the expression. This Law of Supervenience according to which the activities supervene upon the substance is universal and plays at any level of the ontic hierarchy\(^{467}\), and therefore must be applied to the ‘regional’ relation between the soul and its activities. That is precisely one of the main reasons for which Damascius deviates from Proclus and follows Iamblichus on the changing self, since the variation of the psychic σωματικὸς μέχρις can be inferred from the varying activities of the soul.

The relative likeness (ὁμοιότης) between the cause and its effects, expressed by the Law of Supervenience, ensures the connection of each diacosm with that which precedes it and that which follows it. By this, such a multi-layered likeness justifies the intellectual undertaking of rising to the Principles\(^{468}\), because from the empirical observation of certain properties at the encosmic level, it is possible to go up the scale of beings, step by step, until their most transcendent roots – including, by the use of hypernegation, beyond the discursive speech, until the Ineffable. In denying the validity of the supervenience for the ‘regional’ relation between the soul and its activities, Proclus runs the risk of shaking the consistency of the Neoplatonic theory, and of breaking the continuity of the causal chain that brings together all diacosmic levels. Indeed, whether the Law of Supervenience were not universal, then how the Neoplatonists would justify their multi-layered theology of which the construction by procession highly depends on the relative likeness between the diacosms? To preserve the consistency of Neoplatonism, Damascius must therefore diverge from Proclus – who introduces a ‘regional’ gap into the processive continuum – and claim the universality of the Supervenience, in such a way that even the essence of the soul is changeable, insofar as the activities which proceed from it are variable. That way, the procession can be understood, without any trouble, as a continuum resulting from the interplay of similarity and dissimilarity between the causes and their effects, so, as a chain that unifies the ontic hierarchy from an absolute singular principle to a manifold of particulars.

The reciprocity involved by the supervenience is well depicted by the model of ἀλλοίωσις that Damascius favours for clarifying the self-motion\(^{469}\). Indeed, saying that the


\(^{468}\) For instance, see: PROCLUS, Elements of Theology, §28-29, §32

\(^{469}\) Here, I take the opposite view of Steel who thinks that Damascius’ use of terms which indicate qualitative change is an unfortunate consequence of the fact that Damascius is “limited by the conceptual apparatus provided him by his tradition” (C. STEEL, The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus, Brüssel, 1978, p. 116). Quite the reverse, I think the Neoplatonists are perfectly aware of the benefits provided by the Platonic porosity between the categories of substance and quality involved by the ‘categorial modulation’ occurring in the relation of participate. Yet, it seems that all Neoplatonist had forgotten the mediatory role of the μαθηματικ in the ‘categorial modulation’. On these intermediaries, see: ARISTOTLE, Met, A 6 987b14-33; PH. MERLAN, From Platonism to Neoplatonism, Martinus Nijhoff, 1968, p. 11-58 and M. RASHED, “Plato’s Five Worlds Hypothesis (Ti. 55cd), Mathematics and Universals”, in R. CHIARADONNA, G. GALLUZO (eds.), Universals in Ancient Philosophy, Edizioni della Normale, 2013, p. 87-112. Anyway, as Cook Wilson and — after him — Armstrong have lucidly remarked, the puzzle of how occurs the participation is condemned to remain insoluble, insofar such a nexus is in fine a primitive of the theory: D. M. ARMSTRONG, Universals and Scientific Realism. Vol. 1: Nominalism and Realism, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 66-68, p. 104-105, Universals. An Opinionated Introduction, Westview.
soul alters or modifies itself seems naturally to put us in mind the idea of a variation of the very being of the soul itself under the influence of its own activity. Besides, the well-known porosity between qualitative change and substantial change allows to switch from the ἄλλοισις qua γένεσις τις to the γένεσις ἀπλή, or vice versa, without great trouble. This move is especially easy for a Platonist, insofar as such a confusion is already ascribed to Plato in the case of the Forms of which the sensible participates. Indeed, Plato had supported the view according to which the μέθεξις involves a sort of ‘categorial modulation’ from the category of substance to the category of quality, namely from the Ideas in themselves (= substances/τοιοῦτο) to the Ideas as participated by the sensible items (= qualities/τοιοῦτον). Thus, the fact that Damascius claims that what is changing into the soul is its ὀστίωδος μέθεξις (i.e. its τοιοῦτο τῆς ὀστίας) is far to be a Platonistic coincidence, insofar as it is not its least merit to justify the use of the lexicon of qualitative change. Of course, such a porosity might be highly tempered by the distinction between ἄλλοισις and τροπή presented above. However, inasmuch as the Neoplatonic substitution of the coming-to-be (γένεσις) by the transformation (τροπή) clearly corresponds to a transfer of the essential change from the category of substance to the category of quality, this late distinction actually supports the view of Damascius.

Damascius thereby characterizes the products of the essential modifications as essential dispositions (διάθεσις/ἐξίζησις) which determine the path toward the completion (τελείωσις) of the soul, viz. its unification. The quality called διάθεσις is very linked to the idea of

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ARISTOTLE, GC, I 3-4. In this text, ‘alteration’ means more generally ‘qualitative change’ rather than strictly ‘change in affections’ (as ἄλλοισις means in Cat, 14 15a15-33, Phys, 7.3 and Met, A 21 1022b15-20). Indeed, the examples of quality used by Aristotle are not, strictly speaking, πάθη (see: 319b12-14, 25-29, 33). On the porosity between qualitative change and substantial change in Aristotle, see: Met, Z 8 1033b21-24, 1034a5-8 and, above all, Meteor, 4.2 379b17-32. On this point, see: F. MARION, Etude sur les notions de διάθεσις et d’ἐξίζησις chez Aristote, Sorbonne University-Paris IV, 2015 (MPhil Thesis), chap. V, §20


DAMASCtUS, In Parm, 255.26 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.3-4)

The loss of Damascius’ commentary on the First Part of the Parmenides is, of course, highly regrettable for our understanding of Damascius’ account on participation. However, there remains a brief analysis in the De Principiis, see: DAMASCUS, De Princ, II 1-4.4-8 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 168.1-173.5).


mixture since its Hippocratic origin in which δίαθεσις means the healthy or sickly humoral balance. This is in the meaning of ‘corporeal balance’ that, for instance, Aristotle sometimes uses it in his biological treatises. This link between δίαθεσις and mixture is also present in Plato who sometimes speaks about the psychic mixture. Anyway, in the book Δ of the Metaphysics, Aristotle defines the δίαθεσις as the ordered arrangement of that which has parts, and such is any mixture. In making appeal to these qualities that implicitly allude to the mixture, Damascus highlights once more the unified being of the soul. More important, among the four kinds of qualities presented in Cat, 8, he chooses one of which the production is closest to substantial change. Indeed, in Phys., 7.3, Aristotle has described the coming-to-be of the qualities that are not affective on the model of the γένεσις, namely on the model of a derivative production that succeeds some preparatory alterations (in the strict sense of affective change). This process is very similar to the coming of the Forms into the sensible world that follows a preliminary

Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus, Brussel, 1978, p. 113-114. For these notions, see also: ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, DA, 24.21-25.2. The proximity between the two loaded words δίαθεσις and τέλειος is far from being a bland textual fact. It carries a high Alexander’s overtone (rather than an Aristotle’s one), insofar as δήλωσις is often used as a metonymy of ἔξις, see for these notions and the function of such a metonymy in Aristotle: F. MARION, Étude sur les notions de δήλωσις et d’ἔξις chez Aristote, Sorbonne University-Paris IV, 2015 (MPhil Thesis), and, for these in Alexander of Aphrodisias: C. CERAMI, “Changer pour rester le même. Forme, δήλωσις et ἔξις chez Alexandre d’Aphrodisie”, in A. BALANSARD, A. Jaulin (eds.), Alexandre d’Aphrodite et la métaphysique aristotelicienne, Peeters, 2018, p. 237-280. Simplicius follows his master by identifying the essential participation with the notion of ἔξις, see: SIMPLICIUS, In Phys., 1066.3-1067.2 and I. HADOT (ed.), Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Épictète, Brill, 1996, p. 80-83.

477 Ps.-HIPPOCRATES, On Ancient Medicine, 6.2, 7.2, On the Eighth Month’s Foetus, 12.1, On Ailment, 34 (see also for ἔξις: Regimen in Health, I 32.1, III 81.3, 82.3, On Regimen in Acute Diseases, 25.1, 43.1, Appendix, 6.1, 31.2, 57.1) and Ps.-GALEN, Introductio sive Medicus, 680.1-8. For a Neoplatonic text that refers to the Hippocratic use, see amongst others: SIMPLICIUS, In Epict., 14.332-335.

478 For example: ARISTOTLE, Phys., 7.3 246b4-6, GA, IV 2 767a32-33.

479 For example: PLATO, Philebus, 64c.

480 ARISTOTLE, Met., A 19 1022b1-3.


482 There is in Aristotle a well-known porosity between a kind of γένεσις τις and γένεσις ὁπλη, namely between the change in respect to privation (or in respect to τέλειος-ἐκστάσις in the case of the dispositions, according to Phys., 7.3 246b1-3, 247a1-3) and the change in respect to contradiction (see: Phys., 1.7 189b30-190a31, Met., Z 7 1033a8-16, 8 1033a24-b1), albeit only the last is a genuine substantial change (Phys., 1.7 190a21-b10, 5.1 225a12-17, GC 1.2 317a17-3 317b35, 319a3-14). To some extent, such a conflation can be explained by the likeness of these two relations (Met., I 4 1055b3-9).
overcoming of the material barriers that might prevent its reception. The parallel is blindingly obvious, and can legitimate the association of ὑπάρξεις and διάθεσις that puts the emphasis on the categorial porosity involved by the participation.

Moreover, Damascius has surely in mind the Aristotelian definition of ἐξίς according to which it means ‘a disposition according to which that which is disposed is either well or ill disposed, either in itself or with reference to something else’, like are virtue and vice. The ethical overtone of these sorts of qualities is highly relevant for characterizing the essence of the soul that undergoes change in the course of its purifying ascent toward the Intelligible, or quite the reverse in the course of its corrupting fall toward the matter.

So, the fact that Damascius precisely uses the term διάθεσις for denoting the changing quality of the psychic essence is undoubtedly well thought out, insofar as, given its semantic wealth and its great power of evocation, it provides a satisfying clarification of his theory: modifying the intensity of one of the opposing predicates present within itself, the soul changes its predicative balance, namely its disposition, and, therefore, projects varying activity from itself towards itself and, by means of the ‘vehicular reflection’, from itself towards the physical world. That way, the soul modifies itself, given that its activity has the retrograde effect of changing its predicative balance again, and so on and so forth. For instance, when the soul plunges into the sensible world more deeply, its ‘one’ is relaxing while its ‘many’ is strengthening, in such a way that the balance between ‘one’ and ‘many’ changes in favour of the ‘many’. Since the soul is always active and in motion (ἀκατάνητος), it continuously modifies itself, in such a way that the soul is an ever-changing οὐσία (ἀμεταβλήτως, ἀκατάνητος. Yet, the fact that the soul is essentially disposed (διατηθεμένον) differently at different times does not entirely shake its being to the extent that it would be no longer what it is. In spite of the increase and decrease of the various predicative strengths within itself, the soul keeps its identity throughout change.

Indeed, while the essence-οὐσία of the soul is changeable in respect to its variable οὐσία of μέθεξις, Damascius forcefully argues that it is not the case for its εἰδῶς τῆς ὑπάρξεως. Albeit the terms οὐσία and ὑπάρξεις (and, sometimes, ὑπόστασις) are often interchangeable in Damascius, he had nevertheless distinguished their precise meanings and imposed a twist to the earlier Neoplatonic tradition. In short, ὑπάρξεις means the first principle of every determined being – principle which is anterior to all participation. The ὑπάρξεις subsequently plays the role of the kernel around which the substance grows according to its essential participation. In other words, ὑπάρξεις denotes the pure being that fulfils the henaic function of foundation for the whole structure of the essence, in such a way that the οὐσία in fine results from the qualification of the ὑπάρξεις by the diverse essential participation (it must be noted that such a constitution does not perfectly cross-

483 DAMASCIIUS, In Phil, 135.1-136.4
484 Furthermore, these two processes are both durationless (see: Phys, 6.5 236a5-7).
485 ARISTOTLE, Met, Δ 20 1022b10-12 (that refers to Δ 14 1020b19-23 and NE, 2.4 1105b25-28)
486 On the virtue qua ἐξίς, see: ARISTOTLE, EE, 2.2, NE, 2.4-6
487 This ethical overtone of διάθεσις and ἐξίς is quite vivid in Aristotle. Almost the half of their occurrences are found in the ethical and political treatises of Aristotle (221/435), in such a way that the scholars have been focused on the ἐξίς qua virtue. See: M. OELLE, “Passive Dispositions: On the Relationship between πάθος and ἐξίς in Aristotle”, in Ancient Philosophy, 32-2, 2013, p. 351-368
488 For the virtue qua essential participation, see: DAMASCIIUS, In Parm, 256.4-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18-19). See also: SIMPLICIUS, In Epict. Ench. 1.332-342
490 On these notions in Damascius, see: J. COMBES, “Hyparxis et Hypostasis chez Damascius”, in Études Néoplatoniciennes, J. Millon 1996, p. 327-349
check the Chaldaic-triadic combination that produces the οὐσία qua nature which is, has some power and acts)\(^{491}\).

That way, the fact that the psychic υπάρξεις of μέθεξις varies over time is enough for claiming that the soul qua οὐσία undergoes change, and this without entirely denying its identity.\(^{492}\) Moreover, the fact that the essence of the soul results from the conjuction of its υπάρξεις and its οὐσιώδης μέθεξις emphasizes once more the porosity between substantial and qualitative change inherent in the ‘categorial modulation’, given that the essential participation is a genuine ‘component’ of the οὐσία. Damascius’ subtle explanation of the modification of the soul by means of the distinction between υπάρξεις and μέθεξις has also the merit to highlight the intermediary nature of the soul again\(^{493}\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>οὐσία</th>
<th>υπάρξεις</th>
<th>μέθεξις</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>οὐσία</td>
<td>unchangeable</td>
<td>unchangeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>νοῦς</td>
<td>unchangeable</td>
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<tr>
<td>νοσήμα</td>
<td>changing</td>
<td>changing</td>
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As for the reason for why the psychic υπάρξεις is really immutable, it must be found in its henadic function, that is to say its function of unification and of conservation of unity\(^{494}\). Indeed, inasmuch as the soul of the Third Hypothesis is the last One, namely the ἀνθρώπινον ἕν, its very being is determined by the structure of its unity. Consequently, whether this structure (ἐνδος) can be lost, then the fact to be a soul can be lost too, and, therefore, the soul cannot travel along the ontic hierarchy and cannot express the virtualities of its intermediary being without vanishing. To escape such an unpleasant conclusion, the psychic structure of unity – and such is its ἐνδος τῆς υπάρξεως – must be conceived as unchangeable. That way, the Platonic dogma of the immortality of the mediatory soul can be saved, whereas the freedom of the soul indicated by its varying

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\(^{494}\) DAMASCUS, De Princ, I 69.21-70.11 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 104.21-105.20)
activity – and thereby its responsibility for its fall into the corrupted world\(^{495}\) – can be explained by its changing essential participation only, in accordance with the Law of Supervenience.

The ἐξαιρέσεις ὡς ὑπάρξεις is therefore the radical foundation (θεμέλιον) of the soul, its principle of existence (ὑπόστασις), which inherits its dynamic power from the vivifying Intellect\(^{496}\) (Hecate-Rhea) from which the moving life (Hera) and the resting life (Hestia) originally proceed\(^{497}\). The ‘sudden’ shares some characteristics with the νοῦς ζωογόνος of the 2\(^{nd}\) Order of the Intelligible Diacosm, insofar as Hecate is the source of the psychic vivifying form. For instance, on the one hand, in the same way as Hecate is both-together in motion and at rest\(^{498}\), the psychic ‘sudden’ has within itself all opposite predicates; on the other, the vivifying Intellect\(^{499}\) and the ‘sudden’ are in their respective diacosms the analogous of the First Eternity of the Intelligible Life belonging to the 2\(^{nd}\) Triad of the Intelligible Diacosm\(^{500}\). Furthermore, insofar as the ὑπάρξεις is a gift of the Father (that of the Chaldaic Triad corresponding to the Intelligible Diacosm)\(^{501}\), the psychic ‘sudden’ keeps somewhat of the Fathered Act, namely its dynamism. Thus, it is ὡς ὑπάρξεις that the psychic ‘sudden’ takes on the efficient causation of the soul upon itself and upon the physical world, given that its motive force is inherited from the higher diacosms. As a junction between the highest and the lowest levels of reality, the souls, by means of their intrinsic dynamism, are in charge of the transmission and of the conservation of the encosmic life, in doing so they take part in the organization of the sensible world ὑπὸς assistants of the Vivifying Goddess and of the Demiurges\(^{502}\).

Damascius, the last ring of the golden chain\(^{503}\), surely was – of course after Plotinus – the most combative Platonizer, and did not hesitate to correct and amend the Aristotelian drags of Proclus’ Henology in order to recover the true look of Platonism. His aim is clearly to offer a consistent Platonic worldview that, obviously, differs from Plato in many points. In his conceptual elaboration, Damascius thereby is very careful to ensure that the syntactic rules of Neoplatonism – as the Principles of Continuity, of Plenitude and the Law of Supervenience – are universally valid. In agreement with his inherited

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\(^{495}\) SIMPLICIUS, In Epict. Ench, 35.245-273, 38.738-746


\(^{500}\) DAMASCIUS, In Parm, 17.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1997, p. 22.7-10)


\(^{503}\) To borrow the title of the following paper: L. BRISSON, “Le dernier anneau de la chaîne d’or”, in Revue d’Etudes Grecques, 114, 2001, p. 269-282.
Hypothesis

Pachymeres

Parmenides rather than a Platonic way that 'suddenly' keeps the Neoplatonists, beyond the fact that Christian theologians do heavily from his doctrine of the psychic Philoponus, unheeded in the posterior Platonic Tradition.


CONCLUSION: BEYOND DAMASCUS, TOWARDS THE FLORENTINE ACADEMY

Damascius' transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to psychic dynamics shall go unheeded in the posterior Platonic Tradition. Indeed, neither his disciple Simplicius, nor Philoponus, nor Olympiodorus who are well informed of Damascius’ thought, borrow from his doctrine of the psychic εξαίφνης. Likewise, nowhere in the Byzantine Theology heavily inspired by Neoplatonism, a technical account of the εξαίφνης can be found. Beyond the fact that Christian theologians do not share the same Parmenides-focusing as the Neoplatonists, the main reason, I think, is that for them the word εξαίφνης refers above all to Malachias 3.1 wherein it is said that God enters suddenly the Temple505, in such a way that ‘suddenly’ keeps both its mystical and its kinematic meanings, but in a Christian rather than a Platonic way506. Moreover, the only Byzantine commentary on the Parmenides preserved, namely the sequel to Proclus’ commentary written by George Pachymeres (AD 13th-Century)507, comes back to a kinematic reading of the Third Hypothesis508, unsurprisingly less influenced by Neoplatonism than by Aristotle’s brief

504 DAMASCUS, In Parm, 263.29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.25-32.1)

505 Malachi 3.1: εξαίφνης ἐξελείς τὸν ναὸν σου ὁ Κύριος ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε (see also: Mark 13.36; Luke 2.13, 9.36; Acts, 9.3, 22.6)


definition of the adverb ‘suddenly’ qua infinitesimal duration (viz. a duration smaller than any duration that can be given or perceived)\(^{509}\).

The oblivion of Damascius’ innovation could have been corrected later, namely in the Florentine Academy founded by the very erudite Marsilio Ficino. But, although Ficino had likely read – but no translated – Damascius’ *In Parm*, with the annotations of Bessarion\(^{510}\), nothing in his treatment of the Third Hypothesis can put us in mind that he was very influenced by the diadochus\(^{511}\).

Yet, Marsilio Ficino reconciles kinematics and mysticism in his understanding of the ‘sudden’. But he does this by distancing himself from the Greek Neoplatonists in several points. Notably, he slightly deviates from them about the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis. Indeed, albeit his interpretation of Proclus’ position is actually a mistake\(^{512}\), Ficino restraints the σκοπός to the ‘divine’ souls, namely those that have a great likeness with the intellective gods\(^{513}\). The Third Hypothesis is therefore not really devoted to the demonic and human souls (as it is for the successors of Syrianus\(^{514}\), but rather to the cosmic gods, viz. the souls of the greater spheres, of the stars and of the divinities which exercise providence within the spheres\(^{515}\).

Although Ficino admits that some changes occur within the soul\(^{516}\), whatever is its degree of perfection, he follows Proclus by denying that the soul itself undergoes essential change\(^{517}\). The psychic changes are only the varying activities unfolded by time that proceed from the ‘divine’ and eternal part of the soul, namely from its essence. And what is changing within the soul is only its disposition (habitus) or appearance which is firmly understood in a non-essential way\(^{518}\). Such a position is obviously very Proclean. Anyway, anything else, from Ficino, would have been astonishing\(^{519}\). Besides, Ficino illustrates this by the image of the sphere of which the centre remains immobile, while its surface undergoes change in the course of its revolution\(^{520}\), so by an image already employed by

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\(^{511}\) However, Westerinck, and after him, van Riel have shown that Ficino’ interpretation of the *Philebus* was, to some extent, dependent on Damascius’, see: L. G. WESTERINK, “Ficino’ Marginal Notes on Olympiodorus in Riccardi Greek MS 37”, in *Traditio*, 24, 1968, p. 354, p. 367-378 and G. VAN RIEL (ed.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Phîlebe de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. clxxxiv-clxxxviii

\(^{512}\) Ficino misunderstands PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1064.3-5 in which Proclus distinguishes between the souls that have a divine essence, and those that have not but are parented or similar to the Gods.


\(^{514}\) PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1063.5-1064.12, *Platonic Theology*, I 12 56.19-57.14


\(^{516}\) MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.2-7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 266-271

\(^{517}\) MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.4-6 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 258-261


\(^{520}\) MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 260-261
Proclus for clarifying the way whereby the soul is both essentially unchangeable and intimately linked to the becoming. After having briefly summarized the main Aristotelian ideas on the nature of the continuum, Ficino exhibits the puzzle of the weld or of the articulation between two durative phases and its Platonic answer. To sustain the Platonic kinematics, Ficino draws a strong dichotomy between, on the one hand, the physical kinematics which is well theorized by Aristotle and his followers, and, on the other, the psychic kinematics of which the laws are somewhat different. Notably, and here Ficino still follows Proclus, while the physical world is characterized by its continuity and its divisibility ad infinitum, the spiritual world, quite the reverse, is rather characterized by its ‘atomism’ and its composition out of indivisible elements. In other words, while the corporeal diacosm can be studied geometrically, the higher diacosms are merely arithmetical. If so, between two psychic motions, there is not an interval of time – as some physicists had argued for the corporeal motions, most likely by conceiving such an interval as an infinitesimal magnitude –, but a real sizeless switch that is the έξαίφνης of the Third Hypothesis.

The puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ therefore works only for the durative activities of the soul, and not for the durative motions of the body. For Ficino, the ‘sudden’ belongs to the non-bodily diacosms wherein the geometric continuous is replaced by the arithmetic discrete. It is beyond time, in the sense of it is eternal, even super-eternal, insofar as it is undivided. But Ficino’s reading of the ‘sudden’ is far to be a pure kinematic understanding. Indeed, the mystical tone is forcefully kept by Ficino, inasmuch as he brings the ‘sudden’ closer to the transcendence of the One which is beyond all opposites, that seems to be a reminiscence of Plotinus, or, at least of the mystical meeting between the soul and the One-Beauty from Symposium, 210e2-211a2.

In fact, Ficino argues that the έξαίφνης, by virtue of its likeness with the One which is none of the opposites, is the punctual pivot whereby all the alternations between opposites are steered, so their transcendent and timeless seed that is neither the positive nor the negative side. Here, the laconic comment of Ficino is very close to transferring the psychic έξαίφνης from kinematics towards dynamics. But, something holds him back, and he does not jump over the ford. Ficino actually supports a twofold view of the ‘sudden’: first, the pure kinematic and durationless transition from a phase to another which occurs in an undivided temporal instant and prevents the confusion of the two opposite phases.

522 MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 97.8-10 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 270-273
523 MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 97.11-98.8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 272-283
524 MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 97.12, 98.7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 272-275, p. 280-281
528 MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 97.12, 98.5 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 274-275, p. 278-279. The soul in itself is understood as a compound of the opposites, a mixture of negations and assertions, in agreement with the Timaeus: MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 96.1 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 256-257 and In Tim, chap. 27-33, in A. FARNDELL (ed.), All Things Natural: Ficino on Plato’s Timaeus, Shepheard-Walwyn, 2010, p. 44-71
529 Ficino lightens the reasoning of Parm, 156c-e by emphasizing the rejection of moving at an instant and of instantaneous velocity: MARSILO FICINO, In Parm, chap. 98.7-8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 280-281
and second, the superior and more mystical ‘sudden’ that is super- eternal and transcendent in which the soul recovers its logical neutrality that mirrors the highest neutrality of the First One\textsuperscript{530}. This last ‘sudden’ which Ficino calls \textit{divinum momentum} corresponds to the connection of the soul with the highest and super-everlasting principle of Ficino’s Henology, namely the One which is above essence \textit{(super essentiam)}. None of these ‘sudden’ are really dynamic, but only the first is purely kinematic, while the second is kinematic only to the extent that, from its transcendent point of view, it overlays the first. All things considered, the most important point in Ficino’s exegesis of the Third Hypothesis is that the ‘sudden’, under pressure from the prevailing Aristotelian physics, belongs only to the psychic kinematics that challenges with discrete rather than continuous motions, in such a way that the aim of Plato – namely, answering the continuum-problem of the ‘instant of change’ – is completely lost.

Apart from Ficino, it is hard to discern an interest for the \textit{εξαίφνης} in the Italian Platonism. For instance, Pico della Mirandola, who met and challenged Ficino\textsuperscript{531}, had included Damascius in his philosophical curriculum\textsuperscript{532}, but it is difficult to discover a great influence of Damascius on his syncretic thought. In spite of the renewed interest for Damascius in the AD 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} Centuries\textsuperscript{533}, at the current stage of research, it does not appear that his ‘psychology’ had a great effect upon the Platonic revival. Nevertheless, the studies on Patrizi’s Platonism are quite promising\textsuperscript{534}.

Damascius’ one-shot in the Platonic Tradition shows us how the Platonists do not hesitate to radically twist the texts of Plato for hardening the consistency of the Platonic conceptual scheme. Albeit the \textit{εξαίφνης} is a secondary or an outlying concept, the very various ways whereby Platonists had understood it indicate that every Plato’s follower is perfectly aware of the requirements imposed on him by his global conception of the aim and the argument of the Platonism (viz. by the particular universe he draws in accordance with the axiomatic core of the Platonic theory). A Platonist decides to emphasize the mystical facet of the ‘sudden’ in order to sustain the nomological rupture between here and yonder, another the connection of the ‘sudden’ with the soul either to guarantee the validity of the bijection between the schedule of the \textit{Parmenides} and the scale of beings, or for clarifying the blended and intermediary nature of the soul. Since \textit{εξαίφνης} is a \textit{terminus technicus} and a \textit{terminus mysticus} at once, the various balance between its two facets sketches different Platonisms, in the same – but in a less prominent – way that the centre of gravity of the \textit{Corpus Platonicum} they chose. That way, the great wealth of Plato’s Corpus, its unparalleled potentialities, is highlighted again.

\textsuperscript{530} MARSILIO FICINO, \textit{In Parn}, chap. 98.6-8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 278-281


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