

# Berthold of Moosburg on Intellect and the One of the Soul

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The almost total concord of the pagan Proclus and the Christian Dionysius is the doxographical foundation of Berthold of Moosburg's *Exposition on the Elements of Theology of Proclus* (~1327–1361).<sup>1</sup> Their shared doctrine of the one of the soul (*unum animae*) beyond intellect is one of the two most important elements of this agreement, the other being the doctrine of the gods or divine processions. For Berthold, Platonic 'beyond-wisdom' (*supersapientia*) seeks union with the separate substances and divine providence through an excess of the mind, and the *unum animae* is the capacity for this. This paper outlines the assumptions that lead Berthold to promote this Platonic anthropology against the Aristotelian view. In setting forth the principles of Plato and Aristotle, he has constant recourse to the thought of his Dominican predecessor, Dietrich of Freiberg, for whom their discord was not a concern. His subtle but decisive transformation of Dietrich's metaphysics is considered below relative to the human soul's procession from and return into God. The ground of the soul, rather than the place of true selfhood, becomes the principle by which the soul abandons itself entirely.

## I. *UNUM ANIMAE*

Berthold's commentary proceeds charitably and synthetically. From Proclus he rejects only the doctrine of the soul's cyclical

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1 Berthold von Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologiam Procli*, eds. L. Sturlese/M.-R. Pagnoni-Sturlese/B. Mojsisch/A. Sannino/I. Zavattero/F. Retucci/U. R. Jeck/I. Tautz/A. Punzi, *Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi* VI/1–8 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1984–2014). Citations refer to Proposition number and commentary subsection, followed by page and line number in the CPTMA edition.

rebirth, and does so on philosophical grounds.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, he goes to great lengths to offer acceptable elucidations of Proclus' more challenging doctrines (the gods/henads and the incorruptible spiritual body that is permanently united to the soul) by drawing on resources from the Christian Platonic tradition. Both pagans and Christians are regarded as inheritors of Platonic wisdom, which transcends many of the conceptual boundaries used by his predecessors to separate natural and revealed theology.

Berthold thus appears to understand his own task to be that of a compiler and restorer. It is enough to note that his 'Table of Authorities' refers to his commentary as a compilation (*compilata est*) – the assumption here being that the pinnacle of philosophical achievement belongs to the past, so it is the work of the commentator simply to compile and elucidate it.

The theory of the one of the soul (*unum animae*) is integral to this program. Proclus' *Three Treatises on Providence* are decisive here, since no mention of the *unum animae* appears in the *Elements*. William of Moerbeke's challenging translations of these treatises, unsurprisingly, did not find a wide medieval readership. When they did, their readers appear not to have been interested in those passages where Proclus subordinates intellect to a more simple 'one' whose cognition is described as a kind of 'divine life' or 'divine madness'. Before Moerbeke, Latin readers would have encountered a relative of the *unum animae* in the Dionysian doctrine of ἕνωσις (union). On this question, Berthold relies on Eriugena's translation of ἕνωσις as *unitas*, rather than the *unitio* of Sarracenus, whom he normally cites. This enables him to forge a literal concord between the Latin Proclus and Latin Dionysius.

Each partner of the concord supplies something essential to Berthold's presentation of Platonism. The most important element coming from Proclus is the remark in the *De providentia* that the *unum animae*, its mode of cognition and its superessential objects, are sought by the Platonists alone, whereas Aristotle aims no

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2 196F (170,64–5); 206F (223,261–266); 209F (245,201).

further than intellect and the principles of being. As for Dionysius, his essential contribution is the ecstatic language of going outside ourselves: 'not according to ourselves, but our entire selves placed outside of ourselves entire and deified entire [*non secundum nos, sed totos nos ipsos extra totos nos ipsos statutos et totos deificatos*].'<sup>3</sup>

According to Berthold, an Aristotelian approaches the spiritual world 'according to the soul' (i.e., reasoning on the basis of abstractions),<sup>4</sup> whereas the Platonist attends to the natures of things as they really are, 'outside the soul'.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Aristotelians arrive at 'being' as the foundation of all determination, whereas the Platonists reach 'one' or 'good' as what is most causally universal and efficacious. The *Mystical Theology* of Dionysius redoubles the criticism: the unlearned are 'sealed off in beings, supposing that there is nothing supersubstantially beyond existents, but believe themselves to know by that cognition which is according to themselves [*ea, quae secundum ipsos, cognitione*], Him who makes the shadows his hiding-place'.<sup>6</sup> Dionysian ecstasy, therefore, is the mark of the Platonic approach to the separate principles, not 'according to ourselves' (according to abstractions),<sup>7</sup> but by a kind of 'excess of self and all things'.<sup>8</sup>

## II. MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

In his *Prologue*, Berthold introduces the notion of the one of the soul within an extended gloss on the Hermetic *Asclepius* (*Prol.* 14–19). Hermes, explains Berthold, calls the human the *nexus* of God and the world because it reflects all levels of reality as a microcosm. A preceding discussion of the macrocosm has

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3 *Praeambulum* C (64,395–65,454). Cf. *De providentia* 8.32; *De divinis nominibus* 7.1, 865C–868A.

4 1A (74,107–8); 1D (77,218–19); 11A (185,23–27).

5 E.g., 1A (74,106–109); 11A (186,54–55); 16D (28,143); 51A (113,19); 64D (196,120); 135K–L (227,220–229,289).

6 *Praeamb.* C (64,398–402).

7 *Prologus* 16 (25,663).

8 *Prol.* 17 (26,682).

already established the necessity of positing secondary principles called primordial causes, providences or gods (*Prol.* 4–13). The one of the soul mirrors this macrocosmic picture. Two details must be noted: 1) Berthold says that the one of the soul is hidden, compared to the obvious division of the human into body, soul and intellect; 2) although it is hidden, the one of the soul is posited by necessity through the principle that ‘connection necessarily occurs through likeness’.<sup>9</sup> These two notions reveal the essence of Berthold’s method: this necessity can only be recognized if one adopts the Platonic approach to the macrocosm and microcosm.

### *Ila. Procession*

Berthold outlines a central structure of this approach when he glosses the phrase from Hermes about the microcosm ‘receiving, through divine likeness, God’s beauties which are not immersed in the world’ (*Prol.* 19), and specifies the objects of Platonic divine science. He gives a lengthy passage from Dionysius (DN 4.7) identifying the ‘beautiful’ and ‘good’. The Beautiful contains all things in itself as cause (*omne pulchrum uniformiter secundum causam praeexistunt*). Its efficacy unfolds according to a definite pattern. Berthold immediately gives a precise reference back to a crucial passage from DN 11.6, which he has used already to explain the necessity of positing the primordial causes.<sup>10</sup> There and in *Epistle 2*, Dionysius addresses the question of how God can sometimes be called, for example, ‘life-itself’ and, at other times, ‘the substantiator of life-itself’ or ‘beyond life-itself’. The former is said ‘causally’ (*causaliter*) and the latter ‘participably’ (*participabiliter*), in that the unparticipated God is participated through his gifts.<sup>11</sup> Berthold consistently associates this with a principle which becomes a cornerstone in his interpretation of Proclus: ‘from the foregoing evidently it can be gathered that

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9 *Prol.* 15 (578–591). Cf. 20H (71,236–239).

10 *Prol.* 4 (10,175–200).

11 *Prol.* 4 (10,175–12,242).

“one” and “good” are said in three ways’.<sup>12</sup> This is the principle that everything which subsists, subsists according to the mode of cause, essence (or existence), or participation (Propositions 65 and 140) – a principle which he finds stated ‘expressly’ in Dionysius (*Ep.* 9.2).<sup>13</sup> For Berthold, this principle is ‘almost the foundation’ for any consideration of how things outside our intellect subsist; indeed, he believes, ‘this is so obvious that it has no need of proof’.<sup>14</sup>

Here we come to the discord of Plato and Aristotle. Before referring to this foundational principle, Berthold takes a distinction of two meanings of ‘species’ from Eustratius. There are some species ‘whose quidditative being is constituted through the actualised possible intellect’, and others ‘which are truly things established in nature, apart from every operation of our intellect’.<sup>15</sup> There is no compromise: either the relation of our intellect to its object is causal and constitutive, and so the universality of that object is only in our minds, or the species is universal in itself, apart from our knowing. Berthold here is incorporating but relativising the view of Dietrich of Freiberg, according to which nature produces only individual beings (*entia hic et individualia*), while being as such (*ens simpliciter*) is realised in potency only through the succession of individuals and actually through abstraction.<sup>16</sup>

Against this Aristotelian position Berthold opposes an idea that he normally associates with Platonism but that he also takes over from Dietrich of Freiberg. It is a theory to explain why the universe is one *per se*, outlining the structures that must be in place for the cosmos to be intelligible. According to Dietrich, this unity is guaranteed by ‘essential causality’, which obtains if one part of the whole is intrinsically a cause and/or effect of another part, and if the essence of each part exists for the sake of

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12 *Prolog.* 19 (29,773–775).

13 14B (4,44–51); 65F (203,97–204,114).

14 74C (54,136–142).

15 74B (51,62–52,65).

16 74B (53,120–132).

its proper operation.<sup>17</sup> The universe is one through this dynamic hierarchy.<sup>18</sup> Dietrich, it must be noted, similarly regarded the threefold modes of cause-existence-participation as rationally binding and exhaustive.<sup>19</sup> This overarching structure is refracted into ‘universes’ which Dietrich calls *maneries*, a characteristic term that he employs to describe, among other things, the four γενή of Proposition 20 of the *Elements*.<sup>20</sup> Berthold repurposes this doctrine to contrast it with the abstractive sense of ‘species’, effectively turning Dietrich against himself. He thus argues that *maneries* designates a Platonic rather than Aristotelian genus.<sup>21</sup> Within each *maneries* is a hierarchy of essential causality. Every ‘*per se* and essential cause’ acts within the limits of its proper intention. Within these limits, that agent produces its own ‘universe’ which is either ‘total’, in the case of God, or ‘partial’, for that of each determinate god. Among the members of each universe are ‘beings according to species’ (*entia secundum speciem*). What both thinkers mean by this term, *ens secundum speciem*, is that such an entity is integral to the unity and cohesion of that essential order, unlike the accidental succession of individuals within a species. Each entity, in this view, is a kind of species unto itself. Accordingly, both thinkers deny that *entia secundum speciem* have individual properties. Entities like the separate intelligences or, with some caveats, the celestial bodies, should be called singular, rather than individual.<sup>22</sup>

Berthold’s Platonic appropriation of his master’s thought nevertheless results in certain innovations. He usually enumerates seven different universes or *maneries* of formal intentions: goodness/unity, infinity, being, life, intellect, soul, and nature. These reflect

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17 Dietrich von Freiberg, *De intellectu et intelligibili* I. Online texts of this treatise and *De visione beatifica* (discussed below): [http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost13/Theodoricus/the\\_intr.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost13/Theodoricus/the_intr.html) (accessed 28 June, 2018).

18 Dietrich, *De visione beatifica*, prooem.

19 Dietrich, *De int.* II.1.2.

20 Dietrich, *De int.* I.4.

21 135K–L (227,220–229,289).

22 84B (128,20–129,44); cf. Dietrich, *De int.* II.33.

his understanding of how the Platonists reason about the order of things independently of our abstractions: the more universal is more actual by having greater causal influence.<sup>23</sup> So, for instance, 'good' is the most formal of intentions since its causal amplitude is greater than any other, and is the foundation for any further causal activity.<sup>24</sup> From here one must explain how subsequent determinations arise within the universe of goodness. Berthold rejects the option provided by the 'Aristotelian' theory of the transcendentals: being (*ens*) is held to be primary because Aristotle's followers reason about first principles by reducing everything to the universality of predication. Determination emerges, then, from what is 'most potential'. When one argues that being is 'convertible' with one, true, good, etc., one is merely projecting an intra-mental logical game onto the world, in which their differences are merely conceptual and not real. Against this, Berthold argues that determination arises as a contraction or limitation of causal influence, whereby the more universal or actual is determined or limited by the more potential or less universal. He calls this 'theological' universality or universality of separation.<sup>25</sup> The determination of one-good is infinity or power, then being, life, etc.

This priority of goodness at the macrocosmic level has direct bearing on the priority of the one over intellect in the microcosm. Proposition 64 states that each primordial unity gives rise to two series: of things able to subsist by themselves and of those 'illuminations' (*illustrationes*) unable to do so. Thus from the Good proceed self-subsistent goodnesses (*bonitates*) and the good which cannot subsist by itself (matter).<sup>26</sup> And 'prime matter, although it is a one when considered by itself, is yet unable to stand in the things of nature without [something] determining it'.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the second god, power or infinity (*virtus, infinitas*),

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23 11A (185,21–188,98).

24 71B (34,74–81).

25 11A (186,58).

26 59C (166,106–115).

27 89B (151,53–54).

bestows its formal perfection, which Berthold identifies with 'the inchoation of all forms' or 'seminal reasons', and so on.<sup>28</sup>

The one of the soul arises directly from the Good as an *illustratio* and, therefore, requires further determination in order to subsist:

These unities are the most divine things in the essence of beings, lives, intellects and the rest. They are the basis for the gifts of the other gods, whose illuminations reach them. [...] These are those unities [...] which in us exceed 'the nature of mind' according to Dionysius in c.7 of *On the Divine Names*, and are called unities 'lifted high above'. Just as in us these are that intimate and supreme [thing], which God planted in our nature, which also is the 'vestige' and illumination of the primal One alone, which is subsequently determined by other illuminations, namely of power, entity, life, intellectuality, etc., so proportionately it is in all true beings above the human and below the gods [...]. But let it not be imagined that this unity, effected by the primal One, though it is fundamentally subject to the illuminations of the other gods, is more material than the other illuminations, as if the more potential were determined by the more actual [...]. [Rather] the first is most actual, and thus is coeffective of the effects of the manifold of other illuminations by which it is determined; it is sustaining of what is sustained [...].<sup>29</sup>

Whereas Dietrich had identified the agent intellect as the highest and most intimate principle in us, Berthold identifies this as the *unum*. Unlike prime matter, this *unum* participates what determines it, but is more perfect and more actual than its determinant. It can even be said that the one of the soul is the 'place' of these later determinations, if place is understood in the proper sense, not imaginatively as an extrinsic boundary, but as what preserves the located thing (*salvativus rei locatae*).<sup>30</sup> But unlike generation, where form and matter constitute a third, composite term, in determination the two constitute a simple one.<sup>31</sup> It is quite clear for Berthold that these determinations occur by a natural, not a temporal order.<sup>32</sup>

The individual, strictly speaking, falls outside the scope of the *Elements*. Nevertheless, the striking consequences of Berthold's own theory of determination for his anthropology can be glimpsed

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28 138prob. (31,246–248).

29 162B (17,32–58); Cf. 120H (102,378–381).

30 98B (193,85–86); 71E–F (36,140–153).

31 3B–E (93,50–98,247).

32 24B (129,162–198).



in his comments to Proposition 211 on the total descent of the soul into generation. According to Berthold, the human soul 'descends in one way into being by nature and rank, in another way it descends in a special mode of being with respect to generation':

Emanating in the first descent, it proceeds from the primal Good through the primordial causes into the subsistence of its proper nature, where it receives a proper gift not only from the super-primordial cause but also from each primordial cause. For the primal Good, which is the most causal of all causes since it is the supreme cause, gives unity or goodness to this soul – the gift which has the role of a fundamental subject. [...] Then, according to our mode of understanding, that primal Good through the gift of the primordial causes strengthens its illumination such that, through primal Potency or Power it gives to its illumination the power or possibility of existence, through primal Being it gives being or entity, through primal Life vitality, through primal Intellect intellectuality, through primal Soul animality, through primal Nature it [the Good] joins to it [the soul] a spiritual and connatural body. [...] Thus the soul, descending through the primordial causes, proceeds through every per-se perfect order of these primordial causes where, through more and more of these gifts, it is always [*semper*] contracted to the singular subsistence of animality and to its union with its concreated and natural body, where it stands perfectly in the totality and integrity of human nature in which all human beings exist, one human formed after the image and likeness of the primal Good. And thus in being it is established above place and time, where even now it imitates the watchful gods.<sup>33</sup>

He then outlines the soul's second descent from being into becoming, from pristine human nature into individuality. The soul 'is destined for this world when it is well-pleasing to the primal Good with the council of his senate'. Here we find no further mention of illuminations or gifts received from the primordial causes. Instead, 'within human nature' in which all individuals are one, the individual is determined first through the *unum animae*.<sup>34</sup>

Immediately preceding this, Berthold takes a lengthy passage from the *Clavis physicae* of Honorius Augustodunensis, transmitting Eriugena's doctrine that the human can be contemplated from two perspectives: as hidden in Paradise and the primordial causes, and as perceived in generation in the effects of those causes.<sup>35</sup> This use

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33 211C (260,91–261,116).

34 211C (261,117–124).

35 211A (259,68–74).

of the Proclean threefold structure (cause-existence-participation) alongside it, and the qualification of the soul's first descent as into its 'proper nature and condition', leaves the relation between this twofold and threefold structure somewhat ambiguous. But since Berthold specifies that the stages of soul's first descent are a reflection of our mode of understanding, one should conclude that the first descent is referring to the constitution of ideal humanity in the Word.<sup>36</sup> There is no temporal passage from a prior state in being into generation. Paradise is no temporal past but a present condition and dignity which, by its very nature, must be substantial and abiding, though hidden from our view.<sup>37</sup>

Consistent with the methodology taken over from Dietrich and outlined in the commentary's prefaces, Berthold leaves the course of salvation history aside from his consideration of the order of nature.<sup>38</sup> In his view, the doctrine of the general Resurrection in the *Clavis* is consistent with Platonic principles: the return of effects to their causes is simultaneously natural and gracious.<sup>39</sup> Once we arrive to Proposition 211, the descent of the individual human soul into its corruptible body, and having established its enduring connection through the *unum animae* to the substantial integrity of human nature in the Word, we have come, in Berthold's view, to 'the intention [...] of the entire book' of the *Elements*.<sup>40</sup>

### *Iib. Return*

Berthold's elevation of the one of the soul over intellect has, therefore, the advantage of relating the ground of the soul to the pattern of nature in its procession from God. This principle, though hidden, is understood as necessary from a Platonic standpoint. Looking now to his disparate remarks about the soul's return, we find a similar two-sided use of Dietrich. Here, however, the

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36 211A (259,49–51); 211D (262,152–154).

37 210M (255,316–320).

38 *Expositio tituli I* (46,319–47,342).

39 196F (128,190–196); Cf. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V.898D–906C.

40 211F (264,251).

separation is not so clearly delineated. Nevertheless, a distinct emphasis emerges in the course of Berthold's Platonising of his master: the stronger possibility of a transitory rapturous cognition.

Following Dietrich, Berthold maintains that the agent intellect is always turned towards God and to itself, and contains within itself all intelligible content. If in the ground of the soul there is this hidden intellection which is always turned toward God, which is the basis of our external intellectuality, vitality and self-knowledge, then the beatific vision will be the awareness and stable enjoyment of this hidden life. Dietrich uses the Peripatetic notion of the 'acquired intellect' (*intellectus adeptus*) to explain how this union occurs: we are no longer related to our own agent intellects as the extrinsic cause of intellectual life, but as a formal cause.<sup>41</sup> He emphasises that this state is achieved only by grace after this mortal life. Berthold, as has been shown, views the *unum animae* as the principle by which we are conjoined with the separate powers above our minds, and thus, as the foundation of distinctly Platonic divine science. Indeed, it may be on this basis that Berthold explicitly identifies the cognition 'through ignorance' of the *unum animae* with that of the acquired intellect.<sup>42</sup>

Berthold's modification can be witnessed, for example, following his remarks about the double descent of soul in Proposition 211. His comments here have attempted to clarify Proclus' doctrine of the total descent of the soul into generation, where nothing remains above. According to our commentator, Proclus means that the soul's total substance (*tota substantia*) descends into generation, but not in every way (*totaliter*).<sup>43</sup> This adverb is meant to account for the fact that soul remains in its cause 'according to the first descent', that is, according to the mode of the cause, where human nature abides in the Word. Berthold agrees with Proclus that we pass from intellection to non-intellection,

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41 Dietrich, *De vis.* 4.3.2, 2–4.

42 123D (129,148–155).

43 211E (263,192–198.264,229–232).

but for this reason (now shifting to Dietrich's theory) 'there is necessarily something uniform within its substance' which acts 'universally and incessantly' which is the causal principle of these transient states of intellectual life. This principle, he continues, is the essential cause of the soul itself, containing the soul within itself in a nobler mode than soul is in itself – a kind of summary of Dietrich's theory of the agent intellect as the soul's essential cause.<sup>44</sup> However, new emphasis appears in Berthold's comments:

And even though this principle is so noble, the human soul as such has one mode of being and knowing as long as this principle is united to it as a cause – that is, beneath the order of a principal agent [God] – and another mode of being and knowing when it is united permanently to it as form, which does not occur as a permanent possession in his life, although it happens to some suddenly [*raptim*] and by a kind of passing over [*transitum*].<sup>45</sup>

Elsewhere he takes over the crucial passages where Dietrich explains that this union with our agent intellect occurs only by God's grace and in proportion to merits – that is, in the accidental order of will, rather than that of nature.<sup>46</sup> But, again, he expands on these ideas to allow for a transitory rapture (*raptus*), presumably granted by grace, when the soul enjoys momentarily that cognition belonging to its own ground. He writes:

Although [human souls] participate intellect by intellectual activity, they are unable to participate their proximate intellect or intellectual essence, the acquisition of which [*cuius adeptione*] (such that these would be their form) they lack as long as they are in generation, for otherwise they would not have inclined away from intellectual activity. For what acts essentially acts always, just as souls do who have acquired their essential intellect [*animae intellectum essentialem adeptae*]. [...] By a gift of God, however, at some moment even in this mortal life, human souls are elevated not only by their intellectual [part], but even by their henadic [part] or one [*suo uniali seu uno*] to the height of contemplation, to a vision not only of the gods, whom God has established as his dwelling-place, but even of him, Lord God almighty and the great King above all gods.

But after this life, meritorious and well-pleasing souls by the grace of God (that is, by the light of glory), will have their own intellects

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44 Cf. Dietrich, *De int.* II.1–12.

45 211E (263,212–216).

46 129F (182,288–302); 211F (264,246–248).

formally united to themselves, and thus their blessed vision will be fulfilled insofar as they shall see God, Lord of gods, face to face through everlasting mirrors [*facie ad faciem specula in aeterna*].<sup>47</sup>

202F and 211E accentuate the theory of rapturous cognition mentioned in passing by Dietrich in *De visione beatifica* 1.1.4, where he clarifies his argument that, according to Aristotle and Augustine, the agent intellect is a substance (1.1.1.3.6): because, firstly, it is always actually thinking (1.1.2), secondly, it always thinks itself through its essence (1.1.3) and, thirdly, because ‘the intellect is a certain exemplar and a likeness of being as being’ (1.1.4). The indeterminacy of intellect means that it is not restricted to thinking this or that, but ‘universally any quiddity whatsoever and being as being’. Since all things are in intellect according to an intellectual mode, ‘it must carry essentially within itself the likeness of all being intellectually, but in a simple mode’. This likeness is present in two ways, either in potency as the possible intellect which ‘becomes all things’ or in act as the agent intellect which ‘makes all things’. And since the agent intellect is essentially always in act, ‘all beings shine forth intellectually in its essence’ (*omnia entia intellectualiter resplendent in sua essentia*):

On this basis the Commentator argues *On De anima III* [comm. 20 and 36] that if the agent intellect, which is intellect essentially and always in act, at some time were to be united to us as a form, we would think all beings through it. This seems to agree somehow with what one reads about St. Benedict, that in a certain elevation of the mind he saw the entire universe. But how this came about is a matter I judge to be committed to God.<sup>48</sup>

Dietrich then gives passages from Augustine on the theory of recollection and the presence of ‘true reasons in the soul’s secret places’, to show how this intellectual exemplar of being as being shines forth in our external knowing as a cause but not as a form of our intellection.

These reservations do not carry over to Berthold, who uses Proclus and Dionysius to provide further clues as to how this cognition must come to pass. But, notably, the basic sense of what

47 202F (187,217–188,233); Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18 and 1 Cor. 13:12.

48 Dietrich, *De vis.* 1.1.4, 5; Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II.35.3.

the content of this rapturous vision must be remains the same: it is the vision of the entire universe, but of goodness rather than being. In Proposition 202, Moerbeke's translation of 'attendant souls' (ψυχαι ὀπαδοί) as 'contemplative souls' (*animae contemplatrices*) becomes the occasion for a lengthy discussion of contemplation, which offers a clearer view of what Berthold understands to be the means and content of the vision exceeding the mind. He begins by classifying passages from Bernard, Richard of St.-Victor, Dionysius and Proclus, as to whether they refer to contemplation *in via* or *in patria*. He also lists several passages which can be referred to either state. The difference is whether or not the texts speak of some sort of 'quieting of internal and external motions', a process of self-unification which precedes the sending of oneself, united, into the supersubstantial rays of divine wisdom, for *in patria* that effort is needed no longer. These two contemplations differ in degree, not in kind. Their summit is 'to know only as the gods know all things, singular, ineffably according to the one'.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the passage he picks out from Proclus to designate contemplation applicable either *in via* or *in patria* speaks precisely of the vision of the entire immaterial hierarchy, from the soul's 'sisters' in the heavens, to the intelligences and the gods.<sup>50</sup> The pinnacle of contemplation, as 202F indicated, is an elevation of the soul to know the separate substances, the gods and God himself – a Proclean variation of St. Benedict's rapture. In other words, the contemplation of the blessed in heaven is fundamentally in continuity with that of the wayfarer: it is a contemplation of the entire hierarchy of principles treated by the *Elements of Theology*, 'the invisible things of God'.<sup>51</sup>

This displays the fundamental continuity between Berthold's understanding of ecstasy in relation to the knowledge of separate substances (*non secundum nos*) and his statements about how this Platonic science has beatitude as its final end. In fact, this brings us full-circle to the very first sentence of the entire commentary:

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49 202C (186,162–171); Cf. 121L–M (110,172–111,215).

50 202C (186,152–164), citing *De providentia* 6.19.

51 *Prol.* 4–5 (13,251–266).

Paul, the great theologian of divinising wisdom [*divinalis sapientia*], privy to the secrets of God when he was taken into the third heaven, speaking of the wise in worldly philosophy, says "What is known of God is manifest to them: for God revealed it to them", and then adds, "the invisible things of God", etc.<sup>52</sup>

The implication of this is that St. Paul recognised the pagan philosophers' knowledge of the invisible things of God, that hierarchy of separate substances, precisely because of his ascent into the third heaven. Platonic science, then, transmitted from Paul to Dionysius, and systematised by Proclus, would have its foundation and consummation in a vision of this universe of separate principles, now hidden from our view, in an excess beyond the mind, where the soul touches the integral human nature awaiting it in the mind of God.

Berthold thus reads the *Elements of Theology* as a guide to the topography of that divine darkness seen, or rather not seen, from the standpoint of discursive reason. The test would be the logical pinnacle of the ancient tradition of wisdom uniting Plato, Paul, Dionysius, and Proclus. Its individual Propositions are likened to a kind of nutriment or a kind of ladder for the mind.<sup>53</sup> Platonic philosophy, from this point of view, is self-unification, entering the 'peace of God' and finding consolation there.<sup>54</sup> The blessedness presented as its goal is not, finally, for discursive reason to persuade or convince itself that there are necessarily these separate substances. Following Dionysius and especially Proclus, going beyond anything extant from Dietrich, Berthold claims that the contemplative soul, entering the darkness of God's dwelling-place through the *unum animae* lives the divine life and 'exercises providence with the gods'.<sup>55</sup> This exercise of providence has to be understood as generative stillness:

Intellect is not only receptive of species, but is even profusive of itself in the specifying determination of all that is below, and thus makes the goodness of silence [*bonitatem silentii*] to shine forth clearly in itself – I mean the goodness which is

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52 *Prol.* 1 (5,5–8).

53 *Expos. tit.* K–L (47,343–348.49,420–422).

54 *Prol.* 17 (26,677–27,726); *Prol.* 20 (33,939–34,967).

55 *Prol.* 16 (25,646); Cf. 120H–I (102,374–103,404).

diffusive of itself, not by ratiocination or choice. Here it can even be called the silence which is in the hidden places, that is, in the holies of holies [*in abditis, scilicet secretis secretorum*].<sup>56</sup>

This communication of divine goodness is called the 'will' of the separate intelligences that is intrinsic to their essence, which Berthold describes using the *Timaeus* and Dionysius on ecstatic divine love.<sup>57</sup> In this way, the silent, unitive cooperation with divine providence is established as a doctrine already in Plato. Indeed, to describe the relation of the intelligences to God, Berthold takes a phrase from the *Fons vitae* of Avicbron (*ex intuitu voluntatis*), there attributed to Plato, to illustrate this providential, communicative activity of intellect as it receives the species from the divine mind and 'is subjected to the superessential Will'.<sup>58</sup>

Berthold's account of how the beatific vision occurs (*intellectus adeptus*) and its content (God and the *universus entium*) relies substantially, and always tacitly, on Dietrich of Freiberg. Nevertheless, his synthesis of these elements with Proclean and Dionysian accounts of the *unum animae* places stronger emphasis on the possibility of rapturous cognition through 'silencing motions external and internal' and, in connection with this, describes the character of this union in terms suggesting a total abandonment of the self.<sup>59</sup> For Berthold, there is no compromise in the discord of Plato and Aristotle: the divine is either approached 'according to ourselves' or 'not according to ourselves'.

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56 177C (176,116–120).

57 175A (146,13–58).

58 175B (149,109–114); Avicbron, *Fons vitae* V.17.

59 This difference may only reflect the fact that Dietrich's sermons are no longer extant. The vernacular reception of his thought, for example the "Sayings of the Twelve Masters" (ed., A. Spamer, *Texte aus der deutschen Mystik des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts* [Jena: Diedrichs, 1912], 175–177), suggest that reflexivity and selfhood were regarded as defining features of his thought: 'Meister Dietrich speaks of self-awareness [*sinnckait*]. / He places the soul's image in its selfhood [*selbeshait*]. / There it knows God in his self-identity [*istichait*]. / A fifth master is mentioned who comes from Regensburg, where Berthold taught by 1327, around the time these verses were composed. Nothing here conflicts with what we have seen in the *Exposition*: 'The master from Regensburg speaks wonderfully. / He says that the divine Good is superessential. / He holds the highest degree in pure Oneness. / Life and activity he places in otherness'.