

Quinta Natura

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica**

Band (Jahr): **21 (1964)**

Heft 2

PDF erstellt am: **18.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-18891>

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Quinta Natura

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In spite of the recent interest in Aristotle's early development we are still a long way from certainty on a large number of important questions. This article is an attempt to re-examine the evidence for Aristotle's early views on the soul and on the so-called *quinta natura*, two related subjects of particular difficulty.

I

In several passages of the Tusculans, grouped together by Ross as fragment 27 of *De Philosophia*¹, Cicero asserts that in addition to the four generally recognised elements Aristotle introduced into his cosmology a fifth substance (variously called *quinta natura* or *quintum genus*), of which the soul was made. As the concept of a fifth material element is familiar from *De Caelo*², and is recognised as distinctively Aristotelian, it is not unnatural to assume that this is what Cicero means here, viz. a material element of which the soul, a corporeal object, is composed. Since in *De Caelo* the fifth element forms the material of the heavens and the heavenly bodies, it is also not unnatural to assume that it plays the same part in *De Philosophia*, and that both the soul and the heavenly bodies are composed of this element; this assumption is borne out by Cicero's explicit testimony at *Acad.* 1, 26, *quintum genus e quo essent astra mentesque ... Aristoteles esse rebatur*. This picture is self-consistent, and it explains the evidence of *Acad.* 1, 26 which is otherwise very puzzling; but it is built up largely of assumptions, and it is these assumptions that I wish to question.

In the *Eudemus* Aristotle expounded at some length³ a view of the soul-body relationship that is based on the *Phaedo*. It is strongly other-worldly and anti-materialist in tone. The soul's true home is in another world; in this life it is imprisoned in the body, and it regards this life as an unnatural form of existence from which it is eager to escape as soon as possible. The same attitude appears in the well-known simile of the Etruscan pirates, traditionally assigned to the *Protrepticus* (fr. 10b). This view is so similar to that of the *Phaedo* that it has been suggested that it represents little more than the conventional pose appropriate to a *consolatio* and should not be taken as Aristotle's serious and considered opinion

¹ In what follows the fragments are numbered as in Ross's collection unless otherwise stated.

² In *De Caelo*, though, it is called the first element, not the fifth: Aristotle refers to it either as τὸ πρῶτον σῶμα (287 a 3, cf. 269 a 31) or by some name that implies its circular movement (τὸ κύκλιον σῶμα 269 b 30, τὸ ἐγκύκλιον σῶμα 286 a 12, τὸ κυκλικὸν σῶμα 289 a 30).

³ *Frs.* 5 and 6.

even at this early stage of his development; it would be surprising, it is argued, to find him seriously maintaining an extreme view first put forward by Plato some thirty years before and since modified by its author⁴. There is no doubt some truth in this view: the Eudemus is a *consolatio*, not a scientific or philosophical treatise on psychology, and we should not expect to find in it a precise statement of Aristotle's psychological theory and its most recent developments at the time of writing. On the other hand it is surely going too far to dismiss the Eudemus as a conventional set-piece bearing no relation to Aristotle's real views. No doubt the pessimism and the other-worldliness are due to the occasion and nature of the work, but we can hardly doubt that Aristotle did seriously hold the underlying belief that the soul is an immortal entity which enjoys continued existence in some other world after death. This would be a very natural doctrine to find present in Aristotle's early thought, since it forms a fundamental part of Plato's system; although it is associated primarily with the Phaedo and appears in its severest form in that dialogue, and although in his later period Plato's interest in the soul turns from its immortality to its function as an ἀρχὴ κινήσεως, this doctrine is by no means restricted to Plato's earlier period. Though the theory of a tripartite soul is prima facie not consistent with the doctrine of the Phaedo, it is hardly necessary to point out that the immortality of the soul appears again after the introduction of that theory⁵ and that the two are finally reconciled in the Timaeus in the theory of the immortality of the Reason⁶. The opposition between the two worlds which underlies the Phaedo is inherent in the theory of Forms and can be seen throughout Plato's writings; the theme of escape from this world to our true home is prominent at Theaetetus 176a and Timaeus 90a.

Thus the essence of the doctrine of the Phaedo can be seen to persist in Plato's later thought, and so might well have provided the starting point for the development of Aristotle's ideas. But for my present purpose it is not necessary to insist on this view in every detail for, leaving out of account the elements in the Eudemus that are appropriate to its purpose as a *consolatio*, we can be fairly certain that at that date Aristotle believed the soul to be incorporeal. This is attested by Simplicius (fr. 8), who records that ἐν τῷ Εὐδήμῳ ... εἶδος τι ἀποφαίνεται τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι; whatever may be implied by εἶδος τι in relation to Platonic or later Aristotelian theory, it can hardly be anything but an incorporeal entity of some kind. Even if we believe that the Phaedonic attitudes of the rest of the work were merely assumed by Aristotle for the occasion, he could have had no reason for assuming this belief if he did not sincerely hold it; it thus seems reasonable to accept this remark of Simplicius as evidence for his true view at this period.

If an incorporeal soul is established at this stage of Aristotle's development, the

⁴ Cf. D. A. Rees in *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century* (edd. I. Düring and G. E. L. Owen) 192, and P. Moraux, *ibid.* 119–120. For the most recent discussion of this question cf. E. Berti, *La filosofia del primo Aristotele* 410–418.

⁵ *Rep.* 611 a ff.

⁶ *Tim.* 69c. 90a.

appearance of a corporeal soul in *De Philosophia* would represent a striking change in Aristotle's thought⁷. Of course such a change is perfectly possible; it has been suggested that Aristotle did pass through a 'materialist' phase early in his career⁸. But a change of this kind could not occur in vacuo; it would be accompanied by various indications, and if it did occur these indications could hardly fail to be apparent. It is true that we could not expect Aristotle to say explicitly, 'I used to think the soul incorporeal, but now I have changed my mind and believe it to be a material object; here are the reasons for my altered view'. Aristotle is not in the habit of providing such obvious sign-posts to the course of his development. But we should expect to find three things:

(i) In those doxographers who draw on both the Eudemus and *De Philosophia* we should expect to find some reference to this striking contradiction within the exoteric works, just as we find the doxographers commenting on the contradictions between the exoteric works and the treatises or between one group of treatises and another⁹. But there is no trace of this.

(ii) If Aristotle ever adduced arguments for a material soul we should expect to find later philosophers—both Stoics and Epicureans—adopting them to support their own similar beliefs. But there is nowhere any suggestion that they relied on Aristotle in this respect. Epicurean arguments against the *ἀσώματων* are in terms of the void (e.g. Epicur. Epist. 1, 67) and derive from the atomists. In an important account of similar Stoic reasoning (Acad. 1, 39) Cicero implies that Zeno, so far from borrowing Aristotle's arguments, was in opposition to Aristotle.

(iii) In *De Anima* we should expect to find Aristotle, if not justifying his reversion to the belief in an incorporeal soul, at any rate giving serious consideration to the theory of soul as a corporeal fifth element and treating it as a doctrine that merits discussion in a review of possible doctrines. But there is no suggestion of this anywhere in the treatise. In *A* 5, where he argues that the soul cannot be composed of any of the material elements, Aristotle restricts the discussion to the four traditional sub-lunary elements¹⁰. In *A* 2, where he enumerates those earlier thinkers who believed in a material soul, he is so convinced that any plausible concept of soul must really be incorporeal that he assimilates these thinkers to the non-materialists by pointing out that they believed soul to be *λεπτομερέστατον* or *ἀσωματώτατον* (405 a 6 and 27), and ends by speaking of incorporeality as

⁷ I am assuming that the *Eudemus* is earlier than *De Philosophia*. But this assumption does not, I think, affect my main contention, which would still hold good if the order of the two works were reversed.

⁸ Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie in *C. Q.* 27 (1933) 169, though the materialism suggested there is of a rather different kind. A. J. Festugière (*La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* 2, 247–259), who argues in favour of a corporeal soul in *De Philosophia* supports his case with the suggestion of a materialist misinterpretation of the *Timaeus* (which is, of course, very plausible: cf. *De Anima* 406 b 26–407 b 26).

⁹ A well-known example of the first is given by Cicero, *Fin.* 5, 12; for an example of the second, see Nemesius, *Nat. Hom.* 15.

¹⁰ Cf. also 406 a 27–29, where motion on the part of the soul is rejected as impossible on the ground that the only possible motions that the soul could have are up and down, and if it possessed either of these it would be identical with one of the four sub-lunary elements.

a necessary characteristic of soul that has emerged from the discussion as the consensus of all the thinkers considered, including even the materialists (405 b 11). In *A 3* there is, it is true, a lengthy tirade against the belief that the soul is a magnitude (406 b 26–407 b 26), but this is directed entirely at the *Timaeus* and is clearly based on a literal interpretation of the psychogony of that dialogue; there is no suggestion that the doctrine of a corporeal soul endowed with circular motion appeared anywhere in Aristotle's own writings. It is also worth noting that in *De Gen. et Corr.* (a work that must be fairly early since it belongs to the complex of physical treatises that includes *Physics I–VI* and *De Caelo*, and thus cannot be very far removed in time from *De Philosophia*), Aristotle assumes without question (334 a 9–15) that soul must necessarily be incorporeal.

The absence of all these expected indications would make the hypothesis of a material soul in *De Philosophia* an implausible one if it were not for the evidence of *Acad. 1*, 26, which speaks explicitly of such a soul and is difficult to interpret in any other sense. However the evidence of this passage does not square with other passages from Cicero, which I now turn to consider.

At *Tusc. 1*, 22 and 66, two of the most important pieces of evidence for the *quinta natura*, Cicero appears to be reproducing Aristotle's reasoning. He argues that none of the four elements is capable of the intellectual operations that the mind performs, and that therefore the substance of the mind must be something different from them. To a materialist this would be an excellent argument for the existence of a fifth material element; but it is not so to a reader who is not already convinced of materialism, since it is not in itself an argument for materialism. Indeed it would be childishly naive if intended as such, particularly in a thinker who, like Aristotle, was familiar with the concept of an immaterial soul. This reasoning, if it is Aristotelian, is not in itself evidence that Aristotle's *quinta natura* was material; it would be so only in conjunction with an argument for materialism in general, and of this there is no trace. It is noteworthy, on the contrary, that in the passage of *De Gen. et Corr.* cited above (334 a 9–15) a very similar argument is used by Aristotle against Empedocles to prove that soul cannot be *ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων ἢ ἐν τι αὐτῶν* – ἀτοπον δὲ καὶ εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων ἢ ἐν τι αὐτῶν. αἱ γὰρ ἀλλοιώσεις αἱ τῆς ψυχῆς πῶς ἔσσονται, οἷον τὸ μουσικὸν εἶναι καὶ πάλιν ἄμουσον, ἢ μνήμη ἢ λήθη;—but here Aristotle's conclusion is not that the soul might be *πέμπτον τι στοιχεῖον*, but that it must be immaterial. This conclusion would surely have been impossible if he had earlier used that very argument to prove that the soul was a fifth material element; he would at least have had to consider that possibility before dismissing it and concluding that the soul was immaterial.

It is also worth remarking that the terminology used by Cicero in these passages is significantly imprecise. He calls the fifth substance *quinta natura* or *quintum genus*, but never uses specifically physical terms such as *corpus* or *elementum* (= *στοιχεῖον*). In this respect his language is ambiguous, and if Cicero is reproducing Aristotle at all closely it must represent similar ambiguities in Aristotle's

expression. Of course *natura* and *genus* are not exclusively non-material terms, but could refer to either material or immaterial substances; but it is also true that if Aristotle had been expressing the unusual idea of a material soul he could hardly have done so in such ambiguous terms as *οὐσία* and *γένος* without making his meaning clearer. The uncertainty of the doxographic tradition on this point is well brought out by a passage in Tertullian, *De Anima* 5, 2; here Tertullian, in a list of corporeal views of soul, attributes to 'Critolaus and the Peripatetics' the belief in a soul composed *ex quinta nescioqua substantia, si et illa corpus quia corpora includit*. Clearly this *quinta nescioquae substantia* corresponds to Cicero's *quinta quaedam natura* (*Tusc.* 1, 22 and 66, *Fin.* 4, 12), while the doxographic tradition on which the writer was relying did not state clearly whether this was a corporeal substance or not.

Another reason for interpreting Cicero's *quinta natura* as an incorporeal substance is to be found in the structure of the doxographical passage *Tusc.* 1, 18ff. K. Reinhardt has pointed out¹¹ that this is suggested by the arrangement of the passage which, if it has any significance at all, must be interpreted in this sense. The passage falls into two sections: the first (18–19) lists material theories of the soul, ending with Zeno's identification of soul with fire, while the second (19–22) deals with immaterial theories and ends with the *quinta natura* attributed to Aristotle.

Two other Ciceronian passages, though by no means conclusive, seem to me to point in the same direction¹². At *Tusc.* 1, 41 Cicero refers briefly to Xenocrates' self-moving number and Aristotle's *quinta natura*. Here Cicero is arguing that the soul must leave the body at death and rise to the higher regions. He bases his argument on the Stoic theory (derived from Aristotle) of natural motions, according to which earth and water move downwards towards the centre of the universe while fire and air move upwards towards the circumference. This means that soul, whether made of air or of fire (the two possible alternatives according to Stoic theory) must in either case move upwards when freed from the body. And if soul turns out to be made of something still more insubstantial than these, such as Xenocrates' self-moving number or Aristotle's fifth substance, then it will be all the more certain to move in the same way. *Quae cum constant, perspicuum debet esse animos cum e corpore excesserint, siue sint animales, id est spirabiles, siue ignei, sublime ferri. Si uero aut numerus quidam est animus, quod subtiliter magis quam dilucide dicitur, aut quinta illa non nominata magis quam non intellecta natura, multo etiam integriora ac puriora sunt, ut a terra longissime se eferant.*

There is no suggestion here that Cicero means to contrast the incorporeality of Xenocrates' self-moving number with Aristotle's corporeal fifth substance; on the contrary, the two are coupled together and jointly contrasted (*si uero ...*) with the material alternatives of fire and air. It is no doubt strictly true that anything

¹¹ In *RE* 22, 576.

¹² Pace H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* 599.

capable of upward motion must be a material object; but even the *ἐντελέχεια* of Aristotle's later theory is capable of locomotion *κατὰ συμβεβηγός* (cf. *De Anima* 408 a 29ff., *ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὐδ' ἄρμονίαν οἶόν τ' εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν οὔτε κύκλω περιφέρεισθαι, δῆλον ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων· κατὰ συμβεβηγός δὲ κινεῖσθαι, καθάπερ εἴπομεν, ἔστι, καὶ κινεῖν ἑαυτήν, οἷον κινεῖσθαι μὲν ἐν ᾧ ἔστι, τοῦτο δὲ κινεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς*), and in the present case Cicero is clearly not suggesting that Xenocrates' self-moving number is material (cf. *Acad.* 2, 124: *numerus nullo corpore*). However the evidence of this passage is inconclusive, for it only shows that the *quinta natura* was in Cicero's view (or in the view of his intermediate authority) something less grossly material than the four elements (cf. Aristotle's *λεπτομερέστατον καὶ μάλιστα τῶν στοιχείων ἀσώματον*, *De Anima* 405 a 6), without showing whether he thought it actually incorporeal.

The second passage gives us rather more definite evidence. At *Acad.* 1, 39 Cicero writes of Zeno: *De naturis autem sic sentiebat, primum ut in quattuor initiis rerum illis quintam hanc naturam ex qua superiores sensus et mentem effici rebantur non adhiberet. Statuebat enim ignem esse ipsam eam naturam, quae quidque gigneret et mentem atque sensus. Discrepabat etiam ab isdem quod nullo modo arbitrabatur quicquam effici posse ab ea quae expers esset corporis, cuius generis Xenocrates et superiores etiam animum esse dixerant; nec uero aut quod efficeret aliquid aut quod efficeretur posse esse non corpus.*

In this passage the words *discrepabat ab isdem* imply that the *superiores* of the first sentence who believed the soul to be composed of a *quinta natura* also believed it to be incorporeal; since it is clearly Aristotle who is concealed behind the *superiores*, the conclusion is inescapable that his *quinta natura* and Xenocrates' self-moving number are here again (as at *Tusc.* 1, 41) coupled together and used as typical examples of an incorporeal soul.

II

This evidence all seems to suggest that Aristotle's *quinta natura* was not a material element but an incorporeal substance, and thus tells against the explicit statement of *Acad.* 1, 26. But of course there is no doubt that Aristotle did introduce a fifth material element into his cosmology in *De Caelo*, where it forms the material of the supra-lunary world, and it has generally been thought that a similar material element is present in the scheme of *De Philosophia*. These apparent contradictions are reconciled in the solution proposed by S. Mariotti¹³, who distinguished two distinct doctrines present at different stages in Aristotle's early development: (i) the *quinta natura*, the substance of an incorporeal soul, and (ii) the fifth material element of which the heavens are composed. As Mariotti observes, these two doctrines could hardly appear in the same work, and he

¹³ Riv. Fil. 18 (1940) 179–189. Mariotti based his argument on different grounds; I have argued the case afresh partly for that reason and partly because his hypothesis has been rejected (though not refuted) by several more recent writers, cf. L. Alfonsi in *Miscellanea Galbiati* 1, 71–78, M. Untersteiner in Riv. Fil. 39 (1961) 142ff.

accordingly suggests that the first should be attributed not to De Philosophia but to the Eudemus¹⁴. This suggestion is supported by the argument preserved at Tusc. 1, 22 and (more especially) 66; the sharp contrast implied here between the material world and the things of the mind would be very appropriate to the tone of the Eudemus.

An objection might be brought against Mariotti's hypothesis on the ground of the confusing similarity between the two theories. This objection has been partially met by ascribing the two theories to two different works, but the difficulty still exists: it is unlikely that Aristotle propounded successively two different theories of a fifth substance, one incorporeal and the other corporeal, in each case using the term 'fifth' and contrasting this substance with the four elements of common experience.

This would be true of two theories presented in the schematized form in which they are preserved for us by later authorities; but there is no reason to suppose that they were presented by Aristotle in this form, as two different versions of a fifth substance theory. Such evidence as there is tends to suggest that this is merely a pattern imposed upon them by the doxographic tradition. In those cases where the fifth substance appears as the element of the heavens, it seems most unlikely that Aristotle himself applied the word *πέμπτον* to it. Certainly the expression *πέμπτον σῶμα* appears frequently in the doxographers¹⁵, where it has usually been taken to refer to De Philosophia; but in a number of instances¹⁶ it clearly refers not to that work but to De Caelo, where Aristotle himself certainly never uses this term. Since the Greek commentators on the treatises also use the same expression freely¹⁷ to refer to the celestial element of De Caelo, we can see that the use of the term by later writers is no reason for attributing it to Aristotle himself; on the contrary, it is clear that the usage could have developed in the doxographic tradition even though it was at variance with Aristotle's own usage¹⁸.

¹⁴ This suggestion has recently been repeated by O. Gigon in *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century* (1960) 23.

¹⁵ E.g. Aetius I 3, 22; I 7, 32; II 7, 5.

¹⁶ Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1, 502: Ἀριστοτέλης ἐκ πέμπτον σώματος. λέγει γοῦν ἐν τοῖς περὶ τῆς φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως καὶ οὐρανοῦ λόγοις οὕτως. So too *Ecl.* 1, 535 (= Arius Didymus fr. 10, Diels, *Dox. Gr.* 450, 21) where the term *πέμπτη οὐσία* is used, in a context that reproduces the arguments of *De Caelo*. It also seems unlikely that Aetius I 7, 32, which enters into detail about the heavenly spheres and their souls, could be based on *De Philosophia*; it seems much more likely to be derived from a commentator on *Met. A* 7-8. (If this is so the passage is all the more interesting for its explicit statement that the term *πέμπτον* was due to Aristotle - τὸ πέμπτον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καλούμενον.)

¹⁷ E.g. Alex. in *Met.* 259, 19, *Simpl. in Phys.* 1165, 21, Philop. ap. *Simpl. in Phys.* 135v, 10, Philop. in *Phys.* 9, 29; and *Simpl. in De Caelo* passim.

¹⁸ Both doxographers and commentators also call Aristotle's fifth element *αἰθήρ* or *αἰθέριον σῶμα* (e.g. *Dox. Gr.* 336 a 12. b 12; 450, 12; 654, 1; *Simpl. in Phys.* 398, 11, in *De Caelo* 373, 26). In the treatises Aristotle mentions this only as the traditional name for the *ἀνώτατος τόπος* (*De Caelo* 270 b 22) or as Anaxagoras' name for fire (*De Caelo* 270 b 25; 302 b 4), a sense in which he once uses it himself (*Phys.* 212 b 21). In the doxographers this usage is sometimes suspiciously suggestive of *De Mundo*; cf. [Justin] *Cohortatio* chs. 5 and 36, where the references to Aristotle's substitution of *αἰθήρ* for fire as the material of the heavenly gods are clearly derived from *De Mundo* 392 a 5-6 and 400 a 19 (cf. L. Alfonsi in *Vig. Chr.* 2 [1948] 77-78).

As positive evidence against its use by Aristotle there is the fact that in *De Caelo* one of his standard terms for the celestial element is τὸ πρῶτον σῶμα; if he was speaking of the same substance in both works, it is extremely unlikely that he would originally have called it the fifth substance and later changed his mind about its status and re-numbered it as first when he came to write *De Caelo*.

In those cases where the fifth substance appears in connexion with the soul, the evidence for Aristotle's own usage is less clear. There is nothing to show that the term πέμπτη οὐσία or πέμπτον γένος is not Aristotelian, but equally there is nothing to show that it is. One thing that it seems safe to ascribe to Aristotle is the argument preserved by Cicero at *Tusc.* 1, 22 and 66, viz. that since the four elements are incapable of performing intellectual operations the soul cannot be composed of any of them and must therefore be some other substance, different from these four. πέμπτη οὐσία is a term that might very naturally be used either by Aristotle himself or by a doxographer in expounding this argument; but even if it was used by Aristotle, the essential point of the argument is not that this substance ranks as number five in a list of substances, standing on an equal footing with the other four, but rather that this substance is a thing apart, quite different in kind from the other four. Whether Aristotle applied the term fifth to it or not, it is surely misplacing the emphasis to class the theory supported by this argument as a 'fifth substance' theory.

If we bear this in mind, the superficial resemblance between the two theories as we have them disappears entirely. One may properly be called a celestial element theory, while the other is really a theory of a non-material soul. There is no reason whatever for thinking that Aristotle could not have propounded these two theories in quick succession.

III

If Mariotti's hypothesis is correct, it is plain that confusion could easily arise in the doxographic tradition. Indeed when the doxographic schematization had once been established the two theories could hardly fail to be confused by those who had not read Aristotle himself; every time the mistake was repeated the confusion would be increased and the chances of ever retrieving the truth would be diminished. That this confusion is not merely hypothetical but did in fact occur on at least one occasion is shown by an instance first discussed by Diels¹⁹. Three related doxographic accounts of ἀρχαί appear in Sextus Empiricus (*P.H.* 3, 30–35), in [Galen] (*Hist. Philos.* 18 = *Dox. Gr.* 610, 8ff.) and in [Clement of Rome] (*Recognitiones* 8, 15). The first two are virtually identical, and the third, though rather different, is clearly related to them. In the first two Aristotle is credited with a belief in πῦρ ἀέρα ὕδωρ γῆν τὸ κυκλοφορητικὸν σῶμα, but Clement's version reads: *Aristoteles etiam quintum introduxit elementum quod ἀκατονόμαστον id est incompellabile nominavit*. Clearly at some stage in the tradition used by Sextus

¹⁹ *Dox. Gr.* 251; cf. also S. Mariotti in *Atene e Roma* III 8 (1940) 48ff.

and Galen some compiler who did not understand the term ἀκατονόμαστον had substituted for it the more familiar κυκλοφορητικὸν σῶμα.

It may be that an explanation of this kind is enough to account for the fusion of the two ideas that we find in Cicero at Acad. 1, 26, *quintum genus e quo essent astra mentesque ... Aristoteles esse rebatur*²⁰. The two concepts are here conflated, and Cicero or his source could well have confused the two distinct doctrines that he found attributed to Aristotle. Or, a variant of this explanation, the confusion may be more conscious than accidental. Cicero's source here is Antiochus (cf. Acad. 1, 14); we know that Antiochus was a synthesizer and a reconciler whose evidence must be treated with caution²¹, and we can see from his treatment of other Platonic and Aristotelian ideas that his testimony can be unreliable (cf. Varro's speech in Acad. I, passim).

In either event this confusion, it is suggested²², was facilitated by Stoic influence. In Stoic thought fire in some form is the basic constituent of the human soul and is also the material of the heavenly bodies; Cicero is no doubt oversimplifying when he remarks that the Stoics substituted fire for Aristotle's 'fifth element' as the material of the heavens (Fin. 4, 12), but his remark shows that it would be very easy for a Stoic to assume that this 'fifth element' was for Aristotle the material of both souls and heavenly bodies.

But the question is more complicated than this, for Cicero's statement at Acad. 1, 26 is supported by other evidence. A passage from Philo has been discussed in this connexion: τὸ δὲ νοερόν καὶ οὐράνιον τῆς ψυχῆς γένος πρὸς αἰθέρα τὸν καθαρῶτατον ὡς πατέρα ἀφίξεται. πέμπτη γάρ, ὡς ὁ τῶν ἀρχαίων λόγος, ἔστω τις οὐσία κυκλοφορητική, τῶν τεττάρων κατὰ τὸ κρεῖττον διαφέρουσα, ἐξ ἧς οἱ τε ἀστέρες καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανὸς ἔδοξε γεγενῆσθαι, ἧς κατ' ἀκόλουθον θετέον καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν ἀπόσπασμα²³. Here, although Aristotle is not mentioned by name, it is no doubt true that the presence of the πέμπτη οὐσία κυκλοφορητική shows some kind of dependence on him, and the passage has been taken as additional evidence for the material identity of souls and stars in De Philosophia²⁴. Philo's evidence is further corroborated by Hippolytus: ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πλάτων ἀθάνατον [sc. τὴν ψυχὴν], ὁ δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐπιδιαμένειν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ταύτην ἐναφανίζεσθαι τῷ πέμπτῳ σώματι, ὃ ὑποτίθεται εἶναι μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τεσσάρων, τοῦ τε πυρὸς καὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τοῦ ἀέρος λεπτότερον, οἷον πνεῦμα²⁵.

In these two passages another element is introduced into the picture. Not merely are souls and stars made of the same substance (all that was stated at Acad. 1, 26), but a closer connexion between them is stressed: the soul is actually derived from the heavens and will return there after death. The ascription of this

²⁰ Mariotti's explanation of *astra mentesque* as a hendiadys for men's and stars' souls (Riv. Fil. 18 [1940] 182 n. 2) is very unconvincing.

²¹ Cf. G. Luck, *Der Akademiker Antiochos*, esp. 21-44.

²² Cf. Berti, op. cit. 399 and Reinhardt, RE 22, 576.

²³ Philo, *Quis rer. div. heres* 283.

²⁴ Cf. L. Alfonsi in *Hermes* 81 (1953) 45ff.

²⁵ Hippolytus, *Philos.* 20 (*Dox. Gr.* 570, 21ff.).

belief to Aristotle could hardly have arisen from a mere conflation of Aristotle's two doctrines such as Mariotti suggests, and if the theory cannot be genuinely Aristotelian we must look elsewhere for an explanation. In this case the hypothesis of Stoic contamination is less satisfactory, because it is by no means clear that this belief formed part of orthodox Stoicism. The kinship of human souls with the heavens and heavenly bodies, though it is not a peculiarly Stoic idea and though it is not specifically attested in the extant accounts of early Stoicism, was probably implicit in Stoic physics; the belief that vital fire is found both in human souls and in the heavens is attributed to Zeno²⁶ and to Cleanthes²⁷, and was clearly a part of Stoic doctrine from the beginning. It is no great step, it is true, from this idea to the theory that the soul is derived from the aether²⁸, or from that to the converse belief that it returns to the aether after death; but neither of these ideas has a clear place in the doctrines of the early or middle Stoa. There is some late evidence to suggest that these were Stoic tenets²⁹, and there is other evidence which has sometimes been taken as Stoic in origin³⁰, but the ideas are not found in any early Stoic source. Stoic origins have sometimes been suggested for the accounts of the soul's ascent to heaven given by Cicero at *Tusc.* 1, 43 and by Sextus Empiricus at *Math.* 9, 71–73, and Plutarch's more elaborate account in the myth of *De Facie*³¹ has also been thought to depend on Posidonius. But these attributions are by no means certain; and if it is conceded that Plutarch's inspiration is not Posidonius but Plato's *Timaeus*³², and that Cicero depends on Antiochus rather than on Posidonius in *Tusc.* 1³³, the evidence for the Stoic character of this doctrine is greatly weakened. The belief recorded as Stoic by Arius³⁴ and by Tertullian³⁵, that departed souls dwell in the region below the moon, does not support the idea of migration to the aether since the moon forms the boundary between the aetherial heavens and the sub-lunary world; it seems rather to fit the context of the myth in *De Facie*, where souls spend some time in the region below the moon and later, if they are righteous, pass to the moon itself. Nevertheless the very presence in Stoic doctrine of fire as an element common to souls and stars suggests some kind of affinity between them; in this respect the Stoic theory of the soul has much in common with earlier beliefs, even

²⁶ *SVF* 1, 120 = *Stob. Ecl.* 1, 538.

²⁷ *SVF* 1, 504 = *Cic. N.D.* 2, 41.

²⁸ A Stoic might well say that the soul is derived from the aether in so far as this is true of the whole cosmos.

²⁹ *SVF* 2, 813 = *Lact. Div. Inst.* 7, 20.

³⁰ E.g. *Cic. Somn. Scip.* 15: *usque* [= *hominibus*] *animus datus est ex illis sempiternis ignibus quae sidera et stellas uocatis.*

³¹ 942 d–945 d.

³² Cf. R. M. Jones in *Cl. Phil.* 27 (1932) 113ff., and H. Cherniss, *Plutarch's Moralia* XII (Loeb) 23–26.

³³ Cf. K. Reinhardt in *RE* 22, 576. This is of course no proof that the doctrine was not Stoic, since Antiochus incorporates Stoic elements in his eclecticism; but, as I shall suggest, it is equally possible that he derived the idea from Academic or earlier sources.

³⁴ *SVF* 2, 821 (= *Dox. Gr.* 471, 11ff.).

³⁵ *SVF* 2, 814 = *Tert. De Anima* 54, 2.

though in origin it may be derived not so much from traditional popular ideas about the heavens and the aether as from contemporary medical thought on the subject of the *πνεῦμα*³⁶. Moreover the idea of the soul as an *ἀπόσπασμα* of some divine substance—whether this is called the world soul³⁷ or God³⁸ (who is sometimes identified with the heavenly aether³⁹)—seems, at any rate at a later period, to be typically Stoic. Thus it may be true that some sort of Stoic influence—perhaps not that of orthodox Stoicism—is partly responsible for the doctrine recorded by Philo in the passage quoted above.

But the ideas involved here are of wider currency, and I wish to suggest that other influences are at work here besides Stoic ones. The idea of the soul's derivation from the heavens and return thither after death seems to appear first in connexion with the identification of soul with air or breath. This belief in the life-giving property of air, which is based on the primitive equation of breath and life, is a very ancient one⁴⁰. It can be traced back to Homer⁴¹, and was apparently an Orphic belief⁴². As a philosophical doctrine it appears in Anaximenes⁴³ and Diogenes of Apollonia⁴⁴, and is also attributed to Xenophanes⁴⁵ and Heraclitus⁴⁶. If it is breath that constitutes a man's life principle, it is natural to suppose that it comes to him by being inhaled from the surrounding atmosphere, and also that after death it is exhaled to rejoin the atmosphere from which it came. This idea appears in two passages of Epicharmus:

συνεκρίθη καὶ διεκρίθη ἀπῆλθεν ὄθεν ἦλθεν πάλιν,
γὰ μὲν ἐς γὰν, πνεῦμα δ' ἄνω· τί τῶνδε χαλεπόν; οὐδὲ ἐν⁴⁷.
εὐσεβῆς νόω πεφυκῶς οὐ πάθοις κ' οὐδὲν κακόν
κατθανόν· ἄνω τὸ πνεῦμα διαμένει κατ' οὐρανόν⁴⁸.

Here it is clearly because the soul is itself some form of *πνεῦμα* or *ἀήρ* that it is re-absorbed into the *ἀήρ* above.

In a later version of this belief the soul is no longer made of *ἀήρ* but of *αἰθήρ*. In early Greek thought the distinction between these two substances is not clear-cut; *αἰθήρ* was originally a purer and more refined form of the grosser *ἀήρ*, and it only gradually emerges as a separate element distinct from air. In popular thought

³⁶ Cf. G. Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du Pneuma*, esp. 15ff.; cf. also F. Solmsen, *Cleanthes or Posidonius? The Basis of Stoic Physics*, Med. der Kon. Ned. Akad. Deel 24 no. 9, 17ff.

³⁷ *SVF* 1, 495; 2, 633. 774.

³⁸ Epict. *Diss.* I 17, 27; II 8, 11; M. Aur. V 27.

³⁹ *SVF* 1, 530. 534.

⁴⁰ For a general discussion see W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* 1, 128ff.

⁴¹ Cf. R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* 44ff. and 93ff.

⁴² Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 410 b 28.

⁴³ *DK* 13 B 2.

⁴⁴ *DK* 64 B 4. 5.

⁴⁵ *DK* 21 A 1.

⁴⁶ *DK* 22 A 16; B 12.

⁴⁷ *DK* 23 B 9.

⁴⁸ *DK* 23 B 22.

it fills the upper heavens, where the Gods dwell⁴⁹; it is conceived as a brilliant fiery material, as the derivation of its name from *αἴθειν* would suggest. In the fifth century there appears, apparently in popular thought rather than in the philosophers, a belief that the soul is a fragment of this *αἴθήρ* imprisoned in the body, and that after death it will return to the *αἴθήρ* in the heavens. This belief is mentioned several times by Euripides⁵⁰ and it is no doubt this that lies behind the well known epitaph on those who fell at Potidaea in 432:

*αἴθήρ μὲν ψυχὰς ὑπεδέξατο, σώ[ματα δὲ χθών]*⁵¹.

In the next century it is found more widely in sepulchral inscriptions⁵² and appears as a philosophic doctrine in Heraclides Ponticus⁵³.

This belief also appears in contexts where its importance is theological rather than cosmological. The ideas of the soul's affinity with another world and of its migration thither occur frequently in Plato⁵⁴. Plato uses physical imagery to express these ideas, although for him the imagery is clearly a mythical or metaphorical form of expression. Thus the soul's migration is described in physical terms, as a journey from one place to another (*ὡς εἰσιν ἐνθ' ἐνδε ἀφικόμενοι ἐκεῖ καὶ πάλιν γε δεῦρο ἀφικνοῦνται* Phaedo 70 c; cf. Tim. 90 a *πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῶ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν*) and its presence in the human being is spoken of as the physical presence of something inside the body (*τοῦτο δὲ δὴ φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρω τῷ σώματι*, Tim. 90 a); its kinship with the other world is similarly physical (*ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἄρα, τὸ ἀειδέες, τὸ εἰς τοιοῦτον ἕτερον τόπον οἰχόμενον ...* Phaedo 80 d). Very similar imagery is attributed to Aristotle in the Eudemus: *ἐκεῖθεν μὲν ἰούσα ἡ ψυχὴ δεῦρο ἐπιλανθάνεται τῶν ἐκεῖ θεαμάτων, ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἐξ-ἰούσα μέμνηται ἐκεῖ τῶν ἐνταῦθα παθημάτων*⁵⁵.

In the case of Plato we are in no danger of interpreting this language literally; every reader who is familiar with Plato's concept of an incorporeal soul can readily accept this language as metaphorical imagery. But if we were not familiar with this from other sources the language of the Phaedo would be very misleading, suggesting that the soul is a physical object and its migration a physical journey. The language of the Eudemus could be misleading in just the same way—the more so in this case to any one who knew that Aristotle held different beliefs about the soul at different periods of his life. If this is true of the original accounts of Plato and Aristotle, it is still more true of the versions that appear in the doxographic tradition. To illustrate the kind of distortion that can occur, I quote one example. At De Anima 54, 2 Tertullian writes: *itaque apud illum (sc. Platonem)*

⁴⁹ Cf. Eur. fr. 487 N. and Aristotle, *De Caelo* 284 a 11.

⁵⁰ *Hel.* 1014ff., *Supp.* 533ff., frs. 839 and 971 N.

⁵¹ IG I² 945, 6.

⁵² For a collection of these cf. E. Rohde, *Psyche* (English translation) 572 n. 135.

⁵³ Frs. 98–100 (Wehrli). The belief that the soul is an *αἰθέριον σῶμα* is also attributed by Stobaeus (*Ecl.* 1, 870) to *τινὲς τῶν Ἀριστοτελικῶν*; it may well be that Heraclides lies behind this.

⁵⁴ E.g. Phaedo 70c. 80d. 81a; Tim. 42b. 90a.

⁵⁵ Fr. 5.

in aetherem sublimantur animae sapientes, apud Arium in aera, apud Stoicos sub lunam. From the context this appears to be a reminiscence of Phaedrus 249 a⁵⁶: αἰ δὲ εἰς τοῦδ' αἰθέρος τινα τόπον ὑπὸ τῆς Δίης κομφισθεῖσαι διάγουσιν. Here Plato's imagery, taken out of its mythical context, is reproduced without any indication of its metaphorical sense. Tertullian himself was of course aware that Plato believed in an incorporeal soul, but this did not prevent him from quoting Plato's doctrine as a parallel to the Stoic in such a way as to imply that both are meant literally and physically; a later writer coming upon this report might be forgiven for taking it in that sense⁵⁷.

I am suggesting, then, that the (presumably mythical) account of the soul's migration given by Aristotle in the Eudemus was later misunderstood: that Antiochus, or perhaps some intermediate authority, prompted by his own belief in a material soul (derived from the Stoics), took the myth at its face value and, on the strength of this, attributed a similar belief to Aristotle. In itself this may seem an implausible suggestion, without positive support; but the hypothesis seems to me to be considerably strengthened by two facts. First, Aristotle employed in his cosmology a substance called αἰθήρ⁵⁸, and second, belief in αἰθήρ (or ἀήρ) as the material of the soul is often connected with belief in the (physical) migration of the soul. Both these facts were well known, and taken in conjunction with the language of the Eudemus they could give rise to the following argument:

Aristotle believed in a migration of the soul.

Many people who believe in a migration of the soul do so because they think that the soul is made of αἰθήρ and is returning to the αἰθήρ in the heavens.

Aristotle believed that the heavens are made of αἰθήρ.

Therefore Aristotle must have believed that the soul is made of αἰθήρ.

This would reinforce the other argument that is assumed by the commonly accepted hypothesis of Stoic contamination, viz.

Aristotle believed that the stars are composed of a fifth element.

The Stoics substituted fire for this fifth element.

For the Stoics fire constitutes both soul and the stars.

Therefore Aristotle's fifth element similarly constituted both soul and the stars.

From these two fallacious pieces of reasoning are derived the various references in later authors that attribute to Aristotle a belief in a material soul composed of the same element as the heavenly bodies⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ Cf. J. H. Waszink ad loc.

⁵⁷ Similar literalism in the interpretation of *Timaeus* 41 d–42 e was probably responsible for the belief in the connexion of souls with the planets as it appears in Plutarch, *De Facie*; cf. R. M. Jones in *Cl. Phil.* 27 (1932) 120 and 130.

⁵⁸ This is of course not true, but it was commonly thought to be so in antiquity. Although Aristotle did not use the term αἰθήρ for his celestial element, it was frequently attributed to him by doxographers and commentators, and is in any case used in *De Mundo*, as I have remarked above.

⁵⁹ I am very grateful to Mr F. H. Sandbach who has read and criticised this paper.