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A. H. Armstrong

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by

A. H. ARMSTRONG



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INTRODUCTION

THE TITLE of this essay, “The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus”, requires some explanation. By the Intelligible Universe I mean the whole cosmic order of the three hypostases, the One, Noûs, and Soul, as perceptible to the intellect. This I have tried to examine from the point of view of its structure. That is, I have tried to determine how the various levels in the hierarchy of reality according to Plotinus fit in with each other and with the whole, what is their nature and function in relation to the universal order. In doing this I have found it necessary to investigate the historical origins of many of Plotinus’s concepts, to try to discover the traditional reasons which led him to give such a very distinctive outline and articulation to his picture of reality. There is, I think, no general presupposition or preconceived idea about the philosophy of Plotinus underlying this study except (*a*) that it is not, for historical reasons, a fully consistent philosophy; and (*b*) that Plotinus is not an anti-rationalist, but that he believes in the existence of an objective reality which is orderly and so accessible to the human intellect. These beliefs I have tried to justify in my detailed examination.

My obligations both to persons and books are many. I have received much most valued help and encouragement from Professors F. M. Cornford and E. R. Dodds. In those passages in which I deal with Albinus and Numenius I am greatly indebted to Dr Ph. E. Merlan of Vienna, and in those dealing with the Stoics to Professor B. Farrington of Swansea. I give a short list of books which I have found relevant and helpful.

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INGE, W. R. *The Philosophy of Plotinus*.

NEBEL, G. *Plotins Kategorien der Intelligiblen Welt*.

I have tried to confine this list of books in the main to those which have a direct bearing on this essay. I have not included texts. For the *Enneads* I have used the Budé text except for the last four treatises of the Sixth Ennead, for which I have used Volkmann's Teubner edition.

A. H. A.