archa verbi
Subsidia 24

Florian Wöller • Ueli Zahnd (eds.)

Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology

The Order of Preachers and Its Spheres of Action (1215 – ca. 1600)

Aschendorff Verlag

Archa Verbi
Subsidia, Vol. 24

Archa Verbi

Yearbook for the Study of
Medieval Theology

Subsidia
24

Florian Wöller • Ueli Zahnd (eds.)

Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology

The Order of Preachers and Its Spheres of Action (1215 – ca. 1600)

Aschendorff Verlag

Archa Verbi
Annuarium Societatis Internationalis
pro Studiis Theologiae Medii Aevi promovendis

Annuaire de la Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Théologie Médiévale
Annuario della Società Internazionale per lo Studio della Teologia Medievale
Anuario de la Sociedad Internacional para los Estudios de la Teología Medieval
Jahrbuch der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Theologische Mediävistik
Yearbook of the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theology

Subsidia

iussu Societatis edendum curaverunt
Jan C. Klok
Volker Leppin
Ulli Roth

curator
Jan C. Klok

Annemarie Pilarski
Ulrike Treusch
directorium Societatis

Krijn Pansters
praeses Societatis

Printed with support from
CARLSBERG FOUNDATION

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY), which means that the text may be used, provided credit is given to the author.
For details go to http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder.



1. Auflage 2025

© 2025 The editors and authors. A publication by Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Münster
This book is part of the Aschendorff Verlag Open Access program.

Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG
Soester Straße 13
D-48155 Münster
buchverlag@aschendorff-buchverlag.de
www.aschendorff-buchverlag.de

ISSN 1865–2964
ISBN 978-3-402-10333-3 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-402-10334-0 (ePDF)
https://doi.org/10.17438/978-3-402-22688-9

Table of Contents

Preface 9

List of Figures 11

1. Florian Wöller/Ueli Zahnd
Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology: Introduction 13

I. Dominican Identities and Cultures of Expertise

2. Jan-Hendryk de Boer
Giving Advice to the Pope
Dominicans as Experts During the Pontificate of Pope John XXII 23

3. Marcel Bubert
Black Friars as Heresy Experts
Dominican Identities and Inquisitorial Expert Culture
in Late Medieval France and Aragon 43

4. Isabel Iribarren
The Monzón Affair (1387–1403) and the Construction
of a Dominican Thomist Identity 59

5. Ulrike Treusch
The Grabow Case
An Example of Dominican Identity at the Council of Constance 79

II. Preaching and Liturgy

6. Christian Troelsgård
Mnemonic Verse, Theology, and Pedagogy
in Augustinus de Dacia's († 1285) *Rotulus pugillaris* 93

7. Carol J. Williams
Guy of Saint-Denis and Jerome of Moravia
on the Modally Sequential Office 109

8. Alberto Ferreiro
In Vigilia Sancti Iohannis Babtiste
St Vicent Ferrer on the Vigil of John the Baptist in a Catalán Sermon 123

9. Kristin Hoefener
Liturgical Chant and Devotional Practices
in Late Medieval Dominican Nunneries 139

III. Memory and Material Cultures

10. Marika Räsänen
Rethinking Relic Devotion in Medieval Dominican Culture 161

11. Kirsten Schut
Lay Death and Burial in Dominican Habits 181

12. Christian Etheridge
The Iconography of Dominican Saints Found on the
Claus Berg Altarpiece Made for the Priory of St Nicholas
in Aarhus, Denmark 197

IV. Dionysian Theology

13. J. Cornelia Linde
Pseudo-Dionysian Thought in Early Dominican Theology
The Concept of *Ordo* in Guerric of St Quentin's *In Lamentationes* 225

14. Samuel Baudinette
Between Philosophical and Christian Contemplation
The Role of Dionysius in the Writings of Albert the Great 241

15. Constant J. Mews
Dionysius, *Theologia*, and Thomas's Final *Summa* 265

V. Albert the Great and the Plurality of Dominican Thought

16. Amalia Cerrito
Faith and Natural Philosophy in Albert the Great's Account
of the *generatio Christi* 283

17. Marco Vorcelli
The Book of Job Through the Lens of the *Nicomachean Ethics*
Aristotelian Fortitude and Virtuousness of Job's Lamentation
in Albert the Great's Commentary on Job 6:11–12 297

18. Paul D. Hellmeier
Neo-Platonic Ways and Levels of Knowledge in the Interpretation
of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Berthold of Moosburg 311

VI. Dominicans on Prayer

19. Jonathan Reinert
Thomas Aquinas on Petitionary Prayer and Divine Providence 327

20. Anja Bork
Meister Eckhart on Petitionary Prayer and the Relationship between God and Human 345

21. Andreas Zecherle
Johannes Tauler on Petitionary Prayer
An Attempt at Bridging the Gap Between Ecclesiastical Tradition and Mystical Thought 359

VII. Dominicans and the 'Others'

22. Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen
The Dominicans and 'the Others'
The Friars Preachers as Vanguard Against Pagans, Orthodox, Jews, Muslims, and Heretics. The Case of the Baltic Sea Region 373

23. Cheryl Midson
The Dominican Order and Eastern Christianity in the Thirteenth Century 395

24. Volker Leppin
Just a Quarrel of Monks?
Dominicans, Augustinians and the Early Reformation 409

List of Contributors 425

Index of Names 427

Index of Places 432

Index of Subjects 435

Neo-Platonic Ways and Levels of Knowledge in the Interpretation of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Berthold of Moosburg

Paul D. Hellmeier

The doctrine of the three motions of the soul (circular, spiral and straight) which are different ways of cognition belongs to the more well-known teachings of Dionysius the Areopagite and was repeatedly interpreted by several authors in the Middle Ages. In this article I will cite three examples, namely the interpretations of the three Dominicans Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Berthold of Moosburg. All three interpretations differ significantly from each other, but Berthold's interpretation stands out most from the other two. Here I want to show that Berthold's original interpretation owes much to his preoccupation with Proclus, since in the Proclean *Opuscula* he finds another scheme of five or six modes of human cognition, which he seeks to harmonize with Dionysius's scheme of the three motions. Among other things, this leads him to understand the motions of the Areopagite in a completely different way than Albert, Thomas, and also modern interpreters have.

In the following I shall first present as briefly as possible the Dionysian doctrine of the three motions of the soul and its modern interpretation. I will then present the most important points of Albert's and Thomas's readings. Against the background of these accounts, the characteristics of Berthold's interpretation will then come out clearly. After explaining the reasons for these characteristics, a brief conclusion follows.

1. Dionysius's Doctrine of the Three Motions of the Soul and Two Modern Interpretations

The doctrine of the three movements of cognition is found in the fourth chapter of Dionysius's main work *On Divine Names*. There it reads in English translation:

> The circular motion of the soul is both entrance into itself of those which are outside and the uniform convolution of its intellectual powers. In this circular motion a non-erring motion is given to the soul which returns and gathers the soul from the many which are outside it. It is first returned to the soul and then, as it comes to be of one form, it is singly united with the [in this translation: its] unified powers; in this way it is conducted to the beautiful and good beyond all things; the one and the same, without beginning and end.
> The soul moves spirally insofar as it has been illuminated with the divine knowledge in a manner appropriate to it: not intellectually and simply, but logically and discursively, according to its mixed and changing activities. Now the straight motion of the soul is not its entrance into itself (for this is a circular motion, as has been said); rather, in this motion it proceeds

doi.org/10.17438/978-3-402-22706-0

away from those outside of it to those about it, just as it is led from many and various symbols to simple and unified contemplations.[1]

In John Sarrazin's Latin translation, used by Albert, Thomas, and Berthold, the text reads:

Animae autem motus est circularis quidem ad se ipsam introitus ab exterioribus et intellectualium ipsius virtutum uniformis convolutio sicut in quodam circulo non errare ipsius largiens et a multis exterioribus ipsam convertens, et congregans primum ad seipsam, deinde ut uniformem factam uniens unitive unitis virtutibus et ita ad pulchrum et bonum manuducens, quod est super omnia existentia et unum et idem et sine principio et interminabile. Oblique autem anima movetur in quantum secundum proprietatem suam divinis illuminatur cognitionibus, non intellectualiter et singulariter, sed rationabiliter et diffuse et sicut commixtis et transitivis operationibus. In directum autem, quando non ad se ipsam ingressa et singulari intellectualitate mota (hoc enim est, sicut dixi, secundum circulum), sed ad ea quae sunt circa se ipsam, progreditur et ab exterioribus, sicut a quibusdam signis variatis et multiplicatis ad simplices et unitas sursum agitur contemplationes.[2]

Dionysius here describes three different ways in which the human soul recognizes things, and he calls these ways in analogical speech 'motions'. Comparing modes of cognition to spatial movements or figures was common in Neo-Platonism.[3] Already Plato considers intellectual insight in analogy to a circle.[4] Plotinus compares intellectual insight to a circle and sense perception to a line.[5] In the commentary on the *Phaidros* written by Hermias of Alexandria, a contemporary of Proclus, the entire threefold analogy is found, since Hermias compares the faculty of intellectual insight (*nous*) to a circle, discursive reason (*dianoia*) to a spiral and opinion (*doxa*) to a line.[6]

This parallel is one of the reasons why Eric D. Perl assumes that by circular motion, Dionysius means the intellectual insight (*intellectio*), by spiral motion discursive reasoning (*ratiocinare*) and by straight or linear motion sense percep-

1 Dionysius Areopagita: *The Divine Names* 4.9, 705A–B, trans. (from the Greek) John D. Jones: *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, Milwaukee 1980, p. 141. Regarding the text change I made: 'its' is an interpretive addition of Jones, as neither the Greek original nor the Latin translation has a possessive pronoun here. Since Dionysius probably means the angels by the 'unified forces', this interpretation—which Albert also opts for (see below)—seems to be wrong.

2 Dionysius Areopagita: *De divinis nominibus* 4.9, ed. Philippe Chevallier: *Dionysiaca. Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traditions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopagite*, Bruges 1937, pp. 190–193.

3 Cf. Perl, Eric D.: *Theophany. The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, Albany 2007, p. 134, note 12.

4 Cf. Plato: *Leges* X, 898a2–b3, ed. John Burnet (Platonis Opera 5), Oxford 1962.

5 Cf. Plotinus: *Enneas* 5.1.7.8, eds. Paul Henry/Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer (Plotini Opera 2), Paris 1959, pp. 195–198; cf. also *Enneas* 6.9.8, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Paris 1973, pp. 283–285.

6 Cf. Hermias Alexandrinus: *In Platonis Phaedrum scholia*, eds. Carlo M. Lucarini/Claudio Moreschini (Bibliotheca Teubneriana 2010), Berlin 2012, p. 22, l. 16–29.

tion (*sensus*).[7] However, Hugo Koch and Beate Suchla, who follows Koch, interpret the straight and circular motion somewhat differently. Koch writes:

> Die gerade Bewegung bezeichnet die abstrahierende und Begriffe bildende Thätigkeit der Seele [...]; die spiralförmige Bewegung bedeutet die dialektische, Urteile und Schlüsse bildende Seelenthätigkeit, die discursive Denkarbeit [...]; die kreisförmige Bewegung aber bezeichnet die Konzentration der Seele auf sich selbst, die mystische Kontemplation, Vision und Union [...].[8]

Thus, unlike Perl, Koch and Suchla understand straight motion not as sense perception, but as a motion of the *ratio* that forms concepts. However, both interpretations can be harmonized in such a way that every conceptualization is based on sense perception.

The scheme of the three motions expresses a hierarchical order of modes of cognition and is perhaps also to be understood as a step-by-step model of spiritual ascent. Behind these ideas lies an understanding of knowledge as the identity or correspondence of subject and object, or of knowledge and being, which dates back to Plato and Aristotle.[9] The higher the degree of agreement or identity, the higher is the degree of cognition. For example, objects remain outside the subject during sense perception. On the other hand, in intellectual cognition, the forms of things are already in the subject, yet they cannot all be recognized there at the same time, but only successively, i.e. discursively. The insight into principles is even higher, as the principles are viewed intuitively all at once. In Neo-Platonism the highest way of recognizing belongs to the hypostasis of Intellect or *Nous*, since the *Nous* has all forms of being present at the same time and in a timeless way. The greatest correspondence between subject and object is in the One itself, where both completely coincide and, strictly speaking, nothing is *recognized* anymore.

At all levels of the hierarchy, the same object is ultimately recognized: namely the appearance of the One itself in reality, an appearance that Dionysius the Areopagite calls theophany.[10] Only the way of knowing is different, since reality is perceived increasingly simply and monotonously at the higher levels; to speak figuratively: less and less developed into the multiplicity of things and more contracted into the causes of reality.[11] In Dionysius's description of the circular motion it is clear that he considers possible an intellectual ascent of the human soul beyond its mere *ratio* to a higher mode of cognition and finally to the One

[7] Cf. Perl 2007, p. 90 and p. 134, note 12. Note, however, that Perl's interpretation of the straight line or motion does not exactly coincide with the statement of Hermias.

[8] Koch, Hugo: "Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen. Eine litterarhistorische Untersuchung", in eds. A. Ehrhard/J. P. Kirsch: *Forschungen zur Christlichen Litteratur- und Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1, Mainz 1900, pp. ix–276: 150. Cf. Suchla, Beate R.: *Dionysius Areopagita. Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, Freiburg 2008, p. 108.

[9] Cf. Perl 2007, pp. 83–84. Perl points to *Phaedrus* 249b6–c2 and 247e2–6, *Republic* 490a8–b7 and *On the Soul* 3.4, 430a3–5 and *Metaphysics* 12.9, 1075a2–4.

[10] Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: *De Divinis Nominibus*, 1.2, ed. Beate R. Suchla (Corpus Dionysiacum 1; Patristische Texte und Studien 33), Berlin/Boston 1990, pp. 110–111.

[11] Cf. Perl 2007, pp. 83–95.

itself. On its way to the One, however, the soul must first unite with the angels, i.e., participate in their mode of cognition. Dionysius mentions the angels here because in his system they take the place of the Proclean *Henads* and also, in part, of the Neoplatonic realm of the *Nous*.[12] According to this, the angels form the ontological stage that lies immediately before the One itself and must be reached first before the soul can unite with the One.

2. The Three Dionysian Motions of Cognition in the Interpretation of Albert the Great

Albert deals with the three Dionysian motions of knowledge several times in his earlier works, but he does so most extensively in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*.[13] For this reason, all of Albert's texts that are discussed here come from this relatively early work, which was written about 1250.[14] In Albert's interpretation of circular motion it is immediately noticeable that it begins with a statement by Averroes, according to which this movement is essential for the soul and belongs to its simple movements. Albert concludes that the circular motion is to be found in what is simpler and nobler in the soul. This simpler and nobler reality is the light of the *intellectus agens*, which gives form to all that is recognizable and illumines the *intellectus possibilis* by virtue of the divine light reflected therein.[15] This is followed by a comparison: just as the sunlight itself cannot be seen if one does not keep away from all the colors which show only a certain aspect of the sunlight, so too the light of the agent intellect, which comes from God, cannot be seen if one does not keep away from all external appearances.[16] This keeping away is the prerequisite for the actual circular motion of the soul and does not yet belong to this motion per se. The circular motion

[12] Cf. Dillon, John M.: "Dionysius the Areopagite", in ed. Stephen Gersh: *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 111–124: 119.

[13] E.g. Albertus Magnus: *De homine* 3.1.2.1, eds. Henryk Anzulewicz/Joachim R. Söder (Opera omnia 27.2), Münster 2008, p. 24, l. 35–p. 25, l. 50; p. 26, l. 31–55. Albertus Magnus: *Super Dionysii Epistulas*, Ep. 9, ed. Paul Simon (Opera omnia 37.2), Münster 1978, p. 537, l. 58–67. The latter presentation is very brief and is based on the results of the commentary on *De divinis nominibus*. In *De homine*, Albert presents the subject in a very detailed and systematic way. Compared to the commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, however, he is less focused on the intellect.

[14] Simon, Paul: "Prolegomena", in: Albertus Magnus: *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, ed. Paul Simon (Opera omnia 37.1), Münster 1972, pp. v–xx: vi, l. 46–47.

[15] Albertus Magnus: *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus* 4, no. 103, ed. Paul Simon (Opera omnia 37.1), Münster 1972, p. 202, l. 60–67: "Solutio: Dicendum, quod, sicut dicit Commentator, motus circularis est essentialis animae et est de motibus eius simplicibus, et ideo oportet quaerere motum circularem animae in eo quod in ipsa simplicius et nobilius est, et hoc est lumen intellectus agentis, quod etiam dat formam suam omnibus intelligibilibus et illuminat intellectum possibilem virtute luminis divini micantis in ipso." For this characteristic element of Aristotelian epistemology see also *ibid.*, p. 203, l. 73–82.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 202, l. 67–76: "Sicut autem quando visus accipit lumen solis, secundum quod est forma coloris, aspiciendo in album, et secundum quod est determinatum, inquantum vero est in se simplex et universale, non determinatum ad hoc vel ad illud, non potest aspicere ipsum, nisi subtrahat se ab omnibus coloribus qui sunt materia ipsius: ita etiam

only begins when the soul turns back on itself. Next, the soul looks at the light in itself and begins to reflect it back to its origin. Finally, the good and beautiful is recognized in the soul itself, namely in the form of the simple light, which is led around uniformly like a point, coming from the First into the soul and going from it to the First.[17]

An important passage from the section of the literal commentary shows that Albert does not see circular motion primarily as an insight into the first principles, because this insight serves here only as an example of a simple and error-free way of cognition. Rather, the actual circular motion consists in the cognition of the light of the *intellectus agens* and mediated through this in the cognition of the First. That is why he interprets the forces mentioned here by Dionysius not as angels, but as the *intellectus agens* and as its light.[18] Interestingly, in *De homine* he had still interpreted the united forces as angels.[19] Albert's new

anima considerando res exteriores non inspicit lumen intellectus agentis nisi particulatum ad hoc vel illud intelligibile, secundum quod est forma huius vel illius."

17 *Ibid.*, p. 202, l. 76–p. 203, l. 23: "Unde si debeat ipsum lumen secundum se inspicere, oportet, quod retracta ab omnibus exterioribus infigat oculum mentis in se, sicut etiam dicit AUGUSTINUS in IX DE TRINITATE, quod anima numquam considerat, quod sui semper meminerit et se semper intelligat et diligat, nisi quando retrahitur ab exterioribus ad seipsam. Et ideo in motu circulari animae primo ponit introitum ipsius ab exterioribus ad seipsam, non tamquam partem circularis motus, sed sicut remotionem impedimenti. Quando autem anima conversa est ad seipsam, lumen proveniens a primo in ipsam secundum esse reflectit in primum secundum intellectum, et sic concluditur circulus in ipso primo, sicut dictum est SUPRA de motu circulari angeli. Unde convolutio, quam secundo dicit, est pars circularis motus et etiam sicut arcus quidam, inquantum scilicet considerat lumen, quod secundum esse in ipsa est, incipiens reflectere in primum. Tertium autem, quod dicit, scilicet manuductio ad primum pulchrum et bonum, pertinet ad conclusionem ipsius circuli, secundum scilicet quod ipsum <pulchrum> et bonum quod secundum esse est in anima, intelligitur ut punctus quidam circumductus uniformiter, quia semper in ratione simplicis luminis, a primo in se et a se in primum." Cf. also *ibid.*, no. 107, p. 205, l. 61–65. However, see also *ibid.*, no. 104, p. 203, l. 50–54, where Albert writes that the circle is "ex parte ipsius luminis intellectus agentis" and what is moved in the circle is the *intellectus possibilis*.

18 *Ibid.*, no. 104, p. 204, l. 1–24: "Convolutio, dico, largiens ipsi animae non errare, idest quod non erret; omnis enim error qui est in anima, provenit ex compositione et divisione particularium, et omnis certitudo et scientia ipsius provenit secundum reditum in prima principia simplicia, et ideo convolutio ad lumen simplex intellectus agentis facit ipsam non errare. Et convertens, idest retrahens, ipsam animam, quantum ad terminum a quo, a multis exterioribus, idest quae sunt multa et divisa ab invicem, et congregans primum ad seipsam, quantum ad terminum ad quem; convolutio, dico, deinde, idest post conversionem ab exterioribus, uniens per inspectionem luminis simplicis intellectus agentis ipsam animam, sicut iam uniformem factam in recessu ab exterioribus et multis virtutibus, et primo ipsi et intellectui agenti, quae dicuntur unitae virtutes propter lumen simplex et indivisum in multis, unitive, inquantum non exit a simplicitate praedicti luminis, et ita convolutio manuducens animam ad pulchrum et bonum, quod est super omnia existentia, quod est deus, et est unum, quantum ad simplicitatem, et idem, quantum ad incommutabilitatem, et sine principio et interminabile in se, quamvis sit principium et terminus motus intellectus in ipsum."

19 Albertus Magnus *De homine* 3.1.2.1, eds. Anzulewicz/Söder, p. 25, l. 6–14: "Haec enim 'convolutio' tribuit ei 'non-errare', hoc est quod non erret in quaerendo summum bonum, quia primo per gradus entium convertit eam in seipsam, et 'deinde sicut uni-

interpretation of circular motion thus clearly anticipates his theory of the *intellectus adeptus*, i.e., the acquisition of one's own *intellectus agens*, a theory he fully develops in later works, especially in his *Commentary on De anima* and *De intellectu et intelligibili*.[20]

Albert understands the spiral motion as a progression of the intellectual light in the form of the rational cognition. In the *ratio*, which deals with contingent reality, the light of the intellect is obscured, since it begins its activity on the basis of the senses and imagination in order to explore the essence of things, which are in space and time. The *ratio* attains the essence of a thing by discursive progression from one reality to another and thus also attains the light of the simple intellect. Here too, through the detour of the discursive *ratio*, whose activity is the direct motion, the circle towards the first origin of the spiritual light closes. The spiral motion is therefore composed of the straight and the circular motion.[21]

According to Albert, spiral motion differs from straight motion insofar as in the latter there is no return to itself. Rather, the straight motion of the soul goes

formem' et conformem 'factam' primo magis ceteris, in quantum plures bonitates eius participat, unit eam per contemplationem 'virtutibus unitis', hoc est angelis, ad unum primum appropinquantibus. Qui angeli dicuntur virtutes unitivae, eo quod inferiores ad eandem unitatem reducunt."

20 Cf. Albertus Magnus: *De anima* III, tr. 3, cap. 11, ed. Clemens Stroick (Opera omnia 7.1), Münster 1968, pp. 221–223; Albertus Magnus: *De intellectu et intelligibili* II, tr. 1, capp. 8–9, ed. Auguste Borgnet (Opera omnia 9), Paris 1890, pp. 514–517. Cf. also Albertus Magnus: *Metaphysica* XI, tr. 2, cap. 11, ed. Bernhard Geyer (Opera omnia 16.2), Münster 1960, p. 497, l. 40–69. Cf. Hellmeier, Paul D.: *Anima et intellectus. Albertus Magnus und Thomas von Aquin über Seele und Intellekt des Menschen*, Münster 2011, especially pp. 184–187 and pp. 196–200; *id.*: "Der Intellekt ist nicht genug. Das proklische 'unum in nobis' bei Berthold von Moosburg", in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 126 (2019), pp. 215–217.

21 Albertus Magnus *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus* 4, no. 105, ed. Simon, p. 204, l. 25–59: "Deinde determinat motum obliquum ipsius animae. Et sciendum ad evidentiam litterae, quod appellat motum obliquum animae, qui est secundum progressum intellectualis luminis in rationis cognitionem. Ratio autem non habet certitudinem neque stat defixe in uno, sed, sicut dicit Philosophus, est semper contingentium; lumen enim intellectus in ipsa obliquatur et obumbratur per continuum et tempus, secundum quod accipit a sensibus et imaginatione, sicut dicit Isaac, quod ratio oritur in umbra intelligentiae, unde etiam procedit ab uno in alterum perquirendo unum per alterum. Sicut enim lumen, quod est in carbunculo, est a lumine solis, obumbratum tamen ex natura terrestris, in qua recipitur, ita quod rem quidem aliquo modo demonstrat. Si quis autem certitudinem illius rei habere velit, oportet, quod per lumen clarius certam cognitionem de re habeat, ita quod per lumen rationis res quidem aliquo modo ostenditur quantum ad exteriores species rei. Si autem quis velit cognitionem suam profundare in illa re, oportet, quod ad quiditatem rei perveniat per quendam discursum ab uno in alterum et sic tandem perveniat ad quiditatem simplicem rei et ad lumen simplex intellectus. Quia igitur in isto motu servatur natura circularis motus, quantum ad progressum luminis a primo, et deinde, antequam revertatur in primum, exit a simplicitate luminis intellectualis procedens in rationem, secundum quam est exitus in exteriores dispositiones rei quasi secundum motum rectum, et deinde revertitur inquirendo in simplicem rei quiditatem et sic revertitur ad principium: ideo talis motus dicitur obliquus, quasi compositus ex recto et circulari, sicut etiam DICTUM fuit de motu obliquo in angelis."

directly from the cognition of caused things to the cognition of their causes, to which also the first cause belongs.[22]

How does Albert view the relationship of the three movements to each other? Obviously, he sees a hierarchy of values, as he repeatedly attests to the circular movement's simplicity and purity. The spiral and straight motion, on the other hand, begin with a "darkened" *ratio*, even if these two kinds of motion eventually also reach the pure light, or the simple essence of things and their causes. Since for Albert all three movements ultimately lead to God, they do not represent successive stages. Somewhat problematic in Albert's position is the interpretation of spiral motion. Since spiral motion ends up in circular motion, it seems objectively superfluous. Albert himself depicts it as a mixture of the other two movements, so that strictly speaking it does not form a movement of its own.

3. The Three Dionysian Motions of Cognition in the Interpretation of Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas repeatedly expresses himself on this topic: for example, in *De Veritate*, in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus* and in the *Summa theologiae*.[23] Because of its compactness, I am following the presentation of the *Summa theologiae*. The context of this presentation is the question of the *vita contemplativa*.

Like Albert, Thomas seems to assume a hierarchical value of the three motions whose criterion is *uniformitas*. The circular motion proceeds completely monotonously ('*uniformiter*'), the straight motion progresses from one reality to the next, and the spiral motion is mixed of both circular and straight motions.[24] According to Dionysius, the circular motion of the angels consists in

[22] *Ibid.*, no. 108, p. 206, l. 18–26 and p. 206, l. 71–p. 207, l. 6: "Deinde ostendit, quis sit motus rectus animae, et dicit, quod motus rectus animae est, quando ab exterioribus ascendit in primum quasi secundum quandam rectam lineam deveniendo in causam propinquam per effectum et sic usque ad causam primam, ita tamen quod motus iste non intelligatur incipere ab ipsa anima, ita quod exitus eius in exteriora sit pars motus istius – non enim esset rectus –, sed incipit ab ipsis exterioribus. [...] Littera sic exponitur: In directum autem movetur anima, quando non est ingressa ad seipsam et non est mota singulari intellectualitate, idest secundum simplex lumen intellectus agentis; hoc enim, sicut dixi, est secundum circulum moveri animam; sed quando recte movetur, progreditur ad ea quae sunt circa seipsam, idest ad res exteriores, sic tamen, quod iste progressus praecedit motum rectum et non est aliqua pars eius, et sursum agitur, ab exterioribus, scilicet sensibilibus, sicut a quibusdam signis variatis et multiplicatis ad contemplationes simplices et unitas, quae sunt contemplationes causarum et simplicium quiditatum rerum, ascendendo scilicet a causatis multiplicibus et dispositionibus exterioribus rei."

[23] Cf. Thomas de Aquino: *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 8, a. 15, ad 3, ed. Leonina 22.2, Rome 1972, p. 270, l. 215–246. *Id.*: *In Librum Beati Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, ed. Ceslaus Pera, Turin/Rome 1950, pp. 121–122, nos. 374–379. Thomas de Aquino: *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 180, a. 6, ed. Leonina 10, Rome 1899, p. 430f.

[24] *Ibid.*, a. 6 c., p. 430: "In motibus autem corporalibus perfectiores et primi sunt locales, ut probatur in VIII Physic. Et ideo sub eorum similitudine potissime operationes intelligibiles describuntur. Quorum quidem sunt tres differentiae, nam quidam est circularis, secundum quem aliquid movetur uniformiter circa idem centrum; alius autem est rec-

contemplating God in a monotonous and unceasing way, without beginning or end.[25] For man, in order to arrive at the uniformity of the circular motion, two *difformitates* must be removed. The first is that which comes from the multiplicity of external things; its removal is achieved by the soul's entrance into itself. The second *difformitas* is the *discursus rationis*, which is abandoned by directing all psychic activities back to the simple contemplation of spiritual truth. There is no more error in this activity. Like Albert, Thomas also illustrates this with the example of the insight in the first principles, so for him too, the circular motion does not consist primarily in it, but rather the principle-insight is only an example of circular motion. If the two *difformitates* are removed, a uniformity conforming to the angels can arise, consisting in the pure contemplation of God. Unlike Albert, Thomas mentions the angels here, but he also does not see that Dionysius is speaking of spiritual union with the angels. Instead, Thomas interprets the passage as referring to the unification of all human forces.[26]

Thomas interprets the straight motion as a progression from exterior sensory things to the knowing of spiritual reality.[27] For Thomas, this progression is the *discursus rationis*, to which he also adds the predicate 'natural' in accordance with his own Aristotelian epistemology.[28] The spiral motion, on the other hand,

tus, secundum quem aliquid procedit ab uno in aliud, tertius autem est obliquus, quasi compositus ex utroque. Et ideo in operationibus intelligibilibus id quod simpliciter habet uniformitatem, attribuitur motui circulari; operatio autem intelligibilis secundum quam proceditur de uno in aliud, attribuitur motui recto; operatio autem intelligibilis habens aliquid uniformitatis simul cum processu ad diversa, attribuitur motui obliquo."

25 *Ibid.*, ad 2, p. 430: "Et ideo Dionysius motum circularem in angelis assignat inquantum uniformiter et indesinenter, absque principio et fine, intuentur Deum: sicut motus circularis, carens principio et fine, uniformiter est circa idem centrum."

26 *Ibid.*, ad 2, pp. 430–431: "In anima vero, antequam ad istam uniformitatem perveniatur, exigitur quod duplex eius difformitas amoveatur. Primo quidem, illa quae est ex diversitate exteriorum rerum, prout scilicet relinquit exteriora. Et hoc est quod primo ponit in motu circulari animae introitum ipsius ab exterioribus ad seipsam. Secundo autem oportet quod removeatur secunda difformitas, quae est per discursum rationis. Et hoc idem contingit secundum quod omnes operationes animae reducuntur ad simplicem contemplationem intelligibilis veritatis. Et hoc est quod secundo dicit, quod necessaria est uniformis convolutio intellectualium virtutum ipsius, ut scilicet, cessante discursu, figatur eius intuitus in contemplatione unius simplicis veritatis. Et in hac operatione animae non est error, sicut patet quod circa intellectum primorum principiorum non erratur, quae simplici intuitu cognoscimus. Et tunc, istis duobus praemissis, tertio ponitur uniformitas conformis Angelis, secundum quod, praetermissis omnibus in sola Dei contemplatione persistit. Et hoc est quod dicit, deinde, sicut uniformis facta, unite, idest conformiter, unitis virtutibus, ad pulchrum et bonum manuducitur."

27 *Ibid.*, p. 431: "Sed rectum motum ponit in anima secundum hoc quod ab exterioribus sensibilibus procedit ad intelligibilium cognitionem."

28 *Ibid.*, ad 3, p. 431: "Discursus autem rationis, quando est a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia secundum ordinem naturalis rationis, pertinet ad motum rectum." See also the beginning of the corpus articuli, *ibid.*, c., p. 430: "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, operatio intellectus, in qua contemplatio essentialiter consistit, motus dicitur secundum quod motus est actus perfecti, ut Philosophus dicit, in III de Anima. Quia enim per sensibilia in cognitionem intelligibilium devenimus, operationes autem sensibiles sine motu non fiunt, inde est quod etiam operationes intelligibiles quasi motus quidam describuntur, et secundum similitudinem diversorum motuum earum differentia assignatur."

uses divine enlightenment, which it also processes in a discursive way.[29] In this regard, however, it should be noted that Dionysius does not have special divine revelations in mind here, but rather the appearances of the One in creation, i.e., theophanies. Thomas's theological interpretation of the spiral motion prevents it from coinciding with the straight one, since both are discursive. In his view, however, there should be no spiral motion in the realm of natural knowledge. Like Albert, Thomas does not interpret the three motions as stages of a singular ascending movement, even if he considers the circular motion to be the highest, since it is completely uniform and somehow immobile.[30]

4. A New Way of Interpreting Dionysius: Berthold of Moosburg's Use of Proclus

Berthold of Moosburg also repeatedly mentions the three Dionysian motions in his commentary on the *Elementatio theologica* of Proclus, written sometime between 1327 and 1361.[31] His interpretation differs greatly from the interpretations of Albert and Thomas, even if there are agreements and similarities in the details. The most striking difference is that Berthold considers the straight motion to be the highest. He makes this clear, for example, in his commentary on *Propositio* 131. There, after providing his interpretation of the circular motion, Berthold characterizes the spiral and straight motions as an observation of the created good as a trace of the One, or as its example or model. Berthold further describes the spiral motion as a laborious investigation of the discursive *ratio*, which ascends from the sensual to the spiritual and progressively reaches the knowledge of God. In describing the straight motion, Berthold first follows the text from *De divinis nominibus* in a free fashion, but then deviates significantly from it: he continues that in this motion, the mind of the wise man ascends from creatures—understood as examples, images, and signs—to the unified vision of the Deity, "non intelligibiliter, sed intellectualiter, non digressive, sed unitive [...] directa ipsius visione." Berthold further explains that the spiral motion, i.e., discursive cognition, belongs to the philosophers. On the other hand, he characterizes the straight motion as something very special. It is given only to

[29] *Ibid.*, ad 2, p. 431: "In anima autem ponit motum obliquum, similiter ex recto et circulari compositum, prout illuminationibus divinis ratiocinando utitur." *Ibid.*, ad 3, p. 431: "Discursus autem rationis, quando est a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia secundum ordinem naturalis rationis, pertinet ad motum rectum; quando autem est secundum illuminationes divinas, pertinet ad motum obliquum; ut ex dictis patet."

[30] *Ibid.*, ad 3, p. 431: "Sola autem immobilitas, quam ponit, pertinet ad motum circularem." The "immobilitas" denotes the constant and everlasting identity of the motion.

[31] Cf. Bertholdus de Moosburg: *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli*, Expositio tituli, eds. Maria Rita Pagnoni-Sturlese/Loris Sturlese (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi 6.1), Hamburg 1984, p. 37, l. 30–p. 38, l. 35; *ibid.*, Prop. 131, ed. Fiorella Retucci (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi 6.5), Hamburg 2011, p. 190, l. 10–p. 191, l. 44; *ibid.*, Prop. 146, ed. Fiorella Retucci (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi 6.6), Hamburg 2007, p. 97, l. 214–226; *ibid.*, Prop. 185, ed. Loris Sturlese (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi 6.8), Hamburg 2014, p. 26, l. 387–408.

a few, and in order to possess it in its fullness, a special grace or the preceding perfect spiral motion is needed.[32]

How does Berthold come to this unusual assessment of straight motion as the highest mode of cognition? An important reason for this is that he had already found this assessment in the work of an English Franciscan, Thomas of York's *Sapientiale*, which he used in the commentary on *Propositio* 131.[33] But the reason I mentioned earlier seems to me even more important: Berthold knows from the Proclean *Opuscula* yet another scheme of modes of cognition and wants to align it with the three motions of Dionysius. Strongly simplifying and harmonizing the three different representations in *De providentia et fato* and *De decem dubitationibus*, Proclus adopts the following hierarchy of levels of knowledge: sensory cognition, opinion, science, dialectical cognition of the One as the principle of everything, simple intuitive insight, One of the Soul or Divine Madness.[34] For factual reasons, but also because of linguistic parallels in the texts, Berthold assigns the spiral motion to science, the circular motion to dialectical knowledge and to simple intuitive insight, and the straight motion to the last two Proclean levels of knowledge, i.e., to simple intuitive insight and to Divine Madness. The circular motion and the straight motion therefore partially overlap.

[32] Bertholdus de Moosburg *Expositio*, Prop. 131, ed. Retucci, p. 191, l. 28–44: "Motus autem animi praeter istum circularem est duplex, scilicet obliquus et rectus, quia potest inspicere ipsum creatum bonum tamquam vestigium aut tamquam exemplum. In priori acceptione [= motus obliquus] ascendit sapientis animus per laboriosam investigationem dividendo, definiendo, communibus principiis utendo, a notis ad ignota per ratiocinationem procedendo, a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia ascendendo et inter intelligibilia et separata ab uno ad aliud ascendendo, quousque perveniatur ad ultimum, quod dicit prime Deum esse. Motu autem recto movetur animus sapientis, cum nec ad se regrediendo nec ab his, quae extra sunt, per ratiocinationem procedendo ascendit, sed a creaturis tamquam quibusdam exemplis, imaginibus et signis in se variatis et multiplicatis ad unitivas speculationes divinitatis ascendit, non intelligibiliter, sed intellectualiter, non digressive, sed unitive, hoc est non obliqua, sed directa ipsius visione. Primus istorum duorum motuum fuit in philosophis: Quod enim notum est Dei, manifestum est illis. Secundus autem motus paucis datus est infidelibus et, si quibus datus, hoc tenuiter propter hoc, quod iste motus non est datus multis in sua excellentia nisi per gratiam specialem aut non nisi propter praecedentem obliquam animi motionem et hoc perfectam, quod paucissimis datum est."

[33] Cf. King, Evan: *Supersapientia. Berthold of Moosburg and the Divine Science of the Platonists*, Leiden 2021, pp. 108–112. In contrast to Berthold, Thomas of York, who died around the year 1260, had no knowledge of the works of Proclus.

[34] Cf. Proclus: *De providentia et fato et eo quod in nobis ad Theodorum mechanicum* 8, nos. 27–31, ed. Helmut Boese: *Procli Opuscula*, Berlin 1960, pp. 109–171: p. 136, l. 1–p. 140, l. 17. Cf. *ibid.* 6, nos. 16–19, p. 122, l. 1–p. 128, l. 24. Proclus here writes on the 'operations of the soul'. This presentation is not identical with the presentation of 'the ways of knowledge' in chapter eight, but both presentations can be harmonized. The same is true for the presentation in Proclus: *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam*, q. 1, nos. 3–4, ed. Helmut Boese: *Procli Opuscula*, pp. 3–108: p. 4, l. 9–p. 6, l. 5. Here Proclus divides the types of cognition as follows: the non-rational modes of knowledge (sensory cognition and imagination) (1) are followed by the two rational modes of opinion (2) and science (3). Above this are the two intellectual modes of cognition according to a partial mode (4) and a total mode (5), whereby the former should probably be identified with dialectics. All are surpassed by the knowledge according to the One (6).

Berthold seems to make this assignment, for example, in his commentary on *Propositio* 185,[35] but he does it even more clearly in a passage in the *Expositio tituli*, the second introduction to his work. Here, Berthold wants to show that Proclus came to the realization of the Highest Good with all three motions of Dionysius.[36] As proof of this, he assigns to the circular motion statements from the sixth chapter of Proclus's *De fato et providentia* and to the straight motion statements from the eighth chapter of the same work. Berthold's quotation from the sixth chapter of *De fato et providentia* and his introductory words clearly show that he identifies the Dionysian circular motion with the content of Proclean dialectic, since he first mentions sense perception and *ratio*, and after that circular motion. In terms of content, dialectics is presented here as a knowledge of the cosmos of ideas present in the soul, as can be seen from the second part of the quotation. For Berthold, however, the circular movement is even more, because he also identifies it with the Proclean insight (*intelligentia*) that enables the soul to see its "sister souls", the spiritual substances and orders, as well as the monad gods. Accordingly, for Berthold the Dionysian circular movement consists of two successive Proclean stages or modes of cognition.[37] Furthermore, Berthold's long quotation from the eighth chapter of *De fato and providentia* and his commentary on this quotation clearly show that he equates Dionysian straight motion with the two highest Proclean levels of knowledge: *intelligentia* and *divina mania*, or *unum animae*. Here the *intelligentia* should probably be understood as a direct view of the higher hypostases and the Divine Madness as a super-intellectual union with the Divine no longer characterized by discernment.[38] As already mentioned, circular and direct movement therefore overlap, since both have *intelligentia* as a component.

[35] Cf. Bertholdus de Moosburg *Expositio*, Prop. 185, ed. Sturlese, p. 26, l. 393–p. 28, l. 461. See especially *ibid.*, p. 28, l. 457–458 and p. 25, l. 381–383.

[36] Cf. Zavattero, Irene: "La figura e il pensiero di Proclo in Bertholdo di Moosburg", in *Arkete. Rivista di studi filosofici* 1 (2005), pp. 51–67: 57–61.

[37] Bertholdus de Moosburg *Expositio*, Expositio tituli, eds. Pagnoni-Sturlese/Sturlese, p. 38, l. 49–39, 67: "Quod autem Proclus per primum motum, scilicet circularem, sicut dictum est, ascenderit, patet in libro suo *De fato et providentia* 6 cap., ubi ostendit, quod ratio mota ut ratio respiciens est ad intrinsecas rationes et sic 'elongat se ipsam evidenter a sensibus, contra quos sententiat, et a delectationibus et tristitiis sequestratur', et statim subiungit de uniformi convolutione intellectualium ipsius virtutum dicens: Post motum rationalis animae video alterum motum meliorem praedicto 'quiescentibus iam inferioribus et nullum tumultum, veluti in multis consuevit, exhibentibus, secundum quam conversa est ad se ipsam, et videt sui ipsius substantiam et virtutes, quae in ipsa, et harmonicas rationes, ex quibus consistit, et multas vitas, quarum est complementum, et rememinit se ipsam esse mundum rationalem, imaginem quidem eorum, qui ante ipsam, a quibus egressa est, exemplar autem eorum, quae post ipsam, quibus superstat'. Et parum infra eodem capitulo: 'Post has ambas operationes rationalis, ut dictum est, huius animae ad ipsam iam summam recurrens ipsius intelligentiam, per quam videt quidem sorores ipsius in mundo animas' – et infra – 'videt autem supra omnes animas intellectuales substantias et ordines' – et infra – 'videt autem rursum et ante haec eas, quae supra intellectum, deorum ipsorum monades'."

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 39, l. 73–89; p. 39, l. 99–p.40, l. 109: "Sed quod per directum motum ascenderit in Dei cognitionem nec ad se regrediendo nec ab his, quae extra sunt, per ratiocinationem progrediendo, sed a creaturis tamquam quibusdam exemplis, imaginibus et signis in se

Thus, it is clear how Berthold in fact aligns the three motions of Dionysius with the five (sense perception excluded) or six (sense perception included) stages of cognition of Proclus. But what reasons does he entertain for this position? First of all, there are linguistic ones. For example, Proclus describes the soul as "conversa ad seipsam" when dealing with dialectics,[39] a formulation that recalls the term *convolutio*, by which Dionysius describes the circular motion. Nevertheless, Berthold is aware that circular motion reaches even higher, which is why he identifies it with simple insight, too.

There are also linguistic reasons for identifying straight motion with the two highest Proclean levels of knowledge. For instance, the Latin translation of Dionysius says that by straight motion, the soul "progreditur et ab exterioribus sicut a quibusdam signis variatis et multiplicatis ad simplices et unitas sursum agitur contemplationes", which probably makes Berthold think of an ecstatic stepping out of oneself, intuitive insight, elevation to the One itself and union with it.

In addition, there are also systematic reasons for Berthold to make the two identifications. If Berthold were to interpret the straight motion as discursive *ratio*, he would have the same problem as Albert and Thomas, because then the spiral motion would be more or less superfluous.[40] Moreover, if Berthold were to equate straight motion with sense perception (or with the formation of concepts), then the highest level of knowledge of Proclus (i.e., Divine Madness) would have no explicit equivalent in Dionysius. This would be very unsatisfactory for Berthold, however, since he otherwise always wants to show the concordance of the two authors, who are his main Platonist sources and whom he venerates as his most important authorities.[41] Berthold's view of the straight motion

> variatis et multiplicatis ad unitivas speculationes non intelligibiliter, sed intellectualiter, non digressive, sed unitive, hoc est non obliqua mentis motione, sed directa ipsius visione, apparet libro quo supra cap. 8, ubi enumerata triplici cognitione animae, scilicet opinativa et scientifica et ea, quae ascendit usque ad unum et insuppositum 'per omnes, ut est dicere, species, has quidem dividentem, has autem resolventem ex unoque multa facientem et ex multis unum', per quam ascenditur ad principium omnium entium simpliciter et 'usque ad illud ascensus sententiae scientiarum', statim subiungit: 'Quartam autem adhuc tibi et hac simpliciorem intelligendum nostram cognitionem, quam non adhuc methodis utentem et resolutionibus aut compositionibus aut divisionibus aut demonstrationibus, sed epibolis – id est adiectionibus – simplicibus et velut antopticis – id est per se visivis – entia speculantem collaudant, qui secundum ipsam operari possunt, intellectum iam et non scientiam ipsam venerantur dicentes. [...] Hunc [= the hypostasis 'intellect'] igitur imitans, secundum quod potest, anima fit et ipsa intellectus scientiam supracurrens et relinquens multas methodos, in quibus prius decorabatur, et oculos solum erigens ad entia'. Et breviter infra prosequitur de cognitione, quae est supra intellectum, quam theologi etiam ante Platonem divulgant vocantes eam ut vere divinam maniam: 'Ipsam enim aiunt unum animae, non adhuc intellectuale excitantem' sed coaptantem ipsum unum uni summo, cui 'adiacens le unum quietem amat, clausa cognitionibus, muta facta et silens intrinseco silentio''. His concordat Dionysius 7 cap. *De divinis nominibus* B *et* 4 N. Et hoc de motu directo."

39 Proclus *De providentia* 6, no. 18, ed. Boese, p. 126, l. 3–4.

40 At least as a natural mode of knowledge; therefore, Thomas Aquinas understands spiral motion as a form of supernatural knowledge.

41 Cf. Ludueña, Ezequiel: *La recepción de Eriúgena en Bertoldo de Moosburg. Un aporte sobre la Escuela de Colonia*, Saarbrücken 2013, p. 121.

is also supported by the fact that it fits very well with the theological concept of Proclus. In fact, Proclus's theological attitude, which seeks to understand the causal activity of the divine origin, ultimately aims to lead to the experience of transcendence beyond concept and knowledge.[42]

5. Conclusion

At different times and in different contexts, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Berthold of Moosburg show interest in the intricate Dionysian doctrine of the three spiritual motions of the soul. Their interpretations prove to be original and independent from each other, because neither Thomas nor Berthold follow Albert's point of view. Moreover, the three interpretations reveal characteristic ideas of the three Dominicans. Albert's presentation shows his great interest in a 'peripatetic' theory of the human intellect, according to which the intellect can acquire its own light and thereby rise to the knowledge of God. Thomas, on the other hand, emphasizes that our intellect is fundamentally dependent on sense perception; and for his part, Berthold wants to show the harmony between Dionysius and Proclus and interprets the three motions of Dionysius using the Proclean theory of spiritual ascent, which takes place in five (or six) stages.

The Dionysian doctrine of the three motions of the soul is based on the general Neoplatonic idea that the same object, namely the divine One, is recognized at each stage of cognition, albeit in an increasingly intense way. This idea seems to be expressed more clearly in Albert's and Thomas's interpretations than in Berthold's, since Albert and Thomas explicitly point out that it is God who is known through all three motions, with both giving a criterion for the increasing intensity of the knowledge, namely *simplicitas* or *puritas* (Albert) and *uniformitas* (Thomas). Berthold, on the other hand, pays less attention to this basic Neoplatonic idea, since he focuses more on the spiritual ascent and the attainment of the highest level, which consists in total union with the One.

Compared to Albert and Thomas, two things are new in Berthold's interpretation: first, the interpretation of circular and straight motion; and second, the interpretation of the three motions as successive stages of spiritual ascent. God is recognized at every level, but this happens from level to level in an increasingly perfect way. Unlike in Albert's and Thomas's interpretations, the higher motion can only be reached through the fulfillment of the preceding lower motion.

Whether Berthold's interpretation of circular and straight motion is true and perhaps even correct from the point of view of the genesis of the Dionysian text cannot be decided here.[43] The key to this unusual interpretation is in

[42] Cf. Onnasch, Ernst-Otto/Schomakers, Ben: "Einleitung", in Proklos: *Theologische Grundlegung* (Philosophische Bibliothek 562), Hamburg 2015, lv–lvi and cxi–cxii.

[43] See, however, Koch 1900, pp. 152–153. According to Koch, Dionysius's theory of the three motions of the soul indeed depends on Proclus, namely on *In Parm.* 6.52. Proclus lists there the following four ways of the knowledge of the soul: first, being enthused by the Divine One; second, ecstatic dancing around the Nous; third, the self-knowledge of the soul and the knowledge of its own concepts; and fourth, the knowledge of the sensibly perceivable.

any case Proclus. Berthold's excellent knowledge of the Proclean *Opuscula* and his willingness to combine Proclean and Dionysian teaching make the decisive difference between his own interpretation and those of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

Berthold's interpretation of the three motions in some ways points forward to Renaissance Platonism. Firstly, his abovementioned excellent knowledge of the works of Proclus is unmatched in the whole of the fourteenth century and presages increased engagement with ancient Greek philosophical texts in the Renaissance. Secondly, Berthold realizes that Dionysius and Proclus 'belong together', so to speak, and he gains new insights from compiling and comparing their texts. Thirdly, Renaissance Platonism is recalled by the fact that Berthold is not afraid to interpret Dionysius by means of Proclus, and not vice versa (i.e., interpreting the pagan philosopher Proclus by means of the Church Father Dionysius). Nevertheless, Berthold is far from realizing the Renaissance insight of Dionysius' literary dependence on Proclus, something reserved for the precise textual criticism of Lorenzo Valla about a century after Berthold's death.

Unlike Berthold, Koch assigns Proclus's two highest modes of knowledge to Dionysius's circular motion. Furthermore, according to Koch, the third mode of cognition mentioned here corresponds to spiral motion and the fourth mode to straight motion.