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## A REFERENCE TO PLOTINUS IN LIDDELL AND SCOTT

In the 1940 edition of Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*, under the entry *ἄθροος* II. 2, there is this statement: "*continuous, κίνησις* Plot. 3. 7. 8, cf. ib. 1 (Comp)." I judge that this is incorrect.

The passage in Plotinus (III, vii, 8, 49-52, Budé edition) is difficult and corrupt. Without emendation it is as follows: *ἀλλὰ κίνησις οὐχ ἄθροα. Τοῦ δὲ μὴ ἄθροα εἰ τὸ ἄθροον ἐν χρόνῳ, τίνι διοίσει τοῦ ἄθροως, ἢ τῷ τὸ μὴ ἄθροον ἐν χρόνῳ.* So written the text asserts that *τὸ ἄθροον* is in time and also that *τὸ μὴ ἄθροον* is in time. Both cannot be true, for, even if *ἄθροον* means *continuous*, its negative is not *intermittent* (which could be in time) but instantaneous. This is required by the argument because, though the passage is corrupt, the only difference between them is that one is in time. Hence the other is not in time, and a *μὴ* must be inserted before either the first or the second *ἐν χρόνῳ*.

Liddell and Scott also refer to III, vii, 1, 4, where they again take the comparative *ἄθροωτέραις* to mean continuous. Note that this is the meaning given to both occurrences by the translation of Stephen Mackenna, and it is probable that Liddell and Scott are depending on him for their references.

In the last mentioned case, that of the comparative, it should be obvious that instantaneous is a better translation than continuous. Plotinus is commencing his discussion of eternity and time, and he is expressing in less happy phraseology what St. Augustine later put in the words, "What is time? When no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it, I do not know" (*Conf.*, XI, xiv or 17). Plotinus says, "When we speak of time and eternity we think we have, spontaneously and as by a rather sudden intuition (*ἄθροωτέραις ἐπιβολαῖς*) of thought, a clear impression of them in our souls.... But when we attempt to go into an examination of them ... we discover difficulties." The opposition in these lines is between a careful attention, which requires a continuous time, and a sudden, spontaneous intuition. Mackenna ruins the progress of Plotinus' exposition when he translates the first part of the opposition as "we come to think that

both by instinct (*αὐτόθεν* ?) and by the more detailed attack (*ἀθροωτέραις ἐπιβολαῖς*) of thought, we hold an adequate experience of them in our minds without more ado.” It is the more detailed examination as opposed to instinct or intuition that reveals our ignorance.

In deciding on the two passages that Liddell and Scott use, some attention ought to be paid to Plotinus’ general use of the word. The index of the Budé edition lists these occurrences:

*ἀθρόος*: III, vii, 8, 50; viii, 9, 22; IV, iv, 1, 20; VI, i, 18, 3.

*ἀθρόως*: II, viii, 1, 40; ix, 12, 16.

In addition to these I have been able to find:

*ἀθρόος*: I, vi, 3, 13; III, vii, 1, 4; 11, 22; 55; 57; V, v, 3, 19; 7, 8; 10, 8; viii, 6, 9; 10; VI, viii, 14, 32.

*ἀθρόως*: II, ix, 14, 25; III, vii, 8, 51.

For the present purpose the most important of these are those in which the adjective modifies either *ἐπιβολή* or *κίνησις*. *Ἐπιβολή* occurs in III, viii, 9, 22, and it is worthy of note that here Mackenna rejects his translation of III, vii, 1, 4 to use the phrase “direct intuition.” *Ἐπιβολή* also occurs in IV, iv, 1, 20. The same meaning, though with a different word, is found in V, v, 7, 8 and in V, viii, 6, 9 and 10 where the suddenness of intuition is contrasted with *διανόησις*, which takes time, and *βούλευσις*. In VI, viii, 14, 32 the sudden mental act is opposed to *λελογισμένης*. Most of the other references have a similar meaning.

The combination of *ἀθρόα* with *κίνησις* is less frequent. But it is implied in II, ix, 12, 16; and less specifically in II, ix, 14, 25. Perhaps the clearest passage is VI, i, 18, 3, in which Plotinus contrasts *ἐνεργείας ἀθρόας* with *κίνησεις* like cutting, “for cutting is in time.” It follows, therefore, that the former cannot be in time; hence *ἀθρόος* does not mean continuous but rather instantaneous or all of a sudden.

Now we may return to the original passage, III, vii, 8, 49-52. The text must be corrected by Bréhier’s insertion of *τῷ μὴ* before the first *ἐν χρόνῳ*. The translation will then be: “But motion is not instantaneous. If the instantaneous differs from the non-instantaneous by the fact that the former is not in time, by what will the latter differ from the instantaneous except by the fact that the non-instantaneous is in time?”

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