David D. Butorac, Danielle A. Layne (Eds.)

PROCLUS AND HIS LEGACY

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Proclus and his Legacy

Edited by
David D. Butorac and Danielle A. Layne

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Contents

Note on editions, translations and abbreviations

Due to the use of common editions, translations and scholarship, the editors have chosen to have a comprehensive bibliography. Editions and translations of primary authors, e. g. Proclus, Ps-Dionysius, Iamblichus, will be noted by individual contributors in each chapter and are cited according to editor and/or translator. Once the edition or translator has been referenced the following abbreviations will be utilized.

Iamblichus

De An.   *De Anima*
DM   *De Mysteriis*

Marinus

Vit. Proc. *Vita Procli*

Plato

Ap.   *Apology*
Crat.   *Cratylus*
Phd.   *Phaedo*
Phdr.   *Phaedrus*
Prt.   *Protagoras*
Rep.   *Republic*
Symp.   *Symposium*
Parm.   *Parmenides*
Alc.   *Alcibiades I*
Tim.   *Timaeus*

Plotinus

Enn.   *Enneads*

Proclus

ET   *Elements of Theology*
In Alc.   *In Alcibiadem Commentarius*
In Crat.   *In Cratylum Commentarius*
In Parm.   *In Parmenidem Commentarius*
In Remp.   *In Rempublicam Commentarius*
In Tim.   *In Timaeum Commentarius*
Plat. Theol. *Platonic Theology*
de Prov.   *de Providentia*
In Eucl.   *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*

Ps.-Dionysius

CDA   *Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum*
CH   *Celestial Hierarchy*
EH   *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*
DN   *Divine Names*
MTh   *De mystica theologia*
Ep   *Epistolae*

John Dillon, David D. Butorac and Danielle A. Layne
Introduction

> ... he stands as the representative of each sect
> of Greece, emphatically *the* Greek philosopher –
> such a man I saw was Proclus, in whom it seems
> to me are combined and from whom shine forth in
> no irregular or uncertain rays, all the
> philosophical lights which have illuminated
> Greece in various times, to wit Orpheus,
> Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Plotinus,
> Porphyry, and Iamblichus.
> – Victor Cousin[1]

> I read Proclus for my opium, it excites my
> imagination to let sail before me the pleasing and
> grand figures of gods and daemons and
> demoniacal men.
> – Emerson[2]

> At the twilight of antiquity there were still
> wholly unchristian figures, which were more
> beautiful, harmonious, and pure than those of any
> Christians: e. g., Proclus. His mysticism and
> syncretism were things that precisely Christianity
> cannot reproach him with. In any case, it would be
> my desire to live together with such people.
> – Nietzsche[3]

For well over a thousand years after his death, Proclus (412–485 CE) was considered a faithful heir to the Platonic tradition, one of the most reliable interpreters of the Platonic dialogues and a fixture of the Western intellectual tradition not to be ignored. Exceptionally prolific, Proclus' commentaries on difficult dialogues like the *Parmenides* or the *Timaeus* and his systematic texts like *The Elements of Theology* or theological works like the *Platonic Theology* had an enduring influence on the Latin West, Byzantium and Medieval Islamic philosophy. Furthermore, Proclus was a foundational author for the revival of Platonism in the Italian renaissance, inspiring formative authors of the period like Ficino and Patrizi. Indeed, it was only late into the modern age that Proclus' stature as an invaluable exegete of Plato and serious philosopher in his own right become overshadowed and obscured by those who wished to return to a kind of Platonism "purified" from the so-called taint of *Neoplatonism*, a pejorative term first meant to delineate this tradition's opacity and distinc-

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1 Johnson (trans.) (1909), vii-viii. We owe this and the following two references to our esteemed colleagues Gregory Shaw, Gary Gabor and Jay Bregman.

2 Gilman/Parso (eds.) (1970), 378.

3 Levy (ed.) / Ludovici (trans.) (1911), 168.

tion from so-called authentic Platonism.[4] Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a much-needed revival of research on Proclus and his lasting legacy. Stephen Gersh's recent edited volume *Interpreting Proclus* expertly shows how Proclus' Platonism has extraordinary and extensive implications, implications that once understood would surely problematize our current ways of viewing the history of philosophy and our traditional understanding(s) of Platonism. In this vein, texts like Radek Chlup's *Proclus: An Introduction* and Pieter d'Hoine's and Marije Martijn's forthcoming edited volume *All From One: A Guide to Proclus* are also testaments to the recent revitalization of Proclus' philosophy, as both works systematically analyze the work of the "successor," noting his instrumental contributions to the history of Western metaphysics, epistemology, theology and even ethics.

The reasons for this revival in Procline studies are complex indeed and lie beyond the scope of this introduction. Still, the following pages hope to offer a brief survey of the flux of scholarship on Proclus in last fifty years, tracing in outline, what works have led us to this contemporary renaissance in valuing and paying rightful heed to Proclus' thought and reception. To begin, a few brief if unsubstantiated words can be said about the precursors to this revival in the 19th and early 20th century. The first is the wonder of German classicism that flourished during the twilight of the Enlightenment, providing philosophers and researchers alike with the philological skills to read Proclus' texts again. These linguistic tools were, however, prerequisites for a return to the Greek world that would further a spiritual, philosophical and political undertaking that would shape the German (if rather Prussian) romantic and humanistic spirit. Wilhelm von Humboldt's educational idea was a product of this sense and helped nurture this cultural sentiment and love of all things Greek. When this spirit combined with the broader modern project of obtaining encyclopaedic 'scientific' accounts of history, along with a growing trend to view history as a development or unfolding, it is only natural that the figure of Proclus first began to tower over the thoughts of classicists and philosophers alike. For instance, Friedrich Ueberweg (1826–1871) in his *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* of 1863–6 has the following to say:

> In Proclus pagan Neoplatonic philosophy reached its peak. Together with a very thorough acquaintance with previous Greek philosophy, that is, the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and his own Neoplatonic forerunners, a comprehensive knowledge of the most varied branches of learning, and an enthusiastic veneration for all kinds of mythological, theological and ritualistic tra-

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4 See Gerson (1996), 23: "In the modern age [the late antique Platonists] came to be thought as falsifiers of Plato; there was here the prohibition of compromise among the Platonists; their sect was declared 'eclectic' and, in addition, by J. Brucker, the lowliest denizen of the Alexandrian underworld. The term 'Neoplatonism' is used in 1744 by A.F. Büsching, who spoke not only of an eclectic sect but also of 'new Platonists'; in 1786 C. Meiners produced a 'History of [Neoplatonic] Philosophy,' continuing, however, to consider it in a negative light. Finally, in 1793 G.G. Fülleborn chose to express with the title 'Neoplatonic Philosophy' the common name for the 'famous Platonists,' though he still regarded them in basically a negative manner."

ditions, whether of Greek, Oriental or Egyptian origin, Proclus combined an unusual competence in dialectic that gave him the ability to unite the enormous mass of traditional concepts into one large system of thought, in which each of its components, as far as its purpose was concerned, occupied a fixed position. He was the great Scholastic of antiquity. In every respect, objectively considered, his philosophy, as the proper conclusion to the Neoplatonic development, stands as an important milestone in the history of thought.[5]

In contrast to this positive reception, though, scholars like Eduard Zeller (1814 – 1908), in his rather earlier (1844 – 52) *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* is less enthused by Proclus, dismissing outright his logical rigor: "We can expect of him not only no inductive foundation for his thought, but also no purely dialectical development of or rigorously logical basis for his statements [...]."[6] Still, despite such condemnation, Zeller does not dispute Proclus' importance in the history of thought, ultimately agreeing with his mentor, Hegel, who in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* believed that with "Proclus we have the culminating point of the Neo-Platonic philosophy [...]."[7] Ultimately, we note that already in the 19th century there was clearly an interest in our thinker − not an interest that would shatter the consensus of centuries of neglect but, to be sure, the specter of Proclus loomed over the philosophical landscape, luminously informing the work of thinkers as diverse as Fichte and Schelling, and completely overwhelming the thoughts of English philosophers like Thomas Taylor or Americans like Emerson, even peppering the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.

Shifting to the 20th century, the most important moment in the rebirth of what we might call modern academic Procline studies was the publication of the edition and translation of the *Elements of Theology* in 1933 by E. R. Dodds. Indeed, since the study of Neoplatonism in general was, at the time, not considered a worthwhile academic pursuit, the publication of the work of an even more obscure thinker like Proclus stood out as a notable eccentricity of his, and, if anything, worked against his appointment as Regius Professor in Oxford in 1936. In the end, though, his work would rehabilitate, at least in the last half-century since the 1960's, scholarship on Proclus insofar as it made accessible in English one of the most foundational texts of late antiquity whose legacy was far-reaching in Medieval, Renaissance and Modern philosophy.[8] Today his edition and translation are still the standard text for students and scholars alike and, overall, his commentary broke ground in understanding the role Proclus' metaphysics had in the history of philosophy.

If we consider the chief works of scholarship on Proclus in the major European languages that have appeared over the last fifty years or so, as opposed to what came before that, we can appreciate the extent of this restoration. The book that might be said to inaugurate the modern era of Proclus studies is Werner Beierwaltes' *Proklos:*

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5 As cited by Rosán (1949), 226.

6 As cited by Rosán (1949), 225.

7 Hegel (1995), 451.

8 On this cf. Todd (2005).

Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik, published in 1965. Then, in 1968, there appeared the first volume of Saffrey and Westerink's great project, the Budé edition of the *Platonic Theology* – only completed, as we know, in 1997 (sadly, after the death of Leendert Westerink). Saffrey, interestingly, had come to Oxford in the mid-1950's to study with Dodds, and had completed the substance of this first volume there as his D. Phil. In the following decade or so, there appeared in France as well two interesting studies by Jean Trouillard, *L'Un et l'âme selon Proclos* (1972), and *La mystagogie de Proclos* (1982).[9] Trouillard was influenced, it seems, by the Philosophy of Action of Maurice Blondel, and this impelled him to study first Plotinus, and then Proclus.[10] It should also be mentioned that during the period from 1966 to 1970 André-Jean Festugière produced important translations, with useful notes, of Proclus' commentaries on the *Timaeus* and the *Republic,* though he never, so far as we know, devoted a book-length study to Proclus' philosophy.[11] One must also note the almost complete Budé edition of the *Parmenides* commentary by Concetta Luna and the late Alain-Philippe Segonds. We are also looking forward to a new French translation of the Euclid commentary by Alain Lernould (who has contributed important work on the *Timaeus* commentary as well) and another of the *Elements of Theology*, a collaborative effort, spearheaded by Luc Brisson, Philippe Hoffmann, Laurent Lavaud, and Gwenaëlle Aubry.

Moving eastward to Flanders, one will immediately be indebted to the work of Carlos Steel, particularly his work on the *Commentary on the Parmenides,* both in bringing William of Moerbeke's translation into a critical edition, and ultimately, in producing a magnificent Oxford text of the Greek. This, alongside a host of important articles on Proclus' thought and his invaluable translations of the *Opuscula* with Jan Opsomer, his former student, spearheaded careful research on Proclus' views of the soul, freedom, providence, the nature of evil and other pivotal concepts in late antique thought. Moreover, the De Wulf-Mansion Center at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven's Institute for Philosophy has published a useful annotated bibliography of Procline studies, covering the years 1990 – 2004 and has continued to update the bibliography without annotations online.[12] Moving north, we have Bert van den Berg's monograph on Proclus' hymns, a much needed work for filling a large lacuna in Procline studies, Marije Martijn's on Proclus' interpretation of the *Timaeus* commentary, and Ben Schomaker's recent German translation of the *Elements of Theology*. Among Italian scholars, one should mention Francesco Romano in Catania, and the group of scholars that gathered round him, such as Daniela Taormina and Loredana Cardullo. Certainly we should not ignore the work of Cristina D'Ancona Costa,

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9 He had previously, in 1965, produced a French translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology.*
10 Hankey (2004).
11 See Festugière (1963) for a most useful article for dealing with the fragments of Iamblichus' commentaries in relation to Proclus.
12 d'Hoine *et al* (2005). Other notable Proclus bibliographies include Muth (1993) and Girgenti (1987).

both in Greek and in Arabic texts, and a considerable number of annotated transla-tions of Proclus' major works, including the *Platonic Theology,* in which Alessandro Linguiti had a hand. In Greece, Evanghelos Moutsopoulos has done much for Proclus studies over the years, particularly on Proclus' musical theory, as well as many other aspects of his thought.

To turn to the present day English-speaking world, the work of Rosán (1949), while dated, and the more recent work of Siorvanes are still useful texts that inspired a generation of would-be Proclus scholars. We should not hesitate to mention again such figures as Stephen Gersh, originally a rather lonely figure when he graduated from Cambridge in the mid-1960s, but who has since become quite central to late Pla-tonist studies from his base in the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame. There is, of course, Dominic O'Meara (though he is just as comfortable in French), whose work on many aspects of Neoplatonism, including the very popular *Pythago-ras Revived* (now in its fourth edition), has been extremely influential. O'Meara's co-translation of Syrianus' *Metaphysics* commentary with John Dillon will certainly open new avenues of study, while Dillon's work is also well-known, particularly in finishing the translation of Morrow's *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. Re-cently, Edward Butler's insightful and detailed work on Proclus' henadology has sig-nificantly advanced our understanding of Proclus' theology, while Sara Ahbel-Rappe's *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Pro-clus, and Damascius* represents one of only a few scholarly attempts in English to ad-dress late Platonic writing and discursivity using contemporary hermeneutical tech-niques.[13] Furthermore, we must admire and welcome the translation efforts of Dirk Baltzly, Harold Tarrant, David Runia, and Michael Share on the *Timaeus* commentary in Australia. Baltzly, Graeme Miles and John Finamore are currently working on a 3-volume English translation of Proclus' essays on Plato's *Republic* with the first vol-ume set to hit presses this year. While Canada's Jean-Marc Narbonne, who studied under Werner Beierwaltes, has focused more on Plotinus, his work *Hénologie, Onto-logie et Ereignis* attempts to place the thought of Plotinus and Proclus in relation to Heidegger's criticisms of ontotheology. Rounding things off, Greg MacIsaac has steadily published interesting work on the nature of the Procline soul, discursivity and the Euclid commentary.

This impossibly brief survey, which must unfortunately have left some out unin-tentionally, nonetheless reveals an astonishing breadth of interest in Procline studies and we are all the better for it. If we could conclude with two final points: we can only be better served if we understand more of Proclus' predecessors and those who followed on after him. First, there has been a recent and welcomed tendency to pay more respect to his master Syrianus, even to the extent of suggesting that a great deal of what we regard as the Procline system of metaphysics is actually the achievement of Syrianus. To be fair to Proclus, he would have little quarrel with

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13 See also Gersh (2006), 64–80 & Gersh (2014a).

that assessment. Indeed, his works are laced with fulsome tributes to his revered Master. Interestingly, current work by Loredana Cardullo and Angela Longo in Italian,[14] and then in 2006 the first-ever conference in honor of Syrianus, organized by Longo in Geneva and resulting in a fine volume of papers,[15] helped to bring into focus just how much Proclus actually owed to his master. Earlier work on Syrianus tended to focus on his surviving *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics,* which, while most interesting, does not really give an adequate view of his own metaphysical system. In this vein, a collection of the testimonia of his commentaries on the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* compiled by Sarah Klitenic Wear[16] has helped to remedy this distortion by showing how much Proclus is prepared to concede to his venerable Master's metaphysical scheme. Proper attention to Hermias' *Commentary on the Phaedrus* following the new edition of Moreschini and Lucarini, we feel, will only reinforce our appreciation of Syrianus' importance. This will certainly be more readily accomplished with the forthcoming publication of Baltzly and Share's two-volume English translation in Richard Sorabji's Commentators series.

Alongside research into Proclus' predecessors, the second strain of important contributions to the development of Procline and late Platonic scholarship is engagement with a direct, but unruly, heir of Proclus' thought, Damascius. Aside from the Budé editions of *Doubts and Solutions* and his commentary on the *Parmenides* translated and with notes by the late Joseph Combès and a volume of his collected articles on Damascius, the field is there to be tilled. Gerd van Riel has recently produced a translation of the *Philebus* commentary through Budé. Sara Ahbel-Rappe has translated *Doubts* into English while Marilena Vlad offers us a Romanian edition and has many helpful articles on Damascius; Edward Butler has begun to delve into Damascius' henadology; finally, Carolle Metry-Tresson (*L'aporie ou l'expérience des limites de la pensée dans le* Péri Archôn *de Damaskios*) and Valerio Napoli (*Epekeina tou henos: il principio totalmente ineffabile tra dialettica ed esegesi in Damascio*) have published two very interesting books on Damascius' aporeticism. Further study into Damascius' thought is not only worthwhile in its own regard but it will certainly recuperate the significance of Proclus and the final phases of late antique philosophy.

In the end, all these developments over the past 50 years simply go to show that the fabric of Platonism is a complex construction, the fruit of many hands, and that the scenery may be subject to constant change, redirection and transformation. With the exception of a few invited essays, most of the contributions in this volume result from a conference held in Turkey at Fatih University, Istanbul in 2012 which commemorated Proclus' enduring legacy by celebrating the 1600th anniversary of his birth in Constantinople. As a kind of conference proceedings then, our collection, while

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14 Cardullo (1995) & (2000); Longo (2005). We should also not forget the important article of Sheppard (1982).

15 Longo (ed.) (2009).

16 Wear (2011).

not comprehensive of Proclus' philosophical system or exhaustive in its scope with regard to his legacy, still hopes to add to this Heraclitean flux of scholarship and the restoration of this figure to his rightful place in the Western philosophical tradition.

Turning to the contents of the volume, **Part I** collects those papers from the conference that focused on the life, work, and thought of Proclus himself. In chapter 1, Stephen Gersh's "Proclus in the History of Philosophy: Construction and Deconstruction" analyses the history of the reception of Proclus and proposes a rather convincing response to the question of why Procline studies is undergoing its current revival. Offering detailed commentary on the general features of Proclus' diffusion in both the Medieval Latin and Byzantine worlds, while further unpacking the influence of particular works like the *Elements of Theology* up to the early modern period, Gersh compellingly argues for the deep impact of Proclus on the history of philosophy. Attempting to problematize the standard narrative of the history of philosophy that baldly begins with Plato and Aristotle before quickly turning to Descartes and modernity, Gersh's essay makes substantial headway in uncovering why, after a period in excess of one thousand years, Proclus' work is being recovered.

Harold Tarrant's "Forgetting Procline Theology" brings to the fore the political and cultural significance of neglecting not only Proclus' significance in general but also Neoplatonic theological teachings in particular. Here, Tarrant discusses the rise and fall of reading the *Parmenides* as the Neoplatonic theological text *par excellence* and its eventual replacement with Plato's *Timaeus* insofar as its depiction of the divine was more familiar and amenable to Christian audiences. Moving from Plotinus and Proclus' *Parmenides* reception to the Alexandrian school, Tarrant highlights Olympiodorus' attempts to retain Platonic texts and interpretations in a curriculum geared at an audience that was becoming more and more suspicious of pagan philosophy and culture. He suggests that Olympiodorus made sacrifices so as to present "his teaching in a manner that the 'prisoners' could understand."

From Olympiodorus' pedagogical transformation of Neoplatonic teachings, the volume turns to Proclus' understanding of the divine lover who descends to the beloved so as to assist them toward contact with true Beauty and the Good. In Vasilakis' "Platonic Eros, Moral Egoism and Proclus" Socrates is shown to enact this providential role with the young Alcibiades, therein highlighting the role of divine eros in Proclus' picture of Socratic method and pedagogy. Complementing Vasilakis' essay, Layne's "The Platonic Hero" analyses Proclus' use of the Neoplatonic leitmotifs of cyclical creativity, *sympatheia*, and divine providence, and shows how the Neoplatonic category of hero is one whose active powers of reversion assist and inspire human souls in becoming like the divine. In this erotic and heroic project, formidable individuals like Socrates become, as Proclus insists, "human souls on high," elevating all who encounter them back to the divine.[17] From Layne we learn that

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[17] *In Crat.* 75.25. Duvick (trans.) (2007).

through providence, heroes are able to recognize the divine gracing all things from the first to the last.

This discussion of providential will is extended to a discussion of the ambiguous status of the body in late antique Platonism. Specifically, Lang's essay "The Status of Body in Proclus's *Elements of Theology*" turns to the "dire situation" of the body defined as that which cannot in any sense serve as an element or a cause because it has no agency. Having no potency in itself, it depends upon that which is self-moved to give it the appearance of movement, i. e. independent life. In other words, the incorporeal lends itself to the body, causing it to appear to act, to have its own power, and by proxy grants body the power of participating in being as well as a kind of wholeness. Lang does not conclude, however, that the body is denigrated by Neoplatonists like Proclus but, rather, the "body too, in all its helplessness, is cared for by soul and embraced by the divine," and therein achieves a position in the hierarchy of being and providential concern.

Next, Vargas' "Proclus on Time and the Units of Time" elucidates an interesting aporia in Proclus' conception of time, i. e. whether the so-called parts of time, e. g. day, month and year, are real. Outlining the difference between Proclus' and Plotinus' conceptions of time, Vargas details how Procline time is an intellect that contemplates form in its perpetuity, and hence it thinks each form according to its proper measures. The parts of time then are not "divisions" of time; rather they are "unmoved movers" and as such are eternally existing measures of time.

Paired to the results of Lang on the body and Vargas on time, Ramelli's "Proclus and *Apokatastasis*" offers us an in-depth examination of the doctrine of *apokatastasis* or restoration in both Platonic and Christian philosophy. Arguing for the identity of the Christian Origen with the Platonist Origen, Ramelli shows Proclus' dependence on Origen's understanding of universal and cosmic restoration. For both authors *apokatastasis* entails 1) a reversion to the divine cause; 2) a unification of the beginning and the end, the first and the last, in a great cosmic cycle; and 3) that this cycle is best seen as a restoration and return to one's proper place or *oikeiōsis*. For Ramelli, the main difference between Proclus and Origen is that the former envisages infinite beginnings, infinite ends, and infinite cycles of restoration in time, while the latter admits of only one unique beginning, one unique end, and one unique restoration of all. Connecting *apokatastasis* to the restoration of the spiritual body in both Proclus and Origen, Ramelli ultimately emphasizes that the highest form of restoration occurs in the soul and body committed to the philosophical life insofar as it actively rises to the level of noetic being.

Butorac's "Proclus' Aporetic Epistemology" examines Proclus' account of the soul and the soul's relation to its noesis. He draws on the work of Steel and Finamore, who showed that both Plotinus and Iamblichus attended to the philosophical demand for a descended soul in the sensible world and a higher self, somehow outside of change. This insight makes problematic how each Neoplatonist presented the relation of their own system to that of their predecessors, demanding that we as scholars should read their assertions with some scepticism. Turning to Proclus, he

shows that Proclus' doctrine of the descended soul is complex and problematic: ultimately, Butorac argues that the doctrine is unclear in several respects. Notably, ambiguities revolve around whether the particular soul engages in the highest dialectic, what objects it utilizes, and whether the highest dialectic is even possible.

The final two articles in this section of the volume bookend one another insofar as Watt's "The Lycians are Coming: The Career of Patricius, the Father of Proclus" deals with Proclus' early life, detailing his father Patricius' career path, while Luz's "Marinus' Abrahamic notions of the Soul and One" concentrates on Proclus' influence on his student Marinus. With regard to the former, Watts paints a picture of an increasingly anti-pagan environment, therein helping readers understand how Proclus may have been influenced to defend his own theological principles, while the latter expertly details the syncretic environment in which Marinus flourished. Here, Luz is able to detail the religious practices at the school of Athens as well as Marinus' Samaritan background in order to elucidate his unique understanding of the ineffable first principle and the human soul.

Part II of the volume focuses, for the most part, on the Procline influence within the texts of Ps.-Dionysius as well as receptions of Ps.-Dionysius and Proclus by later Byzantine and Christian authors. Coughlin's "Spiritual Motion and the Incarnation in the Divine Names of Dionysius the Areopagite" details Ps.-Dionysius' concept of motion as outlined in the *Divine Names*. In this she analyses the parallels found in the Platonic tradition, e.g. the motions of the Same and Different in Plato's *Timaeus,* Aristotle's *On the Heavens*, and Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*. Focusing on the nature of three different kinds of motion—circular, spiral and linear—Coughlin describes how Proclus used these forms of motion as a description of the motion of the cosmos and the causal process of procession, remaining, and return while also descriptive of three modes of knowing, i.e. understanding, discursivity, and sense perception. Here spiral motion will be the composite of the two primary motions and as such Dionysius will come to use the spiral motion as the framework from which to express the Incarnation.

Lankila, Mainoldi and Schomakers take up one of the most decidedly difficult issues in Ps.-Dionysian scholarship: the issue of the identity and relationship of the corpus to paganism in general and Proclus in particular. Lankila's "A Crypto-Pagan Reading of the Figure of Hierotheus and the 'Dormition' Passage in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*" argues on the basis of textual similarities that the Dionysian corpus was written by pagan Neoplatonists so as to protect Proclus' literary heritage even if disguised within a simulated Christian prehistory. Interestingly, Mainoldi's introduction to "The Justinian Transfiguration of Proclus' Legacy: Ps.-Dionysius and the Late Neoplatonic School of Athens" offers a brief summary of the various debates regarding the identity and intent of Ps.-Dionysius, even referencing the impact of the "crypto-pagan" interpretation of Lankila. Mainoldi, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, shifts his attention to a comparison of the corpus with the achievements of Proclus and Damascius in order to focus attention on how much Ps.-Dionysius' thought is in continuity with Neoplatonism. Mainoldi argues that Ps-Dionysius'

transformations were not merely necessary adaptations of the late Neoplatonic system to the Christian paradigmatic frame. Rather, they were also a reply to the debates between Damascius and Proclus—e. g. designations of the First Principle—as well as direct criticisms of Damascius' triadology, and, even, anti-pagan apologetics. Mainoldi's essay concludes with an excursion into the *CDA*'s conception of evil in relation to the Justinian crackdown against Manicheans/Mazdakites and their Athenian sympathizers. Finally, Schomakers's "An Unknown Elements of Theology? On Proclus as the Model for Hierotheos in the Dionysian Corpus" is a contrast with both these scholars, as Schomakers regards the author's dependence on Proclus as signs that the work was crafted as a complex theologico-philosophical novel, in which a fifth century theologian chooses the first century convert Dionysius as his *fictional* author. In the end all three of these studies reveal the complexity of Ps.-Dionysius' work while further drawing out the repercussions of the author's engagement with Procline metaphysics.

Picking up on the importance of debates surrounding the nature of the One and the Trinity already outlined by Mainoldi, Wear's "Pseudo-Dionysius and Proclus on Parmenides 137d: On Parts and Wholes" argues that the primary change in Dionysius' use of Proclus' language of wholes and parts is that Proclus prioritizes the "whole" insofar as the One reigns over the multiplicity of gods whereas Dionysius includes the parts (the Trinity) in the essence of the unified Godhead. Unlike Proclus, Dionysius makes the unified Godhead relate to beginning, middle, and end while both authors speak of the ineffability of the Godhead. Just as Proclus' One transcends all divine names, so does Dionysius' One transcend even the name of Trinity. Wear concludes her essay by arguing that the Dionysian understanding of the relationship between the Trinity and the One is further accessible via an analysis of Porphyry's theory of the One as the Father of the noetic triad.

Turning then to Proclus' influence on Byzantium, Lauritzen's "The Renaissance of Proclus in the Eleventh Century" first explores the reception of Proclus in Michael Psellos, ultimately arguing that Psellos' serious treatment of the Neoplatonist would act as the catalyst for a Procline renaissance. Next, Gigineishvili discusses in "Proclus as a biblical exegete: Bible and its Platonic interpretation in Ioane Petritsi's commentaries" Petritsi's reverence for Proclus and how he utilizes Neoplatonic metaphysics, predominantly Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, as a standard and criterion for the explication of biblical passages.

Robinson's "Dionysius Against Proclus: The Apophatic Critique in Nicholas of Methone's *Commentary on the Elements of Theology*" keenly analyses Nicholas' criticisms of Procline metaphysics and theology and his attempt to reconcile Proclus with Ps.-Dionysius. Carefully unpacking Nicholas' concerns about Proclus' metaphysics and apophaticism, particularly issues that would make problematic Christian teachings on the Trinity or the First Cause, Robinson ultimately shows how Nicholas adapts the Neoplatonist to Christian doctrinal standards and therein secures him an essential role in the Western philosophical and theological tradition. In the next chapter, entitled "The Presence of Proclus in George Pachymeres' Paraphrase

of Ps.-Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus*", Tempelis and Terezis further this trend in reading texts influenced by Ps.-Dionysius, and examine Proclus' reception in the Byzantine theologian George Pachymeres. Tempelis and Terezis focus on how Proclus, Ps.-Dionysius, and Pachymeres approach the binaries identity/otherness (ταὐτόν/ ἕτερον), similarity/dissimilarity (ὅμοιον/ἀνόμοιον) and rest/motion (στάσις/κίνησις) so as to explain the Byzantine conception of God in Neoplatonic terms.

In **Part III** contributors turn to the reception of Proclus in the Arabic tradition and early modernity. Beginning with "On the Absence of the Henads in the *Liber de Causis:* Some Consequences for Procline Subjectivity", Timothy Riggs concentrates on the problem of individuation or the question "what prevents all souls, when separate from body from being just one single soul or a series of identical souls?" Arguing that Proclus' henadology, advanced in the *Elements of Theology*, offers a consistent and attractive response to this question of individuation, Riggs contrastingly contends that the Arabic *Liber de Causis* reworks Proclus' propositions in a way that diminishes the capacity for his propositions to be used to account for the individuation of souls.

Zampaki's "Ibn Al-Ṭayyib's *Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean Golden Verses" next turns to Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Istithmār* and unpacks its analysis of Proclus' supposed Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. Here, the practical virtues of piety, modesty, justice, and self-examination are analysed in their relation to the Neoplatonic goal of 'assimilation to God', showing how Proclus' more ethical considerations may have been transported into later eras.

Chase and Giannikas' articles both examine Al-Šahrastānī's reception and understanding of Proclus' arguments for the eternity of the world. Priming readers with the background of the history of the argument concerning the eternity of the world in Aristotle and other commentators, Chase's "Al-Šahrastānī on Proclus" attempts to unpack a possible indirect source in Al-Šahrastānī's text, e.g. the anti-creationist arguments mentioned by Augustine. As such, Chase ultimately advances the idea that the intellectual archetype for the pagan arguments falls to none other than Porphyry. Complementary to Chase's work, Giannikas's "Al-Šahrastānī on the Eternity of the World" looks for the pathway to understanding the direct sources of Al-Šahrastānī's text. Examining the surviving passages, Giannikas concludes that the most probable source derives either directly or indirectly from an Arabic translation of Philoponos' *Refutation of Proclus* dating from sometime in the 9th century. Giannikas suggests that the original source may either have been written by Ibn Sīnā himself, or was, at least, a text clearly influenced by the language and the line of argumentation of Ibn Sīnā.

Attempting to show Pico della Mirandola's vehement passion for non-dogmatic philosophical exchange, Steiris' "Proclus as a Source for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's Arguments Concerning *Emanatio* and *Creatio Ex Nihilo*" focuses on Mirandola's attempt to endorse the philosophy of the Neoplatonists— predominantly Proclus—in his criticisms against creation *ex nihilo*. Evidencing how he favors emanationism, Steiris discusses his understanding, criticisms, innovations and

sometimes confusions of Proclus' view of issues regarding the nature of the first principle, its image in the Intellect and the creativity of the demiurge.

Torrance Kirby's "Aeternall Lawe: Richard Hooker's Neoplatonic Account of Law and Causality" then turns to the Elizabethan age and analyzes Richard Hooker's Neoplatonic account of Law and Causality. Derivative of ET §35, whereby "every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it," Hooker's account of eternal law and original divine unity assumes in procession or creation the aspect of diverse articulated kinds all of which 'participate' and 'proceed from' the undivided unity that is their common source. This account of the simultaneous unity and multiplicity of the eternal law and its various derivative species lies at the very heart of Hooker's Neoplatonic vision and his defence of Elizabethan rule alongside the foundational principles of Reformed theology.

In the closing essays of the volume we come to two issues on the reception of Proclus and Neoplatonism in Jewish authors spanning from the late medieval period to Spinoza. In the penultimate essay, Tzvi Langermann's "Proclus Revenant" shifts our attention to Joseph Solomon Delmedigo or Yashar's use of Proclus' arguments for the eternity of the world in his response to the eternalist challenge in late medieval Jewish writers like Maimonides, drawing out all the parallel passages despite the author's failure to directly cite the Neoplatonist. Finally, Zovko's "Understanding the Geometric Method: Hypothetical Dialectic in Proclus, Abraham Cohen Herrera and Baruch d. Spinoza" explores how Spinoza's philosophy is inherently related to 'Platonism,' challenging therein the prevailing opinion that Spinoza's naturalism and "monism" are fundamentally opposed to the "realism" and "dualism" of Platonist thought. Zovko very clearly outlines how the situation is more complex, showing how, like Plato, Spinoza's naturalism is not opposed to his intellectualism. Ultimately, Zovko's essay concentrates on the relation between Platonic and Neoplatonic dialectic, particularly Proclus' and Spinoza's geometric method.

forts in organising and helping coordinate the conference, it just might not have happened.

Danielle A. Layne would like to thank Vladimir Titkov, a graduate student of Gonzaga University, for his work editing the bibliographical information. His dedication and precision did not go unnoticed. Furthermore, this volume would not have been possible without the philosophical kinship of colleagues in the philosophy department at Gonzaga University as well as continued collaboration with Prof. Harold Tarrant and Prof. François Renaud. As always, I am indebted to my husband Tyler Tritten for his companionship and comments on various drafts of the introduction as well as my individual essay in the volume. Both editors would like to thank Edward Butler for his patient proofreading of the entire manuscript.

Proclus in Context:
Background, Relevance and System

Stephen Gersh

Proclus in the History of Philosophy: Construction and Deconstruction

Studies in the history of philosophy exhibit sets of preferences and prejudices that result from deeply-entrenched traditions of intellectual, political, and social history whose origins are often forgotten completely or barely understood, and are seldom subjected to searching intellectual scrutiny. The *status quo* with respect to these prejudices is maintained by the desire to retain intellectual hegemony on the part of certain academic institutions, by the inertia towards any substantive rethinking of intellectual paradigms on the part of many professional academics, and by the self-interested compliance of the academic publishing industry in the face of these two forces. The appreciation of the true position of Proclus in the history of philosophy has for a long time been hampered by all these factors. It has often been assumed that the history of philosophy runs first through Plato and Aristotle and then from Descartes to modernity, in which case medieval philosophy is passed over as irrelevant. In some quarters the study of medieval philosophy was revived, although it mostly focused on Thomas Aquinas because of the authority conferred on him by the Catholic Church. Earlier medieval philosophy was accordingly dismissed as primitive, late ancient philosophy and Renaissance philosophy fell outside the purview of the newly-validated "medievalism", and the existence of a Byzantine tradition parallel to the Latin was virtually ignored. The history of philosophy in Byzantium may have been neglected due to the religious attitudes of the Orthodox Church which maintained a suspicion of philosophy perhaps even stronger than that of its Catholic counterpart. Nevertheless, the most celebrated of all victims of these inclusive and exclusive categorizations by historians of philosophy has undoubtedly been Proclus. Still, current scholarly work on Proclus' philosophy, including the publishing of critical editions, translations, and monographs, has been steadily on the increase during the last fifty years. Accordingly, it is worth stopping for a moment in order to think about precisely why an ancient philosopher whose work has often been forgotten or ignored is undergoing such a revival at the present time. What is it about the intellectual climate of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century that has made these developments possible? In the conclusion of this essay, I will suggest some of the probable reasons for the current revival of interest in Proclus and, although my analysis may seem to some of my readers to be rather personal and perhaps incomplete, the empirical facts at least from which my conclusions are derived will be less liable to challenge. A discussion of these empirical facts, which concern the influence of Proclus' writings and philosophy during a period of more than one thou-

sand years between late antiquity and the Renaissance, will form the main part of the present essay.[1]

Beginning in late antiquity and continuing in the Middle Ages, we see a variety of responses to Proclus' work. These range between the outright critique of his doctrine that tends to predominate in the Byzantine East – where the tradition of seeing Proclus as the epitome of a "Hellenism" that was contrasted with Christianity began quite early – and the assimilation of Proclus' ideas in the Latin West in a more positive manner. In medieval Byzantium, Proclus' writings seem to have been continuously available in Greek even if certain works over time became progressively rarer. Recent scholarship has shown how much Michael Psellos and several generations of thinkers influenced by Psellos during the eleventh and twelfth centuries were familiar with Proclus' writings, and how much later Byzantine scholars such as George Pachymeres continued to edit and study Proclus' texts.[2] However, the predominant Byzantine tradition of criticizing Proclus had already begun in late antiquity with John Philoponus' *On the Eternity of the World against Proclus*, in which nineteen of Proclus arguments are refuted, and will climax during the twelfth century in Nicholas of Methone's *Anaptyxis ("Explanation") of Proclus' Elements of Theology.*[3] This attitude is revealed in the documentation surrounding the condemnation of the philosopher John Italos, and is an underlying but persistent motif in the controversies surrounding Hesychasm documented in the writings of Gregory Palamas, Barlaam of Calabria, and Nikephoros Gregoras, and echoed in the fifteenth-century dispute between George Scholarios and George Gemistos Plethon.

The beginnings of the Latin tradition of assimilating Proclus in late antiquity may be illustrated by Martianus Capella's *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury* in which borrowings from Proclus' commentary on the *Chaldaean Oracles* can be detected, and also by Boethius' *On the Consolation of Philosophy* which absorbs material from Proclus' *Tria Opuscula* concerning providence and fate and probably also from his *Commentary on the Timaeus*. Proclus' name faded from memory in Western Europe after the end of antiquity, given the lack of bilingual authors and the absence of Latin translations. However, the situation changed during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when numerous Greek and Arabic philosophical works (themselves dependent on Greek) were translated into Latin. Thanks to William of Moerbeke's translations, Thomas Aquinas could demonstrate that the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de Causis* depended upon Proclus' *Elements of Theology,* Henry Bate of Mechelen (Malines) managed to synthesize Aristotle's and Plato's teachings in the Procline manner, and German Dominican thinkers from Dietrich of Freiberg and Meister Eck-

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1 The volume of Bos and Meijer (1992) makes a tentative step towards writing a history of Proclus' influence. There is a different and more extensive presentation of similar material, in Gersh (2014c), 1–30. In general, see Gersh (2014b).

2 See Tempelis and Terezis' paper in this volume.

3 See Robinson's paper in this volume.

hart to Berthold of Moosburg could establish a mystical tradition derived from the *Elements of Theology* and the *Tria Opuscula*.

Now, it would be a mistake to conclude that the Byzantine and Latin worlds were totally isolated from one another, and that there are consequently two totally independent channels of Proclus-reception. A text such as Eustratios of Nicaea's *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics,* books I and VI which was written in Greek during the twelfth century and translated into Latin by Robert Grosseteste within a hundred years, and which combines its defense of Plato's theory of Forms with numerous citations of Proclus, is evidence of a cross-fertilization between the two traditions. Prominent thinkers in the West had travelled to Constantinople, and prominent thinkers in the East had sojourned in Italy – particularly towards the end of the Middle Ages. Nicholas of Cusa reports that he received by divine illumination his notion of *docta ignorantia* during a sea voyage back from Constantinople where he had been executing a papal commission, and George Gemistos Plethon's attendance at the Council of Florence-Ferrara as part of the Byzantine delegation is said to have inspired Cosimo de' Medici with the idea of founding a kind of Florentine "Academy."

Given only the facts stated above, one can perhaps already see that the diffusion of Proclus' writings in the Christian world between the end of antiquity and the Renaissance is marked as much by its complexity as by its abundance. However, in order to understand the nature of this phenomenon more thoroughly, two complementary approaches need to be pursued. First, we must determine what general features of that diffusion are most important and organize the wealth of data under those rubrics. Second, we must study the transmission of the different works by Proclus each of which has its own particular history of diffusion.

I. General Features of the Diffusion of Proclus' Writings

One general feature of the diffusion of Proclus' writings is the reading of Proclus in conjunction with Syrianus and Damascius. The relation between Syrianus' and Proclus' doctrines is a relatively straightforward one, since Proclus usually follows the doctrines of his predecessor to whom he refers reverently as "my teacher" (*ho hēmeteros kathēgemōn*): for instance, in formulating the theological interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* that becomes definitive in the later Athenian school. The most obvious differences between the two thinkers result from the fact that Syrianus' principal extant work is a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* whereas Proclus is represented nowadays primarily by his commentaries on Plato. The relation between the doctrines of Proclus and of Damascius is extremely complicated. Taking the latter's *On First Principles* and *Commentary on the Parmenides* as the key texts, one can see that Damascius sometimes follows Syrianus and Proclus: for example, in maintaining the

hierarchy of the hypostases descending from the One, through the multiplicity of ones, to Intellect, and through the multiplicity of intellects, to Soul; but at other times he deviates from his predecessors: most notably, in placing before the One another first principle called "the Ineffable" (*to aporrhēton*) whose very existence can only be indicated through the implementation of an *aporetic* method.

In the philosophical writings of medieval Byzantium, Proclus' name usually appears on its own — mostly in connection with his *Elements of Theology* — or in lists of names including those of Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and other "Greeks" which have a primarily rhetorical function. However, Proclus appears in conjunction with Syrianus together with some distinction between the two philosophers' positions in Barlaam of Calabria's *Solutiones ad Georgium Lapithen*.[4] Here, a discussion of the relation between demonstration and illuminative knowledge is clearly derived exclusively from Syrianus' *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Proclus appears in conjunction with Damascius together with some indication of the two thinkers' differing positions in Cardinal Bessarion's *Letter to Plethon*.[5] In this case, an argument aligning "self-constituted" (*authupostata*) principles with the highest rank of the intelligibles specifically reflects the teaching of Damascius' *On First Principles*. In the Renaissance, Proclus and Damascius are equally important sources of Francesco Patrizi's *Nova de Universis Philosophia* in which Proclus' notion of horizontal and vertical series is combined with Damascius' doctrine of the "One-All" (*hen panta*).[6]

Another general feature of the diffusion of Proclus is the concealment of the latter's doctrine in the writings of "Dionysius the Areopagite". This Christian theologian of the fifth to sixth century who adopted as his pseudonym the name of St. Paul's first Athenian convert, and whose apostolic authority was established through the efforts of such figures as John of Scythopolis and Maximus the Confessor, has been shown to depend heavily upon the writings of Proclus.[7] Despite the facts that Ps.-Dionysius explicitly cites authorities subsequent to the apostolic period and refers to the "Theological Elements" of a teacher called "Hierotheos" who sounds suspiciously like Proclus, it was not until the time of Valla and Erasmus that the standard of philological criticism was sufficiently high to bring Dionysius' claim to apostolic authority seriously into question. Therefore, medieval Latin and Byzantine readers of the *Corpus Dionysianum*, the former having the benefit of a series of Latin translations produced from the Carolingian era onwards, had ambivalent attitudes towards the literary connection between Dionysius and Proclus.[8] Latin writers before the late thirteenth century when some of Proclus' writings first became available in Latin translation could simply read Ps.-Dionysius without any need to consider his relation to Proclus. However, Byzantine writers in general and Latin

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4 Sinkewicz (1981).

5 Mohler (1923), 458–461.

6 Leinkauf (1990).

7 Saffrey (1966) and (1979b).

8 Gersh (1978).

writers from the thirteenth century onwards were forced to situate Proclus chronologically after Dionysius and to accuse him of plagiarizing and distorting the latter's teaching, explaining the non-appearance of the Dionysian writings before the fifth century on the grounds that the pagan Platonists had out of envy concealed the works that they had plagiarized. Byzantine writers such as Michael Psellos, Eustratios of Nicaea, and George Pachymeres treat Ps.-Dionysius as expounding doctrines with which Proclus is in agreement albeit on a lower level of spiritual comprehension, whereas Nicholas of Methone, Gregory Palamas, and others attempt to establish a radical opposition between the respective Christian and pagan versions of teachings that are similar in many respects. These contrasting strategies for handling the relation between Ps.-Dionysius and Proclus can be found in the Latin west during the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Nicholas of Cusa and Marsilio Ficino emphasizing the agreements between the Christian and pagan writers, and Thomas Aquinas their disagreements.

A third general feature of the diffusion of Proclus' writings is the exploitation of Proclus' ideas in the context of Aristotelian commentary. A certain measure of Platonic thinking had been absorbed into the tradition of commenting upon Aristotle from at least the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias and, in the wake of Porphyry's argument that Plato and Aristotle were fundamentally in agreement with one another, the Aristotelian commentators of late antiquity were predominantly members of the Platonic school. Of particular importance among the questions discussed were the establishment of the correct relation between Aristotle's and Plato's teachings about Forms and universals, and their respective viewpoints concerning the nature of causality. Proclus naturally appears in the midst of these debates being either acknowledged explicitly as an authority on points of doctrine or exploited silently through the adoption of his technical terminology. Examples of both the more explicit and the more surreptitious approaches can be found in the commentaries on Aristotle's logical writings by Ammonius whose father had been a fellow-student of Proclus in the classes of Syrianus.

The most important example of similar tendencies in the medieval Byzantine world is provided by Eustratios of Nicaea. Eustratios defends Plato's notion of a world of Forms in the face of Aristotle's critique in his commentary on the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and explains the nature of the transcendent Forms as the contents of Intellect in his commentary on the sixth book.[9] Here, material from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* is introduced. In commenting on both books, he maintains the non-Aristotelian distinction between the discursive thinking of Soul and the non-discursive thinking of Intellect by saying that the discursive activity performs a kind of circular dance around the center represented by the non-discursive activity. Here, Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and *Commentary on the Parmenides* provide material. As a Christian commentator, Eustratios naturally maintains a

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9 Giocarinis (1964).

certain hermeneutical distance in utilizing Proclus, sometimes quoting him without making any value-judgment, sometimes contrasting his teaching unfavorably with the Christian one, and sometimes silently assimilating Proclus to his own position, the Christian authorities against which Proclus' doctrine is measured usually being Gregory Nazianzen and Dionysius the Areopagite. In the Renaissance, an important example of Proclus' doctrine being transmitted via Aristotelian commentary is provided by Francesco Patrizi's theory of light.[10] According to Patrizi, space is equivalent to light because both are impassive, extended in interval, and penetrable and because both represent a body that is immaterial and universal. This subtle and somewhat counter-intuitive theory is derived from Proclus according to Simplicius' *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics.*

Another general feature of the diffusion of Proclus is the loss or suppression of the latter's writings. A work of which the loss is particularly regrettable is Proclus' *Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles*, given that its importance for the author is underlined by the report of Proclus' student Marinus that his teacher once expressed the wish among the ancient books to leave only the *Timaeus* and the *Chaldaean Oracles* in circulation. The facts surrounding the loss of this work are unknown, although it seems likely that it was still extant in the time of Psellos who himself wrote at length on the *Oracles* in a thoroughly Procline manner – albeit with attempts to harmonize their teaching with that of Christianity – but that it may have disappeared by the time of Nikephoros Gregoras who cites only brief passages from these oracles in his commentary on Synesius. In the later Byzantine period, George Gemistos Plethon produced a further commentary on the *Oracles* that took a deliberate stance against the interpretation of Psellos by attributing these oracles not to the two Julians, as the Souda (and presumably Proclus) had done, but to certain "*magi* in the tradition of Zoroaster," and also by avoiding any tendency to Christianize the text, such as was apparent in Psellos' case.[11] Another work of Proclus' of which the loss is to be regretted is his *Commentary on the Enneads of Plotinus*. This also seems to have been extant in the time of Psellos, since phrases from Plotinus' text accompanied by glosses couched in typically Procline terminology have been found in Psellos' theological compendium *De Omnifaria Doctrina*,[12] and it probably remained in circulation for another hundred years at least, given that at least one similar passage can be found in an *Oration* by Eustratios of Nicaea.[13] Further advances in the understanding of Proclus' doctrine in relation to the *Chaldaean Oracles* and Plotinus' *Enneads* have to await the Renaissance, although the original texts of his commentaries are not recovered. Marsilio Ficino adopts something like the Plethonian interpretation of the *Oracles* when he quotes them in his *Theologia Platonica,* at the same time providing evidence of his familiarity with the remnants of Psellos' writings on the sub-

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10 Deitz (1999).

11 Tambrun (2006).

12 O'Meara (2014).

13 Trizio (2014).

ject. In addition, when Ficino writes his own *Commentary on Plotinus' Enneads,* he incorporates extensive materials derived from Proclus in order to argue for the superiority of Plotinus' position although sometimes the reverse is the case.

A final general feature of the diffusion of Proclus' writings is the paraphrasing of Proclus' text in the work known in Arabic as "The Discourse on the Pure Good" and in the Latin of the Schoolmen as the "Book of Causes" − although this really amounts to a specific example of diffusion rather than a general feature and complements the third general feature: namely, the exploitation of Proclus' ideas in the context of Aristotelian commentary. The origins of the *Book of Causes* are obscure. The Schoolmen usually attributed it either to Aristotle, or to al-Fārābī, or to a combination of the two (more rarely to an obscure character called "Avendauth"), although modern scholarship has been able to trace it back to the circle of al-Kindī in the ninth to tenth century. Its importance for the western Middle Ages was assured when it was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona at Toledo around the third quarter of the twelfth century subsequently to which it was incorporated into the curriculum at the University of Paris as the final and theological stage of the course of Aristotelian studies. The next important event in the reception of the *Book of Causes* was when William of Moerbeke translated Proclus' *Elements of Theology* into Latin in 1268, at which point Thomas Aquinas was able to discern that the pseudo-Aristotelian work was in fact dependent on the Procline treatise for much of its form and content.

The possibility of reading the two works in tandem was important for Western medieval philosophy because the *Book of Causes* transforms its Procline source in accordance with the monotheistic assumptions of its Islamic milieu: for example, by replacing Proclus' One with pure Being as the first principle, by reducing the enormous roster of intermediate metaphysical principles in the *Elements of Theology* to a simpler hierarchy comprising Being, intellect(s), and soul(s), and by supplementing the mechanism of emanation in Proclus with a notion of creation.[14] Medieval thinkers such as Matthew of Acquasparta, Henry of Ghent, Thomas of Sutton, Radulphus Brito, John Duns Scotus, and Thomas Bradwardine were therefore able, through a confrontation of the two texts, to understand more clearly both the similarities and the distinctions between the respective metaphysical claims of Proclus and "Aristotle".[15] Although it has been suggested that the practice of quoting propositions from the *Elements of Theology* in the context of commenting upon the *Book of Causes* became so widespread in Paris during the late thirteenth century that the use of Proclus degenerated to the level of clichÈ, it cannot be denied that by some Schoolmen at least − for example, James of Viterbo − genuinely novel philosophical ideas were derived from the ancient Platonist's text.[16]

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14 D'Ancona (2014).

15 Sturlese (1987), 270 – 271.

16 Porro (2014).

II. The Transmission of Specific Works of Proclus

Throughout the Middle Ages in both the Byzantine and Latin worlds, Proclus was known primarily as the author of the *Elements of Theology*. The story begins in Byzantium with Michael Psellos who concludes his essay *About Intellect* in which he distinguishes the unparticipated from the participating intellects and examines the relation between intellect and the intelligibles with the words: "These are the philosophical doctrines of Proclus concerning Intellect in his *Elements of Theology*." Psellos' theological compendium *De Omnifaria Doctrina* reads many passages of the same work – here called simply "the chapters" (*ta kephalaia*) – in conjunction with Christian authorities such as Dionysius and Gregory Nazianzen in order to explain such topics as the three kinds of reversion, the eternal nature of intellect's substance and activity, and the infinity of powers.[17] In the next generation of Byzantine thinkers, John Italos follows Psellos' practice of excerpting the *Elements of Theology* from a viewpoint of ideological detachment rather than the latter's more controversial tendency to apply ideas derived from the same work to the interpretation of Christian dogma. The first question in Italos' *Problems and Solutions* includes references to Proclus' triad "according to cause," "according to substance," and "according to participation," to the irradiations of the intellect within soul, and to the superiority of the cause over the effect". His sixty-eighth question summarizes the doctrine of the hypostases according to "the most theological of the Greeks" (*hoi tōn Hellēnōn theologikōtatoi*) and combines material from the *Elements of Theology* with doctrines derived from other writings of Proclus and from other late ancient Platonists.[18] Despite his ideologically detached mode of citing Proclus' writings, Italos did not avoid official condemnation by the authorities in Constantinople, and it is in the aftermath of these controversies implicating the great Platonist that Nicholas of Methone wrote his *Anaptyxis*[19] *of Proclus' Elements of Theology*. In this work Nicholas employs two main strategies in dealing with Proclus. On the one hand, he shows the incompatibility of many of Proclus' teachings with Christian dogma: for example, his attribution of self-sufficient status to the henads (gods) and to the principles of intellect, life, and power when God alone – as Gregory Nazianzen and Dionysius had shown – enjoys self-sufficiency. On the other hand, Nicholas shows the inconsistency of Proclus' arguments with one another: for instance, in placing the multiplicity of the henads before the unity of being when he has already established as a general rule that unity is prior to multiplicity.

    The Byzantine tradition of engagement with the *Elements of Theology* has its echoes in Georgia, where Ioane Petritsi develops a philosophy that displays an extremely

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17 O'Meara (2014).
18 Trizio (2014).
19 Literally, "Unfolding" or "Explanation." Its modern editor Angelou (1984), taking account of the work's obvious intent, translates it as "Refutation."

positive attitude towards Proclus' doctrine.[20] Petritsi was possibly a student of John Italos in Constantinople who returned to his homeland at a time when the political situation in Georgia allowed a high degree of intellectual freedom and produced there a translation of Nemesius and a commented translation of the Psalms, both of which are extant. His Georgian translation and commentary on the *Elements of Theology* allows us to reconstruct a very early stage in the transmission of Proclus' treatise in Greek and in one instance supplies an additional proposition (to be inserted between §128 and §129 in Dodds' version).[21] Moreover, recent work by modern Georgian scholars such as L. Alexidze and L. Gigeinishvili has shown that Petritsi develops Proclus' thought into a positive encounter with Christian dogma representing an approach more audacious than that of Italos in the previous generation and absolutely the opposite of Nicholas of Methone's a few decades later.[22]

Although the medieval Latin tradition of the *Elements of Theology* begins in Paris where Moerbeke's Latin translation first became available,[23] the real story of its influence is written in the Low Countries and Germany. In the late thirteenth century, Henry Bate of Mechelen (Malines) produced an encyclopedic work entitled *Speculum Divinorum et Quorundam Naturalium* in which Part VII comprises a defense of Plato's theory of Forms in the face of Aristotle's critique while Parts XI-XII attempts to reconcile the teachings of Plato and Aristotle.[24] Bate's text includes many references to the *Elements of Theology* from which he draws such ideas as the distinction between unparticipated and participated terms, the triad of terms "according to cause", "according to substance", and "according to participation", and the notion of self-subsistent principles. Although Bate exactly repeats Thomas Aquinas' mistake of identifying the henads with the Platonic Forms, he differs from the angelic doctor in underlining the points of agreement between Proclus and Dionysius, his strategy as a whole being to reject or modify the Thomistic interpretation of Platonism and Proclus in as diplomatic a manner as possible.

The scene quickly shifts to Germany where a number of important intellectual figures reveal a high degree of engagement with the *Elements of Theology* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Albert the Great had made a first approach to the ancient Platonist's work by citing its propositions regarding the One or Good in his *Summa Theologiae* albeit without significant elaboration or commentary, and it is therefore no coincidence that such younger members of his own Dominican order as Dietrich of Freiberg, Meister Eckhart, and Berthold of Moosburg took up the challenge of reading Proclus in depth.[25] Dietrich of Freiberg quotes Proclus in a number of his more metaphysical treatises and most extensively in his *On the In-*

20 Gigineishvili (2007).

21 Alexidze and Bergemann (2009), 20–24, 291 and 307.

22 See Gigeinishvili's contribution to this volume.

23 Steel (2014).

24 Steel and van de Vyver (1994).

25 De Libera (1984).

tellect and the Intelligibles.[26] A characteristic of Dietrich's approach is the reading of the *Elements of Theology* primarily in conjunction with the *Book of Causes* and the Arabic-Latin philosophical tradition along the lines established at the University of Paris. For instance, he develops the account of the four levels of reality: the One (= Dietrich's God), Intellect, Soul, and Body in Proclus' §20 in combination with the causal model of the *Book of Causes* in order to establish an emanative view of reality as a whole in which the first intellect (= Proclus' One) produces the second intellect (= Proclus' intellect), the second intellect produces the soul of the first celestial sphere and the body of that sphere, the third intellect produces the soul of the second celestial sphere and the body of that sphere, the process continuing down to our agent intellect.[27] Meister Eckhart probably derived the idea for his vast and unfinished project of a *Work of Propositions* from a study of the axiomatic methodology in both the *Elements of Theology* and the *Book of Causes*, and also cites or alludes specifically to Proclus' work on about a dozen occasions.[28] There is much less overt citation of Proclus in Eckhart than there is in Dietrich. This seems to be not only because the former is more overtly Augustinian and more pro-Thomistic in his approach but also because he writes mostly sermons and biblical commentaries in which reference to a pagan philosophical authority is less idiomatic. With Berthold of Moosburg, who produced an enormous commentary on the *Elements of Theology* in Moerbeke's Latin translation sometime in the period between 1327 and 1361, we come to the climax of medieval Procline study.[29] This commentary is an encyclopedic work in which Berthold's commentary on each proposition is systematically divided into a number of *supposita* and *proposita* (usually six) in which the doctrine of the original text, reinforced or expanded with numerous cross-references to other authorities including ancient or medieval Hermetic texts and materials derived indirectly from Eriugena, at last gains a validity independent of the *Book of Causes.*[30] Proclus seems to have earned the admiration and devotion of Berthold for two main reasons: because he elevated the teaching of the Platonists to a rigorously axiomatic form for the first time, and because his teachings agreed to a remarkable extent with those of Ps.-Dionysius.

The *Elements of Theology* continues to be studied during the Renaissance although thinkers of Platonist persuasion seem to prefer certain other works of Proclus, or the *Enneads* of Plotinus, or even Iamblichus. Relatively few of Nicholas of Cusa's abundant *marginalia* in his manuscripts of ancient philosophical works deal with the *Elements of Theology*, and he is verifiably dependent on this treatise perhaps only in parts of his early *On Conjectures.*[31] Marsilio Ficino made a fresh

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26 Calma (2010), 277–342.
27 Mojsisch (1977).
28 Sturlese (1987), 280, n. 71.
29 Sturlese (1986).
30 Gersh (2001).
31 Gersh (2014d).

translation of the *Elements of Theology* which has not been found although some of the glosses in his MS of Plotinus look like extracts from such a translation. Cardinal Bessarion owned several manuscripts of Proclus' treatise and his correspondence with his teacher George Gemistos Plethon shows that both men were familiar with the terminology and the doctrines of the text.[32] Perhaps only in the case of Francesco Patrizi do we find the *Elements of Theology* to be of primary importance. Patrizi's fascination with the work is shown by the fact that he can be associated as owner or copyist with various extant MSS and himself produced yet another translation, and also by the fact that his *Nova de Universis Philosophia* is based explicitly on metaphysical theorems similar to those in Proclus and structures the universe with "vertical" and "horizontal" series of terms.[33]

The *fortuna* of other works of Proclus in the Latin and Byzantine world during the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance can be summarized more briefly. Second in importance after the *Elements of Theology* are the so-called *Tria Opuscula: On Providence and Fate, Ten Doubts Concerning Providence*, and *On the Subsistence of Evils*, the wide circulation of these texts probably resulting from their brief compass and intentionally popular subject-matter. It was undoubtedly for these reasons that they were excerpted or paraphrased by Ps.-Dionysius in the fifth to sixth and by Isaac Sebastokrator in the eleventh century, these borrowings or plagiarisms having provided modern scholars in the former case with proof of the author's non-apostolic status and in the latter case with the only surviving parts of the Greek text. Already in late antiquity, these *opuscula* had influenced Boethius' discussion of providence and fate in the last two books of *On the Consolation of Philosophy*.[34] In the Byzantine Middle Ages, we find Michael Psellos drawing upon them for his explanations of God's foreknowledge of future contingents in *De Omnifaria Doctrina*.[35] Moerbeke's translation of the three *opuscula* in the thirteenth century naturally gave the possibility of their diffusion in the Latin-speaking world. Most important among the resulting late medieval readings of these texts is that of Berthold of Moosburg who not only introduces material from them into his commentary on the *Elements of Theology* but actually steers the commentary – through emphasis upon the doctrine of the "one-in-us" which is prominent in the *opuscula* but not in the *Elements* – towards the realm of personal mysticism.

Traces of reading the *Commentary on the Parmenides* can be discerned in Byzantine writers of the Middle Ages. Eustratios of Nicaea and George Pachymeres represent contrary examples since the former quotes some passages from Proclus' discussion of the different levels of Forms in his commentary on the first part of Plato's dialogue and responds to his source in a Platonic manner,[36] whereas the latter re-

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32 See n.5 above.
33 Leinkauf (2014).
34 Beierwaltes (1983), Gersh (2012).
35 O'Meara (2014).
36 Steel (2002).

sponds to his source in an Aristotelian manner by completing the commentary on the second part of the dialogue missing in Proclus with a discussion that is syllogistic and non-theological.[37] However, for examples of more substantial engagement with Proclus' commentary, one must turn to the Latin tradition which arises in the wake of Moerbeke's translation of the text in the 1260s. In the case of Nicholas of Cusa, the approximately 620 marginal glosses in his personal copy of the commentary which is now the MS *Bernkastel-Kues*, *Cusanus 186* and the citations of passages in his dialogue *On the Beryl* and the sermon-treatise *Tu quis es? (De principio)* show his interest in such doctrines as the hierarchy of three principles and the notion of self-constitution.[38] In the next generation continuing use of Moerbeke's translation is combined with study of the original Greek by Marsilio Ficino. In the *argumentum* attached to his own translation of Plato's dialogue written during the 1460s, Ficino observes in line with Proclus' interpretation that the *Parmenides* is primarily theological in character, and has as its principal topic not the Forms discussed in the first part of the text but the One discussed in the second. This interpretation albeit in a somewhat mitigated form continues to inform Ficino's own commentary on the dialogue published twenty years later, having in the meantime occasioned a critical response on the part of Pico della Mirandola.[39]

There is relatively little written evidence for the study of Proclus' *magnum opus*, the *Platonic Theology* in Byzantium during the Middle Ages. That the work was not just suspect on account of its blatant polytheism but also scarce is suggested by the fact that Nicholas of Methone makes no reference to it in his *Explanation of Proclus' Elements of Theology* although it would have provided plenty of material useful for the advance of his polemical agenda. Some acquaintance with the work is displayed in George Gemistos Plethon's correspondence with Cardinal Bessarion three hundred years later,[40] although this author avoids any reference to Proclus' comparable work in elaborating his own polytheistic system in the *Laws* presumably because of his known disagreements with his predecessor's emphasis upon triadic structuring and apophaticism. However, it is possible to document a substantial revival of interest in the *Platonic Theology* during the Renaissance at first involving the Latin translation of the work by Pietro Balbi in the 1450s[41] and later in response to the Greek text imported from Byzantium. Nicholas of Cusa mentions the project of translating this text in his dialogue *On the 'Non-Other'* where Balbi is himself one of the characters, wrote numerous *marginalia* into his personal copy of Balbi's translation which is now the MS *Bernkastel-Kues*, *Cusanus 185*, and cites various doctrines in his work *De Venatione Sapientiae*.[42] Marsilio Ficino mentions Balbi's translation in

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37 Steel and Macè (2006).

38 Bormann (1986), Beierwaltes (2000), Bormann (2001), Gersh (2014d).

39 Allen (1986).

40 See n.5 above.

41 Saffrey (1979b).

42 Senger (1986), Gersh (2014d).

a letter, includes a number of lexical notes and a detailed summary of the argument in the MS *Firenze, Riccardianus 70* containing a Greek text of the work, and probably derived the title of his own *Theologia Platonica* from Proclus.[43] Finally, mention should be made of the numerous citations of Proclus' treatise in Italian authors of the same or subsequent generations such as Pico della Mirandola, Agostino Steucho, Giles of Viterbo, and Francesco Patrizi.

Among the Byzantine writers of the Middle Ages, it is Michael Psellos who clearly shows the most detailed knowledge of the *Commentary on the Timaeus*. Psellos explicitly refers to this work in connection with his discussion of the eternity of the world in his *De Omnifaria Doctrina* and at greater length in connection with his explanation of the mathematical structure of the soul in one of his shorter philosophical essays.[44] In the western world of the Middle Ages, Plato's *Timaeus* is studied almost exclusively by means of the Latin translation and accompanying commentary of Calcidius, and there are no traces of the influence of Proclus' commentary between Boethius, who seems to have used it for his account of Platonic cosmology in poem III 9 of *On the Consolation of Philosophy,* and Henry Bate of Mechelen (Malines), who included some extracts dealing with the topic of prayer that Moerbeke had translated in parts XI and XXIII of his *Speculum Divinorum et Quorundam Naturalium*.[45] The original Greek text became available once more during the Renaissance, so that Marsilio Ficino was able to use it extensively for its teachings regarding mathematical psychology in his *Commentary on the Nuptial Number in Plato's Timaeus,* for its explanation of the myth of Atlantis in his *Compendium on the Timaeus*, and for its discussion of the indissoluble vehicle of the soul in his *Commentary on Plotinus' Enneads III*. Proclus' commentary is also full of doxographical information about earlier Greek philosophy, and Pico della Mirandola drew heavily upon it when compiling the propositions "according to Porphyry" and "according to Iamblichus" in his *900 Conclusions.*

We have very little information about the *fortuna* of Proclus' other works in the medieval Byzantine milieu although a possible reference to the *Commentary on Euclid's Elements* and a definite one to the *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*[46] have been found by modern scholars in Psellos' *Chronographia*[47] and in Pachymeres' commentary on Dionysius respectively. Since these works were unknown in the West during the same period, we have to wait for the Renaissance in order to find examples of their further influence. Ficino obtained copies of the *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* and of *On the Hieratic Art* and published them in his own Latin translation in a volume of minor works by ancient Platonists published in 1497, the former translation consisting of extracts only. Ficino's discussion of self-knowledge in his *Com-*

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43 Saffrey (1959).

44 O'Meara (2014).

45 Steel (1982–1985), II, 559–587.

46 Segonds (1985), cxvii-cxviii.

47 O'Meara (2014).

mentary on Plotinus' Ennead III quotes from the Commentary on the First Alcibiades, and his treatment of theurgic seirai in his De Vita, book III, makes extensive use of On the Hieratic Art. The case of the Commentary on the Republic is particularly complicated since the manuscript on which the entire tradition depends was at some point separated into two parts. Ficino obtained only the first part covering dissertations I-XII in 1492 and, according to one of his letters, translated some extracts from it which have not been found. The influences of the Commentary on the Republic on Ficino as well as that of the Commentary on the Cratylus, which he also seems to have known, still remain to be studied.

This discussion of the reception of Proclus' works during a period in excess of one thousand years has no pretensions to completeness. However, the evidence assembled has perhaps been enough to demonstrate that, by means of the reversal implied therein of the historiographical tendencies described at the beginning of this essay, Proclus' contribution to the history of European philosophy is brought into greater relief. These tendencies involved assigning a superior position to ancient and modern philosophy with respect to medieval philosophy, or to late medieval western philosophy with respect to early medieval philosophy, or to late ancient philosophy, or to Renaissance philosophy, or to medieval Byzantine philosophy. The reversal implied by the discussion in this essay does not imply that the aforementioned historiographical tendencies are to be rejected but only that they should be affirmed or maintained in a state of tension with the possibility of their own denial. It is in this sense that the reversal amounts to a deconstruction of the hitherto prevalent historiographical stance and the replacement of the finality of epistemological dogmatism with the open-endedness of hermeneutical questioning.[48] Now it is perhaps because of the affinity sensed between a study of Proclus' role in the history of philosophy and a deconstruction of the history of philosophy as such that Proclus is becoming a figure of such great interest at the present time.[49]

But the suggestions that Proclus' philosophy can somehow be disclosed by deconstruction and that an analysis of the type carried out in this essay already amounts to such a deconstruction may come as a surprise.[50] Deconstruction rigorously applied involves a challenge to what Heidegger termed the "metaphysics of presence" dominating traditional European philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche, whereas Proclus was an almost paradigmatic representative of this traditional philosophy irrespective of whether one emphasizes the more realist or the more idealist aspects of his version of Platonism. However, the suggestion that Proclus' philosophy is disclosed by deconstruction must be evaluated with an understanding of the precise tenor of our earlier analysis of its diffusion. This analysis concerned such general

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48 See Gersh (2006), 1–28.
49 This is not to suggest that every contemporary student of Proclus is an active deconstructionist but merely that implicit deconstructionist attitudes are part of our Zeitgeist.
50 On the relation between Neoplatonism and deconstruction in general see Gersh (2006), 64–80. See further Gersh (2014a).

features of the diffusion as reading in conjunction with Syrianus and Damascius, concealment in the writings of "Dionysius the Areopagite," exploitation in the context of Aristotelian commentary, and so forth. It also concerned the differentiation of that diffusion into the transmissions of the *Elements of Theology,* of the three *Opuscula,* of the *Commentary on the Parmenides,* and of other works. In this discussion, the subject matter was never Proclus' philosophy considered as having some static objectivity rendered finite by the physical death of the author but rather Proclus' philosophy understood as a dynamically evolving phenomenon of reading, writing, and influence. It is this second "Proclus" that represents the real challenge to the metaphysics of presence.

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Forgetting Procline Theology: the Alexandrian Story

I. Confidence and doubt

With Proclus Platonist philosophy reached a pinnacle that would never again be approached. Commentary on Plato achieved the greatest detail, with tiny lemmata attracting many pages of commentary. A metaphysic that had been taking shape over several generations of Platonists reached its most systematic expression and the ranks of supernatural beings swelled to army-like proportions as if in direct combat with the combined forces of Christian monotheism. The Greek religious tradition, going back to Homer, Hesiod, and Orpheus and inherited by Pythagoras and Plato, backed by a Chaldaean tradition optimistically taken as ancient, were marshalled together in close correlation as an antidote to the Jewish and Christian traditions that threatened to swamp, by fair means or foul, the ancient heritage. Proclus, following in the footsteps of Syrianus, made sense of all this heritage in a way that enabled him not merely to defend it but actually to live it — to live it with a conviction that was widely respected.

Socrates in the *Phaedo* had been admired by those present for the serenity with which he faced his death and for the power of his arguments, but, however blessed he may have seemed on his final day, it had not succeeded in winning others over to that same level of conviction. Likewise for Proclus, his demeanour and his conviction were admired, but admiration did not necessitate the sharing of his convictions. His commentaries documented centuries of debate within the Platonist tradition in which Proclus had criticized Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Theodorus, and others. It would have been almost unnatural that this debate should then pass into a static belief system that met its final perfection in Proclus. Doubts survived, and the political masters whom Proclus had been able to challenge head-on with his exaggeratedly polytheistic system grew in their power and their determination to prevail. Where there were doubts it became prudent to acknowledge them and to adopt a less confrontational attitude, particularly in the area of theology.

II. Parmenidean disputes

The principal text of Procline theology was not the account of creator and creation in the *Timaeus* so often admired by Christians too, but rather the *Parmenides*, which contained nothing that required it to be taken as a text of theology. This dialogue, as Proclus' own commentary on it makes clear, had at some time been interpreted

as an attempt to outdo the work of Parmenides and Zeno which claimed that Being was One and could not be Many; it had at other times been treated as a work about Platonic Ideas backed by something like a handbook of logic that would train others to defend them better than Socrates had been able to manage; others claimed that real metaphysical entities were under constructive discussion in the latter part of the dialogue (from 137c4), whether the One as Parmenides had conceived it (as the character Parmenides in fact suggests at 137b1–4) or a series of entities beginning with a One still higher than that, a first cause of all that followed and thus the supreme divinity. Those who had adopted the notion that the latter part of the work described or mirrored a series of metaphysical entities had divided the discussion into several hypotheses, usually but not always nine, and by Proclus' day they had come to see the last four of these as non-referring, since they followed from hypotheses that were untrue—either that the One does not exist or that it is not one.

In the early days of the metaphysical interpretation there had been such an emphasis on a single transcendent divine cause that the hermeneutic task was relatively simple.[1] The first hypothesis according to the anonymous commentary from the Turin palimpsest described, or rather obliquely reflected, "the god who is above all",[2] and Plotinus at *Enneads* V.1 [10] 8 was content to relate his supreme One to the first hypothesis, Intellect to the second, and Soul to the third. As a priestly and consciously polytheistic brand of Platonism became the norm, interpreters were no longer content with such simplicity, and they sought rather for a subtler reading in which the whole of their theology might be revealed. Whereas the basics of the metaphysical interpretation as described by Proclus at *in Parmenidem* I.638.10–639.5[3] are not especially complicated, the five hypotheses were expected to reveal *all things* that came to subsist from the One (638.13), and this would involve as many subsidiary divinities as were postulated. The increasing commitment to polytheism meant that Iamblichus had related the first hypothesis to "god and gods", indeed to "all the divine henads" (Proc. *In Parm.* VI.1054.30, 1055.1), while even the third hypothesis was supposed to involve a range of supernatural beings, described as angels, daimones, and heroes.[4] A degree of simplification was associated with an unknown philoso-

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1 There is dissension and a growing bibliography about when this interpretation was introduced, but few would doubt that the anonymous commentary is *relatively* early; the recent publication of an Apuleian text by Stover (2016) may assist, for in summarizing *Parm.* this *compendiosa expositio* (29) seems to note the features that led to interpretations highlighting arguments on both sides of the question, methods for discovering truth, investigation of Ideas, and discussion of how the whole is both one and many, and everything derives from opposites. Did Apuleius already know most of the interpretations contrasted by Proclus in Book I of *In Parm.?*

2 See fragment I recto, 4–5: ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὄντος θεοῦ, 18–19: τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ; we are dealing with a universal cause and beginning, 26–28: πάντων τῶν ὄντων αἰτίαν καὶ ἀρχὴν τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν πάντων. For this text I use principally the edition of Bechtle (1999).

3 Using the edition of the OCT of Steel (2007–2009).

4 The interpretation of the second hypothesis is obscured by a lacuna in Proclus' text.

pher,[5] and Plutarch of Athens appears to follow him in several respects, stressing the absence of any need to see real entities behind hypotheses six to nine, and finding only a single divinity behind the first hypothesis (ibid. 1059.4). However, Syrianus and Proclus see behind the first hypothesis not only the primary god and One but the generation by that one god of all the orders of gods (ibid. 1063.16–1064.1), gods who then become the focus of the second.

As a result we see a tremendous complexity arising from their interpretation of the final part of the *Parmenides*, which, however well Syrianus and Proclus may have argued for it, not only required an amazing level of hermeneutic confidence from those they taught, but would also have required considerable courage on the part of anybody who would promote it in defiance of the dominant monotheistic and trinitarian convictions of their Christian masters, locally and in Byzantium. Even Proclus' own successor Marinus was prepared to abandon it in favour of an interpretation that Damascius associated rather with Galen's Platonism and with Plotinus' friend Castricius Firmus.[6] Damascius himself led the Athenian school between AD 515 and 529 in an effort to restore some of the glory of its Procline days, and, while treating the *Parmenides* in what appears at least to be a more aporetic manner, and deriving from it a rather different metaphysic of his own, nevertheless "understood the system of Parmenidean exegesis as framed by Proclus, as well as its religious associations in the baroque world of Neoplatonic triadic correspondence."[7] Proclus is frequently criticized, but in a manner that demonstrates just how much they had in common, including a commitment to an essentially Iamblichan heritage. We find in Damascius the same interest in Orphic cosmology and in the Chaldaean Oracles as in Proclus, and indeed an interest in a variety of pre-Christian religions, and a similar desire to be systematic, and the resultant conflicts with the authorities led in AD 529 to the demise of this kind of Platonist teaching at Athens.

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5 Manuscript readings that speak of a philosopher from Rhodes are now usually ignored in favour of Saffrey's (1984) suggestion that this must be Theodorus of Asine, and the text of Steel (2007–2009) at *In Parm*. 1057.6 simply prints ὁ ἐξ Ἀσίνης φιλόσοφος. There is no palaeographic justification for this. My current suspicion is that it is Evagoras of Lindos on the island of Rhodes, prominent in Syrianus, *In Hermogenem*, and closely connected there with Aquila, whom Proclus employs at *In Tim*. III.263.6–19.

6 Damascius, *Philosophical History* 97I, Athanassiadi (ed./trans.) (1999). Presumably Galen and Firmus were the two persons whom Porphyry had associated with the view that the *Parmenides* was throughout an inquiry into Ideas, possibly with the implication that the final part is no more than a dialectical exercise preparing the young for a proper discussion of Ideas. Certainly Galen placed his compendium of the *Parmenides* in the company of other dialogues that were interpreted as offering preparation in logic (*Cratylus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Euthydemus*), an approach reflected at Alcinous chapter 6 at least regarding *Parmenides*, *Cratylus*, *and Euthydemus*.

7 Ahbel-Rappe (2010), 27.

III. Alexandrian limitations

At Alexandria over the same period the situation seems to have been very different. Under Ammonius, son of Hermias, the focus of the 'Platonist' school's teaching appears to have been Aristotle. There is speculation about the nature of an agreement that Ammonius made with Nicomedes, an emissary from Byzantium, and/or with Peter Mongus.[8] Watts writes that "Ammonius' compact seems to have removed many of the overt religious elements from his philosophical teaching …", and the links that disappeared are mostly likely to be those with the Orphic and Chaldaean systems and openly pagan practices, particularly theurgy.[9] What most obviously survived was the teaching of Aristotle, for that is what is represented by the extant corpus of Ammonius' writings. Ammonius is also known to have had some say on the earlier dialogues of the Platonic curriculum and on the *Republic*,[10] but teaching on the more 'theological' dialogues is not only unattested for Ammonius, but also for Olympiodorus who seems at some stage to have studied under him and preserves most of the evidence for Ammonius' Platonic activities.[11] We are unable to exclude the possibility that some inner circle gathered for pagan religious practices and for the reading of those Platonic texts most valued for theological content by Iamblichus and Proclus, including *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and the *Parmenides* itself. However, I trust that the discussion which follows will serve to show that this was a remote possibility.

In Olympiodorus' case it seems that a significant proportion of those attending his lectures were themselves Christians, searching perhaps for a more traditional Greek-style education.[12] Consequently there is every effort in the seemingly early *Commentary on Plato's Gorgias* to reduce to insignificance any reference to pagan gods on Plato's part (4.3, 47.2–5) that might worry his students. He is prepared to mention the *Parmenides* in his *Commentary on the Phaedo* (10.5.11), but in the *Commentary on the Alcibiades* an apparent reference to that dialogue clearly relates to the *Charmides* (214.9). This is not likely to be any confusion on the part of the lecturer, but may be one on the part of the recorder – showing *somebody's* ability to confuse the content of the *Charmides* and *Parmenides*. The other reference to the *Parmenides* in this commentary relates to its final place in the curriculum, and fails to prefigure any of its content. Westerink (1976: 24–25) records references to the dialogue in the Aristotelian commentaries of both Olympiodorus and Elias that cite it wrongly as

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8 See Watts (2006), 222–5, Damasc. *VIsid*. 118B.

9 Watts (2006), 224. As we shall see, there are occasionally references to 'theurgy' in Olympiodorus, but there appears to be very little ritualistic about it.

10 Watts (2006), 226.

11 *In Grg*. 32.2, 39.2, *In Phd*. 7.5, 8.17, 10.7; see also Asclepius, *In Met*. 70.31.

12 On Olympiodorus, see now Griffin (2014), and the introduction to Griffin (2016).

Phaedo or *Sophist*. All this seems to indicate a certain lack of awareness about that dialogue, whether encouraged or shared by the lecturer.

IV. The Parmenides in the Prolegomena

My primary purpose here is to examine a potentially illuminating passage in the anonymous *Prolegomena to Plato's Philosophy*, usually connected in some way with the school of Olympiodorus.[13] The work is well known for its preservation of the best account of the Platonic curriculum used since Iamblichus (26), which correctly preserves the *Parmenides* in final place and relates it to theological matters, as opposed to the *Timaeus*' physical concerns (26.20 – 21).[14] The work's final position is reiterated at 26.44. In earlier references to *Parmenides* it is observed innocently that it mentions the teachings of Parmenides himself (4.8), that it is set at the Panathenaic festival (16.49), and that some persons place it first in the curriculum because of its early dramatic date (24.21–22). It would have been extremely interesting to meet some discussion of the work's *skopos* in chapters 21–23, which discuss how the target of a work is to be determined. It may have been omitted from this discussion quite deliberately because of its controversial nature, but one can only speculate about this. Much the same applies to the discussion of Plato's methods of instruction in chapter 27.

It is possible that *Prolegomena* of this kind, given that they are supposed to introduce the serious study of Plato, simply cannot assume enough knowledge of this dialogue on the part of readers to warrant giving its content any prominence. Equally it is possible that the dependence of the work on earlier *prolegomena* modified over generations has ensured that its official place in the curriculum has been maintained, even though this is no longer reflected in the Alexandrian classroom. But what evidence could possibly be offered to demonstrate this?

Neoplatonists distinguished between a style that is 'rich' or 'weighty' (ἁδρός) and one that is 'lean' (ἰσχνός). The speech of Lysias is one paradigm case of a speech in the lean style (Hermias *In Phdr.* 10.16C = 11.13–14 M&L, 206.22 = 216.10–11), though Socrates' familiar conversational style is likewise lean (*In Tim.* I.64.5–11, cf. anon. *Proleg.* 17.12–13). A further paradigm case of the lean style, however, is to be found throughout the *Parmenides* according to Proclus at *In Parmenidem* 647.10 – 648.2:

> But instead of all these the dialectical exegesis of the divine employs, as I said, such dialectical
> terms as One and Being, whole and parts, same and other, like and unlike – the terms with

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[13] For this text I use principally the edition of Westerink, Trouillard and Segonds (1990).

[14] It may prove important that anon. here is specifically referring to the way in which Iamblichus had thought the whole curriculum could be compressed into two supreme dialogues; it does not therefore affirm the author's commitment to classifying the *Parmenides* as 'theological'.

which dialectic mostly operates and here uses for interpreting divine things. This therefore is the kind of discourse that Parmenides follows here, a style appropriate to such terms as these that are taken from ordinary speech, not grandiloquent but restrained (ἰσχνός), not overly contrived but natural. So much we have to say about the expository style of the dialogue.[15]

The reference back to what had been said relates to Proclus' praise of the style of the *Parmenides* as being highly appropriate to the subject matter and logical approach (645.7–8), devoid of appealing artifice. Its simplicity matches that of its subject matter (645.8–9). The term ἰσχνός first occurred at 645.18, and occurs again at 646.4 where Proclus praises others who have remarked upon the style being especially fitting (646.2–9):

> For my part, while I admire those who have allied themselves to the critical acumen of their predecessors, which has led them to applaud the entire type of diction of this dialogue, which in its sparseness (ἐν τῷ ἰσχνῷ) marvellously preserves the character of its own 'Being' (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ὄν[16]) which adequately mingles fullness with restraint and weaves harmoniously together intensity with precision, still more do I admire those who in their instructions regarding the correct mode of theological discourse have pointed out that many parts of the *Sophist* are phrased in this way and that the whole of the *Parmenides* falls into this class.[17]

The important thing to note here is that the lean or sparse character of the dialogue had been recognised for some time before Proclus,[18] and that in particular the *Parmenides* was where this character was *consistently* applied. Nor were late antique scholars imagining that a special type of discourse was being constructed here, for my own stylistic studies show that (i) the hypotheses at the end of the dialogue employ a mix of vocabulary radically different from the norms of both early and late Plato; (ii) that the earlier part of the dialogue employs a diction that goes some way towards that of the hypotheses; and (iii) that elsewhere the central section of

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15 Translated Morrow and Dillon (1987), 39–40, modified to accord with the OCT of Steel (2007–2009), 33, where marked with italics.

16 τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ὄν appears to be corrupt; Morrow and Dillon (1987), 39, appear to read τὸ ὄντως ὄν, while ἐναγωνιον ἐναγώνιον is printed by Steel (2007–2009); I try, however, to make sense of this text, which is supported by the Latin version (*suum ens*), in my modification of Morrow and Dillon's translation.

17 Translated Morrow and Dillon (1987), 39, modified. They suspect that the first part of this passage relates to Porphyry who learned his textual criticism from Longinus, and it might be that the diction is being assimilated throughout this passage to Parmenides' being; they then take the next group to be Iamblichus and Syrianus.

18 Note that Hermias (*In Phdr.* 206.18–26C = 216.6–14 L&M, cf. 10.15–22C = 11.13–20 L&M) seems almost to have to make excuses for Socrates' use of the weighty style in both of his speeches in the *Phaedrus*, arguing that he has to find a check for the young man's attraction to Lysias' well-known lean style, but that this is actually in agreement with the lofty subject matter too.

the *Sophist* seems to have at least some features in common with it.[19] The stylistic differences that were being detected in the *Parmenides* were real enough.

Now Proclus in the last extract seemed to be endorsing the view that the style of the *Parmenides* was appropriate to theology. However, he goes on to reject the idea that it must be appropriate to *all* theological discourse; "it is possible to describe things divine in a variety of ways,"[20] for it was the opposite rich or weighty style, termed ἀδρός, that had been found particularly appropriate to the Demiurge's address to young gods in the *Timaeus* (*In Tim.* III.199.29 – 200.19) as indeed to the Nuptial Number and Myth of Er in the *Republic* (*In Tim.* II.200.3 – 10). The *In Parmenidem* presents it as suited to those experiencing divine possession (*In Parm.* 645.20 – 21), and to divinely inspired poetry (*In Parm.* 646.23 – 25). It is when one sets out theological material *dialectically* that the style of the *Parmenides* is so suitable, and it is appropriate in particular "for those who desire to offer teaching on divine matters dialectically" (τοῖς διαλεκτικῶς περὶ τῶν θείων διδάσκειν ἐφιεμένοις, 646.13 – 14).[21]

In these circumstances it may come as a surprise that the anonymous *Prolegomena* openly declares that Plato "has employed the weighty style (ἀδρός) in the theological dialogues, and the lean style in other dialogues," imitating the subject matter in his diction (Κέκρηται δὲ τῷ μὲν ἀδρῷ ἐν τοῖς θεολογικοῖς διαλόγοις, τῷ δὲ ἰσχνῷ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις διαλόγοις, μιμούμενος ἐν τῇ φράσει τὰ πράγματα, 17.3 – 4). Has the author perhaps forgotten that the *Parmenides* is supposed to be a theological dialogue, indeed the theological dialogue *par excellence*? Or does he not know that it is supposed to be a splendid example of Plato's consistent use of the lean style? Anybody familiar with the dialogue would recognize the economy of its language, and the most obvious explanation for the straightforward attempt to associate the weighty style with theological diction more generally is that the author at this point forgets the role of the *Parmenides* as a theological dialogue, and finds the grand style to be the one most used in the *Timaeus*, and in relevant parts of the *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*,

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19 I speak primarily of the results of cluster analysis and factor analysis applied to up to a hundred common items of vocabulary (after removal of all inflections). More simply, in terms of the richness of vocabulary, that of *Parmenides* part II is the least rich in the corpus. I have figures for blocks of 1735 words, and the hypotheses (6 blocks) contain, on average, only just over two hundred different items of vocabulary per 1735-word block. In the earlier part of the dialogue the first 1735 contains 408 and the remaining 2273 words only 389 in spite of the increased size of the sample. The eighth block of *Sophist* drops to 332, while the three preceding blocks average only 403 items of vocabulary. The figures for *Republic* II-X range from 373 to 540 for 1735-word blocks, while those for *Laws* go from 437 to 566. Earlier dialogues tend to show fewer items of vocabulary, but it must be emphasized that no figure of below three hundred can be found outside *Parmenides*. Another indication of the dialogue's lack of pretension is the fact that its hiatus-rate is actually the highest of all dialogues, a fact that must surely not be explained chronologically.

20 See 646.16: Τὰ γὰρ θεῖα κατ' ἄλλον καὶ ἄλλον τρόπον ἑρμηνεύειν δυνατόν.

21 On the modes in which Proclus thinks one can do theology see Gersh (2000).

Philebus and *Republic*.[22] Certainly he associates the myth of the *Gorgias* with the weighty style on account of its theological content (17.11–15).[23] There the contrast is between the *theological* content of some parts of the dialogue and the *logical* content of other parts.[24] While this may remind one of Proclus' observation that the *Parmenides* tackles theology in the dialectical mode, the anonymous author states bluntly that language is chosen to mirror subject matter (τὰ πράγματα). In this case the lean language should reflect *logical subject matter*, and to argue that the *Parmenides* had logical subject matter would be a position anathema to Proclus (*In Parm.* 630.26–635.21).

It is hard to escape the conclusion that matters central to Proclus' interpretation of the *Parmenides* had either been forgotten, or passed over, or repressed by the anonymous author. If the *Prolegomena* is based on the prefaces to the reading of Plato employed in Proclus' Athenian school it looks rather as if material on the styles used by Plato has been suppressed. Proclus' position had a long Neoplatonist history which has quietly been ousted in favour of a new position that would make the *Timaeus* the theological dialogue *par excellence*, something that Christian readers would no doubt be much happier with. The basics cannot have been simplified in this way without some intention to 'correct' something. Nor can this material be wholly original, for it relates closely to things that Proclus and others, including Hermias, had said. Perhaps, indeed, the *Parmenides* is now regarded as a logical dialogue and the theological interpretation has not only been abandoned, but abandoned in such a way as to necessitate alterations to the treatment of style.

There is another alternative that reflects less directly on the author of this piece. It may be that the *Parmenides* was now so little known that debates over the appropriateness of its style were no longer something that a Platonist would know of. Even if the author knew rather more than this, perhaps so few readers would have known of the work that it was considered safe to make generalisations about theological discourse that manifestly did not apply in this case. Perhaps, indeed, there was no longer anybody left in Alexandria capable of teaching any recognizable version of the Neoplatonic interpretation of the *Parmenides*, and its much-vaunted place at the very end of the Platonic curriculum bore no relation to what a student at Alexandria could hope to achieve. Certainly detailed knowledge about the various orders of

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22 Note here that *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* are clearly marked as having theological subject matter in the discussion of the curriculum at *Proleg.* 26.41–43, and that the case of the *Philebus* must be similar, given that it discusses the transcendent good (26.26–29); but this does not create the same marked conflict with the material on styles in chapter 17. However, regarding the *Timaeus* as 'theological' would seem to be another breach of the Iamblichean material at 26.20–21, where the *Timaeus* is about *physical* things; that does not of course prevent its being about gods *of the natural world*, those in the heavens, those below the heavens, the earth and even the demiurge himself. In that sense the material is obviously *theological*.

23 That Plato does in fact employ a different 'voice' for his myths has been shown using computer-generated stylistics by Tarrant, Benitez and Roberts (2011).

24 See 17.14–15: τὰ θεολογικὰ ἁδρῶς, τὰ δὲ λογικὰ ἰσχνῶς φράζει.

pagan divinities was no longer considered an especially important goal of Platonist teaching, and if only the student could be made as self-aware and as aware as Socrates of his or her moral obligations then philosophy had achieved all that it could reasonably been expected to achieve. The goal was simply to become happy (εὐδαίμων), not to become blessed (μακάριος). The world no longer needed high priests of philosophy.

V. 'Theurgy' and its role

This leads us to questions about theurgy, which has not entirely disappeared from Olympiodoran texts. The *Commentary on the Phaedo* (8.2) postulates one level of virtue superior to the theoretic virtues, which are achieved after the passions are entirely eradicated. This level is that of the paradigmatic virtues when the intellect is assimilated to and united with its objects, the intelligibles. Unlike the previous stage, this type of virtue is achieved through 'theurgy' rather than through philosophy. At this level we get to know that which is intelligible as opposed to that which is intellective, and yet it seems quite unclear why this should involve our bringing about a god within us (8.3). A little later (10.14) it is affirmed that no soul is subject either to eternal punishment or eternal contemplation of intelligibles, "on the contrary [Plato] does not want even the souls of theurgists to remain forever in the intelligible, but actually to come down into generation." Presumably the theurgists here are identified with those who have escaped from the cycle of visits to the lower earth and ascended to the true earth or beyond at *Phaedo* 114b-c, those who have achieved the combined accomplishment of a holy life and philosophical purification. Indeed, for this dialogue's reader this is the kind of path expected to lead to the viewing of the intelligible Ideas. Ritual purification is not treated as some higher path superior to philosophy for the very reason that the Platonic text seems to view such 'holiness' as failing to achieve the highest outcome without philosophy. In these circumstances one might legitimately suspect that Olympiodorus is deliberately offering a rather innocent picture of theurgy, devoid of any necessary 'pagan' associations, in much the same way as he had tried to explain away the Greek gods (*In Grg.* 47.2–4, 48.2, 49.1) and goddesses (*In Grg.* 4.3). In this way the term 'hieratic' (ἱερατικός), often associated with theurgy in Neoplatonic texts, is found only five times in Olympiodorus, four in the *Commentary on the Alcibiades*, and once in the *Commentary on the Gorgias*; at no point does it need to mean any more than 'priestly'.

Only at one point does theurgy appear to surface in a manner strongly suggestive of an earlier brand of Platonism, with a greater reverence for ritual than even for philosophy, and that is at *In Alc.* 177.8:

Ἐπειδὴ σκοπὸς τοῦ διαλόγου τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτούς· οὐ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἐκτός ... ἀλλὰ κατὰ ψυχήν· καὶ ψυχὴν οὐ τὴν φυτικήν, οὐ τὴν ἄλογον, ἀλλὰ τὴν λογικήν· καὶ κατὰ ταύτην

οὐ δήπου γνῶναι ἑαυτοὺς καθαρτικῶς ἐνεργοῦντας ἢ θεωρητικῶς ἢ θεολογικῶς ἢ θεουργικῶς, ἀλλὰ πολιτικῶς ....

Since the dialogue is about knowing ourselves, not *qua* body ... but *qua* soul; and not *qua* vegetative, not *qua* irrational, but *qua* rational soul; and not about knowing ourselves *qua* this [type of soul] when operating in a purificatory fashion, in a theoretic one, in a theological one or a theurgic one, but in a 'political' fashion ....

While the term seems to be used of a self-knowledge whose relevance is here denied (since Alcibiades is not interested in such things), Olympiodorus appears to be accepting from the tradition that there are four ways of operating superior to the manner that Alcibiades is interested in, for he had in the preceding *lexis* (172) enumerated the ways of self-knowledge, replacing 'theurgically' with 'inspirationally' (ἐνθουσιαστικῶς), a term that etymologically makes reference to the god within one. So it seems that for Olympiodorus there had in fact been a theurgic way of living and of knowing oneself superior to the theological way. In chapter 8 of the same work there had been fewer ways of knowing oneself, for here 'inspirationally' had replaced *both* 'theologically' *and* 'theurgically'.

Part of the solution is simply that Olympiodorus needs both stages here, but only one there, where the various levels of self-knowledge are all being related to the Platonic text, at least to what Olympiodorus had read there.[25] He needs both stages here because he is trying to answer the traditional question of how it was that Socrates could deny that he knew himself.[26] Manifestly he is aware in the *Alcibiades* of the god that influences him, which has power over his relationship with Alcibiades. More specifically *In Alc.* 8 makes him aware that Alcibiades will be able to see a god and not just a rational soul if the young man studies him properly. He thus knows himself to the extent that he is conscious of the divine, which is the core of his self and perhaps his very paradigm (κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, 172.10). So, for those Neoplatonists unwilling to suspect deceitful irony, when he claims in the *Alcibiades* that he needs improvement just as the young man does (124c, 127e; cf. *Phdr.* 229e), there has to be some even more exalted sense in which he lacks self-knowledge.

In answer to the question "Did Socrates not know himself?" (Ἆρ᾽ οὖν οὐκ ἔγνω ἑαυτὸν ὁ Σωκράτης;), Hermias (*In Phdr.* 31.5–9C = 33.13–18 L&M) puts it quite simply: "Either [he means] 'I do not yet know myself as god does', or '[I do not yet know myself] *qua* self-itself (ὡς αὐτοψυχή)'." The term αὐτοψυχή seems to relate to the 'self-itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό) of *Alcibiades* (129b1, 130d4), and Olympiodorus interprets this as the rational soul that is not employing the body as an instrument (*In Alc.* 209–10); this type of self-knowledge he wishes to grant to Socrates, even though

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25 On this issue see Tarrant (2007b).

26 This question was asked in relation to *Phdr.* 229e also, as Hermias' commentary shows.

he is still in the body.[27] But he wants to deny him the self-knowledge that comes from union with one's own personal god (κατὰ τὸ ἕν, 172.11), a self-knowledge that would presumably eliminate all difference between the knowing subject and the divine object of its knowledge. Clearly Socrates is not thought of, in the *Alcibiades*, as one who no longer feels the need to distinguish between himself and his guiding divinity.

So Olympiodorus needs a multi-levelled classification of types of knowledge in order to allow Socrates as high a level as possible. What then does this mean for his choice of the term 'theurgic' for the highest level that will remain unattainable? Much depends on the nature of the god that could theoretically become indistinguishable from Socrates' self and yet is still distinguished. Are we to envisage some obviously 'pagan' god that has somehow taken him over, one of many gods that populate the philosophic universe? In the *Alcibiades I* it is well known that what is normally referred to as Socrates' *daimon* is thought of rather as a god. And how exactly does Olympiodorus explain that *daimon*?[28] The answer is given at 22–23, where it is identified with the unerring 'flower of the soul', the conscience (τὸ συνειδός). The passage is acutely conscious of the charges that had been brought, and could still be brought, against Socrates, and also allows that the current vernacular (i.e. Christian language) might rather have used the term 'angel' in preference to *daimon* (21.15–22.2). Socrates' divinity, whether *daimon* or god, for it is later called a "god by acquired status",[29] is explained away in terms acceptable to at least the more enlightened members of an essentially Christian body of listeners. If Socrates' guiding divinity can be explained in this way, then surely Olympiodorus can offer a similarly innocent explanation of Platonic 'theurgy'.

Another way in which Olympiodorus seems to have retreated from a picture of Socrates that might have offended the Christian authorities concerns his relationship to providence. Proclus' *Commentary on the Alcibiades* constantly associates Socrates with providential care as Addey has recently argued,[30] treating him as one who actually does show providential care for Alcibiades, whereas there is nothing comparable in Olympiodorus' treatment of the same work. The closest that he comes is rather in his *Commentary on the Gorgias*, where Socrates is said to *imitate* providence (*In Grg.* 3.4) rather than acting directly as an agent of providence. So here too Olympiodorus is much less keen than some of his predecessors to set up Socrates as a plausible rival for the Christian Messiah.

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27 Hermias seems to have associated such knowledge only with those who have left the body, 31.7–8C = 33.15–17 L&M; thus it will differ from that of those who have merely purified themselves of all passions associated with the body, who know themselves 'theoretically'.
28 On this question one may consult Renaud (2012).
29 κατὰ σχέσιν θεός, 217.17; the meaning of the phrased is fixed by the reference to Hermias' comment on *Phdr.* 249c6, where it is said of the philosopher that "being a god by acquired status he is made divine (ὢν κατὰ σχέσιν θεὸς θεῖος γίνεται) by the illumination proceeding from the intelligible."
30 Addey (2014), 64–65. Socrates' providential care also figures in Hermias, *In Phdr.* 12.28C = 13.30 L&M. See also Layne (2014), 274–5.

VI. Conclusion

Olympiodorus' great discovery, perhaps dictated by necessity as mother of invention, was that everything that was required for Platonist instruction at Alexandria could be translated into Christian terms. The uncompromising pagan systems of theology presented by Proclus and Damascius could be reworked in ways that continued to make sense of their Platonic texts and allowed those texts to go on being used and plausibly explained to Christian audiences. One may suspect that Olympiodorus was at times less than honest in his adaptations and that he had greater affection for Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus and Damascius than is openly revealed, but the key question was what actually mattered. The precise structure of the *Parmenides*, of the divine realm that it had been thought to reveal, of the hierarchy of the virtues and the classification of types of self-knowledge were, in the end, not the supreme issue for one who had warmed to the task of educating Alexandrians.

No doubt with a view partly to students that he had personally encountered, Olympiodorus points out that Alcibiades' general laziness in inquiry entailed that the self-knowledge presented should be primarily that of the self *qua* soul using the body, not some higher species of self-knowledge that it would take a Socrates to aspire to. Alcibiades needed some bait (δέλεαρ, *In Alc.* 177.9) to be associated with the goal of the inquiry, some practical expectation that had concern for his own aspirations. The teacher at Alexandria had to get used to operating within the cave, and to presenting his teaching in a manner that the 'prisoners' could understand. In these circumstances it is not surprising that much that had been so important for Proclus, including the *Parmenides* that was once so critical as the final climax of the curriculum, should have faded into relative obscurity. It might still technically retain its place as the innermost shrine and the last thing unveiled, but who at this time felt confident of its meaning and who would ever be in a position to benefit from that meaning?[31]

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Platonic *Eros*, Moral Egoism, and Proclus

The Neoplatonists have frequently been criticized for giving forced interpretations of Plato.* However, can this verdict justify modern Platonic commentators for not paying attention to Neoplatonic views on central problems of Platonic philosophy, such as the accusation of 'moral egoism'? Vlastos' famous verdict that there cannot be genuine erotic desire for another individual in Plato's terms[1] and Nygren's combination of pagan Platonic *eros* with egoism in contradistinction to Christian altruistic love generated a host of discussions.[2] However, in their replies[3] modern scholars did not seek help from the ancient Platonic tradition itself. Especially Proclus had already given an interesting solution to the accusation of moral egoism in his interpretation of Platonic *eros*. He did so with strong systematic and ontological reasons, which allowed him to develop his 'erotic' insights in the political and the cosmological sphere as well. The best evidence for Proclus' multifaceted discussion of love stems from his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*.[4] Let us take as our starting-point the following characteristic passage:

> *In Alc.* 26.12–27.3
> [I]t is the property of divine lovers to turn, recall and rally the beloved to himself; since, positively instituting a middle rank between divine beauty and those who have need of their forethought, these persons, inasmuch as they model themselves on the divine love, gather unto and unite with themselves the lives of their loved ones, and lead them up with themselves to intelligible beauty, pouring, as Socrates in the *Phaedrus* says, "into their souls" whatever they "draw" from that source. If, then, the lover is inspired (κάτοχος) by love, he would be the sort of person who turns back and recalls noble natures to the good, like love itself.[5]

The "divine lover" described in this passage is Socrates. Furthermore, this ἔνθεος ἐραστής is said to be possessed by the god of Love, i.e. a higher entity in the onto-

1 Vlastos (1973).
2 Nygren (1953), passim. and 166-181.
3 See for instance approaches that in some respects are akin to Proclus, too, as we are going to see: Kraut (1973), Kraut (1992), esp. 328–329; Miller (2007), esp. 338–339 and n.28; Mahoney (1996). Even Vlastos (1973), 33, making a contrast with Aristotle's god, acknowledges the providential attitude of *Timaeus*' Demiurge, but he does not seem to imagine that this could have (at least a decisively positive) bearing on Plato's views on inter-personal love.
4 Westerink (ed.) and O'Neill (trans.) (2011). For a background on the Platonic *Alcibiades I* and its readings in antiquity see Johnson and Tarrant (2012), as well as Renaud and Tarrant (2015). In relation to many of my following points the reader can find relevant articles in Layne and Tarrant (2014).
5 Cf. *Phdr.* 253a6–7.

logical realm. It is assumed that Socrates patterns himself upon the characteristic activity of that deity, which is to elevate the inferior beings of its rank towards the divine beauty. Consequently, the first conclusion one could draw from this comparison is that for Proclus Socrates' relationship to Alcibiades constitutes an allegory for the relation between the higher and the lower entities of the ontological realm.[6] By examining aspects of the way Socrates is associated with Alcibiades, one is able to understand the way the ontological hierarchy is structured, as reflected in our intra-mundane reality, and *vice versa*.[7]

Still, one might justly object that the Platonic essential and inextricable connection between ethics and metaphysics is deeper than that. Indeed, Proclus does not let us assume that Socrates' relationship to Alcibiades is a merely accidental or 'by analogy' mirroring or a reflection of the hierarchy in the intelligible world. Apart from the various sorts of analogies referred to in the commentary, Proclus states that Socrates actually bestows divine providence on the young boy, owing to the erotic bestowals of his guardian spirit, which partakes of the erotic order.[8] Consequently, Socrates' relation to Alcibiades is actually an expression of the divine within our intra-mundane reality. What is more, our passage allows us to assume that there is a specific ontological relation between the divine lover and *Eros*, since the lover receives bestowals that are ultimately derived from that very ontological entity.

Of course, we will be able to appreciate better what Proclus says about love if we try to locate this entity within his ontological scheme and try to understand its function. Here we may confine ourselves to the following rough sketch:[9] as in Diotima / Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*, *Eros* is a medium/mediator between the beloved, which is the Beautiful, and the lovers of it. Love, due to its aspiration, is the first to try to unite itself with Beauty (cf. reversive love), and constitutes the bond for the lower entities to arrive at that divine level (cf. providential love). What *Eros* actually does is to bestow on the inferior members of its rank its characteristic property, which is erotic aspiration. In that way Proclus combines the two notions of ascending and descending love into one: it is insofar as *Eros* has an ascending love that it also enables the inferiors to be elevated, too. And if we insist in asking why *Eros* has this descending attitude at all, then the ultimate answer is that he is providential,

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6 Cf. also Whittaker (1928), 243.

7 For another example of Proclus' strategy see *In Alc*. 37.16–39.5. For a modern counterpart in 20th century scholarship, without paying attention to the Neoplatonic metaphysical scheme though, see Sykoutris (ed./modern-Greek trans./comm.) (1949), e.g. 145*-146*.

8 See for instance *In Alc*. 63,12–67,18 (in conjunction with e.g. 28.18–29.1 and 50.22–52.2).

9 See *In Alc*. 30.14–31.2, 50.22–51.6, 52.10–12, 53.4–10, 63,12ff. A more extensive treatment is given in Vasilakis (2014), esp. 173–179. See also Chlup (2012), 242–243.

providence being primarily identified with the supra-existence of the henadic gods, according to §120 of *The Elements of Theology*.[10]

Thus, it is an essential feature of the Procline divine lover, i.e. Socrates, who patterns himself upon the god *Eros* to elevate along with himself his beloved towards the intelligible Beauty. The lover's reversive *eros* should not be understood to be incompatible with his providential love. Actually, insofar as the lover has a reversive *eros*, i.e. insofar as he is directed towards the intelligible realm, where *Eros* Beauty, and the Good reside, he is also providential towards his beloved. There is no doubt that Proclus follows the path of the *Phaedrus*, where among other things it is stated that,

> *Phdr.* 253b3-c2
> [t]hose who belong to ... each of the ... gods proceed ... in accordance with their god and seek that their boy should be of the same nature, and when they acquire him, imitating the god themselves and persuading and disciplining their beloved they draw him into the way of life and pattern of the god, to the extent that each is able, without showing jealousy or mean ill-will towards their beloved; rather they act as they do because they are trying as much as they can, in every way, to draw him into complete resemblance to themselves and to whichever god they honour.[11]

Indeed, the divine lover's providential attitude, with respect to both the intelligible and the intra-mundane realm, is a recurrent theme in the *Alcibiades* commentary. It is worth giving some further illustrations of it:

> *In Alc.* 33.3–16:
> [T]he souls that have chosen the life of love are moved by the god who is the "guardian of beautiful youths" to the care of noble natures, and from apparent beauty they are elevated to the divine, taking up with them their darlings, and turning both themselves and their beloved towards beauty itself. This is just what divine love primarily accomplishes in the intelligible world, both uniting itself to the object of love and elevating to it what shares in the influence that emanates from it and implanting in all a single bond and one indissoluble friendship with each other and with essential beauty. Now the souls that are possessed by love and share in the inspiration therefrom, ... are turned towards intelligible beauty and set that end to their activity; "kindling a light" for less perfect souls they elevate these also to the divine and dance with them about the one source of all beauty.

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10 Dodds (ed./trans.) (1963). See also Butler (2013). Let me note that the ideal providence which the gods exercise is 'undefiled' (ἀμιγής), according to *ET* §122. I am pursuing the consequences of this crucial qualification in another essay.

11 The translation is taken from Rowe (ed./trans./comm.) (1986). NB 253b7– 8: οὐ φθόνῳ οὐδ' ἀνελευθέρῳ δυσμενείᾳ χρώμενοι πρὸς τὰ παιδικά, since φθόνος is what the Timaean Demiurge lacks. Besides, this is the basic characteristic that distinguishes the real lover from the vulgar one: the latter does not have any genuine *eros*, is related to what is at the bottom of reality, i.e. matter, and does not care whether in fulfilling his passion he may harm the beloved. See the contrasts drawn *In Alc.* 34.11–37.15 and 49.13–50.21. For the exegesis of the *Phaedrus*' passage see also the useful, albeit old, commentary by Theodorakopoulos (ed./modern-Greek trans./comm.) (1971), 252– 253 and 474, n.1.

There could hardly be a better expression of the way Proclus views, on the one hand, the combination of upwards and downwards *eros*, and, on the other, the intimate relation between the intelligible erotic pattern and its worldly instantiations.[12] This special and complex relationship is illustrated also by the fact that when "men's souls receive a share of such [sc. erotic] inspiration, through intimacy with the god [i.e. *Eros*], they are moved with regard to the beautiful, and descend to the region of coming-to-be for the benefit of less perfect souls and out of forethought for those in need of salvation."[13] It is crucial that in all these passages we underline the self-sufficiency implied in the lover. It is true that the *Symposium*, and perhaps the *Phaedrus*, too, in some passages, give us the impression that the lover needs his beloved, because the latter constitutes the means or instrument for the former to recollect the source of real beauty and, thus, ascend to the intelligible.[14] It is this claim that gave modern Platonic scholars the justification to find 'egocentric' characteristics in Plato's account. The Neoplatonic scholar, however, definitely rejects such an interpretation: the beloved cannot constitute at least such a kind of means, since the divine lover already has communication with the higher realm.[15] It is precisely this very bond with the intelligible world that enables the lover to take providential care of his (potential) beloved, i.e. of a person fitted for that special care,[16] and hence (try to) elevate the latter, too, to the former's object of desire.

Consequently, according to the strong unitarian Neoplatonic reading of Plato,[17] it is not so surprising that for Proclus the relationship of the divine lover with his beloved, both in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*, is the exact analogue of the Demi-

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12 Cf. also *In Alc*. 53.3–10: "[W]here there exists both unification and separation of beings, there too love appears as medium; it binds together what is divided, unites what precedes and is subsequent to it, makes the secondary revert to the primary and elevates and perfects the less perfect. In the same way the divine lover, imitating the particular god by whom he is inspired, detaches and leads upwards those of noble nature, perfects the imperfect and causes those in need of salvation to find the mark."

13 Ibid. 32.9–13: Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ψυχαὶ μεταλαγχάνουσι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιπνοίας καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν οἰκειότητα κινοῦνται περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ κατίασιν εἰς τὸν τῆς γενέσεως τόπον ἐπ' εὐεργεσίᾳ μὲν τῶν ἀτελεστέρων ψυχῶν, προνοίᾳ δὲ τῶν σωτηρίας δεομένων.

14 Either on its own, which is the picture illustrated in the *Symposium*, or along with his beloved, as appears in the *Phaedrus*.

15 Proclus is quite explicit about that; cf. *In Alc*. 43.7–8: Σωκράτης μὲν γὰρ, ἅτε ἔνθεος ὢν ἐραστὴς καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ νοητὸν κάλλος ἀναγόμενος ... ("Socrates, as being an inspired lover and elevated to intelligible beauty itself ..."). It is clear from the text that Socrates' position is independent from his relation to Alcibiades.

16 We should not forget that, as is repeated many times throughout the commentary (see *In Alc*. 29.15, 98.13, 133.17 and 20, 135.1, 137.2, 138.7, 139.6), Ἀλκιβιάδης is "ἀξιέραστος", i.e. worthy of love. From that fact we conclude that not any chance person could be the object of Socrates' providential *eros*.

17 Unitarian in the sense that a single and consistent body of doctrine is to be found in all the dialogues of the Platonic corpus. Such a reading is contrasted to the 'developmentalist' one, according to which Plato made progress in his thought, abandoned or modified positions during his writing career.

urge's relation to the Receptacle, and that of the philosopher-king to his own 'political receptacle'. First of all, the analogy between the divine lover and the divine craftsman is made explicit by Proclus himself. Towards the end of the following passage the Neoplatonist makes the receptacle speak to the demiurge, as a beloved would do to its lover. Due to the fact that it is the most moving and poetical moment of the whole commentary,[18] and because we have the opportunity to see another remarkable instance of the ontological analogy between Socrates and the intelligible entities with respect to the issue of goodness and providence, it is worth citing the whole passage:

> In Alc. 125.2–126.3
> [T]he young man seems to me[19] to admire above all these two qualities in Socrates, his goodness of will and his power of provision; which qualities indeed are conspicuous in the most primary causes of reality, are especially displayed in the creative order, and initiate the whole world-order. "For god," he says, "having willed all things to be good, according to his[20] power set the world in order",[21] by his will tendering the good to the whole universe, and by his power prevailing over all things and everywhere extending his own creations. Socrates, therefore, faithfully reproducing these characteristics,[22] set an ungrudging will and power over his perfection of inferiors, everywhere present to his beloved and leading him from disorder to order. Now the young man wonders at this, "what on earth is its meaning,"[23] and how Socrates is everywhere earnestly and providently [προνοητικῶς] (for this is the meaning of "taking great care" [ἐπιμελέστατα]) to hand. If what "was in discordant and disorderly movement"[24] could say something to the creator, it would have uttered these same words: "in truth I wonder at your beneficent will and power that have reached as far as my level, are everywhere present to me and from all sides arrange me in orderly fashion." This spirit-like and divine characteristic, then, and this similarity with the realities that have filled all things with themselves, he ascribes to Socrates, viz: the leaving of no suitable time or place void of provision for the beloved.[25]

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18 For another example of Proclus' moving and poetical images (although not mere metaphors), see his fragment from *De sacrificio et magia*, 149.12–18 Bidez (ed.) (1928).

19 Proclus begins this important passage by mentioning that it is his view (δοκεῖ δέ μοι). Does this mean that here we have an instance where Proclus adds from his own view to the Neoplatonic tradition?

20 O'Neill translates the κατὰ δύναμιν of the Greek text as referring to the Demiurge's capacity to fashion his subject-matter upon the paradigm. D.J. Zeyl's neutral rendering: "so far as that was possible", where it is not obvious whether this is ascribed to the Demiurge or what lies beneath him, is preferable. (This, as well all subsequent translations of Platonic passages come from Cooper and Hutchinson (eds.) (1997).) However, cf. Segonds (ed./trans./comm.) (1985) 197, n.5 for another point of view.

21 Cf. *Tim.* 30a2–3.

22 M.M. McCabe, commenting on an early draft of this paper, has enticingly suggested that "here is Socrates an analogue for divine providence, just in that he allows us to come to know it."

23 Cf. *Alc. I* 104d2–5, cf. *In Alc.* 120.10–13.

24 *Tim.* 30a4–5.

25 Cf. also *In Alc.* 134.16–135.1.

We should be keeping in mind that the *Timaeus*' Demiurge mediates – like *Eros* – between the most beautiful intelligible living being and the Χώρα. We could never think that he is assisted in grasping the former due to the existence of the latter. Rather, it is insofar as he contemplates the intelligible, and is also aware of the 'disorderly moving' receptacle, that he projects the Forms into the latter, in order to set it in order, decorate it and fashion it as the best possible image of the intelligible.[26] Now, if one presses the question more, and asks why the contemplation of Forms is not sufficient for the Demiurge, but he goes on to instantiate them in the receptacle, Timaeus' answer is that the former "was good (ἀγαθός), and one who is good can never become jealous of anything",[27] whereby it is implied that the Ὑποδοχή was fitted (ἐπιτήδεια) for the Demiurge's action upon it.[28]

Coming to the political sphere, in the Procline commentary there are many other analogies about the relation of the lover with his beloved and that of the philosopher-statesman with its (beloved) state. Further, Proclus' language even in these political contexts clearly echoes the wording used for the demiurgic functions of the *Timaeus*.[29] The following is a characteristic example:

> In Alc. 95.14–19
> For the lover must begin with knowledge and so end in making provision for the beloved; he is like the statesman, and it is abundantly clear that the latter too starts with consideration and examination, and then in this way arranges the whole constitution, manifesting the conclusions in his works.[30]

In other words, the Receptacle's aforementioned grateful speech to its decorator could be reiterated by the 'political receptacle', the body of the πόλις, if all classes were united to express with one mouth their gratitude toward their own decorator.

Consequently, these interconnections allow us to give a Procline answer to the thorny question of the *Republic:* why does the philosopher have to become a ruler of the city? Or in other words, why does the philosopher have to return to the

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26 See also Adamson (2011).
27 *Tim.* 29e1–2: Ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος. Cf. Proclus' commentary *ad loc.: In Tim.* I.359.20–365.3, and the note of Dodds (1963), 213 on *ET* §25, with parallels in Plotinus as well.
28 If the receptacle did not possess the potentiality of becoming our physical cosmos, it is not clear whether the Demiurge would have acted in the way he did.
29 In this Proclus faithfully follows Plato himself, who gives us plenty of evidence, e.g. in Socrates' introduction of the *Tim.* 17a1–19b2 and in *Rep.* VI. 506a9-b1 and VII. 540a8-b1, about the intimate relation between the two Platonic works in question. See also Pavlos (2013).
30 δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐρωτικὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γνώσεως ἀρχόμενον οὕτω τελευτᾶν εἰς τὴν περὶ τὸν ἐρώμενον πρόνοιαν· ἀνάλογον γάρ ἐστι τῷ πολιτικῷ, πάντως δὲ οὐκ ἄδηλον ὅτι κἀκεῖνος ἀπὸ τῆς θεωρίας ἄρχεται καὶ τῆς ἐξετάσεως, ἔπειθ' οὕτω τὴν ὅλην διακοσμεῖ πολιτείαν τὰ τῆς θεωρίας συμπεράσματα διὰ τῶν ἔργων δεικνύς.

cave?[31] Plato (or better Socrates) has always puzzled the commentators with his response that "we'll be giving just orders to just people,"[32] since in the previous books justice has been defined in the 'introverted' terms of the orderly relation of the parts of the soul within the individual.[33] Proclus might well have responded that Socrates simply did not do justice to the readers by not presenting them with the whole picture;[34] in fact, it is the goodness, in which the philosopher participates, which makes him, like the Demiurge, good (ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος).[35] As is evident from the passages cited above, there is an organic relation between goodness and providence. The 'better' an entity is, i.e. higher in the ontological hierarchy, the more providential it is, i.e. its bestowals reach further down the scale, and hence it has a wider scope. As with the Procline divine lover, it is insofar as the statesman participates in the intelligible that he goes on to set into order the city's own 'disorderly moving' receptacle.[36] What is more, in that way Proclus is in line with the Platonic *Alcibiades:* the equilibrium between the relations of lover and beloved, on the one hand, and that of the statesman and the city, on the other. The way the lover educates and fashions his beloved must be the paradigm of the philosopher-politician's attitude towards the political body.[37]

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31 Glaucon puts it succinctly when he asks in *Rep.* VII. 519d8 – 9: "Then are we to do them [sc. the philosophers-rulers] an injustice (ἀδικήσομεν) by making them live a worse life when they could live a better one?" For the Neoplatonic answer to this challenge see also O'Meara (2003), 73 – 83, esp. 76 – 77. O'Meara includes references to Proclus' *Alcibiades* and *Republic* Commentaries. Two further essays from Proclus' *Commentaries on Plato's Republic* which would seem relevant – XI, "On the speech in the *Republic* that shows what the Good is" (1.269.1 – 287.17), and XII, "On the Cave in the Seventh Book of the *Republic*" (1.287.18 – 296.15) – are not helpful for my present purposes, because they are occupied solely with epistemological (and some metaphysical) questions. (As noted in the Introduction, the English translation of Proclus' essays on the *Republic* is the aim of a current project led by D. Baltzly.)

32 *Rep.* 520e1– 2.

33 I suppose this difficulty is another evidence for the circularity of Plato's argumentation as Williams (1999), e. g. 258, has sharply remarked.

34 One could claim that the same holds with respect to Socrates' response to another notoriously thorny question, namely that of Cebes in the initial pages of the *Phaedo* (61d3 – 5): "How do you mean, Socrates, that it is not right to do oneself violence, and yet that the philosopher will be willing to follow one who is dying?" See also Plotinus' position towards suicide in his small treatise devoted to that topic, *Enn.* I.9.[16], "On going out [sc. of the body]".

35 Cited above (n. 27). Of course, as Proclus notes towards the end of the extant commentary, the Just participates in the Good, the former being inferior to the latter (cf. e. g. *In Alc.* 319.12ff.). Hence, every just instantiation is also good (but not vice versa), and, hence, the philosopher's being just is at the same time good.

36 NB that the word ἐπιμελεῖσθαι used in *Rep.* 520a6 – 9 is the same in *Phdr.* 246b6: πᾶσα ψυχὴ παντὸς ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἀψύχου, the latter being a principal Neoplatonic source of evidence for the idea that soul(s) are providential for what lies beneath them.

37 In that way we see how the *Alcibiades* provides a viable starting point for the transmutation of the existing political system into the ideal state.

Last but not least, in this framework the question about the mature philosopher-king needing the state in order to help him grasp the Forms[38] simply does not arise. This is exactly the case with Proclus' divine lover, too. Now, whether this scheme of universal correspondence between the Demiurge, the philosopher-king, and the divine lover[39] does exist in Plato might be an open question.[40] We might also question the ontological elaborations with which Proclus has invested Plato. However, to the extent that the Neoplatonic Successor has preserved something from the Platonic insight, all the above material seems to give us justification not to view Plato as an 'egoist' with respect to erotic matters. If this is so, then Proclus had already given a brave and articulate answer against Plato's modern critics. Finally, let me conclude by noting that in this commentary Proclus spends a considerable amount of time attempting to prove that it was not in vain that the 'daimonion' let the Silenus try to elevate the son of Cleinias.[41] Unlike Socrates with Alcibiades, I do not suggest that we should necessarily be persuaded by Proclus. Nonetheless, I hope that the present reflections may at least reveal a reason why it would be fruitful for Platonic scholars to consider in their discussions Neoplatonic perspectives as well.

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38 It is true, though, that according to the Procline interpretation the fact that the philosopher returns to the cave is a verification of his having genuinely grasped the Forms. Therefore, he descends to the 'prison' not because he has any need of its 'prisoners', contra the vulgar lovers in relation to Alcibiades, but exactly because he is self-sufficient, and hence able to free them and elevate them to the truth, as far as possible.

39 In both *Symposium*'s and *Phaedrus*' versions.

40 I am aware that the primary objective of many current scholars is not to draw general schemes or doctrines out of the whole Platonic corpus, but rather to engage in lively dialogues with individual works, as Plato himself urges us to do.

41 See *In Alc.* 85.17–92.2. The problem is that the guardian-spirit could foresee the end of this relationship; so, why did it allow Socrates to associate with Alcibiades? After presenting some problematic solutions found in the tradition, Proclus focuses on the three following points: a) Alcibiades did become better; b) he will also be benefited in another life; c) the daimon is good like the sun, since "he achieves his end in his activity". Proclus also uses the example of Laius and the oracle; see further *In Alc.* 91.10–15 and Layne (2014b).

Danielle A. Layne
The Platonic Hero

In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates seems to rather sardonically compare himself to Achilles (28b-d) and even caustically suggests that instead of being punished for attempting to deliver the Athenians from their unwitting ignorance and lack of care for themselves, i.e. their souls, he should be rewarded by being allowed to eat in the hero's den, the Prytaneum (37a). Interestingly, in this comparison Plato makes strides to problematize and, consequently, transform the common conception of the Greek hero. Instead of revering individuals for feats of physical valor, Socrates suggests that the truly heroic are those who improve the city by demanding that its citizens care for what is actually valuable, their souls.

Strikingly, this conception of the hero, whose role centers upon assisting others in caring for their souls, versus fearless brutes fighting many-headed beasts, is maintained in the Neoplatonic tradition. At *In Crat*. 75.25 – 76.3 Proclus claims that heroes are "human souls on high" which elevate others through love (*eros*) to the life that reflects true magnificence and splendor.[1] He further suggests that the hero is one who has been "allotted the order of reversion, of providential care and kinship with the divine Intellect" and concludes, in tune with the image of the philosopher-hero in the *Republic*, that the nature of a hero is one who descends and assists souls in (re)turning to the gods. Overall, heroes in the Neoplatonic system seem to be some kind of elevated particular soul who, as an agent of divine providence, illuminates, in his words and deeds, the gods' unceasing *philia* and mediated contact through all levels of reality, both intelligible and sensible, and, as a consequence, they inspire average souls to become like such heroes, i.e. ones who seem to be both human and divine. In other words, in line with Socrates' characterization of himself in the *Apology*, for the Neoplatonist being a hero has little to do with dragging corpses around Trojan walls or being worshipped for feats of extreme daring, if by extreme daring one merely imagines Hercules fighting the Cretan Bull. Rather the Platonic hero is one whose acts are fantastic, uncanny, and indubitably brave but only insofar as they risk subverting the quotidian life that rests easy in sensible reality, content with mere opinions over absolute, divine wisdom. The true hero then

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1 See the introductions to Pascuali (ed.) (1908) and Duvick (trans.) (2007) for detailed information on the authorship of this text. The arguments advanced in this essay are not necessarily geared toward whether or not Proclus' views held exactly to the letter of this commentary which may or may not be fully authored by Proclus since they are likely notes of a student of his. Rather the aim is to show the status of the hero within the Platonic tradition. In short, even if one would argue that the views are not genuinely Procline or cannot certainly be attributed to him in this exact form, we can at the very least recognize that this text reflects the inheritance of Proclus' views and its influence on Platonic understandings of the ontological status of the hero. All translations of *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria* are Duvick (trans.) (2007).

is one who guides individuals toward understanding the self as soul, a reality whose origin proceeds from the divine Soul and Intellect and the One or Good beyond being and knowing. In other words, the hero in this sense seems to parallel great philosophical teachers like Socrates who do not rest easy in a life of pure contemplation but rather recognize that their work consists in assisting others toward such inward and, ultimately, divine care. To substantiate this claim, the following paper plans to examine all the various qualifications of the hero in the late Platonic tradition, focusing on the erotic element as an essential mediator between the divine and the mortal as well as Proclus' characterization of the hero as one who exhibits providential agency. Through this we shall see how Proclus explicitly identifies Socrates with heroism and further legitimates the activity of praying to heroes so as to enact ascent, contemplation, and, perhaps, even union with the providential will of the gods.

To begin with what is well known, we should recall that the late Neoplatonists were largely in agreement in outlining, in order of superiority, at least four classes of beings: gods, daemons, heroes, and souls.[2] In this hierarchy there are three complementary Neoplatonic leitmotifs at play. First, the late Platonists arranged this hierarchy according to the principle of likeness or similarity where one can observe a bond of sympathy and *philia* uniting, through incremental chains of likeness (*homoiotês*), the first to the last in any series.[3] Through this chain of likeness all the various grades of being are contiguous and, as such, continuous. Emphasizing the importance of continuity, similarity, and sympathy (or contact) at every level or reality, Proclus writes, "[f]or if the procession of beings is to be continuous, and no void is to enter either in the incorporeal or the corporeal, it is necessary that everything which proceeds by nature, proceeds through similarity."[4] This continuity makes the universe, as a whole, intelligible and unified, allowing one to trace the relationships between all things by means of a graded transition from an absolute singular

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2 See Iamblichus, *DM* 1.5, 2.1–3. At *DM* 3.70. Iamblichus adds angels and archons and Proclus includes the category of angels in all three texts of the *Tria opuscula* (see below for exact references). Overall for both authors angels, daemons and heroes are characterized as 'superior genera' (*kreittona genê*), with Proclus classifying them all as kinds of daemon in *Dub.* § 15. Ultimately, the superior genera, unlike average individual souls, will not fail in being what they are by nature, i.e. angels, daemons or heroes, thus explaining their loftier ontological status. See *Mal.* 15. For Proclus' own schema see *In Crat.* 68.10–71.13 and 75.9–77.20, *In Remp.* II.231.19, *In Tim.* III.166.1–29, *Dub.* §15–16, §24, §25, §44, §46, §62–65, *Mal.* 14–19. See also the commentary and notes of Opsomer and Steel (2012) for useful discussions of the passages cited. This basic schema has roots in comments made by the Athenian Stranger (*Laws* 717b) in defense of worshipping, after the gods, both daemons and heroes. These comments are also cited by Proclus at *In Crat.* 68.25 (see below for the full passage) in his own defense regarding the worship of the heroic class. See Shaw (1995), 132–133 and Butler (2014), 23–44. In this work Butler gives a short history of this schema and also cites Plato *Laws* 717b as well as Plutarch's *De Defectu* 415b and a quotation of Celsus recorded in *Contra Celsum* 7.68.

3 On the Neoplatonic doctrine of sympathy and *philia* see *de Prov.* §12, Iamblichus, *DM* 3.15 (135.10–136.4). See also Van den Berg (2001), 87 and Addey (2012), 133–150.

4 *PT* III.6.21–24. All references to this text refer to Saffrey/Westerink (eds.) (1968–1997) and Taylor (trans.) (1816/2009).

principle to a manifold of particulars. Following upon this, it should then be clear that these chains proceed by diminishing similarity as a way of explaining the very real opposition and difference between the disparate extremes in each particular chain. Only through the middle terms, contiguous with both extremes, in this case the activities of heroes and daemons, will contact or sympathy between contraries like incorporeal gods and embodied individual souls be possible. As Proclus further emphasizes, "[f]or there is no gap between two things, and so extremes always have intermediaries which relate them to each other."[5] Clearly already ascribing to this schema in his own exegesis of the contact and sympathy between gods and souls, Iamblichus writes a generation before Proclus:

> Iamblichus, *DM* 1.5.5–12
> Such being the first and last principles among the divine classes, you may postulate, between the extremes, two means: the one just above the level of souls being that assigned to the heroes, thoroughly superior in power and excellence, beauty and grandeur, and in all the goods proper to souls, but nevertheless proximate to these by reason of homogeneous kinship of life; and the other, more immediately dependent upon the race of gods, that of demons, which, though far inferior to it, yet follows in its train [...].[6]

Here we see clearly that for Iamblichus daemons are more contiguous with the life of the gods, while heroes are closer to the lower order of human souls. Nevertheless *both* daemons and heroes, in comparison with the human soul, are a kind of 'superior genera' (*kreittona genê*),[7] insofar as they act as necessary mediators in the establishment of cosmic harmony between the two extreme terms. Further, elucidating the role that daemons and heroes play in guaranteeing cosmic sympathy, Iamblichus writes:

> Iamblichus, *DM* 1.5.6–15
> The classes of being, then, bring to completion as intermediaries the common bond that connects gods with souls, and causes their linkage to be indissoluble. They bind together a single continuity from top to bottom, and render the communion of all things indivisible. They consti-

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5 *Prov.* §3.163–4. All references to this text are Boese (ed.) (1960) while all translations belong to Steel (trans.) (2007).

6 All translations of *DM* are from Clarke, Dillon and Hershbell (trans.) (2004) which utilizes the edition of des Places (ed.) (1966).

7 See n. 2 above and Butler (2014), 25 who argues that in Proclus' system this intermediary class is fully divine, that heroes are ways of "*being a God*, and not merely a way in which beings partake in the divine nature. The heroes, therefore, must be regarded [...] not as 'demigods', but rather as *Gods who were mortal*." In this essay Butler compellingly argues that Proclus intended to place the category of hero into his understanding of temporality, where heroes are seen as beings projected in their essence toward the future, while daemonic temporality is concerned with the now and angelic temporality with the past. Butler's article also situates the Platonic hero within Hellenic culture in general and therein is able to elucidate the appearance of the hero as one who is always *uncanny* and *untimely*, but also as one who ventures ahead for the sake of the ever-present now, fulfilling the divine will and the good of creation.

tute the best possible blending and proportionate mixture for everything, contriving in pretty well equal measure a progression from the superior to the lesser, and a re-ascent from the inferior to the prior. They implant order and measure into the participation descending from the better and the receptivity engendered in less perfect beings, and make all things amendable and concordant with all others, as they receive from the gods on high the causal principles of all these things.

Directly paralleling the Demiurge's mixing and blending of the juxtaposed extremes of the Same and the Other in Timaeus' account of the coming-into-being of the sensible living cosmos,[8] Iamblichus insists that daemons and heroes are the necessary intermediaries between incorporeal and corporeal being. Like knows like; and so daemons are like the divine in being immortal and imperishable, remaining alongside incorporeal realities in all their activities toward inferior, sensible reality. Inversely, heroes are closer to mortal beings in being embodied souls but are superior to such individuals "in power and excellence, beauty and grandeur, and in all the goods proper to souls."[9] Ultimately Iamblichus, at the start of book II of *De Mysteriis*, clarifies the relation between the orders by emphasizing their own congruency in terms of their substance and their activities:

> Iamblichus, *DM* 2.1.3–19
> By "daemons" I mean the generative and creative powers of the gods in the furthest extremity of their emanations and in its last stages of division, while heroes are produced according to principles of life among the gods; and that the foremost and perfect due measures of souls result from and are distinguished from these powers. [...] That of daemons is fit for finishing and completing encosmic natures, and it exercises oversight on each thing coming into existence; that of heroes is full of life and reason, and has leadership over souls. One must assign to daemons productive powers that oversee nature and the bond uniting souls to bodies; but to heroes it is right to assign life-giving powers, directive of human beings, yet exempt from becoming.

Here Iamblichus mentions several stunning features of the hero, in contradistinction to the daemon, not least of which is the hero's function as a life-giving, directive power who is somehow the cause of the "foremost and perfect due measures of souls."

To understand this it may prove useful to turn to the second and related Neoplatonic leitmotif emphasized in this hierarchy: the doctrine of cyclical creativity, first advanced by Plotinus in the *Enneads* but most clearly articulated in Proclus' *ET* §35. In this proposition Proclus elucidates the basic metaphysical principles of Neoplatonic causality in which all products of creation remain (μονή), proceed from (πρόοδος) and, most importantly for understanding the role of the hero in late Platonism, return (ἐπιστροφή) or revert upon their cause.[10] Of course, by causality we

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8 This image will be explicitly used by Proclus in his own narrative concerning the birth of heroes from the romantic affairs of the gods and mortals in mythological narratives. See n. 19.

9 *DM* 1.5.7–10.

10 Dodds (ed./trans.) (1963). Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* V.2 [11].1 and VI.5 [23].7.

should keep in mind that for Platonists a cause is something that is productive of an effect. This effect is that which has *proceeded* from the cause and, as such, is inferior to the cause, i.e. it is not absolutely like its cause because it has "gone out" or separated itself from the cause therein establishing itself as secondary, as effect. Despite this procession or becoming other than the cause, all effects *desire* to retain their continuity or likeness with their origin; a desire that will ultimately allow for a kind of similarity between cause and effect, the superior and the inferior, that establishes concretely the being and identity of the effect.[11] As Proclus clarifies in §31, this desire is expressed in the effect's *reversion* or return to its cause, an activity cementing the well-being or good of the effect, i.e. its identity in the chain of beings. To be clear, Proclus further emphasizes in §32 that the consummation of reversion or return to one's constitutive cause is accomplished through imitation or a "becoming like" the cause:

> *ET* §32
> For that which reverts endeavors to be conjoined in every part with every part of its cause, and desires to have communion in it and be bound to it. But all things are bound together by likeness, as by unlikeness they are distinguished and severed. If, then, reversion is a communion and conjunction, and all communion and conjunction is through likeness, it follows that all reversion must be accomplished through likeness. (trans. Dodds)

In the Neoplatonic system, this triad of remaining, procession, and return orients all levels of reality including the hypostasis of Intellect in which Being, Life, and Intellect proper can be understood as analogous moments in this system of cyclical causality. As such Being, or that which *remains*, is described as the intelligible, Life is the intelligible-intellective which *proceeds*, while Intellect is the intellective which results from *reversion* to the intelligible object of Being.

Placing this doctrine alongside the hierarchy of beings in the Neoplatonic schema, the relationship between each of the various levels and the bond of sympathy and *philia* connecting the higher and lower terms discussed in the first leitmotif becomes clearer. From within the language of Neoplatonic causality, daemons order the *procession* of the divine into the corporeal world as daemons are the "generative and creative powers of the gods at the furthest extremity of their procession and its last stage of division."[12] Contrariwise, heroes are described as the convertive agents, i.e. agents of reversion that inspire, direct, and guide human souls in their "becoming like the divine" and as such they sever the bond with the corporeal.[13] As Proclus em-

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[11] One should keep in mind that to have desire at all is to recognize procession, i.e. the reality of being other to the cause, of actually being separate from the cause, lest whence springs the desire to return?

[12] *DM* 2.1.3–6.

[13] Concerning the Platonic doctrine of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν see *Theaet*. 175e-176b, *Rep.* 613b1 and *Tim*. 90d. This doctrine serves as the crux to late Neoplatonic theories of ascent for the human soul and its self-knowledge and self-constitution. See Layne (2013) and Layne (2016).

phasizes, "[t]he heroic is analogous to intellect and reversion, and hence is the overseer of purification and is the chorus-leader of a life elevated and performing great deeds."[14]

To understand Proclus' characterization of heroes as ones who perform "great deeds" constituting reversion and a life analogous to Intellect, we should momentarily return to analyzing the similarities and differences between daemons and heroes as congruent intermediaries between the transcendent and perfectly divine gods, on the one hand, and the imperfect and deficient human soul, on the other. First, as noted, daemons are obviously closer in proximity to the divine as their procession and their living powers, and so while they mix with the divisible, the corporeal, and infuse life and power into things, daemons are not themselves subject to division. They, as Iamblichus describes, are "multiplied in unity." To state this differently, daemons generate the complete, perfect unity of divine powers in a manifold, i.e. through the daemonic the absolute power of the gods is divided and distributed throughout the sensible cosmos. This is how daemons guarantee that all things from first to last reflect the life of the divine.[15] In agreement, Proclus writes:

> *In Crat*. 75.19–24
> They [are] daemonic because they bind together (*sundeonta*) the median aspect of the universe, divide the divine power and lead it forth all the way to the lowest level of things. For to divide is to 'sunder' (*daisai*). This genus is polyvalent and manifold, with the result that it embraces as its lowest class even the material daemons that lead souls down [into the realm of generation], and proceeds to the most particular and materially connected form of activity.

In contrast to the daemonic unified nature, heroes, insofar as their life is more akin to the individual human soul, are not only multiple (there are many heroes, unique and particular in their activities) but they are also divisible, subject to internal strife, and the possibility of failure. As ones who mingle with sensible bodies, they suffer from the real threat of division and dispersion, i.e. affections, and, ultimately, death. These are indeed obstacles that may prevent the hero from following the will of the divine, i.e. from fully returning to their divine cause. In tune then with the classic image of the struggling champion, the hero then is one who must overcome a formidable foe in the face of annihilation, i.e. they must subdue the many-headed beasts of corporeal existence. This is the hero's essential labor and task; return home, revert to one's divine parentage, and in doing so become "like the divine."

Yet, to be sure, the tasks of the hero are not performed merely for themselves. The hero's labor is not merely directed upward at the gods but also downward to the particular soul. Put otherwise, heroic activity acts as inspiration for the average

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14 *In Tim*. III.165.19–22. I am indebted to Butler (2014) for the translation of this passage and his further citation/translation of *In Tim*. III.165.27–30.
15 *DM* 1.6.1–15.

soul insofar as heroic deeds become signs signifying in their physicality, their corpo-reality, the real possibility of transcending the limitations of the monstrous world of becoming.[16] For Proclus this is why "great achievement" often characterizes the hero-ic nature. Their acts constitute and uncover formidable power and strength in the human soul, mirroring in their temporal victory the eternal power of the divine. In contrast to the daemon that remains wholly incorporeal, heroes are souls that have fully descended in activity and as such have direct contact with the corporeal. Yet, unlike the average individual soul who succumbs to the chaos of the corporeal body, the hero expertly manages it and becomes a paradigm for inspiring the indi-vidual soul to perform similar feats of commanding their soul, body and the world around them in ways that rouse other souls to see the brilliance of order itself, the brilliance of the divine causes of all things. Ultimately, this is why heroes are often characterized as great leaders of men, life-giving as Iamblichus emphasized, insofar as they inspire the activity of those they direct, guiding them toward their own good. Ultimately, then, as Proclus claimed, the hero is convertive because he/she performs the deeds that constitute the perfection of the soul and the reversion to the intelligi-ble.[17] In this act, the hero becomes properly intellective. As Proclus writes:

> *In Crat.* 68.25 – 69.3
> [T]his heroic class of souls, while it does not always follow the gods, is still undefiled and more intellectual than the other souls. It descends for the benefit of the life of men, since it partakes of a destiny which weighs it down, but heroic souls also have much that elevates them and is easily freed of matter. This is why they are also easily restored to the intelligible realm and pass many revolutions there, even as the more irrational genera of souls are either not at all, or with diffi-culty or only minimally restored to the Intelligible. (trans. Duvick)

What elevates the heroic soul is its active power of reversion allowing them to tran-scend all limitation. This active power diverges from the average human soul who

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16 See Plato, *Crat.* 400c for the play between sign and body: "Some say it [the *sôma*] is the 'tomb' [*sêma*] of the soul which, they believe, is buried in the here and now. And because the soul uses the body to indicate [*sêmainei*] what it indicates, so too the body [*sôma*] is correctly called 'sign' [*sêma*]." Duvick (trans.) (2007). Butler (2014), 37 draws on this passage to make the following conclu-sion: "The entire body of the hero, in returning this way, has become a *sign*, and heroes return be-cause they have become signs: the *sêma* (sign) is the hero's *sôma* (body):[...] The return of a hero is synonymous with some meaning, something signified by this return, be it seasonable or untimely, and there is nothing about the hero that has not become a sign in this way."
17 For Iamblichus heroes as "souls on high" are "produced according to principles of life among the gods," (2.1.4 – 5) and thus they are "full of life and reason." (2.1.11 – 12) Due to this, their powers are "life-giving" and directive of individual human souls, they, as with Achilles or Priam (or as we shall soon see with Socrates), order and lead men, direct souls toward their appropriate ends. Iamblichus further describes the more esoteric manifestations of heroes in theurgic rituals as ones whose appear-ance like daemons is both great and small, whose vehicle possesses "beauty in distinct forms" and "displays courage," (2.3.12 – 15) whose illumination "exhibits a greatness of spirit greater than its con-dition" (2.4.5 – 6) as embodied, whose light is a "fire blended of diverse elements." (2.4.11)

often lets these divine powers of the soul lie dormant. Heroes, then, often expose the impotence of their kin and countrymen simply by being what they are, individuals who have conquered the challenges of corporeal existence and as such are more "like the divine" in being self-constituting, self-ruled, impassible leaders versus the affective and powerless citizen who succumbs to all external influence, ultimately enslaved, and far from evidencing the life of the divine residing in them.

Coming to the third leitmotif, the role of divine providence in the hierarchy of beings, we should also keep in mind that for the late Neoplatonists the truly active power of the hero, i.e. the power that constitutes their ability to revert and ultimately assist others in reversion, is *eros* and the hero's corresponding fulfillment of "convertive providence."[18] Proclus suggests this very clearly when he writes:

> *In Crat*. 75.25–76.4
> They call others heroic (*hêrôïka*) because they raise (*aironta*) human souls on high and elevate them through love (*erôs*). They are also guides of intellectual life, both magnificent and magnanimous, and in general they are allotted the order of reversion, of providential care and kinship with the divine Intellect, to which they cause secondary entities to revert. Thus, the heroic have been allotted this name because they are able to 'raise' (*airein*) and extend souls toward the gods. (trans. Duvick)

Here we should clarify that the erotic nature of the hero is extended both upward toward the love of the intelligible but furthermore, as heroic, toward the inferior, i.e. less fortunate souls who ignorantly refuse to care for themselves, their souls, and the divine element in them. Like Socrates who cares for Alcibiades, who in his love attempts to turn his beloved away from the world of things to the love of that which is truly good, the hero stands betwixt two beloveds: the brilliance of the Good above and the rumbling of the Good buried in the caves below. In this love for the inferior and the superior, the hero indeed binds both extremes, resembling the providential agency of the gods themselves. Thus, for Proclus "[i]t is reasonable that heroes should be named after Eros (398d), inasmuch as Eros is a 'great daemon' (*Symp.* 202d13), and heroes are engendered through the cooperation of daemons."[19]

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18 See *In Tim*. III.165.27–30: "the heroic in turn proceeds according to the convertive providence of all of these [natural beings], and hence this genus is elevated and anagogic of souls and the cause of vigor to them." Edition of Diehl (1903–1906) and translation refers to Taylor (trans.) (1816/1998).
19 Harkening to Plato's *Symp.*, it may be interesting to note here that Proclus makes an explicit connection between the origins and nature of heroes and *eros* when discussing the birth and powers of these two classes. As erotic, heroes have their origin in both *poros*, who is superior, and *penia*, who is a receptacle and inferior. Insofar as they are born from the intermingling of the divine porotic element and the impoverished human element this grounds the nature of both heroes and *eros* as intermediaries. Moreover, Proclus also suggests that the diversity of kinds of heroes is caused by the specific intermingling of certain gods and goddesses, leading therein to differences in the kind of hero. That is the difference between heroes like Achilles and, as we shall soon see, Socrates has to do with the sex of the divine cause. Herein we should be reminded of Pythagorean symbolism, namely,

The erotic nature of the hero should be further mediated by the fact that Proclus makes the hero an active agent of divine providence, i.e. that which bestows the good on "all things, to whole, to parts, even as far as individual things."[20] To understand this we must keep in mind that for Proclus providence is that which subsists according to the one. It imparts unity and definition to all things through the gods, i.e. the divine henads.[21] As subsisting in the one, it is higher than even the intellect and, consequently, even intellect aspires after providential care, turning toward it in its reversion to or desire for unity and the good. Nothing, not even matter or the so-called evils, escapes the grace of providence as all find their purpose in the benevolent bosom of the One. As Proclus writes in *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam:*

> *Dub.* §10
> [L]et us remind ourselves that the doctrine of our school declares that providence is established in the One. As a matter of fact, whatever exercises providence communicates either a real or an apparent one, but always a good, to the subjects of its care, as our common conceptions tell us. And providence is nothing other than doing well to the things that are said to belong to it. But we claim, and have said so before, that to bestow goodness is in all cases identical with the bestowing of unity, because the One is good and the good is One – and this has been said a thousand times. (trans. Opsomer and Steel)

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masculinity's association with sameness while the feminine associates closely with otherness. He writes:

> But since the souls of the heroic class have two forms of life, revealing the power befitting a God now by the masculine aspect in themselves and the cycle of the Same, now by the feminine in the revolution of the Other, when both elements are performing perfectly, these [souls] exist unrelated to generation, contemplating entities prior to themselves and unrelatedly exercising providence over those subsequent to them. But when both elements are defective, these souls will not differ at all from the common run of souls, among which both the cycle of the Same is restricted and that of the Other endures all sorts of both fractures and distortions. It therefore is necessary that one cycle being in accord with nature, but that the other be impeded in its proper activity, and this is why there are demi-gods, because one or the other of their cycles is illuminated from the gods. Thus all of them that have their cycle of the Same running smoothly, and have been awakened to the transcendental life and are inspired by it, are said to be endowed with a father who is a God, but mortal mother because of their deficiency in the other side of their life. Such, on the other hand, as have the revolution of their Other running well, and are successful and inspired to action, these have a mortal father but a mother who is a Goddess. To put it briefly, what is successful in either aspect is ascribed to a divine cause, and when the cycle of the Same is dominant, the divine element is said to be masculine and paternal, but that of the Other is, it is said to be maternal. And this, for example, is why Achilles, as son of a Goddess, is successful in actions. He demonstrates this by his passion for actions and, when in Hades, by his longing for the life with the body so that he may defend his father (*Od.* 11.501–3) But [others who are] reckoned as the sons of Zeus, since they turn themselves away from the realm of generation to what really exists, and adhere to the order of mortal creatures [only] to the extent necessary. *In Crat.* 70.3–71.8. Duvick (trans.) 2007.

20 *Dub.* §2. Boese (ed.) (1960). All translations of this text belong to Opsomer and Steel (trans.) (2012).

21 See Butler (2008).

For our purposes we should note that for Proclus providence exercises its power both *directly* through the gods who are absolutely the henadic, i.e. the absolute sources of the good, unity, identity, purpose, etc., and indirectly through the agency of the intermediaries, i.e. angels, daemons and heroes, who were the "first things to have been made good from [providence]." That is, daemons and heroes illuminate or inspire their inferiors, i.e. awaken souls to the grace of providence in all things. For Proclus the intermediaries make the gifts of providence commensurable to the beings that come after them, shining the light of the good in a way that will help them in their conversion. As such the intermediaries "bring nearer the beings posterior to them, which are weak because of their declension, rendering [souls] more apt for participation [...]" with the gift of providence.[22] Directly outlining the relation of the intermediaries to providence, Proclus writes:

> *Dub.* §25
> Through intermediaries the junction between instable beings and the unvarying permanence of providence, between multiple beings and that which is both one and infinite is accomplished. And sometimes the illumination to the beings posterior to them [souls, animals, inanimate objects] come from these [intermediaries], sometimes through these. [...] [Intermediaries] receive their own power to illuminate other beings. For they, too, have providential activity from [the gods], as they imitate, in accordance with their order, the beneficent activity of [providence]. For [...] it is necessary that some participate immediately of the first [gods/henads], some through intermediaries; [and this mediation may happen in two ways]: either the intermediaries are seen as producing what they are from there [the gods]; or as leading, through what they have, the subsequent beings towards those [divine beings] from which they [intermediaries] derive their powers. (trans. Opsomer and Steel)

Here we see that for Proclus, the activity of procession for daemons and reversion for heroes are complementary activities whose purposes are to illuminate the powers of providence, i.e. the gods. Heroes and daemons do this through their natural activities, i.e. in binding these powers to souls and nature in the case of daemons, and liberating and returning souls to the gods in the case of heroes. In performing their natural activities, they both have the potential to lead souls and other inferior beings back to the divine.[23] Ultimately they, like providence itself, are "'providers'

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22 *Dub.* §17. Opsomer and Steel (trans.) (2012).
23 See *Dub.* §62–65 for Proclus' detailed discussion of how angels, daemons and heroes, while not being henads, i.e. gods, are "like a henad." As he writes a paragraph earlier:
 Hence, although angels and daemons, which are prior to us, and heroes and in addition our own souls are not gods nor henads, they still participate in some henads and have a henadic form: firstly those who are attached to the gods themselves, secondly those who through the mediation of the first connect to the gods, in the third rank, as they say, those who are inferior to the second and ultimately we ourselves. Indeed, even in us lies a hidden trace of the one, something more divine than the intellect in us. When the soul has reached this and has settled itself in it, it is divinely possessed and a divine life, to the extent that this is allowed. [...] The gods exercise providence through the whole of themselves. For they are what they are, as we said, by being henads. But angels and daemons and

(*proxenoi*) of the good for others [...]" exercising "providence for those who have benefited from them."[24] Particularly, emphasizing the power of heroes, Proclus explains that "the very being of [heroes] consists in essential conversion to that which is more excellent," due to the fact that "heroes are always the cause to other things of a conversion to better natures."[25]

In tune with the themes of conversion, *eros*, and intermediaries, while also harkening back to Socrates' divinely ordained task to help his fellow Athenians turn from a life concerned with things, it should finally be easier to see why Proclus appears explicitly to characterize Socrates as a kind of hero. As Proclus writes:

> *In Alc.* 133.8–15
> Socrates "ventures to declare his own mind," he descends to an activity inferior to that which abides within him; since, for divine lovers, to turn towards the inferior is at any rate venturesome. Nevertheless Socrates does descend in order that, like Hercules, he may lead up his beloved from Hades and persuade him to withdraw from the life of appearance and revert to the life that is intelligent and divine, from which he will come to know both himself and the divine which transcends all beings and is their pre-existent cause.[26]

In short, as this explicit comparison to Hercules suggests, Socrates is not merely an exemplary soul ascending through his own efforts up the Neoplatonic ladder of knowledge but, rather, he also purposefully chooses to descend in order to benefit, elevate, and order weaker individuals, like Alcibiades.[27] Socrates' acts are directive and illuminating insofar as he attempts to lead the "less than perfect soul" away from vulgar love toward true beauty and power, i.e. the Good. Further cementing this characterization of Socrates as a hero within the Neoplatonic schema, Proclus analyzes the etymology of Socrates arguing that "he is a savior of the power of the soul—that is, of reason—and is not drawn down by the senses."[28]

Perhaps the strongest piece of evidence for deeming Socrates a hero in the Neoplatonic system can be found, however, in Proclus' commentary on the *Alcibiades I*,

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heroes exercise providence insofar as they too have some seed of the One [...] *Dub.* §64–65. [trans. with minor adaptations from Opsomer and Steel (2012)].

Proclus concludes that the intermediaries need not exercise providence through intellection or reason but they see all things by virtue of the One in them "without any diminution of providential activity." *Dub.* §65.

24 *Prov.* §7.

25 *Mal.* §15. Boese (ed.) 1960 while all translations of this text belong to Opsomer and Steel (trans.) (2003).

26 All references and translations of this text refer to Westerink (ed.) and O'Neill (trans.) (2011).

27 See *In Remp.* 149.21 where Socrates is compared to Achilles during Proclus' apology for why heroes seem to disrespect gods. He mentions that Socrates' acceptance of the wealth that Alcibiades was taking to the gods was not wrong, just as Achilles' lack of dedicating his hair to the river god. Kroll (1899–1901).

28 *In Crat.* 18.18–20.

where the Neoplatonists spend a considerable amount of time drawing parallels between Socrates and the agency of providence.[29] For example, Proclus defends Socrates' premier actions in his affair with Alcibiades, i.e. his silence and constant watching, as mirroring the nature of providence because they highlight that, like providence, Socrates is transcendent and independent.[30] The fact that Socrates loved Alcibiades first out of all the other common lovers and did not depart indicates that his love is "provident and preservative of the beloved" because it, like providence, is "detached and unmixed", therein resembling and harkening to the good.[31] In just the same way that providence always remains present in our daily affairs, quietly arranging and orienting things toward the good, regardless of the shifting flux of corporeal life, so too Socrates observes all of Alcibiades' actions, taking note of his behavior toward his other lovers.[32] To be certain, this quiet watching, this uncanny form of love subtly orients the youth toward the power of providence inspiring him to love in return. While writing about this power of divine lovers, Proclus once again makes allusions to the heroic activity of illuminating, recalling, and guiding lovers to their divine causes:

> *In Alc.* 26.18 – 27.1
> [Divine lovers], inasmuch as they model themselves on the divine love, gather into and unite with themselves the lives of their loved ones, and lead them up with themselves to intelligible beauty, 'pouring', as Socrates in the *Phaedrus* says, into their souls whatever they draw from that source. If then the lover is inspired by love, he would be the sort of person who turns back and recalls noble natures to the good, like love itself.[33]

Finally, coming to some general conclusions then about the nature of the Platonic hero, it may be more pedagogically prudent to reimagine the hierarchy of the intermediaries and the extremes not as standing in a cascading decomposition of likeness and power where the middle terms merely sit between each other, e.g. gods then daemons then heroes then individual souls. Rather, as we have seen, there is a dynamic and cyclical interplay between each of these entities. While placing the heroic fourth in order of appearance, versus third, the following chart might be more helpful in understanding the relationship between all these beings.

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29 See Layne (2014).

30 *In Alc..* 54.15 – 55.1.

31 *In Alc..* 55.12 – 15.

32 Furthermore, Proclus also compares Socrates and his original silence to the quiet activity of all guardian spirits who attend to individuals "for the most part invisibly", bestowing unknowingly to us the good in our lives. And so too "Socrates attends to his darling in silence", making provision for him. Cf. *In Alc.* 41.7 – 10.

33 Cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 253a.
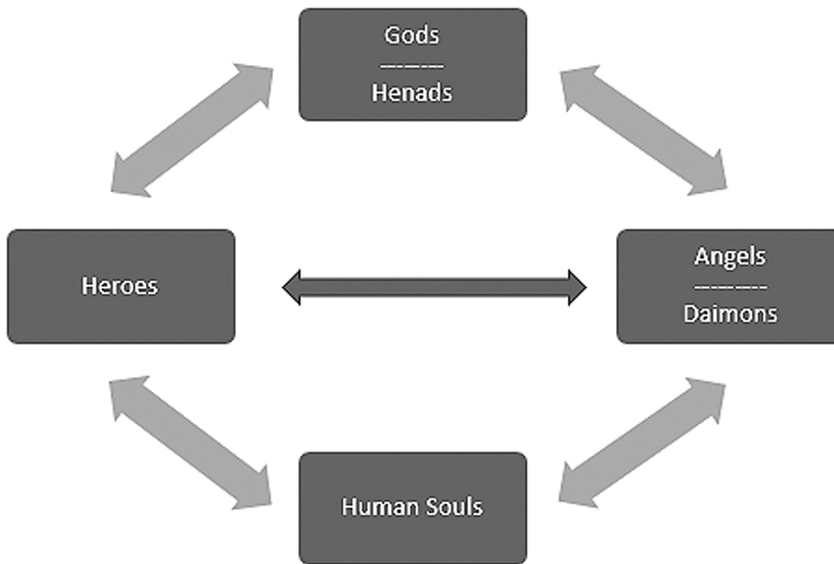
What we should see in this image is that each entity is in contact with the middle terms, i.e. daemons and heroes, and as such the gods become manifest through their unique activities of procession and reversion. In their own activity daemons immediately revert to the divine, i.e. they are absolutely in contact with the divine, and, as such, become perfect expressions of the powers of the divine. Due to this they proceed to material realities and individual human souls both heroic and not heroic, enacting the agency of procession, the outwardly tending providential energy of the gods. Moreover, heroes, as "souls on high," revert to the divine but also descend toward the human, enacting the love for both superior and inferior realities. Through their *eros* they ultimately elevate inferior human souls, i.e. assist in them in their own reversion or convertive providence. In becoming "like the divine," i.e. illuminating divine providence in them, heroes mediate the relationship between the gods and men, evidencing the possibility of converting from the life of external goods to the truly free life guaranteed by the gods. Through the light of heroes, providence graces the human soul with the promise of a homecoming, a promise of the good made manifest in the world. In the end, it is due to these powers that for Proclus and Iamblichus both daemons and heroes are proper objects of prayer, i.e. the proper activity of reversion for the ordinary human soul. For Iamblichus praying to heroes "furnishes goods of a second and third order, aimed at terrestrial and cosmic government of the souls as a whole [...]"[34] while Proclus invokes Plato's *Laws* and insists, "[m]agnificence, loftiness and grandeur are characteristic of these heroic souls, and one

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34 *DM* 2.9.12 – 14.

must honor such heroes and sacrifice to them according to the commands of the Athenian Stranger: 'For after gods', he says, 'the wise man would pay service to the daemons as well, and after these to heroes' (*Laws* 717b)."[35]

In the end we should be reminded of the fact that heroes in some sense are signs, symbols of the divine or more precisely agents, as Proclus insists, of "providential care". Thus when one turns to heroes in prayer, what will become the saint in Christian worship, individual prayers evidence the soul's own *epistrophe* or return to its causative principle, via love and adoration of the hero who absolutely recognized and venerated the "[...] the power of providence penetrating the whole of reality."[36] As agents of divine providence heroes ultimately illuminate the divine origin of all things, revealing the gods' unceasing *philia* and concern for creation.[37] Due to this, the individual human soul, in praying to heroes, evidences their own recognition and, as such, reversion to the divine signature.

To end on a speculative note, then, does this mean that to turn to a hero (or a saint) in prayer is not idolatry as some later Christians will have it? Will it mean that to pray to the hero is to recognize the providence of the gods in a fellow soul, a soul who was graced with the power to overcome ignorance, passion and attachment to corporeal existence for the sake of establishing "themselves in the goodness of the gods"?[38] Is it not the case that through the lives and deeds of the hero, all human souls who see their magnificence come into contact with the divine, ultimately edifying for all what it means to be human? If one can answer these questions in the affirmative, then praying to heroes for intercessory guidance and ascension would reflect one's own ability to become like a god and would help one to come into contact with providence, i.e. to fulfill the will of the good. When we pray to those who enlighten us to the good, have we not shown that we have been healed, enlightened and illumined by the god in man? As Ps-Dionysius, an influential author for the Christian tradition, indicates in his own discussions of divine hierarchies, the role of exalted individuals and their activities of becoming like the divine:

> Ps-Dionysius, *CH* III.1 f.:165b-165c
> [H]e who speaks of hierarchies speaks in general of a certain sacred arrangement, an image of divine splendor, which accomplishes in the orders and hierarchical sciences the mysteries of its own illumination and is assimilated, as far as permitted, to its own principle. For each being who is assigned a role in a hierarchy, each perfection consists in its raising itself to the imitation of God in its own measure. What could be more divine than to become, in the words of the ora-

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35 *In Crat*. 68.20 – 25.

36 *In Tim*. I.215.7.

37 *In Tim*. I.215.20 – 25. Cf. Iamblichus, *DM* 3.15 (135.10 – 136.4). See also Addey (2012), 136 – 138, especially 136, n. 12, Van den Berg (2001), 74, Beierwaltes (1979), 317 and Shaw (1995), 48 – 50 and 162 – 228 for a discussion of the various different types of *sunthēmata* and *symbola* in addition to their role in the ascent of the soul in Iamblichus. For the doctrine of divine sympathy and *philia* see *de Prov*. § 12. See Van den Berg (2001), 87. See also n. 29 and n. 30 below.

38 *In Tim*. I.212.19 – 25 and 215.15.

cles, a fellow worker with God, and to show forth the divine energy which is manifested in one-self as much as one can. Thus since the order of hierarchy will mean that some are being puri-fied and others purify, some are being enlightened while others enlighten, some are being per-fected while others complete the perfecting initiation for others, each will imitate God in the way that is harmonious to its function. (trans. Louth)[39]

In the end, it seems possible that to turn to the hero is to recognize providence, the grace of the gods or the love of the gods that extends to all things. In this providential will, the gods manifest the value not merely of loving them but loving all their processions as they have given all the possibility of reversion, i.e. the ability to recognize that there is good in all things. In other words, the prayerful ultimately recognize that through the hero who returns to the gods, who acts in such a way that shows the powers of the human being, the reserve of the good in us all, all souls have been elevated, saved or rescued by that which is divine in the human because the heroic human being is the divine sign of the good. In short it may be that the Neoplatonists are suggesting something quite simple in their hierarchy: to love the divine begins by first loving the divine in the human being.[40]

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39 Louth (2007), 105.

40 As Shaw writes, "According to these definitions the function of daimons was cosmogonic. Acting centrifugally, they carried the generative will of the Demiurge into its most minute and particular expressions. The function of heroes, by contrast, was convertive. As agents of *epistrophe* they guided the soul's daimonic drives into divine measure. Viewed statically, daimons and heroes were in conflict, the former binding souls to bodies and the latter aiding in their release. In this light it is understandable how the daimons of the Platonic tradition became the demons of the Gnostic and Christian worlds. For Iamblichus, however, both daimons and heroes acted in conjunction and obedience to the divine will (*DM* 70.5). They completed the circuit of divine life that descends continually into sensible expression while remaining rooted in the Forms." (1994), 133.

Helen S. Lang
The Status of Body in Proclus

Introduction: The Problem of body in the *Elements*

In the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus never examines body (τὸ σῶμα) as such. He establishes "elements", i.e., primary constitutive principles, that enter into systematic patterns of causality; but within these arguments he first refers to body and then in §80 defines it.[1] How can Proclus define body without examining it? In order to answer this question, I shall first consider several early propositions concerning cause/effect relations, where the concept of body appears. I turn next to the propositions concerning parts and wholes, where it reappears. These propositions set the stage for the definition of body as an effect. Consideration of this definition along with some further remarks on body will answer our question and produce a "portrait" of the concept of body in the *ET*.

I. Cause Effect Relations

Proclus consistently affirms the transcendence of any cause over its effect and foremost among causes is the One: all that is proceeds from the primacy, superiority, and uniqueness of this cause (§11), which is identical with the Good (§13).[2] Through participation, any manifold depends upon (and so is inferior to) the One.[3] Because par-

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1 The title *The Elements of Theology* obviously reflects Euclid's *The Elements of Geometry*. For an older but valuable study of the notion of "element" in Euclid and ancient mathematics, cf. Mueller (1969), 20 and 289–309. The notion of "elements" also has a long and complex history in ancient philosophy. On this topic, including references to Proclus, cf. Montenot (2008), 106 and esp. 85–88.
2 On the One as the absolute first principle of all Neoplatonism, cf. Van den Berg (2001), 43 and Dillon, (1991), raises the issue of the status of "theology" both for Plato and for Proclus. He argues that there is no "tension" (67) between them for either philosopher. For Plato "theology" means "simply 'talk about the gods,'" (68) and for Proclus the theologians "must concord with Plato," (69). Although Dillon does not refer the point to the *ET*, he does note that there is a sense in which philosophy is subordinated to theology: "theology is concerned with the highest class of objects—the One"; but even here the work done is "essentially philosophic reasoning" (76). Cf. Dillon (1996), 78 and 120–129 for a broader treatment of this problem in Neoplatonism, with reference to Proclus; Dillon considers the meaning of the supposed "irrationality" of the relation to the One. O'Meara (1989), 204 implicitly agrees with Dillon, suggesting that there are (unlike Proclus' other works) no authorities cited because Plato alone is the authority for this work. This work is referred to below as *Pythagoras Revived*.
3 Van den Berg (2001) citing §13, sums up the well-established Neoplatonic view here: "Ultimately Neoplatonism pivots on a single principle: unity. At the top of reality is the absolute One. It transcends all things and causes them. The further that entities are removed from this ultimate cause,

ticipation always entails dependency, Proclus uses it to establish a clear hierarchy of beings, which ultimately depend upon the One or the Good.[4] This hierarchy explains all cause/effect relations.

Everything that is (πᾶν τὸ ὄν) must be either (1) unmoved or (2) moved; what is moved may be further distinguished into (2a) what is "self-moved" and (2b) what is "other-moved" (§14). The mover must be superior to the moved and (1) what produces motion while remaining unmoved is the first mover and the first cause.[5] This cause is later identified with the One.[6]

Having established that the One is first and unmoved, Proclus immediately turns to (2a) the self-moved and (2b) the other-moved in order to determine their respective relations to the One. The immediate effect of any unmoved cause must be (2a) what is self-moved (§14). The self-moved is the first thing set in motion by the unmoved one and it moves all other-moved things, thereby linking what is other-moved to what is unmoved.[7] Consequently, "there is what is unmoved (τὸ ἀκινητόν), what is self-moved (τὸ αὐτοκίνητον), and what is "other moved" (τὸ ἑτεροκίνητον)"; being somehow in the middle (μέσον πως ὄν), the self-moved is at once *moved* by what is unmoved and is also the *mover* of the "other-moved". So among movers, (1) what is unmoved is primary, and among moved things, (2a) what is self-moved is primary. (2b) What is other-moved is moved by the self-mover and in no way originates motion; so it is not further characterized. (What is other-moved can transmit motion that it receives, e.g., a bat moved by a hitter can transmit motion to a ball; but the point here concerns movers that originate motion and so this point does not appear.) We shall see below that body is other-moved.

The self-mover, being in the middle, is crucial to motion and Proclus examines it next. Self-motion implies a mover having the ability to revert upon itself and this ability can only belong to what is incorporeal (§15). Through its relation to what is

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the more their degree of unity diminishes and the greater their degree of plurality becomes... Since, according to the Neoplatonists, causes are more perfect than their products, and since all things strive after perfection, all things ultimately strive after unity" (43). Cf. Chlup (2012), 52. Both Van den Berg and Chlup emphasize the dynamic of procession and return implicit in this proposition. But as its concluding line makes clear, identity is the primary conclusion of §13: "Goodness, then, is unification, and unification goodness; the good is one and the one is primal good." All translations are those of Dodds (1963) with modifications.

4 Meijer (2003), 23 argues that in the *Theologia Platonica* Proclus begins his philosophical project "*ab ovo*" and at *Plat. Theol.* II.1–2 "operated apart from the Supreme One" (413) with remarkable results for the One, the Many, and Being.

5 Cf. *ET* §7.

6 *ET* §26.

7 As Dodds (1963) points out in his commentary, this argument combines Plato's argument for self-moving motion (*Phdr.* 245c-d and *Laws* X 894b-895b, esp. 895a6-b2) with Aristotle's argument for an unmoved mover (*Physics* VIII, 5, 256a13 ff). All references to both Plato and Aristotle are to the OCT. The ways in which Neoplatonism has been understood as "harmonizing" Plato and Aristotle is a topic unto itself, especially in regard to motion. For a recent treatment of this issue that provides an excellent review of the texts, cf. Menn (2012).

unmoved, the self-mover reverts upon itself and thereby originates its own motion. Although the self-mover is not identified as soul here, this point may in part be directed against skeptic traditions, e. g., the skeptics or Stoics that make soul in some sense corporeal.[8] Proclus underscores the contrast between the self-mover and the body, which here makes its first appearance in the *Elements:* it is impossible for a body – and generally all things with parts (τῶν μεριστῶν πάντων) – to revert upon itself and so to be self-moved. Whatever has parts, including body, must be "other-moved" and, again unlike soul, moved by something "outside" itself. Although the self-mover is the proper subject of §15, two features of body appear clearly: it has parts and must be other-moved. Therefore, body depends completely on something other than itself for its motion. This dependence leads some readers, citing §15, to identify "body" with "matter".[9] As we shall see later in the *Elements*, they are distinguished.[10]

Setting out from the concept of body, Proclus defines the hierarchy most completely associated with Neoplatonism (§20): [11] Beyond all body is the substance of soul (ἡ ψυχῆς οὐσία); beyond all souls is "the intellective nature (ἡ νοερὰ φύσις); beyond all intellective natures is the One (τὸ ἕν).[12] Soul – itself beyond body – is the lowest, i. e., most dependent, member of this hierarchy. Since soul is both beyond body and the lowest member of the hierarchy, the status of body is obscure.

In §20, Proclus explains clearly the dependence of any effect on its cause, a dependence worth considering. All body, as we have seen, depends on something other than itself for its motion. Body is moved by soul. Soul is a self-mover by virtue of its very substance (κατ' οὐσίαν), i. e., immediately itself rather than through a relation to another. When soul is present to it, body comes to be self-moved through participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν): through its relation to soul, body becomes what soul is immediately.

The relation of body to soul is crucial to Proclus's account. When soul is present in body, it is distributed throughout but remains distinct because soul is incorporeal and body corporeal. Soul, being a self-mover, grants life to body and only as alive can body become a self-mover. In short, soul is the true self-mover and through its presence in body, body becomes a self-mover because together body and soul are

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8 Steel (2006), 241. Dodds (1963), 202 remarks that the argument here is more general than that concerning soul and so prepares the way for the later propositions, i. e. §186 and §187, concerning it.
9 Cf. Chlup (2012), 74 – 75 for example.
10 Ὕλη occurs in only three propositions in the *ET* §27: "Every producing cause is productive of secondary things because of its completeness and superfluity of potency", §72 "All those characters which in the participants have the relative position of a basis proceed from more complete and more universal causes", and §94 "All perpetuity is a kind of infinitude, but not all infinitude is perpetuity". Siorvanes (1996), 183 clearly distinguishes body and matter.
11 Dodds (1963), 206 identifies this argument as establishing "the three hypostases which constitute the Neoplatonic 'trinity of subordination'".
12 For a parallel text, cf. Proclus *In Tim.* I.456.31 ff. For a treatment of this theme in Neoplatonism with an explicit reference to this text, cf. Smith (2012), 38 – 39.

moved by soul. The relation between body and soul is entirely one-way: Body is in every way a recipient of soul's agency while soul receives nothing from body.

In the propositions on Parts and Wholes, as we shall see, Proclus speaks of the higher levels of the hierarchy as bestowing "gifts" (δόσεις) on the lower. Although he does not use this word in §20, we can see its force: soul gives body motion with no return, without even the possibility of a return. As the self-mover, soul is the originative agent of motion in another and this agency marks it as the lowest member of the hierarchy, while body, having no agency of its own, comes to be a self-mover through its participation in what is self-moved (...σωμάτων τῶν κατὰ μέθεξιν αὐτοκινήτων γινομένων). Although the point remains implicit, this argument suggests that agency is required for a place, even at the lowest level, in the hierarchy.

The self-mover, while originating its own motion, is not altogether self-sufficient; because soul reverts upon itself, even as self-mover it is distinguished into mover and moved and so requires a prior unmoved source or cause of its motion. This cause is νοῦς; but νοῦς too is not completely self-sufficient. Although unmoved, νοῦς is not complete unity – in νοῦς there is self-knowledge and so a distinction between a knower and a known. Hence a higher principle is required: "above" νοῦς is the one, identical with the Good and so, §20 concludes, the ἀρχή of all things, as has been shown (ἀρχὴ ἄρα πάντων, ὡς δέδεικται).

§21 clarifies the force of these arguments and sums up the implications for the concept of body.[13] Every sequence, or causal chain, has its beginning in, and depends upon, a monad that generates the appropriate manifold and to which the manifold can be returned. Thus, the three levels of the hierarchy of movers exhibit a dynamic relation linking them together as cause and effect. While the force of this link will be expressed for body, it remains incompletely explained. "From these things it is clear that both the one and the many belong to body by nature" (ἐκ δὴ τούτων φανερὸν ὅτι καὶ τῇ φύσει τοῦ σώματος ὑπάρχει τό τε ἓν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ...). The "one" presumably comes to body through soul, when it gives the gift of motion that makes body become a "self-mover"; the many that belongs to it "by nature" will appear clearly when Proclus explains how body has parts.

The dynamic relation linking the levels of the hierarchy raises an important point for Proclus. Every productive cause brings forth its effects through its completeness and overflowing power (διὰ τελειότητα καὶ δυνάμεως περιουσίαν) (§27).[14] "Power" here is identified with completeness. Consequently, what is incomplete or unable to produce an effect will be "impotent". As we shall see below, having "power" and being "powerless" are key to Proclus's understanding of body.

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13 As Chlup (2012), 101 expresses the point: "[...] participation is a general all-pervading process, concerning not just the relation between the Forms and particulars, but even more importantly the relation of each single level of reality to another level superior to it."

14 Lloyd (1976), 146–147 takes Proclus's arguments in this section of the *ET* to establish the strong version of the principle that the cause is greater than its effect for the later history of philosophy.

II. Parts and Wholes

As we have seen, Proclus denies self-motion to body because it has parts (§15). Everything that is relates to others either as a whole or a part (or by identity or difference) (§66).[15] Thus wholes and parts, examined in §66–74, are universal predicates and what is true of anything having parts will be true for body. Indeed, Proclus reaches a conclusion crucial to his definition of body. Every whole is (1) a "whole prior to parts", or (2) a whole considered in relation to parts, either (2a) a "whole of parts" or (2b) a "whole in the part" (§67). Proclus takes these wholes in order. If "we contemplate the form of each thing" (τὸ ἑκάστου θεωροῦμεν εἶδος) in respect of its being a cause, then we call it (1) a whole prior to the parts (ὅλον ἐκεῖνο πρὸ τῶν μερῶν). It is the whole as a cause, considered in itself as such without reference to its effects.[16] Like the unmoved, the whole prior to the parts is clearly identified as the primary cause. It is entirely independent and that first principle on which the lower levels depends.

In the parts that participate it, that is in its effects, the whole may be seen in either of two ways. (2a) All the parts may be taken together and this is a whole of parts (ἔστι τοῦτο ἐκ τῶν περῶν ὅλον) such that the loss of any part diminishes this whole; this whole-of-parts is the whole "according to existence" (καθ' ὕπαρξιν). This whole of parts resembles the self-mover, which was such "according to substance". Through its relation to the whole prior to the parts, the whole of parts acquires an intrinsic unity such that a genuine whole *exists*, even though it has parts.

Or (2b) we may see the whole in each of the parts (ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν μερῶν) insofar as each part has come to be according to participation in the whole, participation that "makes the part be a whole as a part" (ποιεῖ τὸ μέρος εἶναι ὅλον μερικῶς); the whole in the part is whole, as the other-moved is moved, according to participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) and this whole, even though it is last, is still the whole "insofar as it imitates the whole of parts" (ᾗ μιμεῖται τὸ ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον). The whole in each of the parts is not constituted in and of itself, but is achieved only through participation, i.e., a relation to a superior whole, a whole that is such in and of itself. In §68, Proclus emphasizes this relation, arguing that every (2b) whole in the part is a part of a (2a) whole of parts.

Not every part can imitate the whole of parts, Proclus concludes, but only those parts that are able to assimilate to a whole whose parts are wholes. This point, to which I shall return below, seems to suggest that there may be parts that do not

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15 In *ET* §66, in addition to parts and wholes, Proclus includes identity and difference. I omit identity and difference because they do not bear on the definition of body.

16 This "whole" may be derived from Plato, *Theaet.* 204–5, *Soph.* 244–5; its relation to the one is not clear here in the *ET*. But it may best be thought of as a kind of unity that already contains diversity. Cf. Siorvanes (1996), 69–71.

enter into a relation, or participate, in a whole of parts. The status of such parts is obscure precisely because they lie outside any kind of whole or unity.

A clear hierarchy among these wholes now follows: the primary wholeness causes wholes of parts, which cause a whole in the part. Conversely, the whole in the part presupposes the whole of parts without which no part could be (§68). The whole of the parts in turn presupposes the primary wholeness (τὸ πρώτως ὅλον) that, having no parts, is in and of itself the first cause (§69). As first cause, the primary wholeness originates all wholes of parts and through them – they are somehow in the middle − any whole in the part. Again, he emphasizes the causal character of the wholes and thereby draws attention to the dynamic relations in the hierarchy.

Proclus characterizes this dynamic relation in dramatic language: all things that are more whole, inhering in their originative principles (ἐν τοῖς ἀρχηγικοῖς) "shine forth onto their participants" (εἰς τὰ μετέχοντα ἐλλάμπει) before those things having parts and they withdraw from what participated them later (§70). For example, a thing must be before it can have life and must have life before it can be human; conversely, reason can fail first leaving heartbeat or breathing, i.e., life; then life can fail, but something remains.

The higher cause is prior and more important because it is more active (δραστικώτερον) and so acts sooner, or logically prior, on the participant (πρότερον εἰς το μετέχον ἐνεργεῖ); indeed, an effect is acted upon first by what is more powerful (τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ δυνατωτέρου πάσχει προτέρου). Consequently, when the secondary cause acts, the first cause "co-acts" (συνεργεῖ) because all the effects of the secondary cause are also from the higher cause by means of a "concomitant generation" (συναπογεννᾷ).

In Proclus's example, a higher cause gives a thing being before a second cause gives it life. The first cause, granting being, provides the foundation for all subsequent predicates, e.g., life, and in so doing enables those predicates; in this sense, the first cause also contributes to the gift of life. Conversely, after the second cause has withdrawn, e.g., life is gone, the higher cause will still be present, still acting, and so something remains. Proclus concludes by returning to the notion of power: for the gift of what is more powerful – the first or higher cause – is slower to leave, first because it remains active and secondly because the gift of the second cause, in which the first cause has co-operated, makes the first cause's irradiation stronger (τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἔλλαμψιν ἐδυνάμωσεν). The power of the first cause is not only prior to and stronger than the second cause, it is to some extent duplicated and so enhanced by the gift of the second cause.[17]

Consequently, the irradiations from the originative causes "come to be in a sense substrata" (ὑποκείμενά πως γίνεται) for the gifts from what has more parts (ταῖς τῶν

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[17] Although the point lies beyond the interests of this paper, we may note that there is a sense in which the second cause retains its autonomy as a cause, i.e. the effect could not come about without it. Cf. Steel (1996), 121–137.

μερικωτέρων μεταδόσεσι) (§71).[18] That is, the irradiations of the prior cause underlie subsequent gifts. As underlying, originative causes both enable the secondary causes and constitute the most basic substrata, or foundation, of the recipient.

In §70, the primary cause is what is "more whole" while the secondary causes are those which have parts. §71 further specifies the causal dynamic between what is absolutely whole and a whole that has parts.[19] Again, an order of precedence in participation follows, with the more whole coming first (τῶν ὁλικωτέρων προενεργούντων) followed by what is bestowed through things that are "more parted" (τῶν μερικωτέρων). (We shall see in a moment that these are the forms.) Therefore, Proclus concludes here, the more complete and more whole causes are in every way prior (τελειοτέρων πρόεισι και ὁλικωτέρων αἰτίων), providing a basis for everything else (§72).

Proclus completes §72 with an important account of matter and body as they relate to this hierarchy. Matter, taking its origin from the one, is in itself without any part, or share, in the forms (ἡ μὲν ὕλη, ἐκ τοῦ ἑνος ὑποσᾶσα καθ' αὑτὴν εἴδους ἐστὶν ἄμοιρος). The One, being the most universal cause, irradiates down giving matter the character of a substratum that, by virtue of this irradiation of oneness, becomes able to receive causes, i.e., the forms, that are more "parted". Consequently, matter's relation to the one both precedes and succeeds its relation to any and all the forms, while the forms constitute relations posterior to the causality of the One. The characterization of matter here is clearly a direct result of the conclusions reached in §71 and §72.

Now Proclus turns to body: it is also clear why body, in virtue of itself, even though it participates being, is without a share, or part, in soul (τὸ δὲ σῶμα καθ' αὑτό, εἰ καὶ τοῦ ὄντος μετέχε, ψυχῆς ἀμέτοχόν ἐστιν) (§72). Body is unlike matter: "matter, being the substrate of all things, comes forth from the cause of all things" (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὕλη, ὑποκείμενον οὖσα πάντων, ἐκ τοῦ πάντων αἰτίου προῆλθε);[20] "body, being the substratum of what is besouled, being derived from what is more whole than soul, in its way participates being" (τὸ δὲ σῶμα, ὑποκείμενον ὂν τῆς ψυχώσεως, ἐκ τοῦ ὁλικωτέρου τῆς ψυχῆς ὑφέστηκε, τοῦ ὄντος ὁπωσοῦν μετασχόν). Proclus unequivocally identifies being as a more universal, or general, cause than Soul. Thus body can participate being, while not participating soul, and yet through participating being body is made a substratum of what has soul. This in turn enables body to receive characteristics (from the forms). And so body's primary participation must be in being, not soul.

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18 For a closer examination of Proclus' use of ὑποκείμενον, cf. Meijer (2003), 400.

19 Martin (2008), 34–35 emphasizes the structure as comparative and notes, citing these propositions, that "the central concept of Proclus's ontology is *order* as that concept is understood by logicians".

20 Proclus also discusses matter in *De Malorum subsistentia* §§30–37; for a study of matter there as well as it relation (or more precisely lack thereof) to evil(s), see See Opsomer (2001).

We saw above (in the account of the self-mover and what is other-moved) that body and soul must remain distinct. Through its relation to soul, body becomes what soul is in itself, a self-mover. But before a gift such as motion can be given, there must be a substratum able to receive it. In the case of matter, "the cause of all things" provides the substratum while for body "being" provides the substratum. Soul is effectively a "lower" cause, i.e., it comes later and leaves sooner, as we see in Proclus's example of life.

For Proclus, these relations raise an important question: which general cause, being or wholeness, is prior. He answers it directly (§73): every whole is simultaneously some being and participates being; but not every being results in being a whole. So being must be prior to wholeness. The central issue at stake here appears if we consider the status of "parts". Even if we grant that a part must be "of a whole", *qua* part it must first "be". A whole of parts must be composed of parts that are. Being must be present to the parts as well as the whole and so being is more general. As more general, being is present to a greater number of participants. The cause of more effects is superior, while the cause of fewer effects is inferior (§60). So being is prior to wholeness as the more general cause of body and body participates being as its prior cause. By virtue of its relation to being, body becomes a substratum able to receive more parted characteristics.

The discussion of wholeness is completed in §74 by a distinction between wholes and forms, which leads to a further tripartite hierarchy. Something indivisible is a whole, insofar as it is indivisible. But not every whole is a form. Anything is a whole which is composed of parts, whether or not the parts are already cut; a form is what is "already cut" (ἤδη τεμνόμενον) into many individuals. Thus, wholeness and forms are distinct and wholeness belongs to more things (ὑπάρχει πλείοσι). The cause of more effects is superior and so wholeness is above "the forms of beings" (τὰ εἴδη. . . τῶν ὄντων); wholeness is in the middle between Being, which is most general, and the forms, which are actually cut into parts. Through wholeness being reaches the forms and so Proclus concludes "the forms are beings but not every being is a form (. . . καὶ τὰ εἴδη ὄντα εἶναι, μὴ μέντοι πᾶν ὂν εἶδος) (§74). This point completes the analysis of wholes and parts.

III. Body: Its Definition and Status in the *Elements*

Propositions §75–80 take us to Proclus's definition of body. Establishing that every cause transcends its effect, (§75), Proclus returns to the distinction between what produces motion while remaining unmoved and what produces motion being moved.[21] Earlier (§14–15) he considered the causes themselves; now he asks about

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21 Cf. also *ET* §7: Every productive cause is superior to that which it produces". Proclus' view here

the effects of these causes (§ 76). Everything coming-to-be from an unmoved cause (ἀπὸ ἀκινήτου αἰτίας) has unchanging existence (ἀμετάβλητον ἔχει τὴν ὕπαρξιν) while everything that comes to be from a moved cause has a changing (μεταβλητήν) existence. While the first unmoved cause is the One (§26), the second cause, the self-mover, is identified here in §76 as that which "is always" (ἀεὶ δὲ ἔστιν); "always", Proclus explains, expresses the eternal productivity of the unmoved mover resulting in an effect that comes to be always and always is (ἀεί γίνεται . . . καὶ ἀεὶ ἔστι, . . .), an eternal procession (πρόοδον ἀεί) stemming from the activity (τὴν ἐνέργειαν) of this cause (§76;10 – 12). In short, a first cause that produces its effect without itself changing results in an effect that is self-moving and also eternal in the sense of "always". While the first cause is unmoved, this self-moving effect expresses its "always" by always changing; because it always changes, its effects are variable, i.e., things that come to be and pass away.[22]

In §77 through §79 Proclus spells out the kinds of potency involved in these cause/effect relations, thereby laying the ground for his definition of body. He first defines any causal relation, including that of unmoved cause and eternal effect, in terms of potency and actuality (§77). The language of potency and actuality is the language of Aristotle but the position is the position of Proclus.[23] The effect is potential and it is advanced to actuality by something that is actually what the effect is potentially. What is potential cannot, *qua* potential, cause itself. It requires what is actual and what is actual is as such perfect (or complete) (τέλειον). In short, whatever is potential is by definition imperfect (or incomplete) and acquires its perfection from something other than itself, something already actual. As actual, the cause is by definition complete or perfect.

This causal relation enables Proclus to distinguish between perfect and imperfect potency – a distinction not found in Aristotle (§78). Perfect potency is the potency of the cause, a cause which has perfect potency makes others perfect through its own activities. Indeed, what can perfect others must itself be more perfect than its effects. The perfect potency of the cause stands in contrast to the imperfect potency of the effect. The potency of the effect requires something pre-existing, something other than itself, something already actual, and so the potency of the effect must be imperfect (or incomplete) (ἀτελής). Being imperfect, or incomplete, the effect needs the perfection found in another in order to become perfect and it becomes perfect by participating in the perfection of that other. Again, this argument leads Proclus to a forceful conclusion: perfect potency resides in what is actual and as such it

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raises a special problem about the status of nature, as distinct from body. For an excellent treatment of this problem, cf. Lernould (2012).

22 Aristotle, *Physics* VIII, 6, 260a15 – 18.

23 Plato of course relies on the notion of "power", most famously as a characterization of being at *Soph.* 247e. But the word ἐνέργεια, actuality, is coined by Aristotle. For the conjunction of these terms used to explain motion, cf. *Metaphysics* IX, *passim*. For a full discussion of "power" in Proclus, especially as it may be derived from the *Soph.*, cf. Van Riel (2001), 140 – 143.

begets new actuality;[24] what is imperfect belongs to what is only potentially, deriving its perfection from the actual.

The progression from §76 through §78 is telling: Proclus first identifies actuality and potency as constituting a cause/effect relation; he next defines each by emphasizing the perfection (or completeness) of the cause and the imperfection (or incompleteness) of the effect; lastly, (§78) he enters them into a dynamic relation/participation, that explains the change in the effect brought about by its relation to the cause. In this sense, §78 is an account of becoming in the effect through its relation/participation to the cause, and this relation uses the definitions established in §76 and §77. Perfect potency explains the target of participation for that which has imperfect potency such that becoming results.

The propositional structure of *ET* allows Proclus to sort out the definitions of cause and effect, §77, from his account of the relation that produces becoming in the effect, §78.[25] Thus the cause is defined as actual and the effect as potential (§77). But when, in a separate step – and a separate proposition (§78) –, he explains the productive efficacy of the cause, he calls on "perfect potency" to express the power of actuality as it acts, through its effect participating it; likewise, he calls on "imperfect potency" to express the power of the effect to be acted upon.

As an historical aside, the separation of being, actuality as complete perfection, and becoming, the process by which the cause produces its effect through participation, clearly has its origins in Plato; but Proclus expresses it in the Aristotelian language of potency and actuality. "Potency", δύναμις, expresses capacity or ability, that Proclus distinguishes into (a) ability to produce motion in another, perfect potency identified with substance that is actual and a cause, and (b) ability to be moved by another, imperfect potency identified with an effect that is incomplete, having its actuality or completeness in its cause. The distinction between perfect and imperfect potency allows him to account for a relation between mover and moved by subordinating the incomplete to the complete through "participation": the effect acquires the perfection of another *via* a direct relation to it.

Proclus' peculiar subordination of effect to cause allows Proclus to characterize everything that becomes (πᾶν τὸ γενόμενον): it arises from a twofold potency (ἐκ τῆς διττῆς δυνάμεως), namely the imperfect potency of what becomes and the perfect potency of the maker (τὸ ποιοῦν), which are fitted together because the actuality of the maker is the actuality of what becomes (§79). In becoming, i.e., in the effect that becomes, every actuality proceeds from a potency already present in the moved as it enters into a relation with that which is perfect in the mover. This direct relation of moved to its mover, he concludes, explains why motion never occurs between two

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24 Siorvanes (1996), 100 makes the helpful point that this kind of power, and hence cause, cannot hold back or withhold its productivity.
25 O'Meara (1989), 158 notes the organizing "power" Proclus exhibits in the *ET*. The point lies beyond the bounds of this paper, but the way in which the organization of the propositions is related to their content raises serious questions about this work.

The Status of Body in Proclus — 79

chance things: the mover always acts on something capable of being affected while the moved never possesses a nature that would prevent it from responding to the perfection of its mover.

With these distinctions in place, Proclus is now ready to let the shoe drop in regard to body: the proper nature of all body is "to be acted upon" (πάσχειν) while that of every incorporeal is "to make" (ποιεῖν) (§80).[26] Body is always "inactive" (ἀδρανές) while the incorporeal is "impassible" (ἀπαθές). So body cannot act and the incorporeal cannot be acted upon. But, this characterization applies only to body and the incorporeal considered apart, each in itself. Proclus immediately adds an important point: through their association, the incorporeal comes to be acted upon and bodies too, as if through partnership, become to an extent able to act. In short, we have here not only an account of the nature of body, but also an immediate turn to whatever is a combination of body and the incorporeal. What does this definition and Proclus's addendum amount to and what does it say about body?

Body, Proclus insists, has no character except divisibility (διαιρετόν ἐστι μόνον); since every part is divisible and then every part again, to infinity, body is able to be acted upon. There is no sense in which body can *per se* be active: it is "impotent" and therefore is involved in change only as being subject to division and acted upon (εἴπερ τὸ σῶμα, καθὸ σῶμα, οὐ ποιεῖ, πρὸς τὸ διαιρεῖσθαι μόνον καὶ πάσχειν ἐκκείμενον). The complete absence of agency further implies that in and of itself body must be without quality and without potency. Here we have body: being divisible, it is that which is completely without agency, devoid of potency. If, as we have just seen, the mover has perfect potency and the moved has incomplete potency, body is not only not a mover, but considered strictly as body it cannot even be something moved. Without any potency, it has no way of entering into a relation with what is actual and as such complete or perfect.

Here we see the force of several earlier points. In the discussion of different kinds of wholes (§67), which we considered earlier, Proclus concludes that the weakest kind, the whole in the part, is still a whole; this point is *not* true, he asserts, for every part but only for those that can assimilate to a whole whose parts are wholes. In body, we have that which is nothing but divisibility into parts that are themselves divisible. There can be no wholeness here, just as there is no power. So some parts of body may not become wholes, but only those parts that can assimilate themselves to the lowest kind of whole, a whole whose parts are wholes. The need to assimilate brings out the point behind the concluding line of §79, i.e., there is nothing chance in the relation of cause to effect because the elements of cause and effect "fit together". In the complete absence of potency, body has no way of fitting together with any

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26 Siorvanes (1996), 183 claims: "Body by itself is just a three-dimensional quantity, and is predicated only of being, while pure Matter can be reached only by unity." There is no mention here of either "dimension" or "quantity." We shall see in a moment the distinction between body and matter.

kind of actuality or perfect (or even imperfect) potency. Completely without power, it has no way to assimilate itself to a whole whose parts are wholes.

Before proceeding with the relation of body to what is incorporeal, we may note that we have here the solution to the question raised at the outset of this paper. Why is body never mentioned as an element or within the causal patterns so important in Proclus's construction of the cosmos? Body cannot in any sense serve as an element or a cause because it has no agency. In a hierarchical arrangement of causes and effects from what is most perfect and so most active to what is least active and so incomplete or imperfect, body has no place. Having no potency, body is "off the bottom of the chart": without potency it cannot even be moved or, speaking generally, be an effect. Being nothing but divisibility into parts, body has no relation to any kind of whole. It possesses no basis for participation in a more perfect potency or in a whole whose parts are wholes. Body is in a dire situation.

We know from §73 that parts, even as parts, must be. Being irradiates down onto parts making a substratum. And so body must be as a substratum (thanks to the gift given it by being). In §80, the next sentence establishes an association (κοινονίαν) or partnership (μετουσίαν) between body and what is incorporeal. When they come together, the incorporeal is "in" the body. "In", as we saw above, means diffused throughout while remaining distinct. The incorporeal, being diffused throughout body, becomes divisible and is divided when body is divided. Conversely, body, having the incorporeal within it, will act (ποιήσει), although not by virtue of being body; it acts by virtue of having the incorporeal diffused throughout it, granting body a part in the power of acting.[27]

Proclus introduced body into the *Elements* in §15, contrasting it, as having parts, with the incorporeal self-mover. In §20, he explains how, when soul is present in body, the two remain distinct, but body through participation in soul becomes what soul is in its very substance, a self-mover. Here in §80, the metaphysical underpinnings of these earlier assertions become clear.

This view, however Aristotelian the language in which it is expressed, recalls Plato.[28] Those who are confused think body is a cause and fail to notice that the causality attributed to body actually stems from the soul present to it.[29] Since all body

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27 The implications of this point for what is incorporeal lie beyond the bounds of this paper. On this point, however, cf. Chlup (2012), 106 ff.

28 The point here is made clear by Russi (2009), 145–146: "The extension of these two tenets (the absence of a form-matter relationship and the sole efficaciousness of intelligible causality) to the whole realm of becoming entails that the notion of potential as understood in Aristotelian terms (i.e. as a condition proper to a substratum capable of coming to actuality), becomes completely meaningless."

29 Harari (2008), 156–157 argues: "... fire and the sun produce in virtue of their being, as the actualization of their inner activity leads in turn to the external activity that causally affects other entities. This notion of production resembles the Stoic notion of cause, in viewing causes as active factors, [and she cites §80] but it is modeled, as Anthony Lloyd has shown, on Aristotle's notion of physical causation, found especially in *Physics* III, 3." Setting aside the problem of what "physical causation"

appears to have some degree of power, the conclusion follows – although Proclus does not draw it here – that all body has the incorporeal present to it. We see here the importance of Proclus's discussion of parts and wholes. In and of itself, body is nothing but divisibility, i.e., it is divisible into parts that are divisible to infinity. Because, as we have also seen, being is more general than wholeness and has more effects, the parts of body *are*, by virtue of being, even as parts, and being serves as a kind of substratum into which "more parted" principles may grant their gifts. We have seen that the forms are what has been actually "cut", i.e., are these principles. For this reason, body, properly speaking, participates being, not soul.

Soul is a self-mover. As such, it grants to body neither its being nor its formal characteristics. Soul, a self-mover, grants motion to body. Body is "other-moved", namely it is moved by soul, which, being dispersed throughout body, gives the gift of a share of power in regard to motion. And through this power, we may conclude, body may enter into a relation to what is more complete, more perfect power, and so take on formal attributes.

In and of itself, body is in every case below the hierarchy that represents what is.[30] It is not other-moved until soul descends into it and thereby transforms it. However, it cannot be a substratum until being shines onto it, thereby irradiating it. It cannot be even the weakest kind of whole, until the incorporeal is diffused throughout it. On its own, body, being nothing but divisibility, is in every way helpless and powerless. In every way, in every case, gifts are given to help body out, to elevate it onto the lowest level of the hierarchy.

IV. Conclusion

The *Elements of Theology* examines the primary constitutive principles that enter into regular patterns of causality. As I have already suggested, there is no systematic examination of body in the *Elements* because it is in no sense an element or a cause. But if we look across the *Elements*, body has a clear status throughout Proclus's analysis of causal relations. It is below the hierarchy of causes and it is the consistent recipient of gifts. Now we can say why this is the case. The patterns of causality established by Proclus are designed to explain all effects, even down to the lowest. And body consistently appears as the "lowest" effect (with the possible exception of mat-

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means, we may note that Proclus' view is exactly the opposite of Aristotle's. In *Physics* III, 3 potency is actualized on contact with actuality because the potency has in it an intrinsic orientation toward actuality. There is no downward "gift" for Aristotle; on the mover/moved relation in Aristotle and his use of the word "imitate", cf. Lang (1994), 335–354.

30 For a full analysis of Proclus's language here, along with a critique of Dodd's interpretation, cf. Perkams (2006), 178–179 who concludes: "The passage makes perfect sense if one understands the third, lowest part of the triad as the compound, i.e. not as a body without qualification but as an unsoiled body".

ter), the effect most remote from the one, from wholeness, from being, from the unmoved source of motion. And so looking across a causal pattern, we can identify a regular pattern, a trace, of causality across even the lowest effects.

As we have seen, body is the recipient of gifts from soul and being. These gifts, given with no possibility of return, rescue body from its dire position as powerless and helpless. But this portrait of body, nothing but divisibility, powerless, in need of gifts with nothing to give in return, is far from Proclus's last word on the subject of body.

Superior body is presided over by soul and the best kind of body is presided over by the best kind of soul, which in its turn is linked to intelligence (§111). Indeed, body participating in soul becomes not only animate and intellective but even divine (§129).[31] The powers of the gods take their origin from above and, extending through intermediaries, reach down to embrace terrestrial regions (§140). Therefore, the gods are present alike to all things; each has its share in their presence, proportionate to its station, some perpetually, others for a time, some incorporeally, and others through the body (§142). Body, in no sense a cause or element, in every sense in need of gifts, is not thereby to be despised or treated with disrespect. For body too, in all its helplessness, is cared for by soul and embraced by the divine. Through their care, this embrace, it enters into a relation with soul and with the divine; via this relation, body achieves a position at the lowest level of the hierarchy of reality, a level that entitles body to its degree of respect.[32]

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[31] Compare this point to the arguments for the eternity of the world in *de Aeternitate Mundi* Argument IV and XVIII in Lang and Macro (2001), 50 and 144.
[32] Editorial note: Helen Lang recognizes with warm appreciation the editorial assistance of Jon McGinnis and Ariella Lang.

Antonio Vargas
Proclus on Time and the Units of Time

I. The Problem of the Parts of Time for Proclus[1]

Is time's division into days, months, and years an intrinsic feature of time or an ordering extrinsic to its passage? Ever since philosophers adopted the cosmological model of uniform motions in the heavens, the question seems to have been settled: the discrete intervals of time exist only for beings located on the surface of the Earth. Day and night and the seasons are local phenomena, not cosmic states of affairs corresponding to qualitatively different times. This is Proclus' position on the perceptible divisions of time: at first sight, it is improper to call the duration of sunshine in a certain location a part of time, since it does not partake in the omnipresence of the now. Proclus formulates this simultaneity criterion in his *Timaeus* Commentary:

> Proclus *In Tim.* III.35.17–23
> However, we hold time to be present to the totality of the world both according to the whole of itself that remains and according to all the parts of its procession. For one and the same now is everywhere identical. It is necessary then for the day and the other things we call parts of time to be everywhere identical, even if they are participated in a partial and differentiated manner by the sensible products of the demiurge.

The end of the quote points to the fact that Proclus wishes to preserve some sense in which Day and other units of time can be said to be parts of time. Indeed, he surprises us by applying to the units of time such as days, months and years the Platonic gesture of explaining sensible instances by means of intelligible entities: days and nights in terms of an intelligible Day and Night, months in terms of an intelligible Month, years in terms of an intelligible Year:

> *In Tim.* III.35.25–36.2
> Therefore, as our father Syrianus said in his philosophical teaching, not in order to subvert the appearances [of day and night], (for Timaeus also refers to these things [viz. the visible day and night], which are also usually referred to by the many), but, as was his wont, leading them back to the more sovereign hypostases, *day and night are demiurgic measures of time*, stirring up and unfolding both the visible and invisible life, motion and ordering activity of the sphere of the fixed stars. For these are true parts of time, are identically present to all things, and comprehend the original cause (πρωτουργὸν αἰτίαν) of the visible day and night, each of which are different in visible time.

In Tim. III.36.10 – 15

But the month unfolds the lunar sphere and the whole completion of revolution of the other [heavenly body, viz. the moon.], *being truly a divine temporal measure. And the year is that which perfects and connects the whole of the heavens and the heavenly bodies* (τὴν μέσην ὅλην δημιουργίαν), according to which the sun is seen possessing the greatest power, and measuring all things together with time.

My purpose here will be to present an interpretation of what these "demiurgic measures", Day itself, Month itself, and Year itself, for instance, consist in within Proclus' system. First however, let me present the commitments behind Proclus' defense of Day, Month and Year as really existing parts of time. These commitments are three in kind: existential, exegetical, and theoretical.[2] Existentially, Proclus reports that such parts of time were celebrated as gods in theurgic rituals (*In Tim.* III.32.17 – 21; 40.19 – 41.24) and Marinus tells us that natural periods of time determined much of Proclus' religious activity (*Vit. Proc.* §11.19).

Exegetically, Proclus is committed to reading Plato ultra-charitably and in Plato's *Timaeus* he encountered not only the well known descriptions of time as a "moving image of eternity" and "an eternal image proceeding according to number" (*Tim.* 37d5 – 8), but also at *Tim.* 37e1 – 5 he found a reference to days, nights, months and years as parts of time. Additionally, at *Laws* X 899b he found a reference to years, months and seasons as gods.

Plato, *Laws* X 899b3 – 8

Now consider all the stars and the moon and the years and the months and all the seasons: what can we do except repeat the same story? A soul or souls – and perfectly virtuous souls at that – have been shown to be the cause of all these phenomena, and whether it is by their living presence in matter that they direct the heavens, or by some other means, we shall insist that these souls are gods. (tr. Saunders)

Finally, on a theoretical level, Proclus agreed with Aristotle's thesis expressed in *GA* IV, 10 and *GC* II, 10 that the periods of natural processes were intrinsically measured in terms of the periods of heavenly bodies. Proclus read this as an explanation of the claim made by the Muses at *Rep.* IX.546a4 – 8, that all living beings are governed by cycles of fertility and sterility, grounding Aristotle's thesis on Platonic authority. This commitment to an intrinsic measure of temporal processes, an objective "age" so to speak, of each changing thing in the world (and even the world itself) is what leads Proclus to recognize eternally existent parts of time. His argument is the focus of the next section.[3]

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2 I employ existential in the sense of pertaining to human existence, not in the ontological sense of affirming the existence of some object. Existential factors are important in understanding Proclus' theory of time, particularly due to the role of Orphic myth in his cosmology, but for the purposes of this paper I will not discuss them in any detail.

3 It would be a mistake to think that to explain Proclus' position in terms of exegetical, existential and theoretical commitments of his own is a justification to restrict the relevance of his opinions to

II. Time and the Parts of Time as Intellects

This last, theoretical commitment to the existence of natural measure is fundamental for explaining how Proclus conceives of time itself, and why this allows him to conceive of time as possessing real parts. To anticipate the conclusion, Proclus conceives time to be an intellect, which therefore can be said to have parts insofar as it is participated in by more partial intellects. Let us see how this arises from the belief in natural measures of change.

The belief in natural measures consists in the observation that each living being has a certain determinate lifespan, every heavenly body a measure for its revolutions, and every non-living body a certain duration for its existence. The duration allotted to each being in the cosmos is connected with a second phenomenon, timing, which is the activation at the appropriate age of each of the possibilities contained in natural forms. Thus, at a certain time boys become men, and at different time of the year, different living species reproduce and different meteorological phenomena occur. Or, on another scale, some animals are diurnal, others are nocturnal, and some flowers unfurl their leaves shortly before sunrise and draw them back shortly before sunset. Proclus frequently refers to both phenomena and in the following passage of his *Republic* commentary we can find references to both of them, along with their determination by the periods of heavenly bodies:[4]

> Proclus, *In Remp.* II.13.10 – 14.8
> Therefore, for all beings, both the measures of lives (Τά μέτρα τῶν βίων)[= the phenomenon of natural measure] as well as the different stages of life (τὰ εἴδη τὰ διάφορα τῆς ζωῆς) [=the phenomenon of timing] depend upon the cyclical periods of the world. Aristotle at any rate says that less sovereign periods follow upon more sovereign ones. But the periods of perpetual beings are more sovereign, and those of mortals are less so. And although all perpetual beings contribute to all mortal beings, different perpetual beings are causes for different mortal beings of their periods.

Taken together, the measure of the duration of each being and the timing of their activities ensure that the existence of each species is sustainable and thus the perpetu-

ity of natural species. This allows us to observe a second aspect of both measure and timing. These phenomena can be observed not only in the case of individuals, but also of eternal forms. Each species of living being has its life cycle by which generations succeed one another and each element its proper cycle whereby its matter is replenished, so that the seas are never entirely evaporated, for instance. Thus not only does each individual have a proper time, each eternal form has its proper perpetuity or perpetual measure.[5]

Proclus believes not only that there are measures for natural species and perpetual heavenly motions, but also a cosmic measure for all movement in the cosmos. In no place does he argue for the existence of such a measure but in the following passage we can see him giving an implicit reason:

> *In Tim.* III.57.14–20
> These [measures of planetary movement] therefore are coordinated after the one measure of the whole period. And although the single monad of time is itself a perfect and entire number, there is an appropriate measure (be it Saturnian, or Jovian, or Lunar, or other) deriving from it in each revolution, which receives its unique characteristic (ἰδιότητα) from the soul in each [heavenly body] and its moving divinity. For one number belongs to the Sun, another to a horse, and another to a plant, whereas the cosmic number is common to all of them. On this account also we say, that there is the same time everywhere.

Here we see that the existence of a cosmic measure has the function of assuring that "there is the same time everywhere" and that the developments determined by the many particular temporal measures can be coordinated with one another in a single temporal continuum. Since this cosmic number is what unites all temporal development into a single totality, Proclus calls it time. A further reason for postulating such a global measure of change is to ensure the production of a harmonious and perpetual coming-to-be in the sublunar world: if the period of each sublunar species is dependent upon some heavenly period, yet each heavenly body is an autonomous self-moving body, there appears to be no guarantee that the sum effect of the many autonomous heavenly movements will be a sublunar world with perpetual species. That can only be guaranteed if there is above the individual measures of heavenly movement a global measure that coordinates them all and harmonizes them.

Furthermore, for Proclus not only bodily changes are measured, but also changes in the activities of souls. For him, souls are perfected by being measured by time (*In Tim.* III.3.10–4.8). After all, if all movement is to be led back to the self-movement of souls (as per *ET* §14 & 20), then *a fortiori* if bodily change is measured, so must psychic change be. And Proclus argues that every soul has a cyclic and thus measured activity governing its ascents and descents in his *ET* §198–200.

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5 Such species-measures are a particular concern of Proclus in his discussion of the Muses' speech in the thirteenth essay in *In Remp.* where he takes them to be discussing, amongst other things, the measure that rules the development of the entire human species.

Proclus takes the fact that time measures psychic activity to be his strongest proof (against Plotinus) that time is not a product of soul (*In Tim.* III.22.4 – 21). The reason for this is that since temporal measures are normative for the duration of beings, determining when they should start their activities and when they should come to-be, they must exist prior to the changes they measure. Proclus makes this point by comparing the measure of temporal development with the *logos* contained in our form that determines that we should have five fingers:

> *In Tim.* III.26.15 – 24
> For if the time in the participants is a number as that which is counted, what will be the time which is a number corresponding to the counting out (κατὰ τὸ ἀριθμεῖν) of that number [i.e. the time in the participants]? To name the partial soul is absurd. For the number in it [i.e. the partial soul] that counts time is derivative, as the number in us that counts our fingers. *In no way is that* [number in the partial soul] *the number that makes the fingers on one hand five, but the number that counts what nature has produced as of that amount. We are searching, however, for the cause of the existence of the time that is counted.*[6]

The priority of temporal measures with respect to what they measure, coupled with the fact that time itself is ultimately the single measure that measures all changing activities, be they corporeal or psychic, means that time is an eternally existing substance prior to and yet still participated by souls and bodies. That is, it is an intellect, a thesis he often repeats (cf. *In Tim.* III.25.9 – 16; 28.1 – 3; 14 – 24, *In Remp.* II.16.3 – 13; 17.21 – 18.10), as for instance here:

> *In Tim.* III.25.9 – 16
> Isn't the following, then, the best thing to say: that since it is a substance perfective of souls and present to all things that change, time is an intellect (νοῦν εἶναι), but one that not only remains, but also changes? It remains according to its inner activity, by which it is also really eternal, while it changes according to its outwardly proceeding activity, by which it determines every transition?

This is a surprising thesis: how can time, which has appeared to many to be the most insubstantial and fleeting entity, be said to be an eternal thinking substance? It is important to remember that here Proclus means by time not the change from future to present to past, but rather the eternal order that coordinates all changes, constituting a single present moment and a single continuum of change. The flow normally referred to as time is for Proclus an activity proceeding from this intellect and through which it measures all encosmic change. (cf. *In Tim* III.30.11 – 24)

As an intellect, Time is an eternal knowledge of the whole of real being according to a certain respect.

> *ET* §170.1 – 2; 20 – 24
> Every intellect has simultaneous intellection of things: but while the unparticipated intellect

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6 For a passage making a similar point see *In Tim.* III.20.1 ff.

knows all unconditionally, each subsequent intellect knows all in one especial aspect. Since, then it must know all things or one or else all in one especial aspect, we shall conclude that the last is truth: intellection embraces all things perpetually, and in all intellects but in each it delimits all its objects by a particular character. So that in the act of cognition and in the content known there must be some one dominant aspect, under which all things are simultaneously known and by which all are characterized by the knower. (tr. Dodds, modified)

Which respect is this? Proclus does not tell us explicitly, but given that time is described in the *Timaeus* as an image of Eternity produced by the demiurge, in order to assimilate the world to the eternal living being, which Proclus regards as the sum of all the forms, then it seems safe to say that Time is the contemplation of all the forms under the aspect of eternity. This is not to say that time is eternity: Eternity is a simple being lacking any plurality which is the cause of the immutability of the forms (*In Tim.* III.10.8 – 12.12), whereas the contemplation of the forms as eternal is to contemplate them insofar as they are produced by Eternity and are thus like eternity. They are like Eternity in their immutability, but this immutability does not involve only their abiding perfection, but also their production of perpetual effects. *ET* §67 reads "All that arises from unmoved causes has an invariable substance". Time therefore thinks the plurality of forms as causes of perpetual effects, and we can understand this by saying that it thinks each form according to the proper measures that guarantee its perpetuity.

It thinks an animal species, for instance, as the series of phases in its lifecycle which guarantee its reproduction, and it thinks the forms of the heavenly bodies according to the various stages of the heavenly process, the different relative positions of the planets relative to each other and to the fixed stars, which endlessly repeat themselves. Ultimately, it thinks all the forms by conceiving of the "whole sum of time", the measure appropriate for the entire cosmos, equivalent in extent to the great year, the period in which the heavenly bodies return to their same relative positions.[7] The collection of all temporal measures determining the duration of beings and the timing of their activities is contained within the measure that determines each part of the life of the world. Thus, time determines each stage of the life of the world as a moment proper to certain changes and not to others.

We can therefore say that time's knowledge of all the forms according to perpetuity results in the calculation of the great year and with it the determination of the proper measures of all beings in the world. As an intellect it is not distinct from its knowledge, but rather this calculation is the very knowledge of the forms that it is. It is a separately existing science that calculates this number and whose theorems include the proper measure of every being in the world, their proper ordering

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[7] One might wonder how Proclus can at once conceive of time as a finite whole and also argue that the world has no beginning nor end in time. He confronts the problem *In Remp.* II.11.17 – 12.12, where he proposes to solve the apparent contradiction by saying that although time is finite in being, it is infinite in becoming.

and the activities relevant to the perpetuation of the forms that begin or end at any moment in time.[8]

This conception of time allows us to understand how the parts or units of time, such as day, month and year can exist eternally. They cannot exist as divisions within time, because time is an intellect, and as such indivisible. There is the possibility, however, of conceiving them as intellects themselves, each of which contains the whole of time, that is, themselves calculate the entire great year, doing so, however, in a more "partial" way than time as such. This possibility is given by the fact that each of the periods of the heavenly bodies itself divides the great year, the extent of which is nothing but the lowest common multiple of all of them. Therefore, the whole of time can be conceived as contained within the month, say, because the great year is but the month multiplied so many times. The month and the other parts of time, can therefore be conceived as intellects subordinated to the first intellect of time, which also think the forms according to their perpetuity, and thus calculate the great year, but employ more specific forms to do so.[9] Indeed, Proclus says in *ET* §177 that "things generated out of the superior intelligences in virtue of a single form are produced parcelwise from the derivative intelligences in virtue of a number of forms" and that "secondary intelligences by their more specific discrimination of the forms as it were articulate and elaborate in detail the formative work of the primals". I would therefore suggest that Time is to be understood as the monad of a ser-

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8 As an intellect, this science must exist indivisibly and be known through a single act. How this is to be understood is brought out by a name Proclus uses for time *qua* intellect: the monad of time. Thus time can be conceived as the unit from which all temporal measures are calculated. This unit can further be specified as the now. Aristotle had previously compared the now to the unit (*Phys.* IV.220a4) and Proclus praises him for seeing the need for something indivisible in time (*In Tim.* III.23.20 – 23). Furthermore, just as Aristotle argues that the now is to time as the subject of change is to change (*Phys.* IV.219b22– 220a3), Proclus employs the argument that every change requires a subject of change in order to infer the existence of an eternal time as the necessary presupposition of ever flowing sensible time (*In Tim.* III.26.24 – 30). In doing this, he echoes Iamblichus, who first argued for the existence of time as an eternal reality on the basis of Aristotle's paradox at *Phys.* IV 218a8 – 30 concerning whether the now changes or remains the same (in Simpl. *In Categ.* 353.19 – 356.7). Iamblichus' influential solution was to distinguish between two nows, an eternal now and an ever flowing one. Thus Proclus' intellect of time is the indivisible and eternal now, which is present as a whole at every moment in time (See *In Tim.* III.31.10 – 32.4), and is the unit from which all temporal measures are "calculated". As numbers are somehow supposed to exist in the monad in a unified form (*ET* §21), so probably do all the temporal measures exist in the monad of time

9 Speaking of intellects as separately existing sciences, perhaps we might say that they are sciences capable of deducing the same theorems as time, but which employ a more complex set of postulates to do so, as if one were to construct figures in Euclidean geometry but postulated besides the straight edge and compass, the ability to construct other figures that typically one would construct with the basic instruments. On the basis of the proposal of the previous footnote, that time is to be identified with the single principle of such a science, namely, the unit-now from which all measures are calculated, we can think of these intellects as employing not only the unit-now in their "calculations", but also a unit-now proper to each planet.

ies of intellects, each of which grasps the whole of time but in a more partial way, each intellect containing time as a whole in the part (cf. *ET* §180).

III. Time and the Parts of Time as Unmoved Movers

The intellects in the series of time are named after divisions of sensible time of which they are the cause such as Year, Month and Day. I will now explain how they cause these sensible phenomena. Namely, they are the unmoved movers of the heavens.

At *In Tim.* III.8.29 – 9.21, Proclus gives an account of how the notions of time and eternity are first formed. The notion of time is a notion common to all men and is derived by observing movement, both sublunar and heavenly, and all men come to the conclusion that time is "something pertaining to movement" (κινήσεώς τι). The notion of eternity, on the other hand, is derived by only a few experts, who pay attention to the regular and uniform motions of the heavens and ask what is the source of the fact that the heavens always move and always move uniformly and regularly. They then reason that this cause cannot itself be moved, but must itself be unmoved, and thus not time, something pertaining to movement, but eternal.[10]

This account is clearly modeled after Aristotle's argument for a first unmoved mover in *Physics* VIII.6 and *Metaphysics* XII.6 – 8, taken up by Proclus in §18 and §19 in his *Elements of Physics*. Proclus gives a modified version of Aristotle's arguments in the *Elements of Theology* §14, where he argues not only for the need of an unmoved principle of movement, but also for the need of self-movers:

> Proclus *ET* §14.11 – 18
> But if so, there must be something self-moved. For imagine all things to be at rest: what will be the first thing to be set in motion? Not the unmoved, by the law of its nature. And not the else-moved, for it is moved by another. It remains, then, that the first things set in motion is the self-moved, which is in fact the link between the unmoved and the things moved extrinsically. At once mover and mover, the self-moved is a kind of mean term between the unmoved mover and that which is merely moved.

I take Proclus' counterfactual question "what will be the first thing to be set in motion" to be asking what is the cause of motion's necessary existence. And Proclus rea-

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10 The notions of time and eternity generated by this account are clearly not what Proclus considers the correct notions of time and eternity. A proper notion of time, as we have seen, involves much more than the fact that it somehow pertains to movement, much on the contrary it determines and causes movement. Likewise the unmoved mover responsible for heavenly motions is not eternity for Proclus but something eternal, whereas he would call eternity the cause of being eternal, which is distinct from eternal things.

sons that it must be a self-moved soul, for the unmoved mover *qua* unmoved can only accidentally be a cause of motion, whereas bodies cannot *per se* be movers.[11]

In reaction to Proclus' argument in the *ET*, we might ask: does not the existence of a *per se* moved entity require the existence of a *per se* mover? This is precisely the complication introduced by Proclus' discussion of time. At *In Tim.* III.26.4–15 Proclus argues that time as an eternal intellect must exist in order to mediate between intellect and soul.

> Proclus *In Tim.* III.26.5–15
> For if one thing is only movable, both according to itself and according to its participants, being only the cause of motion like soul (it therefore does nothing but move itself and the others), and another is only immovable, preserving itself immutable and being the cause to other things of being always in the same manner, it is necessary for the things moved by soul for there to be a medium between these two which are extremes, *viz.* between that which is immoveable both in essence and activity, and that which is moveable both according to its own nature and according to what it imparts to other things, being at once immoveable and moved; on the one hand immovable *per se*, but in motion in its participants. And a thing of this kind is time.

It is remarkable here that Proclus appears to identify simple time with the notion of an intellect that is participated in by something that moves, that is, with the general notion of an encosmic intellect, or the intellect participated by a soul that in turn is itself participated in by some body. This does however seem to be Proclus' view when he explains precisely in what way time may be said to be in motion:

> Proclus *In Tim.* III.31.27–32.
> It is therefore moved not *per se*, but according to the participation deriving from it, which is observed in movements, both measuring and bounding them, just like if someone said that the partial soul is divided amongst bodies insofar as some participation of it is divided amongst them, of which it [the soul] contains the cause. For in this manner is time movable, as possessing the cause of the activity proceeding externally from itself and which in the motions is bound and extended by them in a partial manner. Therefore, just as the movements come to be in time by means of the participation, so does time become movable by being participated in by the movements.

Here Proclus explains that time is said to be moved in just the way that the soul is said to be divided about the body because it animates it. But the latter is true for any soul with a body, so the former must obviously be true for any intellect participated in by a soul in time. Thus time must be the intellect of the world soul, the primary intellect to be participated in by an encosmic soul, and in general all intellects that are the cause of motion to some soul will belong to the series of time, that is,

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11 Proclus' argument in the *ET* appears to be compressed and incompletely expressed, for he does not take care to exclude the possibility that the first unmoved mover is the eternal and unchanging essence of soul.

they will be more partial intellects of time, like the Day or the Year.[12] For this reason, one can see that Aristotle's arguments and Proclus' argument from the *Elements* are proofs of the existence of time as Proclus understands it. For they argue for the existence of intellects insofar as they are movers and time is precisely the concept of an intellect which is *per se* a mover. Furthermore, Aristotle argues for the necessity of an unmoved cause of movement to explain the perpetuity of the world, and we have seen that it is precisely this perpetuity which is caused by time's distribution of appropriate measures to all things. Time, therefore, is what Aristotle's unmoved mover becomes within the confines of Proclus' cosmology.[13]

This analogy is not confined to time, but carries over to the parts of time as the proper unmoved movers of the different heavenly bodies. Thus at *In Tim.* III.36.7–9, Proclus says that Day and Night as demiurgic measures preexist unmoved and intellectually the many days and nights which are sensible and are changes which repeat themselves indefinitely. The argument that there must be an unmoved mover to cause perpetual phenomena is implicit in this comparison, and thus Proclus can be seen to be inferring the existence of Day and Night as causes of perpetual movement. At *In Tim.* III.40.32–41.24 the same argument is employed to explain ritual cults of the Month, the Year and Time itself.[14] Earlier, at *In Tim.* III.29.16–25 Proclus remarks that as the entire external activity of time is responsible for the periodic movement of the world soul, parts of time are responsible for the periodic movements of "other souls, natures, the heavenly revolutions and, in the last instance, the entire sublunar world." Finally, at *In Tim.* III.57.14–20 we discover that following

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12 I would like to thank Michael Chase and Marije Martijn for pushing me on the question of exactly what kind of an intellect time is. My conclusion that all encosmic intellects belong to the series of time might be an unexpected way of dispelling the anxiety around calling time an intellect, but I am driven to it by all sides in Proclus' system. One might object that Proclus often calls Time hypercosmic, but Damascius reports that Proclus corrected himself on this point in the lost portion of his commentary on the *Parmenides*, and Proclus himself says that the first encosmic must also be in a certain sense hypercosmic.

13 In another sense, Aristotle's first mover becomes the Demiurge in Proclus' physics. This ambiguity is caused by the fact that, in Proclus' view, Aristotle has placed too weak an entity (a cause of infinite movement) to fulfill too great a role (the first cause of the cosmos). Time seems to me to be the equivalent to the weak entity in Proclus' system. (Of course, in yet another sense, namely *qua* the absolutely simple first principle, Aristotle's first mover becomes the one in Proclus' system, or perhaps the henad of the intellect of the world.)

14 Proclus also mentions here Day, Night and the Seasons, which must be treated differently, since they cannot be taken as units and measures of time. One way to understand their existence as transcendent measures or intellects would be to take them not to be measures of time but of space: Day and Night would be the causes of the eastern and western boundaries of the proper places of living beings, whereas the Seasons would determine their northern and southern boundaries – circumscription of altitude would probably be the work of the forms of the four elements themselves, which divide the world into their natural places. All of this goes much beyond the text, but Proclus does associate the Seasons *qua* goddesses with the allotment of souls to proper places at *In Tim.* I.162.31–164.22.

the unique time, there is a measure for each revolution, determined by the soul and the "divine moving principle" in each heavenly body, which we can naturally take to be the eternally existing measure.

In sum, therefore, we find that Proclus' theory of the parts of time, which at first posits such implausible entities as a "Day itself" and a "Year itself", is actually the Procline absorption of Aristotle's theology of unmoved movers into Platonist physics. Proclus' theory (to the degree that it is successful) improves upon Aristotle's insofar as it does not simply posit a set of eternal and independent causes, but tells us clearly that they are intellects, and furthermore gives us tools for reconstructing what is the content of their intellection, namely the plan of the world that we would attain through an ideal calculation of the ideal rhythms of every natural kind. Not only does Proclus tell us what Aristotle's unmoved movers are thinking, he further gives a reason for why they should all result in a single harmonious order of change in the sublunar world, for they are all ultimately more partial versions of the primary unmoved mover of the world, the intellect of time. In this entire gesture of absorption, Aristotle is not only systematized and illuminated, but also "put in his place": his principles are not the principles of all being, and a theology of "unmoved movers" cannot go beyond the gods that are immediately involved in the world of becoming. Given the longevity of Aristotle's unmoved mover in the Arabic and Latin theology, Proclus' appropriation and criticism of the unmoved mover in his theory of the parts of time may have consequences far beyond the narrow confines of today's "philosophy of time".

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Proclus and Apokatastasis

The present contribution concentrates on Proclus' notion and terminology of *apokatastasis*. The doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις, restoration or reconstitution, is an extremely interesting case of a philosophical soteriological theory elaborated in both so-called pagan and Christian philosophy, especially Platonism, not without possible remarkable interactions that still need to be investigated in a methodical way.[1] The main difference between Proclus and Christian Neoplatonists that will emerge is the infinity of the apokatastatic cycles maintained by Proclus in conformity with the theory of the perpetuity of the world.

In Stoicism, *apokatastasis* affected the cosmological sphere, and had no soteriological value proper. The term ἀποκατάστασις (from ἀποκαθίστημι, "I restore, I reconstitute") is referred by Eusebius to the Stoics' cosmological conception of the cyclical return of the universe to its original condition at the end of every great year, "the famous 'resurrection' [ἀνάστασις] that makes the great year, when the universal restoration [ἀποκατάστασις][2] takes place" (*PE* 15.19.1–3 = SVF 2.599). The Stoics' use of this term was related to its astronomical meaning, one of the many that this noun bore in antiquity. It indicated the return of a heavenly body to its initial place after a revolution, or the return of all stars to their original place after a cosmic cycle. The latter is the meaning on which Stoic cosmology drew. In Stoic cosmology, *apokatastasis* indicates the periodical repetition of a cosmic cycle (SVF 2.599; 625), based on αἰῶνες or "great years" that return again and again, identical to one another, in an infinite series. The same persons will exist in each aeon, and will behave in the same ways, making the same choices, forever. This succession is determined by periodical conflagrations (ἐκπυρώσεις) in which all is reduced to fire/aether/*logos*/*pneuma*, i.e. Zeus, the supreme, immanent divinity. After this, Zeus expands again into a new universe (ὅλον):

> The Stoics maintain that the planets will return [ἀποκαθισταμένους] into the same constellation [...] Universal restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] takes place not only once, but many times, or better the *same things* will continue to be repeated [ἀποκαθίστασθαι] indefinitely, *without end*. (SVF 2.625 = Nemesius, *NH* 38)[3]

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2 The terms ἀποκατάστασις and ἀποκαθίστημι are only attested by Christian sources. Pagan sources such as Marcus Aurelius (*Ad seips*. 11.1.3), Simplicius (*In Ar. Phys*. 886.12–13), and Alexander of Aphrodisias (*In Ar. Gen. et corr*. 314.13–15) use παλιγγενεσία and πάλιν γίγνομαι.

3 Translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

The Christian Platonist Origen of Alexandria refuted the Stoic doctrine of *apokatastasis* to further his own, Christian doctrine of universal restoration. Stoic aeons are different from those theorised by Origen. There are two main differences between Stoic *apokatastasis* and Origen's *apokatastasis:* the first is that the Stoics postulated an infinite series of aeons, while Origen posited an end of all aeons at the final *apokatastasis*, which will be only one, eternal, and will put an end to every χρόνος and αἰών. The second difference is that the Stoics thought that in each aeon everything would happen in the same way as in all the others, while Origen thought of the aeons as different from one another, in that they are the theatre of the moral and spiritual development of rational creatures. For example, in *CC* 4.12 and 67–68, Origen criticises the Stoic theory in that it denies human free will:

> If this is the case, our *freedom of will* is over. For, if during given cycles, out of necessity, the same things have happened, happen, and will happen [...] it is clear that out of necessity Socrates will always devote himself to philosophy, and will be accused of introducing new divinities and of corrupting the youth; and that Anitus and Meletus will always be his accusers, and that the Areopagus judges will condemn him to death [...] If one accepts this idea, I do not quite know how *our freedom* will be saved and how *praise and blame* will possibly be justified. (*CC* 4.67–68)

In *CC* 5.20 the Stoic doctrine of cyclical worlds is also ascribed to Platonists and Pythagoreans; in *Princ*. 2.3.4 the Stoic notion of *apokatastasis* is again accused of denying human free will and responsibility:

> This theory can be supported by no argument, since the souls are pushed by their free will, and their progresses and regresses depend on the faculty of their will. Indeed, the souls are not induced to do or wish this or that by the circular movement of the heavenly bodies that after many aeons accomplish the same cycle, but wherever the freedom of their inclination has pushed them, there they orient the course of their actions.

And in *Princ*. 2.3.5 the end of all aeons is explicitly affirmed. It will coincide with *apokatastasis*, "when all will be no more in an aeon, but God will be 'all in all'." In 3.1 Origen envisaged "a stage in which there will be no aeon any more", just as in *Comm. in Io*. 13.3: after "αἰώνιος life," which will be in the next aeon, in Christ, *apokatastasis* will come: then all will be in the Father and God will be "all in all".

Stoic *apokatastasis* had no clear soteriological implications, also given the strict immanentism and materialism of 'orthodox' Stoic doctrine: souls dissolve at the end of each cosmic cycle if not earlier, and are reconstituted by necessity in the following aeon.[4] In pagan and Christian Neoplatonism, on the contrary, *apokatastasis* became the doctrine of the salvation of the soul, with the related question of the *universality*

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4 See a Greek fragment from Chrysippus on apokatastasis preserved by Lactantius (*Inst*. 7.23 = SVF 2.623): "It is clear that it is not at all impossible that we too, after our death, once given cycles of time [περίοδοι χρόνου] have elapsed, are restored/reconstituted [καταστήσασθαι] into the structure that we presently have."

of this salvation. Will all souls be restored and saved, or not all of them? It is meaningful that some late Neoplatonists ascribed the doctrine of universal restoration and salvation back to Plato, to dignify their own theory, but Plato did not believe that *all* souls would be liberated from the torments of Tartarus. Origen, and other Christian Neoplatonists, instead, did uphold this theory, and their ideas may have been known to pagan Neoplatonists who reflected on soteriology.

I limit myself to adducing one possible instance: Macrobius. Commenting on the myth of Er at the end of Plato's *Republic*, devoted to the eschatological destiny of such souls, he remarks:

> Plato's famous Er ... enumerates the infinite aeons [*saecula*] in which the souls of sinners, reverting again and again to the same punishments, in the end are allowed to emerge from Tartarus [*sero de tartaris permittuntur emergere*] and, after attaining purification, finally come back to the principles/origins of their nature, that is, heaven [*ad naturae suae principia ... remeare.*] For it is necessary that every soul return to the place of its origin [*Necesse est enim omnem animam ad originis suae sedem reuerti*]. Those, however, who inhabit the body as strangers return quickly to their homeland, so to say, after leaving the body, while those who stick to bodily seductions as their own dwelling place, the more forcedly they are separated from them, the more slowly return to the superior realm. (*Comm. in Somn. Scip.* 2.17.12–14)

Macrobius affirms that, according to Plato, all souls will return to their original place, albeit some sooner and others later. In fact, Plato admitted of exceptions, for souls who are absolutely irrecoverable; these will remain in Tartarus forever. Pains cure the souls, but some are "incurable" (ἀνίατοι) because the crimes they committed were too extreme; therefore, they will undergo eternal punishment (*Phd.* 113E, *Gorg.* 525C, *Rep.* 10.615C-616 A). Though in Plato's *Phaedrus* the "law of Adrasteia" (248C2) prescribes that, after migrations and purifications, souls return to their original place, after three thousand years for the souls of philosophers, which become winged again at that time, or after ten thousand years for common souls.[5] This is the only passage – against the others – that might suggest that *apokatastasis* for Plato was universal.

Whereas Plato repeatedly stated that some souls would not return to their original place, Macrobius, like his contemporary Gregory of Nyssa, the Christian Neoplatonist and follower of Origen, thought that *all souls, without exception*, would return to their homeland.[6] Those who had erred the most will take long, but nevertheless will return. For Macrobius, *apokatastasis* would really be universal. All souls will be restored to their original seat, because of an ontological necessity.

If Macrobius presents Plato as saying something different from what he maintained, this means that Macrobius' conviction concerning universal *apokatastasis* was strong. This conviction was equally strong in roughly contemporary Christian Neoplatonists who supported *apokatastasis*, such as Gregory of Nyssa or Evagrius,

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5 On Plato's doctrine of salvation see Menn (2013).
6 See Ramelli (2013c).

but with the difference that in their view – directly based on Origen's view – this was not an ontological necessity, but depended on Christ's incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrection, and on the development of human free will.

Macrobius may have had in mind also Porphyry's "universal way for the liberation and salvation of the soul,"[7] but, as noted by Gillian Clark and others, it is doubtful that Porphyry wanted to find a way for the restoration of all souls; at any rate, he did not find it. According to Augustine *CD* 10.32, Porphyry concluded book 1 of *De regressu animae* stating that, after examining true philosophy and the doctrines of the Indians and the Chaldaeans, he could not find any philosophy or religion that provided a "universal way" for the liberation of the soul (*universalem continet viam animae liberandae*). Victorinus, who translated many Neoplatonic texts into Latin, also translated Porphyry's *De regressu animae*,[8] making it thereby available to Augustine, who devoted almost one book, the tenth, of *De civitate Dei* to Porphyry. According to Smith,[9] there are three possible interpretations of the *via universalis* allegedly sought by Porphyry, as is clear from other passages in *CD* 10.32:

- either a way for the liberation of all souls (*qua universae animae liberantur ac per hoc sine illa nulla anima liberatur*),
- or a way for all peoples (*universis gentibus communis*),
- or a way for the liberation of the whole human being (*totum hominem*), or at least for the whole of the soul, both the higher and the lower.

Smith thought that Porphyry wished to find a way for the liberation of the higher soul of all humans, but found that only some people can pursue philosophy, which liberates the higher soul (*De abst.* 1.27–28); Brahmans and Samaneans in India are restricted groups (*ibid.* 4.17), and Chaldean theurgy only purifies the lower soul (Aug. *CD* 10.9).[10] Pierre Hadot thought that Porphyry did not envisage a universal way, because he knew that Platonism was for an élite, and that some non-Greek religious techniques were very limited.[11] Likewise, according to Gillian Clark, that Porphyry was in search of such a universal way for the deliverance of the soul is a notion that is conveyed by Augustine's paraphrase of his *De regressu animae*;[12] the concern for universalism is Augustine's own addition.[13] It is Augustine who opposes Christi-

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7 As suggested by Theo Kobusch in Aarhus, August 2013.

8 Possibly also his *Letter to Anebo*, at least according to Saffrey (2012), lxiii.

9 Smith (1974), 136–141.

10 Simmons (2006) thinks that the universalistic theme in Eusebius's work is a reaction to Porphyry (see also Idem 2009). This is true, but I note there is a strong Origenian basis, and both Porphyry and Eusebius were in dialogue with Origen. Moreover, it is Augustine who presented Christianity, against Porphyry, as the *universalis animae liberandae via* (*CD* 10.32).

11 Hadot (1960), esp. 239.

12 Clark (2007).

13 Indeed Clark (2007), 130, 136 remarks that "where the relevant text [*sc.* cited by Augustine] are extant, as they are in the case of Virgil and some of Augustine's other sources (notably Sallust and Apuleius), we can show just how narrowly Augustine selects his material and how forcefully

anity, as a religion who instructs everybody ("as though in a lecture room open to both sexes and all ages and ranks": *Ep.* 138.10),[14] to "pagan" philosophy, which was reserved for few people, while "pagan" religion did not teach moral behaviour to anyone (*CD* 2.6; 2.26). As Augustine reports in *CD* 10.29, in his *De regressu animae* Porphyry repeatedly taught that "every body must be avoided, that the soul may remain with God in blessedness" (*omne corpus esse fugiendum ut anima possit beata permanere cum Deo*). This can be achieved only by an élite of philosophers and ascetics. Aaron Johnson is now essentially on the same line.[15] Porphyry surely knew Origen's doctrine of universal restoration, but could not share it because it was Christian: it depended on faith in Christ as God and included also the resurrection of the body. Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* — where he took into consideration philosophy, common notions, Egyptian religion (esp. Chaeremon) and Chaldean religion (the *Chaldean Oracles*) — also makes it clear that he did not consider theurgy and religious rituals to be such a way: these may well be universal, but are not ways to the salvation of the whole soul. Philosophy alone is. This is also why both Eusebius and Augustine, who knew this letter, highly appreciated it for its criticism of "pagan" religion.[16]

The very title *The Return of the Soul* alludes to the *apokatastasis* of the soul (not of the whole rational creature, body and soul, as in Origen's and Gregory Nyssen's thought, where the resurrection of the body is part and parcel of the restoration[17]). It would be very interesting to know exactly what Greek term lies behind *regressus*; it is possible that Porphyry had ἀποκατάστασις. But Porphyry did not teach the restoration of all souls, and therefore Macrobius does not seem to have followed him when he maintained that all souls will be restored.

The exact time of composition of Macrobius's works is debated, but it seems to come shortly after two other Latin Christian Neoplatonists who did embrace the doctrine of *apokatastasis*, Victorinus and Augustine, although the latter did so only during his anti-Manichaean phase, in the 390s.[18] Origen's theory of universal restoration, which Augustine later rejected mainly for the purpose of his polemic against

he interprets it to suit his argument ... it is much more likely that Porphyry denied any claim that there is a single way of liberating the soul".

14 It must be noted, however, that Augustine's own concern for universalism should not be confused with a doctrine that all will be saved, since Augustine was convinced that most will be damned (see Fredriksen (2012), 185 – 187, and my review (2013a)), although in his anti-Manichaean phase, before his anti-Pelagian phase, he embraced Origen's doctrine of universal restoration – as demonstrated in Ramelli (2013c).

15 Johnson (2013).

16 Augustine in *CD* 10.11 praises the letter for claiming that whatever demons do (in pagan cult) is an imposture. Indeed, Augustine described Porphyry as "the most illustrious philosopher among the pagans" and "the most learned of the philosophers, though the most bitter enemy of the Christians" in *CD* 22.3 and 19.22 respectively.

17 See Ramelli (2013c).

18 Demonstration in Ramelli (2013c).

Pelagianism, was espoused by a "pagan" Neoplatonist such as Macrobius, whatever the relation between Macrobius's *apokatastasis* doctrine and Origen's. Macrobius might have embraced a Christian doctrine – an Origenian doctrine –, but he certainly endeavoured to ascribe it back to Plato: he would have felt uneasy about acknowledging any philosophical debt to Christian Platonism. In Christianity, however, the doctrine of *apokatastasis* was soon banned as 'heretical' by the Church of the Empire under Justinian – who significantly both condemned Origen as a Christian Platonist and wanted to terminate the pagan Neoplatonic school of Athens. These two decisions are interrelated.

Proclus too, who lived well before Justinian, seems to have been at least acquainted with, if perhaps not directly influenced by, the Christian theory of *apokatastasis*.[19] Olympiodorus famously classified Proclus, with his inspirer Iamblichus (who strongly influenced Proclus), and Syrianus, among the "religious" exponents of Neoplatonism, as opposed to the "philosophical" exponents such as Plotinus and Porphyry: "Some, such as Plotinus, Porphyry, etc., give priority to philosophy; others, such as Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus, and the whole priestly school, give priority to the priestly art (ἱερατική)" (Damasc. *In Phd*. 1.172, 123.3 Norvin).

Proclus is generally regarded today as the main inspirer of Ps. Dionysius, who, as I argued,[20] was also profoundly inspired by Origen. In late antiquity and Byzantine times, however, Proclus was considered to have been inspired by Dionysius.[21] The theory of *apokatastasis*, so prominent in Origen and in Ps. Dionysius, is also a major feature of Proclus's thought. Proclus, as I shall show, depicts *apokatastasis* as ἐπιστροφή, just like Ps. Dionysius.[22] The latter is closer to Proclus than to Origen in respect to an extraordinary importance attached to liturgy; for Proclus, of course, this is theurgy, for Ps. Dionysius Christian rituals.

In this connection, it is important to note that Proclus knew and cited Origen extensively, and the Platonist Origen he speaks of is likely to be identifiable with the Christian Platonist,[23] who was, as I mentioned, the main theoriser of the Christian doctrine of *apokatastasis*. In *Theol. Plat*. II.4, Proclus speaks of Origen's metaphysics. He observes that he cannot explain the reason why Origen, who, as Proclus expressly states, received the same philosophical training as Plotinus from Ammonius Saccas – which is the case also for Origen the Christian philosopher[24] –, individuated the su-

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19 On his thought see now Chlup (2012).

20 Ramelli (2013c), chapter on Ps. Dionysius.

21 Suda, s.v.Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης; Psellus, *De omnifaria doctrina* 74.

22 For apokatastasis as ἐπιστροφή in Dionysius see Ramelli (2013c), chapter on Ps. Dionysius.

23 The identification is considered to be possible or probable by, e.g., Crouzel (1956); Kettler 1979; Böhm (2002); Beatrice (1992), 351, and again, on the basis of the sole Numenius, (2009), 531: "Origen the Pagan, or the Neoplatonist, has never existed, and the Origen we meet three times in Nemesius' treatise is always the only Christian and Platonist Origen, known to Christian and pagan writers without any distinction"; Ramelli (2009), and with further arguments (2011); Digeser (2012), 18, 51 and *passim*; Johnson (2013), 153 n. 30, also deems the identification possible; Ramelli (in preparation).

24 See Ramelli (2009).

preme principle, not in the One, like Plotinus, but in the Intellect and the first Being. Origen, according to Proclus, stopped short of theorising the One, which transcends the Intellect, every intellect, and Being itself. Plotinus considered the One to transcend the Intellect and Being, but Origen regarded the Intellect as the prime Being and the prime One, and this, in Proclus's view, is definitely not in line with Plato's thinking, but derives from Peripatetic innovations; this is why he cannot agree with Origen.

Origen was well acquainted with Peripatetic teachings, as he shows on a number of occasions, but it is Ex 3:14 ("I am ὁ ὤν", LXX, which Philo sometimes rendered with τὸ ὄν), that was paramount for him. Proclus, like Celsus or Poprhyry, would never have acknowledged the importance of the Bible for a Platonist, not even as a text to be allegorised. On the basis of Ex 3:14, Origen identified God with the Intellect and Being. In his comment on Ex 3:14 in *Comm. in Io.* 2.13.96 Origen, basing himself on Scripture, identifies God with the supreme Good and Being, to oppose evil to both and to declare evil to be non-being (μὴ ὄν); this is one of the metaphysical tenets of Origen's system, which also bears on *apokatastasis*. He also said that God may be considered to be superior to both intellect and being. Thus, for instance, he maintained that the "God of the universe" is either Being itself or "beyond Being" (*Comm. in Io.* 19.6.37; *CC* 7.38; 6.64). Origen describes God as Intellect, but also as "Monad and Henad" (*Princ.* 1.1.6).

It is well possible that the interpretations of Plato's works that Proclus reports in his Commentary on the *Timaeus*, too, as provided by Origen are ascribable to Origen the Christian. At his school Origen explained the works of Greek philosophers, among whom Plato had special prominence (Eus. *HE* 6.17). Likewise here in Proclus we find Origen engaged in the interpretation of Plato's works. The context of Proclus *In Tim.* I.31 is a debate on the purpose of Plato's *Republic*. In Proclus's account, in 1.31.19–32, Longinus and Origen disagreed on what kind of πολιτεία Socrates deals with in that dialogue. According to Longinus, it was the middle πολιτεία, since its guardians were soldiers, but according to Origen it was the first πολιτεία, because its guardians were educated in various disciplines, the liberal arts. These μαθήματα indeed were important, both in Origen's own formation and in his teaching program. It is natural that he stressed their importance also in Plato's *Republic*, which could provide a model.

Proclus himself seems to have not only known Origen's position, but also followed it in his own interpretation of Plato's *Republic*. Here, Proclus does not consider the ideal State delineated by Plato a realistic constitution, but a representation of the cosmos, where the three classes of citizens symbolise gods, demons, and humans (*In Remp.* I.16; I.47; I.146; II.98; II.325–326). Now this seems to have been also the interpretation of Origen, as reported by Proclus himself in *In Tim.* I.13. Origen's first πολιτεία is a notion that fits the cosmic πολιτεία, and Proclus seems to be developing Origen's line. Longinus and Origen, the two protagonists of Proclus's report, knew each other well; Longinus himself, in a passage reported by Porphyry in *V. Plot.* 20, mentions Origen together with Ammonius as a philosopher, a Platonist, of extraordinary

intelligence whom he had frequented for a long time. The immediate association with Ammonius is surely due to Origen's being a disciple of Ammonius. Longinus, who was probably born in 212 CE, states that he has travelled a lot in his youth for his philosophical studies; he does not say that he frequented Origen's school of philosophy in Alexandria; he may well have frequented it in Caesarea, in the later 230s. This, from the historical viewpoint too, allows for the identification of this Origen – clearly the same as mentioned in *V. Plot.* 14, since both passages cite his *On Demons* – with the homonymous Christian Platonist.

Another exegetical disagreement between Longinus and Origen is reported by Proclus, *In Tim.* I.76.31–77.9. The focus is again on the interpretation of Plato, in particular his myth of Atlantis. The *Timaeus* was indeed well known to Origen the Christian, who read *Genesis* in its light, as both Philo and Bardaisan had done. According to Longinus, this myth is an allegorical expression of the order in the cosmos, with heavenly bodies such as planets and fixed stars, but according to Origen it is an allegory of rational creatures (δαίμονες), good or evil. Rational creatures, good or evil, were at the centre of Origen the Christian Platonist's theodicy, protology, philosophy of history, and eschatology. It was natural for him to read Plato's Atlantis myth – an original, happy state of a whole population, suddenly destroyed by a catastrophe – in reference to them, and probably in reference to the original life of the *logika*, before the fall. These rational creatures are called here δαίμονες, as in the title of one of the two treatises that, according to Porphyry, Origen the Neoplatonist wrote on the basis of Ammonius's teaching.[25] It was typical of Origen the Christian to allegorise cosmological depictions, such as that of the "upper waters" in *Genesis*, in reference, not to physical realities, but to rational creatures. Thus, for instance, the "upper waters" symbolise good rational creatures (angels), the inferior waters evil rational creatures (demons). This style of allegorisation of the cosmological myth of Scripture, typical of Origen the Christian, is analogous to that of Origen the Neoplatonist's interpretation of the cosmological myth of the *Timaeus* according to Proclus.

Another philosophical discrepancy between Longinus and Origen is reported by Proclus in *In Tim.* I.162.15–30. The good condition of body and soul depends, according to Longinus, on earthly physical factors such as a good land and climate, while Origen had it depend on the circular movement of the sky, with an allusion to *Rep.* 8.546 A. Proclus pairs the exegeses of Plato's texts offered by these two prominent disciples of Ammonius's. The other passages from Proclus's commentary that mention Origen, too, can be explained in the light of the Christian Origen's deep interest in both allegoresis and philology, as is clearly testified to by his commentaries, *Hexapla*,[26] and even his homilies; for Origen, allegoresis kept both Scripture's "soul"

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25 On the attribution of these woks to Origen the Christian philosopher see Ramelli (2009).

26 He then used his *Hexapla* not only in his great commentaries, but also in his homilies, including those recently discovered in Codex Monacensis Graecus 314: see Perrone (2014). Origen abundantly uses his comparative edition in these homilies, delivered in Caesarea perhaps toward the end of his life.

and its "body," that is, its literal and historical level, without eliminating either. Two mentions of Origen's ideas in Proclus's commentary on the *Timaeus* perfectly suit Origen's philological, rhetorical, and literary interests. In *In Tim.* I.68.12–15 Proclus examines Origen's evaluation of the literary style of Plato's dialogues. He argued that such phrases as "Heracles' strength" instead of "Heracles" befit prose, not only poetry. And in I.93.8–15 Proclus considers Origen's research into the meanings of ἐλευθερώτατον in *Tim.* 21C. This research resembles Origen's close investigations into the meanings of terms in his Scriptural commentaries. Also, Proclus in *In Tim.* I.60.1–12 is dealing with the question of the interpretation of Plato's metaphors. This was meaningful for an allegorist such as Origen, who was also very appreciative of Plato's myths, both in their form and in their contents, to the point that he interacted with them and used them in his elucidation of Scripture.[27] According to Origen, as Proclus reports, metaphors in Plato's dialogues had cognitive and ethical import; their aim was not to produce pleasure – although Origen admitted that Plato was attentive to stylistic elegance – but to represent passions, so as to eliminate them. Such an interpretation fits both with Origen's ethics, strongly characterised by the pursuit of *apatheia* and the criticism of the Epicurean theory of pleasure, and with his appreciation of Plato's myths and of allegory.

In *In Tim.* I.83.19–28; I.86.20–87.6 Longinus and Origen, again, are said to have entertained different views concerning Plato's myths. Longinus regarded them as ornamental or psychagogical, Origen as endowed with gnoseological value and not aimed at producing pleasure (the same motif as in *In Tim.* I.60). This fits Origen's ethics and allegorical attitude. Moreover, Proclus remarks in I.83.26–27 that Origen was close to Numenius in his exegesis, which refused to see pleasure as the aim of Plato's myths. Numenius, a Middle Platonist and Neo-Pythagorean, was one of Origen's favourite readings, and also an allegorical interpreter of both Plato and the Bible, like Origen. He does not seem to have been either a Christian nor a Jew, but he allegorised parts of the Old and New Testament, as Origen testifies. Numenius was also one of the favourite readings of Plotinus, who was accused of plagiarising him and was defended by Amelius.

Proclus speaks again of Origen as allegorical exegete of Plato in *In Tim.* I.63.25–64.7, in an account, based on Porphyry, of Origen's interpretation of *Tim.* 19DE. Porphyry knew Origen and may have received this anecdote from Plotinus or Longinus or someone of their circle. The question was whether Plato included Homer among the ancient mimetic poets; Origen pained for three days on this issue. The description of Origen's hard labour in terms of sweating and long mental and physical effort fits the image of Origen the Christian philosopher as hard-worker, which earned him the title of φιλόπονος and φιλοπονώτατος from Athanasius and Eusebius, and the byname Adamantius, which Origen himself may have elected,[28] and was used by his

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27 Ramelli (2011c).
28 See Ramelli (2009).

Christian followers. Origen's extraordinary laboriousness and πόνος are repeatedly emphasised by highlighted Eusebius in his biography of Origen.[29] He, like Athanasius, uses φιλοπονώτατος as an epithet for Origen (*Ecl. Proph.* 3.6). Actually, Origen himself emphasised his own hard labour, for instance in Homily 1 on Psalm 77.1 (Cod. Monacensis Gr. 314, fol. 215r): "And God knows how much I have laboured [ὅσα ἐκάμομεν], for his sake and thanks to his Grace, examining together both the Hebrew text and the other editions, so as to establish the emendation of errors."

Proclus's account of Origen the Neoplatonist's positive attitude toward Homer also corresponds to Origen the Christian's attitude toward Homer, which again suggests that Origen the Neoplatonist and Origen the Christian were the same person.[30] Thus, it is possible to identify Origen the Neoplatonist who appears in Proclus (and in Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* and in Hierocles of Alexandria's fragments) with the Christian Platonist.

It is therefore possible, if not probable, that Proclus knew Origen's *apokatastasis* doctrine. An investigation into the terminology of ἀποκατάστασις and ἀποκαθίστημι reveals an extraordinary proliferation in Proclus's writings, while the occurrences in earlier pagan Platonists are sparse or inexistent: none in Plato, Numenius, or Plotinus, six in Porphyry, five in Iamblichus, two in Hierocles, but 145 in Proclus, mostly in his Commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus* – with the most frequent occurrences – and *Republic*, but also in other works such as *Theologia Platonica* and *Elementa Theologiae*. This dramatic increase – even taking into account the fragmentary state of works such as those of Numenius and Iamblichus – can hardly be accidental. A scholar has to make sense of this in the light of late antique Platonism, pagan and Christian. Proclus reflected a great deal on restoration, and connected this to the return/reversion (ἐπιστροφή). The soul is its main protagonist, but is by no means alone. The whole cosmos is involved in restoration. In this respect it must be noted that a good deal of occurrences of the terminology of *apokatastasis* in Proclus – about one fifth of the sum total – are related to the astronomical/cosmological meaning of this term, e.g. the *apokatastasis* of spheres, planets, or stars[31] (a number of these in the *Hypotyposeis astronomicae*[32]), or the combination of *apokatastaseis* that keeps the cosmos in order,[33] or the definition of the whole of the time is a period of all the universe, which embraces many restorations of the planets.[34] But Proclus closely connects to this cosmological *apokatastasis* the *apokatastasis* of souls, so that, for instance, as I shall point out soon, the *apokatastasis* of the universe, com-

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29 See the analysis in Ramelli (2011b).

30 Analysis in Ramelli (2011a).

31 *In Remp.* II.23.26; II.30.18; II.45.11; II.237.12; *In Tim.* I.101.1; III.54.29; III.56.11; III.75.16; III.78.28; III.81.4; III.83.25; III.87.27; III.87.31; III.88.7; III.88.9; III.89.1; III.89.15; III.90.24; III.91.11; III.91.20 – 25; III.92.4; III.93.2; III.93.12; III.146.13; III.148.27.

32 *In Remp.* III.53.7; III.53.9; III.54.2; III.60.3; III.83.3; V.23.1; V.23.4; V.24.3; V.28.1; V.37.1.

33 *In Remp.* II.24.14.

34 *In Tim.* II.289.12.

prising those of all planets and making up the whole time, coincides with the *apokatastasis* of the world soul, which includes those of all souls and extends to the whole of time. Consistently, Proclus draws a parallel between cosmic-astronomical restorations and restorations of souls (*In Remp.* II.267.28).[35] Indeed, he is clear in many passages that *apokatastasis* involves both corporeal and incorporeal realities.[36] The cycle of restoration (περίοδος καὶ ἀποκατάστασις) involves not only incorruptible realities (ἀδιάφθορα), such as souls, but also all realities subject to generation (πάντα τὰ γενητά, *In Tim.* III.43.27).

Before analysing Proclus's doctrine of restoration of the soul, however, it is necessary to remark that Plotinus in fact did receive the doctrine of *apokatastasis*, though, as I have said, he completely lacks the terminology of *apokatastasis*, and developed this theory differently from his fellow disciple Origen. Indeed, in the only two passages in which he refers to this theory (*Enn.* IV.3 [27].12; V.7 [18].1–3), he adheres to the Stoicising scheme of infinite apokatastatic cycles during which the same events occur and the same individuals live, making the same choices, ad infinitum. This scheme, as I have shown, was criticised by Origen. In IV.3 [27].12 Plotinus presents his closest approximation to the terminology of *apokatastasis:* κατὰ χρόνους ἀεὶ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ καθιστάμενα. This periodical reconstitution, Plotinus states, includes the descents and reascents of souls (καθόδοις ψυχῶν καὶ ἀνόδοις). In V.7 [18]. 1–3 Plotinus is reasoning within a framework of infinite cosmic cycles (περίοδοι characterised by ἀπειρία) and is asking whether in each of them there exist *logoi* of all the individuals that are generated within a single cosmic cycle. He concludes that "the whole cosmic period includes all *logoi* and therefore the same things happen again and again according to the same *logoi*" (ἡ δὲ πᾶσα περίοδος πάντας ἔχει τοὺς λόγους, αὖθις δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ πάλιν κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους). Plotinus's adhesion to the Stoic model is clear in IV.7 [2]. 2: "The same, in every detail, repeats itself from period to period" (τὸ αὐτὸν πάντη ἐν τῇ ἑτέρᾳ περιόδῳ), a point that was not only contested by Origen, but also not taken up by Proclus.[37]

Proclus is closer to Origen when he rejects Plotinus's doctrine of the undescended soul in *ET* § 211: "Every partial soul, descending into the realm of generation, *descends in its entirety* [ὅλη]: it is not the case that a part of it remains above, and the rest descends." Plotinus was aware that his doctrine was still extraneous to the Pla-

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35 Καθάπερ οὖν *αἱ τῶν κύκλων ἀποκαταστάσεις ἐν τῇ περιόδῳ συμπεραίνονται* πάντων, κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ δὴ καὶ *αἱ περίοδοι τῶν ψυχῶν* αἱ κατὰ πάντας βίους. And in *In Tim.* III.19.31 Proclus draws a parallel between the restoration of a human soul and that of heavenly bodies such as the sun and the moon: ἄνθρωπον δὲ τοσόνδε, ἥλιον δὲ ἐν τοσῷδε ἀποκαθίστασθαι καὶ σελήνην.

36 E. g. *In Remp.* II.16.14: καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν ἀεικινήτων ἔστιν τις νοῦς, ὃς καὶ τὴν ζωὴν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ συμπεραίνει καὶ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν τὴν *σωματικήν*; III.28.20: *ψυχάς τε καὶ φύσεις καὶ σώματα* κύκλῳ περιάγει καὶ περιοδικῶς ἀποκαθίστησιν.

37 Plotinus even resumes the terminology of *logoi spermatikoi* – adopted by Justin, Clement, and Origen too – when in IV.7 [2].3 he claims that "we ought not to fear the infinity of seminal reasons (in each cosmic period), since the Soul possesses all".

tonic tradition in his time (*Enn.* IV.8 [6].8: "against the opinion of the others," the other Platonists). Damascius too will reject the doctrine of the undescended soul (*In Parm.* II.254.3–10). Likewise Proclus is closer to Origen than to Plotinus when he rejects the theory that the soul is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with the divine and identifiable with the Intellect and even the One (*In Tim.* III.231.5–11). Iamblichus's position about the soul, that it undergoes changes in its substance, since it descends entirely, does not convince Proclus completely. According to Proclus, the human soul does descend entirely, but it does not undergo changes in its substance (*In Tim.* III.335, III.338, III.340). The soul is an eternal substance, but its activities are accomplished in time (*ET* §192). Reflecting on Plato's *Timaeus*, where the γένεσις of the soul is described—the genesis of something ἀγένητον—Proclus takes it to mean that the soul is continually generated, and continually receives the power to exist (*In Tim.* II.119–132).[38]

Plato in *Tim.* 36B ff. spoke of circles in the soul. For Proclus, the cyclic period of the human soul is "its proper life" (*ET* §199 & 200). This conception squares perfectly with his restoration-return-reversal scheme. The Neoplatonic use of ἐπιστροφή, which in Proclus parallels ἀποκατάστασις, must be seen within the triadic movement of μονή, πρόοδος, and ἐπιστροφή. Proclus himself ascribes the theorisation of this movement to Iamblichus (*In Tim.* II.215.5): the Monad is the principle of identity and the moment of immanence, the Dyad introduces procession, and the Triad is the origin of reversion/return. Procession, according to Proclus, is a movement from better to worse, reversion from worse to better (Procl. *ET* §36–37; cf. Plot. *Enn.* V.8 [31].1, VI.9 [9].9). According to Proclus, only what is incorporeal and without parts, such as the soul itself, can revert or return, i.e. have an ἐπιστροφή (*ET* §15). The body does not revert, which also implies that there is no resurrection of bodies. Origen too ruled out the resurrection of the material ὑποκείμενον of a body, which is permanently in flux, and only admitted of the resurrection of the εἶδος or metaphysical form of the earthly body, transformed into a spiritual body; so also the Christian Neoplatonists Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius.[39] For them, the resurrection is part and parcel of the restoration, which involves soul and intellect as well as body; the body will be elevated to the level of soul and the latter to the level of intellect.[40]

The connection between ἐπιστροφή and ἀποκατάστασις is clear especially in the case of souls and is made explicit in *In Tim.* I.87.30: the decade indicates the reversion (ἐπιστροφή) of all beings in the cosmos toward the One; the ninety indicates the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) to the monad next to the procession (πρόοδος). Like the reversion, the restoration too is posited next to the procession. Indeed, as I mentioned, in Ps. Dionysius, who was heavily influenced by Proclus, the restoration is

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38 Origen applied a similar notion to the generation of the Son: the Son is coeternal with the Father because its generation is eternal, not so much in the sense that the Son continually receives the power to exist, as in the sense that the generation of the Son takes place out of time.

39 See Ramelli (2008a; 2007b; 2015).

40 Ramelli (forthcoming).

understood as a reversion. In *ET* §32 Proclus observes that the reversion of the soul, which parallels Origen's notion of *apokatastasis*, "is accomplished by virtue of likeness" to the highest principle. *Apokatastasis* is common to both "souls" and "mortal animals" but with different modalities, because for souls alone it depends on life "according to virtue" (κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν ζωή, *In Crat*. 179.36 – 37).[41] Interestingly, that *apokatastasis* is made possible by the active pursuit of likeness to God, the first principle, in a life of virtue was a major tenet of Origen's *apokatastasis* doctrine. Unlike Gregory, Origen drew a distinction between being in the image of God, an initial datum for every human intellectual soul, and becoming in the likeness of God, which passes through a personal effort and engagement in virtue, and is perfected only in the *telos*, at *apokatastasis*.[42] Proclus spells out this general principle: "Every return is perfectly achieved by means of the likeness of those who return to the principle to which they return" (πᾶσα ἐπιστροφὴ δι᾽ ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελεῖται τῶν ἐπιστρεφομένων πρὸς ὃ ἐπιστρέφεται, *ET* § 32).

Proclus was relying on Plato, *Theaet*. 176B, on ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, Origen on Plato and Scripture (*Gen*. 1:26 – 27), but neither source includes the specific idea that the return/restoration will be through likeness. This is rather found in Origen and Proclus. The latter found in Plotinus that likeness is a fundamental presupposition of all knowledge (*Enn*. 1.8.1, reflected in Proclus *In Tim*. II.298.27; III.160.18), and interpreted knowledge as a type of return (*In Tim*. II.287.1). Sallustius relates the idea of likeness to the voluntary adhesion to the divine, like Origen: "When we are good we attach ourselves to the gods through likeness [δι᾽ ὁμοιότητα], but when we become evil we separate ourselves from them through unlikeness [δι᾽ ἀνομοιότητα]" (*De diis et mundo* 14.2). Ps. Dionysius, the Christian Platonist who was well acquainted with Origen and Proclus, maintained likewise that likeness is the motor of the reversal, which in his view is associated with *apokatastasis:* "The power of the divine likeness is that which has all beings return [ἐπιστρέφουσα] to their Cause" (*Div. nom*. 9.6).

That Proclus had Origen's *apokatastasis* at the back of his mind seems all the more likely if one considers that in the immediately following proposition (*ET* §33) Proclus enunciates another principle that was a main pillar of Origen's doctrine of *apokatastasis*, namely that the reversion/restoration joins the end (τέλος) to the beginning (ἀρχή): "All that proceeds [προϊόν] from a principle and reverts [ἐπιστρέφον] to it has a cyclic activity. Indeed, if it reverts [ἐπιστρέφει] to the principle from which it proceeds [πρόεισιν], it *joins the end to the beginning* [συνάπτει τῇ ἀρχῇ τὸ τέλος] ... *all beings* [πάντα] come from the first principle, and all revert to it." The very universality of the reversion/restoration is here enunciated and is in full agreement with Origen's doctrine of universal restoration. The main difference is that Proclus envisages infinite beginnings (ἀρχαί) and infinite ends (τέλη), because infinite are the re-

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41 Τὰς μὲν ψυχὰς διὰ τῆς κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν ζωῆς τελεσιουργεῖν, τοῖς δὲ θνητοῖς ζῴοις τὴν εἰς τὸ εἶδος ἀποκατάστασιν χορηγεῖν.
42 See Ramelli (2013c), section on Origen.

turns and the apokatastatic cycles in his system, while Origen, although he admits of many aeons, postulates only *one* beginning (ἀρχή) and *one* end (τέλος), which comes after the end of all aeons. Very interestingly, the principle connecting the *telos* to the *arkhē* emerged around the time of Origen also in his fellow disciple Plotinus ("for all beings the beginning is also the end," τέλος ἅπασιν ἡ ἀρχή, *Enn.* III.8 [30].7; see also V.8 [31].7). Then it returns in Iamblichus (*De myst.* 31.16) and Syrianus, Proclus's teacher (*In Met.* 38.3).

What is more, one proposition later (*ET* §35) yet another tenet of Origen's restoration theory appears: that the reversal/restoration is to *oikeia,* to what is proper and familiar to someone; this principle is reiterated at *In Remp.* II.162.10: "each being must absolutely be restored [πάντως ἀποκαθίστασθαι] to the wholeness proper and familiar to it [εἰς τὴν ὁλότητα τὴν οἰκείαν]."[43] This is why at *In Tim.* III.57.3 Proclus speaks of a restoration of the soul "to itself" (ἀποκαθίσταται πρὸς ἑαυτήν). Indeed, another impressive similarity between Proclus and Origen concerns the concept of *apokatastasis* as *oikeiōsis*. Origen, as I demonstrated elsewhere,[44] was the first who firmly established this link, which was then taken over by Gregory of Nyssa. He claimed that *apokatastasis* is an *oikeiōsis* because "restoration is to a condition proper and familiar" to the creature who is being restored (ἡ ἀποκατάστασίς ἐστιν εἰς τὰ οἰκεῖα, *Hom. in Ier.* 14.18). No being can be restored to a condition that does not belong to its very nature and primordial state. Likewise Proclus in *ET* §35, arguing for the necessity that immanence, procession and return be always present, all of them, excludes that there may be a return to a condition alien to the being that is returning: "If it should return only (without immanence or procession), how could that which has not its essence from that cause *make the return by essence to what is alien to it?*" (τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἀλλότριον ἐπιστροφήν). This is exactly what Origen maintained, followed also by Gregory of Nyssa.

As Proclus remarks, the steps of the reversion mirror those of the procession: "Every reversion passes through the same terms as the corresponding procession" (*ET* §38). In *ET* §39, Proclus extends reversion to all beings, but to different degrees: some (inanimate beings) revert only in their being; others (animate but irrational) revert in their life too; and intelligent beings, and only these, revert in their knowledge. Indeed, in *Theol. Plat.* III.6.22.19–23 Proclus explains that Life is participated by all animate beings, including those which have no share in knowledge, while Intellect is only participated by beings that are capable of knowledge. Life therefore irradiates its gifts to more beings than Intellect does. Likewise for Origen Christ-Logos is participated by all rational or intellectual beings (*logika, noes*), the Holy Spirit by the saints—therefore, a more restricted group—and all creatures in God the Father and Creator, who is thus participated by all existing beings.

43 See also *In Tim.* III.308.11: ταῖς ψυχαῖς … ἡ ἀποκατάστασις εἰς ἓν ᾗ πάσης καὶ μὴ εἰς τὸ σύννομον ἄστρον ἀποκαταστᾶσα διὰ τὴν νομὴν εἰς ἄλλο ἀναγκάζηται ἀποκαθίστασθαι διὰ τὴν εἰς ἐκεῖνο σποράν· οἰκεῖον γὰρ τὸ σπειρόμενόν ἐστι τῷ περὶ ὃ ἔσπαρται κατ' οὐσίαν.
44 Ramelli (2013d)

Proclus's and Origen's similarities and differences in the notion of *apokatastasis* emerge nicely from *ET* §146: in the cycle of procession and reversion "the end is similar to the beginning" (τὰ τέλη πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὰς ὁμοιοῦται), but this process also forms a cycle that "has no beginning and no end" (ἄναρχον καὶ ἀτελεύτητον). Origen precisely maintained that the end will be "similar to the beginning", like Proclus, but unlike him Origen did *not* posit *infinite* cycles of reversion, because he postulated, on the basis of Scripture, both a creation in time and an end of time, so that after *apokatastasis* there will be no new beginning. He made this clear especially in his polemic against the Stoic theory of *apokatastasis*.[45]

The same difference can be noted within the following parallel. The supreme deity, to whom the monad belongs, is for Proclus the cause of every *apokatastasis* (*In Remp.* II.21.22; II.20.5).[46] Origen too considered God, "Monad and Henad" (*Princ.* 1.1.6), to be the cause and the ultimate end of universal *apokatastasis*, but he thought that, once all rational beings have returned to God, there will be no new cycle of distancing from God and return. After all have attained unity with God and in God, this state will be definitive. The same difference between Proclus and Origen appears another parallel: like Origen,[47] Proclus relates *apokatastasis* to eternal life, after purification (*In Remp.* II.185.6).[48] However, for Origen the attainment of eternal life takes place once and for all for each individual, while Proclus envisages infinite cycles between eternal life and the world of generation. Yet another parallel between Proclus's and Origen's doctrines of *apokatastasis* concerns the notion that all that which is not already in actuality needs time to reach perfection and restoration by adhering to the Good and collecting all of its own goodness (δεῖται τοῦ χρόνου πρὸς τελείωσιν καὶ ἀποκατάστασιν, δι' οὗ συλλέγει πᾶν τὸ οἰκεῖον ἀγαθόν, *In Tim.* III.22.6). The same idea was also found in Origen: *apokatastasis* can be reached only by adhesion to the Good and by rejecting all evil and collecting all the good that can be present in oneself; now this path toward perfection and restoration takes time. This is also why Origen postulated a series of aeons before *apokatastasis*, to give time to all to reach their perfection. But this is also where the difference between Proclus and Origen emerges again: for Origen there will be one and only one universal restoration at the end of all aeons, whereas for Proclus the restorations are infinite, as time is infinite.

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45 See my (2013c), ch. 1.

46 II.21.22: ἡ μὲν μονὰς Διός ἐστι … ὁ πατὴρ πάσης ἀποκαταστάσεως αἴτιον; 2.20.5: πᾶσα γὰρ ἡ χρονικὴ σειρὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἐκείνου θεοῦ ἀνῆπται, μετροῦσα τῷ πάλιν καὶ πάλιν τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν ἑκάστων καθ' ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὅρον.

47 He uses both ζωὴ ἀΐδιος, like Proclus, and ζωὴ αἰώνιος, a Biblical expression: see Ramelli (2008b).

48 Καθαιρόντων τὰ περιβλήματα αὐτῶν διὰ θείου φωτὸς καὶ ἀναμιμνησκόντων τῆς ἀϊδίου ζωῆς καὶ τῶν ἀποκαταστάσεων τῶν τελευτάτων.

According to Proclus, "The soul measures its own life by circles of restoration" (ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ μὲν ἀποκαταστάσεσι καὶ περιόδοις μετρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτῆς ζωήν, *Theol. Plat.* III.33.13).[49] He expands on the restoration or *apokatastasis* of the soul in *ET* §199:

> Every soul that is in the cosmos has periods and restorations of her own, proper life [πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐγκόσμιος περίοδοις χρῆται τῆς οἰκείας ζωῆς καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεσιν]. For if it is measured by time and operates in a transitive way,[50] and movement is proper to it,[51] and all that which moves and participates in time, being perpetual [ἀίδιον], has periods and revolves in periods [χρῆται περιόδοις καὶ περιοδικῶς ἀνακυκλεῖται] and *is restored from the same state to the same state each time* [ἀποκαθίσταται ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτά],[52] then it is clear that every soul that is in the cosmos, having movement and operating in time, *will have periods of movements and restorations* [περιόδους τε τῶν κινήσεων ἕξει τε καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεις]. For *every period of perpetual beings involves a restoration* [πᾶσα γὰρ περίοδος τῶν ἀϊδίων ἀποκαταστατική ἐστι].

The association of *apokatastasis* – of souls and heavenly bodies alike – with cyclical periods is very frequent in Proclus,[53] who also ascribes this concept to Egyptians and Chaldaeans.[54] Among the "perpetual beings" of which Proclus speaks in the block quotation as subject to *apokatastasis* there are surely souls. Origen classified as rational souls (*logika*, rational beings/creatures) or intelligences (*noes*) angels, humans, and demons. All of these originally enjoyed the same state of beatitude and were not differentiated into classes; they became differentiated due to the better or worse choices of their free will.[55] Porphyry, who knew Origen's theory of *logika*, in his *Letter to Anebo* asked precisely about the factors that distinguish from one another gods, demons, heroes, and souls (*ap.* Iambl. *De myst.* 61.11; 67.1).[56] Proclus, *In Tim.* I.142.1, defines demons at large as "souls that are neither divine nor susceptible of transformation," but then in 3.165.11 he further classifies these into angels, demons, and heroes (ἄγγελοι, δαίμονες, ἥρωες). This tripartition was already present in the Middle Platonist Celsus and Origen (*Cels.* 7.78). The latter also wrote a treatise *On Demons/Spirits*.[57]

The cyclical, perpetual nature of the movement of restoration is further expounded by Proclus in *ET* § 198: "All being that participates in time and moves perpetually [ἀεὶ κινούμενον] is measured out by periods [περιόδοις μετρεῖται]. Indeed, since it

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49 Cf. ibidem 4.101.17: τὰς περιόδους ἀφορίζουσι τῶν ψυχικῶν ἀποκαταστάσεων.

50 Cf. *ET* §191.

51 Cf. *ET* §20.

52 Cf. *ET* §198.

53 E. g., in *Hypot.astr.* 1.30; *In Tim.* II.264.33; II.290.20; II.292.24; III.28.29; III.29.20; III.57.13; III.64.3; III.89.12; III.92.27–30; III.127.24; III.129.26; III.138.15; III.150.17; *In Remp.* II.18.1; III.33.21; *Plat. Theol.* IV.59.13; *Inst. phys.* 2.6; *In Eucl.* 213.26–214.1.

54 *In Remp.* II.236.2: ποῖαι καὶ ὅλων κοσμικῶν περιόδων καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεων ἦσαν ἱστορίαι.

55 Full analysis in Ramelli (2013c), section on Origen.

56 On this work see now the edition and essays by Saffrey/Segonds (2012).

57 Arguments for the attribution of this treatise to Origen the Christian in Ramelli (2009; in preparation).

participates in time, its movement has a share in measure and limit, and it proceeds according to number. And since it moves perpetually [ἀεί], and this perpetuity does not transcend time but is within time [τὸ ἀεὶ τοῦτο οὐκ αἰώνιόν ἐστι, ἀλλὰ χρονικόν],[58] it necessarily has cyclic periods. [...] What moves perpetually *cannot be transformed a limited number of times*. Therefore, *what moves perpetually will return from the same state to the same state, so as to form a cyclic period* [ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἄρα ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ πάλιν ἥξει τὸ ἀεὶ κινούμενον, ὥστε ποιῆσαι περίοδον]." The perpetuity and infinity of this movement is what distinguishes Proclus's restoration theory from Origen's most; it is highlighted by Proclus many a time throughout his works, for instance also in *In Tim.* 3.18.16 (χρονικῆς *ἀιδιότητος* ... κυκλικῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως) and elsewhere.[59]

The *apokatastasis* of the soul, according to Proclus, is opposed to the world of generation and becoming. For there are two arrangements: the better, harmonic, tends to the restoration of the soul, the other to the cycles of rebirth (*In Remp.* II.67.1).[60] Souls have intellectual restorations (αἱ ἀποκαταστάσεις αἱ νοεραί), which cannot be perceived by senses (*In Tim.* III.149.26; III.308.22). Each soul has its own periods and restorations, and differences among these are due to partial souls' life in time:

> *ET* §200
> Every period of the soul is measured by time, but the period of the other souls is measured by a certain time, while the period of the first soul is measured by *the totality of time* [τῷ σύμπαντι χρόνῳ]. For if all movements entail a 'first' and an 'after', cyclic periods too, then, do. And for this reason they participate in time, and *time is what measures all the cyclic periods of the soul*. Now, if the periods were the same for all souls, and all had the same vicissitudes, the time, too, would be the same for all of them. But if *their restorations are different from one another* [ἄλλαι ἄλλων ἀποκαταστάσεις], *the time of their cyclic periods, too, and their restorations will vary*. ... All other souls (apart from the world soul) are measured by given measures that are more limited than the whole of time. This is clear from the following consideration. If those souls are more limited than the soul which participates in time primarily, they will not adapt their periods to the totality of time either, but *their many restorations will be parts of the one great period and restoration* [αἱ πολλαὶ αὐτῶν ἀποκαταστάσεις μέρη ἔσονται μιᾶς περιόδου καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεως], *that in which the soul that primarily participates in time is restored* [ἣν ἡ χρόνου μετέχουσα πρώτως ἀποκαθίσταται]. Indeed, the more limited participation characterises

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58 For the meaning of αἰώνιος as "transcending time" in the Platonic tradition and the difference from ἀίδιος see Ramelli/Konstan (2011), 732–734, and the reviews by Carl O'Brien (2010) and Danilo Ghira (2009).

59 E.g. *In Tim.* III.29.7: πάλιν ἀποκαθισταμένη καὶ τοῦτο ποιοῦσα πολλάκις, μᾶλλον δὲ *ἀπειράκις*; III.20.29–21.1: ὡς αὐτὸν *αἰωνίως* προειληφότα καὶ νοοῦντα τὸν σύμπαντα τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κινουμένων ἁπάντων ἀριθμόν, καθ' ὃν πάντα τὰ κινούμενα περιάγει καὶ ἀποκαθίστησι περιόδοις θάττοσιν ἢ βραδυτέραις, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀπέραντον διὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὸ γὰρ πάλιν καὶ πάλιν ἀνακυκλεῖν; *In Parm.* 1218.20: ἔχει τὴν ἴσην ἀποκατάστασιν, αὕτη δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτῆς ἀεὶ χρόνον.

60 Διττῆς τῆς ἁρμονίας οὔσης καὶ τῆς ἀμείνονος σαφῶς εἰρημένης εἰς τὴν *ἀποκατάστασιν* τείνειν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἡ λοιπὴ ἂν εἴη *γενέσει* φίλη. Proclus speaks of the restoration of souls a number of times, e. g. *In Tim.* I.54.8.

a lesser power, the more universal characterises a greater power. Therefore, the other souls cannot by nature receive the full measure of time during one single life, because they have been assigned a place subordinate to that soul which is measured by time primarily.

It is clear that each individual soul has its *apokatastasis*, each different from those of other partial souls, but the world soul, whose period is measured by the totality of time, has an *apokatastasis* that coincides with one great period. This notion that the partial restorations of single souls, each involving a fraction of time, make up the universal restoration, which coincides with the totality of time, is often hammered home by Proclus.[61] He postulates different measures and periods for the restorations of partial souls and bodies, but one single measure and one big period for the universal restoration (*In Tim.* II.54.21; *In I Eucl. Elem.* 149.1).[62] Partial souls and bodies have different paces in their periodic restorations,[63] but they are all unified in the cosmic restoration. With its own restoration, the world soul restores the whole universe with itself (τῇ γὰρ αὐτῆς ἀποκαταστάσει συναποκαθίσταται τὸ πᾶν, *In Tim.* II.292.21).

The totality of time coinciding with a single cyclic period of the world soul, of which Proclus speaks in *ET* §200, in turn, cannot be the infinity of time – since a cycle must by definition be finite –, but a cosmic cycle, which is concluded by a cosmic *apokatastasis*, that is, the restoration not of one partial soul, but of all partial souls together. This is the *apokatastasis* of the world soul, which includes the restoration of all other souls: "Time, revolving upon itself in a circle, *is restored* [ἀποκαθιστάμενος] together with the whole revolving of its own power, and thus it also *restores the cyclic periods of the other souls* [τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἀποκαθίστησι περιόδους] ... the same scheme returns again and again, *perpetually*" (*In Tim.* III.29.18); "the totality of time is the complete number of the restoration of the universe" (ὅλος δέ ἐστι χρόνος ὁ τέλειος ἀριθμὸς τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ἀποκαταστάσεως, ibidem III.95.6). In *In Remp.* II.11.25 Proclus describes time (ὁ χρόνος) as "the whole measure of the common *apokatastasis* of all movements, corporeal and incorporeal" (τῆς τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πάντων ἀσωμάτων κινήσεων καὶ σωματικῶν πασῶν κοινῆς συναποκαταστάσεως μέτρον παντελές):[64] now, this, "continuously recurring [πολλάκις ἀνελισσόμενον], makes up the *infinite time* [ποιεῖ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον]". Like Origen, Proclus postu-

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61 *In Tim.* II.289.29: μόνην ἄρα δεῖ πρὸς *τὸν σύμπαντα χρόνον* ἐνεργεῖν, αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι πρὸς *μόριον τοῦ σύμπαντος χρόνου* ἐνεργοῦσιν, καθ᾽ ὃ καὶ ἡ ἀποκατάστασις αὐταῖς; II.290.7: νοοῦσα δ᾽ οὖν καθ᾽ ἓν ἔχει τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν κατὰ *τὸν ὅλον χρόνον* τὸν περιέχοντα τὴν τοῦ θείου γενητοῦ περίοδον; II.290.11: πᾶσαι γὰρ ἐν μέρει τοῦ ἑνὸς ἐν τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ τὰς ἀποκαταστάσεις ἔχουσιν, ἅτε καὶ *μερικώτερα* ἀνελίττοσαι, ἡ δὲ νοερὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς νοητοῦ κόσμου νοοῦσα καὶ ἐκπεριοῦσα *τῷ ὅλῳ χρόνῳ* συμπεραίνει τὴν ἑαυτῆς περίοδον; 3.306.6: χρόνους, καθ᾽ οὓς ὁ πᾶς μετρεῖται χρόνος τοῦ κοσμικοῦ βίου, καὶ κοινὰς ἔχουσι πρὸς ἐκεῖνον καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀποκαταστάσεις. See also the article by Vargas in this volume.
62 The notion of measure is intrinsic to the periodic movement of apokatastasis (*In Remp.* II.18.17).
63 *In Remp.* II.20.19;II.226; *In Tim.* II.289.18; III.76.16; III.87.15.
64 That universal apokatastasis is both bodily and noetic is made clear in *In Tim.* II.290.17.

lates a universal *apokatastasis*, but, unlike him, thinks that *apokatastasis* does not happen once and for all at the end of time, but repeats itself infinitely, even if on extremely long cycles. For the universe itself is imperishable, it was not created in time and therefore will never perish: "the entire time embraces the whole life of the *apokatastasis* of the universe. What does not perish within this time is imperishable. Indeed, nothing perishable can endure for the totality of time" (*In Remp.* II.12.2).

The doctrine of cosmic cycles, each concluding with an *apokatastasis*, seems to have been already present in Middle Platonism, which absorbed this element from Stoicism. Not accidentally, Origen, well steeped in Middle Platonism, felt the need to criticise the Stoic *apokatastasis*, as I mentioned, contrasting it with his own Christian *apokatastasis*. The Middle Platonists probably read the Stoic doctrine of *apokatastasis* in Plato's *Politicus* myth. I suspect that this myth and Plato's great year influenced the Stoic theory of *apokatastasis* itself.

According to Proclus, a cyclic period of a human soul – much shorter than the great, cosmic period – is not to be regarded as one single human life, but as the cycle that begins with the descent of the soul with its incarnation and ends with its restoration to contemplation. This cycle can embrace many human lives. In Plato's *Phaedrus* 248Eff. the minimum interval is said to be 3000 years, encompassing three incarnations of the soul. Plato in *Tim.* 42B seems to admit that the return of a soul to the appropriate star can occur after one incarnation only. Proclus, however, in *In Tim.* III.291 remarks that this is not a complete ἀποκατάστασις.

The doctrine of *apokatastasis* – which primarily concerns souls – is related in Proclus, as in Origen, to the theory of the soul-body relation and the vehicles of the soul.[65] Proclus's doctrine of the soul's corporeal vehicle, different from Plotinus's doctrine, will therefore have to be briefly examined, and a comparison will have to be drawn with Christian Platonists such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. According to Proclus, at the beginning of a cyclic apokatastatic period the soul acquires a second vehicle (ὄχημα), after the immaterial and immortal one of which Proclus speaks in *ET* §208 and to which I shall return in a moment. This second vehicle is in turn different from the mortal body. At the restoration or *apokatastasis*, the soul will be purified and liberated from the second vehicle as well as the heavy body (*In Tim.* III.237). These degrees from an immortal to a mortal and heavy body are also found in Origen from the Christian side of Platonism. Proclus describes the first vehicle of the soul in *ET* §208: "The vehicle [ὄχημα] of every partial soul is immaterial [ἄϋλον], indivisible by essence, and not subject to passions." This corresponds to Origen's description of the spiritual body that all rational creatures had at the beginning of their creation, an immaterial and impassible body which served as a vehicle of the rational soul. Plotinus, too, spoke of a "luminous vehicle" (αὐγοειδὲς ὄχημα), which souls assume in their descent in Treatises 14, 26 and 27. Origen too, Plotinus's fellow disciple at the school of Ammonius in Alexandria, deemed rational creatures to be endowed,

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65 For Origen on body/bodies and soul(s) see full documentation in Ramelli (2013b).

from the beginning of their existence as substances, with a subtle body, which may become a heavy, mortal body on account of their sin. There is even a verbal resonance between Origen and Plotinus: Origen too designated the subtle, spiritual body of rational creatures as both αὐγοειδές and an ὄχημα. The latter notion is conveyed by the sentence, "The soul is said to have first used the luminous body as a vehicle; later this was covered with the skin tunics," mortal corporeality (τῷ δὲ αὐγοειδεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν *ἐποχεῖσθαι* πρώτῳ λέγουσιν, ὅπερ ὕστερον ἐνεδύσατο τοὺς δερματίνους χιτῶνας, *ap.* Procop. *Comm. in Gen.* PG 87.1.221 A). Origen's description of the spiritual body as αὐγοειδές is further confirmed by the sixth-century theologian Gobar (ap. Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 232, 288a).

Like Origen, who rejected the notion of the preexistence of 'bare' souls without any corporeal vehicle, Proclus too thinks that every soul always has an immaterial, simple, and impassible vehicle. Origen deems both the rational soul/intellect and its immortal body created by God prior to the existence of the material world, but not coeternal with God. Proclus also speaks of the soul and its immortal vehicle as created (*ET* §207: "the vehicle [ὄχημα] of every partial soul has been created [δεδημιούργηται] by an immovable cause") and perpetual in time (ἀίδιον, *ET* §208; 196), though not eternal in the sense of beyond time (the meaning of αἰώνιος in Platonism[66]).

In *ET* § 196 Proclus makes it clear that the immaterial, invisible, and impassible vehicle of the soul is actually an immortal body, which here he describes as ἀγένητον, not in the sense of "uncreated," which would contradict *ET* §207, but in the sense that it has no beginning in time – otherwise it should also have an end in time, as imposed by the perishability axiom:

> *ET* §196
> Every participated soul uses at first *a body, which is perpetual and has a constitution without beginning in time and incorruptible* [πᾶσα ψυχὴ μεθεκτὴ σώματι χρῆται πρώτῳ ἀιδίῳ, καὶ ἀγένετον ἔχοντι τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ ἄφθαρτον]. For if every soul is perpetual by essence [κατ' οὐσίαν ἀΐδιος] and if by its very being it ensouls primarily one of the bodies, *it will ensoul it always* [ἀεί]; for the being of every soul is unchangeable. If so, the body ensouled by it *is in turn always* [ἀεί] *ensouled and always participates in life*. Now, what lives always much more exists always. But what exists always is perpetual [ἀΐδιον]. Therefore, *the body that is at first ensouled and attached to any soul is perpetual* [ἀΐδιον]. But every participated soul is at first participated by a body, if it is true that it is participated, and not unparticipated, and by its very being ensouls the body that participates in it. Therefore, *every soul that is participated uses at first a body that is perpetual* [ἀϊδίῳ], *not created in time, and incorruptible by essence.*"

The spiritual body, not being created in time, and not being composed, will neither decay nor have an end in time. Unlike Plotinus's or Porphyry's, Proclus's position that a soul perpetually uses a body as a vehicle, from the very beginning and independently of its descent or fall, comes remarkably close to Origen's. Like Origen, also, Proclus thinks that angels have a spiritual body, which per se has no shape—they are

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66 Ramelli-Konstan (2011), 22–38.

ἀμόρφωτοι—but can take on a shape when they condescendingly appear to humans ἐν μορφῇ (Procl. *De sacr. et magia*, *ap.* Psell. *Scripta minora* I.150.13 – 14).

As Origen did, then, Proclus too speaks of one single immortal body of each soul, which can be transformed into heavy and earthly by accretion of 'tunics' – like Origen's Biblical skin tunics, and Porphyry's skin tunic[67] – upon it:

> ET § 209
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> The vehicle [ὄχημα] of every partial soul descends by way of *addition of tunics that are more and more material* [χιτόνων ἐνυλοτέρων], and ascends together with the soul thanks to the removal of all that is material and to the return to the form that is proper to it, analogously to the soul that uses it. The soul too, indeed, descends by receiving irrational forms of life, while it ascends by dropping off all the powers that activate the process of generation, which the soul had put on during the descent. ... Since souls, by their very existence, vivify their vehicles, and the latter are *created together* [συμφυῆ] *with their souls*, they change in every respect together with the activities of the souls, and *follow them everywhere:* when the souls experience passions, their vehicles suffer the same with them; *once the souls have been purified, their vehicles are restored together with them* [κεκαθαρμέναις συναποκαθίσταται]; when the souls are lifted up, the vehicles rise with them, desiring their own perfection. For every being attains perfection when it reaches its own wholeness.

Even Proclus's notion of a common restoration of soul and body after a period of purification, which is clear in this passage, is identical to Origen's. The same notion that purification must precede *apokatastasis* to the divine world is reflected in *In Remp.* I.120.14 in reference to Heracles, who after being purified obtained "the perfect restoration to the deities" (διὰ τελεστικῆς καθηράμενος καὶ τῶν ἀχράντων καρπῶν μετασχὼν τελέας ἔτυχεν τῆς εἰς θεοὺς ἀποκαταστάσεως). Restoration is perfect when it crowns a philosophical life. This is why in *In Tim.* III.291.32 – 292.2 Proclus, referring to Plato's *Phaedrus*, draws a distinction between non-philosophical souls, who can ascend to their heavenly body within one period, and philosophical souls, who are restored to the intelligible realm after three periods.[68] If souls attain restoration without having lived a philosophical life, this restoration is not perfect, since they cannot

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67 Porphyry, who knew Origen's work, used the same notion of skin tunic in *Abst.* 2.46: "In the Father's temple, i. e. this world, is it not prudent to keep pure our last garment, the skin tunic, and thus, with this tunic made pure, live in the Father's temple?" and 1.31: "We must remove these many garments, both this visible garment of flesh and those inside, which are close to those of skin." Origen maintained that "initially the soul used the luminous [αὐγοειδεῖ] body as a vehicle [ἐποχεῖσθαι], and this body was later clothed in the skin tunics" (*Comm. In Gen.* 3:21 PG 87/1.221 A). See also Ramelli (2014).

68 Likewise *In Tim.* III.291.22: ὁ τὸν φιλόσοφον βίον ἑλόμενος διὰ τριῶν ἀποκαθίστατο βίων (with reference to *Phdr.* 249AB). For a soul's restoration to its heavenly body see also *In Tim.* III.291.18: τῶν μετὰ τὴν πρώτην γένεσιν εἰς τὸ σύννομον ἄστρον ἀποκαθισταμένων ... αὐτὰς ἀπολειπούσας τὸ σῶμα βίον ἕξειν εὐδαίμονα = *In Remp.* II.130.24: δηλοῖ δὲ ὁ Τίμαιος τὴν εἰς τὸ σύννομον ἄστρον ἀποκαταστᾶσαν εὐδαίμονα βίον λέγων ἕξειν, both with reference to *Tim.* 42B. Also *Theol. Plat.* VI.34.10; *In Tim.* III.308.12.

rise to the intelligible realm (*In Remp.* II.169.8).[69] The soul's perfect restoration is noetic (*In Tim.* II.248.20).

Proclus – following Syrianus, as it seems – postulated the existence of two ὀχήματα of the soul, not only in *ET* §§196; 207–209, as I have shown, but also in *In Tim.* III.236;3.297–298.[70] The first and higher is, as I indicated, immaterial, simple, immortal, and not liable to passions, and is called by Proclus αὐγοειδές, ἀστροειδές, and συμφυές. Proclus identifies this vehicle with the vehicle in which the Demiurge places the soul according to Plato, *Tim.* 41E. The inferior, and subsequent, vehicle of the soul is called by Proclus πνευματικόν and is composed by the four elements (on the basis of *Tim.* 42B).[71] It is not the vehicle of the rational soul, as the first, luminous body is, but rather the vehicle of the inferior, irrational soul. As such, even if it survives the death of the mortal, heavy, and earthly body, it is doomed to disappear. In *In Tim.* III.297.21–298.2 Proclus distinguishes the first, immortal vehicle of the soul, the "connate vehicle" (σύμφυτον ὄχημα), from a second "vehicle of irrational life" (ἡ ἄλογος ζωὴ καὶ τὸ ἐκείνης ὄχημα), a "mass" (ὄγκος) derived "from the simple elements" (ἀπὸ τῶν ἁπλῶν στοιχείων), a "compound made of various kinds of tunics" (ἐκ παντοδαπῶν χιτώνων συγκείμενον) which weighs the soul down. This is because a soul could not pass immediately from immaterial pneuma to the earthly body (ἀμέσως ἀπὸ τῶν ἀΰλων πνευμάτων εἰς τόδε τὸ σῶμα χωρεῖν). Therefore, "during their descent to earth souls receive, one after the other, different kinds of tunics [χιτῶνας] made of the elements, air, water, and earth, and only afterwards, in the end, enter this thick mass [εἰς τὸν ὄγκον τὸν παχὺν τοῦτον]". The "second vehicle" (τὸ δεύτερον ὄχημα) appears again at *In Tim.* III.330.20–22, where it is identified once more with "the irration-

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69 Ταῖς ἀπὸ γενέσεως στελλομέναις εἰς γένεσιν ψυχαῖς, πρὸ τῆς τελείας, ὡς εἴπομεν πρότερον, ἀποκαταστάσεως;

70 Proclus's doctrine of the two ὀχήματα will be taken over by Philoponus (*De an.* 12–14 Hayduck) and probably also Macrobius (*Comm. in Somn. Sc.* 1.12.13), who speaks of a *luminosi corporis amictus*, and who ascribes the doctrine of universal apokatastasis to Plato (see above). Macrobius too was acquainted with the apokatastasis doctrine of some Christian Platonists. In the passage cited, and in I.11.12, Macrobius states that the soul, descending through the planetary spheres, acquires a body that is *sidereum* and *luminosum*, which correspond to Greek ἀστροειδές and αὐγοειδές.

71 Proclus, like Origen and most Platonists, rejected the Aristotelian "fifth body" or "element" (*In Tim.* II.42.9 ff.); in *Plat. Theol.* I.19.51, when he says that they are "immaterial", he uses ἄϋλος in the same relative sense as Origen often uses it, not meaning without matter or body in an absolute sense, but as compared with heavy earthly bodies. In *CC* 4.56 Origen remarked that Aristotle and the Peripatetics "maintain that aether is immaterial, and is of a fifth substance besides that of the other four elements; against this theory the Platonists and the Stoics adduced noteworthy arguments." Likewise in *Comm. in Io.* 13.266 he accepted the four elements. Origen's rejection of the fifth element was in line with that of some Middle Platonists. Atticus, for instance, in fr. 5 Des Places criticised Aristotle for deviating from Plato, who admitted of only four elements. Taurus also seems to have rejected the fifth element; see Karamanolis (2006), 185. Plotinus certainly did, as is clear from *Enn.* 2.1.2, and Porphyry hammered home that Plato's doctrine contemplated only four elements, and that the doctrine of the fifth element is alien to Plato's teaching (*ap.* Philop. *De aet. mundi* 521–522).

al mass [ὄγκος ἄλογος] drawn from fire, air, water, and earth".[72] Proclus interprets the myth of Plato's *Phaedo*, where those who dwell in the high places of the earth are mentioned, as a reference to souls still linked to this inferior, second vehicle, who are awaiting their complete restoration (ἀποκατάστασις, *In Tim.* III.309.26). This restoration will liberate them from the second vehicle, but not the first, which is permanently attached to the rational soul. This is also what Origen assumed. Both at the beginning, at their creation, and at the end, at their restoration, rational souls or intellects are joined with a luminous, immortal, and spiritual vehicle.

The idea that the soul is permanently accompanied by a body, from the beginning, not only is common to Proclus and Origen – whatever the specific relation between their two theories –, but it seems to have been supported by other Platonists: according to Iamblichus (*ap.* Stob. *Anth.* 1.378: 904 Hense), "the followers of Eratosthenes and Ptolemy the Platonist, and others" also thought that the soul is always joined to a body and before having an earthly body had "subtler" bodies (λεπτότερα). What is unclear, however, is whether according to the thinkers mentioned by Iamblichus each soul has one body, which by accretion can become heavier – as Origen and Proclus think – or has different bodies of different kinds. At any rate, Proclus, unlike Plotinus but like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, seems to refuse to admit that human souls can ever exist without a body, thus denying that souls pre-exist their bodies and receive a body only as a result of a fault. On the other hand, unlike Iamblichus, but again like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, Proclus did not admit that the inferior faculties of the soul – the irrational layers of the soul, so to say – are immortal.[73]

Of course Proclus, as a "pagan" Platonist, did not envisage a resurrection of the body together with the restoration of the soul, but the resurrection theorised by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, a resurrection of the *spiritual* body of the beginning, comes remarkably close to Proclus's idea of the apokatastatic return to the first body, the spiritual body that from the beginning accompanies the rational soul. The real difference between Proclus and those Christian Neoplatonists is not so much the resurrection itself, as – I think – the infinity of the apokatastatic cycles that Proclus maintains in conformity with the theory of the perpetuity of the world. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, instead, taking for granted that this world was created in time, also thought that it will have an end in time. Their motivation was not only the perishability axiom, but also Scripture, which speaks of the end of the world. As a consequence, both Origen and Nyssen thought that there is a cyclical succession of aeons, but this is finite, and it will have an end exactly with the eventual *apokatastasis*. This restoration, at the end of all aeons, that is, at the end of time,

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72 For an analysis of these passages see Finamore (forthcoming).

73 For the immortality of the rational soul but the disappearance of the irrational parts or faculties at apokatastasis according to Gregory Nyssen see Ramelli (2007a).

will occur only once, and not infinite times, as Proclus seems to postulate. This seems to be the main difference between Proclus and these Christian Neoplatonists.

As mentioned earlier, Plato in *Phaedr.* 248CE suggested that, if a soul can attain a vision of the Forms, it will be released from incarnation for a cycle of ten thousand years, just as a soul that chooses the life of the philosopher for three subsequent periods of one thousand years. Proclus glosses the *Phaedrus* passage as a reference to the *apokatastasis* of the soul from generation[74] to the intelligible world (although the expression was absent from Plato): διὰ μυρίων ἐτῶν ἀποκαθιστὰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ γενέσεως εἰς τὸ νοητόν (*In Remp.* II.52.19; also *Theol. Plat.* IV.87.14). The "most perfect restoration" (ἡ ἀποκατάστασις ἡ τελεωτάτη) is indeed the attainment of "the knowledge of all", γνῶσις πάντων (*In Remp.* II.168.16). And again in *In Remp.* I.175.26 Proclus refers to the same Platonic passage when he states that "souls, after being bridled for nine thousand years on earth, are restored at the tenth thousand" (κατὰ τὴν δεκάτην ἀποκαθίστανται). Only once may Proclus suggest that the restoration after ten thousand years may be definitive: in *In Remp.* II.170.27 he says that after such a restoration there is no other biological life (μετὰ ταύτην ἄλλος οὐκ ἔστι βίος), because the myriad is the limit of all generations. This, however, may mean that there is no other biological life during that myriad, but there can be others in the following myriads. Not all souls, according to Proclus, can attain restoration to the intelligible realm: the less rational among them either are not restored at all to the intelligible realm, or are restored to it only with great difficulty, or as the latest of all (*In Crat.* 117.23).

Among "pagan" Neoplatonists, Plotinus seems to have postulated no release for the soul from the cycles of incarnation, and therefore infinite restorations to the intelligible world at the end of each cycle. Porphyry in *De regressu animae*, if one trusts Augustine (*CD* 10.30; 12.27), claimed that the soul of the philosopher alone will finally be released forever. The soul, "once purified from all evils and established with the Father, will *never again* endure the evils of this world" (*De regr.* fr. 11). Thus, the soul's return/restoration will be definitive and eternal − like that postulated by Origen: no new fall after *apokatastasis* − and not temporary in the framework of infinite cycles of restoration always followed by new falls and incarnations. The latter view was supported by Sallustius in *De diis et mundo* 20, on the basis of the natural affinity of the soul for a body and of the limited number of souls, which must necessarily be reincarnated without end, given the eternity of the world.[75] Proclus is on the same line. He argues that, according to the cosmic law, each soul must become incarnate at least once in each cosmic cycle (*In Tim.* III.278.10), although in *In Crat.* 117 he envisages the possibility of an exception for souls such as Heracles's, who may skip several cosmic cycles. Even in this case, though, the soul must continue to de-

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74 The passage "from generation to generation before the perfect restoration" is associated by Proclus with the thousand years or chiliad: at *In Remp.* II.161.14; II.328.20.

75 With regard to the most perfect souls, Sallustius says that, separated from the irrational soul and pure, they will dwell with the gods (*ibid.* 21), but not that they will do so forever.

scend at least sometimes. Here, the descent is not a result of sin, but – as already Iamblichus and Origen admitted – is rather the effect of the generosity of a soul that wants to assist lesser souls in the process of salvation: "to do good to less perfect souls, out of providence for those who need salvation" (ἐπ' εὐεργεσίᾳ μὲν τῶν ἀτελεστέρων ψυχῶν, προνοίᾳ δὲ τῶν σωτηρίας δεομένων, *In Alcib.* 328.29).

That the cyclic periods of particular souls are infinite according to Proclus, and therefore their restorations also occur infinite times, is also clear from *ET* §206, where Proclus also avails himself of the perishability axiom:

> Every particular soul can descend into generation and ascend again from generation to being *infinite times* [ἐπ' ἄπειρον] … for what had no beginning in time will have no end either, and what has no end necessarily has no beginning. The consequence is that each soul makes ascents from generation and descents into generation, and *this has no end* [ἄπαυστον] because time is unlimited [διὰ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον]. Thus, each particular soul can descend and ascend *infinite times, and this will never stop happening to every soul.*

The infinity of *apokatastaseis* instead of one single *apokatastasis* at the end of time appears to be, therefore, the main difference between Proclus's *apokatastasis* doctrine and the Christian Neoplatonists'. But the similarities, too, are remarkable and, given Proclus's knowledge of at least Origen—on whom Gregory depends— one might not rule out some possible influence.

In this connection, the parallel with Hierocles of Alexandria is striking. In the fifth century, Hierocles too, like Proclus, explicitly mentioned and praised Origen the Neoplatonist (whom we have assumed to be probably the same as Origen the Christian Platonist). According to Hierocles, Origen and Plotinus were Ammonius Saccas' most illustrious disciples (*ap.* Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 214.172b). That Plotinus and Origen were the best of all those who frequented Ammonius's school is even reiterated by Hierocles at 251.461b. This is why Hierocles mentions Origen among the most important Neoplatonists, who followed Plato's "purified" thought, immediately after Plotinus and as a contemporary of his (214.172b). It is therefore possible, if not probable, that Hierocles knew Origen's doctrine of *apokatastasis*. Indeed, the two passages in which Hierocles speaks of *apokatastasis* bear extraordinary similarities to Origen's *apokatastasis*, so some kind of influence cannot be completely ruled out. In *In aureum carmen* 20.5, Hierocles identifies the *apokatastasis* of humans with their deification, like Origen, and, like him, explains that it can be reached by means of virtue and knowledge of the truth (τυγχάνειν γὰρ τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως ἡμᾶς – ταὐτὸν δὲ εἰπεῖν τῆς ἀποθεώσεως – διὰ τῆς προασκηθείσης ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ ταύτῃ γνωσθείσης ἀληθείας). These elements will be inherited by Evagrius in his *apokatastasis* doctrine.[76] The ascetic exercise of the soul in view of virtue, Hierocles adds, is indispensable to this end (τὸ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἄσκησιν ὅλην ἐπιστρέψαι τὴν ψυχήν).

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76 On the presence of these traits of apokatastasis in Origen and Evagrius see Ramelli (2013c), chapters on Origen and Evagrius.

Then in 27.2–3 Hierocles links the requirement of virtue in the soul with that of purity in its pneumatic vehicle (ἀρετὴν ἐν ψυχῇ, καθαρότητα δὲ ἐν τῷ πνευματικῷ αὐτῆς ὀχήματι). In this way one can become "entirely healthy" and thus "be restored to the form of one's original condition" (οὕτω γὰρ ὑγιής τις καὶ ὁλόκληρος γενόμενος εἰς τὸ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἕξεως εἶδος ἀποκαθίσταται). Hierocles describes again this restoration as deification, like Origen (τὸ τῆς ἀποθεώσεως ἀπόκειται γέρας); this is the prize for the person who has acquired virtue and the knowledge of the truth in her soul and purity in her pneumatic vehicle. This in particular entails union with the right Logos (διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον ἐνώσεως), the acknowledgment of the divine order in the universe (πάντα τὸν θεῖον κόσμον ἀναγνωρίσας) and of the Creator/Demiurge of the universe itself (τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς ἐξευρών). After acquiring this knowledge after the due purification (μετὰ τὴν κάθαρσιν), one will be restored to the state that is always enjoyed by those beings who never fall into generation (ὃ ἀεί εἰσιν οἱ μὴ εἰς γένεσιν πίπτειν πεφυκότες), will be united to the universe thanks to knowledge (ταῖς μὲν γνώσεσιν ἑνοῦται τῷ παντί), and will ascend to God (πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνάγεται τὸν θεόν). One's body itself will be adapted to one's new state, as both Origen and then Proclus assumed (σῶμα δὲ συμφυὲς ἔχων τόπου δεῖται εἰς κατάταξιν ἀστροειδῆ οἷον θέσιν ζητῶν).

Another important motif is common to Proclus, Origen, Gregory, Iamblichus, and Ps. Dionysius, and in Origen and Gregory is closely related to *apokatastasis:* the presence of the divinity "all in all" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν), but in a manner that suits each recipient and in a given order. The first Neoplatonist in which this principle appears and is deployed throughout is Origen, who grounded it in 1 Cor 15:28, where the perfection of the *telos* is described as the state in which God is "all things in all," or "all in all," τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. Origen elaborated a great deal on this notion, making it the cornerstone of *apokatastasis* and his metaphysics.[77] Gregory of Nyssa followed him and claimed that God will indeed be "all in all" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν) according to the capacity of each recipient and in a precise order depending on the degree of each one's adhesion to the Good: those who are farthest removed from the Good will be the last to be restored and to come to be in God.[78] Plotinus might even have criticised Origen's doctrine when he claimed that the divinity, or the highest principle, far from being "in all," "*is itself in nothing*, but it is the other beings that participate in it, all those which can be present to it and insofar as they can be present to it" (*Enn*.VI.5 [23].3.13–15).

After Origen, this doctrine of the presence of God "all in all" returns in Neoplatonism on the "pagan" side, but in a different form, as the presence of all in all (without focus on God or the highest Principle); only Proclus will develop the same formula as Origen, of God being "all in all." Indeed, Porphyry, who was well acquainted with Origen's work in turn, in *Sent*. 10 has a different formulation: "Every-

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77 Full documentation in Ramelli (2007a).

78 Thorough analysis in Ramelli (2007a) and more extensively (2013c), the section on Gregory.

thing is in everything, but in an appropriate way [οἰκείως] according to the essence of each thing: in the intellect in an intellectual way, in the (rational) soul in a rational way, in plants in a seminal way, in bodies in the form of images, and in what is beyond (intellect and being) in a super-intellectual and super-essential way." Iamblichus, however, says that Porphyry rejected this principle of "all in all" elsewhere (Stob. *Ecl.* I.49.31, p. 866 Hense). Iamblichus himself used this same principle (Proclus *In Tim.* I.426.20) and ascribed it to Numenius, well known to Origen (Stob. *Ecl.* I.49.31, p. 866 Hense). Origen, though, formulated it in reference to God or the supreme ἀρχή, and the same did Proclus later, who took over both Origen's form and Porphyry's, Numenius's, and Iamblichus's.

Proclus, indeed, develops this principle a number of times, on various occasions, and the very first proposition of *ET* states that God-the One is in all, in that all multiplicity participates in the One in some way. In *ET* §23 he stresses that the principle is "in all" (ἐν πᾶσίν ἐστι), though at the same time is not immanent, but transcendent. In *ET* §103 he claims that "all things are in all, but in each one in an appropriate manner" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, οἰκείως δὲ ἐν ἑκάστῳ), with the same formulation as in Porphyry's *Sentences*.[79] Ps. Dionysius, in turn, took over the principle both in Origen's and in Proclus's form. The latter case, without reference to God, is evident for instance in *DN* 4.7: "the community of all in all in a manner appropriate to each one" (αἱ πάντων ἐν πᾶσιν οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ κοινωνίαι). Origen and Proclus's formula, referring to the first principle, is clear in *DN* I.7.596c-597a: "The Cause of All is 'all in all' [πάντα ἐν πᾶσι] according to the saying, and certainly it must be praised in that it is the Giver of existence to all, the Originator of all beings, who brings all to perfection, holding them together and protecting them; their seat, which has them all return to itself [πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἐπιστρεπτική], and this in a unified, irresistible, absolute, and transcendent way." The formula here – recognised as such by Dionysius and therefore called "saying" – has both Proclus's metaphysical import and Origen's eschatological value, which Dionysius expresses in Procline terms of ἐπιστροφή. The formula appears again in *DN* 1.5 (p. 221 Suchla) in which Dionysius is speaking of the contents of his lost treatise, *Theologikai Hypotyposeis*; here the formula is referred to Jesus *qua* God and his operations, and has both metaphysical and eschatological overtones: "What could be said of Christ's love for humanity, a love that gives peace in profusion? Jesus who operates all in all [τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι ἐνεργοῦντος] and realises an unspeakable peace established from eternity, and reconciles us to him in spirit, and, through himself and in himself, to the Father. Of these wonderful gifts I have abundantly and sufficiently spoken in the *Theological Outlines*, where to our testimony is joined that of the holy inspiration of Scriptures/of the sages/of the sayings [λογίων]." In *DN* 9.5 Dionysius follows Origen's formulation and relates the situation described by 1 Cor 15:28, God's being "all in all," both to "the providence of God" and to "the salvation of all beings." He states that "in his providence, God

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79 See on this Siorvanes (1996), 51–56.

is close to every being," continually assisting each of them until the end, "and (thus) becomes 'all in all'." This takes place διὰ τὴν πάντων σωτηρίαν, the preservation of all beings now and their eventual salvation. Gregory of Nyssa already had both Origen's eschatological formulation that God will be all in all, and the non-eschatological formula in *De anima* 132: "The power of the Spirit, which operates all in all/all things in all beings," τὴν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐνεργοῦσαν δύναμιν. Obviously he could not be influenced by Proclus, who came after him.[80]

In conclusion, as I pointed out, Proclus's doctrine of ἐπιστροφή and *apokatastasis* has remarkable points of contact with that of Origen, the main difference being the infinite number of apokatastatic cycles according to Proclus and the unicity of *apokatastasis* according to Origen. This does not demonstrate a direct dependence of Proclus's doctrine of restoration and reversion on Origen's. However, given the many and significant elements of contact highlighted; given Proclus's knowledge and appreciation of Origen (likely the same as the Christian Platonist); and given the extraordinary frequency of the very terminology of *apokatastasis* in Proclus's works, against the scanty or inexistent occurrences and the apparently scarce interest in this doctrine shown by previous pagan Platonists, it may be that Proclus formulated his own doctrine of restoration and reversion not without Origen's theory somehow at the back of his mind. However, Origen's influence, if there was any, could not extend so far as to have Proclus embrace the Christian notion of the "end of the world." In this respect, Proclus's concept of the infinity of apokatastatic cycles comes closer to the Stoic theory of *apokatastasis* than to Origen's – although Proclus's Platonic transcendent framework was shared by Origen, but not by (in his day no longer vital) Stoicism.

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80 Maximus, after Proclus and Dionysius, picked up only Origen's theological-eschatological formulation, within the framework of the *apokatastasis* doctrine: "God will truly come to be 'all in all,' embracing all and giving substance to all in himself, in that no being will have any more a movement independent of God, and no being will be deprived of God's presence. Thanks to this presence, we shall be, and shall be called, gods and children, body and limbs, because we shall be restored to the perfection of God's project" (*Amb.* 7.1092Cff.).

David D. Butorac
Proclus' aporetic epistemology

> First we must enquire about the soul, whether
> we should grant it knowledge of itself, and what is
> that which knows in it, and how. -
> Plotinus, *Ennead* V.3 [49] 2.1–2[1]

The foundations of Neoplatonic metaphysics can be resolved into two, one arising from the other. First, there is a One that excludes all multiplicity. Second, there are subordinate to this One, two other 'ones' with content and ways of thinking and of being unique to each.[2] Because the mode of unity, cognition and substance in each of these latter 'ones' – *Nous* and Soul – are unique to them, they must be intrinsically different from each other, however much the Soul as effect is like its cause, *Nous*. Textual allegiances aside, these 'three kings' remain bedrocks of the system for philosophical reasons as well. This creates difficulties for the partial or human soul within a body who is somehow existing in time and becoming; it also poses difficulties for the philosopher who would explain coherently the possibility of the soul to achieve some kind of rest or return to its source or to articulate some kind of capacity for stable knowledge in wisdom outside of the flux of generation. More precariously, the coherence of the metaphysical system being thereby propounded, and of the foundations of Neoplatonism itself, rests precisely upon the coherence of that adumbration.

Our story begins with Iamblichus and his strident criticisms of Plotinus' account of the soul, and the latter's insistence that the soul is double: one above in *Nous* and the other below. Whatever nuance and ambiguity there was about the soul in Plotinus' works was run over roughshod by Iamblichus, whose criticisms were influential for Proclus' understanding of the history, his own articulation regarding the soul,[3] and even our own understanding of the history. However, Carlos Steel has shown that Iamblichus misrepresents Plotinus' account and that the latter's account is more complex than Iamblichus allows. Rather, Steel argues, Plotinus attends to both the necessities of the soul 'above' and also to the lower dianoetic soul.[4] For our purposes, I would like to apply Steel's critical standpoint to Proclus' account of the soul, in particular to the relation which the particular soul has to *Nous* or,

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2 These foundations are, however, interpreted differently, which is one of the topics of this paper.
3 Although Iamblichus' criticism of Plotinus' doctrine of the undescended soul is more nuanced than Proclus'. See below.
4 Steel (1978), 45; Cf. also Opsomer (2006). I follow Steel's treatment of Plotinus and his account of Iamblichus' treatment of Plotinus.

more accurately, its *Nous* or its *noesis*. Once Plotinus is viewed in a more dynamic and problematizing light, and as we will see with Iamblichus as well, we can better understand Proclus' position within this nuanced history and his attempt to explain what the soul is and how its faculty of *noesis* operates.

I will argue that, rather than Iamblichus' chasm between Plotinus and his own position (which forms one important basis for Proclus'), Proclus' own position is, in a *certain* respect, closer to Plotinus' than he, himself, would allow. However, to see this similarity one has to grasp the common epistemological and ontological *problems* shared by them all, something facilitated by Steel's insight. Of course, there is a certain systematic coherence within Proclus' account of the soul, but there also remain fundamental problems or ambiguities, which Proclus in fact shares with all of his predecessors. So I will argue that Proclus develops what I will call *a robust soul* where not only is the soul descended, but, in that descended state as a soul, Proclus aims to imbue it with an inherent capacity to engage both in mathematical sciences and the like and in metaphysics/theology/highest dialectic. Yet insofar as the soul is robust and descended, it opens Proclus up to problems where the soul must precisely stop being soul. However, in this, we only see the common problem and tension within all pagan Neoplatonism and which Damascius goes some way to resolve.

I. Plotinus: above and below

To account for the possibility of the soul to have rest, achieve a stable science and overcome the challenge of scepticism, Plotinus posited two souls: one above in *Nous* and one below. However this was not his only reason and his reason could be described as one which both protects the nature of *Nous* and Soul and as accounting for an essential part of soul. Namely, Plotinus argues, if there is no difference between a higher and lower *Nous* (that is, one which is in *Nous* and one in Soul) "this [higher] part of the soul is already pure Intellect" (V.3 [49] 2.22), but it is clear it is separate and we don't always use it (V.3 [49] 3.41–42). He then goes on to distinguish the character of thinking appropriate to this soul. The dianoetic part of the soul is incapable of returning upon itself (V.3 [49] 2.23–24) and so self-knowledge would be denied to this lower part. Its job rather is to "observe what is outside it" (V.3 [49] 3.16–17). Only *Nous* is capable of self-knowledge (V.3 [49] 2). Plotinus clarifies the nature of this lower soul: "No, it is we ourselves who reason and we ourselves make the acts of intelligence in *dianoia*; for this is what we ourselves are" (V.3 [49] 3.33–36). Plotinus is, in this *Ennead*, paying particular attention to both sides of the argument: the uniqueness and separateness of soul from *Nous* and *vice versa*. Thus Nous is not "of the soul" (V.3 [49] 3.22–23), "it is ours and not ours" (V.3 [49] 3.26–27), is not us (V.3 [49] 3.31). *Nous* "belongs to us and we belong to it" (V.3 [49] 4.26). We are between *noesis* and sensation (V.3 [49] 3.38). Here we find a nuanced position where the soul is not simply 'above' for the reason of *main-*

taining the discursive character of the soul, something essential to later Neoplatonism. But to square this circle of maintaining the unique dianoetic character of soul with the unique character of *Nous*, along with the requirement that soul has some sort of real contact or relation with *Nous*, Plotinus did posit a second half which remains in *Nous* and hence there is a 'double man' (V.3 [49] 4.7–8).

II. Iamblichus

It is trivial to say that with Iamblichus the Neoplatonic system becomes more complex, as this development allows both for more clarity and for more caveats and confusions. First, there is a proliferation of and focus on gods, heroes, angels and so on, principles which, for our purposes, lie between *Nous* and the human soul. Being interpreted through the law of mediation,[5] they provide a logical basis to describe a hierarchical relation between superior and inferior, or in other words, descent and return. This law both incrementally connects, as well as protects and separates dissimilar things. Overlapping with this is a proliferation of different kinds of soul which differ in their relation to *Nous*, making straight comparisons to Plotinus' relating of soul and *Nous* very difficult. Essential to this is the introduction of a new criterion to rank the souls, something essential to understanding Iamblichus' partial and embodied soul: their relation to change.[6] At the higher end, Iamblichus seems to confer upon these less changing souls a status similar to what Plotinus conferred upon the soul 'above'. Thus, with many caveats, I am aiming to describe the human particular embodied soul and its relation to a higher kind of intellection.

If Iamblichus critiques Plotinus for his double soul, where Plotinus overemphasizes the permanent roots of soul in *Nous*, Iamblichus could also be said to undermine the unity of soul in a much more radical way.[7] Iamblichus, it is known, places greater emphasis on situating the embodied particular soul within the sensible world or nature, and thus, in a way, attempts *to unify it*. It fully descends and so Iamblichus, one could say, overemphasizes this embodied aspect of the soul.[8] Yet like Plotinus', there is a tension in Iamblichus' account of the soul.[9] Like Plotinus' soul, Iamblichus' soul is intermediate between *Nous* and nature, but with Iamblichus, this intermediate nature takes on a new character. The embodied soul, being so weakened and fractured in its descent into matter as almost dissolving entirely, in

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5 *Apud*, Proclus, *In Tim.* II (ed. Diehls) 313.19; for Proclus' own account, *ET* §132.

6 Damascius, *In Parm.* (eds. Westerink & Combès) IV 3.15–4.14. I follow the pagination and lineation of this edition.

7 Cf. Finamore (2009), 123.

8 Brought out nicely by Finamore (2009), calling it 'schizophrenic', 'trapped in a twilight zone between pure contemplative thought and bodily activities. It can never fully embrace either extreme but it lives in the middle', 128.

9 More on this below.

equal parts *needs* the other Intelligible half which it mediates. But it is not that either. More acute still, Finamore notes that the Iamblichean soul is even different from itself at different times.[10] It is Iamblichus' post-Plotinian attempt to describe the soul's relation to *Nous* as a descended soul that makes him so interesting. The human soul that results is almost like that of the name offered by Odysseus to the Cyclops: no man (IX.366). And yet the Iamblichean descended soul manages to come out as one. That is, somehow the soul stays soul, however tenuously at times.

Iamblichus' critiques of Plotinus touch not only the soul's unity, but also its substance or nature. Iamblichus rejects what he takes to be Plotinus' assertion that there is "in us something impassable that always thinks".[11] For Iamblichus, the soul descends entire, even the highest part,[12] and this ensures a proper distinction between the particular soul, on one hand, and the other higher souls and *Nous*, on the other.[13] To accentuate the gap between *Nous* and the particular soul, Finamore notes Iamblichus' unique interpretation of the Parmenidean hypotheses, placing the human soul not in the third hypothesis, but in the fourth.[14]

For Iamblichus, the particular soul does not always intelligize (*In Tim.* frg. 87.20). Unlike the gods, whose essence always thinks,[15] the human soul has only an intellectual disposition (διάθεσις, *De An.* 457.7). If it achieves some kind of intellection, it is *via* the unparticipated soul (*In Tim.* frg. 50) which overlaps with the level immediately above it, that is, the participated *Nous* (*In Tim.* frg. 55). Iamblichus illustrates this by means of an interpretation of the circle of the Same and the Other (*Tim.* 36c). The circle of the same (divine/unparticipated Intellect) encircles that of the Different (the whole soul) and within these circles is the unparticipated soul. This latter is the model for our relation to *Nous*, as we proceed from the unparticipated soul. Using an image to explain the soul's intellectual capacities, individual souls are intellectual insofar as they are encircled by the unparticipated soul (*In Tim.* 54.14–23).

Yet there are tensions within Iamblichus as well. He may assert the unity of the soul and its descent, but in *De Mysteriis* VIII 6, he asserts that for the Egyptians, man has *two souls*, one subject to the physical change of the sublunary world while the other is "from the first intelligible and is participant in the power of the Demiurge ... superior to the circle of generation". According to Taormina's reading (connecting this passage from *De Mysteriis* to the *Epistle to Macedonius*),[16] the human contains

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10 *In Phaedr.* frg. 87.31. All fragments of Iamblichus come from Dillon (1973). All citations of Iamblichus' fragments come from this edition.

11 *In Tim.* frg. 87.8–9. Of course, Plotinus paints a picture more complex than that but one can say Iamblichus does correctly identify a prominent element in Plotinus' thought and which Iamblichus will try and replace.

12 Dillon (1973), 382–3 commenting on frg. 87; Steel (1978), 40–45.

13 Iamblichus, *De Anima* (eds. Finamore & Dillon) 365.5–366.11; note that Iamblichus sees that Plotinus has a nuanced position on this; cf. *De An.* 365.15–16.

14 Finamore (1997), 165.

15 Iamblichus, *De An.* 379.20.

16 45a (eds. Taormina & Piccone).

two principles: one free from nature and one within us.[17] This distinction is simply what Plotinus was trying to do with the double soul as well. Further, this observation seems to me to be parallel to the distinction made by Iamblichus about the soul having a double life.[18] Here Iamblichus considers soul, once again, in a double aspect. One is the soul itself and one in connection with the body. Philosophically speaking, one can see the need for these distinctions, but the reasons for them mirror inversely Plotinus': Plotinus emphasizes the soul (or part of it) above in *Nous*, with the soul (or part of it) below in the sensible world as somehow secondary, while Iamblichus emphasizes the embodied soul, with the part or aspect of it 'above' as somehow secondary. Nonetheless, for both thinkers, one needs *both* sides.

To complicate things further, Iamblichus inserts a different kind of knowing than that gained by reason alone. It is a *gnosis* of the gods, the *gnosis* of which eternally is and precedes our descent into generation.[19] This is the problem with Iamblichus' criticisms: having criticised Plotinus, Porphyry and Numenius, he falls afoul of similar contradictions within his system or at least the intention of that system.

Before we move to Proclus, we must treat one principle common (explicitly) to Iamblichus, Porphyry and Proclus, that is, 'all things are in all but in a mode proper to the essence of each'.[20] Plotinus has his own version of this – for what else could the soul possessing the intelligible in it mean? –, however much, according to Iamblichus, he inclined to confuse the substance of Soul and *Nous*; nonetheless, the principle is there. The application of the principle of 'appropriateness' within a Neoplatonic context by Porphyry, however, is important insofar as subsequent thinkers try to solve the problem of the unique nature of the soul and its intellection as Plotinus adumbrated it. One clearly senses that Iamblichus perceived perspicaciously the fragility of the soul, cut off from *Nous* (though he reconnects it to *Nous* and the gods in other ways), but this soul seems so attenuated and emaciated that the full implications of the Numenian principle of 'appropriateness' could not come to light, for there is almost no soul, immersed in flux as it is.

17 Taormina (2012).

18 *De An.* 368.3 – 6; 371.3 – 11; 373.8 – 21; 373.25 – 374.6; cf. Finamore (1997), 167 ff.

19 Cf. *DM* I.3 (8.3 – 13); (9.14 – 10.1); (10.5 – 10).

20 Porphyry, *Sent.* 10 (for the Greek, Vol. I, p. 310; for the English, Vol. II, trans J. Dillon, 797); see also *Sent.* 22. According G. Madec, Syrianus says this principle originates from the Pythagoreans (*In Meta.* 81, 38 – 82, 2 [Kroll]). Iamblichus, *De An.* (Stobaeus, *Anthol.* I 49.32, p. 365 W.) attributes it to Numenius (=41, des Places). For Hadot (1968) (I.243), this comes from Numenius and becomes the cornerstone of pagan philosophy. For Madec, it falls to Porphyry to apply this principle to Neoplatonism and make this distinction within the degrees of being. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 400. This latter moment is crucial to this paper.

III. Proclus or the robust soul

It is with Proclus that the idea of all things in all things but appropriately finds its most orthodox and fecund development.[21] Here the One, *Nous* and Soul each possess a unique way of self-relation. The One is beyond all self-constitution, while *Nous* and Soul possess this (*ET* §40 – 51). Parallel to this, the One lacks self-reversion, while both *Nous* and Soul possess it (§§15 – 17 & 20). This gives to soul an independence and capacity for science in a way unthinkable for Plotinus or Iamblichus. Proclus will not allow the soul to be dissolved into *Nous* nor allow it to hang almost helpless at the edge of an abyss. The Procline soul in its native activity of *dianoia* possesses, as an intrinsic part of its essence and activity, the science of mathematics. Likewise Proclus' soul and its *dianoia* are capable of self-knowledge, in a way impossible for Plotinus, because it is as a particular soul 'down here' or as intrinsically separate from *Nous* that it achieves this.

Nous is the cause of and model for Soul: what it is and what it thinks are one and the same.[22] It does possess many objects of thought but due to the eternity of its essence and activity, they are one. Importantly, the forms which are in it are one and indivisible. Soul is eternally one, but it participates in time,[23] traversing from form to form.[24] Its nature thus is one of movement.[25] Its nature is dianoetic, which divides and combines the *logoi*, which are *images* of the forms in *Nous*, and which comprise the very substance of the soul, a point central to this paper.[26] The Procline particular soul is fully descended, meaning here descended in its activity, not in its essence.

What is different here is what I am calling the robustness of the soul in comparison to Iamblichus due to the soul's native capacity for self-reversion, and in comparison to Plotinus due to the capacity for self-constitution. The soul's *logoi* and *dianoia* must belong in it and, importantly, perdure in all activities, that is, everything in everything but appropriately. Thus in its contact or relation to itself and everything other than it, it does so through its *logoi* and *dianoia*. Mapped on to soul's nature are its other faculties. For example, to perceive the sensible one uses the sensitive faculty; opinables opinion; dianoetic objects *dianoia*, *noetoi noesis* and the One through the One in it (e. g. *De Prov.* §30). The question before us is how, practically

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21 I leave the most *unorthodox* and fecund development of this principle to Damascius.

22 *Plat. Theol.* I.19.93.12 – 16; cf. *ET* §169 and *Enn.* V.1 [10] 4.11 – 19. On this in general, cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 165 – 188 and 192 – 196.

23 For a detailed analysis of Soul's activity in time, cf. MacIsaac (2002); Beierwaltes (1979), 196 – 200; Halfwassen (2005); Joly (2003) and O'Neill (1962), 161 – 165.

24 *Plat. Theol.* I.19.93.7 – 12. Cf. also *In Tim.* II.243, 22. And on participated souls, cf. *ET* §191. An important Plotinian text on this issue is *Enn.* III.7 [45] 11.35 – 44; cf. also V.1 [10] 4.19 – 20.

25 *In Tim.* I.239.2 – 5d; 282.27 – 30d; II.97.27 – 98.3; *In Parm.* 1025.15 – 28 (ed. Steel). I use the pagination of Cousin's edition and lineation of Steel's.

26 *ET* §190. For the background to Proclus' concept of *logoi*, on Iamblichus, Steel (1993); Manolea (1998); on Syrianus, Lautner (2009); on Ammonius and his school, Tempelis (1997).

speaking, the soul is related to "its *Nous*"[27] and what exactly its object or objects might be.

In the first place, generally speaking, because the soul has the cosmos in it and is separate from *Nous*, any discussion of the *Nous* of soul precludes that 'psychic *Nous*' from being *Nous* itself. Thus while *Nous* thinks all its forms at once, the soul in its time-bound kind of thinking thinks each intelligible object[28] one by one. This difference between soul and *Nous* is clear and seemingly unproblematic, but things become more puzzling when looking at the precise mechanics of this employment of the soul's *Nous* and which objects it might use.

In his commentary on *Timaeus* 28a, Proclus tries to explain what Plato meant by the expression *noesei meta logou* and its ability to grasp *to aei on*, meaning by this the Being found in Nous itself, stressing that this Being is "simple and undivided" (246.18), not graspable by "composition and distinction" (246.16) and is differentiated from the "intermediates" (247.1), that is, the *logoi*.[29] To summarize, according to Proclus, Plato's use of *noesis* here refers to the particular *Nous*, while the *meta logou* refers not to our *dianoia*, but to some other higher kind of *dianoia*, which is, in fact, the *Nous* found in us or as he later puts it, the *Nous* which "comes to exist in the soul" (247.5). When soul strives to know True Being, it must use this higher *dianoia*/*Nous* and co-operate with the particular *Nous*. This seems straightforward enough. But turning to the details, we find problems.

He provides two places in the Platonic corpus where the concept of *logos* is interpreted to help us understand what he might mean in the *Timaeus* here. First, there is the treatment in the *Theaetetus* (206c-209a) which Proclus rejects because it is not helpful in this context. We will return to this. He then turns to an adapted version of the *Republic*'s account of the faculties of the soul. For Proclus, opinion is linked to irrational knowledge so it cannot be a candidate to be connected to the *noesis* of the intellect. Neither is *dianoia* (here, he uses what is synonymous, *epistemonikos*), for, he says, "it advances to multiplicity and division", shying "away from intellective indivisibility through the variegated nature of its reasonings" (246.27–29). What remains, according to Proclus, is that the *logos* referred to in the *Timaeus* passage above is the "summit" (246.20) or "highest within the soul and most resembling unity in *dianoia*" which is "established in *noesis* of the particular *Nous* and is linked to it through affinity" (246.27–31).

What is striking in this search for an appropriate meaning of *logos* is that Proclus' first option from the *Theaetetus* could, in fact, describe the soul, its essence and activities – something he promptly pivots away from. Instead, he makes a space within soul and its 'normal' *dianoia for another higher kind of dianoia*,

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27 A problem noted by Lernould (1981), 531.

28 I am intentionally vague here about what exactly are the soul's intelligible objects.

29 For clear outlines of this, cf. Chlup (2012), 158–160; MacIsaac (2011). That Proclus is pushing the necessity of *unities* within Nous and not the divisible *logoi* found in soul is important for our treatment below of Proclus' account of dialectic and the soul's *noesis* in the *Parmenides*.

which, he stresses, is *unlike the soul and its normal or lower dianoia* (that is, the option from the *Theaetetus*). What he is doing here of course is interpreting a text in a favourable light, relevant to his purposes and plausible enough. However, read closely and in a critical light, there are tensions found within the account itself between denying to soul and its *dianoia* a kind of intellection appropriate to it – *a strict element and explicit requirement for his entire system* – and yet being obliged to furnish a place within it, even though, in a sense, the particular *Nous* is not identical to the soul.[30] But he must furnish the soul somehow with this particular *Nous*, for without this the Procline soul would either be cut off from *Nous* or, as another option, he would have to resort, perhaps, to a Plotinian solution.

What I have tried to uncover above is that there is a dominant understanding within scholarship today of the Procline descended soul, its *dianoia* and its objects (*logoi*), whose understanding of the soul comes mostly from the *ET*,[31] and is entirely unproblematic, but here we have been influenced by Iamblichus' self-interested presentation of his system as radically different from Plotinus. Yet we know from Steel and Finamore that Plotinus' and Iamblichus' conception of the soul and its true nature or natures are much closer to each other. Even with Iamblichus' descended soul, it still needs something above. So if one reads Proclus' *Timaeus* commentary with this insight, one can see that Proclus is rather struggling to provide soul with everything it needs.

The key to my argument lies in a close reading of the concept of dialectic in Proclus' *Parmenides* commentary,[32] where he makes clear that the soul in middle dialectic uses its own *logoi* and *dianoia*, whereas the soul in the highest dialectic must use 'true' Forms in its *Nous* and its *noesis*. With both the *Timaeus* commentary and the *ET* in mind, one can now better appreciate that he faces a particularly difficult task, one which he shares with his predecessors. In general, we can see a tension in the nature of the activities of dialectic and, thus, the precise objects it might use. The problem hinges around the fact that the methods of dialectic (the Platonic dividing and combining or the Aristotelian definition, division, demonstration and analysis) invariably would divide that which they treat. This would seem to indicate that dialectic must use *dianoia* and *logoi* in the soul. But it is more complicated than this.

Central to understanding dialectic properly is grasping Proclus' distinction of three activities of dialectic[33] and then to note (and keep noting) the context in which certain statements about dialectic have been made. Proclus does not merely want to make a tripartition of dialectic because he likes triads, nor because he has a scholastic fetish. He does so in his commentary on this dialogue because he must account for Parmenides' advice to Socrates that he train himself if he is to see the truth (*Parm.* 135cd). The problem is that Aristotle also used the term *gymnasia*

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30 We will discuss this more below.

31 One exception is MacIsaac (2011).

32 On this, cf. Butorac (2009) and (2012).

33 *In Parm.* 653.5–10.

to refer to the activities of his dialectic (*Top.* I 2.101b25–26) and he is clear that his dialectic uses *endoxa*, something anathema for a Platonist. Proclus, in an original twist, boldly confirms that, indeed, there is a gymnastic dialectic referred to here, but that this need not refer to Aristotle's bastard version,[34] nor must Parmenides' words refer to what happens in the final section of the dialogue. Instead, Proclus argues, Parmenides refers to a Platonic gymnastic or middle dialectic which uses intelligible *logoi*. He then finds in the miniscule section of the *Parmenides* an example of this *gymnasia* (136a-c), and if one happened to miss that, as one invariably would, Proclus provides a superfluity of them (*In Parm.* 1002–1018) just to drive the point home: there *is* a middle dialectic in the *Parmenides*. But having done so, Proclus then has to distinguish this middle dialectic from the highest which takes place in the third section and this requires a closer reading still. Please note that because Proclus has so emphatically endorsed Parmenides' advice to Socrates that he must train himself in dialectic, Proclus must then meaningfully and clearly distinguish the middle 'gymnastic' dialectic from the highest dialectic. The profusion of Proclus' description of dialectic as a gymnastic has led the scholars who have treated dialectic in the *Parmenides* commentary to conclude that *all* dialectic is merely a gymnastic, with disastrous results for our understanding of the 'theology' of its final section.[35] In fact, in the vast majority of these descriptions, Proclus is referring to the middle part of the dialogue and so the middle dialectic and not the final theological section.

To distinguish the middle and the highest dialectic, Proclus says in a few places that the highest dialectic uses the true forms in *Nous*[36] and here we come back to the problem raised just above: the instinct is to suggest that if there is dialectic, even the highest dialectic, it must use *logoi*, because it divides and combines and so on.[37] In

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34 *In Parm.* 652.21–653.3.

35 Thus for Hadot, Procline dialectic is strictly and only a gymnastic, a thesis more in conformity with his Gadmerian hermeneutics than the text of Proclus. It conforms to his thesis that ancient philosophy is a manner of living. Cf. P. Hadot (1995), 261. Following O'Meara (2000), who follows Steel (1997b), 91, Gritti (2007), 177 refers exclusively to "esercizio dialettico del *Parmenide*", while in her book (2008), 181, she does note the existence of an "esercizio preliminare".

36 E. g. *In Parm.* 994.31–995.4 (discussed below); 985–987 and *De Prov.* §30. In the Euclid commentary (*In Eucl.* 44.10–11), Proclus presents a simpler conception of dialectic, although what he says there about mathematics and dialectic can be mapped easily onto the middle and highest dialectic of the *Parmenides* commentary: the defining character of mathematics is that it employs *dianoia* and *logoi*, while dialectic is associated with and originates in *Nous*. The difference between the *logoi* used in mathematics and middle dialectic should be further examined.

37 In his *Metaphysics* commentary, when Syrianus speaks of *logoi*, he tends to speak of them as ἀμερής (e. g. 92.17; 94.20–21), but his strategy in his commentary is to refute those elements in Aristotle which he understands to be incompatible with Platonism. In comparison to particular objects in the sensation and *phantasia*, intelligible forms are partless. For Syrianus, and against Aristotle, for knowledge to be possible these *logoi* are an *a priori* condition. Because of this context, one should not take this as Syrianus' final word on this, or as indicative of Proclus' understanding of the *logoi*. Further work must be done to clarify Syrianus' account of *logoi* and its relation to Proclus' ac-

two places in the commentary, Proclus is at his clearest on what forms the soul should use. At 653.14–23 while distinguishing the highest from the middle dialectic, he says of the highest that it begins by placing the *Nous* of the soul at rest where *Nous* is most at home and then he goes on to say that the soul goes on to define, demonstrate and so on. This is a potentially problematic passage, for it would seem that by beginning with the soul's *Nous*, and thus perhaps with indivisible forms (the point of contention at issue), this would preclude division and so on from being employed. But dialectic *does* divide and combine and so on. One might then be forced to infer that only the soul's divisible *logoi* were being discussed here.

However, from 985–987, he is clear that the highest dialectic has two moments and two objects. First, it has a vision of the true form (presumably the forms which are in the particular *Nous*, *which is separate and different from soul*) and then, when it goes on to divide and combine it, the soul uses the images of the forms in its native *logoi* (986.19–27). Importantly, what distinguishes the 'true forms' from the *logoi* is that the *true forms* are simple and partless (985.14–16) and the *logoi*, on the other hand, *divisible*. I want to be emphatic that, for Proclus, if the highest dialectic (and so theology, metaphysics) is going to be possible, we must have access to forms which are qualitatively different in terms of their *unity and indivisibility* than those *logoi* that are found as native to the soul's substance. No other category is given by Proclus to distinguish them. Remember also that the soul must possess everything appropriately to it, that is, *its own logoi in its own dividing and divisible way*, but if it doesn't possess everything (as it *seems* that it does not), or if it demands a way 'inappropriate' to it (as it seems that it does, *perhaps*) a central element in his system (*and Neoplatonism*) collapses or is rendered meaningless, which amounts to the same thing.

The introduction of Aristotelian theology within late ancient Platonism did indeed augur change for Platonic metaphysics, but perhaps not auspiciously in a way an orthodox pagan Neoplatonist would intend. As O'Meara rightly notes, the soul's *logoi* become the lodestone for this new enterprise,[38] but, of course, with the hierarchy of Aristotelian sciences (easily interwoven into a Platonic context), one also requires a clear hierarchy of principles from which to begin one's reasoning. That is, the principles or premises that metaphysics employs must be different from and higher than, for example, those used by physics or sub-sciences within physics.

The instinct on the side of the contemporary scholar to look for a hierarchy of principles from an Aristotelian context is thus entirely sound, but it runs into difficulties when the school under examination has fully committed both to a Neoplatonic cosmos with the sharply demarcated unities/hypostases (and the kinds of unities

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count of *logoi*, especially in the difference between *logoi* which the soul uses in mathematics and in the middle dialectic. See Longo (2001).

38 O'Meara (1986), 12.

within each) and thus, to the followers of Iamblichus, to the intention of articulating a fully descended soul, with a unity, essence and cognition unique to it. To square this circle, one must assert both the difference between the forms in *Nous* (proper) and the *logoi* in soul, on one hand, *and* a hierarchy of principles within or for soul, on the other. Take for example what Dominic O'Meara says about these superior *logoi* in Syrianus: "Il s'agit en fait de concepts se révélant un niveau encore plus profond de l'intelligence humaine que celui des projections mathématiques, et, de ce fait, plus proche encore de l'origine de l'intelligence humaine dans l'intelligence divine…".[39] Several things should be said about this.

First, addressing the *Metaphysics* commentary itself, Syrianus does say that metaphysics does not employ the simplest substances in *Nous*, but those found in the middle (*In Met*. 4.29 – 34). He does speak of *koinai ennoiai* (18.9 – 22) and of universal *logoi* (4.36). These *logoi* in the soul are simpler, more universal, and clearer and better known than the more particular ones and for this reason are closer to *Nous* (90.4 – 7). But once one takes these general insights and propounds a more complex and developed system (as in *ET*) or within a Platonic text with more complex hierarchies implicit in it (as with the *Republic* or *Parmenides*), the specific positive adumbration becomes quickly problematic.

Proclus is loath to depart from his master's teaching and this is why I suggest the context of commenting on a text to explain the apparent discontinuities between Syrianus' and Proclus' account. In this light, is it surprising that the *Timaeus* or *Parmenides* commentary and not a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* rendered problems of hierarchy more clearly and thus the difference between *Nous* and soul and the subsequent refinement and articulation of their relation? Proclus does make reference to *koinai ennoiai* at the crucial place of the deductions of the first hypothesis.[40] Clearly, they have or should have a higher ontological status – this is logical enough – but why not clarify the precise 'location' or character of these premises or *logoi* at this point? The sticking point is the demand that, in Proclus' account, the starting points of the highest dialectic or metaphysics be qualitatively different from the 'normal' *logoi* the soul has and is and that the forms employed in the highest dialectic are or should be *indivisible*. To my knowledge, there is no Procline text that warrants the assertion that there are *logoi* in the soul that are indivisible, for this would be to blur the difference between *Nous* proper and Soul, which, following Iamblichus' distorted account of Plotinus, Proclus wanted to avoid.

Another option would be to locate these indivisible forms which the soul would use in the highest dialectic in the particular *Nous*, which seems to be the most probable interpretation. Yet the particular *Nous* must cooperate with the soul, in particu-

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39 O'Meara (1986), 12 and also cf. 12., n. 26. He refers us to Syrianus, *In Meta*., 4.33 – 5.2; 18.9 – 22; 19. 5 – 8; 20.7 – 10; 90.4 – 16 and to J. Trouillard, *L'Un et l'âme*, 51 – 67.

40 On *koinia ennoiai* in Syrianus, cf. Longo (2005) and in Proclus, cf. Helmig (2012), 270 – 272, who does not cite this passage. More work needs to be done on the place of these within the late Athenian school's epistemology.

lar with the soul's *Nous* which at once is and cannot be the 'normal' *dianoia* (for that uses 'mere' divisible *logoi*) *and* the higher *dianoia*. This is, or should be, quite reminiscent of Plotinus' fuzzy assertion that *Nous* is in soul but not of it. But based on how Proclus is understood and presented today (and if we only quickly or even rigorously read the *ET*), this critical ambiguity seems so... *unprocline*. Even if this option works, where exactly is that unity of form that the highest dialectic requires? Is it in the irradiation? If we assert that it is *not* in the soul's *ousia* (and so its *logoi*), but in its *participation* in 'its' *Nous*, we have not done much to clarify our answer because to follow such a statement to its logical conclusion requires us to run afoul of central elements of Proclus' metaphysic. As Proclus notes (*In Parm.* 982.24–34), and Beierwaltes follows, without this noetic ground in the particular *Nous*, the project of philosophy and dialectic must fail.[41] At the end of the day, there is in Proclus a tension and critical ambiguity in mapping the requirement of a higher kind of cognition and appropriate object on top of the nature of the soul as *dianoia* and it shows, but recognising this tension only draws Proclus closer to Plotinus and Iamblichus (properly understood).

My criticism of Proclus is a small but important one. He is a systematic thinker, something requiring, *contra* Dodds' evaluation, great creativity. The application of such systematicity to the tradition leading up to him allowed him to fill in gaps and inconsistencies, and to provide logical foundations for many elements – both related to the myths of the pagan religion and to purely philosophical or logical considerations – of what was to become his own philosophical system. Behind this is also what I called the robust soul: the tensions and problems only appear, first, once one sees a common philosophical problem, and, second, once one has fully committed to and elaborated this robust soul, as Proclus does, where all forms of science – whether mathematics or theology – occur or ought to occur.

There is a measured but resilient confidence in the soul's capacity for science in Proclus. But the fact remains that there remain gaps, perhaps not issuing necessarily from the desiderata of Neoplatonism, but from its untested hypotheses, which Damascius does so much to test and rework. Proclus faced the problem of the relation of Soul to *Nous* with remarkable consistency: *Nous* could not be directly related to a particular soul, which sometimes thinks and sometimes does not and which must think objects one by one. And so a series of intermediaries are posited, allowing for a particular *Nous* to continually shed its irradiations on a particular soul, if that particular soul were to train itself and turn to itself and its *Nous*. This is consistent. But these principles conflict with other equally important principles: with Plotinus (in fact)

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41 "Wenn die Idee nicht als in sich seiender Sinn [that is, in Nous] und als seiender Grund ihrer eigenen Vorläufigkeit im diskursiven (zeitlichen) Denken gedacht wird, ist Philosophie als Vollzug der dialektischen Methode und dies heisst als Wissenschaft nicht möglich" (Beierwaltes (1975), 164). Proclus refers us to *Parm.* 135b. Beierwaltes throughout this paper refers only to *Nous* or the Soul's *Nous*, but in fact it must be the particular *Nous*.

and Iamblichus, Proclus must carve out a place for soul, and he must also somehow relate it in some significant way to *Nous*, protecting both.

The baroque elegance of Proclus' system has blinded scholars to the problems in his system and to Proclus *as continuing the dynamic creativity* of someone like Plotinus.[42] I am convinced that the early publication within the recent history of academic research on Neoplatonism of Dodds' modern and nearly perfect edition of the *ET* distorted, in an unexpected way, our perception of Proclus' thought, in particular his metaphysics and psychology. Yet it is Proclus' clarity and systematicity in the *ET* that allows us to see, eventually, problems and the implications of those problems for the system as a whole, if one has the eyes to see. At stake is the character and even the possibility of the highest dialectic or theology and it seems that the Procline soul is not united sufficiently to itself to encounter what is other than it, in particular, the intelligible principles whence it came, which it both must be ineluctably separate from and joined to. The problem comes down to a separation of the one and many, or at least, how precisely the separation had been framed and conceived. The virtue of understanding Proclus in this critical light is not only understanding him or late ancient metaphysics better, or seeing him as a continuous, creative part of a school of thought ushered in by Plotinus; these are important things. The crucial development would be to draw the aporetic thought of Damascius backwards and firmly within the bounds of the project of Neoplatonism, precisely insofar as Damascius identifies and tries to resolve the structural difficulties within his school. But if Proclus is a mere systematizer, and his project so almost perfect, then Damascius' difficult (and underexamined) work would seem so out of sync with 'orthodox' Neoplatonism. This would, however, at once distort the entire history of Neoplatonism, ignore some of the best academic work on Neoplatonism, disregard Proclus' creativity and miss altogether the difficult task which pagan Neoplatonism set itself.[43]

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[42] Beierwaltes (1975) highlights some element of knowing in Proclus that are aporetic, in particular the relation of *dianoia* to *phantasia* and, as he puts it, the dianoetic or noetic relation to the One in it (175) and is aware of that the soul must think true being in time (172), but his treatment misses the problematic character of the particular soul and its relation to its *Nous*. If we understand Proclus' soul better, it is due to MacIsaac's work (among others, 2002 & 2011).

[43] For a critical history of Neoplatonism, and in particular Damascius' function within it as exposing its weakness, cf. Doull (1997). I would like to thank Jonathan Grieg for reading this and his helpful comments.

Edward Watts

The Lycians are coming: The career of Patricius, the Father of Proclus

If he were still alive, the philosopher Proclus would have recently celebrated his 1600th birthday.[1] Most of the papers in this volume consider how Procline ideas were received in the decades and centuries after his death in 485. This paper will instead consider the circumstances of his birth and early life, seldom discussed elements of his biography that merit attention in light of Proclus' stature. On one level, the lack of scholarly concern about Proclus's early life is perfectly natural. Marinus takes pains to emphasize Proclus's innate philosophical disposition, but the young Proclus left no texts and taught no students.[2] Aside from Marinus's thoroughly conventional statement about Proclus's inherent philosophical virtues, there is little that one can learn about the actual philosophical ideas or thought of the young Proclus.

One should not, however, simply dismiss the importance that Proclus's early life had on his later thought. Because of the great influence that Proclus had over the later Platonic tradition, scholars often fail to recognize how utterly odd some of Proclus's philosophically-inspired religious and political practices would have seemed to his older contemporaries. Most philosophers active at the turn of the fifth century were fundamentally still wed to an idea of principled civic engagement in which they worked to incrementally make their communities more philosophical. Many of these philosophers, like Hypatia and Proclus's Alexandrian contemporary Hierocles admitted Christian students to their classes and taught a philosophy that these students could happily learn.[3] Proclus did none of these things. His political activities are modest and mostly confrontational, with the result that he was exiled from Athens for a year and then largely left political advocacy to a surrogate named Archiades.[4] As far as we know, Proclus never took on a Christian student and he wrote from such an unapologetically uncompromising pagan perspective that the Christian philosopher John Philoponus chose to make a refutation of Proclus's *de Aeternitate Mundi* the spectacular centerpiece of his program to define an Alexandrian Christian Pla-

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1 The date of Proclus' birth is in dispute. The horoscope preserved at the end of Marinus' *Life of Proclus* suggests a date of 412 though the chronology within the text is more consistent with a date of 410. For a date of 412, see Jones (1999). For a date of 410, see Siorvanes (1996), 26–27 and Edwards (2000), 112 nn. 377, 378.

2 This idea is developed at length in *Vit. Proc.* 3–5.

3 For the teaching of Hypatia and Hierocles see Watts, (2006), 194–7 (Hypatia) and 205–7 (Hierocles). Hypatia famously taught the future bishop Synesius and Hierocles the Christian sophist Aeneas of Gaza.

4 Watts (2006), 103–110.

tonism.[5] All of these Procline attitudes make perfect sense in the world of sixth century Platonism described by Damascius in the *Life of Isidore*. They make much less sense, however, in the early fifth century world in which Proclus was born and grew up.

This is remarkable because it seems that Proclus had already developed his distinctively uncompromising attitudes towards political engagement and philosophical compromise by the time that he began his studies in Alexandria in the 420s.[6] This suggests that Proclus's early life may offer some important insights into why, unlike many of his pagan philosophical contemporaries, Proclus largely shunned intellectual and political engagement with the increasingly Christian population around him.

I. The Family of Proclus

All of the information that we have about Proclus' family life comes from chapter six of the *Life of Proclus*. The passage in question reads:

> *Vit. Proc.* 6
> His mother Marcella, joined in lawful marriage with Patricius, bore him. They were both Lycians and stood out in both social status and virtue. But the protectress of Byzantium (Athena), who was responsible for his existence because he had been born in her city, took him in her charge as if she served as his midwife and at a later time she also provided well for his existence, since she had raised him to childhood and adolescence. ... Meanwhile, after his birth his parents brought him to their fatherland, Xanthus, holy to Apollo, and this was his homeland according to some divine lot ... Because he was educated in the most noble habits there he developed ethical virtues and he became accustomed to love to do whatever things he ought and to turn away from such things as he ought not to do.

There are a couple of generally unrecognized elements of Proclus' early life mentioned here that make it intriguing. First, while it is not uncommon for modern married couples to move to a larger city and begin a job before returning home after starting a family, this was rarer in late antiquity. Members of the elite did move to the capital or other large cities to begin their career, but this usually happened before marriage. To give but one example, Libanius writes in early 360 to a friend named Florentius asking that he help Miccalus, a man traveling from Antioch to Constantinople, secure a position in imperial service "because he is still unwed."[7] Miccalus would secure a position as an assessor to an imperial governor later in 360—and was married by 362.[8]

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5 On Philoponus's engagement with Proclus see Watts (2006), 237–46.

6 *Vit. Proc.* 8–10.

7 *Ep*. 97.4.

8 Libanius, *Ep*. 704. For his marriage see Libanius, *Or.* 63.30–35. This governorship may actually have been secured more because of the influence of Priscianus, under whom he served as an assessor

Miccalus would eventually become the governor of Thrace and, while Proclus' father Patricius never earned quite so high an office, Marinus does indicate that Patricius "had acquired great renown in his vocation, when he served as an advocate in the royal city."[9] The exact position that he held is unclear. It is possible, for example, to read the Greek as "administering courts in the royal city." This would ordinarily mean an urban prefecture, which Patricius certainly never held, or it could be a vague allusion to some other office whose precise title Marinus did not know. The most likely interpretation, though, is that Patricius served as an advocate who practiced in the tribunal of the urban prefect.[10] Advocates were organized into corporations that gave them privileges before the tribunal, but the magistrate in charge of the tribunal needed first to grant them membership in this body.[11] The prominence that Patricius gained in Constantinople suggests that he earned this recognition well before Proclus' birth. Because the family was back in Lycia by the time that Proclus started school around 420, Patricius (and probably Marcella too) must already have been in Constantinople for some time before Proclus' birth.

II. Patricius the Bureaucrat

Imperial positions in the capital were good, highly desirable jobs that were usually awarded to the well-connected through the patronage of some more important figure. Governorships and other senatorial-level offices could turn over quite rapidly, but the people who held positions like that which Marinus seems to attribute to Patricius often remained in the capital for some time. Libanius' cousin Spectatus, for example, served as a tribune and notary at the court of Constantius and remained in the city for a decade or more until he was purged by Julian following Constantius' death.[12]

Patricius' career is interesting for other reasons that have some bearing on how one can understand Proclus' later life. Patricius was a pagan who held an important office at the turn of the fifth century, a period when increasingly aggressive actions were being taken against paganism. It is worth considering, then, how he may have established himself in the capital despite this religious climate. Marinus tells us nothing definitive, but one circumstantial piece of information presents an interest-

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in Euphratensis, than through the trio in Constantinople. As *Ep*. 149 shows, Libanius facilitated Miccalus' introduction to Priscianus as well.

9 ἐπλησίασε δὲ καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῶν διδασκαλείων διατριβαῖς καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πολλὴν ἐπίδοσιν καὶ περὶ τοὺς τοιούτους ἔσχε λόγους· καὶ γὰρ ἤγετο τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπιτήδευμα, ἐφ' ᾧ δὴ ἐκεῖνος σφόδρα ὀνομαστὸς ἐγεγόνει, τὴν δικανικὴν ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι πόλει δεόντως μεταχειρισάμενος. (*Vit. Proc*. 8).

10 He is unlikely to have been a procurator, as Mark Edwards suggests (n. 79), because this office involved management of financial accounts, not litigation in court.

11 For details of this see Bradbury (2004), 107–8.

12 For his purging see Libanius, *Ep*. 618. For a more thorough discussion of bureaucratic careers in late antiquity see C. Kelly (2004), 18–105.

ing possible explanation. Patricius was Lycian and the last decade of the fourth century saw a remarkable rise in the prominence of Lycians in the eastern imperial administration. The impetus for this was the prefecture of Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, which lasted from 388–392.[13] Tatianus was a pagan and appears to have been chosen for the position of Prefect of the East in part as a way to make up for the anti-pagan excesses of his immediate predecessor Cynegius. His time as Prefect of the East also coincided with a Constantinopolitan urban prefecture held by his son Proculus. The emperor Theodosius I was campaigning in the West when the two men were elevated and, because of this, Tatianus and Proculus served as the most important policy makers in the Eastern Empire for most of their tenure in office—and certainly until Theodosius returned from the West in 391.[14] They also brought relatively large numbers of Lycians to the capital to staff government offices and hold administrative positions. Tatianus and Proculus both fell in September 392 after machinations led by Rufinus, the *magister officiorum*. Rufinus took over as Prefect of the East, Proculus was executed (an execution that Rufinus compelled Tatianus to watch).[15] Tatianus was exiled to Lycia, many of the measures they sponsored were cancelled, and the Lycians they brought to Constantinople were expelled.[16]

The Lycians did not stay away. A law of 396, issued after the fall of Rufinus, restored "the former reputation and merit of the province of Lycia" and the "former dignities, and others to come" that its citizens once enjoyed.[17] Lycians, including members of the family of Tatianus, returned to imperial service and remained quite influential into the 460s. Perhaps the most important of these was a grandson of Tatianus. The son of Tatianus' daughter, he was sent by his mother to Constantinople to spend time with his grandfather in 388 in order for him to continue his education.[18] Some time in the early part of the fifth century, this Tatianus served as a governor of Caria and restored a statue commemorating his father that had been erected in the city of Aphrodisias.[19] By 422, however, Tatianus was home in Sidyma living on the family estate with his brother. He there met the future emperor Marcian and, according to some later Byzantine chroniclers, predicted Marcian's accession, gave him some money, and waited patiently for a promised reward.[20] This story was propaganda, a fictionalized anecdote that helped Marcian legitimize his rule by claiming a close relationship with the family of Tatianus, but it also shows quite clearly that the family remained extremely influential well into the fifth century.

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13 Fl. Eutolmius Tatianus 5, *PLRE* 1.876–8.

14 Zosimus, 4.45.

15 *Chron. Pasch.* s. a. 393.

16 Zosimus 4.52.

17 *CTh* 9.38.9.

18 Libanius, *Ep.* 899.

19 Roueché, [2004] inscription 37; discussion at IV.9

20 Cedrenus, 603–4; Theophanes, 104 (AM 5943); Nicephorus Callistus, *HE* 15.1.

Their influence grew under Marcian. The emperor appointed Tatianus Urban Prefect of Constantinople in 450 and kept him in the position until 452.[21] Tatianus' brother Julius governed Lycia for Marcian from 450 until, perhaps, as late as 457.[22] And his son, also named Tatianus, was tapped by the emperor Leo to serve on an embassy to the Vandal kingdom in 464 and as consul in 466.[23] In all, members of four consecutive generations of this family served as either urban prefects or consuls (or both), a record of sustained prominence few families in the empire could match.

The story of this family has some important implications for our understanding of Patricius' career. Though it cannot be proven definitively, it is likely that Patricius began his service in Constantinople as part of the wave of Lycians that followed Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus and Proculus. He would certainly have fit the profile. Xanthus and Sidyma are neighboring cities, less than twenty kilometers (twelve miles) apart on the modern road. Patricius' family likely knew that of Tatianus. Both families even shared the tendency to give their children Latin names. These families were also pagan, a factor that may have additionally helped Patricius' prospects under Tatianus. It would fit Patricius' career trajectory quite well if he came to Constantinople with this initial wave of Lycians, was expelled from the city when Tatianus fell in 392, and returned after the law of 396 enabled him to take back the Constantinopolitan privileges that Rufinus had stripped from him.

III. Proclus the Refugee

The return of Lycians after the fall of Rufinus explains why Patricius and his wife would have been back in Constantinople at the time of Proclus's birth. It is then striking that the family would again leave Constantinople so soon after Proclus was born. As Lydus suggests, career bureaucrats tended not to leave positions like that held by Patricius for frivolous reasons.[24] Again, it is impossible to say for certain what pushed Proclus's family to leave the capital, but one outside factor may offer a possible explanation. In 415, a law was issued that stated: "Those persons who are polluted by profane false doctrine or crime of pagan rites, that is, the pagans, shall not be admitted to the imperial service and they shall not be honored with the rank of administrator or judge."[25]

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21 For his career see Tatianus 1, *PLRE* II:1053 – 54.

22 Iulius 4, *PLRE* II.642.

23 Tatianus 3, *PLRE* II.1054 – 5

24 The promotions, regular cycling through offices at high pay grades, and retirement benefits suggest as much. See on this Kelly (2004), 36 – 44. Perhaps showing the appeal of these positions, John Lydus evidently even kept his bureaucratic position at the same time that he served as an imperial teacher of Latin in Constantinople. For this see Maas (1992), 35.

25 *CTh* 16.10.21, addressed to Aurelianus, the Praetorian Prefect of the East.

This law did two relatively novel things that previous anti-pagan legislation did not. First, it explicitly penalized those who held to "false doctrine" as well as those participating in traditional religious rituals. Previous anti-pagan legislation had focused particularly on practices like sacrifices but had not been concerned with the beliefs that pagans may have held. Second, this law also stripped pagans of positions in imperial service. Previous laws had enacted penalties against pagans in imperial service who failed to uphold or enforce their terms, but they had never prevented pagans from serving.[26]

Most late antique anti-pagan legislation represented more of a statement of governing principles than a blueprint for legal actions. No one, for example, is known to have been prosecuted for performing sacrifices in the fourth or fifth centuries despite the numerous legal prohibitions.[27] But this law, because it excluded people from government service, could be enforced more easily and would quickly have made the professional environment in the capital less hospitable for the pagans who worked in the courts or in imperial service. This is not to say that the law succeeded in purging the imperial service of pagans—it most certainly did not—but it did make the environment less comfortable for them. This would have been especially true for those Lycians who had come during the regime of the pagan prefect Tatianus. Their origins invited people to assume that they were pagan. Either this law itself or the climate it created probably induced Patricius to return to Lycia in the later 410s.

IV. Proclus's Early Life and his Later Career

So what, ultimately, does this tell us about the mature Proclus? There are a couple of ways in which this early experience can be helpful when considering Proclus' later career. First, we must remember that Proclus' family may have been pagan refugees forced to flee the capital when he was quite young. One of Proclus' great failings as head of the Athenian school was his inability to work effectively with Christian authorities.[28] He never mentions his father in any of his own writings, but the fact that Patricius' career in the capital may have ended abruptly because of a shift in imperial religious policies could not help but influence this attitude. It also likely helps to explain Proclus's apparent hostility towards the idea of teaching Christian students and his apparent embrace of an eternalist philosophical position that, for some Christians, embodied a fundamental problem with Platonic teaching. To use modern parlance, the religious intolerance that forced Proclus' family from the capital when he was a young child may have ultimately radicalized the philosopher.

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26 E. g. *CTh* 16.10.4, 16.10.10 – 13, 16.10.19.

27 Bradbury (1994).

28 For discussion see Watts (2006), 100 – 18.

Patricius' background also helps us to better appreciate a second feature of Proclus' career. Throughout his later career, Proclus enjoyed particularly close relations with elites in Asia Minor and, in particular, with Asclepiodotus of Aphrodisias (to whom he dedicated his *Parmenides Commentary*).[29] Asclepiodotus comes to be an important node of influence in the broader Neoplatonic social network that joined Alexandrian and Athenian intellectuals in the later fourth century.[30] He was also a leading figure in the town of Aphrodisias, the capital city of the province that Tatianus the younger governed and the city in which he restored a statue of his grandfather that had been defaced in 392.[31] This Lycian connection suggests that Asclepiodotus' relationship with Proclus may have been more nuanced than is often appreciated. The two men probably shared philosophical interests, friends who were philosophers, and common associates who were not philosophers. Their interactions, then, likely included both philosophical communications and more mundane exchanges like those found in the letters of Libanius.

None of these conclusions are particularly revolutionary, but they do make a larger point about Proclus that is worth underscoring. Most of Proclus' life falls into a historical valley separating two rich but very different sets of sources documenting late antique intellectual life. Proclus was born just after the string of letters, orations, and biographies that describe the intellectual environment of the later fourth century peter out. And he died just as Marinus and Damascius were collecting the material that would inform the main narratives of late fifth and early sixth century philosophical life. This gap has particularly profound consequences for any reconstruction of Proclus' early life. Because of the abundance of fourth-century letters, epigraphy, and other surviving materials, we have become accustomed to thinking about intellectuals from that century as three-dimensional figures whose intellectual and social lives must be considered alongside one another. This is less frequently done for fifth century intellectuals whose life events can only be recovered from philosophical biographies that often say little about their social relationships. And yet Proclus was no less a part of the late Roman social world than a fourth-century figure like Themistius and his experiences living in it were no less important. Proclus knew about Patricius' time in Constantinople and spoke about it with Marinus; it was meaningful to him. Historians considering Proclus' career and his broader intellectual legacy must acknowledge this and keep his Constantinopolitan childhood in mind as we think about the trajectory of his career and the nature of his legacy.

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29 Watts (2006), 106.

30 Watts (2006), 115–16 and Ruffini (2004).

31 For Ascleopiodtus' influence in Aphrodisias see Roueché (2004) inscriptions 53, 54 and discussion at V.8–18.

Menahem Luz

Marinus' Abrahamic notions of the Soul and One

It was said of Proclus that he was devoted not only to the gods of ancient Greece, but to those of all other peoples as well.[1] It is thus surprising that his biographer, successor and most devoted pupil, Marinus of Neapolis, was severely reprimanded by other members of the Platonic school for abandoning his native Samaritan faith for "the ways of the Greeks".[2] Since the school in which he worked also considered the divine to be derived from a single ontological, though ineffable principle, the claim that Marinus actually abandoned similar Samaritan notions of a single God would in some sense seem contradictory.[3] Two preliminary problems thus emerge: 1) the question of Marinus' consistency concerning the One and 2) his attitude to the worship of many gods.

Marinus certainly expressed no reservations concerning Proclus' own activities in theurgic practice alongside a belief in a form of universal faith. This, it should be noted, was in a period when to be non-Christian was not only disrespected in the Empire, but also dangerous. Both points obviously ran counter to imperial authority: theurgy as participation in alien cult(s) and any expression of a universal religion which was not the faith intended to replace all others. As a former Samaritan, his own attitude to Hellenism also needs to be explained. Although polytheism is said to have had a wider, though sporadic, influence on some earlier Samaritan thinkers,[4] it was unlikely to have affected them to the same degree at this period because of later imperial policy towards pagan cults.[5] Nonetheless, the criticism leveled at Marinus was not of official or even Christian origin, but rather from inside the Neoplatonic school of Athens itself. Ostensibly, it reflects discord among Proclus' pupils with one party favoring the cause of Marinus who succeeded Proclus in 485 CE – and the other favouring Isidorus of Alexandria, who prevailed a few years later (*flor.* 490 C.E.).[6] However, a closer examination of Damascius' account shows that this was not so much a tale of academic bickering circulating in Marinus' own life-time, as a

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1 Morrow (1970), xl.

2 Sources and discussion in: Zintzen (1967), frs. 141, 144, 244; Stern (1980), II,672.

3 In general, see Sambursky (1986), 146.

4 Marinus has sometimes been seen as at "the beginning of Samaritan 'philosophical' literature" whose proponents occasionally "developed tendencies" to polytheism in varying degrees. Crown (1989), 63. However, for this paper, I will treat Marinus as *sui generis*.

5 The status of Samaritans was no less difficult in the Empire since their belief was not a *religio licita* despite their similarity to the Jews (Mor (2003), 199), especially after Constantine (Crown (1989), 67).

6 See Schissel (1930), 1759; Schissel (1928), 52–53. Yet, although Damascius claims to record earlier debates in the school concerning Marinus' worth (*Isid.* (ed. Zintzen (1967), frs. 141, 144, 244), his account is heavily in favour of his own master, Isidorus (Luz (1990)).

much later onslaught made public only after the main protagonists were all gone.[7] It is the purpose of this paper to clarify his actual understanding of the Neoplatonic concept of the One despite the testimony of Damascius' criticism. Given that Marinus' religious notions play no small part in this, it would help to clarify his previous worldviews in this respect. For this we first need examine: 1) Marinus' understanding of Proclus' religious practice; 2) his possible beliefs during his alleged "Samaritan" period; and 3) his notion of the One during his stay in Athens.

I. Marinus on religious practice in the school of Athens

Perhaps Marinus' most acclaimed, but still debated, description of Proclus' opinions regarding the role of the philosopher in life ascribes to his teacher a notion akin to a universal theology encompassing all religious practices and beliefs. In what has been described as his 'obituary' speech for his master, but commonly known today as *The Life of Proclus or on Happiness*, Marinus reports that Proclus repeatedly stated that the philosopher should be minister of no particular people, but a hierophant of the entire world:

> *Vit. Proc.* xix.47–48
> It behoves the philosopher to be no minister of any one city, nor even of any particular people's customs, but to be a sacral hierophant of the entire world in common.[8]

The exact shade of meaning of the word "hierophant" (ἱεροφάντην) needs to be clarified. Although its distant origins in the classical period indicated a priest who revealed or gave instructions concerning sacred objects, it has often been noted that the sense here would best suit the philosopher who interpreted written beliefs and instructions. [9] Unless the concept of what is 'in common' (κοινῇ) is tautological, it should add a new point to the attribute 'entire' world meaning that the philosopher should be a hierophant not only of particular peoples' native customs (τῶν παρ' ἐνίοις πατρίων) throughout the entire world (τοῦ ὅλου κόσμου), but also of what is common to them all. So much is also borne out by the preceding clause: that the philosopher should be minister (θεραπευτήν) of no particular native custom, but of

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7 Dam. *Isid.* was obviously written after Isidorus' own demise and probably sometime after the school's defection to Persia 531 C.E. and Damascius' conjectured departure (532 C.E.). On these events, see: van Riel (2010), II.667–668.

8 Unless stated otherwise, translations are my own. Text and commentary in Saffrey-Segonds-Luna (2002[2]), cap. 19. *ll.* 28–30 and Boissonade (1814), 16. The historical background of the delivery of Marinus' speech on Proclus' life is dramatically set forth by Van den Berg (2001), 3–5.

9 The translation in this instance as "prêtre/philosophes-prêtres" (Luna in Saffrey-Segonds-Luna (2002[2]), 133 n. 13 begs the question of his affinity with the other instances cited.

something belonging to them all. In his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus expresses a theological principle similar to that on which Marinus' statement is based:

> *Plat. Theol.* III.14.4
> God then is One and gods are many: also Unity is one and there are many unities prior to beings – and Goodness is one and many are the goodnesses (ἀγαθότητες) after the One.[10]

Nonetheless, some have explained Marinus' remark concerning Proclus' notion of a universal religion as based less on theology as on the latter's observance of the religious calendars of all peoples.[11] It certainly was the custom of his school to sing or recite hymns on the important religious holidays of every land and especially on the days holy to the Egyptians and Chaldeans.[12] Hence there arose a preconception of his true philosophy as if Proclus worshipped "as many gods as possible" and not as "just metaphysical abstractions", but as beings in direct contact with mortals.[13] Unless the remark concerning a universal religion was no mere stylistic analogy, it would have been one that was meant to encompass earlier theologies too.[14] Marinus would seem to have grasped the distinction between Proclus' "philosophy of religion" and the actual practice in the school. In fact, he dismisses the aspersion that his master was forever feasting on the holy days marked in the calendar of every religion because (in reality) he regularly abstained from eating and drinking even on holy days, often only tasting (a little) out of piety (*Vit. Proc.* xix). We could deduce from this that there were others in the school – perhaps, Marinus' critics – who organised these feast-days in a more sumptuous style. The fact that he was finally favoured to lead the school after Proclus' death shows that he was not alone in his understanding of Proclus' way of life. How deep the rift between Marinus and his critics rested on this religious conflict is difficult to say, but Damascius' arguments do contain a personal element as well as a philosophical one. However, the real rift over theurgy *versus* philosophy erupted only after Marinus' death when the leadership of the school passed to the theurgic Hegias in 490 C.E.[15] By this time, both Isidorus and Damascius had already left Athens for Alexandria.

Proclus' abstention from food at the festivities was surely one thing, but his participation in theurgy and recital of the school's hymns was another. These would have had an important mystical role in the festivities. However, although we have

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10 My literal rendition places the emphasis on unity/plurality in the subject/predicate relationships; the Budé trans. emphasises the existential aspect: "Il y a donc un dieu unique et des dieux multiples ..." (Saffrey – Westerink (1978), 14) much as was understood by Thomas Taylor (1804): "Hence, there is one God, and many Gods ...".
11   Morrow (1970), xl-xli. More recent study emphasises a *koine* not only of language, but also of religious concepts and expressions. Athanassiadi-Macris (2013), 46 – 48.
12   Van den Berg (2001), 30 – 31.
13   Van den Berg (2001), 3 – 4.
14   Horn (2006), 26.
15   Van Riel (2010), 668.

surviving examples of Proclus' own hymnal compositions, we have no means of knowing whether these were actually performed on the festive days observed within the school. If they did not play a religious or even ritualistic role in his own days, they possibly achieved this shortly afterwards as happened in the case of those hymns ascribed to Proclus' pupil Isidorus.[16] However, it is readily apparent from the archaic language of the extant hymns that they would have been best presented at the leisurely pace of philosophical recitation – or religious chant – rather than choral song. In this sort of ambience, they would at least be more comprehensible at a period when language and poetic style had already changed. The suggestion to compare their presentation to readings of piously minded sections of the theological treatises is not out of place,[17] although slightly more would be expected from something written in the style and genre of hymns than from declamatory prose works.

The content of Proclus' *extant* hymns does not help illuminate the principle of a universally common religion. The latter are dedicated not to the gods of other peoples, but to the traditional gods of Hellas with the understandable exception of one Romano-Greek couplet (no. VI). Perhaps more reflective of Marinus' notion is composition no. IV, entitled "Hymn Common to Gods" (ΥΜΝΟΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΥΣ). Once considered Chaldean, it has been recently argued that it too was addressed to the gods of Hellas.[18] On the other hand, the surviving collection has been described as "only a fraction of Proclus' hymns" that originally included songs to non-Greek deities as well.[19] Marinus of Palestine may have personally witnessed some of the cults to which they were apparently dedicated: Asclepius Leontouchos of Ascalon, Thyandrites of the (Nabatean ?) Arabs and Isis of Egypt.[20] Hymn IV is, indeed, imbued with a mystical, almost gnostic, atmosphere disclosing the aura expected from the recitation of religious songs when it implores the deities to "shed holy light" that disperses the darkness (*l.* 6) and lead to knowledge of god and man acquired "through the study of divine books". [21] When the hymn refers to religious "rites and rituals" practised in the community (*l.*15), it speaks of the gods as actually summoned up as in prayer: "reveal You through sacred tales". [22] The role

16 Van den Berg (2001), 30 – 31. The use of hymns in ritual mystery religions of the previous imperial period is examined in Belayche (2013), 20 – 25.
17 Van den Berg (2001), 34.
18 Cf. Van den Berg (2001), 227 in reply to Saffrey (1981).
19 Van den Berg (2001), 5.
20 Although they had early local precedents (e. g., Asclepius with Esmun), it is clear that in Proclus' day these gods were more late Hellenistic-Roman equivalents than eastern archaisms.
21 Cf. the Gnostic, almost Biblical analogy of the gods dispersing darkness and shedding holy light (φάος ἀγνὸν ἀποσκεδάσαντες) for the participants (*l.* 6) and readers of the divine books (ζαθέων δ' ἀπὸ βίβλων; *l.* 5).
22 These rites and rituals (ὄργια καὶ τελετὰς) are mentioned in the hymn (*l.* 15) but may have been also practised since it also summons the gods to "enlighten" (ἀναφαίνετε) through the "sacred tales" (ἱερῶν ... μύθων) and perhaps through the study of divine books mentioned above (*l.* 5).

of the hierophant philosopher is thus easily understood as one who interprets the gods' nature through this revelation. However, while this hymn is testimony to rites, rituals, hymns and readings from divinely inspired books read in the school [23] – somewhat recalling the "Lesson" read in Judeo-Christian congregations and readings from the Bible in the Samaritan world – there is still no final proof that Hymn IV itself played a part in the ritual itself, rather than reflecting recitals descriptive of it.[24]

A more general point to be raised is that mere observance of the holy days of all peoples is not sufficient in itself to justify a claim to be a sacral hierophant of the entire world unless there was also "a belief" in what is universally "common" (κοινῇ) to all religions. It would be merely a mark of religious tolerance to observe other people's customs without also involving some belief in their gods as well. A modern analogy is the practice of displaying a Christmas tree alongside a Hanukkah candelabrum in a public or private capacity. Unless this also involves some belief in a common religious theology, it should be better termed 'equal tolerance' of all rites. All the same, a hierophantic philosopher would still be expected to explain the principles of a theology common to the religons and customs of all peoples. Despite Damascius' criticism, Marinus' non-Hellenic origin should thus have been easily acceptable to a school supporting Proclus' belief in a universal, common religion. Moreover, Marinus' Samaritan origins with its Abrahamic notion of a single, ineffable name of God should also have been in many ways compatible with the school's ineffable and apophatic divine principle.[25] The motives behind Damascius' criticism must then have been different and simply *ad hominem*.

II. The evidence for Marinus' beliefs during his "Samaritan" period

Although we have no knowledge of Marinus' early education, it is certain that he was born in or near the Samaritan community of Palestinian Neapolis – modern Nablus:

23 These readings were previously considered to be from Chaldean oracles, but Van den Berg (2001) plausibly suggests that these were more general, possibly including Homer, Orpheus and even Plato (p. 234).

24 It is argued that the hymns played an important and theurgic role in the mystic and intellect-awakening rites in the activities of Proclus and Marinus with the intention of approaching the divine Intelligence through the god. Van den Berg (2000), 434 and 436.

25 Setting aside earlier Judeo-Christian discussions of the ineffable (ἄρρητον) name of God by his fellow townsman (Justin. *Apolog.* 61.11), the 3rd-4th CE. Samaritan texts almost contemporary with Marinus presuppose the Divine Name (*sh^em'a*) as an ineffable principle and source of divine attributes (Crown-Pummer-Tal (1993), 105; Broadie (1981), 23–53).

Suda Π 2473.4
and Marinus of Neapolis was his (*scil.* Proclus') pupil and served as successor.

Details of his origins are also found in in Photius' epitome of Damascius' lost *Life of Isidorus* but this text stills leave many points unclear:

Pht. *Bibl.* 242. 345b 24 – 26
He (*scil.* Damascius) states that Marinus, successor of Proclus, was by race from Neapolis in Palestine, a city situated near the mountain called Agarizon (*scil.* Gerizim). Then the impious writer (*scil.* Damascius) said in blasphemy:

"There is the holiest of temples to Zeus the highest, 'to whom Abram, the ancient ancestor of the Hebrews consecrated himself' as Marinus himself stated."

Now, although at first a Samaritan, Marinus aligned himself differently from their belief in as much as it had diverged from Abram's rite by way of innovation and so he fell in love with the ways of the Greeks.[26]

For our present purposes, it would be best to divide this evidence into three obvious sections:
1) Photius' introduction ("He … blasphemy");
2) The actual quotation from Damascius, part of which includes a citation from Marinus ("There is the holiest … Marinus himself stated");
3) and Photius' concluding remarks ("Now, although … the Greeks").

Although it is difficult to decide how accurately Photius summarises what he found in Damascius – and even more so to estimate how accurate was Damascius' own citation from Marinus – we can still gauge the motives behind each section. In the first part, Photius apparently extracts from Damascius' biography factual information concerning Marinus' original "race" (γένος). On the other hand, the details concerning the proximity of Mt. Gerizim to Neapolis could well be an explanatory point inserted by Photius in anticipation of the quotation from Damascius in the second part. However, it is still unclear from the text that Marinus was originally a Samaritan if the reader was not already aware of the significance of Mt. Gerizim or Palestinian Neapolis. Photius thus adds this point hurriedly in the third part of this citation, but not in order to explain Marinus' race,[27] but how Marinus came to embrace Hellenism, i.e. polytheism.

We are thus still left with the problem of what Marinus' Samaritan race was meant to convey in this context: 1) Was he born and raised a Samaritan? 2) Was

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26 Abram's 'rite' (θρησκείας) is replaced by 'sacrifice' (θυσίας) in *ms.* Marc. Gr. 451. Sources, trans. and discussion in Zintzen (1967), fr. 141 p. 196; Stern (1980), II.548.673 – 675.
27 This is so whether we accept the text of Photius as cited above (Σαμαρείτης οὖν τὸ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς), or the restoration in Zintzen (1967), 196 n. 6 *ap. crit.:* "Damascius scripsisse videtur Σαμαρείτης οὖν τὸ ἀνέκαθεν".

he of Samaritan heritage though not himself an adherent? 3) Or was he merely born in Neapolis and not necessarily Samaritan by blood? [28]

Regarding the last option, it used to be noted that under the Roman Empire, Neapolis was a thoroughly Hellenised city boasting a temple to Zeus Hypsistos on its acropolis and this monument was indeed depicted on the city's coins and medallions.[29] It has thus been suggested that Marinus was already a Hellenised philosopher at the time of his residence in Neapolis.[30] Three points could be raised against this and in support of the first two options:

1. Even in late antiquity, there was a sizable Samaritan population in the immediate vicinity, if not within Flavia Neapolis itself. [31]
2. The name 'Marinus' in this geographical setting should be seen as derived from the Aramaic '*mar*' (lord/master) – or even its plural form '*maran*'. If so, it would imply that at least Marinus' family were Aramaic speaking residents of this area and probably Samaritan by religion. Although he himself could have been raised otherwise, his immediate family must have felt some adherence to tradition at the time of his name-giving.
3. When Damascius describes Marinus as a 'Samaritan', this was more than a geographical description of a Hellenised inhabitant of Samaria who happened to have been born there and originally from there since the point is immediately made that he disassociated himself from their faith because of a disagreement with innovation made to their creed.[32] For this to have happened, Marinus must have originally been a Samaritan believer himself. [33]

In addition to these points, we should examine a number of peculiar features in Photius' evidence. We may first ask: are we to take the use of the singular "with innovation" in a generic sense, or as a reference to a particular case of innovation? For a generic usage, we would perhaps expect the word to be defined by the definite article while the reference to a certain innovation would perhaps be expressed more specif-

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[28] Although this is a point needing to be analysed below (Luz (1990), 93), his Samaritanism and "conversion" are still sometimes presupposed. Saffrey-Segonds-Luna (2002²), xii-xiv.

[29] Pummer (1989), 165–169 (history), 169–175 (archaeology), 168 (Marinus); Mor (1989), 27.

[30] Sources in: Luz (1990), 93 n. 4, 8; Stern (1980), II.675.

[31] Mor (2003), cap. 13.

[32] Photius states that Marinus was not only born there but originally from there by origin (τὸ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ... γεγονώς). It is not claimed that he apostasized, but disassociated himself (ἀπετάξατο) from their belief (δόξαν). If the order of fragments in Zintzen (1967) is correct, the Suda fragment parallel to the above section of Photius' epitome discussed an actual example of apostasy in no uncertain terms (the Jew, Zeno of Alexandria (fr. 239, p. 197)).

[33] We can lay aside the description of Marinus in Schissel (1930) as a "juedisch-heidnische Konvierten". At any rate, his criticism of Samaritan innovations should not be seen as part of a Jewish-Samaritan theological debate. Stern (1980), II.675.

ically.[34] Contextually speaking, if Marinus criticised kinds of changes made within the Samaritan tradition, a number of possible Samaritan sects *are* known but largely from a much earlier period. Among the latter, only the semi-philosophical, gnostic Dositheans are said to have had any longer lasting existence.[35] Elsewhere, Photius himself discusses them extensively quoting from a report on the numerous Samaritan schisms written by the Alexandrian patriarch, Eulogius (580 – 607 C.E.).[36] Although some of these Samaritan factions are really more contemporary with Eulogius than Marinus, the details cited by Photius (*Bibl.* 286a33 – 41) concerning "Dositheus' pronouncement (κήρυγμα)" do have philosophical relevance in respect of Marinus' later philosophy, but at this stage we may note their discussions concerning the indestructibility of the world and destructibility of the soul, descriptions of angels who are substantialized *ex nihilo* and references to certain semi-gnostic ideas concerning demons.[37] On the other hand, his alleged criticism of Samaritan innovations antedates Eulogius' description of the Dositheans by a hundred years or more depending on when we date Marinus' youth. He was, after all, old and failing in health by 490 C.E. At the very least, Eulogius' evidence shows that only a little later than Marinus there was still some philosophical debate among the Samaritan factions although those in his days may not necessarily be formally identified with any of the Dositheans.

Putting aside the suggestion of Marinus' disaffection with general innovations, if the sense intended a "a specific" innovation", the reference would be to a particular ritual rather than to an entire theology. For this, there are two possible explanations. Photius' source (Damascius through Marinus) adds a reference to Abram's original rite/sacrifice (θρησκεία) on Mt. Agarizon (Gerizim). If this refers to the covenant (διαθήκη) of circumcision made between Abraham and God (*Gen.* 17. 10, 13 – 15), then Marinus' criticism of the innovation could have been grounded either on some departure from the original rite of circumcision,[38] or more likely to its reinforcement within the Samaritan community.[39] However, our text explicitly describes how "Abram con-

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34 If the singular "with innovation" (εἰς καινοτομίαν) is in a generic sense, we would perhaps expect a definite article (εἰς τὴν καινοτομίαν) while if the text referred to a kind of innovation we may perhaps expect εἰς καινοτομίαν τινά.

35 On gnostic ideas and activity in Marinus' time, see: Hall (1993), 42; Isser (1976), 117–126.

36 Pht. *Bibl.* 285a25 – 286a41; Isser (1976), 194 – 198 (Photius' text), 64 – 65 (trans.), 66 – 69 (discussion).

37 See below concerning: Marinus' understanding of Aristotle's passive Intelligence that is not that of the cosmos (*panta*) but a *daimonion* or *angelikon* intelligence and not external to the soul. Luz (1990) and Sambursky (1986), 145, 159.

38 There were periods when circumcision was proscribed under the emperors even up to the Christian period. In fact, the Samaritan reformer, Baba Rabbah (c. 244 C.E.), is particularly known for its restoration, or more likely its non-clandestine operation. Pummer (1993), 57; Pummer (1987) 4, 16; Pummer (2002), *s.v.* 'Baba Rabbah'.

39 Social and religious innovations are also ascribed to Baba Rabbah in this period, including the restoration of buildings in the vicinity of the holy Mt. Gerizim itself, but this would with difficulty

secrated himself" on Mt. Agarizon, an act not directly connected with the covenant of circumcision, but rather with the story of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac (*Gen.* 22.14).[40] The rock of Isaac's sacrifice on the mountain was and still is revered. Whenever Samaritans were permitted to ascend the mountain, it served as a focal point of their pilgrimage.[41] It is true that Photius and perhaps Marinus used the shorter name "Abram" (Ἀβράμ) rather than the expected longer form "Abraham" (Ἀβραάμ) which is recorded in the Bible for the account of the sacrifice,[42] but we are, after all, dealing with Photius' summary of a citation from Damascius quoting Marinus. The origin of this type of mistake could once more be an interpolation of Damascius. [43]

What shocks Photius himself is not Marinus' apostasy – discussed in the next sentence – but the suggestion of the "blasphemer"[44] that Abram sacrificed to Zeus the Highest. It has often been noted that the divine attribute "Hypsistos" had been identified with the Judeo-Samaritan "God most high" ever since the Hellenistic period, but, in the present passage, this could not be a mere literary approximation to the original name as previous scholars imply since a pagan temple in the name of Zeus had once stood on that very spot. In fact, the city of Neapolis was even awarded the rank of temple-keeper (*neokoros*) at various times.[45] Obviously, this appellation was awarded for the upkeep of a pagan shrine, not any structure – be it synagogue or temple – sacred to the Samaritans. However, this shrine had collapsed in the meanwhile and it was a ruin from before the days of Julian right down to the time of Marinus and Damascius. We would thus have expected our source to have written: "where there *had once stood* a most holy temple/shrine to Zeus the Highest". The actual description in the citation ("where there *is* a Temple to Zeus")[46] would not have been so expressed by the 9th century Photius who would know that in his days a Church now stood where once there used to be a pagan shrine. Nor would they be

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serve as the butt of Marinus' criticism for chronological reasons. The proposed later date for Baba Rabbah (c. 350 C.E.; *e.g.* Loewenstamm (1972), 18 – 19) is no longer held. Stonehouse (1993), 37 – 38.

40 Support for the interpretation of "where Abram consecrated himself" (ᾧ καθιέρωτο Ἄβραμος) as referring to the sacrifice of Isaac is found in the ms. Marc. Gr. 451 where θρησκεία is replaced by θυσία, but this reading is rejected by Zintzen (1967), IX. Still, the late copyist was thinking of the LXX ὁλοκάρπωσις (Gen. 22.14) when he wrote θυσία.

41 Also on Mt. Gerizim's summit is "the rock of Isaac's sacrifice" which is still revered by the Samaritan community (Pummer (1993), 207).

42 The change in the patriarch's name from 'Abram' to 'Abraham' was first made at the covenant of circumcision and prior to the sacrifice of Isaac where the name 'Abraham' is used.

43 While an orthographic correction by a scribe of the Christian era is possible, it would have to be by one not well grounded in the Bible.

44 The citation is taken from the blaspheming συγγραφεύς (Damascius) ὡς αὐτὸς ἔλεγεν.

45 Antiochus IV and III dedicate a temple to Zeus Xenios or Hellenios on Gerizim (Mor (1989), 14, 18); followed by a Roman Temple under Hadrian (Hall (1989), 51 – 52), Antoninus Pius and Caracalla (Pummer, (1989), 168 – 169); Burrell (1980), 260 – 265.

46 Ἐν ᾧ Διὸς ὑψίστου ἁγιώτατον ἱερόν. In archaeological inscriptions, it was dedicated to "Zeus Olympios but ceased to function as such by the 4th CE (Segel (2013), 258, 363 n. 508).

the words of Marinus, who, no matter how Hellenised he was by this time, would know that no such pagan shrine had existed in his city for centuries. However, we should not expect the same accuracy from Damascius who probably knew little of Neapolis and its cults. It is thus doubtful whether Damascius found the actual ascription to "Zeus" in Marinus, but added it himself along with some of the other mistakes.

We may gather from this evidence that Marinus had indeed knowledge of the locality as well as the Samaritan interpretation of the Bible. His connection with Dositheanism is uncertain although some of his esoteric interpretations of Aristotle concerning the active soul, indestructible cosmos and created angelic intermediaries between God and man need now be examined in this context.

III. Marinus' notion of the Soul and the One during his stay in Athens

To a certain extent, Schissel is correct that much of the criticism raised against Marinus in the Isidorus camp stemmed from opposition to the latter's Aristotelian approach to interpreting certain aspects of Proclus' teaching. Isidorus had personal experience of this from his own studies: [47]

> *Suda* M 199.1–2
> <Marinus:> he received Proclus' teachings and lectured on Aristotle's works to the philosopher, Isidorus.

Proclus' own teacher, Plutarch of Athens, was responsible for a return to the study of Aristotle's *De Anima* – as well as his other works – which were reincorporated within the Neoplatonic schedule[48] although not without reservations. This same tradition has special relevance for one important testimony concerning Marinus' philosophical interpretation of *De Anima* III. 5. It is preserved in Ps.-Philoponus' commentary on this book, today ascribed to the 7th century Stephanus of Alexandria. [49]

> [Philp.] *In de An.* III.5 (Hayduck, 535 5–8)
> Marinus claimed that an active Intelligence (ἐνεργείᾳ νοῦν) was not the single principle of all things, but some (Intelligence) that was divine or a conveyor of information (δαιμόνιόν τινα ἢ ἀγγελικόν). At any rate it is neither our own active intelligence, nor that of the one single principle of all.

47 Although the suggestion that the school was divided into an "aristotelesfreundliche" and "aristotelesfeindliche" camps (Schissel (1930), 1759) is no longer held.
48 Longo (2010b), II.615.
49 Hayduck (1897), v.

Stephanus' source seems to have been some earlier (5th-6th century) *katadrome* of four Neoplatonic philosophers who discussed this passage (Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, Plutarch of Athens and Marinus). The date of Stephanus' source may be deduced from those mentioned in the the list with Marinus as the latest and Alexander of Aphrodisias as the earliest. Although Stephanus describes them as commentators (*exegetai*), some like Plotinus cannot be properly termed so. From his comparison of a *katadrome* for each,[50] we may gather that the comparison does *not* originate in Marinus, even though he was the latest in date.[51] Moreover, since Stephanus does not cite exact sources for their views although claiming to quote them, we may perhaps gather that the *katadrome* was sketchy or a summary.

In order to analyse the view ascribed to Marinus, we need to examine the *lemma* under discussion briefly. In *De An.* iii, Aristotle expounds on the twin intellectualization (*nous*) in the soul – our individual passive intelligence (*pathetikos nous*) that is potentially all in thought but needs to be activated by a generic active Intelligence (*poietikos nous*) just as light activates the potential in the soul to see all colours of thought (430a15 – 17). Much in Aristotle is unclear and even fragmentary, but he does repeatedly distinguish between: a) an act of human intelligence (νοῦς) i. e. intellectualizing – which is intuition endowed with the ability to ponder over all scientific thought; b) and essential Intelligence (νοῦς) – that is the power of Intuition to activate human intelligence everywhere just as Art activates the intuition of the artist (12 – 15, 19 – 20).

Basing himself on his physical theory that every activity must be a result of action on a passive material substrate (11 – 13), Aristotle deduces that both principles must also account for our intellectual/intuitive thought. Our potential ability to theorize and intuit must in his opinion be activated by the essence of Intellection/Intuition just as artistic matter is activated by Art itself (*techne*; 12 – 13). Since there are no limits to the power of human intuition, our potential to intuit all and any scientific principles is the result of the independent activity of this principle of Intellection on our own intellectual ability. This is compared to the activity of an independent, essential Intelligence that motivates and stirs our own intelligence, but is not mixed with it, or affected by it:

> Aristotle, *De Anima* 430a 17 – 18:
> This Intelligence is also separate, impassive and unmixed for it is an activity in its essence.

This abstract Intellect (Νοῦς) – *viz.* Intellection – acts like a catalyst and prime mover of our own intellection – *viz.* our thought (νοῦς). As such the former must be separate (χωριστός) from it, and for it to maintain its independence it has also

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50 Hayduck (1897), 535.17 – 19; 536.10 – 19; 537.9 – 26.
51 He contrasts Marinus' view with those of Plotinus and Alexander, but compares Plotinus to Plutarch with whom Stephanus himself agrees. The views of Proclus are notably absent although we would expect some reference if the whole discussion originated in Marinus.

to be impassive (ἀπαθής) and unmixed (ἀμιγής) – *viz.* unaffected – by human intellection and forever prior to it. Human intellect is thus not only passive to Intellection's activity (ἐνέργεια), but also dependent on it and fleeting:

> Aristotle, *De Anima* 430a23 – 25
> Separated, (the Intellect) is all that exists and only it is immortal and eternal – but we do not recall (its activity) since it is impassive while our passive intellect (νοῦς) is fleeting and intuits (νοεῖ) nothing without the former.

Whether this passage is a gloss inserted from one of Aristotle's earlier studies, or, as once suggested, a Platonistic addition to our text,[52] Neoplatonists naturally tended to identify this Intelligence with principles that are prior to us not only in Aristotle's primary sense, but also in a transcendental sense as well:

1. Alexander of Aphrodisias is said to have identified the active Intelligence with what he termed "the single external principle of the universe or the Intelligence from without (θύραθεν)" (535.4 – 5). This activates everything as a primary cause since he saw that it was fashioner of all things (20 – 22). Stephanus himself interprets Alexander in reference to Aristotle's God and unmoved mover (25 – 29).

2. Plotinus is now said to have identified both of Aristotle's intelligences as human (8 – 9), but while one was unceasingly active, the other was only intermittently so (9).[53] Plotinus' reference, however, resembles the division of the upper and lower souls in *Enn.* I.1 [53]. 7 – 8 since Stephanus contrasts his bipartite view of the intelligence with the non-partite view ascribed to Plutarch of Athens (13 – 16).

3. Marinus' interpretation of the passage is now claimed to fall between the two previous stand-points: that of Alexander's divine Intelligence and that of Plotinus' human one (31 – 35). He is said to posit an intermediary Intelligence that is some spiritual (being) or a conveyor of information (δαιμόνιόν τινα ἢ ἀγγελικόν)[54] because "he says that it is neither our own active intelligence, nor that of the one single principle of all" (5 – 6).

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52 As it stands today, Aristotle's *De Anima* is a mixture of different periods of his psychological theory, containing sections from his earlier Platonising works on the soul, his instrumentalist middle period and this later period where the *Nous* has some affinity to the Unmoved Mover.

53 Stephanus takes τὸν μὲν ἀεὶ ἐνεργοῦντα, τὸν δέ ποτε ἐνεργοῦντα; as a departure from Plato according to whom the soul is forever moving (9 – 12). While Plato described the action of the *demiourgos* on an ever-moving soul in the *Timaeus*, it is claimed that Plotinus does not distinguish between this and the lower emanations of the human soul, thus casting doubt on the soul's eternity. However, it could also have originated in a discussion of the self-moving, ever moving chariot soul of the *Phaedrus*.

54 These are not always synonymous, but distinguished (Proclus. *in Remp.* I.86.7, 147.9; II.13.20), or alternatives (I.96) though Proclus also refers to the ἀγγελικῶν δαιμόνων (*in Parm.* 617) but mostly in relation to the intuitive power of the mind as a spiritual conveyor of the gods' will (*in Tim.* I.341).

4. Stephanus concludes with the simple non-partite (ἁπλοῦς) view of human intelligence ascribed to Plutarch of Athens with whom he personally agrees (535.11, 536.3).[55]

From Stephanus' description, we may understand that Marinus drew his conclusions from what he at least considered was a return to Aristotle's original text: "Marinus … claimed that there was a divine intelligence that *Aristotle said* was an active intelligence" (31–32). Likewise, he recalls Aristotle when he said that it was not a human intelligence since "*he* (*scil.* Aristotle) *said* that it intuits everything and is by essence active and always intuits" (31–33). Similarly, Marinus claims to return to the Aristotelian text itself when he states that Alexander's identification of the active Intelligence with the "single principle of all things" (34) is incorrect since *he* (Aristotle) compares it to light and a state accompanying appearances (35–36), but light is the medium between the illuminated and the illuminator" (39). Marinus concludes from this re-examination of the original text that the ever-active "Intelligence" is a medium between Alexander's external principle of all and Plotinus' human intelligence, describing it as "an Intelligence which is like some sort of conveyor of information" (37–38).

Marinus was not the first to write of Intelligence as some sort of spiritual or informative (δαιμόνιόν τινα ἢ ἀγγελικόν) medium or simply as like that of the informtive Intelligence (οἷον ἀγγελικοῦ νοῦ). His master, Proclus, had used a similar expression to explain how it was not (essential) Intelligence itself that creates a the divine (soul) since there is also an Intelligence that is (merely) conveyor of information and spiritual.[56] In his triadic ontological system, the divine Living Being is composed of Intelligence and the divine Soul with monadic Unity standing before them (16–17). It is quite clear then why Marinus could not have accepted Alexander's equation of the Intelligence with the prime cause which in Proclus' system would supersede the spheres of Being and Intelligence. In fact, Proclus later explains:

> *In Tim.* III.165.17 ff.
> For the principle conveying information to the Intellect (ἀγγελικὸν πρὸς τὸ νοητόν) is primarily the result of the ineffable (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρρήτου) and hidden source of beings. Keeping the analogy: therefore, it too reveals (ἐκφαίνει) the gods and conveys (ἐξαγγέλλει) hidden information from them. [57]

However, while Proclus' discussion concerns the cosmological structure of all being, it is clear that Marinus is attempting to explain Aristotle's question: how can humans intuit unless there is some previous Intuition to activate their intellects. Marinus cannot accept Alexander's solution since the primary cause should be identified with

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55 Possibly this is derived from some discussion of Plutarch on the Plato's *Phaedo*.

56 *in Tim.* III.126.21: "for that which makes a divine being is not Intellect (itself), since there is also an informative and spiritual Intellect" (οὐ γὰρ νοῦς ὃ ποιεῖ θεῖόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἀγγελικός ἐστι νοῦς καὶ δαιμόνιος).

57 The informative connotation of ἀγγελικόν is clarified by the use of ἐκφαίνει/ ἐξαγγέλλει.

Proclus' ineffable (ἄρρητον) principle and not the cause of intellect. Nor could he accept Plotinus' solution whereby Intellection touches on our intellect through emanation. On the other hand, his application of Proclus' principles to solve a problem raised by Aristotle deserves more than Damascius was willing to appreciate. Although obviously wrapped in a layer of melodramatic venom and spite, Damascius' account mocks Marinus' "natural inability to grasp philosophy" – and understand his master's commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*.[58] Marinus' own exegesis of the *Parmenides* similarly suggested that the subject was a contemplation of the Forms and not the ineffable principle about which there is no dialectical enquiry.[59]

It is in a way not surprising that of the many Procline notions that Marinus chose to adapt one was the ineffable principle of all being and the other the informant principle emanating from it. By means of the latter, the ineffable was not wholly unknown to humans. Given that the principle of the Ineffable name of God and the spiritual powers conveying information about Him were well-entrenched in Samaritan beliefs, it is tempting to see them as part of Marinus' previous theological concepts. His recollection of Abram and his one god would have been tailored in order to fit into the Procline system. He is thus a splendid example of the multiculturalism of Proclus' theological system.

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58 Zintzen (1967), fr. 244, 199; a judgment still upheld in Van den Berg (2001), 4 on Marinus' "limited intellectual capacities".

59 Further details of Damascius' unfair attack in: Luz (1990), 102–104.

II Ps.-Dionysius, Byzantium and the Christian inheritance of Proclus

Rebecca Coughlin

Spiritual Motion and the Incarnation in the *Divine Names* of Dionysius The Areopagite

In the widely read and commented upon text of Dionysius the Areopagite entitled the *Divine Names*, there are three short, yet thought-provoking passages that demand close examination. Each passage deals, in its own way, with the concept of motion. As has been shown by many commentators, motion has a very important place in the ancient philosophical traditions, particularly the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. From its centrality in Plato's discussion of the motions of the Same and the Different in the *Timaeus*, to the importance of the distinction between circular and rectilinear motion for Aristotle in *On the Heavens,* the concept of motion has played a crucial role in the work of these two foundational philosophers. As these examples show, there are two predominant ways of understanding motion within this tradition. The first understands motion as describing the logical or causal relations between things. The second understands motion as an image of the modes of knowing. Interpretations of the passages in Dionysius' *Divine Names* which deal specifically with motion focus on one or the other of these modes of interpretation. A fuller understanding of Dionysius' position can be achieved through engagement with the Neoplatonic tradition on which he relies, especially as presented by Proclus. In this paper I will examine some of the interpretations of these passages and suggest how an understanding that takes both views into account, along with a fuller understanding of Dionysius' commitment to orthodox Christological formulations, will yield a more complete understanding of Dionysius' conception of motion in the *Divine Names*.

I. Spiritual Motion in the *Divine Names*

In the longest chapter of the *Divine Names*, ch. 4, Dionysius presents his reader with three brief and almost cursory discussions of motion. The first is in relation to the movement of the angels. He says, "The divine intelligences are said to move as follows. First they move in a circle while they are at one with those illuminations which, without beginning and without end, emerge from the Good and the Beautiful. Then they move in a straight line when, out of Providence, they come to offer an unerring guidance to all those below them. Finally they move in a spiral, for even while they are providing for those beneath them they continue to remain what they are and they turn unceasingly around the Beautiful and the Good from which all identity comes."[1] Thus, Dionysius enumerates three kinds of motion found amongst the divine minds,

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[1] *DN* 4.8 (704D–705A).

divine intelligences, or angels: circular, linear, and spiral. The angels move in a circular motion when they are most closely united to God: the Good and the Beautiful. They move in a straight line when they reach out providentially to those below them; and they move in a spiral when they reach out with providential care to those below while they also remain fixed in their identity with their Source: the Good and the Beautiful.

Immediately following this passage, Dionysius describes how the human soul partakes of the same three motions exhibited by the angels, albeit according to their own mode:

> *DN* 4.9 (705AB)
> The soul too has movement. [the soul] moves in a circle, that is, it turns within itself and away from what is outside and there is an inner concentration of its intellectual powers. A sort of fixed revolution causes it to return from the multiplicity of externals, to gather in upon itself and then, in this undispersed condition, to join those who are themselves in a powerful union. From there the revolution brings the soul to the Beautiful and the Good, which is beyond all things, is one and the same, and has neither beginning nor end. But whenever the soul receives, in accordance with its capacities, the enlightenment of divine knowledge and does so not by way of the mind nor in some mode arising out of its identity, but rather through discursive reasoning, in mixed and changeable activities, then it moves in a spiral fashion. And its movement is in a straight line when, instead of circling in upon its own intelligent unity (for this is circular), it proceeds to the things around it, and is uplifted from external things, as from certain variegated and pluralized symbols, to the simple and unified contemplations. (tr. Luibheid)

Thus, the soul too, shares these three distinct motions: circular, spiral, and linear. However, the types of motion, when attributed to the soul, seem to take on a different character. Here the motions are not only discussed with respect to the soul's relation to its superiors and inferiors; rather, its motions are also, and perhaps more fully, described as modes of knowing. So there is the circular motion which is a sort of self-contemplation that produces unity within the subject in imitation of the divine unity; there is spiral motion which the soul exhibits when it moves in logical and discursive thinking; and finally there is linear motion which the soul exhibits when it considers those things around and below it and moves through them towards God.

The final passage in the *Divine Names* that deals specifically with these three kinds of motion occurs in the ninth chapter. Here, Dionysius discusses the attribution of rest and motion to God. After asserting that God remains in himself, that he is immobile and immovable; that he is unchanging and stable; that he is these things transcendently and that he is the cause of these things in everything, Dionysius says that God can also be said to move:

> DN 9.9 (916CD)
> And yet what do the theologians mean when they assert that the unstirring God moves and goes out into everything? This is surely something which has to be understood in a way befitting God, and out of our reverence for him we must assume that this motion of his does not in any way

signify a change of place, a variation, an alteration, a turning, a movement in space either straight or in a circular fashion or in a way compounded of both. Nor is this motion to be imagined as occurring in the mind, in the soul, or in respect of the nature of God. What is signified, rather, is that God brings everything into being, that he sustains them, that he exercises all manner of providence over them, that he is present to all of them, that from him, providing for everything, arise countless processions and activities. And yet, in some mode conforming to what befits both God and reason, one has to predicate movement of the immutable God. One must understand the straight motion of God to mean the unswerving procession of his activities, the coming-to-be of all things from him. The spiral movement attributed to him must refer to the continuous procession from him together with the fecundity of his stillness. And the circular movement has to do with his sameness, to the grip he has on the middle range as well as on the outer edges of order, so that all things are one and all things that have gone forth from him may return to him once again. (tr. Luibheid)

Dionysius is careful, as always, not to suggest that God's motion can be understood in any way that is similar to how motion is understood for the soul, or even for the divine intelligences. Movement cannot be attributed to God, at least not movement as we regularly understand it in any sublunary way and not even movement as understood spiritually. And yet, God does, in a manner befitting him, move. First, the straight is described as the act of creation, God's production of the cosmos from himself. Second, the spiral motion is described as a combination of God's providential activity and his remaining in himself; finally, the circular movement describes at once God's holding of all things in unity with Himself and the return of all things to him.

II. Neoplatonic sources

Before describing further the ways that the three basic motions are interpreted within the Neoplatonic tradition generally, I will turn to a brief discussion of the sources of the idea of these motions as described by Proclus, Dionysius' immediate Neoplatonic source.[2] In his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Proclus considers Plato's assertion: "For the movement of the Same – which gives all their [the planets'] circles a spiral turning, due to the two distinct [orientations of the circles] going along in opposing [dimensions] at the same time."[3] Proclus interprets Plato here to mean that the planets move in a spiral, at once moving east to west and north to south, "for these two movements in conjunction with the motion of the universe make the spiral."[4] The more primal motions are circular and linear, and it is only in combination that the spiral is produced; so the spiral is not a simple motion, but composite.

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2 For Dionysius' reliance on and kinship with the Neoplatonic philosophy of the late Athenian school, particularly as found in the writings of Proclus, see Koch (1895a) and Stiglmayr (1895a).
3 *In Tim.* IV.77.11–77.14.
4 *In Tim.* IV.79.12–79.13.

Proclus makes a similar assertion about Plato's position in his *Commentary on Euclid's Elements,* except that here it is in a discussion of geometrical principles rather than motion. He states: "Plato assumes that the two simplest and most fundamental species of line are the straight and the circular and makes all other kinds mixtures of these two, both those called spiral, whether lying on planes or about solids, and the curved lines that are produced by the sections of solids."[5] In this commentary, Proclus' focus is on metaphysical, but not cosmological, sources of the kinds of motion. This is also where Proclus states: "According to Plato, the point, if we may say so, appears to bear the likeness of the One, for the One also is without parts, as he has shown in the *Parmenides*. Since there are three hypostases below the One – namely the Limit, the Unlimited, and the Mixed – it is through them that the species of lines, angles, and figures come to be."[6] Thus, the One, as point, does not share the changes associated with the hypostases. Proclus goes on to describe the circular line as corresponding to Limit, the straight line to the Unlimited and, as noted it is through their combination, the Mixed, that lines, angles, and figures come to be: "So as all other things arise from the Limit and the Unlimited, likewise the whole class of mixed lines, both those in planes and those about solids, come from the circle and the straight line."[7] Thus everything below the first two hypostases, being Limit and Unlimited, belongs to the category of the Mixed, just as all lines, angles and figures are composed of the combination of circular and straight lines.

It is with this discussion of the hypostases in the *Commentary on Euclid* that Proclus begins his comments about motion. On account of the three hypostases "there are three species of motion: motion in a straight line, motion in a circle, and mixed motions."[8] Thus, the three kinds of motion that comprise all movement in the universe are directly linked to the divine procession that comprises the first three hypostases. There is a close connection found in Proclus' commentary between the perceived ordering of the cosmos and natural laws of geometry, physics and logic. This is seen in Proclus' discussion of the genesis and place of the spiral in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus:*

> *In Tim.* IV.79.13 – 79.21
> The spiral is also appropriate to the planets since they are intermediate between the fixed stars and the things in the sub-lunary realm. Since the former are moved only in a circle, while the things [below the Moon] undergo rectilinear motion, it follows for things that are intermediate between them to be moved naturally in an irregular manner and also in a regular manner with respect to their longitude (*mêkos*), latitude (*platos*) and proximity to the Earth (*bathos*). This happens in order that [the planets] may be paradigms of the various motions of the things that come after themselves as well as imitating the uni-formity (*to monoeidês*) of the things prior to themselves through their rotation. (tr. Baltzly)

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5 *In Eucl.* 103 – 104.

6 *In Eucl.* 104.

7 *In Eucl.* 107.

8 *In Eucl.* 104.

The spiral is not, for Proclus, a mere side effect of contrariety as found in the movements within nature; it is rather a necessary intermediate motion as it serves to mediate between the motions of the sublunary realm and the perfect motion of the fixed stars. As he asserts:

> *In Tim.* IV.80.5–.80.13
> The spiral shape is not an empty coincidence but rather fills in the intermediate status between bodies that have rectilinear motion and those that are carried around in a circle. The circle, as has been said [79.14], is only for the fixed stars, while the straight line is for Becoming. The spiral, then, is for the planets, since they have a mixture of both rotation and straightness. Their motions with respect to latitude and proximity to the Earth are proximate causes and paradigms of the motions of things down here – that is of motions upward, downward and along the diagonal. (tr. Baltzly)

These observations are not, for Proclus, limited to the realm of the movement of celestial bodies and physical objects. He makes the connection, in his *Commentary on Euclid,* between these motions and the soul and in this case the kinds of motion are specifically described as symbols: "The straight line is a symbol of the inflexible, unvarying, incorruptible, unremitting, and all-powerful providence that is present to all things; and the circle and circular movement symbolize the activity that returns to itself, concentrates on itself and controls everything in accord with a single intelligible Limit."[9] He goes on to explain that:

> *In Eucl.* 107–108
> For this reason the soul contains in advance the straight and the circular in her essential nature, so that she may supervise the whole array of unlimiteds as well as all the limited beings in the cosmos, providing for their forthgoing by the straight line and for their reversion by the circle, leading them to plurality by the one and collecting them all into unity by the other. And not only the soul, but also he who constituted the soul and furnished her with these two powers possesses in himself the primordial causes. (tr. Morrow)

By this Proclus means *Nous*, which he also refers to as the demiurge. For he says,

> *Eucl.* 108–109
> The demiurgic *Nous* has therefore set up these two principles in himself, the straight and the circular, and produced out of himself two monads, the one acting in a circular fashion to perfect all intelligible essences, the other moving in a straight line to bring all perceptible things to birth. Since the soul is intermediate between sensibles and intelligibles, she moves in circular fashion insofar as she is allied to intelligible nature but, insofar as she presides over sensibles, exercises her providence in a straight line. (tr. Morrow)

The soul is, in this way, akin to the planets that are governed by intelligences and move eternally in a spiral motion as the expression of their mediate position. The soul, however, does not have the quality of eternality in the same way that the plan-

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9 *In Eucl.* 108.

ets do and therefore she moves first in one way and then in the other, alternating between circular and rectilinear motion depending on the object of her activity.

The connection here between motion and providence is striking. Although the idea of providence does not come into his discussion of the spiral as the cosmologically determined motion of the planets, he does seem to suggest that its place and role are necessary to the emanation of all things from the first principle, and as part of the eternal creation of the cosmos, the spiral motion can be said to reflect the providential care of the First Principle. It is interesting that Proclus chooses not to ascribe spiral motion to the soul in this discussion as Dionysius does. Neither does he ascribe spiral motion, *per se*, to the demiurgic *Nous*, as Dionysius does of God in ch. 9 of the *DN*.

The spiral is, by its nature, a mixed motion. While Proclus does acknowledge the presence of Limit, the Unlimited, and the Mixed in the first three hypostases, these principles do not touch the One, which is said to be akin to the point and therefore above the circular and straight lines and their many combinations which create shapes. In this geometrical description of the genesis of the cosmos, God, the One, is above all motion and does not possess length, depth or breadth. Even *Nous*, as the first hypostasis, does not participate in the mixture of Limit and Unlimited, though it contains both, and therefore cannot, for Proclus, ever be described as exhibiting spiral motion. And so while Soul, like Nous itself, is described as containing and exhibiting both of these motions, it does not, for Proclus, move in what is properly described as a spiral fashion.

III. Motion as Logical Relation

As mentioned above, discussions of motion within the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions can be said to fall into two categories. The first uses the paradigm of motion to describe logical relations and the second to describe modes of knowing. In the following section I will discuss several different interpretations of motion as logical relation within this tradition.

In his foundational treatment of this topic, *Kinesis Akinetos*, Stephen Gersh describes the notion of spiritual motion as the "motion of immobility."[10] While within the tradition motion is often predicated of spiritual realities, as seen above with Proclus' discussion of *Nous* and Dionysius' discussion of God, it is assumed that what these authors intend is not to attribute actual change of place or orientation to the divine principle. As Gersh argues, "Most earlier writers agree that the motion which is a fundamental characteristic of atemporal and non-spatial reality can only be understood as some type of logical relation."[11] When discussing Proclus' po-

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10 Gersh (1973), 11.
11 Gersh (1973), 11.

sition in particular Gersh suggests that the only type of logical relation that explains Proclus' position is 'dynamic logical relation' which holds the spiritual realm to be a process, not a fact.[12] In a later treatment Gersh asserts that the Neoplatonists classified reality into unmoved and moved, that further the moved are divided into internally and externally moved; and in addition "they also attribute motion of a kind to the spiritual principles which comprise this first category."[13] He explains that "what is being described here as a motion is precisely that moment of distinction or separation which characterizes the procession of an effect from a cause, and so it seems reasonable that reality, inasmuch as it constitutes a series of such processions, can be understood as a descending scale in which rest predominates over motion at higher levels but progressively diminishes in relation to it."[14] And finally, he concludes that "in brief, the argument seems to be that rest and motion are in a reciprocal relation since each must follow the other in temporal sequence and that, since motion is a kind of rest (for it remains in a state of mobility) and rest is a kind of motion (for it requires that something continues to rest), the reciprocity applies even to the atemporal sphere."[15] It is through analogy that notions of rest and motion can be applied to the spiritual realm and it is also by analogy that the geometrical elements point, straight line and curve – "can be held to approximate to certain inexpressible truths."[16]

In general, the causal process in Neoplatonic thought is described by the terms procession, remaining and return, and their interplay. When using the analogy of geometry to discuss this causal process, there are two possible ways, Gersh suggests, that the analogy is applied: the first equates the centre (point) with remaining, the straight line with procession and the circle with reversion; the second possibility equates the circle with remaining, the straight line with procession, and the spiral with reversion.[17] Gersh supports this claim with the following explanation:

> That these three different types of line can be equated with the three moments of the causal process seems to be supported by (i) the fact that the triad of limit, unlimited, mixture is normally viewed as an alternative description of the process, (ii) Proclus' assertion that the circle is the figure which is 'akin to unity and determined by unity (…),' and presumably therefore equatable with remaining, (iii) the association of procession with the straight line in the earlier example discussed above, and (iv) the notion which is especially prominent in Damascius, that reversion is a combination of remaining and procession. It would thus perform the same role as the spiral in relation to the circle and straight line.[18]

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12 Gersh (1973), 11–12.
13 Gersh (1978), 68.
14 Gersh (1978), 68.
15 Gersh (1978), 69–70.
16 Gersh (1978), 73.
17 Gersh (1978), 73–74.
18 Gersh (1978), 75.

Thus we see how the geometrical descriptions provided by Proclus in his commentaries *In Euclidem* and *In Timaeum* can be directly related to the general causal process of procession, remaining and return which permeates his system. The analogy, however, is not fixed; it is able to be shifted and moved depending on the specific causal relation that is being discussed. This shifting in focus when discussing causation is seen throughout Proclus' most systematic work, *The Elements of Theology*.

Perhaps one of Proclus' most fundamental claims in *The Elements of Theology* occurs at §35, where he asserts: "Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it."[19] This is what Gersh described above as the "general principle of causation." The way the effects proceed, revert, and remain deserves closer attention in the context of the question of motion. Products or effects are united to their cause in that they are dependent on them and in their dependence desire them.[20] In addition, the effect remains in its cause to the extent that it shares an element of identity with its cause, and proceeds from it to the extent that it differs from its cause,[21] and also that "all reversion is accomplished through a likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion."[22] In this context Proclus describes the movement of procession as cyclic:

> ET §33
> All that proceeds from any principle and reverts upon it has a cyclic activity. For if it reverts upon that principle whence it proceeds, it links its end to its beginning, and the movement is one and continuous, originating from the unmoved – and to the unmoved again returning. Thus all things proceed in a circuit, from their causes to their causes again.

In this case the motion of procession and reversion is combined and linked, forming the cyclic or circular motion of all creation. Note that for Proclus all things proceed in this way – this motion is the source of their being. So while it is the case that procession, strictly speaking, coincides with the analogy of the straight line, there is another sense, which Proclus points to here, in which procession cannot be separated from reversion – both being necessary for the coming-to-be of the effect. This passage highlights the need to avoid strictly dividing the moments of the causal process in Neoplatonic thought, whether that process is thought of in terms of the concepts of procession, remaining and return or in its geometric analogy as straight line, circle, and spiral.

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19 *ET* §35.
20 *ET* §28.
21 *ET* §30.
22 *ET* §32.

IV. Motion as Modes of Knowing

As we saw above different kinds of motion can also be used as an analogy for the different modes of knowing as set out within the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. That there are different modes of knowing and that these modes exist in a type of hierarchy was clearly established by Plato in the *Republic*. These modes of knowing – sense perception, belief, discursive thought (*dianoia*), and understanding (*noesis*) – were directly connected by Plato in book six of the *Republic* with the objects of knowledge, i.e. the ordinary objects or images in the perceptible world, abstract mathematical and geometrical principles, and finally, universal philosophical truths. In this system it seems that the form of knowing is determined by the object perceived, that is, only a limited and unreliable kind of knowledge is possible of the objects of sense perception, and that more reliable, discursive knowledge is possible of abstract principles because they are by their nature less contingent and more universal. However, there developed within the Neoplatonic tradition a different approach to the modes of knowing in which the mode of knowing is determined by the knower, not by the object. As Christoph Helmig has described, Proclus maintains "that the form of knowledge is not determined by the object known, but by the knower, since although both intellect and soul possess the same Forms, intellect possesses them primitively (that is, intellectual apprehension is the paradigm case of knowledge of the Forms), whereas soul possesses them in an unfolded, that is, discursive manner. The doctrine that the form of knowledge is determined by the knower was first formulated by Iamblichus. Proclus himself refers to it several times, for instance, in *Elem. Theol.* §124."[23] John Dillon also alludes to this when he describes with respect to the higher forms of knowledge: "The characteristic of discursive thought, after all, which is a mode of intellection proper to the level of soul rather than to intellect, is that it proceeds from premises to conclusions, and pursues chains of reasoning, and also, inevitably takes time to come to its conclusions; whereas non-discursive or intuitive thought comprehends a truth or situation all at once, globally and instantaneously."[24] Thus modes of knowledge in the later Platonic tradition are determined by the knower and not by the object.

Stephen Gersh has noted that the first Neoplatonic author to make a distinct connection between modes of knowing and kinds of motion was Hermias, an Alexandrian who studied at the Platonic Academy in Athens under Syrianus. In a footnote Gersh mentions that "the circle, straight line and spiral are used by Hermias (*In Phdr.* 20. 27 ff) to characterize intellection, sense, and discursive reason respectively as the different functions of Intellect, while Proclus (*In Tim.* III. 80.5 ff) applies them to bodily motions."[25] This is an interesting note, since for Dionysius this association

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[23] Helmig (2012), 252.
[24] Dillon (2008), 247.
[25] Gersh (1978), 75 n. 229.

between forms of knowing and kinds of motion is used right alongside the analogy with causation and it is the former analogy that is taken up to a larger extent by his successors.[26]

Eric Perl sees in Dionysius' description of the soul's modes of knowing a hierarchy of unity, what he refers to as a "continuum of cognition."[27] In the passages from the *Divine Names* dealing with the modes of perception, Perl sees a fundamental principle of the Platonic tradition. Turning to the writings of Plotinus, Perl shows how "intellection itself is the intelligible paradigm of which sense perception is the unfolded expression [...]. Correlatively, as lower and higher points on the continuum of cognition, sense perception is dim intellection, and intellection is clear sense perception."[28] When looking at the passages from *DN* specifically, Perl notes "Dionysius proceeds to present discursive reason, proper to human souls, as inferior to angelic intellection precisely in that it is less unified. [...] Sense perception is an 'echo of Wisdom' in that, as a mode of cognition, it is still a consciousness, however 'dim' or diffuse, of being. Hence even the lowest animal, in that it has sensation and thus some awareness of reality, is a participant in God as Wisdom."[29] The human soul, for Dionysius, has the capacity for all three forms of knowing; it is not "confined to the level of discursive reason, but, as in Plotinus, can ascend to the level of intellection and beyond."[30] Here Perl is suggesting an understanding of the modes of knowing and so the motions given them by analogy that understands their interrelation and does not require that they be held apart and seen only in contrast to one another. This observation is especially important given that the causal process is interpreted by Proclus in such a way that he does not divide the motions but rather sees them as interrelated or even coincident.

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26 See Harrington (2002), 448, for Maximus Confessor's use of the three motions: "Maximus the Confessor paraphrases this chapter in appropriating the three motions for his own theology, but he goes on to give them titles which reflect their roles in human knowing – they are *nous*, *logos*, and *aesthesis*. These three motions are to be differentiated based on the different kinds of objects that they know. Through the motion of *nous*, 'the soul is moved unknowably about God.' Through the motion of *logos*, the soul 'posits in itself, through the activity of science, all the natural *logoi*.' Through the motion of *aisthesis*, the soul 'is affected by what is outside it. The three motions of soul exist because there are three levels of being: God, the intelligible *logoi*, and the sensible exterior world."

27 Perl (2007), 83.

28 Perl (2007), 89.

29 Perl (2007), 90.

30 Perl (2007), 90.

V. A Christological Framework for Dionysius' Conception of Motion

There are many similarities between Dionysius' formulations of the three types of motion and their analogies with the causal process and modes of knowing and those same formulations as found in the Neoplatonic tradition. Indeed Gersh has asserted that "Christian Neoplatonists are as readily prepared as their pagan predecessors to conceive the cyclic process of causation in terms of geometrical images, and much of the earlier doctrine is repeated without significant alteration."[31] And yet there is also a new framework within which these analogies are being understood with Dionysius, and it is to this new framework and its implication that we now turn.

At the council of Chalcedon in 451, in Proclus' birthplace, Constantinople, the orthodox Christological formulation was firmly established. The council states "... we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood [...] recognized in Two Natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence...."[32] Dionysius' commitment to this Christological formulation has been called into question on many occasions – from the time of his texts' appearance sometime in the middle of the 6th century to the present day.[33] The problematic passage for many commentators occurs in his *Fourth Letter*. In this letter Dionysius summarizes his position about the nature of Christ, writing:

> *Ep* 4
> For, if I may put the matter briefly, he was neither human nor nonhuman; although humanly born he was far superior to man, and being above man he yet truly did become man. Furthermore, it was not by virtue of being God that he did divine things, not by virtue of being a man that he did what was human, but rather, by the fact of being God-made-man he accomplished something new in our midst – the activity of the God-man (tr. Luibheid).

Dionysius calls this new activity *theandric*. The concern over the years has been that this language reflects a monophysite position, which does not preserve, but destroys both the human and divine natures in the Incarnation and creates something wholly new and unlike either of the constituents. Yet, in the same letter Dionysius says with respect to Christ's human nature, that Jesus in the Incarnation is called man, "He is not called a man here in the context of being the cause of man but rather as being himself quite truly a man in all essential respects."[34] Dionysius is especially careful

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31 Gersh (1978), 251.
32 Bettenson (ed.) (1963), 51.
33 See Wear/Dillon (2007).
34 *Ep 4.*

to preserve both natures in the Incarnation, while highlighting, just as the Council of Chalcedon did, the unity of person in the Incarnation.

It is within this context of the Incarnation that Dionysius' appropriation of the analogy of spiral motion gains a different meaning and it is in this context that the full meaning of the spiral in the pagan Platonic tradition is realized. For Proclus, in a cosmological context, the spiral explicitly represents the mean between the motion of the fixed stars and the rectilinear motion of the sublunary realm. When the spiral is used within the analogy of the causal process, it becomes clearer that Proclus is not talking about three different activities, and especially not three different agents – rather all three motions are manifestations of the same motion as perceived in different contexts. Procession and reversion are not as such divisible in the process of emanation, for every effect only comes to be insofar as it is engaged in all three activities – remaining, proceeding and returning. Dionysius captures this in his discussions of the movement of the soul and of the intelligences. Both soul and angelic minds have three motions, circular in relation to God and themselves (remaining), linear as they proceed to those around them (procession, providence), and spiral insofar as they conduct both activities at once. It is because Dionysius has a universal concept of the Incarnation that is at work at all levels of his hierarchy and which mediates the coincidence of motions as imaged by the spiral, that he attributes the spiral motion to both the soul and the intelligences without limit. As they exist, so they participate in God's activity, and so unlike Proclus' fixed planets, the mediation of the Incarnation bestows its own divine-human activity on all that participates in the divine activity. As Dionysius relates in ch. 4 of the *DN*, God is the source and cause of all movement and rest:

> *DN* 4.10
> The Good and the Beautiful is the cause of these three movements, as also of the movements in the realm of what is perceived, and of the prior remaining, standing and foundation of each one. This is what preserves them. This is their goal, itself transcending all rest and all motion. It is the source, the origin, the preserver, the goal, and the objective of rest and motion (tr. Luibheid).

God, the Good and the Beautiful, in the Incarnation is the source and end of all motion and through all of creation's participation in the divine activity, it is guided providentially to its fulfillment.

The doctrine of the Incarnation also provides Dionysius with a framework within which to place his theory of knowledge. As Perl notes, there is within the Neoplatonic tradition a theory of the continuum of cognition;[35] Dionysius can be squarely placed within this tradition. In this respect the doctrine of the Incarnation does not so much change what Dionysius says, but it does, however, give added force to the argument. The unity of thought – of which discursive reasoning and sense perception are weaker forms – is united and unifies, in that it brings together subject and object, without

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35 Perl (2007), 83.

negating either, but as with the logic of Incarnation, in a way that preserves both elements.

VI. Conclusion

This consideration of motion within Dionysius' *Divine Names* sketches out the three main passages where he treats motion *per se* and looks at how he has taken up and relied upon the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. The image of motion – circular, linear, and spiral – was used by Proclus particularly as a description of the motion of the cosmos and as an analogy for the central causal process of procession, remaining and return. These three motions are also used analogically to describe the three cognitive processes, namely, understanding, discursive knowledge and sense perception. In both these instances, spiral motion is the composite of the two primary motions; indeed, for both Proclus and Dionysius the motions and the activities that they represent are more united than they are divided. It is Dionysius' commitment to a Chalcedonian doctrine of the Incarnation that provides the framework within which he is able to express the paradox of the unity and difference of the three motions, while highlighting the spiral, as an image of the Incarnation, which best expresses this unity.

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A Crypto-Pagan Reading of the Figure of Hierotheus and the "Dormition" Passage in the Corpus Areopagiticum

The following essay has three main aims: 1) compare respective merits of Basil Lourié's[1] and István Perczel's[2] recent contributions to the question of origin and authorship of Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum (henceforth *CDA*); 2) consider relationships between Dionysius and Hierotheus as a literary parallel to Proclus and Syrianus; and 3) provide a reading of the famous Dionysian "dormition" passage (*DN* III 139.17–143.8 (Suchla) = 681,1 A-684,D) which may substantiate the hypothesis of a crypto-pagan origin for the Corpus.[3]

Basil Lourié and István Perczel agree that there was a genuine Christian motive of the Corpus, but they end in diametrically opposite conclusions concerning the Christological partisanship of the author and the date of the Corpus. Further, they provide differing views on the question of whether events described in the passage concerning "the life-giving principle" should be understood as meaning Virgin's dormition (*koimesis*) or not.

Basil Lourié wants to validate an old thesis of Peter the Iberian's authorship of the *CDA*. According to this view the Corpus was created in order to establish a new cult of saints Dionysius and Hierotheus. Here was the seminal event motivating the Corpus according to this interpretation with the vision of John the Eunuch, Peter's friend and spiritual guide, probably in the year 444, which John Rufus has described in his hagiographical work on Peter. According to this work, John the Eunuch saw the heavens opening with the angelic hierarchies and Christ coming to receive the Theotokos' soul. Thus, a suggestion of Peter's authorship is intimately linked with the dormition legend and interpretation of the above mentioned passage referring to this event. As the author gestures to the revelation attained by his teacher, we should conclude that Dionysius is Peter the Iberian and Hierotheus is John the Eunuch. Thus, the dormition would be the hagiographical core of the whole *CDA* and the following hierarchical speculations and exegesis are made essentially for explaining John's vision.

Lourié dates the composition of the *CDA* between 482 and 515 and the famous scholia of John of Scythopolis on the *CDA*, "to the period shortly after 518, most probably, somewhere in the 520s, and not in between 537 and 543, as Rorem and Lamoreaux thought".[4] The standard Greek version of the *CDA* is not, however, according to

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[1] Lourié (2011).

[2] Perczel (2012).

[3] For the general background of this hypothesis see Lankila (2011).

[4] Lourié (2011), 163.

this view, the same as the original work of Peter, but radically reshaped, probably after the death of Peter (d. 491). Lourié thinks that it was already Peter the Iberian who had described his master's spiritual experience in the terms borrowed from Platonists.

As for the dating, motive and Christological positions of the author of the *CDA* and the status of dormition legend, István Perczel's views are contrary to Lourié. Perczel's arguments are based on internal evidence of the Corpus related to the historical settings characterized by Christological controversy, and the predicament of the radical diaphysite faction, during the reigns of emperors Leo and Zeno. Thus, according to Perczel the *CDA* was composed between 470 and 485 as an esoteric text of a community feeling pressured under a threat of persecution.

Perczel claims that the people and events which are mentioned in the *CDA* are encoded references to real people and events preceding the council of Chalcedon until the ascendancy of the Cyrillian party under Henotikon. According to this interpretation Hierotheus is Theodoret of Cyrrhus, the great opponent of Cyril of Alexandria. Perczel sees the Corpus permeated throughout by hidden citations of and references to Theodoret. These citations are often ascribed to Hierotheus. Unfortunately Perczel has not yet in the mentioned paper told us what these citations are, but has promised to do this in a future article in his Dionysian series.

After establishing that the work originated from the circle of followers of Theodoret and that Hierotheus is Theodoret, Perczel asserts that the word "Hierotheus" is an anagram for the name of Theodoret. This same ingenious method gives him the probable name of the author of the *CDA*. Dionysios Areopagitēs seems to be the anagram, as well, than which a better one could not easily be imagined, according to Perczel, of the words "Agapītos Rhodiōn Nēsiou", that is, of a putative Agapetus, bishop of the island of Rhodes.[5] After that Perczel finds among the participants of the Council of Chalcedon a proper bishop with the correct Christological stance to fit this placeholder.[6]

The denial of the dormition interpretation is important for Perczel's argumentation. He says that "The original 'vision' of the 'God-receiving body' can mean the Eucharist, but can also mean the inner contemplation of the Christological mystery".[7] Great hierarchs named in this context, with exception of Hierotheus, are symbolic representatives of the different apostolic sees. As Hierotheus is Theodoret, and the key speaker of this holy assembly, the event interpreted since John of Scythopolis' tentative suggestion as a dormition scene actually turns out to be the council of Chalcedon.[8] Perczel crowns his conclusions by deciphering in the figure of apostle John, banished to Patmos and to whom Ps.-Dionysius addresses one of his letters, no lesser

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5 Perczel (2012), 85–87.
6 Perczel (2012), 88–90.
7 Perczel (2012), 76.
8 Perczel (2012), 82–83.

figure than Nestorius, whose condemnation and exile the diaphysite writer of the *CDA* considered most undeserved punishment.[9]

Lourié makes a fruitful suggestion to study the environment of the empress Eudocia as a source of Neoplatonism in the *CDA*. However, at the current state of our knowledge, nothing indicates, in my opinion, that John the Eunuch, Peter the Iberian, or even Severus of Antioch were in any deep sense inside Procline thought. This observation is valid regarding Theodoret as well. He surely was engaged in Platonism, but a diffused Platonism generally shared by the whole intellectual elite with literary ambitions. Theodoret's Platonism is derivative, filtered through older Christian authors, as Niketas Siniossoglou has convincingly argued in his study of Theodoret and Plato.[10] Theodoret does not seem to have been interested in, or aware of any Neoplatonist treatises after Porphyry.

Ultimately, Perczel's anagram-making instead of confirming his conclusion on identification seriously weakens in my mind his argument on authorship, because it seems quite artificial and is an example of overkill in interpretation. How should we comprehend this method? What if the authors' name had been instead of Agapetus of Rhodes, for instance, Hipponax of Sinope? Would he then have adopted the identity of some other holy man of ancient times, whose name had resulted in some other compatible anagram? Surely "Dionysius the Areopagite" was carved in the stone of tradition, because it was guaranteed by apostle Paul's authority. Anagram in the case of Areopagite is a clever toy, but redundant as an argument. As for Hierotheus it could make more sense but this pseudonym as well is explainable by other and on more convincing grounds.

As for the dating of the *CDA*, in principle the Corpus could have emerged with this strong Procline content during the period indicated by Perczel. From Marinus' biography of Proclus we know that Proclus' capabilities for work seriously deteriorated during the last five years of his life. His literary production was thus practically finished before 480, but not definitively edited, this work falling to his successors. Thanks to John the Lydian's evidence we can infer that Proclus' *magnum opus*, the *Platonic Theology*, was known in Constantinople at the beginning of 6th century.[11] John the Lydian's teacher and Proclus' youngest known direct disciple, Agapius, was one of the persons who would be capable of writing a work like the *CDA*. But if it is true, what many scholars had accepted (Grondijs,[12] Hathaway,[13] Lilla,[14] de

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9 Perczel (2012), 85.

10 Siniossoglou (2008).

11 John refers ten times to Proclus, and at least his Lyd. *De Mensibus* I 15. 8.17‒9.7 is based on the *Platonic Theology* see Maas (1992), 134‒135, Saffrey and Westerink (1997), xxxi-xxxiii.

12 Grondijs (1962), 325.

13 Hathaway (1969).

14 Lilla (1997). Lilla's contribution is still the largest and most systematic study of affinities between Dionysius and Damascius. However, neither Lilla nor later contributors have yet discussed Damascius' commentary on the *Parmenides* in this respect.

Andia,[15] Suchla,[16] Mazzucchi,[17] Arthur,[18] Perl[19]), that the post-Procline Athenian school and Damascius are also present in the *CDA*, would confirm the dates suggested by Lourié rather than Perczel.

Lourié's and Perczel's approaches share a major problem. We are asked to believe that the author's main motive is the justification for the cult of saints or the defense of a definite Christological position. Apparently feeling it necessary to carry out such an agenda using a vast array of pagan philosophy, the author demonstrates his knowledge of Neoplatonic doctrine and refers, more or less overtly, to Proclus (as Suchla has counted) over 700 times.[20] The disproportion between assumed goal and means used is such that it seems to me to render these proposals unconvincing.

The curious amalgam of Neoplatonism and Christianity in the *CDA* is perhaps better explained with more traditional arguments, such as saying that the author attempted to infiltrate the core of Christianity with Neoplatonic ideas (Mazzucchi's thesis), or to defend Platonic form of thought inside Christian discourse (Suchla's opinion), or that the purpose was to re-enact apostle Paul's encounter with Hellenic thought with the aim of conversion (thesis by Dillon, Wear, Schäfer et al.).[21] But none of these approaches could give an adequate answer to the question asked by Sheldon-Williams long ago:[22] why is there this play of duplicate pseudonyms, Dionysius and Hierotheus?

I believe that Perczel correctly positions the *CDA* as a self-defensive esoteric text created by a community in acute fear of persecution. Certainly radical diaphysites too were enduring hardships. However, pagan Neoplatonists, the intellectual vanguard of militant polytheistic piety, had much more obvious reasons to prepare for the threatening future. The general outlines of their predicament are already common knowledge. They both possess strong motives as well as adequate intellectual tools to produce the *CDA*.

In order to argue for the view that the author of the *CDA* follows Proclus' model, a brief discussion of Angela Longo's study on the eulogies of Syrianus in Proclus' prefaces to his commentary on the *Parmenides* and the *Platonic Theology* is required.[23] In her detailed analysis, Longo shows that in these two works, Proclus' prefaces were densely packed with philosophical content that provides not only a scheme of the orders of reality, but also a survey of the history of philosophy in

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15 De Andia (1996), 56–57 is critical of Lilla and assumes a minimalist position in estimating commonalities between Dionysius and Damascius.

16 Heil/Ritter (1991), 247–248 finds 6 Damascian references or parallels in Dionysius, see also Suchla (2008), 33–34, 202–203 and Suchla (2008), 33–34, 202–203.

17 Mazzucchi (2006).

18 Arthur (then Griffith 1997) and (2008), 30–31.

19 Perl (2007), 119.

20 Suchla (2008), 34.

21 Wear/Dillon, (2007); Schäfer (2006a); Suchla (2008); Mazzucchi (2006).

22 Sheldon-Williams (1966), 109.

23 Longo (2010a).

which a high profile is granted to Syrianus as Platonic exegete. Proclus draws a figure of Syrianus as a kind of initiator-priest for the souls and a benefactor of humankind as an exegete of the highest and purest philosophy.

With little variation, the prefaces of the *Parmenides* commentary and the *Platonic Theology* expound five literary motives: a eulogy of Syrianus, an acknowledgement of gratitude, a description of reception of divine light coming from Syrianus, an overt praise and mention of the gods, and, finally, implicit and explicit references to various dialogues of Plato. While Proclus underlines his immense debt to his teacher and rhetorically restricts his own role to a receiver of these gifts of the master's teaching, he also emphasizes his duty and intention to transmit this teaching to others worthy of it, i.e. in the case of the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, Asclepiodotus, and in the *Platonic Theology*, Pericles the Lydian. A long note of Alain-Philippe Segonds and Concetta Luna dealing with Syrianus' figure in Proclus' preface of the *Parmenides* commentary as well as my own findings regarding the late Neoplatonic manner of using honorific epithets completes the image given by Longo.[24]

It seems certain that Proclus' praises for Syrianus do not testify only of his master's great influence on his pupil, but also evidences the former's belief that divine providence causes some special souls, such as Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus or Syrianus, to descend to the world of becoming in order to enlighten people regarding divine phenomena.[25] In his references to the historical figures of Neoplatonism, Proclus applies a defined scale of epithets for evaluating their ranking according to "orthodoxy" from the perspective of the Athenian school. These epithets correlate to the degrees of souls. Therefore, it is not by chance that Proclus situates his beloved teacher's position above the scaled series and repeatedly calls him simply καθηγε- μών and does not pronounce his name. In the case of Syrianus, namelessness is a mark of superabundant intellectual power, that quality above measure, which makes Syrianus truly "divine", even comparable to the secret noetic gods.

Dionysius cannot raise his own master to the highest plane of divine anonymity, because his strategy requires an introduction of the otherwise unknown teacher. Comparing Procline proemia and corresponding passages referring to the works of a fictitious master of theology in the *CDA*, we observe the same elements of eulogy, gratitude, reception of divine light, talk about divine hierarchies, and references to the words of still higher authority (Plato for Proclus, Paul for the *CDA*). Both authors rhetorically posture themselves as transmitters of their master's teaching in a way proportionate to their own capacities.

There are some striking parallels in expressions. For Proclus, Syrianus is the main revealer of divine truths after Plato and the gods while, after the divine Paul and Sacred Scriptures, Dionysius has learned the truths from Hierotheus. Proclus'

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24 Luna and Segonds (2007), n. 11, p. 170–175; Lankila (2008), 121–133.
25 On the Neoplatonist concept of philosopher-benefactors possessing divine soul, see also O'Meara (1990), 150–152.

way of calling Syrianus a hierophant acts as a likely model for the author of the *CDA* insofar as he too calls "his" master an initiator and divine priest (hieroplastes and Hierotheus). The emendations which Perczel proposes to Suchla's text on the basis of the Syriac version strengthen similarity between Dionysian and Procline passages. While the standard edition has πάντων ἐκράτει μετὰ τοὺς θεολόγους, the Greek text reconstructed according to Syriac has πάντων ἐκράτει μετὰ τὸν μακάριον χορὸν τῶν θεολόγων.[26] Proclus in the preface of the *Platonic Theology* uses the same simile calling authentic exegetes from Plotinus to Syrianus a divine chorus who celebrate Platonic mysteries with their rational understanding (τῷ θείῳ τούτῳ χορῷ περὶ τῶν τοῦ Πλάτωνος τὴν ἑαυτῶν διάνοιαν ἀνεβάκχευσαν). He further expresses his thankfulness to Syrianus for introducing him and his companions to this chorus which celebrates the secret truth of divine principles.[27] The reference to Bacchic frenzy with which Proclus describes the state of the truthful exegetes accords well with *CDA*'s talk of divine rapture of the hierarchs.

In the assumed dormition passage, the *CDA* refers to the specific event highlighting the grandeur of Hierotheus. Do we find something similar in connection to solemn praises of Syrianus in Proclus? There indeed is such a work. Turning to the sixth essay of the Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Republic*, one can observe a kind of blueprint for the *CDA*'s depiction of its author's relation to Hierotheus. The second treatise of Proclus' essay opens with a short preface similar to the eulogy of Syrianus. Again, Proclus calls his teacher a hierophant of Plato and sets himself the task of transmitting, as far as his strength permits, Syrianus' teaching. In the conclusion of the treatise, Proclus once more refers to Syrianus, dedicating the whole of his own discourse to his memory, and ends with these solemn words: "these are things that I could tell you, but you must not reveal them to the vulgar multitude."[28] Does Proclus really claim for his treatise esoteric status or is this simply a solemn literary *topos?* Be this as it may, Proclus continues that he has not told every detail; one who wants to follow the subject more could familiarize himself "with the teachings of our Master, who reveals many admirable doctrines in his (work) *Solutions for Homeric Problems*".[29]

Thus, in both authors we have a quasi-esoteric reference to ideas which shall not have been revealed to unworthy people, an assurance of the author that he is telling only exactly what his master told, and a reference to a book which the master himself wrote about the things under discussion, but which exposes these admirable doctrines with much more detail. These items bring the Procline locus very close to Hierothean passages in the *CDA*. However, it is important that we find here also references to the sublime assembly.

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26 *DN* 41.10; See Perczel's 'Appendix: The Greek and the early Syriac version of the Pseudo-Dormition of the Virgin Mary from the *Divine Names*' in his article (2012).

27 *Theol. Plat.* I.7.1.7.5–8.

28 *In Remp.* I.205–23.

29 *In Remp.* I, 95,27–30. My translation.

The first lines of the sixth essay of Proclus' commentary introduce the theme of commemorating Plato's birthday,[30] a most important annual feast of the Academy. This feast probably began with sacrifice followed first by a lecture of the head of the school and then discussion. Thus, we have the same elements present as in the *CDA*'s dormition story, a liturgical act and learned contributions of the men of wisdom, each of them speaking proportionally to their intellectual strength. Proclus' treatment includes a reference in Plato's text of 378a4–6 on "esoteric" gathering after sacrifice (the proper place for discussion about myths according to Plato).[31] Late ancient Neoplatonists perhaps imitated in their own gatherings these Platonic models, and under prevailing circumstances with modest sacrifices. Proclus' essay is then a polished and edited version of thoughts intended for the internal audience of the school, and it originated from a real lecture given under the auspices of Plato's birthday celebrations. Proclus refers back to an older lecture given by Syrianus, probably in a similar context.[32] Thus, developmental stages for the birth of Proclus' sixth essay are, as Anne Sheppard shows in her analysis, first Syrianus' lecture, then "Proclus' subsequent discussion with Syrianus, Proclus' lecture and finally writing up of that lecture into the essay as we have it."[33]

The persons present in the *CDA*'s passage are characterized first as the highest group of theologians, consisting of sacred writers and brothers of the God, the leading figure and summit amongst them being the apostle Peter. The lower category of participants is formed by the humbler "holy brothers" and between these two groups are "hierarchs", amongst whom Hierotheus is shown to be above all others due to his inspired and divine discourse. Reading this as a pointer to what Proclus writes in the sixth essay of his *Republic* commentary, the holy brothers can be seen as a qualified audience present in the Academy at the celebration of Plato, while theologians and sacred writers are composers of the Greek and Chaldean theological and philosophical tradition, supreme among them Plato, who is spiritually present in his own celebration. "Hierarchs" are then Platonic exegetes, named by Proclus in the preface of the *Platonic Theology*. That each of them speaks according to their capabilities describes the history of unfolding of the Neoplatonic doctrine especially in the exegesis of the *Parmenides*, which for Proclus culminates in his own teacher, the real hierophant Syrianus, who is the most reliable guide in theology after Plato and the gods themselves.

In conclusion the depiction of the relation between the author of the *CDA* and Hierotheus conveys an idea that Hierotheus is for the author what Syrianus is for Proclus. The corpus' rich gestures to Proclus, not only at the level of concepts, but also in literary schemes, and the fact that it does not after all contain much original argumentation but a lot of declarative and fragmentary summaries of Procline ideas,

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30 *In Remp.* I.69.23.

31 *In Remp.* I.80.15.

32 *In Remp.* I.71.2.

33 Sheppard (1980), 32.

gives an impression that the whole the corpus was created altogether for the sake of pointing to another, genuine Neoplatonic corpus. In the circumstances which prevailed in the beginning of the 6th century, when the Neoplatonic academy was preparing for the future where the teaching of their metaphysical theology would be prohibited for an unknown duration, and their books were under threat of destruction (the real fate of Porphyry's writings and a great deal of those composed by heterodox Christians), pagan Neoplatonists protected Proclus' literary heritage with a pseudonymous collection granting to Proclus' works a faked Christian prehistory.

Among the known Neoplatonists, Agapius would be one of the possible candidates for authorship. But under current circumstances prevailing in the Ps.-Dionysian studies today, when we are blessed year after year with new articles and books hailing genial Ps.-Dionysius, who is proclaimed without hesitation as a Syrian monk, one would like to underline at least as a healthy reminder for historical reflection, that there were many qualified persons in the circle of the Academy after Proclus who would have been able to compose such a literary work. To add to the list of possible authors the philosopher, poet and grammarian, disciple of Isidorus and Damascius, the daughter of Kyrina and Diogenes, one need only name Theodora.[34]

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34 All that we know about Theodora comes from Damascius through the patriarch Photius's Bibliotheca (cod. 181, p. 125b 32 Bekker (= Henry II p. 189).

Ben Schomakers

An unknown *Elements of Theology?*
On Proclus as the model for the *Hierotheos*
in the Dionysian Corpus

I. An unknowable author with unknowable ideas in search of the unknowable god

The mysterious philosopher and Christian theologian who created the corpus of Dionysius the Areopagite is one of the most intriguing, puzzling and influential individuals in the history of Western theology (and philosophy). As other authors have noted in this volume, we do not know his name or exactly when and where he lived, and the correct approach to his writings is far from clear. We are not sure how to read them. Yes, they are the writings of a theologian (with a strong penchant for philosophy) and they do have the exterior form of regular treatises and explanatory letters focusing on common themes for early Christian theologians. Nevertheless, on closer inspection the traditional appearance of the writings crumbles, and soon the corpus seems to be elusive, radically untraditional and, almost, fictitious (in a sense). Overall, it is an allusive and a well-crafted patchwork quilt assembled from both Christian theological and Platonist philosophical texts. Moreover the author shows himself a master of indirect communication with very exact, but always subtly evasive, formulations, and, for those who are receptive, Dionysius also appears to be a playful, humorous, and even mocking master. Ultimately, Dionysius' sentences, assertions, and words never mean what they seem to mean upon one's initial reading. Often, the author appears to invite us to decode his meaning in the context of a dense fabric of allusions and borrowed phrases, all of which are evocative and encapsulate theological and philosophical positions.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the corpus is the fact that it pretends to have been written in the 1st century by the philosophically minded Athenian Dionysius who converted to Christianity after Paul delivered his sermon on the Areopagus, in front of an altar dedicated to the "unknowable god".[1] Nevertheless, since over more than a century, no reader of Dionysius doubts that this corpus of works actually was written much later. It abounds in quotations, allusions, and reflections of post-Dionysian authors, the most important of whom being Proclus. The author made liberal use of Proclus' metaphysical terminology, distinctions, and structures. This discrepancy between the actual and the suggested date of composition led to the once – but no longer – widely shared idea that the corpus of Dionysius is a forgery com-

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1 *Acts* 17 : 34.

posed with the explicit intent to dupe readers into believing it was actually written by the historical Dionysius.

Regardless of its intuitive nature this idea needs to be rethought. The presence of later post-1st century authors, in the form of quotations, allusions and doctrinal reflections, is overwhelming, such that it could not have escaped the notice of any educated reader of the corpus after it was released in the 5th century. The author is clearly dependent on post-Dionysian sources. This overt reliance suggests that the author wished these sources to be recognizable to his readers, leading to the conclusion that the author of the corpus had no intention to suggest that his writing were the authentic works of Dionysius. Rather, it seems the author may have crafted a complex historical-philosophical-theological novel, in which a 5th century theologian chooses the 1st century convert Dionysius as his main character, opting therein for a first-person singular perspective. From this perspective, the author conveys a fascinating philosophical system, woven out of post-Dionysian Neoplatonic and Christian words, thoughts and patterns.

If one were to take this line of thought, the motives for the choice of the main character of the novel are not unobvious. The fact that the writings are put into the mouth of one of those who is ranked, according the account of Paul, among the philosophers of Athens is telling enough. It is quite likely that the author of the Dionysian corpus himself spent a (long) spell in Athens, in the direct proximity of Proclus, and if this is true, he must have passed by the Areopagus more or less daily, on his way to the Academy.[2] The author selecting Dionysius as the protagonist of his very theoretical novel hints at some possible 1st century confrontation between Christianity and Platonism, between theology and philosophy, which was repeated within the walls of the 5th century Academy, between himself and some of his fellow students. In this case it is probable that in these works the author was expressing his own attitude in the debate, indirectly confessing his conversion from philosophy to theology himself.

The sources of the corpus are biblical, of course, and theological, drawing from early Christian writers, but also abundantly philosophical, the Neoplatonists are

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2 The main argument for Ps.-Dionysius' presence in Athens during the lifetime of Proclus consists in the circumstance that the corpus of Dionysius breathes – among others – the atmosphere of Proclus' late reign of the Academy: texts, themes, discussions relevant to that context are present in the corpus of Dionysius. Moreover Ps.-Dionysius alludes to texts of Proclus that were not meant to circulate outside the Academy and the intertextual game the author plays leans heavily on a thorough familiarity of himself and his intended readers with the works, both those published and those familiar to selected students: the game could never have met with fertile ground if the author and his audience would not both have been educated in the presence of Proclus. As a consequence I am inclined to shift vis-à-vis to what many think the dates of the composition of the corpus, by moving it back in time. In my opinion the corpus was written at the latest in the early nineties of the 5th century, that means some three decades earlier than the still traditional dating has it. This means that the corpus was written during the last years of the life of Proclus or more likely not long after his death in 485.

most prominent, in particular Proclus but also Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Moreover, the author is widely read in Plato and Aristotle, taking into account the specific texts he is referring to, probably due to reading courses taught by the Neoplatonists. Echoes of these thinkers reverberate in an environment formed by 1) idiosyncratic language, 2) rich neologisms fabricated by Ps.-Dionysius himself, and 3) theologico-metaphysical structures which are well articulated and elaborated while still safely hidden within the text itself. An allusion recognized by a reader never allows him to infer that the author agrees with the original meaning, but only that he is employing it as a sign, beckoning to an insight or a conviction which in the literal sense is not expressed. A slight modification in a quotation or a juxtaposition of allusions as a rule changes the apparent meaning of the text. Reading Dionysius is decoding Dionysius, often with results that cannot be tested or proved.

II. Hierotheos and Proclus

If we are to read the corpus as a theologico-philosophical novel, the writings of Dionysius can be considered a *roman-à-clef* in the sense that it acquaints its readers with characters who represent some theological or philosophical position and have a model in the real world of theologians and philosophers. In some cases the fictitious characters correspond isomorphically to one real person; in other cases the character in the novel combines various real identities. Beyond a doubt the most important riddling personage of the corpus is Hierotheos, to whom Dionysius appeals among others as an expert on Christ. In fact, Dionysius claims to have had two teachers, Paul and Hierotheos. There is no doubt that this Paul must be taken as the apostle. All quotations put into the mouth of this teacher can be directly traced to the *Acts* and Paul's letters. But who is this Hierotheos? In other words, what theologically inspired thinker was Ps.-Dionysius' model?

Some preliminary observations must be made here. First, Hierotheos is always addressed with great reverence, though bare of the religious epithets adorning Paul and others who are unambiguously introduced as religious authorities. Admittedly, Hierotheos is called "divine",[3] but it seems we have to take this qualification here in the same sense as Proclus' praise of Plato as "divine" i.e., he was inspired and towering above all others rather than an embodiment of some god.

Second, Hierotheos makes his appearance in the Dionysian corpus altogether 15 times, with the possibility of more covert allusions as he is not only referred to by his name, but also by periphrases, such as "our holy initiator" and "our teacher and

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3 See for instance *DN* III.2 141.1–2/681C. (Page and line numbers of Dionysius' writings refer to the recent edition of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* : I. *De divinis nominibus: Suchla* (1990), II. *De coelesti hierarchia. De ecclestiastica hierarchia. De mystica theologia. Epistulae:* Heil/Ritter (1991); for the sake of convenience after the slash have been added the still standard references to the columns of Mignes 1857 edition of all of Dionysius' writings in volume III of the *Patrologia Graeca*.

guide" (καθηγεμών).[4] This last denomination which happens to coincide with Proclus' favourite term for of his own teacher and guide, Syrianus. Moreover, in two or three cases it is not perfectly certain whether this holy initiator or guide is identical with Hierotheos.

Third, Hierotheos is always brought onto the stage in relation to a specific doctrine which, as a rule, is introduced by Dionysius as a corroboration of some thought he has been unfolding – or has announced to unfold – himself. He is an expert on Christ, but also on love, on the good, on triads and on vertical causative metaphysical chains. In most cases this thought or doctrine is presented in a well-articulated fashion, sometimes in texts running up to two or three pages. It is obvious that Hierotheos is one of the strongest doctrinal props of Dionysius' metaphysical system.

So obviously Hierotheos is of pivotal importance for Dionysius but no Hierotheos of any theological or philosophical significance ever existed. The name – "holy god" – seems to have been coined for the sake of this occasion by Ps.-Dionysius. Yet, an identification of his model seems to be possible which in the first instance may appear convincing and evident. When for instance Dionysius presents an extract of what he describes as the "erotic hymns" of Hierotheos, he seems to have a particular section of Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* in mind, which, though not quoted literally nor rendered faithfully, is used as an intertext and subjected to the method of intertextual variation.[5] (An intertext is a more or less well-known text an author evokes for his readers by alluding to it as a model, which at the same is adapted, such that both the letter and the meaning of the original text are changed.) Putting into the mouth of Hierotheos the principle of the "triadic division" of the intellects, i.e. the angels, Dionysius intentionally calls Proclus' *Platonic Theology* to mind, which reverberates loudly in many lines of the Dionysian corpus.[6] Where he makes Hierotheos responsible for the idea of a power originating in the first principle and reaching all lower beings without abandoning its transcendence, he makes him (more or less) quote a section of Proclus' *Στοιχείωσις θεολογική*.[7]

In almost all cases where a crucial doctrine of Hierotheos is adduced, it is relatively easy to find a Procline text on which it has been based. Moreover Proclus' vocabulary and distinctions are omnipresent in the Dionysian corpus, which it is to be expected from a teacher as important as Hierotheos is said to be for Dionysius. This logically points to the conclusion that Ps.-Dionysius modelled Hierotheos on Proclus. However, the most convincing indication for this identification is also, paradoxically, the most problematic. It is provided by the passage in which Dionysius ascribes to Hierotheos the authorship of a book called *Θεολογικαὶ στοιχειώσεις*. Now there exists

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4 For the "holy initiator" see *DN* IV.14 160.16/712D; *CH* VI.2 26.12/200D; for the "teacher and guide" see e.g. *DN* II.9 133.13/648 A, II.11 136.18/649C etc.

5 *DN* IV.15 – 17. See *In Alc*. 30.

6 *CH* VI.2 26.11 – 13/200D. For the triadic scheme of metaphysical (sub)divisions, see e.g. *Plat. Theol.* II.6 41.18 ff. and *passim*.

7 See *CH* XIII.3 44.17 ff./301 A; cf. Proclus, *ET* §140.

no other writing with a title remotely similar, except, of course, for the Στοιχείωσις θεολογική of Proclus, a title better translated, in my eyes, as *Theological Foundation* than as the since Dodds usual *Elements of Theology*.[8] True, Hierotheos is said to have written *Theological Foundations*, in the plural, while the title of Proclus' treatise is in the singular. It may be the case that when the author was writing the title of Proclus' work had not yet been definitely established, after all it may be the description of a genre rather than an exact title. The plural may also be due to a slight, delusive variation on the model by the author making use of the model, in the same way as the "erotic hymns" of Hierotheos point to a passage in the *Commentary on the Alcibiades*. Further, it may even be the case, as often in Dionysius, that the divergence, small though it may be, conveys a hidden message, a thesis we will dwell on more in-depth below.

III. The metaphysical expert on Christ

This interpretation of Hierotheos as a mirror for Proclus, logical and evident as I deem it to be, is still not common opinion among the modern interpreters of Dionysius. Though it has been acclaimed for instance by de Andia and Lankila, it is received lukewarmly, snubbed as a not very interesting possibility or even explicitly rejected by others.[9] This reluctance (or even resistance) is not entirely incomprehensible insofar as the identification would turn a Neoplatonic philosopher into the treasured teacher of a important Christian author. Some modern authors may have considered this to be compromising. Yet this would be a circumstance which need not bother contemporary readers. Gradually we have become aware that in Late Antiquity the worlds of Christian theologians and Neoplatonic philosophers were not clinically separated. Christians and Neoplatonists for instance often attended the same educational institutions, such as the Athenian Academy in the period Proclus was its head.

More important though are some details related particularly to Dionysius' account of the *Theological Foundations*, which may seem irreconcilable with the *Theological Foundation* of Proclus and therefore might have left the readers of Dionysius confused, not certain how to take the reference. To be sure, in both cases the formal descriptions of the *Theological Foundations* are in perfect agreement with Proclus' *Theological Foundation* or *ET*. The uneasy feelings are actuated by the unexpected

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8 It does not present elements of a theology, but prepares for the study of theology departing from some elements, which as such are not elucidated or even turned into a theme, as can be learned from Proclus's own musings on the term στοιχείωσις in his *In Eucl.* 73.25–74.9.

9 For identifications with Proclus see de Andia (1996), 153; Lankila (2011), 30–31. In opposition see Mazzucchi (2006), 299–334 suggested to identify Hierotheos with Isidore of Alexandria and Perczel (2012), 87 where Hierotheos is aligned with Theodoretus of Cyrus. See also some of the contributions in this volume.

connection made between the author of the *Theological Foundations* (or even these *Foundations* themselves) and some aspect of a Christian theology and Christology. This is difficult to reconcile with Proclus, from whose existent writings Christ is, of course, totally absent. Of the two long Dionysian passages dealing with the *Theological Foundations*, both to be found in the treatise *On the Divine Names*, the first forming part of the second chapter, the second forming part of the third, the most problematic is the first in which Dionysius discusses the nature of Christ and leans on Hierotheos as an authority.[10]

The second chapter of *On the Divine Names* is dedicated to the paradoxical relation between god and beings, also to that between god as the principle and the persons of the Trinity, a relation which is described by Dionysius as being simultaneously "unification" (ἕνωσις) and "distinction" (διάκρισις), or alternatively, in a Procline term as "procession" or "coming forward" (πρόοδος). The difficult metaphysical thought Dionysius is conveying here, probably not in every respect convincingly, says that, in the metaphysical process of creation, God as the ultimate cause of beings remains connected with all beings, is present to all beings, is in a way even immanent in all beings, but at the same time remains absolute and transcendent.

Immediately before the introduction of Hierotheos, Dionysius, palpably in need of theoretical support, refines his thought, borrowing from Proclus both terms and a metaphysical distinction expressed in these terms, a distinction elucidated by Proclus in many texts, among which, conspicuously, his *Theological Foundation* or *ET*. Metaphysical causes and things caused, Dionysius says, are never in perfect agreement but it is rather the case that things caused receive an "image" (εἰκών) of the (metaphysical/hierarchical) cause.[11] The distinction between cause and image ought to be correlated to the idea that the cause – God – is *present to* and even *in* the things caused. In the metaphysical framework of Proclus this idea comes up to an implicitly upheld theory of clear-cut metaphysical boundaries: the cause is merely present in things caused as an image and never as it is itself.[12] One might call this "immanence in semblance". Dionysius seems aware of the problematic nature of this kind of immanence and rather tries to keep God and beings, cause and things caused, together in tighter connection, while not abandoning the transcendence of the principle.

Groping for a solution in this theoretical situation Dionysius seems to suddenly change the theme from this complex metaphysical discussion to another kind of problem—that of the incarnation, i.e. the manner Jesus as the Christ assumed human nature. Here, once again, Dionysius calls upon the authority of Hierotheos. Here, too, the way Hierotheos is introduced is notable. We read:

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10 See *DN* II.9 – 10 133.5 – 9/648 A-649D respectively III.2 – 3 139.17 – 143.8/681 A-684D.

11 See *DN* II.8 132.14 – 133.4/645CD.

12 See *ET* §65, *In Parm.* 900.18 ff., *In Tim.* I.234.23 ff. etc.

On the Divine Names II.9 133.13–134.4/648AB
But also that most striking and luminous insight of all theology, that is the god-shaping of Jesus in our world (ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦ θεοπλαστία), cannot be uttered by any word and not be known by any intellect, not even by that first of the highest angels. And that he has become being as man is a fact we learned in a mystical manner, while we do not know how he was shaped out of the virginal blood in accordance with some other kind of law contrary to nature, and how he went over that liquid and unresting being with his never-wet feet carrying a bodily mass and the weight of matter, and all these other things belonging to a natural discourse on the super-natural Jesus. This is what has amply been discussed by us elsewhere and what has been sung by our famous teacher and guide in his *Theological Foundations*, in an utterly supernatural man-ner (Ταῦτα δὲ ἡμῖν τε ἐν ἄλλοις ἱκανῶς εἴρηται καὶ τῷ κλεινῷ καθηγεμόνι κατὰ τὰς Θεολογικὰς αὐτοῦ στοιχειώσεις ὕμνηται λίαν ὑπερφυῶς), either grasping it from the holy theologians, or comprehending it through scholarly study of the writings which were at the centre of his great efforts and concentration, or being initiated by some higher inspiration, not only coming to know but also experiencing those things divine, and hence, in virtue of his affinity with the things divine, if one has to say so, becoming perfected for the mystical unification, not to be taught, and for trusting belief.

The fact that Dionysius feels the need to vindicate the credibility of his famous and esteemed Hierotheos on the point of his Christology possibly indicates the circum-stance that Hierotheos, as Dionysius realizes, does not belong to the Christian canon. As a matter of fact he is presented as depending upon other theologians or heavy scholarship or even divine inspiration. A justification of Hierotheos' insights by pointing out their possible origin makes sense if the "famous teacher" were an outsider, say of Neoplatonic background, suggesting that the author saw Hierotheos as one who formulated thoughts and doctrines which can be said to bear on some Christian problem, in this case the metaphysical problem of the divine immanence in man whilst not necessarily being a Christian.

After the introduction a rather long paraphrase from the *Theological Foundations* follows, in the first lines of which Dionysius announces his plan to unfold Hiero-theos' Christology but then immediately shifts attention to a metaphysical domain. I quote again from the second chapter of *On the Divine Names* which continues the above previous passage.

On the Divine Names II.9–10 134.4–135.9/648BCD-649 A
And now let me present in the briefest fashion possible the many and blessed visions of the sharp insight of that man, Hierotheos. For the following is what he says in the *Theological Foun-dations*, which were brought together by him, about Jesus (τάδε περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φησιν ἐν ταῖς συνηγμέναις αὐτῷ Θεολογικαῖς στοιχειώσεσιν).

The divinity of the son, that is the divinity which is the cause of all things and fills all things (ἡ πάντων αἰτία καὶ ἀποπληρωτικὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότης), and maintains the harmony of the parts and the whole and is neither part nor whole but is at the same time whole and part, as it has grasped every part and every whole in itself, and has them in a superior way and has them in advance, this divinity now is perfect in things imperfect as it is the principle of perfec-tion, but it is imperfect in things perfect as it is more than perfect and before perfect, it is form creating form in things formless as the principle of form, but it is formless in the forms as being above form, it is being which occupies all beings completely without defiling itself and while

transcending all being in a way above being, and it defines all principles and orders while establishing itself above all principle and order. And it is the measure of beings and their eternity, while being itself above eternity and before eternity, it is full in things, which are in need, it is more than full in things full, it cannot be spoken of, it cannot be uttered, as it is above intellect and above life and above being, for it possesses its more than nature character in a more than natural manner, its more than being character in a more than being manner.

Now, since he who is above God out of love for man has come to nature and did become being in the true sense and assumed the name of man – we have to sing with grace those things which are above intellect and above word –, in these things too he keeps a character more than nature and a character more than being, not only in as far as he is in communion with us changing himself, without confounding himself with us as he didn't suffer anything as to his being more than full from the unutterable emptiness, but also because he that is above being in things which have being was – the most surprising of things surprising – in the nature of us more than nature, being more than all things belonging to us, out of us, above us. Thus far as concerns this theme.

At first sight this text can be taken as an instance of Hierotheos' Christianity and thus as an obviation of the association of Hierotheos and Proclus, who never talks about Christ at all. Yet this is only at first sight, and the text can be read as Procline too. First, mention of Jesus occurs in the introduction (the first paragraph of the text just quoted) where he is announced as the theme of the following paraphrase of the *Theological Foundations*. Jesus also occurs in the corollary, which is not on the account of Hierotheos but rather an inference drawn by Dionysius himself. Nevertheless, literally speaking Jesus is absent from the middle paragraph. That long section inserted between the occurrences of Jesus is of a metaphysical nature and it is expressed in terms, which are more or less easily, in some cases directly, in others indirectly, traceable to Proclus. The relation between parts and the whole and the unity of the whole, the idea that some principle must contain both parts and whole, the idea of eternity as a measure defining beings, the metaphysical pattern of the presence of something perfect or some form in things without which things are imperfect or formless, while this principle remains transcendent. As most are aware by now, all these metaphysical themes are to be found in the *ET* and in the wider context of Proclus' thought.[13]

This observation suggests that Dionysius didn't intend to stage Hierotheos as deliverer of an explicit discourse on Jesus, but rather thought of Hierotheos as having explored some metaphysical themes, which from another angle – that from Dionysius' own theology and metaphysics – can be connected and in a sense be identified with Jesus. This connection and identification has not been expressed by Hierotheos himself but depends on an interpretation of Dionysius, which he suggests his readers follow. In this text too Hierotheos remains the metaphysician who, by enormous ef-

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13 See e.g. for the immanence/transcendence of forms *ET* §74; for eternity and god as measures of all beings, §§54, 117; for immanent and transcendent wholes, §§67–69; for degrees of perfection related to immanence and transcendence, §64.

forts or due to divine inspiration, individually attained an insight which can make sense of the Christian incarnation.

IV. Forms of immanence

In his paraphrase of Hierotheos' *Theological Foundations* in the middle paragraph above, Dionysius focuses particularly on the relation between the organizing principle or the "cause" and the thing that it eventually organizes. Here the principle is said to maintain the harmony between whole and parts, to be the form creating form, to be perfect in things still imperfect but being made perfect, to be being which turns things into beings and to be the measure and eternity of beings. (A "measure" in the sense of Proclus is not an abstract mathematical standard which *a posteriori* determines what is already there, but is rather a creative, defining principle that determines *a priori* what is going to be there and what could never be there without the measure prescribing its identity and structure.)

That this immanent cause of Hierotheos according to Dionysius refers to Jesus is obvious from the opening words in the first paragraph, in particular from the first of the abstract words, describing the cause as the "divinity of the son". Also one should note the third paragraph, which discusses a particular aspect of the cause in terms that are characteristic for Christ in the Dionysian corpus: he is the one who is above being, is always referred to by his love for man and is the one who empties himself. It is thus Dionysius who in the name of Hierotheos identifies the cause with Jesus, with a very abstract Jesus, as it were. It even seems to be the case that Dionysius, following and assisting his guide Hierotheos, more or less reduces Jesus to this abstract principle. The divinity of the son is said to be, in general, the cause of all things, and hence, in particular, the measure and eternity of beings, the perfecting principle of beings and so on, which means that Dionysius is expanding the meaning of the son present to creation from what is traditionally considered the human incarnation to the immanent metaphysical principle of reality in its entirety.

Two observations are due here. First, the son, in the system of Dionysius, is connected to what Dionysius and Proclus have labelled the "procession" or πρόοδος, which, for Proclus, is an expression of the causative power of (ultimately) the first principle: that power reaches reality of which it is the cause and in which it by dint of its causative act becomes immanent.[14] Jesus on the other hand seems to be the metaphysical reaching out of the ultimate triadic principle to reality, that is the procession itself.

Second, the metaphysical system of Dionysius is, in spite of the presence of extensive orders of angels, from a structural perspective essentially simpler than that of

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14 See *ET* §35.

Proclus. Basically, the demarcation between the causal principle of reality and caused or created reality is sharper.[15] For instance the gap between the creator and creation is not bridged by a gradual descent of various intermediary metaphysical entities – series of hierarchically ordered henads, intellects, souls – as is the case with Proclus. In Dionysius however, creator and creation, caused and cause immediately touch each other, and it is exactly this touch, this tendency from the principle to reality, that is described as the "procession" or the "son." The image of the cause in the caused is the *immediate* imprint in things created, of the son or Jesus, metaphysically construed. The idea seems to be that there is one universal cause, the procession, Christ, which is present to all things and becomes immanent in each thing in a particular manner, namely as the principle of its inner harmony, perfection, form, coherence and being.

Proclus thus offers a doctrinal foundation for the Dionysian system but at the same time Dionysius is dialoguing with Proclus, adapting his doctrine to suit his philosophical and Christian needs. Via Hierotheos he appropriates Proclus by giving implicit hints for solving what Dionysius considers one of Proclus' main philosophical problems, namely his understanding of metaphysical mediation and as its consequence the nature of the immanence of the cause. The essence of Dionysius' solution consists in reducing the gap between cause and caused by getting rid of the intermediary entities, limiting the procession of the cause to the emergence of the son and defining the immanence in beings, non-human and human, as a direct image of the cause, i.e. god in these beings.

The corollary in the third paragraph, though, seems to apply to the general metaphysical understanding of Jesus as the immanent cause of reality to an alternative, additional form of immanence, that is restricted to man. The corollary seems to be drawn not by Hierotheos but in the name of Hierotheos, by Dionysius, who has recognized the Christological potential of the general metaphysical structure outlined by Proclus and hence also by Hierotheos. Christ's immanence as an image of the cause which he is cannot yet be said to be "assuming being", for his becoming being "in the true sense" happens only in man and out of his "philanthropy" or "love for man". The paragraph is complex, the thought begs for more elucidation than can be given here,[16] but it seems as if this truly "becoming being" is a process which takes place on the basis of the permanent immanent presence of the cause of all things, retaining a supernatural dimension, remaining transcendent, such that at the same time there exists a distance between the image in the things caused and the cause itself, a distance both of an ontological nature and of an epistemological nature. Now on this ontological basis it is possible, only for man, to come to know and experience this cause on the condition it empties itself, that is of its divine character as far as this keeps it aloof from man: the hidden cause opens itself to man. The en-

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15 On this see E. Mainoldi's paper in this volume.
16 See Schomakers (2016).

suing experience of the immanence in relation to the transcendent, of the image in relation to the cause, I am convinced, can be shown to be Dionysius' rather particular rendering of the incarnation.

Thus behind the veil of Hierotheos, Dionysius achieves, with respect to Proclus, a certain metaphysical metamorphosis which implies a different perspective as to the possibilities of an eventual experience of the cause. In Proclus what is present to the human soul is the distant image of the higher causes, that is to say, the soul does not harbour the One but merely a remotely connected reflection of the One, nor does it possess intellect in the full sense of the word, but again, only an image of an intellect:[17] the soul may turn to the image and be aware of that which is beyond the image, but it cannot leave its place and will only experience the dynamic impression which it finds in itself. This is an idea which Dionysius via Hierotheos takes over from Proclus, be it with the subtly, almost unnoticeably indicated modification that the intermediaries between the ultimate cause and the thing caused have been abolished, such that the distance between the ultimate cause and the things caused has been minimalized and the cause itself, or the cause's coming forward, which Dionysius calls Christ, is immanent. This makes the human soul's turn towards the immanent cause more promising, for now its object is not a remote image but an immediate image, directly connected to its origin. The silently adapted version of Proclus' metaphysics, put into the mouth of Hierotheos, lends itself to a meaningful, but still very metaphysical role in the Christology of Dionysius.

V. Ontology and experience

Now, if we turn to the second passage dealing with the *Theological Foundations* of Hierotheos, we firstly find a formal description of Hierotheos' work of which it is obvious that it is smoothly in tune with Proclus' *Theological Foundation* or *ET*.[18] Hierotheos' work is said to consist of concise and synoptic definitions – perhaps rather "determinations" (ὅροι) – which in themselves are as a "unitary expression" valid for many beings or theorems and according to Dionysius need to be articulated and applied by their readers, either at their own initiative or under the guidance of a teacher. This characterization, of course, holds too for Proclus' *ET*. Reassuring too is that Dionysius when talking about the *Theological Foundations* apologizes for his apparent impertinence in indulging in the impulse to emend this writing by giving his own particular theological application of it. Dionysius pleads that in presenting his own doctrine of divine names he actually is not emending Hierotheos but rather unfolding what is implicitly present in these very condensed *Theological Founda-*

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17 See Onnasch & Schomakers (2015), LXXVIII-LXXXVII.
18 *DN* III.2 139.20 – 140.14/681AB.

tions.[19] This claim tallies with the contents of the *ET*, which, being concise and universal, touches on the divine names but does not elaborate them, and is purposely free from any particular theological system. It is neither Greek, nor Christian but appears to have been composed such that it lays a foundation for every metaphysical or theological system. It seems possible to argue in favour of the thesis that Dionysius, in giving his extensive demonstration of the divine names, claiming to follow Hierotheos, is really employing the metaphysical structures found in the *ET* and is therein faithful to Proclus' idea of a general, multi-system metaphysics, re-interpreting it while dressing it up in Christian terms.

The main problem this passage causes to the Hierotheos-Proclus identification concerns an event described immediately after Dionysius' apology and his praise for the *Theological Foundations* and for Hierotheos. Dionysius' call upon Hierotheos is justified again.

> *On the Divine Names* III.2 140.17–141.15/681CD-684 A
> Adequately therefore we have said the following, namely that the self-seeing vision of the intelligible writings and their synoptic teaching requires the power of an older man, while on the other hand the knowledge and the thorough learning of the hereto contributing arguments befit the weaker of the initiators and those being initiated. This too however we have very suitably been taking care of, namely that we would in no way touch upon things which our teacher and guide in his clear exposition has perfectly articulated himself, such that we have been avoiding any tautology with the exposition which was brought forward by himself. For among our god-gripped hierarchs – at the occasion we, as you know, and he and most of our holy brothers had come together for the vision of the body which is principle of life and receives God (ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν τοῦ ζωαρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος), and James and Peter, the crown and most respected summit of the theologians were present, and following the vision it was decided that all hierarchs had to sing and praise, each befitting his own powers, the infinitely powerful goodness of the weakness of the thearchy – he surpassed all others, that is to say, as you know, after the theologians, as he left totally behind all others mystically initiated, stepped totally out of himself and experienced the communion with the things sung and was considered by all those who listened to him and saw him and knew him and not know him to be god-gripped and divine.

Now Hierotheos is said to have been one of the participants, together with James and Peter, and also with Dionysius himself, in some religious gathering, described by Dionysius as "the vision of the body that is the origin of life and receives God". The presence of James and Peter at this event has put the readers of this rather general description on the track of a specific Christian interpretation. Some of them have taken the text to refer to the so-called "dormition of the virgin", the coming together of the apostles at the body of Mary, after the death but before her burial.[20] Hierotheos is said to have been present too and moreover to have perfectly understood and ap-

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19 See *ET* §123.
20 The first to point – ambiguously – in this direction is John of Scythopolis in his scholion ad locum, since this interpretation has become part of in particular the Eastern Orthodox tradition. See also e.g. Louth (2001), 102.

propriated what he saw here and to have responded to it with liturgical excess. Other interpretations have Hierotheos present at the Eucharist[21] and thus Hierotheos seems to have been involved, in the story as told by Dionysius, in a Christological context. And thus this scene has seemed hard to reconcile with the idea that Hierotheos was modelled on Proclus. Of course, the author of a theological *roman-à-clef*, as I am arguing, enjoys an enormous freedom, but arranging a Neoplatonic teacher in a historical-iconic Christian choir is either a very bold statement or a counter-argument for the identification of (the model for) Hierotheos and Proclus in spite of appearances.

Many observations are to be made here. First is the question whether Dionysius actually staged a "dormition of the virgin" scene, a scene which has no biblical reference and is somewhat shadowy, perhaps reflecting a tradition originating later than the composition of the Dionysian corpus. One may doubt this on the basis of the adjectives – "being a principle of life" and "god-receiving" – applied to the body, in the theological literature in Dionysius' environment never refer to Mary, but exclusively to Christ or the Trinity in as far as Christ is one of its aspects. Attempts to identify the vision with some theological or historical event, for instance a Church council, as some have suggested,[22] are speculative, and in all cases not convincing. Generally speaking, it seems illogical, anachronistic and thus hardly credible that the cautious author of the corpus would evoke this kind of a (semi-)historical gathering of people, having come to the body of Christ, for instance after the deposition or in the cave. Dionysius, also one of those who came together for the vision of the body, met Paul and converted to Christianity only after thse events. Moreover the implication would be that the Neoplatonically inspired Hierotheos, never presented by Dionysius as either a Christian or a theologian, would have been present at a meeting for Christian insiders, some of the most renowned and influential insiders, that is—James, Peter and also that Athenian convert of Paul, Dionysius. Hierotheos doesn't belong in their circles.

Yet the heterogeneous character of the persons said to have been present in that gathering is telling, in particular if we assume that contemporary readers of the corpus were expected to recognize Hierotheos' modeling of Proclus. This heterogeneous character suggests that Dionysius was not thinking of a literal gathering, at a certain place, at a precise moment, but rather of a metaphorical meeting of theologians or theologically inspired thinkers who, though living in different places and even in different periods, were finding each other in discussing the same theme. Note that Peter was the first patriarch of Rome and James the first of Jerusalem: their presence at the gathering makes it cover theology from West and East. If this interpretation is correct, the vision of that body doesn't mean some historical event, but may perhaps be taken as a kind of summary surrounding certain theological problems, over which theologians (and theologico-metaphysicians) from different provenance

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21 Perczel (2012), 13–16.
22 See Perczel (2012), 56.

have stooped. Here it may be possible to begin thinking that Dionysius orchestrates a fictitious theological discussion which from a theological perspective deals with the incarnation but from a philosophical perspective with the transcendent principle's immanence in its effects, in created versus uncreated reality.

An indication for this idea might be considered from the textual circumstance that follows immediately after the vision of the body. Dionysius presents a scene, probably also to be taken metaphorically, in which those present participate in a mystical choir, singing the praise of Christ, and in which Hierotheos too has a loud voice, bested only by acknowledged theologians, but excelling above all other holy mystics, "stepping out of himself". Dionysius uses here mystical terminology with a clear Neoplatonic ring, and this terminology returns in his intimations (at various occasions) of the mystical breakthrough. It seems as if Dionysius has been staging firstly the theoretical discussion on the immanence of the transcendent, encapsulated in that vision of the body, but secondly the experience of that immanent-transcendent itself. That experience is achieved by the theologians, who praise Christ, abandon themselves and are actually absorbed into the unification, but also reached by Neoplatonic mystics, such as Proclus, who plunge themselves into the image of the principle their soul carries and thus come to belong to a divine activity.

VI. Concluding musing on an "s"

One of the clues evincing the relation between Proclus and Hierotheos as that of the metaphysical model and his slightly adapted metaphysical duplicate consists in the title of the work Hierotheos is claimed to have authored. Hierotheos wrote a *Theological Foundations*, while Proclus' model of this work, as far we discern, was officially called the *Theological Foundation* or *ET*. The similarity of the titles may be turned into an argument against the identification: there is a plural and there is a singular. Yet, this plural of Hierotheos' title in all likelihood does not reveal a slip from the side of Dionysius, nor some indeterminacy within the Academy concerning the proper title of Proclus' writings. It rather gives an indication of the atmosphere in Athens as it was experienced by Dionysius.

In his biography of Proclus his immediate successor Marinus stresses Proclus' principal openness to various religious systems, all of which are thought to establish themselves on the same metaphysical structures, but identify within this framework different gods and install different services to these gods.[23] The fact that the *ET* of Proclus doesn't mention any Greek god and obviously is not intended to remain restricted to Greek theologies can be interpreted as a sign that this work presents a foundation for a number of religious systems each of which may feel to have some

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23 See Marinus, *Vit. Procl.* §19.

freedom to use this foundation for its own purposes. Dionysius seems to have adopted the same attitude towards the work and have used it in order to create his very own metaphysical-theological system. Nevertheless, he appears to have realized that in spite of many questions, structures and terms he sensed Hierotheos and himself were having in common with Proclus, he was not prepared to accept Proclus' complex mediated road to reality and rather had it reduced to the simple ontological distance between cause and caused, between god and beings, between creator and creation, a distance to be bridged by the procession of the son.

This is an essential modification, which may have made him realize that after all he had arrived at a different theological system. Changing the singular into the plural thus may be interpreted as the confession of the author of the Dionysian corpus that in the end he was using the metaphysical basis provided by the *ET* in order to create a system no longer perfectly in tune with it. In that case it would provide a basis not for two modifications of the same metaphysics, structurally reconcilable among them, but for different systems. It presents different foundations. The author of the Dionysian corpus may have been taken further away from Proclus than he initially thought he would.

Independent Scholar

Ernesto Sergio Mainoldi

The Transfiguration of Proclus' Legacy: Pseudo-Dionysius and the Late Neoplatonic School of Athens

I. Is Pseudo-Dionysius Christian or Crypto-Pagan?

Modern Dionysian historiography has its beginning in the discoveries by Hugo Koch and Joseph Stiglmayr,[1] dated from the end of 19th century, of an evident textual link between the works of Proclus Lycaeus Diadochus and the *Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum* (*CDA*).[2] These philological discoveries provide us with the most important information about the real historical context that produced the pseudo-epigraphic masterpiece. Since the time of the two German scholars many other proofs demonstrating the close relationship between Ps.-Dionysius and the Neoplatonic school of Athens have been adduced: we should recall a monograph by Eugenio Corsini, arguing that *DN* can be considered as a text representative of the Neoplatonic tradition of commentaries on the *Parmenides*,[3] the three "classical" studies by Henri-Dominique Saffrey, presenting new objective links between Ps.-Dionysius and Proclus,[4] and a fundamental paper by Salvatore Lilla that showed traces of the indebtedness of Ps.-Dionysius to Porphyry and Damascius.[5] In particular, the discovery of a textual dependence of the *CDA* upon the works of Damascius, the last diadoch of the Neoplatonic school of Athens, implicates that Ps.-Dionysius' speculative activity can be dated towards the last years of the Athenian institution (that is, the years 520s).

The evidence that Proclus and Damascius played a remarkable influence on the writing of the *CDA* does not mean automatically that Ps.-Dionysius adopted the same philosophical perspectives of the two *Diadochoi*. In fact the text of the *CDA* presents some elements that suggest that his author looked in the direction of the overpassing of Procline thought and of the demarcation from – if not opposition to – Damascian aporetic solutions. Nevertheless, a deep-rooted historiographical tendency assumed Ps.-Dionysius' closeness to the Neoplatonic school of Athens as a proof of his belonging to the Neoplatonic paradigm of thought, considering his Christianity as a sort of

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1 Koch (1895a), 438 – 454; Stiglmayr (1895a); Stiglmayr (1895b).

2 All Greek quotations from the *CDA* are based on the following critical editions: Suchla ed. (1990), Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*; Heil/Ritter edd. (1991), Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, *De caelesti hierarchia*, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *De mystica theologia*, *Epistolae*.The titles of Dionysian works will be quoted according to the abbreviation between brackets.

3 Corsini (1962).

4 Saffrey (1966), 98 – 105; Saffrey (1979b); Saffrey (1998) [repr. in Saffrey (2000)].

5 Lilla (1997).

shell artificially created to protect, in a hostile religious context, the relics of the genuine Neoplatonic thought.

This historiographical tendency, already found in Martin Luther's judgment upon Ps.-Dionysius,[6] recently drove the Byzantine philologist Carlo Maria Mazzucchi to propose the identification of the author of the *Areopagitica* with Damascius, the last Athenian diadoch.[7] This supposition has been properly defined by Tuomo Lankila as the "crypto-pagan" hypothesis,[8] and since it assumes that the *CDA* would have been a pagan and antichristian plot, we can look at Mazzucchi's hypothesis as the "crypto-pagan" hypothesis in its strongest formulation.[9] Another form of the crypto-pagan hypothesis is formulated by Tuomo Lankila himself and by Ronald Hathaway,[10] according to whom Ps.-Dionysius' intention would have been that of ensuring the surviving of Neoplatonic philosophy under a Christian coverage.[11] In this case the Christian paradigm does not appear to be the core of Dionysian thought, but only a strategic and exterior shell.

On the other hand another major historiographical stream in Dionysian studies is constituted by the supposed link between the mysterious author of the *CDA* and the Monophysite and Origenist milieus of Palestine and Syria. This hypothesis is based on the evidence of several points of contact between the *CDA* and the Christian Western Syria ecclesiastical culture of the late 5th Century: we can sum up these points of contact in the very early reception of the *CDA* in Syria (with the translation made by Sergius of Reshayna and the pseudo-epigraphic *Book of Holy Hierotheos*), in the positive reception of *CDA* among moderate monophysite circles, such as that of Severus of Antioch, the first author who quoted the *CDA*, and, above all, in the similarities between the rites described in the *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* (*EH*) and the Syriac liturgy and euchology, as it was firstly noticed by Stiglmayr.[12] According to the Syriacist perspective the Neoplatonic background of the *CDA* is assumed to be a mere linguistic shell that Ps.-Dionysius exploited in order to formulate arguments that were able to influence the debates among the Christological and Origenistic factions somewhere in the Syrian or Palestinian monastic milieus.[13]

Dionysian questions in the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century can be depicted as a sort of silent struggle among scholars belonging to different dis-

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6 Luther (1888), 562: "In 'Theologia' vero 'mystica', quam sic inflant ignorantissimi quidam Theologistae, etiam pernitiosissimus est, plus plutonisans quam Christianisans, ita ut nollem fidelem animum his libris operam dare quam minimam. Christum ibi adeo non disces, ut, si etiam scias, amittas."

7 Mazzucchi (2006).

8 Lankila (2011). See also his contribution in this volume.

9 About the difficulties raised by Mazzucchi's argumentation see E. Fiori's review of his paper: Fiori (2008).

10 Hathaway (1969).

11 For another reference to crypto-paganism see Caseau (2011).

12 Stiglmayr (1909); see also Perzcel (2008), Fiori (2011).

13 See Perczel (2001).

ciplinary areas (historians of philosophy, Syriacists, patrologists and theologians), claiming Ps.-Dionysius for their own field, giving relevance to the elements of the *CDA* that are more evidently connected to their discipline. Perhaps the only exception is constituted by the work of István Perczel, who explored the large spectrum of disciplinary implications behind the *CDA*, increasing our knowledge of it with many new acquisitions, but in his results he offers rather an explanation *ad sensum* of the general problem rather than a solution: a work by a Christian monk, issued from the Syrian monastic world, an Origenist and an exponent of the diophysite Christology, a former student of the Neoplatonic school of Athens, but also a Christian convert.[14] These conclusions are very likely close to the historical reality, since they recapitulate what has been observed in the text of the *CDA* by Dionysian scholars, but they fail to explain the Dionysian project as a whole. Finally, the conclusions on the Origenism of Ps.-Dionysius formulated by Perczel raise more problems than they solve.[15]

Most scholars accept the enigma of the identity of the author of the *CDA* as a matter of fact, and not as a decisive point of departure to understand his thought. For instance, this same position is held by Werner Beierwaltes, who, at the beginning of his essay, significantly entitled "Dionysius Areopagita: a Christian Proclus?",[16] declares that the reconstruction of Dionysian thought is to be made outside the problem of the attribution of the *CDA*. Beierwaltes' conclusions are based on the evidence of the text, as he interpreted it: Ps.-Dionysius is a Neoplatonist, but his Christianity is also indisputable. Nevertheless this explanation cannot prevent the crypto-pagan hypothesis in its weaker form, which postulates that the Christian inspiration of Ps.-Dionysius is secondary to his conformity to the Neoplatonic paradigm of thought – unless one admits that the Christian paradigm is simply interchangeable with the Neoplatonic one.

The Areopagitic question has been overwhelmingly approached from the side of the *Quellenforschung*. Yet, another important achievement issuing from the Dionysian studies of the last half century is that concerning the status of the text. Every scholar knows well the *status quaestionis* concerning the sources of the *CDA*, but very little attention has been paid to the composition of the text. The understanding of the genetic structure of the text is perhaps more relevant for shedding light on the authorship of the *CDA* than the identification of its sources. This problem has been highlighted by Bernhard Brons[17] and Mihai Nasta,[18] whose contributions provide many philological reasons to understand the *CDA* genesis as a sort of patchwork, written in different stages and, perhaps, not entirely by the same author.

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14 See below, in the bibliography, for a list of Perczel' studies on Ps.-Dionysius.

15 For a criticism of the main tenets of the Origenist thesis concerning Ps.-Dionysius see Fiori (2011).

16 Essay published in Beierwaltes (2001).

17 Brons (1975).

18 Nasta (1997).

In this paper I would like to get a deeper insight into some of the philosophical aspects of the *CDA*, in comparison with the achievements of Proclus and Damascius in order to verify how much Ps.-Dionysius' thought can be said in continuity with the reflection of the two great Neoplatonic thinkers. Very often in fact conceptual and terminological correspondences among Christian and pagan authors in the Late Antiquity are interpreted as a proof of a paradigmatic continuity, while the original intention, both by Christian and pagan authors, was to emphasize doctrinal discontinuities.

Ps.-Dionysius transformed Neoplatonic philosophy in order to fit it in the Christian paradigmatic vision of the world, employing arguments and terminology from the works of Proclus, his possible master, and from the works of Damascius, his probable colleague in the school of Athens, removing all elements that linked the philosophy of the two thinkers to pagan theology and to its vision of the world. The transformation of Neoplatonism operated by Ps.-Dionysius, in particular reference to *Parmenides* exegesis, is referred by Stephan Gersh as "revolutionary rethinking".[19] My concern here is to show that the reinterpretation of Neoplatonism by Ps.-Dionysius was driven by a paradigmatic awareness, in which it appears that the innermost textual strategy of *CDA* is to accept the external form of pagan philosophy to transform it, establishing a doctrinal hiatus through formal continuity. This strategy can also be depicted as an appropriation with the intention to turn the page of philosophy into a new direction. Furthermore, the analysis of some of the most striking philosophical argumentation in *CDA* lets us glimpse traces of a theoretical debate in the texture of the pseudo-epigraphic masterpiece that can disclose to us some important information about the making of the *CDA*.

II. The law of mediation

The first question to ask is how Neoplatonism is compatible with the paradigm depicted by Ps.-Dionysius' hierarchies. The second question is whether the system of Dionysian hierarchies are a strict application of the principle of mediation, as it is generally assumed.

The law of mediation is certainly one of the main aspect of the Dionysian universe because the transmission of the gifts from above by means of hierarchical intermediaries has a primary role in the definition of the hierarchical order. Nevertheless this is not the only way of transmission of the thearchical gifts envisaged in the *CDA*. Ps.-Dionysius conceives, in fact, two way transmission of the goods from above, that is the immediate one and the mediated one. In *CH*, he states in fact:

> Hence the middle rank of the heavenly intelligences manifests its conformity to God. This, as has been said, is how it achieves purification, illumination, and perfection, at second hand (δευ-

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19 Gersh (1984), 299.

τέρως) from the divine enlightenments by way of the first hierarchical rank, and passed on secondarily through that mediating rank (καὶ διὰ μέσης ἐκείνης δευτεροφανῶς διαπορθμευομένων).[20]

Here it is clearly stated that the first mode of transmission is by direct illumination, the second is by means of the hierarchical mediation. In general we can notice in the first two treatises of the *CDA*, that is *CH* and *EH*, a major weight of the principle of mediation, whereas in *DN* the principle of immediateness is more emphasized:

> The Good is described as light (φῶς νοητὸν ὁ ἀγαθὸς λέγεται) of the mind because it illuminates the mind of every supra-celestial being with the light of the mind, and because it drives from souls the ignorance and the error squatting there (πᾶσαν δὲ ἄγνοιαν καὶ πλάνην ἐλαύνειν ἐκ πασῶν). It gives them all a share of sacred light (καὶ πάσαις αὐταῖς φωτὸς ἱεροῦ μεταδιδόναι). It clears away the fog of ignorance from the eyes of the mind.[21]

The principle of immediate interaction with God's energies seems implicated in the concept of *synergia*:

> This first group [i. e. rank] is particularly worthy of communing with God and of sharing in his work (συνεργίας). It imitates, as far as possible, the beauty of God's condition and activity (τῶν καλῶν ἕξεών τε καὶ ἐνεργειῶν).[22]

Moreover, according to neo-testamentary theology and terminology, Ps.-Dionysius speaks of Grace, a concept that implicates the direct transmission of divine goods to creatures:

> And so it comes about that every order in the hierarchical rank is uplifted as best it can toward cooperation with God. By grace and a God-given power (ἐκεῖνα τελοῦσα χάριτι καὶ θεοσδότῳ δυνάμει), it does things which belong naturally and supernaturally to God, things performed by him transcendently and revealed in the hierarchy (ἱεραρχικῶς ἐκφαινόμενα) for the permitted imitation of God-loving minds.[23]

In this last passage Ps.-Dionysius distinguishes Grace from natural power. Grace is accorded directly by God, even if it is transmitted through the hierarchy. The role of the hierarchical ranks can be seen as the assistance provided by the superior τάξεις to the inferior ones to fulfil the conditions of knowledge and purification that allow these last to participate in the thearchical gifts. Following the same logic Ps.-Dionysius conceives prayer (in *DN* III, 1) as the faculty to move anagogically and directly to God, without passing through any intermediation.

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20 *CH* VII.2.240B, 33–34: Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 167.
21 *DN* IV.6.700D, 149; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 75.
22 *CH* VII.4.212 A, 31; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 165.
23 *CH* III.3.168 A, 19; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 55.

In *EH* it is affirmed that the function of the hierarchy is to help the anagogical movement of all ranks, but it is also specified that the illumination is not given by the higher members of the hierarchy, since it comes directly from God:

> The ranks coming in succession to these premier beings are sacredly lifted up by their mediation to enlightenment in the sacred working of the divinity (πρὸς τὴν θεουργὸν τῆς θεαρχίας). They form the orders of initiates and they are named as such.[24]

Such a mode of action characterizing the hierarchical transmission of the divine gifts matches perfectly with the absolute monotheism expressed in *DN* XI:

> The absolute being underlying individual manifestations of being as their cause is not a divine or an angelic being, for only transcendent being itself can be the principle, the being, and the cause of the being of beings. Nor have we to do with some other life-producing divinity distinct from that supra-divine life which is the originating Cause of all living beings and of life itself. Nor, in summary, is God to be thought of as identical with those originating and creative beings and substances which men stupidly describe as certain gods or creators of the world. Such men, and their fathers before them, had no genuine or proper knowledge of being of this kind.[25]

The affirmation of an unique causality acting in the universe is a distinguishing aspect of Dionysian monotheism. He defends the compatibility between the absolute transcendence of God and his providential extensions, recurring to the theory of energies/operations, which implicate immediateness:[26]

> ...in his total unity he rises above all limitation. He is neither contained nor comprehended by anything. He reaches out to everything and beyond everything and does so with unfailing generosity and unstinted activity (ἀλλὰ διατεῖνον ἐπὶ πάντα ἅμα καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα ταῖς ἀνεκλείπτοις ἐπιδόσεσι καὶ ἀτελευτήτοις ἐνεργείαις).[27]

The function of the hierarchy is not to emanate the Grace, but to transmit the illumination from above as knowledge of God. According to the synergy of transmission of the divine goods, the hierarchy has the function to support the purification of each rank as the preliminary condition of the transmission. In any case what is transmitted is proceeding only and directly from God. The formation of the concept of "hierarchy", a word that we should recall is a Dionysian neologism, fits the religious conception of the universe as product of the One willing cause. Even in *EH*, the treatise that among the Dionysian writings responds the most to the law of mediation, we

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24 *HE* V.2.501B, 105, Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 233–234.

25 *DN* XI.6.953C-D, 222; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 124–125. I translate here and in following quotations from this edition ἀρχή / ἀρχαί by "principle/principles", where the original translation has "source/sources".

26 A possible source of the Ps.-Dionysius' theory of the distinction between essence and energies may be Basil the Great, *Contra Eunomium* I.14; cf. Larchet (2010), 154.

27 *DN* XIII.1.977B, 227; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 128.

read about the divine energies working through the hierarchical ranks. This is quite evident when Ps.-Dionysius said that the ecclesiastical functions are "icons of divine operations":

> Since the differences of clerical function represent symbolically the divine activities (τῶν θείων ἐνεργειῶν) and since they bestow enlightenment corresponding to the unconfused and pure order of these activities, their sacred activities and holy orders have been arranged hierarchically in the threefold division of first, middle, and last so as to present, as I have said already, an image of the order and harmonious nature of the divine activities. The divinity first purifies those minds which it reaches and illuminates them. Following on their illumination it perfects them in a perfect conformity to God. This being so, it is clear that the hierarchy, as an image of the divine, is divided into distinctive orders and powers in order to reveal that the activities of the divinity (ἐναργῶς ὑποδεικνῦσα τὰς θεαρχικὰς ἐνεργείας) are preeminent for the utter holiness and purity, permanence and distinctiveness of their orders.[28]

If the hierarchy represents the order by which divine energies operate, and its role is to manifest the action of divine energies, we can understand that energies are said to be "distinct" because they are energies of the Thearchy, and not of the hierarchy; the ἱερατικαὶ διακοσμήσεις are synergical to divine energies, but the anagogic power is distinct only through energy/operation/activity of the divine Thearchy.

The comprehension of the principles of immediateness and synergy is of great importance: if we maintain that the Dionysian universe is ruled only by the principle of mediate transmission of divine energies we would turn this universe into an emanatistic *kosmos*, in which causality would spread among different entities, that is among several causal levels subordinated to each other, where the superior ranks are causes of the inferiors. On the contrary, we shall think of mediation as a synergical function by which the upper hierarchical orders help the lower orders participate in the gifts of the Thearchy.

III. From ἀρχαί to the ὑπεράρχιος ἀρχή

Turning now to Procline henology, in order to verify its compatibility within the Dionysian conception of causality, we should discuss how Proclus introduces the theory of the henads between the One and Being (or Intellect). Departing from the hypostatic order defined by Plotinus, Proclus aims to separate the One from every multiplicity that proceeds from it. This is the main tenet of the philosophy of the One in Proclus and Damascius.

Proclus rejects the idea found in Plotinus that the prototypes of the intelligible world would have their origin in the One itself. According to Plotinus there are no hypostatical intermediaries between the One and *Nous*.[29] Proclus looks not only to

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28 *EH* V.7.508C–509 A, 109–110; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 238–239.
29 D'Ancona (1992), 288.

the separation of the multiplicity from the One, but also wants to avoid the idea that the One would be the direct productive principle of the multiplicity. To avoid this conclusion Proclus introduces the couple of ἀρχαί, i.e. the limit and the unlimited (πέρας – ἄπειρος), or, alternatively, the set of ὑπερούσιοι ἑνάδες. Proclus conceives πέρας as the principle of *identity* and ἄπειρον as principle of *alterity*.[30]

This solution raises the problem of the understanding of the compatibility between the ἀρχαί and ἑνάδες systems[31] but in the *Platonic Theology* III, 8 we can envisage an explanation where the ἀρχαί are presented as a *dyad*, or supreme *henad*. The *henads* are the first determination of the One, but, being generated καθ'ἕνωσιν and being before every otherness and division, they don't implicate any multiplicity into the One.

The *henads* are forms of the One and derive from the One, but are less transcendent. They are divine entities and each *henad* can be assimilated to a particular divinity of the traditional Greek pantheon.[32] The One itself is conceived of as "original Henad" or "Henad of the Henads".[33] In *Platonic Theology* πέρας is presented as *monad*,[34] but this limit-monad should be distinguished from the Monad in itself, which obtains the main place among ideas.[35] In Proclus' henology we can then distinguish three levels: the One, the *Archai*, and the Henads-Gods. The Monad is inferior to the One, but superior to the Henads.

In relation to this distinction we should recall that Ps.-Dionysius unified in God the concepts of henad and monad:

> […] all these scriptural utterances celebrate the supreme Deity by describing it as a monad or henad, because of its supernatural simplicity and indivisible unity (ὡς μονάδα μὲν καὶ ἑνάδα διὰ τὴν ἁπλότητα καὶ ἑνότητα τῆς ὑπερφυοῦς ἀμερείας)…[36]

Unifying the concepts of monad and henad, on the basis of a definition found in Origen,[37] Ps.-Dionysius avoided the Procline henad-level, that, according to the Neoplatonic paradigm, has the task of providing a mediation in the procession from the One.[38] Furthermore, the system of the *henads* provides a philosophical foundation for the Greek polytheism. It is not by mere hazard that Proclus, in his subtle polemics against the Christian faith, accuses Christians not of impiety or lack of faith, but of

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30 See *In Tim.* II.159–160. See also D'Ancona (1992), 278.

31 D'Ancona (1992), 266 ff; Van Riel (2001a).

32 *ET* §114: "Every god is a self-complete henad or unit, and every self-complete henad is a god" (Dodds ed./transl. (1963)); see also Abbate (2008), 95–96.

33 Abbate (2008), 95.

34 See D'Ancona (1992), 275.

35 For other monadic systems in Proclus, see Combès (1987).

36 *DN* I.4.589D, 112, Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 51.

37 On this topic see Perczel (2003a).

38 See D'Ancona (1992), 274.

epistemological ignorance and atheism, since he envisages the lack of philosophical foundation behind the Christian belief.[39]

Ps.-Dionysius was very likely well aware of Procline philosophical foundation of polytheism, so he felt the need to contrast it by a new philosophical perspective, built upon the causal uniqueness of the First principle, which is conceived as beyond the Principle (ὑπεράρχιος) and at the same as what comprehends in itself every being in a superessential way:

> Godhead (θεαρχία) is a monad, that it is one in three persons (μονάς ἐστι καὶ ἑνὰς τρισυπόστα-τος), that its splendid providence for all reaches from the most exalted beings in heaven above to the lowliest creatures of earth. It is the Cause and principle beyond every principle (ὑπεράρ-χιος ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία) for every being and it transcendently draws everything into its perennial embrace.[40]

Ps.-Dionysius combines the logic of radical apophaticism with the hyperontological discourse. He avoids the necessity to postulate, as Proclus did, a distinction among the One, the Monad and the Henads, and to develop a theory of causal principles beside the First Principle. Identifying the Principle beyond the Principle, which is absolutely transcendent, with the universal and unique Cause of everything, Ps.-Dionysius avoids the need for a logical distinction between the principle beyond the One (ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἑνός) and the One itself, unlike Damascius, who felt such a distinction as necessary.[41]

Ps.-Dionysius abandons the strict dialectical argumentation followed by Proclus and Damascius in their respective commentaries on the *Parmenides*, a consequence of which was the multiplication of the first "principles". Accepting the antinomy of a Principle completely transcendent and at the same time revealing itself in theophanies, Ps.-Dionysius bypasses the multiplication of the first "principles" and also avoids the distributing of affirmative and negative features of the One Principle, as well as its causal power, to several secondary principles, as it has been concluded by the two diadochs. The unification of the henad and monad allows Ps.-Dionysius to simplify the supersensible world, withdrawing from its order the need for secondary intermediate principles:

> "Being itself", "life itself", "divinity itself" (αὐτοθεότητά), are names signifying principle, divinity, and cause, and these are applied to the one transcendent cause and principle beyond principle of all things (τὴν μίαν πάντων ὑπεράρχιον καὶ ὑπερούσιον ἀρχὴν καὶ αἰτίαν). But we use the same terms in a derivative fashion and we apply them to the provident acts of power which come forth from that God in whom nothing at all participates (ἐκ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀμεθέκτου). I am talking here of being itself, of life itself, of deification itself (αὐτοθέωσιν) which shapes things in a way

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39 See Saffrey (1975), 558.

40 *CH* VII.4.212C, 32; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 166.

41 On this topic see Napoli (2008).

that each creature, according to capacity, has his share of these. From the fact of such sharing come the qualities and the names "existing", "living", "possessed by divinity", and suchlike.[42]

Beside the absolute monotheism and monocausalism affirmed in this passage, we should notice the asymmetry between "divinity itself" and "deification itself", in that the first is unparticipated and the second participated, and, secondly, that the deified-ones are counted among beings. From these remarks we can deduce that one of the aims systematically pursued by Ps.-Dionysius in his reworking of Neoplatonism is the complete elimination of the henads-gods from the divine world.

Even if Ps.-Dionysius employs the term ἀρχή in the plural for the most part to refer to the first rank of the third angelical hierarchy (i. e. *archai*, *archangeloi* and *angeloi*), in *DN* we can find the plural occurrence of this word with the concept of "principles", as it is the case in the 4th book of *DN.*:

> In my concern for other matters I forgot to say that the Good is the Cause even for the principles and the frontiers of the heavens (καὶ τῶν οὐρανίων ἀρχῶν καὶ ἀποπερατώσεων αἰτία τἀγαθόν).[43]

Here he speaks of the Good as the cause of the principles and limits of the heavens. In another case Ps.-Dionysius formulates an argumentation *per absurdum* starting from the premise that the Good is a principle alongside the evil:

> If it has some kind of being then it must derive from the Good, since every being owes its origin to the Good. Hence Good produces evil, because evil coming from Good is good, or else the Good is itself produced by evil and is therefore evil because of its principle. Or, once again, it may be that there are two principles (ἢ δύο αὖθις ἀρχαί). But if so these must in turn be derived from some anterior principle.[44]

Assuming that Being is the first gift of the Good and that everything participates in Being, the author of *DN* emphasizes the fact that the principles are *beings* before being *principles* which means that the principles are not beyond Being.

> All the principles of whatever there is both exist and are principles by virtue of their participation in Being. First, they are, and then, they are principles (Καὶ γοῦν αἱ ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὄντων πᾶσαι τοῦ εἶναι μετέχουσαι καὶ εἰσὶ καὶ ἀρχαὶ εἰσὶ καὶ πρῶτον εἰσίν, ἔπειτα ἀρχαὶ εἰσίν).[45]

The insistence on these topics by Ps.-Dionysius can be explained by his desire to avoid every possible link with the Procline principles beyond Being. But what are the principles according to Ps.-Dionysius? According to him, "principles" are the divine names, which do not have any causal independence from God's will, as unique causal principle. Consequently the divine names can be referred to as "principles",

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42 *DN* XI.6.953D-956 A, 222; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 125. With light modifcations.
43 *DN* IV.4.697B, 146; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 73.
44 *DN* IV.28.729 A, 174; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 91–92.
45 *DN* V.5.820B, 184; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 99.

but only in a nominal way, since they are names of the Principle, not principles *per se*.

> From it and in it are Being itself, the principle of beings (αἱ τῶν ὄντων ἀρχαὶ), all being and whatever else has a portion of existence. This characteristic is in it as an irrepressible, comprehensive, and singular feature.[46]

In the same direction, Ps.-Dionysius reworkes the concept of henad to distance his system from the Procline one. In the Areopagitic texts the plural of ἑνάς occurs only in one case as genitive plural (ἑνάδων; the nominative form ἑνάδες never occurs), and only in *DN*, a clear difference from the abundant employment of this word by Proclus and Damascius. We can argue that this main feature of Procline-Damascian terminology, linked not only to the concept of intermediation, but also to the justification of traditional Greek polytheism, has been completely removed by Ps.-Dionysius: the term ἑνάς is mostly intended by Ps.-Dionysius as synonym of μονάς, as one of the names of God.[47]

In only one occurrence in the plural, in the whole *CDA*, the usage of the word ἑνάς can be assimilated to the Procline theology, and it is where Ps.-Dionysius speaks of "angelic henads".[48] Defining the angels as 'henads' Ps.-Dionysius manifests his intention to recall the terminology applied to the gods by Neoplatonists. Nevertheless, whereas in Proclus the henads-gods are beyond Being, i. e. they are super-essentials, according to Ps.-Dionysius the angels are ontological entities, being created in *ousia*, *dynamis* and *energeia*.[49] Employing the same words used by Proclus could means that Ps.-Dionysius' intention was to underline their conceptual difference from how they are understood in Proclus. At the same time we can observe that Ps.-Dionysius never employs μονάς in the plural, whereas Proclus and Damascius utilize this term in the plural several times in order to define the particular gods.[50]

In *DN* XI.6 – one of the most striking instances of monotheistic apology in the whole *CDA* – Ps.-Dionysius provides assertions that ensure us that his starting point is the henads of Proclus, which he wants to leave behind:

> The absolute being underlying individual manifestations of being as their cause is not a divine or an angelic being, for only transcendent being itself can be the principle, the being, and the cause of the being of beings (τὸ ὑπερούσιον ἀρχὴ καὶ οὐσία καὶ αἴτιον).[51]

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46 *DN* V.6.820C-D, 184; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 99.

47 See *DN* I.4.589D, 112; *DN* I.5.593B, 116; *DN* I.1.588B, 109.

48 *DN* VIII.5.892C, 202; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 111: "This Power ensures that the orders and directions of the universe achieve their proper good and it preserves in immortality the unharmed lives of the angelic henads (τῶν ἀγγελικῶν ἑνάδων ζωὰς)".

49 See *CH* XI.2.284D-285 A, 41–42.

50 *Plat. Theol.* III.20.2–3: "Πάλιν δὴ οὖν συλλήβδην εἴπωμεν ὅτι μετὰ τὴν μίαν τῶν ὅλων ἀρχὴν μονάδες ἡμῖν αὐτοτελεῖς ἐφάνησαν οἱ θεοί". Saffrey-Westerink (1968–1997).

51 *DN* XI.6.953C, 222; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 124.

In conclusion, Ps.-Dionysius does not intend to follow the theoretical outline drawn by the Procline system. He directs his reflection in an asymptotical direction with regard to the Diadochus' philosophical outline. Nevertheless, the aim of the *CDA* author was not a mere adaptation of the late Neoplatonic system to the Christian paradigmatic frame. Rather, it is mainly a clear and firm stance in the face of the criticism addressed to Proclus by Damascius about the First principle and the possibility to conceive a Principle beyond the One.[52]

IV. Clash of triadologies

Another important ground of comparison between the speculation of Ps.-Dionysius and the developments of the late Neoplatonic thought is that of the Damascian triadology. Damascius deals with the problem of triadicity as a possible outcome of the problem of multiplicity and otherness in the intelligible, assuming that there cannot be multiplicity or otherness or number in the intelligible. In this way, through a speculative argument, Damascius comes to a solution that sounds like a demonstration of the impossibility of the Christian Trinity. This argument fits smoothly into the program of anti-Christian apologetics pursued by Damascius.[53]

The argument provided by the last diadoch proceeds as follows: in *De primis principiis* I.6, he recalls the principle by which the One (τὸ ἓν) in itself cannot be equated to a numeric concept, since it expresses simplicity; the "indefinite dyad", which comes after the One (ἡ δυὰς μετὰ τὸ ἓν ἡ <ἀόριστος>), is not the sum of two monads, but is the generative cause of everything. The One is assimilated to the principle called "Father" by *Oracula Caldaica*, which has the power to "generate everything" (πατὴρ πάντα γεννᾶν δυνάμενος).[54] From this Monad and this Dyad Damascius derives the Triad, that "by nature has the character of the unified" (τριὰς κατὰ φύσιν ἔχουσα τὸ ἡνωμένον), and as Dyad that converts itself to the One is the "paternal intellect" (νοῦς πατρικός).[55]

It follows, first, that the Father, in his generative power, is the entire Triad (ὅλη τριάς), and second, that the Triad is the Monad, not as the first expression of multiplicity, but as cause of the multiplicity; in the third place, the Triad is the simplicity of the unitary form of everything (μονοειδὴς τῶν πάντων ἁπλότης).[56] The principle of noetic monism on which this argument is based leads to the affirmation that "the Father is the One, the unlimited power of the One is the multiplicity, and the intellect

52 See Napoli (2008), 201–259.
53 See Napoli (2008), 79–89.
54 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., (1889/1964), I.300,7–12.
55 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., (1889), I.300.
56 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., (1889), I.300.

of the Father is the All".[57] Consequently, the attempt itself to speak of a Triad is a mere consequence of the inability of human thought to conceive the nature of the Monad as pure simplicity, and to grasp the multiplicity and the totality with a simple act of the mind.[58]

Damascius avoids in this way an aporetic reconciliation between the One as generator of the multiplicity and the triadic structure that emerges in this process of generation. Restoring the primacy of the One as monadic simplicity, beyond its triadic property, Damascius opens the way to his conception of the ineffable principle beyond the One.[59]

The three principles defined by the Father, the paternal power and the paternal intellect, in reality are neither one nor three, nor one-and-three (οὔτε μία, οὔτε τρεῖς, οὔτε μία ἅμα καὶ τρεῖς), but it's only by necessity that the thought is expressed with such names and concepts (διὰ τῶν τοιούτων ὀνομάτων καὶ νοημάτων).[60] Through this argument Damascius opposes a serious alternative to the speculative fundaments of the Christian dogma of the Trinity.

The Dionysian trinitarian argument deals in two different steps with the problem of "unions and distinctions" in God. In relation to ἕνωσις, Ps.-Dionysius affirms the absolute transcendence of the Trinity, which he defines as *enarchic*, a neologism which appears in *DN* II. With the expression τῇ ἐναρχικῇ τριάδι, Ps.-Dionysius affirms that the Divine Triad (the Trinity) is the principle of unity, stating consequently that the One derives from the Triad. He offers, then, a sample of antinomy, saying that God is "unity beyond the principle of unity" (ἡ ὑπὲρ ἐναρχίαν ἑνότης), but at the same time he affirms the antinomies constituted by his "polynomicity" (τὸ πολύφωνον) and his "ineffability" (τὸ ἄφθεγκτον), and between his "unknowability" (ἡ ἀγνωσία) and his "complete intelligibility" (τὸ παννόητον).[61]

Contrary to Damascius, who excludes the antinomy between the simplicity of the Monad and its triadicity, claiming the argument of the poorness (πενία) of human thought, Ps.-Dionysius assumes the antinomy as a distinctive trait of the exegetical tradition of the Holy Scriptures. This assumption allows him to reconcile the ineffable principle with the unity and the triadic hypostaticity of the Holy Trinity.[62]

The hyperousiologic and apophatic argument, which Ps.-Dionysius refers to in *DN* XIII, explains the possibility of the conception of superessential and hypostatic distinctions and unions in God at the same time. Here again it's very likely the Damascian triadology is targeted by the Dionysian elaboration. The answer to the ques-

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57 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., (1889), I.300: "Οὐκοῦν ἓν μὲν ὁ πατήρ, πολλὰ δὲ ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀόριστος δύναμις, πάντα δὲ ὁ νοῦς τοῦ πατρός".

58 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., I.301.

59 See Napoli (2008), 421–469.

60 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed., I.302.

61 See *DN* II.4.641 A, 126–127.

62 About the differences between Proclus' and Ps.-Dionysius' reciprocal conceptions of the opposites in relation to the One, see Steel (2003).

tion whether the Three of the One "are the same or are different and if the monad is the triad", in Damascius' *De primis principis* sounds as follows:

> Are the three the same thing or are they different, and is the monad a triad? (καὶ τριὰς ἢ μονάς;) None of these things is true. There is none of this in that realm, not sameness, not otherness, not triad, not monad as distinct from triad (οὐ τριάς, οὐ μονὰς ἡ πρὸς τριάδα ἀντικειμένη). There is no antithesis in the intelligible (οὐδεμία γὰρ ἀντίθεσις ἐν τῷ νοητῷ).[63]

This negative outcome, affirming that the divinity is said as neither monadic nor triadic, would have sounded to a Christian observer as a radical criticism indirectly addressed to the dogma of the Trinity. As far as I can see Ps.-Dionysius replies to this precise argument in *DN* XIII.3–4, accepting the challenge based on extreme apophaticism launched by Damascius. Moving on the same speculative and terminological ground the author of *DN* follows the same path of the extreme apophatic denial:

> There is the transcendent unity of God and the fruitfulness of God, and as we prepare to sing this truth we use the names Trinity and Unity (τῇ τριαδικῇ καὶ ἑνιαίᾳ θεωνυμίᾳ τὴν ὑπερώνυμον ὀνομάζομεν) for that which is in fact beyond every name, calling it the transcendent being above every being. But no unity or trinity (οὐδεμία δὲ μονὰς ἢ τριάς), no number or oneness, no fruitfulness, indeed, nothing that is or is known can proclaim that hiddenness beyond every mind and reason of the transcendent Godhead which transcends every being. There is no name for it or expression. We cannot follow it into its inaccessible dwelling place so far above us and we cannot even call it by the name of goodness.[64]

Concerning the topics of "unions" (ἑνώσεις) Ps.-Dionysius seems to have taken in account the results of Damascius' negative triadology with the intent to overcome it. Building on the orthodox perspective fixed by the Cappadocian Fathers and turning to the side of "distinctions" (διακρίσεις), the author of the *CDA* argues in *DN* II.2:

> Anyone claiming that this procedure involves a confusion (σύγχυσιν) of the distinctions (διαιρέσεως) within God will not be able, I believe, to prove the truth of his claim, even to himself. And if, in this, he is entirely at loggerheads with Scripture, he will be far removed also from what is my philosophy, and if he thinks nothing of the divine wisdom of the Scriptures, how can I introduce him to a real understanding of the Word of God?[65]

In this passage Ps.-Dionysius addresses "someone" who rejects the Holy Scriptures, very likely alluding to a pagan thinker, with whom he had, we may suppose, a dispute on the "distinctions" befitting the magnificence of God (τῆς θεοπρεποῦς διαιρέσεως). This mysterious person, whom Ps.-Dionysius addresses, may simply be a literary fiction that sketches the general character of a pagan philosopher who refuses

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63 Damascius, *De principiis* XVII, q. 117, Ruelle ed. (1889), I.300; Ahbel-Rappe transl. (2010), 400.
64 *DN* XIII.3.980D-981 A, 229; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 129–130.
65 DN *II.2.637D, 124; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 60.*

the Christian dogma of the Trinity, or perhaps it could refer to a real person, someone who really opposed Ps.-Dionysius on the topic of the distinctions in God.

The fact that Damascius conceives the distinctions relative to the triad as a nominal representation by the human thought, while according to him the intelligible triad is absolute unity and simplicity, may be an indication that the real referent of Ps.-Dionysius' polemics was precisely Damascius.

This supposition can be confirmed by another Dionysian Trinitarian definition in *DN* II, which is worthy to draw our attention:

> Theology, in dealing with what is beyond being, resorts also to differentiation. I am not referring solely to the fact that, within a unity, each of the indivisible persons is grounded in an unconfused and unmixed way. I mean also that the attributes of the transcendentally divine generation are not interchangeable (τῆς ὑπερουσίου θεογονίας οὐκ ἀντιστρέφει πρὸς ἄλληλα). The Father is the only source of that Godhead which in fact is beyond being and the Father is not a Son nor is the Son a Father. Each of the divine persons continues to possess his own praiseworthy characteristics, so that one has here examples of unions and of differentiations (ἑνώσεις τε καὶ διακρίσεις) in the inexpressible unity and subsistence of God.[66]

This statement is surprising because among the numerous Trinitarian heresies that emerged up until the sixth century, no one has ever argued for the interchangeability of the Father and the Son; even the ancient heresy of Sabellius (ca. 215 CE.), who maintained that the three Persons of the Trinity are mere names of the one God, cannot be the object of Ps.-Dionysius' disagreement here. Which doctrine has then Ps.-Dionysius in mind with this unusual statement?

The answer – I think – can be found again in Damascius' triadology, where the conversion that equates the generator and the generated is affirmed. The generation process is actually described as a "division of what is anticipated in the generator", but saying that in the "summit of the intelligible, even the faint semblance of plurality is absorbed in union",[67] it follows that the generation gives life to an external plurality (τὸ ἔξω πλῆθος) which develops from the internal plurality that is unified in generators (ὡς εἰ πολλὰ εἶναι ἐν τῷ γεννῶντι):

> This, too, must form part of our doctrine, from what has been said, that at every level, the external multiplicity that becomes differentiated in the things that are generated out of it (τὸ ἔξω πλῆθος διακρινόμενον ἐν τοῖς ἀπογεννωμένοις), grows out of what is concentrated internally in the things that generate [the external multiplicity]. As a result, the correlate (ἀντιστρέφοντα) is also true, that if many are within the generator (εἰ πολλὰ εἶναι ἐν τῷ γεννῶντι), they most certainly are transferred in the next thing generated, and if the many are externally differentiated in the generated, the many are certainly manifested prior to this, in the closest generator.[68]

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66 *DN* II.5.641D, 128; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 62.

67 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed. (1889), I.242: "...ἐν τῇ ἀκρότητι τοῦ νοητοῦ καταπίνεται καὶ ἡ τοῦ πλήθους ἔμφασις ὑπὸ τῆς ἑνώσεως".

68 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed. (1889), I.242–243; Ahbel-Rappe transl. (2010), 339.

The verb ἀντιστρέφω, here used by Damascius, is the same that Ps.-Dionysius uses in the negative to exclude the convertibility of the Father in the Son, in relation to divine generation (οὐκ ἀντιστρέφει πρὸς ἄλληλα).[69]

Moreover, Damascius reaffirms this principle also in the fourth chapter of *De principiis* I (dedicated to the One and procession), saying that "things of the same rank are suitable for conversion to equality."[70] Consequently, in relation to what "is beyond all distinctions", he can establish that "things that are distinct in reality are not absolutely distinct."[71]

According to this dossier of texts and problems that find correspondences and crossing references between Ps.-Dionysius and the late Neoplatonic school we can surmise that the composition of *DN* played a part in the apologetics against pagan Neoplatonic speculation, in particular that of Damascius, who raised in a more or less veiled manner a strong refutation of Christian dogmas. Since 515 AD, in fact, Damascius held the position of diadochus of the school of Athens, and, with his later works, he brought not only the level of the institution to the glories of the past, but also was driving the most vigorous pagan response to the cultural hegemony of Christianity.

V. Anti-pagan apologetics in *CDA* plot

Among the variety of issues that can be identified behind the plot of the *CDA*, the critical dialogue with the late Neoplatonic philosophy is a central one and enables us to understand to what extent the author of the *CDA* was personally involved in the debates issuing from the late school of Athens. The philosophical polemics that can be acknowledged behind the *CDA* are not only a matter of literary fiction. It seems quite evident that Ps.-Dionysius addresses a secret polemical dialogue against certain philosophers of his time: very likely, they were exponents of the school of Athens. Ps.-Dionysius should have been directly involved in the events that marked the last period of the school and, being very likely a Christian convert, he was well aware of the apologetic direction taken by Isidore and Damascius, in the direction of a militant reaction of pagan philosophy against Christian faith, in a historical moment in which Christianity had reached an hegemonic position and menaced the existence of paganism.

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69 See above, n. 70.

70 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed. (1889), I.116: "Ἡ μὲν δὴ τῶν ὁμοταγῶν ἐπίσης ἔχει πρὸς τὴν ἀντιστροφήν, ἡ δὲ τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ χείρονος ἀντιστρέφει μέν, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῆς ὑπεροχῆς καὶ τῆς ἐλλείψεως".

71 Damascius, *De principiis*, Ruelle ed. (1889), I.78; Ahbel-Rappe transl. (2010), 152: "But as for what is beyond every differentiation, no one could say that this is subject to any differentiation at any time (τὸ δὲ ἐπέκεινα διορισμοῦ παντὸς οὐκ ἄν τις ἔχοι λέγειν οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς διωρισμένον)".

We can confirm this hypothesis if we observe that the Dionysian reworking of Neoplatonic principles is not only implicit in the texts, but is explicitly contextualized in open polemics. We can witness these polemics in at least three striking places in the *CDA*. First, in *DN* II.2, as we have seen above. Second, in *DN* V.9, where Ps.-Dionysius, with reference to παραδείγματα, argues against the possibility of a principle of causality other than the One itself, that is the one God. Contesting that every causality and ontological productiveness can be found outside God, Ps.-Dionysius directs his criticism toward a philosopher named "Clement" (*DN* V.9, 824D). Concerning the identification of the real person behind this name, Eugenio Corsini concludes definitively: "the adversary targeted here is Proclus and cannot be any other than Proclus".[72]

The third place of anti-pagan polemics is the well-known contention with Apollophanes, in the 7th *Ep*.

> But you say that the sophist Apollophanes reviles me, that he is calling me parricide, that he charges me with making unholy use of things Greek to attack the Greeks (ὡς τοῖς Ἑλλήνων ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας οὐχ ὁσίως χρωμένῳ). It would be more correct to say to him in reply that it is the Greeks who make unholy use of godly things to attack God (ὡς Ἕλληνες τοῖς θείοις οὐχ ὁσίως ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα χρῶνται). They try to banish divine reverence by means of the very wisdom (τῆς σοφίας τοῦ θεοῦ) which God has given them.[73]

In this case the polemic is presented by Ps.-Dionysius as a reply to Apollophanes' criticism of his supposed "pillage" of philosophical Greek sources. We don't know if this exchange is fictitious or if it echoes a real personal diatribe; in any case it demonstrates that Ps.-Dionysius was well aware that his speculation opposed the Greek [i. e. pagan Neoplatonic] tradition. Through the episode of Apollophanes, he wants to highlight the paradigmatic gap of his thought in respect to pagan philosophy. Ps.-Dionysius acknowledges that God has given wisdom to the Greeks, but he rejects the use of the wisdom made by them. This justifies for him his exploitation of Greek philosophy without sharing the Greek-pagan paradigm.

Finally, we can conclude that Ps.-Dionysius' philosophical reworking does not intend to fit the genuine tradition of Neoplatonic speculation into a Christian frame, but rather it attempts to argue for the rightness of the monotheistic paradigm with the help of Neoplatonic arguments, responding also to the speculative need to simplify or radically modify Proclus' system of *archai*. It further contrasts the radical negation of every possibility of knowledge of the First Principle, claimed by Damascius. According to Ps.-Dionysius simplification and conciliation between apophaticism and positive knowledge of God finds its possibility in Christian monotheism, as he clearly affirms in *DN* XIII.4, that is in the last paragraphs of this treatise.

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[72] Corsini (1962), 163 (our transl.).

[73] *Ep VII*.2.1080 A-B, 166; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 267.

The outcome of Dionysian philosophical reflection converges with the monocausality of Christian theology, that avoids henads and ideas, asserting the identification of the apophatic One with the creative One – i.e. the one God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. In Ps.-Dionysius the weight of revelation, upheld by continuous references to the Scripture and the holy tradition, balances the weight that dialectics has in Proclus and Damascius. In *DN* XIII.4 it is not other than revelation, defined as the gift of saying and well saying (τὸν δωρούμενον πρῶτον αὐτὸ τὸ εἰπεῖν, ἔπειτα τὸ εὖ εἰπεῖν), that allows Ps.-Dionysius to affirm the possibility of the knowledge of God, through his self-revelation. Following the path of negation, he arrives at the same aporetical conclusion reached by Damascian dialectics, according to which God is neither monad nor triad. Nevertheless, Dionysus closes his treatises on divine names with a strong invocation of the divine gift of knowledge, which goes back to the Biblical main tenet, that of the personal revelation of God:

> So if what I have said is right and if, somehow, I have correctly understood and explicated something of the names of God, the work must be ascribed to the cause of all good things for having given me the words to speak and the power to use them well (τὸν δωρούμενον πρῶτον αὐτὸ τὸ εἰπεῖν, ἔπειτα τὸ εὖ εἰπεῖν).[74]

Due to the cultural rivalry against the uprising hegemony of Christianity, one of the directions taken by Neoplatonism after Iamblichus was the attempt to justify the Hellenic religious system through philosophical arguments, conceived to ensure it a strong epistemic basis.[75] This has determined the multiplication of intermediary principles and consequently the need for their reconciliation with the primacy of the One.[76] Instead, the main target of Dionysian reflection is not concerning the One, but the elimination of intermediaries, conceived either as deities or causal principles. It appears that this theoretical topic is central in order to understand the clash between monotheism and polytheism behind the works of late Neoplatonists and Ps.-Dionysius as well. The strength of Neoplatonic henology cannot avoid the fact that Neoplatonic philosophy maintains an enduring justification of dualism, which is the characteristic element of the pagan vision of the world, as codification of the antagonism among causal principles.

The possibility that a key figure of the late Neoplatonic school of Athens would have collaborated in the composition of the *CDA* would confirm the hypothesis that Ps.-Dionysius' massive use of Neoplatonic terminology and concepts – radically transformed – underlies his polemic position regarding his former colleagues of the school of Athens. This criticism doesn't merely concern religious faith, but also philosophical principles, such as causality and the possibility of knowledge of the divine realities.

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74 *DN* XIII.4.981C-984 A, 230–231; Luibhéid/Rorem transl. (1987), 124.

75 See West (1999), 21–40; 41–68.

76 See Abbate (2008), 27; d'Hoine/Michalewski (2012), 179.

The *CDA* is linked to the philosophical debates concerning the One, the Good and causality in the late Neoplatonic school, but despite the causal role attributed to metaphysical intermediaries by Neoplatonists, according to Ps.-Dionysius the principle of mediation doesn't prevail on that of immediacy, since their mutual relationship and action can be understood as *synergy* between the hierarchical energies and thearchical ones. Synergy is according to will, and this ensures us that the *epistrophé* to the One, as conceived by Ps.-Dionysius, is a voluntary conversion, a concept that is rather distant from the Neoplatonic dialectic between the One and multiplicity, which is described through the metaphor of the emanation and return.[77] Ps.-Dionysius negates the idea that universal causality can be shared among different *archai:* only God is the causal-creative principle of everything, his names are not ontological principles nor ideas but his "providential powers".

In *DN*, Dionysus argues against philosophical triadic structures which imply criticism of the dogma of the Christian Trinity. I suggest that Damascius' triadic doctrine is targeted in this polemic. The *CDA* presupposes in fact not only the knowledge of Proclus but also that of Damascius, with whom Ps.-Dionysius undertook a critical dialogue. Moreover, many passages of the *CDA* contain allusions to a more or less open philosophical and religious polemic against certain thinkers of his time, in two cases referred with the fictive names of "Clement" and "Apollophanes". We have argued the possibility to identify these figures respectively with Proclus and Damascius. If the second one is presented – with negative accents – as a "sophist", toward the first one, who is called "philosopher", Ps.-Dionysius shows a sort of deference, even if he strongly disagrees with him about the conception of causality.

In conclusion we can notice that this scenario implicitly reveals much of the relationships among the late members of the school of Athens. Ps.-Dionysius' debt to Neoplatonism can be finally understood as a reworking of Proclus' teachings on intermediaries and mediation, in the direction of a full theoretical affirmation of the Christian paradigm over pagan Neoplatonism. In the second place, he intended to oppose Damascian radical apophaticism, particularly in the field of triadic theories, which were a tool of the last diadoch's apologetics against the fundaments of Christian theology.

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77 On the rejection of this metaphor by Christians see Gersh (1978), 205 ff.

Sarah Klitenic Wear

Pseudo-Dionysius and Proclus on *Parmenides* 137d: On Parts and Wholes

In the *Divine Names*, Ps.-Dionysius expresses the unity of the Godhead and the distinctions of the Trinity in such a way that the unity of the Godhead transcends parts while still containing those parts as their creator.[1] These parts are called the "divine unities" (τὰ μὲν ἡνωμένα)[2] insofar as they form the hidden aspects of God; when these unities interact with the rest of the universe, particularly the figure of Jesus on earth, they are considered his processions (τὰ δὲ διακεκριμένα[3] (*DN* 641 A) or ἡ θεία διάκρισίς ἐστιν ἡ ἀγαθοπρεπὴς πρόοδος (*DN* 644D 11)). Thus, this distinction between *henosis* and *diakrisis* forms the basis for Ps.-Dionysius' Trinitarian theology. In this paper, I will argue that the source for the language and thought of Ps.-Dionysius' Trinitarian theology comes from Ps.-Dionysius' reading of *Parmenides* 137d,[4] on the relationship between wholes and parts, which is connected to a secondary discussion of these parts as beginning, middle, and end of the whole.

Parmenides 137d discusses whether the One has parts and whether or not these parts function as a beginning, middle, and end of the One.[5] In Proclus' interpretation of this passage, he discusses how something unitary can interact with a universe full of multiplicity while still maintaining its own oneness. Proclus further questions how a uniquely unitary entity, such as the One, could contain parts at all. For, on the one hand, the One seems to be a whole with no parts, but on the other hand, it should contain all the parts of the universe. Moreover, all the parts not only have their be-

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1 The three persons of the Trinity are purely distinct and unified. In *DN* 640 A-644D, Ps.-Dionysius treats the henad beyond the unity, and the union and distinction of the Godhead. These sections speak to a development of Ps.-Dionysius' Trinitarian theology. See De Andia (1996), 31–37. For further discussion of these sections, see Lilla (1973), 609. For one example, see *DN* 641 A-B. De Andia calls the distinction between unity and distinction foundational to the Trinitarian theology of Ps-Dionysius and important to an understanding of the *Divine Names*. See De Andia (1996), 30 for Ps.-Dionysius' use of Proclus' language on one and three, see also 49–54. On Ps.-Dionysius' debt to Damascius on the question of unity and trinity, see Lilla (1997).
2 *DN* 640B 5–11. The unities consist of the divine names of the Godhead, including: τὸ ὑπεράγαθον, τὸ ὑπέρθεον, τὸ ὑπερούσιον, τὸ ὑπέρζωον, τὸ ὑπέρσοφον. All Greek text of Ps.-Dionysius' *Divine Names* in this article is taken from Suchla (1990).
3 *DN* 640 C 2–8.
4 In the first hypothesis: "If it [the One] has no parts, it cannot have a beginning, or an end or a middle, for such things would be parts of it. Further, the beginning and end of a thing are its limits. Therefore, if the One has neither beginning nor end, it is without limits. Consequently, the one has no shape" (137d4–8). In the second hypothesis: "Since it is limited, then, it will have extremities and if a whole it will have beginning, middle, and end. A thing cannot be a whole without these three; if any one of them is lacking, it will no longer be a whole" (145a4–8). (trans. Cornford).
5 For a discussion on the history of commentary on this lemma, see Wear (2011), 246–50.

ginning in the One, but they remain in the One and proceed from it, and then return to the One, which is the end. Proclus solves this dilemma by speaking of the One and wholes and parts in one way in the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, and another in the first hypothesis. Namely, the negative argument (that the One has no parts) has its positive counterpart (that the One contains parts) in the second hypothesis at 145a4–8, which argues that that One is an unlimited entity which contains wholes and parts in a transcendent fashion. Proclus, relying on Syrianus' interpretation of this passage,[6] argues that the One contains no beginning, middle, or end because it is *aschesis;* rather, parts have a relationship (or *schesis*) with it only. Proclus appropriates the role of "relationship" to the One-Being, which can be said to contain parts and have a beginning, middle, and end.

The primary change, therefore, in Ps.-Dionysius' use of Proclus' language of wholes and parts, and of beginning, middle, and end, is that Proclus ultimately prioritizes the "whole" as the One over the multiplicity of gods,[7] whereas Ps.-Dionysius includes the parts (the Trinity) in the essence of the unified Godhead. While for Proclus, the One-Being is the entity which has a relationship to the beginning, middle, and end, Ps.-Dionysius makes the unified Godhead relate to beginning, middle, and end. Still, the distinction between Proclus and Ps.-Dionysius ultimately breaks down when the two speak of the ineffability of the Godhead which, for both, exists beyond the title of cause or whole or containing parts; just as Proclus' One transcends all divine names, so does Ps.-Dionysius' One transcend even the name of Trinity. What this means for the relationship between One and Trinity in Ps.-Dionysius remains unclear, and perhaps the better understanding of Dionysian Trinitarian theology lies in Porphyry's account of the role of the One as Father of the Noetic Triad because he permits the One to directly interact as part of the intelligible triad.

I. Wholes and Parts

In this discussion of how beginning, middle, and end function as parts of the One, it might be best to begin with how Proclus first conceives of the issue of whole and part with respect to the One, as Proclus addresses this issue first and treats the discussion on beginning, middle, and end as a subset of this topic.[8] The lemma for *Parm*. 137c4-d reads:

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6 On Syrianus' contribution to this argument, see Wear (2011) p. 242–270, fragments 4 and 5.

7 This is accordance with Euclid's understanding of "part", that "the whole is greater than the part" (*Elem*. I, common notion 8). See Glasner (1992), 196. Whole is on a higher level than parts, as the genus is to the species; see *Plat. Theol*. III.25, Saffrey-Westerink (1968–1997), 165. For a larger discussion on Proclus' wholes and parts and cause and effect, see Charles-Saget (1982), 84–88.

8 Proclus defines beginning, middle, and end as parts, and then defines part. Proclus argues that the One can have no beginning, middle, and end because these entities are parts and only more partial, inferior beings have parts. See Proclus, *In Parm*. 1111; *ET* §67: "that which causes all wholes to be

'Well then,' said Parmenides, "if there is a One, of course the One would not be many." "How could it?" "So there cannot be any parts of it, nor can it be a whole. (trans. Wear)[9]

For Proclus, the issue of wholes and parts describes the relationship between the One primal God (as described in the first hypothesis) and the One-Being (as described in the second hypothesis). Thus, what is systematically denied of the One in the first hypothesis is affirmed of the One in the second hypothesis (which is really the One-Being), so that each positive attribute corresponds in order to a preceding negation. With respect to a discussion on wholes and parts, Proclus says that the divine names "whole", "multiplicity", "limit", and "limitless" refer to the divine stages of procession.

In addressing *Parm.* 138a3–6, Proclus uses the language of "being in itself" and "being in another"[10] to further describe the One in the first and second hypotheses as having contact with many points, but containing no parts.[11] Thus, through "being in itself" and "being in another", Proclus applies the principle of multiplicity inherent in the statement "being in another" to the One-Being in the second hypothesis because the One-Being participates in intelligible multiplicity.[12] For, he adds, the One is "partless" (*ameros*). However, he goes on to say that:

> *In Parm.* 1143.26–33
> Even when the One is called a monad, it is a monad with respect to the intellectual realm; otherwise it is a multiplicity in comparison with the noetic monads; and when it is said to be whole and partless, that is in relation to the intellectual realm, and this is said from our perspective; and even if it does not have parts, yet it has parts in comparison with intelligible wholeness; and when we say it is without shape, once again this is in the intellectual realm, since in any case it is necessary for it to partake in the shape that is prior to it.[13]

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wholes in prior to their parts." Wear (2011), 246. For a treatment of this question including the relationship between wholes and parts and beginning, middle, and end, See Glasner (1992).

9 Εἶεν δή, φάναι· [εἰ] ἓν ἔστιν, ἄλλο τι οὐκ ἂν εἴη πολλὰ τὸ ἕν.—Πῶς γὰρ ἄν; Οὔτε ἄρα μέρος αὐτοῦ οὔτε ὅλον αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι.—Τί δή; (*Parm.* 137c4–6). Wear (2011), 231. All Greek text of Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* in this article is taken from Steel (2007–2009).

10 Proclus denies the attribute "in itself" and "in another" to the One. This is part of a tradition of interpretation found in Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Syrianus; see Saffrey and Westerink (1974), 129. Glasner discusses Proclus' theory of *diairesis* and argues that Proclus makes a division into beginning, middle, and end (1992), 198. See Proclus, *In Eucl.* 98.13–14 for further discussion.

11 Proclus's lemma reads as follows, "If it were in another, it would be encircled all round by that in which it was contained, and would have many contacts with it at many points; but it is impossible for there to be contact at many points all round in a circle with a thing which is One and has not parts and is not round." "It is indeed impossible." [*Parm.* 138a3–6] Translation by Morrow-Dillon.

12 See *In Parm.*1142.9–1143.26. For a discussion of this passage, see Wear (2011), fragment 6, 272–278.

13 Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν λέγηται μονάς, ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς ἐστι μονάς, εἰ καὶ πλῆθός ἐστι πρὸς τὰς νοητὰς μονάδας· καὶ ὅταν λέγηται ὅλη καὶ ἀμέριστος, ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς, καὶ ταῦτα λέγεται παρ' ἡμῶν· εἰ δὲ μὴ μέρη ἔχει, ἀλλὰ πρός τε τὴν ὁλότητα τὴν νοητὴν μέρη ἔχει καὶ ὅταν ἀσχημάτιστος, πάλιν ἐν νοε-

The One "in itself" and "in another" can only refer to the monad of the intelligible or intellectual being,[14] as the One can be neither in itself or in another—it transcends the concept of participation, even with respect to its own self. Likewise, in *Platonic Theology* II.20, Proclus says that the absolute One exists beyond the total (*pan*) since the total relates to the parts that comprise it by encompassing those parts. Instead, the Absolute One is better called "entire" (*to holon*), a total entity that is not full of parts. This is further seen in the *Elements of Theology*, propositions §66–69 on wholes and parts, which describes the distinction between ὅλον ἐκ τῶν μερῶν (the whole is a sum of its parts) and ὅλον πρὸ τῶν μερῶν (the whole is distinct and unparticipable) from Plato's *Theatetus* 204a-205c, and a third kind of relationship between wholes and parts added by Proclus: a whole is within each of its parts ὅλον ἐν τῷ μέρει.[15] Understood in light of the propositions on participation (see §23 *et al*), therefore, it seems that the monad, as unparticipated, produces terms outside of itself that are participated; these terms contain their primary cause, although in a secondary manner.[16] Still, this negative argument has a positive analogue in the second hypothesis at 145a4–8, which says that the One, in its unlimited state, contains the wholes and parts in a transcendent manner.[17]

Dionysius likewise uses the language of whole and part with respect to the divine godhead and the Trinity. In *Divine Names* God is "beginning as cause and end as that for the sake of which" and yet he also "contains beforehand in himself the beginnings, middles, and ends of beings in a non-relative and transcendent manner" (*DN* 825B). Here, God possesses beginning, middle, and end without any relationship (*schesis*) towards these parts,[18] thus implying no necessary dependency and making these qualities inherent qualities of God.[19] Viewed generally, the position on whole and parts with respect to the Godhead and Trinity is quite different from

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ροῖς, ἐπεὶ πάντως αὐτὴν ἀναγκαῖον μετέχειν τοῦ σχήματος τοῦ πρὸ αὐτῆς. Translation by Morrow-Dillon.

14 Proclus, relying upon the teachings of Syrianus, discusses "being in itself" and "being in another" in terms of attributes of different gods which represent the different attributes of Being; the deduction that "the One is" starts from the highest level of intelligible Being, "the One Being'. See Proclus, *Plat. Theol.* I.11.50, 2–3 and Van Campe (2009), 268.

15 See Proclus, *ET* §67; *Plat. Theol.* III.25.88; for three senses of whole: whole before parts, whole of parts, whole in parts.

16 In *In Parm.* 1112.26–35, Proclus argues that the One cannot contain limits and that parts are limits. He sets out three definitions of parts:

1. A part is that which contains the same elements as the whole, only in a partial manner;
2. A part makes up totality;
3. A part is linked with other things for the completion of one entity.

On the three modes of wholeness, see Theodore of Asine, as quoted by Proclus, in *In Tim.* II.274.10; see also Proclus, *ET* §23 and §65.

17 Wear (2011), 246.

18 See Radde-Gallwitz (2010), 249; and Wear (2014).

19 Radde-Gallwitz makes this point (2010), 249. See also Proclus, *ET* §126, that the more universal gods transcend relation.

Proclus' understanding of the One and divine beings, because for Dionysius the Trinity, while three parts, is not separate from the Godhead. Still, this is not to say that God and Trinity are in any way identical in essence.[20] For instance, while in the previous passage from Proclus *In Parm*. 1061.25, Proclus said that the divine names refer to the One-Being, Dionysius says that divine names apply to the entire Godhead (*DN* 640B)—however, it is also clear, in the *Mystical Theology*, that God, as with the Procline One, surpasses divine names.[21] However, Dionysius does call these names "distinctions" as opposed to his correlative "hidden unities." Moreover, he uses the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,[22] although referring to the Godhead, in order to express the proper activity of the three members of the Trinity:[23] "the divine unities are the hidden and permanent supreme foundations of a steadfastness which is more than ineffable and more than unknowable. They say that the differentiations within the Godhead have to do with the benign processions and revelations of God" (*DN* 640D).[24] Immediately after this passage, however, Dionysius says that the divine Trinity holds within it a supra-essential subsistence. It is unclear whether Ps.-Dionysius is portraying the Trinity as the unknowable or if it is closer to a Procline monad, which contains an element within it that cannot be participated in, and yet still participates in that which is higher in power than it. The existence of Jesus, moreover, is also called a distinction (*DN* 640D).[25] In *Divine Names* 648C, Dionysius uses the language of parts and wholes to describe the activity of Jesus; Jesus relates to creation as its cause and goal, in the same way that One is described as the beginning and end:

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20 There is not an over-abundance of work on Ps.-Dionysius' understanding of Trinity, see De Andia (1996), 30–61; Brons (1976), 78–130; Lilla (1973), 609–623; Pera (1936), 1–75; Beierwaltes (1994), 204–261.

21 De Andia (1996), 30.

22 Τὰ δὲ διακεκριμένα τὸ πατρὸς ὑπερούσιον ὄνομα καὶ χρῆμα καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ πνεύματος, *DN* 640C.

23 Ps.-Dionysius calls God a triadic henad (*DN* 593B) and an henadic triad (*DN* 641 A), as well as a trihypostatic henad (*CH* 212C). Proclus, likewise, has a doctrine on the union and distinction in the One. Eugenio Corsini points to passages in the *Commentary on the Parmenides* and the *Platonic Theology* VI.12. See Corsini (1962), 40. De Andia finds parallels in the *Commentary on the Timaeus*, book 3, on the mixture of the same and other. (*In Tim*. III, 254) See De Andia (1996), 53. For Cappadocian parallels, see Gregory of Nyssa, *Ex comm. Not*. 21, 15; Gregory Naz., *Or*. 25, 17; 31, 9; 11. While this paper does not concern the intra-relationship of the members of the trinity, on the matter of how they are equally mixed and united, see the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil, *de Spir*. 18, 45; Or. 24, 4; Gregory of Nyssa, *de diff*. ess. *Et hyp*. 4 (=Basil, *Ep*. 38, 86, 76–87, 91); Basil, *Adv. Mac*. 89, 25–90, 4, Mueller, *C. Eunom*. (ii. 315, 2–3 Jaeger); Greogry Naz. *Or*. 28, 1.

24 See Wear/Dillon (2007), 35. See also De Andia (1996), 37. De Andia lists four terms which Ps-Dionysius uses to speak about the Unity of the Trinity: the henad (ἑνάς), the unity (ἑνότης), the union (ἕνωσις), and the permanence (μονή). Καλοῦσι γάρ, ὅπερ καὶ ἐν ἑτέροις ἔφην, οἱ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς θεολογικῆς παραδόσεως ἱερομύσται τὰς μὲν ἑνώσεις τὰς θείας τὰς τῆς ὑπεραρρήτου καὶ ὑπεραγνώστου μονιμότητος κρυφίας καὶ ἀνεκφοιτήτους ὑπεριδρύσεις, τὰς διακρίσεις δὲ τὰς ἀγαθοπρεπεῖς τῆς θεαρχίας προόδους τε καὶ ἐκφάνσεις.

25 Ps.-Dionysius never uses the term *proodos* with respect to the procession of the Son and the Spirit from the Father. For a discussion of terms used by Ps.-Dionysius and their historical roots, see De Andia (1996), 59.

DN 648C

> The divinity of Jesus is the fulfilling cause of all, and the parts of that divinity are so related to the whole that it is neither whole nor part while being at the same time both whole and part. Within its total unity it contains parts and wholes, and it transcends these too and is antecedent to them. (trans. Lubheid)[26]

Thus, the divinity of Jesus is described here as doing primarily the same thing as the Dionysian godhead insofar as it contains parts and surpasses parts. In *Divine Names* 956 A, Dionysius says that "being itself", "life itself", and "divinity itself" are names signifying source, divinity, and cause and can be applied to the one transcendent cause with respect to his acts. Hence, he says, "the good is called the subsistence of the first being, then of the wholes, then of the parts, then of those with a share in the whole, and then of those with only a partial share" (ibid.).[27] The idea of wholeness is prioritized for the divine Godhead, which is foremost a unity.

II. Beginning, Middle, and End

After a more general discussion on wholes and parts, Proclus begins his explanation of beginning, middle, and end. Notably, Proclus considers beginning, middle, and end impossible for the One, as it is "the symbol of a rank inferior to that which is a whole and has parts."[28] The lemma for *Parmenides* 137d 5–7 is: "So then, if it has no parts, it has neither beginning, nor an end, nor a middle; for such things would already be parts of it."[29] In this passage, Proclus sets out the issue of whole and part addressing the aporia raised by *Laws* IV 715 E which says that God possesses the beginning, middle, and end of all existent things, which seems to contradict *Parmenides* 137d and which rather asserts that that God has no beginning, middle, or

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26 Ἡ πάντων αἰτία καὶ ἀποπληρωτικὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότης ἡ τὰ μέρη τῇ ὁλότητι σύμφωνα διασῴζουσα καὶ οὔτε μέρος οὔτε ὅλον οὖσα καὶ ὅλον καὶ μέρος, ὡς πᾶν καὶ μέρος καὶ ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῇ συνειληφυῖα καὶ ὑπερέχουσα καὶ προέχουσα.

27 Διὸ καὶ πρῶτον αὐτῶν ὁ ἀγαθὸς ὑποστάτης λέγεται εἶναι, εἶτα τῶν ὅλων αὐτῶν, εἶτα τῶν μερικῶν αὐτῶν, εἶτα τῶν ὅλως αὐτῶν μετεχόντων, εἶτα τῶν μερικῶς αὐτῶν μετεχόντων.

28 Beginning, middle, and end must ultimately be denied of the Procline One because they represent a limit and the One is foremost unlimited. In Proclus, *In Euclid* 98.13–14, Proclus says that the division into beginning, middle, and end relates to the concept of part and boundary. See also *In Parm*. 1116; 1125; *In Eucl*. 142.8–143.5. This description is a commentary on *Parm*. 137d6–8, which says that the end and the beginning are the limits of each thing; if the One is unlimited, it has neither beginning nor end. Proclus, following the teachings of Syrianus, uses this lemma to launch into a discussion of the dyad limit and unlimitedness (*peras* and *apeiria*), the two countering principles which exist after the One. See Syrianus, *In Met*. 182.22–24; 9.37–10.7 and Proclus, *In Tim*. I.176.23–177.2; 385.9–21; *Plat. Theol*. III.8, 30.15–23. Cf. D'Ancona (1992), 274 and O'Meara (1990). See also Wear (2011), 253–270.

29 Trans. Morrow and Dillon

end. In reply to this aporia, Proclus gives the opinion of one group of commentators, lumped together and referred to only as "some":

> *In Parm.* 1114.1–13
> There are some, again, who say in reply to this difficulty that the first principle both possesses beginning, middle, and end and does not possess them distinctly; for it contains everything within itself in a manner inexpressible and inconceivable to us, but knowable to itself. Once again, we will not accept these theorists, since they are in their turn multiplying the One to some extent or other; for this hidden and undivided multiplicity belongs to some other order of secondary entities and not to the primal entity itself, which is pure of all multiplicity. For in general, of divisions, some are monadic and extend only to the intelligible realm, while those extending into numbers are to be viewed in connection with the orders of being subsequent to this; but the One is prior to all division and multiplicity, both the unified and the distinct, being exclusively One. (trans. Morrow and Dillon)[30]

Thus, from this passage, it seems that Dionysius' Trinitarian theology would follow the thought of the first group of commentators, identified as Porphyry by Pierre Hadot and maintained by John Dillon.[31] It is this first group of commentators who argue that God contains beginning, middle, and end intrinsically, in a hidden mode. Proclus, however, argues against this concept that the One contains parts in an inexpressible manner as only secondary entities can contain multiplicity. In *In Parm.* 1114.25, Proclus gives the opinion of Syrianus, who denies the possibility that the god discussed is the Demiurge. Instead, Proclus launches into a discussion, based on *Ep.* II, 312 E, of how the godhead is the beginning, middle, and end not intrinsically, but because of the relationship other things have to him: "that entity is the beginning of all things, their middle, and their end."[32] Proclus, thus giving the interpretation of his master, Syrianus, says:

> *In Parm.* 1114.29–1115.21
> But our own master has solved the objection still more perfectly, saying that it is not the same thing for us to examine how the One is related to itself and how it is related to others, as we have indicated many times before this. Once these problems have been sorted out, it seems reasonable that Plato here, where he is considering what does not follow for the One in relation to itself, has denied it beginning, middle, and end; for these would as far as we are concerned have introduced with them multiplicity into the One. The Athenian Stranger, on the other hand, is not saying what relation God has to himself but what relations he has to others, and that he possess

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30 Πάλιν δὴ πρὸς ταύτην τὴν ἀπορίαν φασί τινες, ὅτι καὶ ἔχει τὸ πρῶτον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ οὐκ ἔχει· κρυφίως γὰρ ἔχει, διῃρημένως δὲ οὐκ ἔχει·πάντα γὰρ ἀφράστως ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνεπινοήτως ἡμῖν, αὐτῷ δὲ γνωστῶς. Οὓς οὐκ ἀποδεξόμεθα πάλιν πληθύοντας τὸ πρῶτον καὶ ὁπωσοῦν·τὸ γὰρ κρύφιον τοῦτο καὶ ἀδιαίρετον πλῆθος ἄλλῃ προσήκει τάξει τῶν δευτέρων τινὶ καὶ οὐκ αὐτῷ τῷ πρώτῳ τῷ παντὸς καθαρεύοντι πλήθους. Ὅλως γὰρ αἱ διαιρέσεις αἱ μὲν μονάδι καὶ μέχρι τῶν νοητῶν εἰσιν, αἱ δὲ εἰς ἀριθμοὺς ἐκτεινόμεναι περὶ τὰς ἐφεξῆς καὶ τούτων θεωροῦνται διακοσμήσεις·τὸ δὲ ἓν πρὸ πάσης ἐστὶ διαιρέσεως καὶ πρὸ παντὸς πλήθους, τοῦ τε ἡνωμένου καὶ διακεκριμένου μόνως ἓν ὑπάρχον.
31 See Morrow and Dillon (1997), 398 and 457 n. 93; Hadot (1968); see also Dillon (2007).
32 See the larger discussion in *In Parm.* 1114.29–1116.16.

beginning, middle, and end, these things being present in the universe, but not in God, while God himself, because he is prior to everything, is pure from having beginning, middle, and end, but holds together all existing things, in which these three elements exist. So that even if the discussion does concern the first God in that passage also, it does not contradict what is said here. For the Athenian Stranger is not saying that god possessed this triad in himself and in relation to himself, but that he transcends all the beings in which these three elements are. And if in the *Letters* he declares that all things are about the king of all, and for his sake all things are and he is the cause of all nobility, it is plain that he says this because that entity is the beginning of all things and their end and their middle, but he is not because of this himself possessed of beginning, middle, and end; for that passage teaches what relation God has to others, and not what his relation is to himself. (trans. Morrow and Dillon)[33]

Here, Proclus agrees with Syrianus' opinion that the *Laws* and *Epistles* both state that the One contains no multiplicity when viewed in itself—the One *qua* One is pure unity. However, the One, when viewed in relation to others—that is the universe, has a beginning, middle, and end.[34] All things have their beginning in the One, the One contains all things, so to speak, insofar as they participate in it, and all things seek a return to the One as their end. Thus, Syrianus and Proclus say that all things have a *schesis* with the One, but the One is transcendent over all things —and is *aschesis* the universe. This concept is further developed in *In Parm*.1142.9 – 1143.2 which is a discussion on the lemma *Parm.* 138a3 – 6: "Further, being such as we have described, it cannot any longer be anywhere; for it cannot be either in another or in itself" (trans. Morrow and Dillon). On this concept, Proclus says that the One is neither in itself nor in another, but that the One-Being, however, is said to be 'in itself' and 'in another':

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33 Εἴρηται μὲν οὖν, ὥσπερ ἔφην, καὶ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς· ἔτι δὲ τελεώτερον ὁ ἡμέτερος καθηγεμὼν ἔλυε τὴν ἔνστασιν, λέγων ὅτι μὴ ταὐτόν ἐστιν ἐπισκοπεῖν ἡμᾶς ὅπως ἔχει πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ πῶς πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα τὸ ἕν, καθάπερ ἐπεσημηνάμεθα πολλάκις. Τούτων δὲ διακεκριμένων τῶν προβλημάτων, εἰκότως ὁ Πλάτων νυνὶ θεωρῶν τίνα οὐχ ἕπεται τῷ ἑνὶ πρὸς ἑαυτό, καὶ ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον αὐτοῦ καὶ τελευτὴν ἀπέφησε· ταῦτα γὰρ πλῆθος ἂν ἡμῖν τῷ ἑνὶ συνεισήνεγκεν. Ὁ δέ γε Ἀθηναῖος ξένος οὐ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς ἑαυτόν ὁ θεὸς εἴρηκεν, ἀλλὰ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς ἄλλα, καὶ ὅτι τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχει καὶ τὰ μέσα καὶ τὴν τελευτήν, τούτων μὲν ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν ὄντων, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τῷ θεῷ, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ, διότι πρὸ πάντων ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ ἔχειν ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσα καὶ τελευτὴν καθαρεύον-τος, συνέχοντος δὲ τὰ ὄντα πάντα, ἐν οἷς τὰ τρία ταῦτά ἐστι· ὥστε καὶ εἰ περὶ τοῦ πρώτου ποιεῖται τὸν λόγον καὶ ἐν ἐκείνοις, οὐ μάχεται τοῖς ἐνταῦθα λεγομένοις. Οὐ γὰρ ὅτι ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὴν τριάδα ταύτην ὁ θεὸς ἔχει, λέγει ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ξένος, ἀλλ' ὅπως πᾶσιν ἐπιβέβηκε τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν οἷς τὰ τρία ἐστὶ ταῦτα. Εἰ δὲ ἐν Ἐπιστολαῖς περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα τὰ πάντα εἶναί φησι, καὶ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα πάντα καὶ ἐκεῖνον αἴτιον πάντων τῶν καλῶν, δῆλον δὴ ὅτι καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος καὶ τέλος καὶ μέσον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς ἀρχὴν ἔχει καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτήν· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνα πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα διδάσκει, καὶ οὐ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς ἑαυτόν.

34 Theon of Smyrna states that the triad is the first number to have a beginning, middle, and end, *Philosophi Platonici*, ed. H00.13 – 15; Iamblichus states that the monad is potentially a beginning, middle, and end (pp.1, 3) while the triad is actually so (6, 17). See Iamblichus, *Theologoumena Arithmetica*, ed. V. de Falco (1922). See Glasner (1992), 199.

In Parm. 1143.21–26

> Since even when it is called a monad, it is a monad in a mode proper to the intellectual realm; otherwise, it is a multiplicity in comparison with the noetic monads; and when it is said to be whole and partless, that is in relation to the intellectual realm, and this is said from our perspective; and even if it does not have parts, yet is has parts in comparison with intelligible wholeness. (trans. Morrow and Dillon)[35]

Proclus understands the categories of 'in another' and 'in itself' as meaning two kinds of reversion: to another (which is always to a higher entity) and to self, which is considered inferior to the first kind of reversion; for, in *Platonic Theology* V.37, p. 136.20–137.5 and VI.21, p. 95.1–7, Proclus argues that divine entities can only revert to higher entities. This discussion also is taken up by Proclus in his *Commentary on the Alcibiades*, 20.8–13, where the two kinds of reversion are described and in Damascius' *Commentary on the Parmenides* (Ch. 270, III.11.5–13 (W-C)). All of the above passages are certainly in keeping with Proclus' description of the One in the *Parmenides*—again, that certain attributes can be predicated of the One in so far as it interacts with creation (as we understand and describe it) but ultimately they must be denied of the One, whose transcendence makes all predicates impossible.

Dionysius' understanding of the godhead and beginning, middle, and end echoes the language of Proclus in the *Parmenides* commentary, but he comes to a slightly different conclusion. Dionysius speaks of God as not having a beginning, middle, and end because he transcends parts and names; however, when he also speaks cataphatically about God as containing beginning, middle, and end, it tends to be with respect to God containing creation, which has its beginning, middle, and end in God. When he speaks of the One's relationship to Trinity, he speaks of it as three distinctions in the One.

In *Divine Names* 824 A, God is said to be "the eternity of being, the source and the measure of being. He precedes essence, being, and eternity. He is the creative source, middle, and end of all things."[36] This passage clearly mirrors Proclus' understanding of the One's relationship to creation. However, it is also connected, I would argue, to Dionysius' reading of three things in God. The One, for Proclus, consists of three parts – beginning, middle, and end – insofar as the universe relates to it. For Dionysius, the unified godhead contains the Trinity and is the Trinity, for God is the "beginning of all things, the center of all things, all things are established in it and it is the end to which all things strive." Still, this is to say that for Dionysius, "beginning, middle, and end" also demand some kind of relationship between the One

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35 Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν λέγηται μονάς, ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς ἐστι μονάς, εἰ καὶ πλῆθός ἐστι πρὸς τὰς νοητὰς μονάδας· καὶ ὅταν λέγηται ὅλη καὶ ἀμέριστος, ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς, καὶ ταῦτα λέγεται παρ' ἡμῶν· εἰ δὲ μὴ μέρη ἔχει, ἀλλὰ πρός τε τὴν ὁλότητα τὴν νοητὴν μέρη ἔχει·καὶ ὅταν ἀσχημάτιστος, πάλιν ἐν νοεροῖς, ἐπεὶ πάντως αὐτὴν ἀναγκαῖον μετέχειν τοῦ σχήματος τοῦ πρὸ αὑτῆς.
36 Καὶ αὐτός ἐστι τοῦ εἶναι καὶ αἰὼν καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ μέτρον πρὸ οὐσίας ὢν καὶ ὄντος καὶ αἰῶνος καὶ πάντων οὐσιοποιὸς ἀρχὴ καὶ μεσότης καὶ τελευτή.

and another thing, rather than describing the One in its essence (which would include God as Trinity).[37] Dionysius speaks of souls having their "beginning, middle, and end" in God, from whom they originate and to whom they come as a final cause (*DN* 824 A). Just as with Proclus' distinction between "in itself" and "in another", Ps.-Dionysius' first distinction in the Godhead is "according to union itself" (κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἕνωσιν).[38] Interior to this divine union, there is the divine distinction of the hypostases, or persons of the Trinity.

III. The Transcendent One and the Dionysian Trinity

Although Ps.-Dionysius posits a Trinity with the One, he still says the name of Trinity ultimately cannot be applied to the true Godhead.[39] In the *Mystical Theology*, Ps.-Dionysius says that he has praised the notions most appropriate to affirmative theology, in which the divine and good nature is said to be one and triune, how Fatherhood and Sonship are *kata autēn*. All of these names, including those of unity and trinity, must ultimately be denied of the simple and unknowable God.[40] In *Divine Names* Ps.-Dionysius says:

> *DN* 981 A
> There is the transcendent unity of God and the fruitfulness of God, as we prepare to sing this truth we use the names Trinity and Unity for that which is in fact beyond every name, calling it the transcendent being above every being. But no unity or trinity, no number or oneness, no fruitfulness, indeed, nothing that is or is known can proclaim that hiddenness beyond every mind and reason of the transcendent Godhead which transcends every being. But no unity or trinity, no number or oneness, no fruitfulness, indeed, nothing that is or is known can proclaim that hiddenness beyond every mind and reason of the transcendent Godhead which transcends every being. (trans. Lubheid)[41]

Here, Dionysius uses the negative language of the *Parmenides* in order to posit a kind of One beyond the One, although this One beyond the One is simply a superior understanding. This passage has its parallel in Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides*, particularly selections on the lemma *Parm*. 142a, "therefore no name or description

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37 See Radde-Gallwitz (2010), 248.

38 De Andia (1996), 38

39 *DN* 637 A treats the henad beyond every unity: ἡ ὑπερηνωμένη ἑνάς.

40 Ὑπέρκειται δὲ καὶ τούτων ἡ τῆς παναιτίου θεότητος ἀμεθεξία τῷ μήτε ἐπαφὴν αὐτῆς εἶναι μήτε ἄλλην τινὰ πρὸς τὰ μετέχοντα συμμιγῆ κοινωνίαν. *DN* 644B

41 Διὸ καὶ μονὰς ὑμνουμένη καὶ τριὰς ἡ ὑπὲρ πάντα θεότης οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ μονάς, οὐδὲ τριὰς ἡ πρὸς ἡμῶν ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν ὄντων διεγνωσμένη, ἀλλὰ ἵνα καὶ τὸ ὑπερηνωμένον αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ θεογόνον ἀληθῶς ὑμνήσωμεν, τῇ τριαδικῇ καὶ ἑνιαία θεωνυμία τὴν ὑπερώνυμον ὀνομάζομεν, τοῖς οὖσι τὴν ὑπερούσιον. Οὐδεμία δὲ μονὰς ἢ τριάς, οὐδὲ ἀριθμὸς οὐδὲ ἑνότης ἢ γονιμότης οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι τῶν ὄντων ἤ τινι τῶν ὄντων συνεγνωσμένων ἐξάγει τὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα καὶ λόγον καὶ νοῦν κρυφιότητα τῆς ὑπὲρ πάντα ὑπερουσίως ὑπερούσης ὑπερθεότητος.

or knowledge or sensation or opinion applies to it". About this lemma, Proclus says that "the One has its place above the silence and the intellect and the knowledge of the intellect, which form a triad" (*In Parm.* VII. 505.17–18). In this same section, however, Proclus argues that unity is the most venerable name of the One, although the One even transcends this name. For the One, says Proclus, is necessary because no multitude can be infinite, and so a multitude must participate in a unity to be some one thing; thus, "'three' is a sort of unity ... for it is a kind and a kind always participates in a unity" (ibid., 21–26). In this way, Dionysius applies both the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides* to the Godhead, so that the Godhead can be viewed in a positive or negative capacity, whereas Proclus seems to apply the positive attributes of the first hypothesis to the realm of One Being and the negative attributes of the second hypothesis to the realm of the One.[42]

IV. The One and Parts: Porphyry and Dionysius

While it seems that the language of "three things", so to speak, exists in Proclus and in Dionysius in the terminology of beginning, middle, and end and parts and wholes, the Dionysian understanding of the relationship between the Trinity and the One seems to be articulated best, not by Proclus' description of the One and its parts, but rather by Porphyry's theory of the One as the Father of the noetic triad. Porphyry's theory can be found in Proclus' commentary on *Parmenides* 137d; notably, his position that "some" (here, likely Porphyry) argue that god contains beginning, middle, and end in a hidden, intrinsic mode. If this is indeed Porphyry, this concept might be further in line with Porphyry's concept that the One is unitary within himself, but is connected to plurality insofar as it is also the Father of the Intelligible triad.[43] Damascius, in *De Principiis*, states Porphyry's position on the One as the father of the intelligible triad, which differs from the regular tradition of the Athenian school:

> Damascius, *De Princ.* Section. 43, I., p. 86, 8 ff. Ruelle
> After this let us bring up the following point for consideration, whether the first principles before the first intelligible triad are two in number, the completely ineffable, and that which is unconnected to the triad, as is the view of the great Iamblichus in Book 28 of his excellent *Chaldean Theology*, or, as the great majority of those after him preferred to believe, that the first triad of the intelligible beings follows directly on the ineffable first principle; or shall we descend from this hypothesis and say with Porphyry that the first principle of all things is the Father of the Intelligible triad? (trans. Dillon.)[44]

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42 Wear/Dillon (2007), 45–48.

43 On this argument, see Dillon (2007). See also an earlier article by Edwards (1990), which sets forth that Porphyry anticipates the theology of the triad.

44 Wear/Dillon (2007), 45 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐκεῖνο προβαλλώμεθα εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν, πότερον δύο εἰσὶν αἱ πρῶται ἀρχαὶ πρὸ τῆς νοητῆς πρώτης τριάδος, ἥτε πάντη ἄρρητος καὶ ἡ ἀσύντακτος πρὸς τὴν τριάδα,

Damascius describes Iamblichus' theory of a first, transcendent primal One which exists over and above a second One, while the second One is creator of all existence, but unconnected to the intelligible triad. This is in contrast to the universe of Porphyry, who equates the One with the Father of the Intelligible triad.[45] In this way, Porphyry conflates the ruling triad of the second hypothesis with the first principle of all, so that the One is brought into a direct relationship with the intelligible realm. Proclus, moreover, in his *Commentary on the Parmenides*, makes note of a system whereby the One interacts with the multiplicity of the intelligible triad; while Proclus does not state explicitly that Porphyry is the author of this concept, the description matches the one Damascius attributes to Porphyry:

> Proclus *In Parm.* 1070.15–24
> We shall, therefore, be very far from making the primal god the summit of the intelligible world, as I observe to be the practice of some leading theologians, and making the father of that realm the same as the cause of all things. For this entity is a participated henad. After all, he is called an intelligible father and the summit of the intelligible world, and even if he is the principle of coherence for the whole intelligible world, yet it is as its father that he is so. The primal god, however, who is celebrated in the first hypothesis, is not even a father, but is superior also to all paternal divinity. The former entity is set over against its Power and its Intellect, of whom it is said to be the Father, and with those it makes up a single triad; whereas this truly primal god transcends all contrast and relationship with anything, so *a fortiori* it is not an intelligible father. (trans. Dillon.)[46]

It seems that were Dionysius to borrow from Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* or if he had access to Porphyry's own works to describe the relationship between the One and the intelligible triad to formulate his own concept of God and Trinity, he might certainly have borrowed from Proclus' comments on Porphyry's concept of the One. For Proclus, as we have seen, makes the negative attributes of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* describe the unknowable One and the positive attributes of the second hypothesis describe the One-Being. Both Dionysius and Porphyry, however, seem to show how the One (or godhead) can interact in both spheres such that

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καθάπερ ἠξίωσεν ὁ μέγας Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς χαλδαϊκῆς τελειοτάτης θεολογίας, ἢ ὡς οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν ἐδοκίμασαν, μετὰ τὴν ἄρρητον αἰτίαν καὶ μίαν εἶναι τὴν πρώτην τριάδα τῶν νοητῶν· ἢ καὶ ταύτης ὑποβησόμεθα τῆς ὑποθέσεως, κατὰ δὲ τὸν Πορφύριον ἐροῦμεν τὴν μίαν τῶν πάντων ἀρχὴν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα τῆς νοητῆς τριάδος;

45 Porphyry's doctrine of the first principle is elaborated in the following: Dillon (2007); Dillon (1992); Wear/Dillon (2007), 45–48.

46 Wear/Dillon (2007), 46: Πολλοῦ ἄρα δεήσομεν ἡμεῖς τοῦ νοητοῦ τὴν ἀκρότητα λέγειν τὸν θεὸν τὸν πρῶτον, ὥσπερ ἀκούω τινῶν ἐν θεολογίᾳ πρωτευσάντων, καὶ τὸν ἐκεῖ πατέρα ποιεῖν τῷ πάντων αἰτίῳ τὸν αὐτόν· οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ἑνάς ἐστι μεθεκτή· νοητὸς γοῦν λέγεται πατὴρ καὶ ἡ τῶν νοητῶν ἀκρότης, καὶ εἰ παντὸς τοῦ νοητοῦ συνεκτικός, ἀλλὰ πατήρ· ὁ δὲ πρῶτος θεὸς διὰ τῆς πρώτης ὑποθέσεως ὑμνούμενος οὔτε πατήρ, ἀλλὰ κρείττων καὶ πάσης τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος. Ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ ἀντιδιήρηται πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὸν νοῦν, ὧν λέγεται πατήρ, καὶ συμπληροῖ τριάδα μίαν μετ' ἐκείνων· οὗτος δὲ ὁ πρῶτος ὄντως θεὸς ἐξήρηται πάσης πρὸς πάντα καὶ ἀντιδιαιρέσεως καὶ συντάξεως, οὔτε πολλῷ πλέον νοητὸς πατήρ.

the positive attributes of the second hypothesis describe the One insofar as it interacts in the intelligible realm (for Dionysius, this interaction would reflect God the Father's interaction within the Trinity, rather than the intelligible realm), with the negative attributes being reserved for the unknowable One (the One in and of itself.)[47]

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, Dionysius and Proclus both speak of the One in terms of the language in *Parmenides* 137d on wholes and parts. For Proclus, however, the difficulty of how the unitary One can contain parts, or a beginning, middle, and end is solved by positioning the One-Being in relation to parts, keeping the One in a state of *aschesis*. Dionysius, moreover, uses the language of wholes and parts with relation to the One and Trinity. The Trinity is embedded in the One, but parts – as the universe – interact with the One and the Trinity. In this respect, Dionysius seems to follow the group of philosophers Proclus criticizes in his *Commentary on the Parmenides* 1114.29 – 1116.16, those who argue that the One contains parts in a "hidden manner". Because this group likely describes the thought of Porphyry, perhaps Porphyry is the one to look to when inquiring into the philosophical roots of Dionysius' Trinitarian theology.

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47 Wear/Dillon (2007), 45 – 48.

Frederick Lauritzen

The Renaissance of Proclus in the Eleventh Century

Anyone who has worked with Proclus has come across the Byzantine philosopher Michael Psellos (1018 – 1081?) and anyone who has read his works has needed to study some of the ideas of Proclus. Indeed, some may argue that Psellos is single-handedly responsible for the renaissance of Proclus' thought in the eleventh century. He is clear about the importance of the Neoplatonist in the following famous passage from his *Chronographia*:

> Starting from these authors I completed a cycle, so to speak, by coming down to Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. Then, continuing my voyage, I put in at the mighty harbour of the admirable Proclus, eagerly picking up there his doctrine of perception, both in its broad principles and in its exact interpretation. From Proclus I intended to proceed to more advanced studies, metaphysics, with an introduction to pure science, so I began with an examination of abstract conceptions in the so-called mathematics, which hold a position midway between the science of corporeal nature, with the external apprehension of these bodies, and the ideas themselves, the object of pure thought. I hoped from this study to apprehend something that was beyond the reach of mind, something that was not subject to the limitations of substance. (tr. Sewter)[1]

The passage is remarkable, not only because it is written in a history, indicating a non-specialist readership, but also because it indicates that, though he read many Neoplatonic works, he preferred Proclus.[2] Moreover he believes that his contemporaries do not focus on the right texts:

> That era produced few men of erudition, and even they stood only at the outer door of the Aristotelian doctrines and merely repeated the Platonic allegories, without any understanding of their hidden meaning or of the philosophers' studies in dialectic or proof by syllogistic deduction. There being no proper criterion, their judgment on these great men was erroneous. However, questions were propounded on religious subjects, questions dealing with the interpretation of Holy Writ. Yet most of the difficult problems were left unsolved. The truth is that they concerned themselves with such mysteries as the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, and metaphysical problems.

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1 Ἐντεῦθεν οὖν ὁρμηθεὶς αὖθις ὥσπερ περίοδον ἐκπληρῶν ἐς Πλωτίνους καὶ Πορφυρίους καὶ Ἰαμβλίχους κατῄειν, μεθ' οὓς ὁδῷ προβαίνων εἰς τὸν θαυμασιώτατον Πρόκλον ὡς ἐπὶ λιμένα μέγιστον κατασχών, πᾶσαν ἐκεῖθεν ἐπιστήμην τε καὶ νοήσεων ἀκρίβειαν ἔσπασα· μέλλων δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην ἀναβαίνειν φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τὴν καθαρὰν ἐπιστήμην μυεῖσθαι, τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀσωμάτων θεωρίαν προὔλαβον ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις μαθήμασιν, ἃ δὴ μέσην τινὰ τάξιν τετάχαται, τῆς τε περὶ τὰ σώματα φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἀσχέτου πρὸς ταῦτα νοήσεως, καὶ αὐτῶν δὴ τῶν οὐσιῶν, αἷς ἡ καθαρὰ συμβαίνει νόησις, ἵν' ἐντεῦθεν εἴ τι καὶ ὑπὲρ ταῦτα ὑπέρνουν ἢ ὑπερούσιον καταλήψομαι. *Psellos Chronographia* 6.38, Impellizzeri (1984).
2 For a study of the way in which Psellos read Plotinus see Lauritzen (2014b)

The palace indeed clothed itself in the outward form of philosophy for all to see, but it was all a mask and pretence: there was no real test, no real quest for truth. (tr. Sewter)[3]

Thus Psellos proposes to study Proclus in contrast to those who were before him. This fact is well known but has attracted little interest in why. It is necessary to give a context to Psellos' interest and this leads one to compare his ideas with those of main philosophers of the eleventh century: the Anonymous Heiberg,[4] Psellos,[5] and his disciple John Italos.[6] The three authors are quite securely dated. The Anonymous Heiberg appears to have written in the year 1007.[7] His text was then copied and commented in 1040,[8] revealing a readership contemporary to Psellos' first steps in philosophy. Psellos became representative of the philosophers in 1047[9] and wrote extensively on many of its aspects. John Italos has only left us philosophical works and we also have the anathemas directed against him in 1077 and 1082[10] as well as the acts of his trial.[11] Thus the three authors represent three quite different stages of Byzantine thought at this time and they are clearly different with specific characteristics. It is for this reason that it is surprising to find common traits in their texts. It is in logic alone that they have overlapping interests. Specifically it means that the texts of Psellos which are most relevant are those edited by Duffy in the *Opuscula Logica*. To delimit the task at hand one may use the Anonymous Heiberg as the starting point and give the chapter subdivisions of book 1:

Categories (1.2–20)
De Interpretatione (1.21–24)
Syllogisms (1.25–67)
Kolophon of philosophy (1.39–48)

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3 Βραχεῖς γὰρ ὁ τηνικαῦτα χρόνος λογίους παρέτρεφε, καὶ τούτους μέχρι τῶν Ἀριστοτελικῶν ἐστηκότας προθύρων, καὶ τὰ Πλατωνικὰ μόνον ἀποστοματίζοντας σύμβολα, μηδὲν δὲ τῶν κεκρυμμένων εἰδότας, μηδ᾽ ὅσα οἱ ἄνδρες περὶ τὴν διαλεκτικὴν ἢ τὴν ἀποδεικτικὴν ἐσπουδάκασιν· ὅθεν τῆς ἀκριβοῦς οὐκ οὔσης κρίσεως, ἡ περὶ ἐκείνους ψῆφος ἐψεύδετο· αἱ μὲν οὖν τῶν ζητημάτων προβολαὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων λογίων προετείνοντο, τῶν δὲ ἀπορουμένων τὰ πλείω ἄλυτα καθεστήκει· ἐζητεῖτο γάρ πως ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀμιξία καὶ σύλληψις, παρθένος τε καὶ τόκος, καὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ φύσιν διηρευνῶντο· καὶ ἦν ὁρᾶν τὸ βασίλειον σχῆμα μὲν φιλόσοφον περικείμενον, ἦν δὲ προσωπεῖον τὸ πᾶν καὶ προσποίησις, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀληθείας βάσανος καὶ ἐξέτασις. Psellos *Chronographia* 3.3, Impellizzeri.
4 Heiberg (1929).
5 The main philosophical editions are Duffy (1992), O'Meara (1989), Gautier (1989), Duffy and Westerink (2002).
6 Ioannou (1956).
7 The most recent article is Barnes (2002).
8 A Cod. Palat. Heidelberg Gr 281f. 181r: ἐγράφη ἡ βίβλος αὕτη διὰ χειρὸς Νικολάου καλλιγράφου μηνὶ ἰανουαρίῳ ιδ ἰνδικτίωνος ὀγδόης ἔτους ϛφμη ἐκ πολλῶν πονημάτων Ῥωμανοῦ ἀσηρῆτος καὶ κριτοῦ τοῦ Σελευκείας συλλεγεῖσα τοῦ καὶ αὐθέντου μου. Οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες αὐτὴν εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ.
9 Lefort (1976).
10 Gouillard (1967).
11 Gouillard (1985).

Paralogisms (1.49–64)

Conclusion of syllogisms (1.65–67).

It is interesting that Italos never specifically discusses any of the issues of the other books (2 numbers, 3 music, 4 geometry, 5 astronomy). Psellos does deal with such issues from books 2–5 occasionally. The aim here is to find the common ground between the three thinkers. Since Psellos never discusses the *De Interpretatione* in the *Philosophical Minora I* one may leave out this topic. Overall the links between the three thinkers are the Categories and Syllogisms.

This brings one to Psellos' ironic passage in the *Chronographia* about logic referring to the reign of Romanos III (1028–1034):

> Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν ᾔδει ἐν τοῖς ζητήμασιν, καὶ συλλογισμοὺς σωρείτας καὶ οὔτιδας, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἔργων τὸ φιλόσοφον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι οὐ πάνυ ἠπίστατο. (Psellos *Chronographia* 3.15.23–25)

> The philosophy he [Romanus] knew was concerned with the scholar's inquiries, the syllogisms "sorites" and "outis", but in his works he had no idea at all how to show forth that philosophic spirit. (tr. Sewter)

The criticism expressed in book 3 is clear. For Psellos it is a waste of time to deal with questions of logic in this manner. However this must be combined with the praise he gives of Italos sometime between 1047 and 1077 in oration 19 for Italos' logical abilities. It is clear that the Anonymous Heiberg, which is a teaching text, probably for beginners in philosophy, has many interesting parallels with Italos' interests. Moreover compared to Psellos, Proclus is not so central in the Anonymous Heiberg or Italos. Therefore one may deduce that logical training was the norm among beginners in philosophy and consequently logic was not the exceptional and innovative element of the eleventh century.

One should draw another important point. Psellos was the only one of the three hired to work in the imperial bureaucracy. He was secretary to an unnamed judge when he left the city for the first time age 16 in 1034[12] and was imperial notary approximately around the year 1040. Furthermore, around this time he served as provincial governor twice.[13] By 1042 he was permanently in the city and was nominated head of the philosophers in 1047.[14] This meant that he was considered exceptional as

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12 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν τηνικαῦτα συμβὰν οὕτω ἐν τοῖς πρὸ τῆς πόλεως διῃτώμην ἀγροῖς, ἀνδρί τινι τῶν πάνυ γενναίων περὶ τοὺς λόγους βραχύ τι συναποδημήσας, πεπιστευμένῳ δικάζειν οὐ σμικρὸν μέρος τοῦ ἑσπερίου τμήματος. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν τότε πρῶτον ἐξῆλθον τῆς πόλεως καὶ τὸ περιφράττον τεθέαμαι τεῖχος, εἰπεῖν δὲ καὶ ξύμπαν τὸ ὕπαιθρον, ἑκκαιδεκέτης ὢν καὶ μείζονα ἔχων τοῦ χρόνου τὴν ἡλικίαν, ἄρτι τοῦ ποιημάτων ἀκούειν ἀπαλλαγεὶς καὶ παρακύψας εἰς τὴν τῶν λόγων τέχνην σὺν χάριτι. Psell. *In matrem* 15.834–842, Criscuolo (1989).

13 Lauritzen (2009).

14 πρόεδρον τῶν φιλοσόφων προχειρισάμενος Attaleiates History 21.19–20 Bekker in I. Bekker, Michaelis Attaliotae historia, Bonn 1853. Mauropous wrote to congratulate him: τὴν τοῦ διδασκαλικοῦ παράληψιν θρόνου Mauropous: Letters 23. 12–13 Karpozilos in Karpozilos (1990).

both Skylitzes[15] and Comnena[16] suggest. However, it would seem that the only element which is truly innovative in Psellos' interests was his fascination and frequent discussion of Proclus. Indeed the passage which identifies his interest in Proclus above and beyond other thinkers refers to the year 1042 when the new emperor Constantine IX Monomachos was crowned emperor.

Thus it would appear that in five years (1042–1047) he devoted himself specifically to the study of Proclus and it was a solitary undertaking[17] since he says that no one knew anything of philosophy either in the city or abroad.[18] This signifies that unlike Anonymous Heiberg or Italos, Psellos clearly did not think that logic was a central part of philosophy. The evidence for Psellos' interest in Proclus is ample.[19] Psellos used Proclus' philosophy in order to answer questions which were interesting during his lifetime. One of the most striking is that Psellos used Proclus' philosophy to build a court case against the Patriarch Michael Keroularios in order to have him deposed (Oratio Forensis 1). In particular he thought the patriarch practiced theurgy in the same manner as Proclus believes in.[20] Psellos also employed Proclus favorably in an imperial encomium, a speech of praise recited sometime between 1052–1054

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15 ὁ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὕπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων καὶ ὑπέρτιμος ὁ Ψελλός. Skylitzes. *Pro.*1.13–14, Thurn (1973).
16 οὕτως οὖν τοὺς ἐνταῦθα ἔχοντας ὁ Ἰταλὸς εὑρηκὼς καὶ ἀνδράσιν ὁμιλήσας σχολαστικοῖς καὶ ἀμειλίκτοις καὶ τὸ ἦθος ἀγρίοις (ἦσαν γὰρ τότε καί τινες περὶ τὴν βασιλεύουσαν τοιοῦτοι) παιδείας τοίνυν ἐξ ἐκείνων λογικῆς μετασχὼν καὶ Μιχαὴλ ἐκείνῳ τῷ Ψελλῷ ἐν ὑστέρῳ προσωμίλησεν, ὃς οὐ πάνυ τι παρὰ διδασκάλοις σοφοῖς ἐφοίτησε, διὰ φύσεως δὲ δεξιότητα καὶ νοὸς ὀξύτητα, τυχὼν μέντοι καὶ Θεοῦ ἀρωγοῦ πρὸς τούτοις διὰ τὴν τῆς μητρὸς θερμοτάτην ἱκεσίαν ἐπαγρυπνούσης συχνῶς τῷ ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Κύρου τῆς Θεοτόκου σεπτῷ εἰκονίσματι καὶ θερμοῖς τοῖς δάκρυσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς ἐκκαλουμένης, εἰς ἄκρον σοφίας ἁπάσης ἐληλακὼς καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Χαλδαίων ἀκριβωσάμενος γέγονε τοῖς τότε χρόνοις περιβόητος ἐν σοφίᾳ. Anna Comnena *Alexias* 5.8.3.1–12, Kambylis Reinsch (2001).
17 Duffy (2002).
18 καί μοι συμμαρτυρήσετε οἱ τήμερον τὸν λόγον ἀναγινώσκοντες, ὅτι ἐκπνεύσασαν τὴν σοφίαν καταλαβὼν ὅσον ἐπὶ τοῖς μετέχουσιν, αὐτὸς ἀνεζωπύρησα οἴκοθεν, οὔτε διδασκάλοις ἀξιολόγοις περιτυχών, οὔτε σπέρμα σοφίας ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἢ τῇ βαρβάρῳ τὸ ξύμπαν διερευνησάμενος εὑρηκώς. Psell. *Chronographia* 6.37.4–9, Impellizzeri.
19 Some examples could be the following: Chaldean Oracles—Psellos' treatise is the only source for Proclus' commentary on these texts. Psell. *Philosophica Minora* II 38–41; Numerous quotations of the *Elements of Theology* in Psell. *Philosophica Minora* II; Allegorical readings of Plato based on Proclus: *Philosophica Minora* II Essay 4–7; Allegorical readings of *Iliad* and *Odyssey. Philosophica Minora* I.42–48; Magical properties of stones as well as demonology. *Philosophica Minora* II.
20 Τὰ μὲν οὖν τῶν Χαλδαίων καὶ τοῦ Πρόκλου, ὡς ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα ἐρεῖν, ταῦτα. καὶ οἶμαι ὡς ἀδιάφορός ἐστιν ἣν ἐξετάζομεν νῦν θεαγωγίαν τε καὶ ἐπίπνοιαν πρὸς τὴν εἰδικὴν ταύτην καὶ ἀπηγορευμένην τῶν Χαλδαίων αἵρεσιν. οὐ γὰρ θεαγωγία τὸ γινόμενόν ἐστιν, ὡς δηλοῖ τοὔνομα, ἀλλὰ πνευμάτων ὑλικῶν ἐπιφοίτησις, οἷς ἐκεῖνοι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιτιθέασιν ὄνομα. ὁ τοίνυν τοιούτων ἑαυτὸν ἐξαρτήσας πνευμάτων καὶ τοιαύτην πρεσβεύσας ἐπίπνοιαν καὶ θαυμάσας μὲν τὴν τῆς γυναικὸς κατοχὴν καὶ ὥς τινα τῶν κρειττόνων αὐτὴν ἐκπλαγείς, τιμήσας δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐξάρχους καὶ μυσταγωγοὺς τῆς αἱρέσεως πότερον τῆς ἡμετέρας αὐλῆς ὢν τυγχάνει ἢ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς καὶ Χαλδαϊκῆς συμμορίας; καὶ πότερον χρεὼν τὸν οὕτως κατὰ τοῦ θείου ἀπερυθριάσαντα δόγματος τὸν πρῶτον τῶν ἀρχιερέων εἶναι καὶ δογματίζειν, οὐκ εἰδότα ὅθεν τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν δογμάτων ἀνείληφεν, ἢ καθαιρεῖν τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀπελαύνειν μακράν; Psell. *Oratio Forensis* 1.342–358, Dennis (1994).

before Constatine IX Monomachos.[21] He also employed Proclus to solve many theological questions.[22] He used the Neoplatonist to explain the transfiguration on Mt. Tabor.[23] He even quotes Proclus when discussing the beheading of John the Baptist in a panegyric speech dedicated to the saint.[24] Therefore Psellos refers openly to Proclus in all occasions and circumstances. This needs to be contrasted with the Anonymous Heiberg who never refers to Proclus and Italos who only refers once explicitly to Proclus when discussing Porphyry's notion of the whole.[25]

The following list outlines which texts of Proclus are employed by Psellos:

Psellos	Proclus
Philosophica Minora I	*De malorum subsistentia*
	De providentia
	Decem Dubitationes
	Elementatio Theologica
	In Alcibiadem
	In Platonis Timaeum
	In Rem Publicam
	Oracula Chaldaica
	Theologia Platonica
Philosophica Minora II	*Ars Hieratica*
	Elementatio Theologica
	In Cratylum
	In Euclidem
	In Timaeum
	Oracula Chaldaica

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21 ἡ μὲν γάρ, ὡς καὶ Πρόκλος φησί, τὴν μέσην ἀπείληφε χώραν τῶν ἀμερίστων καὶ μεριστῶν καὶ ἔστι τι χρῆμα παράλογον καὶ σῶμά τι ἀσώματον. σὺ δὲ τὴν ἀσώματον ἐπετήδευες—κατὰ ψυχῆς γὰρ ἡ καταγραφή—καὶ γραμμὰς ῥητάς τε καὶ ἀλόγους ἐχάραττες. Psell. *Oratio Panegyrica* 2.513–517, Dennis (1994).

22 He refers openly and explicitly to Proclus 18 times in the *Theologica* I: 1.21, 7.46, 9.7, 11.21, 22.39, 23.50, 47.43, 50.42, 51.21, 51.38, 54.120, 54.123, 54.136, 56.8, 74.125, 74.145, 79.32, 90.55, 98.37, 98.116, 103.14, 105.88, 106.11 and 4 times in *Theologica* II: 5.79, 18.34, 37.28, 37.31.

23 Lauritzen (2012).

24 ὅτῳ μὲν οὖν καὶ ὅθεν καὶ ὑπὲρ ὧν ὁ λόγος, οὕτω μοί πως ἐναλήθως τε καὶ εὐσυνόπτως ἢ κατὰ Πρόκλον ἀνωμολόγηται. τῷ μὲν γὰρ οἱ παράλογοι τῶν προτάσεων ἀφθονώτεροι· ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ ἀληθὲς γυμνόν τε καὶ ἀδιάσκευον. *Or Hagiogr.* 8.27–31, Fisher.

25 Ἔστι τοίνυν εἰπεῖν περὶ τοῦ ὅλου ὃ καὶ Πρόκλος ἐν τῇ Στοιχειώσει περὶ αὐτοῦ εἴρηκε· Italos 15.4–5, Ioannou.

Theologica I	*Elementatio Theologica*
	In Alcibiadem
	In Cratylum
	In Rempublicam
	In Timaeum
	Oracula Chaldaica
	Decem Dubitationes
Theologica II	*Decem Dubitationes*
	Elementatio Theologica
	In Parmenidem
	In Timaeum
	Ars Hierarcha

The specific passages are too numerous to mention here, but from this list one can see that Psellos indeed quotes all of the surviving works of Proclus and even refers to texts which are as yet unidentified. There are many more references which are hidden in the text. This abundance of Procline text and thought in Psellos does not appear in any other author of the eleventh century. This of course leads one to question what reasons there may be for such ease and familiarity with his ideas. Indeed the speed with which he tackled such an unusual body of thought means that something was extremely familiar to him.

Psellos gives us a hint when he says that Dionysius the Areopagite and Proclus used the same language to discuss similar questions.[26] This had already been stated by the Suda which claimed that Proclus had adopted the language of Dionysius for his work.[27] In other words the vocabulary regularly employed in theological and philosophical discourse was already similar to that of Proclus. In the case of Dionysius or Maximus the Confessor their language was often highly compressed and difficult to follow without extensive practice and familiarity.[28]

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26 τοῦτο δὲ τὸ κεφάλαιον πρότερον μὲν τῷ Ἀρεοπαγίτῃ Διονυσίῳ πλατύτερον διερμήνευται, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ τῷ Λυκογενεῖ Πρόκλῳ συλλογιστικῇ μεθόδῳ ἠκρίβωται. Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.118.30 – 119.3, O'Meara.

27 ἰστέον δέ, ὥς τινες τῶν ἔξω σοφῶν καὶ μάλιστα Πρόκλος θεωρήμασι πολλάκις τοῦ μακαρίου Διονυσίου κέχρηται καὶ αὐταῖς δὲ ξηραῖς ταῖς λέξεσι. καὶ ἔστιν ὑπόνοιαν ἐκ τούτου λαβεῖν ὡς οἱ ἐν Ἀθήναις παλαιότεροι τῶν φιλοσόφων σφετερισάμενοι τὰς αὐτοῦ πραγματείας, ὧν αὐτὸς μνημονεύει πρὸς Τιμόθεον γράφων, ἀπέκρυψαν, ἵνα πατέρες αὐτοὶ ὀφθῶσι τῶν θείων αὐτοῦ λόγων. Suda Δ.1170.80 – 86, Adler (1928 – 1938).

28 μέμνημαι τῆς μητρὸς καὶ βασιλίδος πολλάκις ἀρίστου προκειμένου βίβλον ἐν χεροῖν φερούσης καὶ τοὺς λόγους διερευνωμένης τῶν δογματιστῶν ἁγίων πατέρων, μάλιστα δὲ τοῦ φιλοσόφου Μαξίμου καὶ μάρτυρος (ἐσπουδάκει γὰρ οὐ τοσοῦτον περὶ τὰς φυσικὰς συζητήσεις ὁπόσον περὶ τὰ δόγματα τὴν ὄντως σοφίαν καρποῦσθαι βουλομένη), καί μοι πολλάκις θαυμάζειν ἐπήει καὶ θαυμάζουσα ἔφην ποτὲ πρὸς αὐτήν· "πῶς αὐτόθεν πρὸς τοσοῦτον ὕψος ἀπέβλεψας; ἔγωγε τρέμω καὶ οὐδ' ἄκροις ὠσὶν ἀποτολμῶ τούτων ἐπαΐειν· τὸ γὰρ πάνυ θεωρητικόν τε καὶ νοερὸν τοῦ ἀνδρός, ὥς φασιν, ἴλιγγον παρέχεται τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν". ἡ δὲ μειδιάσασα ἔφη· "ἐπαινετὴν οἶδα τὴν δειλίαν ταύτην· καὶ οὐδ'

Procline vocabulary had become fashionable after 1035 when Niketas Stethatos published the introduction to the *Hymns* of Symeon the New Theologian (949 – 1022). This introduction has the most extensive quotations of Dionysios the Areopagite since the time of John Damascene in the early eighth century.[29] Indeed even Hausherr referred to the "*areopagitisme*" of the introduction written by Stethatos. Dionysius and Proclus share the same vocabulary but the pagan tends according to Psellos to be easier to follow in his reasoning. This combination of Proclus and Dionysius explains why Psellos could employ such ideas publicly as well as employing the pagan thinker's ideas in Christian theology without incurring any condemnation. Indeed the eleven anathemas concerning Italos recited in 1077 and 1082 condemn various Platonic ideas, but none may be connected directly and specifically with Proclus or Psellos. In fact they represent condemnations mainly of logic applied to false statements in order to alter Christian truth. This very point had already been anathematized even before Psellos' birth in the tenth century and was integrated in the Synodicon of Orthodoxy when Psellos was around 13 years old.

Proclus as reintroduced into Byzantium by Psellos suited the cultural atmosphere of the city. Indeed every writer who thought of himself as a philosopher had something to say about Proclus until 1453 and thus he is a defining element of middle and later Byzantine culture. Moreover, the texts were offered to other nations, e. g. the Georgians in the case of Ioane Petritsi, as well as to the Latin authors like William of Moerbeke. The condemnation of Proclus by Nicolas of Methone is a witness to the popularity of the Neoplatonist[30] rather than a successful elimination of his works. Thus Psellos achieved a veritable renaissance. The point is that after Psellos every Byzantine thinker who thought of himself as a philosopher needed to be familiar with Proclus.

Independent Scholar

αὐτὴ ἀτρέμας ταῖς βίβλοις ταύταις πρόσειμι, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀποσπᾶσθαι τούτων οὐ δύναμαι. σὺ δέ μοι μικρὸν ἀνάμεινον καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐγκύψασα βίβλοις πρότερον καὶ τῆς τούτων ἀπογεύσῃ ἡδύτητος". ἔτρωσέ μου τὴν καρδίαν ἡ τῶν ῥηθέντων μνήμη καὶ ὥσπερ εἰς πέλαγος ἄλλων διηγημάτων ἐμπέπτωκα, ἀλλά με θεσμὸς ἱστορίας ἀπείργει· Anna Comnena *Alexias* 5.9.3.5 – 20 Kambylis Reinsch.

29 Lauritzen (2014).

30 ὅθεν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πολλὰ προσκόπτειν συμβαίνει καὶ τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐκτρέπεσθαι πίστεως καὶ ταῖς σεσοφισμέναις πειθανάγκαις ὑπαγομένοις εἰς βλασφημιῶν αἱρέσεις ὑπολισθαίνειν. ὅπερ ἵνα μὴ πάθωσι καὶ τῶν νῦν πολλοὶ προνοούμενος, ὅσοι τὰ Πρόκλου τοῦ Λυκίου κεφάλαια σπουδῆς ἄξια κρίνουσιν, ἅπερ αὐτῷ Θεολογικὴ Στοιχείωσις ἐπιγράφεται, δεῖν ἔγνων ἐπιμελῶς αὐτοῖς τὸν νοῦν ἐπιστήσας τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν θείαν πίστιν ἀντίδοξον ἐπισημήνασθαι μετὰ καί τινος ἐλέγχου τὸ μεμηχανημένον καὶ τῇ κομψείᾳ ὑποκρυπτόμενον καὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς οὕτω διαφεῦγον ψεῦδος ἀνακαλύπτοντος. Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation of Proclus*, proem 17 – 25, Angelou (1984).

Levan Gigineishvili

Proclus as a biblical exegete: Bible and its Platonic interpretation in Ioane Petritsi's commentaries

I. Introduction

Sometime in the 12th century, Ioane Petritsi arrived at the Gelati monastery in Georgia, the chief scholarly center of the Kingdom with a clearly defined program: to nurture disciples and to set up a lasting philosophical tradition on Georgian soil. He thought of a school that would continue in the same free and searching spirit in which he provided his own lecture-courses, explaining Proclus' systematic treatise, *The Elements of Theology*, and introducing his students to this arcane metaphysical knowledge.

Gelati was called by contemporaries "another Jerusalem and second Athens" – a metaphor, self-consciously setting itself against Tertullian's divisive stance, that stood for a unity of faith and philosophy, of biblical and philosophical wisdoms. Indeed, those who stood at the inception of this new, Hellenophilic trend and adhered to minute exactitude in translation of philosophic and theological works, scholars like Arsen Ikaltoeli (d. c. 1127) or Ephrem Mtsire (d. 1101), were engaged in titanic efforts for creation of a Georgian philosophical terminology – especially while translating the Porphyrian elaboration of Aristotelian logic as given in John Damascene's *Font of Knowledge*. They viewed philosophy as beneficial for Christian faith. Those translators did important work as they succeeded in the creation of a terminological apparatus, and thus a logical-dialectical tool was ready, and the logical method at hand, to be used for whatever purposes. In fact, the Gelatian scholars went even further and started to translate philosophical works outside of the bosom of the ecclesiastic writings, e. g. the texts of Ammonius Hermiae, a sixth century Alexandrian philosopher. Thus, at his arrival Petritsi did not find a wasteland in Georgia with regard to philosophy. However, even by the standards of the Gelatian scholars' openness and toleration towards the "alien wisdom" Petritsi stands out. In fact, all previous authors and translators dealing with the philosophical tradition utilized the latter basically for two reasons: explication of ecclesiastical dogmas and polemics against both Christian heretics and non-Christian philosophers. However, in a drastic difference from his predecessors Petritsi felt it as his mission to restore philosophy to its true, antique dignity: as the cultivation of Aristotelian wonder about and research into reality, both visible and invisible, through a terminologically regulated system and a rigorous method. For Petritsi philosophy is a way towards the true reality and personal fulfillment, thus for him its aim coincides with that of religion. Now, as there are true and false religions, so there are true and false philosophical systems

and for Petritsi there is only one true philosophical system – Platonism – that gives a truthful account of the eternal order of reality.

In what follows I shall prove that Petritsi held this true philosophy as the criterion for any truth whatsoever, so that as a Christian, believing in the truth of revelation as recorded in the Bible, he naturally finds it indispensable to identify Platonic truth in the biblical text, the former acting as a criterion for explaining the latter. Thus, Proclus, who is the chief Platonic authority for Petritsi, the mouthpiece revealing the hidden thoughts of Plato himself, features as a biblical exegete, whose theories shine upon the biblical text revealing hidden metaphysical theories. This Petritsian estimation of Proclus will ultimately contribute to the debate concerning whether the Georgian philosopher held two different discourses – one philosophical and another religious-Christian, so that we can be justified in thinking that while discussing Proclus' metaphysical system, Petritsi does not put there a truth claim, but simply gives an account of the Greek philosophy, without necessarily subscribing to the views he explains.[1] This paper will demonstrate the implausibility of such a stance and show that Petritsi does not have two discourses, but only one discourse in which philosophical and revelational truth merge.

II. 'Saint' Proclus

To start with, Proclus is not, for Petritsi, only a philosopher who explains the views of the ancients. For Petritsi, Proclus is a saint whose life is a model. Let us see what Petritsi has to say about Proclus' *curriculum vitae:*

> This Proclus, a successor of the *cathedra* of divine Plato, was from Ionia, an offshoot of most noble parents, who did not have a child and constantly ringed in the temples of divine mercy with prayers to have one. And they got a promise from a divine oracle: "You will be given a son, who will spend his life in contemplation of heavenly realities". And as the child grew to puberty, he surpassed all beyond comparison by the powers of holiness [working] within him. First of all I will mention his chastity and extinguishing of youthful [sexual] burnings in him, which beset the souls that fall to the realm of becoming through sensual [perceptions] and imaginations; next [I shall mention] his concentration and acuteness in educational labors: in logical sciences, in physical theories, in arithmetic, geometry and even music itself, through which is discoverable the design and structure of constitution of beings and their mutual communion and division, and how through those things [one may apprehend] that creativity of the God of all surpasses any contemplator. However, Proclus did not remain in those theories that are connected with natural essences, but he left those temporal realities that are subject to becoming and are only imitators of Being, for most of them are connected with non-being, and attended to the true Being and Essence. And even this he did not consider as the utmost limit of his contemplations, but took the lead of his predecessors, I mean the Platonist philos-

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1 Cf. Mtchedlidze (2000), 299 who, after discussing the theory of *eros* in Petritsi states: "Subtil connaisseur de la pensée de Proclus, ayant conscience de la divergence entre cette pensée orthodoxe, Petritsi ne s'attache pas à consilier le platonisme et le dogme.".

ophers, and tried to comprehend, as much as possible, the One – the object of desire and love of all beings, which is inaccessible even to the Highest Intellect, having revealed the hidden aspects of Plato's dialogues and having illuminated wisdom within them, that is to say, the truth that co-exists with beings.[2]

Petritsi must have known that Proclus was a fervent opponent of and had written against Christianity, specifically against the Christian teaching of creation; however he bypasses this theme altogether, while at the same time speaking about souls as "having fallen to the realm of becoming", which is clearly at odds with orthodox Christian doctrine of human beings coming into being in time as ensouled bodies both making up a unique personality of each human being. As we shall see, Petritsi adheres to the doctrine of preexistence of souls, which was held by some early Christian thinkers – Origen, Nemesius of Emesa etc. – and is rather convenient for combining Christian and pagan philosophical lore on this issue.

Below I adduce instances in Petritsi's commentary on Proclus' *ET* in which Petritsi first exposes Procline doctrines and then uses them for explication of biblical passages.

III. The Divine Image

In his effort to create one body of knowledge combining Procline metaphysics and biblical revelation, Petritsi is compelled to translate and even identify metaphysical notions and realities with those of the Christian universe. For this reason he modifies and simplifies the Procline system in his explanations, making it less "crowded" by different, ever multiplying entities. One of the most important identifications is that of the Procline One, Limit and Infinity with the hypostases of the Christian Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively. Next come the level of supraessential henads, which Petritsi calls "created ones" and which seem to express divine ideas in their highest and incomprehensible mode, translatable to Maximian *logoi* or Eriugenian *causae primordiales*. Petritsi creatively elaborates upon Proclus' henadic theory and offers his own, apparently a Christianized version in which henads are presented as created entities that are in fact not Gods properly speaking, but "divinized through participation" in Limit – the Son. Then comes the level of being, comprehensible through human intellection. The highest reality in the realm of being is the First or Universal Being – Intellect. Now, Petritsi has to deal with this issue, to translate and adjust the Procline scheme to the Christian world. This he does by identifying the First Being with the pre-existent intellect of

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2 Ioane Petritsi, *Commentaries on Proclus Diadochus, a Platonic Philosopher's, Elements of Theology* (=*Commentaries*). ed. S. Kaukchishvili and Sh. Nutsubidze. Tbilisi, 1937, 4–5. All translations of Petritsi's text are my own.

Christ. Thus, he calls Limit ἐκμαγεῖον or imprint of the Father,[3] and this imprint becomes "image" in the True Being, or Limit creates the True Being as its own image, himself being the "imprint" of the Father:

> Proclus says: "everything that participates in the One is one and not one" [*ET* §2] that is to say, it is a created one. However, anything which is created needs, as Parmenides explained to Socrates, three [aspects]: first, that one towards which it is made, that is to say, from where it impressed in itself the image of the One; second, that by which it is made and unified; and, third, the parts it consists of. In fact, [Parmenides] meant in the first (i) that [one] which has shone out from the One and has been established as His property and likeness, as His *ekmageion* or impression, which afterwards becomes an image – for, in general, impressions precede images which come after those impressions. In the second (ii) (he meant) the Power which proceeds from the One which makes patterns and parts of the Composed Essence and assimilates it to His [i.e. the One's] own uncreated unity; and in the third (iii) he meant precisely the parts from which it [i.e. the True Being] is composed. And he [Parmenides] sums it up in those words: "everything is perfected by three" (*Commentaries,* prop. 1. 17.6 – 20).

Petritsi takes his creative interpretation of Proclus and claims that this is what Apostle Paul also implies in calling Jesus the ἐκμαγεῖον, Changeless Image of the Father:

> My Paul, whose intellect is like the sun, says that the Son is the image and likeness and *ekmageion* of the One, whom discourse dared to call Father. And concerning the likeness [of the Son with the Father], he [Paul] says that He [the Son] is the [Father's] changeless image. This addition of the "changeless" implies the likeness that is infinite and dense. Moreover, Paul says that "He brings with Himself all fullness of richness of God the Father"; all such utterances signify for us the infinity of the firstborn Word, that is prior to beings and even *henads*, whom the philosopher calls "Idea of Ideas"[4] and "Limit of Limits" (*Commentaries*, p. 78).

Even though Petritsi, alongside correct quotations, loosely ascribes to St. Paul expressions that he remembers from his reading of Christian exegetical literature,

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3 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *or.* 38.13 on Theophany (*PG* 36.325b): ὁ δὲ ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, ὁ προαιώνιος, ὁ ἀόρατος, ὁ ἀπερίλεπτος, ὁ ἀσώματος, ἡ ἐ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀρχὴ, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς φῶς, ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας, τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον τοῦ ἀρχετύπου κάλλους, ἡ μὴ κινουμένη σφραγὶς, ἡ ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκὼν, ὁ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὅρος καὶ λόγος. The term ἐκμαγεῖον is found in Plato's *Timaeus* (50c2), where it denotes the receptacle – χώρα. Philo of Alexandria refers to human intellect as ἐκμαγεῖον of the Divine Word: πᾶς ἄνθρωπος κατὰ μὲν τὴν διάνοιαν ᾠκείωται λόγῳ θείῳ, τῆς μακαρίας φύσεως ἐκμαγεῖον (*Philonis Alexandrini libellus de opificio mundi*, ed. L. Cohn, 1889, 55.7–18, in the following *De opificio mundi*). St. Gregory the Theologian's idea seems to be the further elaboration of this theme, for in it the Divine Word, now regarded as hypostasis, already Himself becomes the ἐκμαγεῖον of God the Father.

4 Cf. Aristotle: ὁ νοῦς εἶδος εἰδῶν (*De an.* 432 a), which is taken by Origen, who calls the Son ἰδέα ἰδεῶν (*Contra Celsum* B. VI, *PG* 11, 1396 C-D), yet Origen's source may be not directly Aristotle but Philo, who also utilizes this Aristotelian expression with reference to the "intelligible world", identified with divine reason-λόγος: [ὁ νοητὸς κόσμος], αὐτὸς ἂν εἴη τὸ παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτθπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν (*De opificio mundi*, 7.14–16). Petritsi follows a similar trend of identifying philosophical and Biblical notions.

namely, the homily of St. Gregory the Theologian, the passage shows most clearly how unitary and indivisible the philosophical and Christian universes were as Platonic, Aristotelian and Pauline notions are assimilated and identified.

IV. Non-being and Matter

Another Pauline passage interpreted in the light of the Neoplatonic metaphysics is the doctrine on matter as "non-being". In this passage, Petritsi claims that the transcendent One stands above the binary opposition of being and non-being, because He/It is beyond all opposition, whereas the opposition of being vs. non-being applies to the created reality of the Being-Intellect, which is the place of all metaphysical ideas vs. Non-Being of matter, which is understood to be devoid of all ideas. However, this non-being of matter is also a relative one if we consider the fact that it also emanates from the supra-being of the One. In this way, the One totally engulfs and rules over the non-being of matter. Here also Petritsi adduces a Pauline passage to the effect that the apostle becomes an exponent of the Procline idea:

> The first Being was adorned by the supra-henadic One as Its image and as god of beings and essences. However, the One Itself, which has no properties, similarly transcends both being and non-being. In fact contrary to non-being is the First Being, which is the True Being, whereas the supra-henadic One has nothing opposite to It. Because neither can non-being, as non-being, escape the bonds of Unity, for as non-being it is still one. Thus even non-being has been ruled over by the transcendent power of the One of the henads, and this is [the meaning of the words] of my Paul: "[God] calls non-being as being"[5] (*Commentaries*, pp. 170 – 171).

Petritsi fully shares the Procline doctrine of the emanation of matter (called "non-being" in Plotinus and in Pseudo-Dionysius) directly from the One, to the effect that it, unlike the Plotinian theory, can be regarded as the last reach of the emanation of the One and thus – evil. Furthermore, he puts this meaning in Paul's words, as if the Apostle had in mind matter when speaking of the μὴ ὄντα.[6]

V. The Angel of Great Mystery

One of the significant passages that clearly show Petritsi's eclectic attitude is his explanation of Isaiah's words: "the Child is born for us, and his origin is on his shoulders, and he is called the angel of great mystery."[7] Petritsi explains that the biblical "great mystery" is nothing else than the constitution of the universe, both visible

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5 Cf. Romans 4:17.
6 Note that Petritsi puts the plural of Paul into singular to fit it better to his theory.
7 Again, characteristically, Petritsi makes his own version of the translation, rendering the Greek βουλῆς ("of council") with the Georgian word საიდუმლო – "mystery".

and invisible, whereas the "mystagogue" to this mystery is the "vision/theory of the Philosopher's Day" or as an alternative reading would correct: "vision of the philosophers of the Day."

> The divine firebrand – Isaiah (the Prophet), says: "the child is born for us". By "child" he means the One who is born from the Father, and by "for us" he means that He (the Son) has become known and understood by us only recently (i. e. after the Incarnation /L.G./). [Further Isaiah says] "His government is upon His shoulders". This theory implies the following: the "upon shoulders" signifies [the Son's] unity with and inseparability from His cause – the Father. And this all is used by him as a parable, for in fact the shoulders are a place of power, thus "upon His shoulders" means "upon His powers", for every effect receives all powers from the cause, however [in this case] not in an adventitious and accidental way, but in an essential nay supra-essential way, through unity with the One. For, in fact, before multiplicity, the One produces the [second] One and only then the series of henads is produced. Furthermore, Isaiah [calls Him] "the Angel – that is to say, announcer – of great mystery"; in fact, in the "great mystery" he implied the entire creation of the constitution of the reality and the mystagogue to the mystery – the theory of the philosophers' Day (or: theory of the philosophers of the Day) (*Commentaries*, p. 78).

This is a very strange passage and difficult to interpret. According to the context, the Philosopher's Day must refer to Christ – in fact in patristic literature Christ or knowledge of Him is referred to as "Day."[8] Furthermore, if the true account concerning the constitution of reality is provided in the Procline system, then we may say that Proclus got it from illumination from the Mystagogue – Christ, or, if the alternative reading is correct, then there are the philosophers of the Day, that is to say, illumined by Christ, of which one is Proclus. The interpretation seems daring, but it is quite possible in view of Petritsi's understanding of the Platonic tradition as the "Pillars of Wisdom" who penetrate the depths of reality. Moreover, elsewhere, when he tries to find the common epistemological ground for the Book of Psalms and philosophy, he clearly says – apparently following the tradition of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, as recorded in his 7th letter – that Greek wisdom is divine and that all truth in non-biblical cultures came from the illumination of Holy Spirit. The "Pillars of Wisdom" in pagan cultures, thus, are in full harmony with Christ who comes as the crowning stone upon these pillars who subject to Him as disciples to a Master:

> May you understand as "towers" all those graces and bestowals that the Holy Spirit vouchsafed upon humankind from Above – I mean the intellectual wisdom, which was revealed to humankind at certain moments of time according to the heavenly benevolence on our behalf: i) to Abraham, ii) to the Chaldeans, and, furthermore, iii) to the Greeks; in fact, the teacher of our Church, Paul, says that [Greek wisdom] derives from the same [Holy] Spirit, calling it, accordingly, "divine wisdom."[9] And now, we dare say, that our Tower, Christ, who is Great[10] and transcendently

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8 The Psalm 117:24 αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα, ἣν ἐποίησεν ὁ Κύριος was referred to Christ by a couple of patristic authors (eg. Justin, *Dialogus cum Typhone Judaeo*, Migne 6.709C; Clement, *Stromateis*, Migne 9.376C, Origen, *Commentarii in Johannem*, Migne 14.673 A, Evagrius of Pontus, *Epistula* 7, Migne 32.257B) *et al.*
9 Cf. 1 Cor 1:21: "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe."

higher than anything which is accounted for as being "high," has linked together all other towers and pulled them to Himself, as disciples to their Master. (*Commentaries*, p. 208).

VI. Souls in Paradise

As shown above, Petritsi uses Neoplatonic metaphysics, predominantly Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, as a standard and criterion for explication of the Bible – quite a different body of text. If for Petritsi the aim of human life is to exercise theoretical powers through dialectical exploits and thus reach the communion with the eternal ideas, a communion which will continue in the blessed afterlife, then the revealed text of the Bible should do nothing else than that. If one fails to discern this message, such an individual commits a grievous error and his/her biblical interpretation is at best futile and at worst spiritually dangerous, for it may avert the reader from a proper human end despite the fact that he/she may think they are on the right track. Thus, the Bible, which is full of metaphors, anthropomorphic accounts of God and strange stories that, if taken at a face value, do not convey a sound teaching, demands philosophical interpretation as it is a metaphorical text pregnant with metaphysical theories that account for the passage of human souls from the world of flux to that of the solidity of eternal ideas. Ultimately, Petritsi finds it as his task to thoroughly philosophize the Bible. In fact, he plainly says that Moses, the most esteemed of prophets, says the same as Platonic philosophers regarding the nature of the soul. The latter is simply presented more clearly and scientifically, whereas Moses discusses the soul by utilizing the curtains of metaphors:

> [Soul] descends to the world of becoming, as Socrates said, as a bird deprived of wings, *pterorousa*;[11] that is to say, when it is cut off from the Mind, it becomes mindless, for the wing of soul is Mind. However, when through education and practice of virtues it will regain its wings, which is the Mind, it will fly up back to the Father of souls. If anybody still doubts it, let him know that also Moses says the very same things, yet through curtains (*Commentaries*, p. 204).

Philosophers are there to open those curtains and find metaphysical visions shining behind them. Thus, the biblical trees of paradise become intellectual ideas that the bodiless soul beholds in its unfallen state; whereas Soul-Adam who turns away from those ideas falls down to the material world of becoming where everything is in mutual opposition and struggle in difference from the ideal world, where love and unity rule. In fact, even "hell" is understood metaphorically by Petritsi: if everything in Procline metaphysics must have a referent in the Christian universe, then there is no hell in Proclus and so the "hell" of the Bible becomes a metaphor of the sublunar

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10 Cf. Tit 2:13: "Our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ".

11 Cf. *Phaed.* 246c.

material world, which is a "hell" only relative to the ideal world but not a realm of ceaseless torment.

VII. Conclusion

What was shown above is sufficient to illustrate Petritsi's eclectic stance of not only comparing, but thoroughly identifying items of Neoplatonic metaphysics with those of Christian universe. Eventually a crucial question should be asked: how do the philosophers arrive at an accurate account of reality without revelation? I have partially answered this question above when speaking about Petritsi's affirmation that all truth in the non-biblical context is vouchsafed through the benevolence of Holy Spirit. Thus, the difference between biblical revelation and philosophical-dialectical insights into the depths of reality coalesce. Indeed, Petritsi emphatically states that after the Incarnation, Jesus has "lifted souls of man higher than even highest among philosophers could lift their souls" (*Epilogue*, p. 208). However what exactly the contents of this difference are he does not explain in any clear manner. He speaks of his own personal enlightenment, which is a philosophical one, rather than prophetic, for he states that he tirelessly engaged in dialectical efforts until he received illumination from the "Day of the Intellect" (this reference must be to Christ) so that he could behold "lights that are never substituted by darkness" (*Epilogue*, p. 220). Nevertheless, how this enlightenment differs from that obtained by Greek philosophers, and why and how is Petritsi's enlightenment higher than the highest that the Greek philosophers acquired, remains obscure.

In fact, such an eclectic attitude of Petritsi, with a consequent blurring of a distance between the biblical revelation of Moses and the dialectical enlightenment of Proclus, was found to be dangerous by the official church authorities – doubly blind by ignorance and unawareness of this ignorance – who started persecuting the philosopher, both in Byzantium and Georgia, for which Petritsi bitterly laments in his "Epilogue":

> Let it be known, that I, a man of creative work, was pursued in different places by manifold ongoing afflictions: by illnesses, by wandering among strangers, by fire of envy and perfidy of my contemporary Greeks and Georgians alike. Especially the Georgians… In fact, had I been shown a tiny bit of love and support on their part, I would have followed that which is providentially destined to me by God, and I do swear by my very longing for the theories, that I would have shown the Georgian language as being of equal capacities to those of the Greek language and would have Aristotelized,[12] embarking upon the theoretical thought of philosophers, presenting the Theology that stands aloof of matter (*Commentaries*, p. 222)

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12 That is: "philosophize like Aristotle."

Joshua M. Robinson

Dionysius Against Proclus: the Apophatic Critique in Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation of the Elements of Theology*

Sometime in the mid-12th century, Nicholas, bishop of Methone, in the Peloponnese, wrote a chapter-by-chapter ἀνάπτυξις of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Athanasios Angelou, in the English title to his edition of Nicholas' text, renders ἀνάπτυξις as 're-futation',[1] which is certainly a reasonable translation of the word, given the polemical and defensive attitude that pervades the entire work.[2] Literally, however, an ἀνάπτυξις is an 'unfolding', or 'explication'; it is not a polemical word. Ps.-Dionysius, for example, at the very beginning of his *On the Divine Names*, says that he will offer an ἀνάπτυξις of the divine names.[3] The neutrality of this term is corroborated by the only reference to this text in Nicholas' other works, where it is designated as "exege-ses."[4] As regards its genre, therefore, we can consider Nicholas' Ἀνάπτυξις to be a kind of commentary on the *Elements of Theology*, and as such it takes its place along-side the other medieval commentaries on the same work, including the Georgian commentary by John Petritsi, written in the eleventh or twelfth century,[5] the Latin commentary by Berthold of Moosburg, of the fourteenth century,[6] and the recently discovered early-fifteenth-century commentary, probably by John Krosbein, on 147 selected propositions from the *Elements*.[7] Nicholas' work is admittedly a peculiar commentary, however, driven by a very specific agenda and, unlike those of Petritsi and Berthold, rather unsympathetic to its subject. The full title of Nicholas' work ex-presses quite well his agenda: *Explication of the Elements of Theology of Proclus of Lycia the Platonic Philosopher: that those who read this book might not be seized by*

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1 Edition of Angelou (1984). Hereafter abreviated as *Refutation*.

2 In this he follows the older edition of Voemel (1825). Of the two manuscripts containing a Latin translation of the text, one, in Milan, calls it a *Refutatio*, but the other, in Leiden, an *Explanatio*. These Latin manuscripts are listed in Angelou (1984), XLI.

3 *CDA* I, *DN* 1.1, 585B, 107.1–2: Νῦν δέ, ὦ μακάριε, μετὰ τὰς Θεολογικὰς ὑποτυπώσεις ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν θείων ὀνομάτων ἀνάπτυξιν, ὡς ἐφικτόν, μετελεύσομαι.

4 An exegetical treatise on I Cor. 15:28, edited in Demetrakopulos (1866, 1965²), 316.24: Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν πλατύτερον, τοῦ Θεοῦ διδόντος, ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεσι διευκρινηθήσεται… (But I will examine these things more thoroughly, God willing, in the exegeses…). Cf. the end of chapter 74 (77.1–18) in the *Ref-utation*.

5 Regarding Petritsi, and specifically the difficulty of dating his work, see the discussion in Gigi-neishvili (2007), 12–19. For a German translation of this commentary, see Alexidze and Bergemann (2009).

6 Edition of Pagnoni-Sturlese (1984).

7 *Sententia Procli alti philosophi*, edited in Retucci (2016), 126–179; additional discussion in Calma (2016b), esp. 16.

its seemingly compelling persuasion and be tempted against the true faith.[8] The aim of this commentary is thus to neutralize a perceived danger in the *Elements of Theology.* As Nicholas explains in his prologue, he has set out to write this work because some of his contemporaries find Proclus fascinating, and even prefer the intricacies of Proclus' doctrine to the truths of the Christian faith. Nicholas therefore declares that he is going to expose the error in Proclus' *Elements,* which he describes as a new Tower of Babel, composed not of bricks but of 211 propositions, bound together by the mortar of logic.[9]

One may summarize Nicholas' approach to Proclus' text by saying that his primary concern is to show how Proclus' philosophy is incompatible with Christian doctrine. There are two fundamental conflicts, and various secondary disagreements. The first fundamental opposition is between, on the one hand, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and on the other hand, the seemingly rationalistic Procline doctrine of a monadic first principle that excludes all plurality, and is necessarily prior to and superior to any multiplicity such as (it would seem) the 'threeness' of the Christian God. The second fundamental opposition is between, on the one hand, a monotheistic doctrine in which the first principle is absolutely productive of, and distinguished from, all subsequent entities, and on the other hand, a polytheistic hierarchy in which metaphysical productivity is not limited to the first principle, but emanates through secondary principles as well, even to the lowest levels of being.

This second opposition may also be described as the opposition between a doctrine of creation, according to which the first principle produces all other things absolutely, and a doctrine of emanation, according to which the primary productivity of the first principle is mediated through other productive principles – Intellect, Soul, Nature – all the way to the level of matter. Thus, for Nicholas, polytheism and the doctrine of emanation are two sides of the same coin, as are monotheism and the doctrine of creation.

Nicholas not only defends the threeness of the Christian God against any charges that the transcendence of the One has been compromised, but he even regards this threeness as a point of superiority in Christian doctrine. The divine generations of the Son and the Spirit are held by Nicholas (following Gregory of Nazianzus) to be a transcendent 'movement' that is the metaphysical basis for all creaturely motion and production.[10] The Christian Trinity is thus seen as the middle way between the supposed sterility of the Jewish God and the Unmoved Mover of the philosophers on the one hand, and the diffused divinity of the pagan pantheon on the other. In Nicholas' view, Proclus' doctrine of emanative hierarchy is thus doubly inferior to the Christian doctrine: on the one hand, the first principle of the emanation lacks the internal dy-

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8 *Refutation,* 1: Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου τοῦ Λυκίου πλατωνικοῦ φιλοσόφου πρὸς τὸ μὴ συναρπάζεσθαι τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας ὑπὸ τῆς ὑποφαινομένης αὐτῇ πειθανάγκης καὶ σκανδαλίζεσθαι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθοῦς πίστεως.

9 *Refutation,* Prologue, 3.

10 *Refutation,* Prologue, 5.3–15.

namism, as it were, of the Trinity; on the other, it is not absolutely and directly productive of all things, since its productivity is mediated through lower principles or hypostases.[11]

How then does Nicholas carry out his critique, and how are these primary and persistent themes coordinated with the task of responding to the particular content of each of Proclus' chapters? In part, the answer to this is simple. Nicholas identifies, in regard to each chapter, the aspects of doctrine that conflict with Christian teaching. In rejecting the conclusions of each chapter, however, Nicholas has three options: he is obliged either to identify flaws in Proclus' reasoning, or to identify false premises, or, finally, to deny the applicability of Proclus' propositions to the Christian God.

I.

In this essay I would like to give particular attention to this third strategy for responding to Proclus, which Nicholas employs whenever he wishes to defend the Christian God as a transcendent reality that simply cannot be rationally or intellectually understood. When responding to Proclus in this mode, he may accept the soundness and validity of a given proof in the *Elements*, but he will deny that its terms and premises encompass whatever theological datum Nicholas wishes to defend. This is done through a radically apophatic critique drawn from Ps.-Dionysius, a critique that in essence consists in saying that God transcends being, understanding and language. With regard to the Trinity, the implication of this apophaticism is that, though we call God both "one" and "three," this is a unique use of these terms, not subject to the logical operations that Proclus' proofs involve. Defending the doctrine of Trinity is in fact the most prominent use Nicholas makes of this apophatic defence, for throughout his *Refutation* Nicholas frequently regards Proclus' statements as an attack on this doctrine.[12] Already in the fourth paragraph of his prologue Nicholas announces this concern:

> *Refutation*, Prologue, 4.3 – 6
> This wise one, beginning the enterprise set forth by himself, says straightway in the first proposition that *every multitude in some way participates the one*, scoffing perhaps at us worshipers of the Trinity as revering a multitude before the one or even together with the one....[13]

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11 See *Refutation* 12, 17.3 – 8, and 26, 34.23 – 35.3.

12 See for examples *Refutation*, Prologue, 4.3 – 6, and 7, 10.23 – 12.5.

13 Unless another sourse is given, italics in text from Nicholas indicate quoted or closely paraphrased text from Proclus, usually (though not always) from the proposition on which he is commenting. Quotation from other sources is duly indicated by footnotes. All translations are my own.

He then provides a general refutation of this perceived threat by arguing that the Trinity is not subject to the terms of this claim, since it is not a multitude, but is both one and three in a transcendent manner:

> *Refutation*, Prologue, 4.19 – 5.3
> And one must know that the things demonstrated by him concerning one and multitude are not at all set against us in regard to the doctrine of the highest Trinity, since, to speak as does the great Dionysius, that which is worshipped by us is both one and three and neither one nor three, since it is beyond every one and every multitude, seeing that it is in fact even superior to number, and transcends every word and every concept.[14] For truly, that which is revered would hold nothing beyond us, if it were captured by our intellect and reason; and it escapes not only our intellect but even all the supercelestial beings, which are also intellects, since they are named also intellectual substances. We confess therefore that the divinity is Triad and that the same is Monad and the One; its being three does not deny its being the One, nor does its being the One deny its being three, but rather from both it is confirmed to be both. For it is three, not as being measured by number, but as one who gives substance to every three and measures every number; wherefore it is not a countable three, so that it could also be called a multitude, but three, the one and only, and not by participation in the One (for such participants are countable, coordinate with the multitude), but as being itself the One.

Thus invoking the authority of Dionysius, Nicholas argues that the divine *threeness* is utterly unlike any other threeness; it is not a multitude so as to be subject to Proclus' proof. On the other hand, the divine *oneness* is also not limited by our static conceptions, and indeed the notion of three is seen by Nicholas as helping to correct limitations in our conception of oneness. We could say that threeness for Nicholas, in its seeming tension with oneness, has an apophatic function vis-à-vis oneness. Nicholas continues his argument by connecting the doctrine of the Trinity with the ideas of fecundity and self-motion in a kind of natural theology, arguing for these divine attributes by analogy with features of the created order:

> *Refutation*, Prologue, 5.3 – 15
> Again, it is the One, yet is neither sterile nor altogether unmoved, but is itself the cause of all fecundity and motion; wherefore it is also the fecund-in-itself, and the unique and very first self-moved, lest it should be deprived of the best things that are derived from it. For if it is sterile, whence comes fecundity for others, and if it is unmoved, whence comes motion? For the alternative is that one must grant that some other thing is the cause of these qualities, and thus the cause of all things would not be one; but if, on the contrary, the cause of all is both one and fecund, it must also be self-moved. *Because of this*, Gregory the Theologian says, *the Monad from the beginning moved toward a dyad and at the Triad came to a halt.*[15] Since then this one is both fecund and self-moved, because of this it is also three, and since it is three [...] on account of this it is also one; or rather let us say that the Three itself, unique and supersubstantial, is the same as the One itself.

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14 Cf. *CDA* I, *DN* 13.3, 980D-981 A, 221.3 – 14.

15 Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration* 29.2.14 – 15.

A truly unified cause, Nicholas thinks, must be a cause that comprehends within it-self a certain fecundity and consequently a self-motion. Otherwise, one will destroy the unity of the cause by seeking an alternative source for the fecundity and motion observed in the created order. He thus closely associates tri-unity, motion and fe-cundity here, and he returns to this association throughout the work.[16] Although the Trinity, considered apophatically, exceeds our comprehension, when considered cataphatically Nicholas argues that the Trinity should be understood as internal fe-cundity and self-motion.

This general statement in his prologue anticipates Nicholas' particular response to Proclus' first proposition ("Every multitude participates in some way the One"), which again shows his apophatic critique in action:

> *Refutation* 14, 20.17 – 24
> Thus the things demonstrated by this wise man concerning multitudes give no offence to us in our discourses concerning the divine Triad. For it is Triad, but is also beyond triad and multitude and every number; therefore it is certainly not subsumed with *every multitude,* so that it would *participate the One* too, but it super-transcends every multitude, and does not participate the One, but it itself is the One, or rather it is even beyond every one, wherefore it is also not-one, not in the sense that it is inferior to the One, but as super-transcending the kind of one that is opposed to the multitude and in this way is co-ranked with it and of the same kind.

As Dodds points out, Proclus presumably did not write this proposition, or indeed any others, as an attack on Christian doctrine.[17] Nicholas, however, having observed that his contemporaries are fascinated by Proclus, perceives a threat. The response, which Nicholas never tires of repeating, is that the Trinity transcends the very terms of the proposition: because the Trinity is not a multitude, Proclus' proof does not concern it. When Nicholas proceeds to consider the details of Proclus' argumenta-tion, he states explicitly that the demonstration cannot apply to the Trinity, because the demonstration relies on logical division and the law of non-contradiction, while the Trinity is subject to neither of these.[18] Despite such claims, Nicholas is by no means an irrationalist; he is quite ready to argue that Proclus has contradicted him-self or that he has not proven what he set out to prove. But while the law of non-con-tradiction is for him fully in force at the level of logical demonstration, he considers

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16 See for examples chapters 7, 21 and 26.

17 Dodds (1933, 1963²), 188.

18 Directly following the previously quoted passage (5.24 – 6.9): "And at any rate the demonstration of the above problem proceeds from logical division, *for each of the many,* it says, dividing the multi-tude into the individual things of which it is composed and into which it can be divided—then, sup-posing that this individual *will be either one* (it says) *or not one*, it employs the law of non-contradic-tion along with the logical division; then again in like manner it subdivides the not-one—that is, what is distinguished by opposition to the one—into many and nothing. Therefore it is clear that the One which pre-transcends the one that is distinguished-by-opposition to and co-ranked with the multi-tude—that One is not comprehended by the demonstration, since it transcends every division and demonstration; and in relation to it even the law of non-contradiction falls apart."

that the Trinity in its transcendence is not subject to the logical laws that pertain to lower levels of reality. The Trinity is not logically divisible and is not bound by the law of non-contradiction; it is therefore not subject to Proclus' mode of demonstration.[19]

II.

I now turn to the problematic role of apophatic theology in this critique. Nicholas' reliance on Dionysius to combat Proclus is somewhat ironic, given the heavy debt that (as we know) Dionysius owed to Proclus.[20] As I will show in my conclusion, Nicholas himself explains certain affinities between the two by supposing that Proclus owes something to Dionysius rather than vice versa. In any case, this somewhat ironic situation, i.e. that Nicholas' refutation of Proclus relies on Dionysius, who himself was dependent on Proclus, raises a particular problem that I would like to discuss at greater length. Nicholas uses apophatic theology as his primary means of defense against Proclus; yet, as we know, Proclus also has an apophatic theology, and while there are of course patristic precedents as well, Proclus' form of apophaticism is certainly one aspect of his influence on Dionysius.[21] How then can Nicholas accuse Proclus of being insufficiently apophatic? Admittedly, Nicholas was probably not aware of the more extended apophatic passages in other works by Proclus,[22] but he did at least know the apophatic passages in the *Elements of Theology*,[23] as well as the frequent references to the One as "beyond-being," and "unparticipated," which are the metaphysical correlates of apophaticism.[24] The following question thus presents itself: to the extent that Nicholas was aware of the apophatic dimension in Proclus' thought, why did he nevertheless think that this was incoherent and that Proclus had failed to recognize the transcendence of the first principle?

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19 I would like to note in passing that the claim that in relation to God "the law of non-contradiction falls apart" does not amount to the claim that God is self-contradictory, for contradiction presupposes the duality of subject and predicate; if then God transcends duality, as Nicholas insists, then he simply transcends the sphere in which the law of non-contradiction applies. I am grateful to Anik Stanbury for helpful discussion of this point in a paper on Plotinus.

20 One should not exaggerate this point, however, for much of Nicholas' critique of Proclus is already implicit in Dionysius.

21 See Steel (2004), 622–623, where the close relationship between *DN* 13.3, 981A-B, 229.13–230.5 and *In Parm.* VII.505.1–513.14 (on *Parm.* 142a3–4) is demonstrated. For further reflection on Proclus' negative theology, and possible differences between Dionysius and Proclus, see Steel (2003). Whatever the exact differences between the negative theology of Proclus and that of Dionyius, Steel here shows that Nicholas of Cusa's interpretation of affirmation and negation as a *coincidentia oppositorum* would not have been acceptable to Proclus. Nicholas of Methone, however, may be rather close to Nicholas of Cusa with respect to this issue.

22 See for examples *Plat. theol.* II, and *In Parm.* VII.505.1–513.14 (on *Parm.* 142a3–4).

23 These include §§123, 151 and 162.

24 See also §133, where Proclus asserts the transcendence of the One over the gods.

Part of the answer is undoubtedly that Nicholas was reading Proclus unsympathetically, and so it was easy for him to dismiss an occasional apophatic claim as marginal to Proclus' thought. After all, explicit apophatic claims are not that frequent in the *Elements*. But in order to find a more substantive explanation of Nicholas' position, let us consider Nicholas' response to the most explicitly apophatic passage in the *ET*, §123:

> All that is divine is itself ineffable and unknowable to all secondary beings because of its supersubstantial unity, but grasped and known from its participants; wherefore only the First is utterly unknown, inasmuch as it is unparticipated.[25]

Here, it seems, we have a clearly apophatic statement to which Nicholas should have attended before he accused Proclus of overlooking God's transcendence. The problem for Nicholas however is that Proclus has made statements just a little earlier in the *Elements* that seem incompatible with this apophatic claim. He comments as follows:

> *Refutation* 123, 118.23–31
> If *the divine* is *ineffable and unknowable*, then on what basis have you known and said that his *existence* (ὕπαρξιν) is *goodness*, and his *power* is *unitary* (see §121), unless you are above *the secondary beings* with respect to *knowledge* and speech. But you have thus lost all sense, and we, knowing our own weakness, and standing in the limits of our knowledge, confess that God is in every way—i.e., according to *existence* (ὕπαρξιν), *power* and activity—*ineffable and unknowable to all*, being understood and being known *not* at all *from the things in himself*, but *from the things around him*[26] in due proportion as much as is possible.

Just two propositions earlier, §121 had apparently identified the divine substance with the name of "goodness": Πᾶν τὸ θεῖον ὕπαρξιν μὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀγαθότητα, δύναμιν δὲ ἑνιαίαν καὶ γνῶσιν κρύφιον καὶ ἄληπτον πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ τοῖς δευτέροις (All that is divine has an existence that is goodness, a power that is unitary, and a knowledge that is secret and ungraspable by all secondary beings alike).[27] For Proclus, the divine sphere of the henads, coordinate as it is with the One, also has the character of *goodness*, which for the Neoplatonists is the other chief name of the first principle. Yet in Nicholas' view this makes no sense, for it seems contradictory that Proclus should claim that the divine is ineffable, but then proceed to identify the divine *hyparxis* as goodness. This, for him, is tantamount to naming God's substance or essence.

> *Refutation* 121, 116.21–24
> [it is problematic that Proclus should] on the one hand say that the knowledge of his gods is *hidden* and *ungraspable*, but on the other hand define the *existence* or substance (ὕπαρξιν εἴτουν

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25 *ET* §123, 108.1–4.

26 Nicholas is quoting Gregory of Nazianzus here; see *Or.* 38.7.9–11.

27 *ET* §121, 106.10–12.

οὐσίαν), of which the *knowledge* is an activity, as graspable, and to declare that, whatever it is, it is *goodness*.

Nicholas contrasts this with the Christian way of speaking, explaining that for Christians no name is adequate to define God's substance or essence (οὐσία), though all names may be used because God is the creative cause of the beings to which names correspond:

> *Refutation* 121, 116.24 – 117.17
> But we do not speak thus, but we know that God is good, learning from Him who said that I am good and *no one is good except one, the God*; but that *goodness* is also the *existence* or substance (ὕπαρξις εἴτουν οὐσία) of God, as though his substance (οὐσίας) were defined in quality, we ourselves neither claim to know, nor are we persuaded by this one who says this.... And in the same way as we say that God is the other things, such as just, wise, powerful and true, *not from the things in himself but from the things around him,* in this way indeed we also say that he is *good, gathering impressions from here and from there into one particular representation of the truth*, as Gregory the Theologian says, understanding the supernatural and ungraspable qualities of the creator by analogy with the qualities contemplated in the creatures, namely wisdom, truth, justice, *goodness.* Just as therefore the *existence* of God is neither wisdom, nor power, nor truth, nor some other of the things said, so also it is not *goodness*, and in the way that he is said to be the others, in the same way he is said to be *goodness*.

Nicholas assumes that the words *hyparxis* and *ousia* are more or less synonymous in the *Elements of Theology*,[28] and so takes Proclus' claim that the divine *hyparxis* is goodness as equivalent to the claim that the *ousia,* the substance or essence, is goodness. Any claim to have identified the substance, however, is highly problematic for Nicholas, for this possibility had been ruled out of Christian discourse long before, notably in the anti-Eunomian writings of the Cappadocian fathers,[29] as well as, of course, in Ps.-Dionysius.[30] Thus Proclus' claim in §123 that the divine is "ineffable and unknowable," seems simply incoherent, given the fact that, just two propositions earlier, he has identified the substance as goodness.

III.

We have considered, then, Nicholas' reaction to Proclus' explicit apophaticism. Two other related aspects of Proclus' thought demand attention, however, and these are the notions of "beyond-being" and of "unparticipated." Both of these notions have apophatic implications, and so we should consider Nicholas' interpretation of them

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28 Though in fact Proclus uses these words somewhat differently. See the thorough discussion of these terms in Gersh (1973), 30 – 38.

29 See for example Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium libri, pars prior*, §§125 – 196; Engl. trans. in Karfíková, Douglass and Zachhuber (2007), 86 – 100.

30 See, for example, *CDA* I, *DN* 1.1, 585B-588B, 107.3 – 110.1.

as well. To begin with the first, Nicholas and Proclus are agreed in considering the first cause to be "beyond being." This verbal agreement masks an important difference, however, resulting from the fact that whereas Proclus places the One or Good above Being at the top of an ordered productive hierarchy,[31] Nicholas does not ascribe productive power to Being or Life or Intellect, but regards each of these names, and indeed all names, as designating created qualities devoid of productive power.[32] For him, God is "beyond being" in the same way that he is beyond any other created quality. This transcendence of creatures requires the apophatic stance, the denial of all names, yet correlative with this denial is the transcendent affirmation of all names, in virtue of God's universal causality. The paradoxical result is that in one sense Nicholas gives various divine perfections or attributes, as well as their names, a more exalted place in his theology than does Proclus in his metaphysics, for according to Nicholas the various divine attributes of goodness, unity, being, intelligence, *etc.* are not to be distributed amongst a multitude of hierarchically ordered principles, but are each to be ascribed to the one God as a whole.[33] "Intelligence" and "Being" are not for Nicholas names of subordinate hypostases, but instead designate the same unique source of all things that "the One" and "the Good" designate. On the other hand, however, and precisely because all these names now have the same referent, none of them is specially or definitively indicative of God's substance. All the names may be affirmed of God, but they must also all be denied. I do not mean to suggest that for Proclus either "One" or "Good" defines the One in an exhaustive manner, but this seems to be how Nicholas understands Proclus.

IV.

The other issue related to Proclus' apophaticism is the doctrine of the "unparticipated." Although the "unparticipated" appears at many levels within Proclus' system, and so does not exclusively designate the One, it does apply to the One, as §116 indicates: "Every god is participable, except the One."[34] This clearly has apophatic im-

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31 See §8.
32 For example, at the end of chapter 59 (62.22–24): "Certainly I do not agree with you that the intellect is the productive cause of the soul, or the soul of the body, or one thing of another, but I know that the one-in-three God is cause of all things."
33 See chapter 13 (18.21–29): "but for us both 'One' and 'Good' and 'Being', and all names that are fitting for God, are reserved exclusively for the one and good God who alone exists, or exists beyond all things, in whom all things both pre-exist super-substantially and also, in a super-unified way, exist substantially and distinctly as the things which each is, and are also preserved in one form, being held together, and being made good, and avoiding utter dispersion. According to us as well the Good and the One are thus identified, but in fact so are Being and all the other names, since the unique cause of all, the super-divine Monad and Triad, supersubstantially is all things...."
34 *ET* §116, 102.13.

plications, since it is in virtue of participation that higher things can be named by terms drawn from lower realities, and so we should consider Nicholas' interpretation of this aspect of Proclus' system as well.

Nicholas' position regarding Proclus' teaching on the "unparticipated" is somewhat difficult to understand. He begins by criticizing Proclus for contradicting himself in maintaining on the one hand that all things participate the One (§1), and indeed "in every way" (§5), and yet on the other hand stating in §24 that the One is "entirely unparticipated." In Nicholas' view, this is incoherent, for if A participates B, then it must be the case that B is participated by A; if all things participate the One in every way, then the One must be participated in every way. We might designate this view as the idea that participation is a two-way relation. "And thus he is convicted of overturning himself… in his saying that the same thing is *in every way* both participated and unparticipated…."[35] Here the problem seems to be the contradiction involved in the claim (as Nicholas sees it) that the same thing is both participated and unparticipated.[36]

It is then surprising to find Nicholas himself maintaining the coincidence of "participated" and "unparticipated." He first states his position in chapter 23, where he criticizes Proclus for allowing "corporeal conceptions" to condition his metaphysical speculations. In fact, Nicholas argues, even among corporeal things we have the example of the voice as something which is shared and divided among many participants while remaining undivided in itself. Likewise, the concept of the teacher, when shared with his students, "remains the same whole in itself in the teacher, no less than if it were unparticipated."[37] If in these cases an impartation without division is possible, then *a fortiori* this is also possible for "the one and simplest and primally-being and beyond-being and beyond-intellect Intellect."[38] Nicholas concludes the chapter with what seems to be a general argument regarding incorporeal entities:

> *Refutation* 23, 32.12–17
> How is it not participated by all, *that which is equally present to all and fills all things*? But that which is said [by Proclus] regarding an incorporeal, that *what is in one thing is not in the others*, is especially false, for the incorporeal is not divided, but, becoming a property of each thing

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35 *Refutation*, Prologue, 4.11–12.

36 In a note at the end of chapter 5 (9.30–33), Nicholas offers a more sympathetic reading, in which he harmonizes what he treats as contradictory in the prologue and in chapter 24: Σημείωσαι ὅτι ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ θεωρήματι ἔδειξεν, ὅτι **πῇ** μετέχει τοῦ ἑνὸς τὸ πλῆθος· νῦν δὲ συνάγει ὅτι **πάντη.** καὶ ἴσως λέγοι ἂν ὅτι τὸ μὲν ἓν οὐ πάντη μετέχεται, μᾶλλον γὰρ ἀμέθεκτόν ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πλῆθος **πάντη** ἀντὶ τοῦ καθ᾽ ὅλον ἑαυτὸ μετέχει τοῦ ἑνός (Note that in the first proposition he showed that the multitude *in some way* participates the One; but now he infers *in every way*. And perhaps he would say that the One is not participated *in every way* for, on the contrary, it is unparticipated, but that the multitude participates the One *in every way*, that is, in its entirety.).

37 *Refutation* 23, 31.15–26.

38 *Refutation* 23, 31.27–28.

among all things, it is whole and remains whole in itself, so that, in all things and before all the things, the same is both participated as a whole and unparticipated as a whole.

This is a surprising statement on Nicholas' part, for it is difficult, at least at first sight, to distinguish the position affirmed here from what was denied in the prologue, namely, "that the same thing is *in every way* both participated and unparticipated." Unless some subtle difference between "as a whole" and "in every way" can be determined, it is difficult to acquit Nicholas himself of holding a contradictory position.

In the following chapter, after first reminding his readers of the contradictory elements he has already identified in the prologue, Nicholas then summarizes the argument of §24, "All that participates is inferior to the participated, and this latter to the unparticipated":

> *Refutation* 24, 32.22–27
> Here he demonstrates that... the unparticipated is more akin to the cause of all things, which belongs to all and not to one; and, to express it shortly, the [unparticipated] prior to the many is one alone, since it is participated by nothing, while the participated (τὸ μετεχόμενον) is in the many and is one yet not-one, and what participates (τὸ μετέχον) is not-one yet one, and thereby he concludes that the first One is participated by nothing....

Whereas his earlier criticism in the prologue had functioned first by ostensibly showing that Proclus maintained that the same thing is both participated and unparticipated, and then by objecting to the contradiction involved in this, here Nicholas focuses upon the seeming incoherence of saying that "the cause of all things" "belongs to all" while also saying that it is "participated by nothing":

> *Refutation* 24, 32.29–33.6
> And how, my good man, is *that which belongs to all* not participated by all? For either it is not participated by all, and does not *belong to all* (and to your dismay, the first and fifth chapters are shown to be false), or else it is participated and thus *does belong to all*, and the unparticipated vanishes. For that *what belongs to all* is also participated by all, you no doubt will grant, since you say that *what belongs to something is participated* by that thing to which it belongs, so that it is the same thing *to belong to something* and to be participated by that thing, and by analogy [it is the same thing] *to belong to all* and to be participated by all; for if the former are the same, then the latter are also the same, but if the latter are not the same, then neither are the former. From this it is clear that this present chapter in itself is refuted by itself.

By assuming an equivalence in meaning between "belonging to something" (literally, "being of something": τό τινος εἶναι) and "being participated by that thing" (μετέχεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ τινος ἐκείνου), Nicholas ridicules the seeming incoherence of Proclus' position. The apparent conclusion is that "unparticipated" must simply be rejected.

This reading seems to be confirmed by Nicholas' comments on §63:

> *Refutation 63, 65.5–12*
> The hypothesis of *the unparticipated,* having been introduced superfluously, has been clearly refuted already by us in what was written concerning the twenty-third chapter. Since therefore this has thus been thrown out, it is not at all out of place to say that the divine itself is participated, being divided indivisibly and being participated by all things in the measure in which each is able to participate in it, so that some *participate* in it *always*, and others *sometimes*, and that this partaking in it is simple and undifferentiated in itself, but in relation to the things that diversely participate it is not only *double* but even multiple.

Even though the "hypothesis of the unparticipated" seems here to be dismissed without qualification, we must recall that the earlier argument of Nicholas to which he alludes here ("what was written concerning the 23rd chapter") was not an absolute rejection of the "unparticipated," but rather a rejection of the supposed incompatibility of the "unparticipated" and the "participated." The "hypothesis of *the unparticipated*," then, cannot be understood simply as any affirmation of the "unparticipated," but must for Nicholas designate specifically the notion that the "unparticipated" somehow has a distinct and superior status vis-à-vis the "participated." This is confirmed by Nicholas' comments on §69, "Every whole of parts participates the wholeness before the parts." This chapter contains one of the fullest expressions of Nicholas' views on participation, and therefore merits a thorough presentation. Here, as in his comments on §23, Nicholas affirms the coincidence of the "participated" and the "unparticipated," locating this coincidence in God perhaps even more clearly than does the earlier passage from chapter 23, which seems merely to make a general claim regarding the incorporeal:

> *Refutation 69, 69.30–70.7*
> We say that the divine is both *the whole* and the *wholeness before the parts*, *by participation* of which *the whole of parts* is constituted, and we never hesitate to call it "*participated*," and would even be constrained to say "divisible," since even among sensible things we know some things, such as speech and light, that are divided indivisibly and remain whole after their division, as we have earlier noted in passing in the twenty-third chapter. If therefore there are sensible things that are divided indivisibly, how much more [it is the case that] the intelligible and (still more) the beyond-intellect One-in-itself and Whole-in-itself, although divided, remains indivisible, and, although it is *participated*, will be preserved no less *unparticipated* and *whole* and one.

Thus, for Nicholas, the one divine principle is identified as both unparticipated and participated. In the second paragraph, Nicholas clarifies the nature of his criticism, which is not, it now seems, a criticism of the notion of the "unparticipated" as such, but rather of the idea that the "unparticipated" stands in a hierarchical relation to the "participated." Here the context of Nicholas' discussion is Proclus' elaboration of his theory of wholes, which involves a three-fold division: "whole before the parts," "whole of parts" and "whole in the part" (see §§66–74). Nicholas rightly observes a correspondence between this three-fold structure and the earlier one in §23 and §24, the triad of "unparticipated," "participated" and "participant." Just as he had argued in regard to those earlier propositions, so also he argues here that par-

ticipation is a two-way relation (if A participates B, then B is participated by A). Thus, if the "whole of parts" participates the "whole before the parts," then this latter "is participated" (μετέχεται) by the former, and thus is "participable" (μεθεκτόν):

> *Refutation* 69, 70.8–19
> Certainly we do not agree that the *unparticipated pre-exists the participated* (§23), which indeed he assumes in the demonstration, since we have shown that it both is participable, insofar as it *is participated* by its participants, and is *whole* in itself, as indivisible, and in this way is *unparticipated*. See then that even this wise man is compelled to call the *unparticipated* participable; for, he says, *every whole of parts participates the wholeness before the parts*, which he wishes to be *unparticipated*. If therefore *the [whole] of parts participates the wholeness before the parts*, how is *the [wholeness] before the parts unparticipated*, [the wholeness] in which, it has been agreed, *[the whole] of the parts participates?* And if it is participated, how is it not also participable? Thus he overturns himself, and thus he is compelled to agree with us and to confess that the same thing is both participable and *unparticipated*.

Because he conceives of participation as a two-way relation, Nicholas does not tolerate any suggestion that a lower entity might participate in a higher without the latter being participated by the lower. In the third paragraph, Nicholas repeats his criticism that Proclus has applied to higher realities conceptions only suitable for lower realities, and he proceeds to reaffirm the simultaneity or coincidence of "unparticipated" and "participated" in the Divine, asserting the power of God to be present to all while yet remaining simple; he associates God's being participated with his causal relation to creatures, and his being unparticipated with his "pre-existence":

> *Refutation* 69, 70.20–29
> But also the [claim] that [if it] *comes to be in a certain* [whole], then the [whole] *before the many*, or the *unparticipated* [whole], *is unable to be cause for the others* (for he assumes this in the demonstration)—this claim both is refuted as false, and has been thrown out as unfittingly derived in regard to the simple and indivisibly divided, as if in regard to the divided. For when it wishes, the divine, which alone is properly *before* all—both being *in* all and *coming to be in* each, *is able,* and super-powerfully *is able to be cause* of all things, as all-powerful and super-powerful, and as being simple and remaining *whole* in itself, no less undivided and *unparticipated* even in being divided and participated.

We see in this passage the close relationship between the ideas of participation and presence. To say that the divine is participated is to say that it is present, whereas to say that it is unparticipated is to deny its circumscription. In the final paragraph of chapter 69, Nicholas seeks to show that Proclus' middle term, the "whole of parts" or "whole in the parts" is superfluous.[39] This is equivalent to Nicholas' rejection of any

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39 Proclus varies his terminology, but it is clear in §67 (64.3–7) that Proclus identifies the mediating whole of parts (ἐκ τῶν μερῶν) with the whole in the parts (ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι): ἢ γὰρ ἐν τῇ αἰτίᾳ τὸ ἑκάστου θεωροῦμεν εἶδος, καὶ ὅλον ἐκεῖνο πρὸ τῶν μερῶν λέγομεν τὸ ἐν τῷ αἰτίῳ προϋποστάν· ἢ **ἐν τοῖς** μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς **μέρεσι.** καὶ τοῦτο διχῶς· ἢ γὰρ **ἐν ἅπασιν** ὁμοῦ **τοῖς μέρεσι**, καὶ ἔστι τοῦτο **ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον**, οὗ καὶ ὁτιοῦν μέρος ἀπὸν ἐλαττοῖ τὸ ὅλον· ἢ **ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν μερῶν**; (emphasis

subordination of the "participated" to the "unparticipated." Thus, in both these contexts, Nicholas rejects the mediating term. As he says here: "why is there need of the mediating *whole in the parts?*" In his view, both concrete parts and their wholes directly participate the "whole before the parts." There is no mediating "participated" term, because God, identified here with the "whole before the parts," embraces both the "unparticipated" and the "participated" aspects. This rejection of mediating terms is consonant with Nicholas' entire approach to Proclus, in which Proclus' hypostases are rejected, and all productivity is assigned exclusively to God:

> *Refutation* 69, 70.30–71.5
> And see also this, that although intending to show that the whole of parts participates the wholeness before the parts and that it has suffered the whole, instead of this he says that the parts have suffered the whole because of the unification. If therefore the parts have been unified, and have suffered the whole and in this way participated the wholeness before the parts, why is there need for the mediating whole in the parts? Rather, it is clear that such a whole wholly is not, nor does it subsist or participate the unparticipated. But since this does not exist, neither is it necessary that what [the whole of parts] participates (his [whole] before the parts) be some other whole besides the one and only whole revered by us, which indeed is the divine [whole], which is participated both by the parts and by the wholes embracing these [parts], and as a whole is unparticipated.

Nicholas reiterates and expands upon this rejection of mediating terms in his comments upon §81, "All that is participated separately is present to the participant through an inseparable power that it imparts."[40] Proclus has here further elaborated the schema of unparticipated–participated–participant by speaking of things which are "participated separately" (τὸ χωριστῶς μετεχόμενον) and arguing that this can only be possible by virtue of "an inseparable power" (τινος ἀχωρίστου δυνάμεως) which mediates between the participated term and the participant. The three-fold schema has thus become fourfold: unparticipated–separately participated–inseparable power–participant. For Nicholas of course this is even worse than the three-fold scheme, for his view is that God (who for Nicholas is the sole object of participation) is directly participated by creatures, even though he is also unparticipated:

> *Refutation* 81, 84.5–19
> ...in saying that there is one *principial* and super-principial *Monad*, and that all the *illuminations* proceeding from it are both *perfect* and perfective of the things that receive them, we avoid the aforesaid absurdity,[41] we confess that the *principial Monad* itself is in this way *participated* and

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added); it is evident that the whole "in the parts" (plural) cannot be identified with the "whole in the part" (singular) mentioned in the proposition itself, which is the whole "in each of the parts" mentioned here.

40 *ET* §81, 76.12–13.

41 In the portion of the text just prior to this passage, Nicholas notes an apparent contradiction in Proclus, since in §24 Proclus has said that the participant is inferior to what it participates in, while in §64 (as Nicholas reads it), Proclus seems to imply that some "illuminations" are inferior to their recipients, since they "need" these recipients as subjects for their subsistence. The absurdity being

present to all, and we preserve it as *separate* and *unparticipated*. For it is present to all things purely, undefiledly and uncircumscribably, and it precontains and super-contains all things according to cause and incomparable transcendence, and gushes forth all things from itself on account of its abundant goodness, and does not need *some intermediary* through which, according to the unwise wisdom, *it is joined to the participant*, it itself being principle of all things, since it is before all and cause of all, and *middle*, since it supports and *holds together* all things in itself, and limit, since it defines and limits and perfects all things by excess of power through the perfective *illuminations* that proceed from it, through which it is present to all and is participated by all, though itself remaining *separate* and *unparticipated*.[42]

Thus Nicholas affirms the simultaneous presence and transcendence of the Monad in relation to all things. Surprisingly, however, Nicholas seems to introduce his own version of mediation at the end of this passage by speaking of "the perfective illuminations *through which* it is present to all and participated by all." Only if we understand the "illuminations" as being in some fashion God himself is this consistent with my assertion above that Nicholas affirms God's direct presence to all things. Perhaps Nicholas here anticipates Gregory Palamas' later distinction between God's essence and energies, both uncreated, but the latter being God as he descends to his creatures.

Many more passages could be supplied in order to illustrate the features of Nicholas' thought thus far discussed,[43] but those I have given are sufficient to define his position, which may be summarized as follows: although Nicholas appears in the prologue to deny that the same thing can be both participated and unparticipated, his typical position is in fact to affirm that God is both participated and unparticipated. What he really denies in Proclus is the hierarchical arrangement of "unparticipated" and "participated" as distinct entities or terms. Nothing, according to Nicholas, can be described as "unparticipated" without qualification. As for whether anything besides God can be characterized as both participated and unparticipated, Nicholas' position is ambiguous. His comments on §23 suggest that he thinks anything incorporeal may be characterized in this way, yet in commenting upon §100 he states, "since the One and first is conceded to be participated, we are far from supposing that others besides this are unparticipated";[44] and in his comments on §161 he remarks, "But he alone is *unparticipated*, even if all things subsist by participation in him."[45]

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avoided here is twofold, that of supposing that illuminations from God might be "imperfect," and that of supposing they might need perfection or completion by something lower, rather than being perfective of the lower.

42 In this passage I have placed in italics not only quotation or paraphrase from §81, but also words and phrases that reflect §64.

43 See chapters 98 – 101, 103, 116, 123, 161, 166 and 176.

44 *Refutation* 100, 98.8 – 10.

45 *Refutation* 161, 143.23 – 24; see also chapter 176.

Earlier I noted the crucial role played by apophatic theology in Nicholas' defense of trinitarian doctrine, and I have now considered Nicholas' perspective on three closely related aspects of Proclus' thought, namely explicit apophatic doctrine, the notion of "beyond being," and the notion of "unparticipated." That these are indeed closely related may be demonstrated from Nicholas' own comments. In chapter 161 we see the connection between transcendence, "unparticipated," and wholeness:

> *Refutation* 161, 143.25 – 28
> For in this way he is participated by all things, but... although being participated, he remains again whole himself in himself, uncircumscribably transcending all things, and in this way he is said to be *unparticipated.*

And in chapter 123, "unparticipated" is explicitly connected with "super-substantiality" and "beyond being":

> *Refutation* 123, 118.32 – 119.4
> *Participation is not of all by all, nor is it a random connection,* but all things participate the One on which they *depend,* the One which precontains all things as cause and super-substantially exists before all things and is nothing of beings, since it exists in a manner beyond being and in this way is both participated and unparticipated by all things.

We are now in a position to sum up Nicholas' perspective on the apophatic aspects of Proclus' *Elements*.... To begin with, we have seen how Nicholas' own use of apophatic theology against Proclus presupposes the absence of a genuine apophaticism in Proclus himself, and indeed Nicholas dismisses Proclus' apophatic claims in §123 on the grounds that Proclus actually does assign names ("One" and "Good") to the divine substance. Nicholas thus makes the case that his theology is more apophatic than that of Proclus. In considering the respective roles that the notion of "beyond being" plays in the two thinkers, however, we found that in a sense the Christian notion of "beyond being" actually allows for a more richly cataphatic theology, for if it is true that all names are denied of the God beyond being, it is equally true that all names are also affirmed of this God, whereas in Proclus' system certain names (e. g. "Being") specifically designate subordinate hypostases rather than the One beyond Being. The diverse functions of "beyond being" for the two thinkers would thus seem to show Proclus as the more apophatic thinker. For him names are gradually stripped away as one ascends the hierarchy (either from lower hypostases, or from the henads), whereas for Nicholas the variety of names seems on the one hand to be reduced to a single plane, the created order, and then denied in one universal denial, while on the other hand all names are also applied transcendently to God. The effect is a paradoxical tension between the apophatic and the cataphatic in Nicholas' thought: God is named by nothing and by everything. Exactly parallel to this is an analogous tension between "unparticipated" and "participated," where hierarchy again has been replaced with a paradoxical coincidence of opposites. This is well illustrated in his comments on §103, where, having criticized Proclus' attempt to see

Being, Life and Intellect as co-inhering while also hierarchically structured, he proceeds to give his own view, according to which these principles are identified with the one God:

> *Refutation* 103, 100.32–101.6
> But no such absurdity occurs for us, who call first being and first life and first intellect one and the same, that is, the one God over all and before all, himself both participated, as was said, and unparticipated, both divisible and indivisible; for he is participated imparticipably and divided indivisibly, the former according to the natures of the participants who participate divisibly (since they are unable to contain the whole itself), and the latter according to his own nature; for he is indivisible, since also he is incorporeal, and an unparticipated whole, since he transcends all things, for he distributes the bestowals from himself to all other things: being to beings, life with being to living things, and to intellecting things also intellection together with these [being and living], and thus he is present to all by participation, insofar as each can naturally contain him, but in himself he remains no less whole, that is, indivisible and unparticipated.

Though there is a hierarchy among creatures according to the mode of their participation in God, there is no hierarchy of participated hypostases, but rather, the one God is present to all things as the sole source of their various qualities. As is characteristic of Nicholas, the emphasis here is again on the immediacy of God to all things, though this immediacy in no way compromises divine transcendence.

To conclude then our survey of Nicholas' perspective on apophaticism in Proclus, we may say that while Nicholas *claims* to be more apophatic than Proclus, and provides superficial justification for this claim, nevertheless this claim cannot be sustained either in the light of a more sympathetic reading of §123 (which need not be understood as naming the One in any definitive way) or, all the more, in the light of the much more explicit and developed apophaticism found in Proclus' other works, such as Book II of the *Platonic Theology*. On the contrary, it would seem that Proclus is in one way actually more apophatic than Nicholas, insofar as the latter applies names to the first cause that Proclus reserves only for lower beings.

These differences certainly do not originate with Nicholas, but can be traced to certain fundamental alterations that Ps.-Dionysius made to the Procline system. These may be summarized by saying that whereas Proclus interpreted the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* as applying to the One and successive hypostases respectively, Dionysius, by applying both the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides* to the first principle, endorsed a much more paradoxical position than that of Proclus.[46] Nicholas is here simply a good Dionysian.

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46 See Gersh (1978), 11, where he discusses the contribution to Dionysian studies of Corsini (1962): "Here the writer makes a detailed analysis of the way in which Plato's dialogue was interpreted by pagan Neoplatonists of the school of Syrianus with the first hypothesis (negative predicates) being applied to the One and the second hypothesis (affirmative predicates) to a succession of hypostases consequent upon the One. He then demonstrates how Ps.-Dionysius transforms the method by applying both hypotheses to the First Principle so that what was originally an ineffable One followed by a

V.

Nicholas' awareness of a certain affinity between Dionysius and Proclus affords him some flexiblity in reacting to Proclus' ideas. While he finds much to oppose in Proclus' system, and in doing so often adopts criticisms that were already at least implicit in Dionysius' writings, he is also prepared on occasion to recognize a certain amount of common ground between the two thinkers. I would like to conclude by considering Nicholas' commentary on §122, which falls between the two propositions discussed earlier in relation to apophaticism, and which provides a striking example of a more sympathetic approach to Proclus, based upon an awareness of the common ground just mentioned. The proposition in question is one in which Proclus argues for the compatibility of divine transcendence and divine providence, a position with which Nicholas is in full agreement. §122 runs as follows:

> Everything divine both exercises providence towards the secondary [beings], and transcends the things provided for, its providence neither undoing its unmixed and unitary transcendence, nor its separate unity removing its providence.

And Nicholas begins his commentary as follows:

> *Refutation* 122, 117.23 – 25
> Apart from the "*every*", and the other suggestion of polytheism, and his distinguishing "*Goodness*" and "*the One*" as substance of the divinity, this chapter is pious with respect to the other things.

While agreeing with the general intention of the chapter, Nicholas takes issue with Proclus' polytheism of course, but also with Proclus' identification of "Goodness" and "the One" as the divine substance. The former had been a problem in the previous proposition (§121), and both seem to Nicholas to be implicit in Proclus' proof of §122. He then sets out the following hypothesis:

> *Refutation* 122, 117.25 – 29
> Whence it seems to me that he has stolen his lofty and thus wonderful (ὑψηλὰ καὶ οὕτως ἐξαίρετα) propositions from the theology of the great Dionysius, having come across this theology in Athens and having mixed the evil tares, that is, the teachings of godless polytheism, with the seeds of piety. And so it should be better rendered (ἐκδίδοσθαι) in this way:...

The very proximity of Proclus' thought to Christian teaching here prompts Nicholas to recognize some literary relation between Proclus and Dionysius, but he reverses

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co-ordinate series of gods or henads becomes a Christian God with a plurality of divine attributes. The transformation here so brilliantly identified is of philosophical as well as historical significance for it renders the First Principle of Christian Neoplatonism self-contradictory in a way that its pagan equivalent was not."

the order of dependence. Whereas elsewhere Proclus' error is shown by noting his deviation from the authoritative positions of Dionysius, here Dionysius serves to explain the near-correctness of Proclus' teaching. Nicholas proceeds to offer a paraphrase of the entire proposition and proof. In order to display clearly Nicholas' relation to Proclus here, I have placed the remainder of the chapter side by side with the Procline text on which he is commenting, setting in bold italics all of the text that is either shared verbatim or displays a close verbal parallel. What can be seen by comparing the proposition and commentary is that Nicholas is, as he says, "rendering" Proclus into Christian theology. Adopting much of Proclus' exact wording, he omits or alters it at certain points where he finds Proclus problematic. In addition to setting shared elements in bold, I have underlined those elements in Proclus which seem to have provoked the qualifications at the beginning of Nicholas' chapter.

Proclus, *ET* 122, 108.1 – 24		Nicholas, *Refutation* 122, 117.29 – 118.17	
Everything divine *both exercises providence towards* the secondaries *and transcends the beings for which he provides*, its providence neither undoing its unmixed and <u>unitary</u> transcendence, nor its separate <u>union</u> anulling its providence.	Πᾶν τὸ θεῖον *καὶ προνοεῖ* τῶν δευτέρων *καὶ ἐξῄρηται τῶν προνοουμένων*, μήτε *τῆς προνοίας χαλώσης τὴν ἄμικτον αὐτοῦ καὶ* <u>ἑνιαίαν</u> *ὑπεροχὴν μήτε τῆς χωριστῆς* <u>ἑνώσεως</u> *τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀφανιζούσης.*	ὁ θεὸς *καὶ προνοεῖ* πάντων τῶν ὄντων *καὶ ἐξῄρηται τῶν προνοουμένων*, μήτε *τῆς προνοίας χαλώσης τὴν ἄμικτον αὐτοῦ καὶ* θείαν *ὑπεροχὴν μήτε τῆς χωριστῆς* ὑπερουσιότητος *τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀφανιζούσης*	(a) God *both exercises providence towards* all beings *and transcends the beings for which he provides*: his providence involves no remission of his pure and divine transcendence, neither does his separate super-substantiality *annul his providence*;
For remaining in their <u>unitary</u> [nature] and in their <u>existence</u> they have *filled all things with their power*	*μένοντες γὰρ ἐν* τῷ ἑνιαίῳ τῷ ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἐν τῇ <u>ὑπάρξει</u> *τὰ πάντα πεπληρώκασι τῆς ἑαυτῶν δυνάμεως·*	*μένων γὰρ ἐν* τῇ οἰκείᾳ ὑπεροχῇ *τὰ πάντα πληροῖ* τῆς *ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως* καὶ ἐνεργείας,	(b) *For remaining in* his own transcendence *he fills all things with his power* and activity,
and every thing that is able to participate in them *enjoys the goods which it is able to receive according to the measures of its own subsistence,*	*καὶ πᾶν τὸ δυνάμενον* αὐτῶν *μεταλαγχάνειν ἀπολαύει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὧν δέχεσθαι δύναται κατὰ τὰ μέτρα τῆς οἰκείας ὑποστάσεως,*	*καὶ πάντα*, καθόσον ἕκαστον *δύναται μεταλαγχάνειν, ἀπολαύει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὧν δέχεσθαι δύναται κατὰ τὰ μέτρα τῆς οἰκείας ὑποστάσεως·*	(c) and *all things*, to the degree that each *is able to participate*, *enjoy the goods which they are able to receive according to the measures of their own subsistence*;

by their very being, or rather pre-being, making good things to shine upon the beings. For being nothing other than goodnesses, by their being they furnish to all things good without stint, making no calculated apportionment,	ἐκείνων αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι, μᾶλλον δὲ προεῖναι, τἀγαθὰ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐπιλαμπόντων. ὄντες γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ἀγαθότητες, αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀφθόνως τἀγαθὰ χορηγοῦσιν, οὐ κατὰ λογισμὸν ποιούμενοι τὴν διανομήν,	ὑπερχέων γὰρ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς ἀγαθότητος πᾶσιν ἀφθόνως τὰ ἀγαθὰ χορηγεῖ οὐ κατὰ λογισμὸν ποιούμενος τὴν διανομήν. οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου, φησί, δίδωσιν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὅλον ἀθρόως πᾶσι προχέει τὸν θησαυρόν,	(d) for overpouring the wealth of his *goodness*, *he furnishes to all things good things without stint, making no calculated apportionment. For not by measure*, scripture says, *does God give the Spirit*, but he pours forth the whole treasure at once to all,
but these *receiving according* to their *deserts*, and those giving according to their existence.	ἀλλὰ τούτων μὲν **κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀξίαν δεχομένων**, ἐκείνων δὲ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ὕπαρξιν διδόντων.	τὰ δὲ τούτου τὸ **κατ' ἀξίαν** ἕκαστον **ὑποδέχεται**, καὶ μένει πάλιν ἀκέραιος καὶ ὅλος ὁ θησαυρὸς μηδένα μερισμὸν ἐκ τῆς **διανομῆς** ὑφιστάμενος.	(e) and each *receives* the [good things] of it *according to their deserts*, and again the treasure remains pure and whole, undergoing no division in its *apportionment*.
Neither therefore *in providing*, do they undertake relation to the things provided for; for by being that which they are they make all things good, and everything that acts by being acts without relation (for relation is an addition to being; wherefore it is also contrary to nature);	**οὔτε** οὖν **προνοοῦντες** σχέσιν ἀναδέχονται πρὸς τὰ προνοούμενα· τῷ γὰρ εἶναι ὅ εἰσι πάντα ἀγαθύνουσιν, πᾶν δὲ τὸ τῷ εἶναι ποιοῦν ἀσχέτως ποιεῖ (ἡ γὰρ σχέσις πρόσθεσίς ἐστι τοῦ εἶναι· διὸ καὶ παρὰ φύσιν)·	καὶ οὕτως **οὔτε** διὰ τὴν **πρόνοιαν** ὑποβιβάζεται τῆς θείας ὑπεροχῆς τὸ ἀξίωμα	(f) And thus *neither is* the axiom of divine *transcendence* compromised because of *providence*,
Nor in being separate do they annul providence; for thus (*what is not even lawful to say*), their existence would be removed, whose property is goodness. For the bestowal to all who are able to participate is of the good,	**οὔτε** χωριστοὶ ὄντες **ἀναιροῦσι τὴν πρόνοιαν· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἀναιροῖεν (ὃ μηδὲ θέμις εἰπεῖν)** τὴν ὕπαρξιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν, ἧς ἰδιότης ἡ ἀγαθότης ἐστίν. **ἀγαθοῦ γὰρ ἡ μετάδοσις εἰς πᾶν τὸ μετέχειν δυνάμενον**,	**οὔτε** διὰ τὴν **ὑπεροχὴν ἀναιρεῖται ἡ πρόνοια. οὕτω γὰρ ἂν** καὶ ἡ θεία χρηστότης, **ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, συναναιροῖτο· ἀγαθοῦ γὰρ ἴδιον τὸ μεταδιδόναι πᾶσι τοῖς δυναμένοις μεταλαμβάνειν**, καὶ τὸ προνοεῖν ταὐτόν ἐστι **τῷ ἀγαθουργεῖν**.	(g) nor is providence annulled because of transcendence. For thus the divine kindness would also be removed, which is not lawful to say; for it is proper to the good to bestow upon all those who are able to receive, and to provide is the same as to work good.

and *the greatest* is not *the good in form,* but *what works good.* This therefore either nothing of beings will have or the gods before the beings [will have]; for *the greater* good would not belong to *those that are good* by participation, and the lesser to the *primally good ones.*

καὶ *τὸ μέγιστόν* ἐστιν οὐ τὸ *ἀγαθοειδές,* ἀλλὰ *τὸ ἀγαθουργόν.* τοῦτο τοίνυν ἢ οὐδὲν ἕξει τῶν ὄντων ἢ θεοὶ πρὸ τῶν ὄντων· οὐ γὰρ ἄν που *τοῖς* μὲν κατὰ μέθεξιν *ἀγαθοῖς* ὑπάρχοι *τὸ μεῖζον* ἀγαθόν, τοῖς δὲ *πρώτως ἀγαθοῖς* τὸ ἔλαττον.

τοῦτο δὲ *μεῖζον τοῦ ἀγαθοειδὲς* εἶναι· καὶ δεῖ *τὸ μεῖζον τῷ μεγίστῳ* καὶ *πρώτως ἀγαθῷ* προσεῖναι, *τὸ ἀγαθουργεῖν,* εἴπερ καὶ *τοῖς* δευτέροις τὸ δεύτερον πρόσεστι, *τὸ ἀγαθοειδέσιν εἶναι,* ὁποῖοι οἱ θεῖοι ἄγγελοι.

(i) And this is *greater than being in the form of good;* and it is necessary that *the greater, to work good,* attach *to the greatest and first good,* if indeed also the second, to be *in the form of good,* attaches to *the secondarily good things,* of which sort are the divine angels.

In the opening of his commentary on this chapter, Nicholas noted with disapproval Proclus' "defining *Goodness* and *One* as substance of the divinity"; this seems to refer to the underlined elements above, which are conspicuously absent from Nicholas' paraphrase.[47] But Nicholas' method is as notable as his doctrinal differences, for chapter 122 presents an extreme case of something Nicholas is very often doing on a lesser scale, and it helps us to understand one mode of *anaptyxis,* or explication, that Nicholas sometimes employs. While he is usually occupied with refuting Proclus, he is also sometimes engaged in cleaning up Proclus, as it were, so that he conforms to Christian doctrinal standards and can be read in an edifying manner. In this respect there may be an occasional similarity to Isaac Sebastocrator's adaptations of the Procline *Opuscula.*[48] Nicholas' "explication" at times consists in distinguishing the tares of Proclus from the seed first sown (he presumes) by Dionysius.

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47 Subsequent to my presentation of part of this paper at the conference in Istanbul, Lela Alexidze kindly gave me a copy of her helpful article, "Dionysius Areopagita in den mittelalterlichen Kommentaren zur *Elementatio theologica* des Proclus" (2002). This article contains a thorough discussion of chapter 122 of Nicholas' *Refutation.*

48 Cf. Proclus, *Trois études sur la providence,* ed. and trans. D. Isaac (1977–82); In addition to providing Latin editions of Proclus' texts, Vol. 1 contains Isaac Sebastocrator's (Greek) adaptation of the *Ten Problems Concerning Providence,* Vol. 2 contains his *On Providence and Natural Necessity,* adapted from Proclus' *Providence, Fate, and What Depends on Us,* and Vol. 3 contains his adaptation of Proclus' *On the Existence of Evils.*

Elias Tempelis and Christos Terezis

The Presence of Proclus in George Pachymeres' Paraphrase of Ps.-Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus*

I. Introduction

Since the composition of the *Corpus Areopageticum* (5th or 6th c. CE), the presence both direct and indirect of the Platonic dialogue *Parmenides* has been systematically foundational for the formulation of some theories in Christian metaphysics—ontology, cosmology, epistemology, and to a lesser extent, aesthetics. Particular Byzantine theologians and philosophers have made use of an impressive number of the concepts of this dialogue and have implemented them in such a way that we can argue that their use is not incidental. We see them mainly in theologians with a particular philosophical education, such as Leontius of Byzantium, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Arethas, Michael Psellos and Gregory Palamas. Of course, there are differences in their use of Plato for reasons often related to their specific theoretical aims or the degree to which they desire the integration of philosophical thought into theological matters. Overall, though, we argue that Platonism in Byzantium is not fully comprehended unless the *Parmenides* is carefully examined. The Areopagetic treatises, having specified commitments to the use of this dialogue which could not be easily neglected, formed a peculiar tradition concerning the relevance of theology to philosophy, and these were the texts that defined the main parameters of Christian teaching, both in the East and the West.[1]

In particular, the Areopagetic treatise *De divinis nominibus* consists of a Christian reading and interpretation of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, which was extensively dealt with by Proclus in his treatises *In Parmenidem* and *Platonic Theology*, texts which claim to recapitulate ancient Greek metaphysics in its entirety, but mainly Neoplatonism. In both traditions we could identify common uses of this hypothesis, while the Neoplatonic analysis is clearly more extensive. Within the frame of the Neoplatonic and the Christian approaches, the second hypothesis represents what could be defined either as the "procession" of the supreme principle (in the ontological version) or as affirmative theology (in the epistemological version). In other words, the second hypothesis is understood to describe by means of particular conceptual categories the productive projection of the supreme reality, i.e. the One/ Good, which to a certain extent can be known by human beings only as creative

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1 Concerning a Christian reading of the *Parmenides* and its differentiations from the Neoplatonic one, see Gersh (1978), 153–177.

agent. The linguistic correspondences between Proclus and Ps.-Dionysius with reference to these topics are impressive and have been systematically examined by historians of philosophy since the end of the 19th century,[2] but there is, however, a huge difference between them. Proclus argues that every concept or category in the *Parmenides* corresponds to a certain divine entity, constructing what would be defined as an "ontotheological" projection of polytheism.[3] On the contrary, Ps.-Dionysius, a consistent defender of monotheism, proceeds to assign each concept/category to one of the divine energies, which are the immediate projections of the divine essence.[4] This difference is very important, as it defines the conditions of causality and indirectly, but clearly, influences how human cognition was understood as to its criteria and the content of its cognitive products. Therefore, despite their common features, two different epistemological exemplars are formed, both as to the content of the metaphysical world and as to the number of causes from which the natural world derives. Neoplatonic polytheism leads to a multiplicity of causes, while Christian monotheism to a single source of causation.

Despite their long temporal distance, however, the influence of Proclus can also be traced in posterior Christian texts, in particular like those of George Pachymeres (1242–1310), a thinker who owes his fame as author both to his exhaustive analysis and interpretation of Areopagetic texts and to his scientific and philosophical studies on Plato and, mainly, Aristotle. In the wider sense he was a universal genius. One of his major works is the commentary on the remainder of Plato's *Parmenides*, on which either there is no commentary by Proclus, or none preserved in Greek.[5] Pachymeres mainly deals with the section of the dialogue where the Eleatic philosopher had attempted to show by means of dialectic the ways the supreme ontological principle, i. e. the One, is related to the totality of the general aspects of reality, or, in other words, with the ways of expressing "being". Another topic is the examination of the possibilities of the human intellect to cognitively approach these relations. Pa-

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2 The most systematic study concerning the relations and differences between Ps.-Dionysius and Proclus also including the reading of the *Parmenides* is that of Corsini (1962).

3 Cf. for instance Proclus' systematic commentary *In Parm.* 1089.17–1239.21. In this extant text the Neoplatonist scholarch posits a hierarchy among the gods, as well as among the categories corresponding to them, by presenting each superior one to be the cause of its subordinate one, on the basis of the triadic scheme "remaining – procession – reversion". "Remaining" denotes the stable unmanifested presence of a deity in its own self. "Procession" expresses its manifestation by means of emanation through the development of a new inferior entity. "Reversion" stresses how each produced entity returns to the source it has derived from. During the presentation of his positions, Proclus proceeds to references to the relevant philosophical past, to such an extent which shows his impressive knowledge.

4 Ps.-Dionysius' *DN*, chapters 5 (*P.G.*, vol. 3, 816b-825c), 6 (856a-857b) and 7 (865b-873a) are most relevant concerning this point. Also, see his brief treatise *MTh*, chapters 4 (1040d) and 5 (1045d-1048b).

5 Cf. Pachymeres, *Anonymous Sequel to Proclus' Commentary*. Also, concerning the philological aspects of the text see the introduction by C. Luna and A.-P. Segonds (2007) in Proclus' *Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, CLVII-CLXX. Cf. Pachymeres *Philosophia*. Pachymeres' studies on Aristotle were included in his *In universam fere Aristotelis philosophiam epitome*.

chymeres evidently studied Proclus' treatises in depth and made use of them.[6] However, his style is notably plain and he rarely deviates from the Platonic text, apart from a few instances related to Christian theories. Having composed valuable commentaries on a number of ancient Greek texts, it was expected that Pachymeres would include at least some of his conclusions in his commentary on the Areopagetic treatise *De divinis nominibus*, which had in a way opened extensive dialogues with ancient Greek thought. The correspondences between Proclus and Pachymeres are clear both from the ontological and the epistemological point of view, while the methodological aspect should not escape our attention. In this paper we will attempt to show the way the two thinkers approach the categories identity/otherness (ταὐτόν/ἔτερον), similarity/dissimilarity (ὅμοιον/ἀνόμοιον) and rest/motion (στάσις/κίνησις), which belong to the pillars of ancient Greek thought concerning the mode of existence and productive projection of the metaphysical world and the functions it defines within the natural world. It should not, of course, be neglected that Pachymeres strictly implements Christian monotheism. However, we are interested in the way he utilizes the Platonic doctrines for the sake of his own theoretical framework, which reveals clearly, if indirectly, some important aspects deriving from his acquaintance with late Neoplatonic thought. For instance, we would note his understanding of the way each Neoplatonic deity functions as a cause, transferring this property/manifestation to a divine energy. That is, he uses Neoplatonic causality in a Christian way, also analogically utilizing the schema "remaining-procession-reversion". It should be noted that such use is not found in the later thinker Gregory Palamas, at least in a way evidencing reception of the *Parmenides*. We will mainly examine Chapters 8 and 9 of his paraphrase on *De divinis nominibus*, which will be compared with passages from Books 5 and 6 of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, where the lower gods of his metaphysical system are presented by means of a strict geometrical articulation.

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6 H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink dealt particularly with the reception of the *Platonic Theology* by Pachymeres in their critical edition of vol. 5 of this treatise (1987, LVII-LXIX). As an indication of this we cite their following remarks: "Ces rapprochements nous semblent convainquants et, à nos yeux, suffisent à prouver que Georges Pachymère a connu et utilisé la *Théologie platonicienne* de Proclus. C'est pourquoi, nous croyons pouvoir affirmer de nouveau qu'il constitue un chaînon important dans la tradition byzantine du néoplatonisme et de la *Théologie platonicienne* en particulier. (...) Le texte de Georges Pachymère que nous venons d'étudier nous fournit un bel exemple d'une utilisation par cet auteur de la *Théologie platonicienne* de Proclus. Nous espérons que ce n'est qu'un premier exemple, et qu'une lecture plus attentive de l'oeuvre entière de Pachymère en livrera d'autres encore. D'ores et déjà cet exemple suffit pour confirmer une fois encore la connaissance étendue que Pachymère possédait de l'oeuvre de Proclus." (LXVII).

II. Identity and Otherness

Proclus elaborates the concepts of identity and otherness in his treatise *Platonic Theology* V.39, where the discussion is about the Demiurge in relation to the seventh intellectual monad. This deity, according to the philosopher, despite the lower position it possesses in the metaphysical system, presents clear analogies with the one, as the productive projection or power of the One/Good, given, of course, the ontological priorities and distances.[7] This is a reality which could be characterized as a "second One". Initially, he clarifies that the "one" is examined not only in itself, but also according to the relations it develops with the deities which are inferior to it. Therefore it is examined as a transcendent and also as a productive reality. According to the above-mentioned analogy, Proclus characterizes the Demiurge as identical with himself, having as a starting point that ontological property which is peculiar to him and characterizes his uniqueness, i.e. that unity appropriate exclusively to his hypostasis. At the same time, Proclus stresses that the Demiurge, according to the unrepeatable way he possesses his property in itself, has developed an ontological relationship with the "limit" (πέρας), as a property which poses restrictions by bestowing specific forms. This topic was in its general principles elaborated in Book III (8, 30.15 – 34.19) in the context of a discussion of the *Philebus* (23c7-d8). Transposing this discussion to the *ad extra* manifestations of the Demiurge, Proclus underlines that the identity existing in all other beings consists in a beneficence which the Demiurge himself has bestowed upon them. In all created beings he is present in the same way, suffering no alteration from his immanence in each case. If such alterations were to occur, apart from destroying the metaphysical integrity of the procession, they would have unavoidable consequences for the stability of generation.[8] Therefore, identity, as any other metaphysical category, continuously remains in the same ontological condition relative to the properties it itself possesses, independently of the way it is participated by those beings it has led to existence. In the general consideration of the ontological factors described in this chapter, it is stressed that the Demiurge is not identical with the beings he has created, even though he has bestowed upon them the property of identity, as well as the totality of their other properties.[9] It should also be noted that in many cases Proclus uses the term

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[7] Proclus systematically exposes his theory about the One/Good mainly in Book 2 of his *Plat. Theol.*, Also, cf. Trouillard (1972).

[8] See *ET* §§7 – 13, pp. 8.1 – 16.8. Cf. Trouillard (1977).

[9] See *Plat. Theol.* V.39.143.8 – 145.5: "Πῶς οὖν ταῦτα καὶ διὰ τίνων ἀναφαίνεται; Τὸ μὲν δὴ ταὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ (τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ Παρμενίδης πρώτιστον ἀναδείκνυσι) περὶ τὴν τοῦ ἑνὸς φύσιν τὴν μοναδικὴν καὶ πατρικὴν ἰδιότητα παρίστησι, καθ᾽ ἣν καὶ ἔστιν ὁ δημιουργός· διὸ καὶ ταὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ λέγεται τὸ ἕν. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα κατὰ τὴν τῶν διαφόρων αἰτίων περιοχὴν ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ ταὐτὸν τῆς οἰκείας ὑπάρξεως αὐτοῦ, τῆς πατρικῆς λέγω, σύνθημα προφαίνεται. Εἷς γὰρ ὢν καὶ τῶν ὅλων ἐξῃρημένος πατὴρ καὶ δημιουργός, τὴν οἰκείαν ἕνωσιν ἔστησεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ τὸ μονοειδὲς καὶ τὸ τῷ πέρατι συγγενὲς ἐν τῷδε διαφερόντως δείκνυσι. Τὸ δὲ δὴ ταὐτὸν τοῖς ἄλλοις τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεώς ἐστιν ἐξαί-

διακόσμησις (adornment), in order to describe the production of the lower beings by the superior beings. Consequently, he attributes to causality aesthetic as well as ontological content, rather than a neutral productivity.[10]

Through the term "otherness" Proclus denotes the absolute clarity of the Demiurge as productive principle, with reference to the beings he creates. His transcendent superiority to all those beings which follow him forms the basis of his non-identity with them. In other words, the Demiurge is independent from any relation or communion with sense-perceptible beings, so that no material characteristics can be attributed to him. Of course, deriving the necessary power from the metaphysical realm, the Demiurge adorns sense-perceptible nature and whatever has materiality, without, however, belonging to the same genus with it. In addition, his providence is bestowed through his hypostasis, which has an overwhelming ontological power. He is superior to the beings he creates and remains immutable in his realm. At this point, the philosopher introduces the pair "participable"/"imparticipable", which defines precisely the principle of causality, without leading to any confusion or absorption of the contributing factors.[11] The Demiurge permanently preserves his otherness in relation to the beings he creates, even though they participate in his gifts and through this participation acquire their limited existence. Proclus conceives the essence of the Demiurge as remaining imparticipable, while his projections, as effects of his productive energy, are participable. He also clarifies that, even though the energy of the Demiurge is the immediate source of creation, it does not suffer any alteration, and its ontological integrity is preserved undiminished. More generally, in his ontological system the cause never bestows on the effects the totality of the properties of its hypostasis, thus preserving its superiority to them and avoiding pantheism. On the other hand, every cause functions in a way analogous to the "One", thus preserving, to the extent of its operation, an untouched unity regardless of its emanation. As long as the metaphysical system is enhanced by means of the appearance of new deities, otherness is increased, as it is the basis for the development of the world of sense-experience. Unity, however, is not abolished, but is progressively

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ρετον ἀγαθὸν καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ πάντα προϊούσης καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀκωλύτως διηκούσης αἰτίας. Πάρεστι γὰρ πᾶσιν οἷς παράγει καὶ ἐν πᾶσίν ἐστιν ὁ αὐτὸς οἷς διακοσμεῖ, τὴν γεννητικὴν τῶν ὅλων αἰτίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ προστησάμενος. Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς λέγομεν, καὶ τὸ πέρας ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἄπειρόν ἐστι δημιουργικῶς· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐν τῇ χωριστῇ τῶν ἄλλων ἐστὶ ταυτότητι, τὸ δὲ ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τῇ γεννώσῃ τὰ ἄλλα. Πανταχοῦ γὰρ ἡ δύναμις γόνιμός ἐστι τῶν δευτέρων, ἡ δὲ κατὰ τὸ πέρας ἀρχὴ τῆς ἡνωμένης ὑπάρχει καὶ σταθερᾶς ὑποστάσεως χορηγός". Cf. *In Parm*. 1172.27–1191.9, where the concept of otherness is analyzed.

10 See, for instance, *In Tim*. III.52.25–81.11. In this passage the created world appears as a realization of beauty, while the deities producing it – primarily the Demiurge – are presented to be satisfied by the effect they caused. This condition is justified by the fact that the Demiurge is described as moving in order to create by means of personal intentional movements in order to create a new reality which will be a genuine copy of himself.

11 Concerning the scheme "imparticipable–participated–participable" in Proclus' system, see *ET* §23–24, p. 26.22–28.22. Cf. Dodds' commentary (1963, 1992²), 210–212.

reduced in its absolute characteristics and combined with multitude.[12] It should be noted that in his *Platonic Theology* (Books III-VI) Proclus describes how the initial unity is successively diminished and how the multitude develops in reverse fashion, so that what comes to the fore are the presuppositions of the production of the natural world, informing the infinite multitude of distinctions and renewed developments.

At the beginning of his discussion about the theonymy of identity, Pachymeres observes that each verbal sentence formulated about God should be conceived in a supra-substantial way. Since according to the Christian paradigm God is not at all subject to the mundane circumstances of relative generation, it follows that the expressions by means of which we would attempt to express him signify by analogy. Identity should be conceived in light of God's remaining permanently in himself as on account of his self-establishment he possesses the absolute identity of his essence and of every ontological determination relevant to it. This condition is immutable by definition. Given these presuppositions, any hierarchical articulation within divine reality is excluded; therefore, the expressions through which man refers to his existence must be analogous. The Christian thinker mentions, of course, that identity does not seem to have been preserved in the totality of the created world, since what dominates there is otherness, due to the evolutionary motion giving shape to generation. Otherness, of course, does not denote cosmological gaps, but rather the tension of differentiations among beings and among phenomena. The divine, however, exists in another ontological condition: it is immutable and absolutely motionless, since it is self-defined exactly in terms of its absolute uniqueness and its identity, the latter being the result of induction. Pachymeres explains that concerning God we have to introduce the concept of uniqueness, which defines that the nature of God is incomparable to all other states. This concept incorporates that of identity, which refers to the immutability of God. These are two absolute properties, and, therefore the only thing they should be understood to declare is divine integrity. Up to this point, we remain within the frame of the metaphysics of transcendence, the separate character of the divine with reference to the sense-perceptible. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that, despite the fact that God is separate from the created beings, he bestows on them the possibility of stability in themselves, so that they are not led to disorder that would dissolve their function, their substance and their aim. God supplies them so that they are not led to alienation. Therefore, the existence of the whole natural world is in terms of identity when conceived under the presupposition that it is derived exclusively from God, who bestows it permanence within ontological perpetuity.[13] This, indeed, resembles a metaphysics

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12 See *Plat. Theol.* V.39.145.6 – 146.16. Concerning the role of the Demiurge in this treatise, see Dillon (2000).

13 Pachymeres, *Paraphrasis*, *P.G.*, vol. 3, 925d-928c: Πάντα τὰ τῷ Θεῷ προσεῖναι λεγόμενα ὑπερουσίως λέγονται· ὅθεν καὶ ταὐτὸν λέγεται ὑπερουσίως ὅτι ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένει, καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει ἱδρυμένον ἐν τοῖς καλλίστοις πέρασι τῆς περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν φαινομένης ταὐτότητος. (...) Ἔστιν

of immanence, which in this general context derives from the manifestation of divine energies. Of course, identity does not function in the same way in the metaphysical and the natural world, but supplies a paradigm according to which both are understood to exist as objective realities independently of their differences. In addition, the immanence of the divine indicates that the natural world is not created automatically or by chance, that it is not subject to determinism and that it follows a clear teleological plan. Looking back at the history of philosophy, we could argue that on the one hand, through the function of identity as archetype there is reference to Plato (*Sophist* and *Parmenides*), while through teleology Aristotle (cf. *Physics* 201a-202a; *Metaphysics* 1050a-1051a) comes to the fore. This synthesis is one of Proclus' most favored goals, which he carries out in his commentaries on the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, and a tendency evident both in Neoplatonic and Byzantine thought.[14]

In his elaboration of the theonymy of otherness, Pachymeres initially argues that it, too, has to be approached in a transcendent way. In order to clarify this position in its wider context, he begins his syllogism from the concept of identity. Thus, in accordance with his basic Christian views, he underlines that, even though God remains in his identity, he moves providentially to secure the salvation and the assimilation to himself of all humans who revert to him, having chosen various ways to achieve this. Here there is no question of any mere mechanism. In the same light, he states that the wisdom of God is manifested in various ways as well. Hence we would note that God is activated both as efficient and as final cause. He can thus begin the discussion about divine otherness on the basis of what has been realized by means of divine Revelation. In particular, he stresses that otherness is initially identified with the variety of schemata in the world of sense-experience, which are clearly different from their source. God, in fact, is not manifest by means of his essential self in his appearances and is ontologically different from the totality of beings. Furthermore, he stresses that despite the fact that God as Demiurge appears through the natural bodies, it should be understood that whatever he bestows, he does in an immaterial way. Pachymeres also remarks that even if we were to aim at attributing to God the properties of length, width and depth, which describe bodily dimensions, we should formulate this attribution in a way appropriate to God, stressing that all three properties express aspects of his own way of existing. In particular, through the term "length" we should denote the divine power, through the term

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οὖν τὸ Θεῖον ἀμετάβλητον, καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν κίνησιν ἀκίνητον. (...) μονοειδῶς γὰρ καὶ ταὐτοειδῶς ἀφορίζεται· μονοειδῶς διὰ τὸ παντελῶς ἀπαράβλητον τῆς θείας φύσεως· ταὐτοειδῶς διὰ τὸ ἀναλλοί- ωτον. (...) Καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ ταὐτὸν καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον ὁ Θεός, δωρεῖται τοῖς κτίμασι τὸ ἐν ταὐτότητι δια- μένειν. Ταὐτῶς οὖν ἅπαντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ ἐν ταὐτότητι τῆς φύσεως, ἐν τῷ Θεῷ θεωρεῖται· πάντων γὰρ τῶν ὄντων ταὐτῶς, ἤγουν ὁμοίως, αἴτιος ὁ Θεός.

14 Concerning the many ways Proclus attempts to combine Plato with Aristotle, see A. Kojève (1973), 336–367. With reference to the way the Byzantines conceive a similar task within the frame of the wider aspects of the relations of theology with philosophy, see G. Podskalsky (1977), a treatise which is both historical and systematical.

"width" his providential projection and through the term "depth" his own hidden self. Thus, by means of the first two terms reference is made to affirmative theology and through the third to negative theology. We could argue that all three belong to symbolic theology. At this point, the Byzantine thinker clarifies that when it is said that God is other than the created beings, this does not mean that he himself changes, moving from a certain condition to a different one. To be exact, remaining in his own simplicity, God produces the quantitively many levels of creation of every kind. Using Neoplatonic terminology, Pachymeres notes that divine "procession" has to do with the fact that he creates the totality of beings by means of, so to speak, a motion and flow.[15] Hence otherness, as well, is an expression of the metaphysics of immanence in connection with the construction of the infinite multitude of created beings and phenomena. Immanence here produces effects, which, as such, according to their essence, in their formation and function are other than their source.[16] No relations derive from it in any sense, because the divine active causality remains undiminished. Thus, otherness brings out the differences between the two worlds and further clarifies what it means for everything to have its peculiarity, which is described by means of identity. In addition, pantheism is avoided. Through the manifestation of divine otherness each produced being is formed in a concrete and unrepeatable way. This mode of production, which is quantitively infinite, provides that God does not through production reproduce himself in type.

III. Similarity and Dissimilarity

Proclus examines the categories similarity and dissimilarity in the *Platonic Theology* VI.14, where he refers to the hegemonic gods, who belong to the lower ranks of metaphysical beings. As gods, they are closer to the world of sense-perception, with regard to a causality which is more direct in terms of the relations derived by the effect. As metaphysical multitude increases, the mode of natural generation is approached.

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15 See Pachymeres, *Paraphrasis*, 928c-929b: ὅτι μένων ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῆς οἰκείας ταὐτότητος, τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι προνοητικῶς διὰ τὴν πάντων σωτηρίαν γίνεται, ἑαυτὸν ποικίλως ἐπιδιδοὺς πρὸς ἐκθέωσιν τῶν ἐπεστραμμένων. Διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ πολύτροπος ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφία λέγεται· (...) ἐπὶ Θεοῦ τοῦ πάντων ἐπέκεινα θεοπρεπῶς ὀφείλομεν ἀναπτύσσειν, καὶ ἀνακαθαίρειν, καὶ τῶν σωματικῶν ἀπαλλάττειν τὸ θεωρούμενον. Καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν, ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἰδίως ἐστί, τὸ μῆκος, τὸ πλάτος, καὶ τὸ βάθος, εἰ βουληθείη τις περιάψαι τῷ θείῳ, θεοπρεπῶς ὀφείλει τοῦτο ποιῆσαι· καὶ νοῆσαι μὲν πλάτος τὴν ὑπερεύρειαν εἰς πάντα τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόοδον εἰς τὸ παραγαγεῖν, εἰς τὸ κυβερνᾷν, εἰς τὸ προνοεῖν· μῆκος δὲ τὴν ὑπερέχουσαν τὰ πάντα δύναμιν· βάθος δὲ τὴν ἀπερίληπτον κρυφιότητα. (...) ἑτερότητα λέγοντες ἐπὶ Θεοῦ, μὴ ὑποπτεύσωμεν, ὅτι εἰς ἕτερον καὶ ἕτερον ἀλλοιοῦται τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ἁπλότητι μένοντα τὸν Θεόν, τὰ ποικίλα καὶ παντοδαπὰ εἴδη τῆς κτίσεως παραγαγεῖν, ἐμφαίνομεν.

16 For the function of the concept of procession within Christian thought, see Gersh (1978), 223–225. We could also propose a further utilization of Gersh's interpretation concerning the concurrence between Christian and Neoplatonic thought on the basis of Pachymeres' works.

As in other cases, the philosopher here states that he follows the theogony of the *Parmenides*, according to his own way of interpretation. He argues that, more than the rest, these gods correspond to the categories of similarity and dissimilarity, which they bestow as properties to the beings they have created. Based on this particularization, he argues that each hegemonic god, manifest by means of his own energy, conveys both similarity and dissimilarity to what he creates, categories which clearly denote relations. These relations function both between the metaphysical and the natural world, as well as among the particular beings of the natural world. At the same time, each god initially possesses within himself these two conditions in his own way together with all the rest of them. As to the way each hegemonic god is manifest, Proclus notes that by means of similarity he reverts the created beings to their principles, while by means of dissimilarity he contributes to the development of multitude. Thus, his bestowals are based on the scheme "remaining–procession–reversion",[17] since in the system of Proclus "reversion" is necessary for the completion of the process of creation. Thus, he proves that the reverting entity has consciousness of all terms which will lead it to the realization of the corresponding teleology. It has received these terms from its causes; it discovers and activates them. Here, too, Proclus implements general principles which he had formulated in his treatise *Elements of Theology* (§31–39, p. 34.28–42.7). As to the particular pair, it is stressed that, through his bestowals, each hegemonic god assimilates sense-perceptible beings to intellectual ones. It should be noted that the intellectual field possesses the third place in the metaphysical hierarchy, the climax after the intelligible and the intelligible-intellectual.[18] Since the intellectual field is superior to the hegemonic, the latter plays a mediating role, so as to connect the world of sense-experience with the reality superior to it. It should further be stressed that, within the system of the Neoplatonist scholarch, no direct connection takes place. This is a theoretical position exhaustively elaborated in the whole of his *Platonic Theology*, where he develops and enhances the multiplication of the deities by means of triadic genera.

Within the framework of his exhaustive particularizations, Proclus proceeds to three distinctions between the terms ὅμοιον and ἀνόμοιον. First, he underlines that each hegemonic god imparts similarity in a greater degree than dissimilarity to the progeny that are more proximate, while constituting the essence of things pro-

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17 Concerning the scheme "remaining – procession – reversion" in Proclus, see *ET* §25–39, p. 28.21–42.7. Cf. Dodds (1963, 1992²), 212–223; Trouillard (1972), 78–106 and (1982), 63–91; Beierwaltes (1979), 118–163.

18 *ET* §101–103, p. 90.17–92.22. Cf. Dodds, *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, p. 252–254; Beierwaltes (1979), 93–118; Hadot (1968), 213–246, 260–272. According to the Neoplatonist scholarch the intelligible gods correspond to Being, the intelligible-intellectual gods to Life and the intellectual gods to the Intellect. See *Plat. Theol.* IV.2.10.21–13.18. The hierarchy among these gods is defined by their creative/archetypal function. The evolution from one category of gods to the next one depicts an increasing recession of the initial unity, a condition which, however, is necessary for the generation of the natural world.

ceeding farther from his own hypostasis according to dissimilarity rather than similarity.[19] Secondly, similarity contributes to binding beings, dissimilarity to their division, so that unity is preserved and unfolding continues. Thirdly, identity is the main cause of similarity, while otherness is the cause of dissimilarity. He, however, clarifies that identity and otherness are in mutual collaboration, depending on the particular priority in each case, as imposed by the particular circumstances, both for the production of similarity as well as of dissimilarity. If identity only prevailed, no emanation or evolution would result; if otherness only, every possibility for unity and continuity would disappear. Therefore, the categories "similarity" and "dissimilarity" are terms developing in the metaphysical world, through which it is projected, in the philosophical theonymy of concrete deities, towards the natural world.[20] The reference to development should not suggest that the metaphysical world has initial deficiencies, but that it gradually brings to the fore concrete deities/ontological categories, so as to construct the natural world by means of a concrete ontological plan. It does not possess any gaps of its own, but gives shape, by means of its own specifications, to the necessary presuppositions for the completeness of its products. This completeness will be ultimately expressed when the produced beings revert to the sources from which they derived, by utilizing what has been conferred through their causal manifestation. The teleological example is thus present to all things programmatically. The natural world, as product, is a system within which one sees the function of the dialectic of union with distinction. The latter term increases the value of the particularity of each hypostasis.[21] However, each hypostasis is an expression of a specific unity. As in all other cases, static monism is excluded here, as well, given the domination of the variety of living beings. If this monism prevailed, there would be no development, either metaphysical or natural.

God is absolutely similar with himself, a relation which Pachymeres formulates briefly, due to the fact that, as he underlines, the supreme Principle is not subject to

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19 Concerning the general principles on which he establishes this position, see *ET* §28–32, pp. 32.10–34.10.

20 See *Plat. Theol.*, VI.14.68.1–72.9: Εἰ τοίνυν καὶ ἥδε τῶν θεῶν ἡ τάξις ἀπεικάζει τὰ αἰσθητὰ τοῖς νοεροῖς καὶ πάντα τὰ μεθ' ἑαυτὴν κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὰ αἴτια παράγει μίμησιν, ὁμοιότητος δήπου τοῖς μεθ' ἑαυτήν ἐστιν αἰτία πρωτουργός· εἰ δὲ ταύτης, καὶ ἀνομοιότητος τῆς τῇ ὁμοιότητι συστοίχου· πάντα γὰρ τὰ μετέχοντα τοῦ ὁμοίου, καὶ τοῦ ἀνομοίου μεταλαγχάνειν ἀνάγκη. Καὶ τοῖς μὲν προσεχεστέροις τῶν ἀπογεννωμένων μειζόνως τὸ ὅμοιον τοῦ ἀνομοίου δίδωσι, τοῖς δὲ πορρώτερον προϊοῦσι τῶν ἀρχῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀνομοιότητα μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τὴν οὐσίαν ὑφίστησιν. Ὅλως γὰρ ἡ μὲν ὁμοιότης ἀνάλογον ἐν αὐτῇ τοῖς πατρικοῖς αἰτίοις ἕξει τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ τοῖς ἐπιστρεπτικοῖς πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, ἡ δὲ ἀνομοιότης τοῖς γονίμοις καὶ πλήθους καὶ διαιρέσεως προΐσταμένοις (...) Τὸ γὰρ ταὐτὸν τὸ δημιουργικὸν καὶ τὸ ἕτερον τῆς ἐνταῦθα προέστηκεν ὁμοιότητος καὶ ἀνομοιότητος αἴτιον (...) Γεννᾷ δ' οὖν καὶ ἡ ταυτότης τὴν ὁμοιότητα καὶ ἡ ἑτερότης, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν πατρικῶς, ἡ δὲ ἀχράντως, καὶ ἡ μὲν γεννητικῶς, ἡ δὲ διακριτικῶς· καὶ πάλιν ἑκάτερα τὴν ἀνομοιότητα ὑφίστησιν οἰκείως ἑαυτῇ. Cf. *In Parm.* 1191.10–1201.21.

21 In all the texts of Proclus referring to ontological (both metaphysical and cosmological) matters, the principle of particularity is a basic law. For instance, see *Plat. Theol.* III.28.100.22–102.6. Cf. Bastid (1969), 354–397.

any development or change, and evidently not even to self-reference. On the other hand, exactly by being immutable he is dissimilar to all beings which are subject to becoming. Despite his dissimilarity, however, he bestows similarity on those beings which revert to himself as their source, reinforcing the relation between the cause and the effect without leading to an identity of them. This reversion takes place by means of imitation to the extent that it is possible for these beings of the divine and transcendent archetypes, defined by God as regulative ideals of their way of existence. It is stressed that no such analogous restriction exists for God, since he possesses everything to an absolute degree, without being implicated by anything and without the need to revert to any reality superior to him. In order to avoid misinterpretations, the Byzantine thinker makes the following clarifications as to the relation between the created and the uncreated: the created beings are similar to God, but it cannot be supposed that the relation is also valid *vice versa*, since he uses the argument about the correspondence existing between the image and the archetype. According to the exact meaning of the term, a relation of similarity exists only among the created beings. In other words, the effects are similar to the causes, but the causes are not similar to the effects, which can be examined on the basis of what is bestowed upon them from above and to the degree each one participates in them.

Transferring the discussion to the function of archetypes, Pachymeres notes that God is the cause of the Form of similarity (αὐτοομοιότης) and of any other condition, denoted by the prefix "αὐτο-", which directly contributes to the fact that beings are similar among themselves. Lest it be argued that God is the Form of similarity, he clarifies that this should be predicated in a primary, divine and causal way. God is not ontologically restricted only to the function of archetype, since there would be evident consequences concerning his transcendence. In fact, God offers existence to the Form of similarity, in the sense that in himself he possesses together with their ontological content, of course, all rational sources of beings in an atemporal and unified way, i.e. before they manifest themselves as archetypes, or, according to the Areopagetic vocabulary, as predefinition (*praedefinitiones*).[22] The created beings participate only in what is manifest as archetype, and not in the divine essence. Following this description and on the basis of the new data so far, it is repeated that beings are not only similar to God, but also dissimilar. We would stress that, in a way, an axiological distinction is introduced here. In particular, beings are, or more correctly, become similar to God if they imitate his way of existence, to the extent that this is permanently possible to them. They are dissimilar, however, inasmuch as the distance from their cause is infinite and cannot be bridged with respect to

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22 Concerning the concept of "predefinitions" in Ps.-Dionysius, see Roques (1954, 1983²), 61–64. The "destinations" are specific expressions of divine providence and are participated in a particular way by each category of produced beings. Roques' main contribution in this research is precisely in that he combines the "destinations" with "analogy" and "symmetry", i.e. with the way and the extent of participation of each being in their content on the basis of the divine planning from above.

what is defined by their own essences.[23] It should also be noted that no term like "the Form of dissimilarity" is used. This would set a distance between the two worlds which would exclude any communication between them, through the non-participation of produced beings in the projections of their cause. Absence of participation by definition means either autonomy or initial exclusion of the presuppositions for production. Its presence would pose questions as to the common source of the created beings and the initial common elements among them would also be excluded. Thus, in the description of these theonymies we would note that the metaphysics of transcendence is distinguished from the metaphysics of immanence and pantheism is absolutely excluded. Transcendence is not abolished by immanence, which in the whole Christian tradition is not subject to necessity but is a product of the divine will, which contributes to the manifestation of the divine energies in a particular way.

IV. Rest and Motion

At *Platonic Theology* V.38 Proclus formulates his general views about the intellective gods, or the Intellect, based on his own general theogonic interpretation of the ontological categories of the *Parmenides*. Despite the brevity of this chapter, the philosopher articulates a complete description of these gods, applying basic tenets of his own ontotheological system. Within this frame, he presents some of his views about the categories of "motion" and "rest". The general position from which he derives his theoretical motives is that every god as a cause moves whatever follows its presence. It becomes manifest through its corresponding "procession" by generating life and thus produces the lower divine entities, which it has undertaken to form or to bring to the fore on behalf of the henads.[24] Thus, the god through his presence multi-

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23 See Pachymeres, *Paraphrasis*, 929c-932c: Ὅμοιον δὲ τὸν Θεὸν εἰ μὲν ὡς αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ ὅλον δι' ὅλου εἴποι τις, οὐκ ἀτιμαστέον τὴν θεωνυμίαν. (...) Οὕτω δέ, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅμοιος οὐδενί, δωρεῖται τὴν ὁμοιότητα τοῖς ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστρεφομένοις. Πῶς; Κατὰ μίμησιν τὴν κατὰ δύναμιν τῶν θείων ἐκείνων καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα ὅρον καὶ λόγον ὑπαρχόντων. (...) Τὰ γοῦν παραγόμενα ῥητέον ὅμοια Θεῷ, αὐτὸς δὲ τὸν Θεὸν ὅμοιον οὐ ῥητέον, ὅτι οὐδὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ, ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν ὁμοία τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ. (...) Πᾶσι γὰρ τοῦ εἶναι ὁμοίως αἴτιος ὁ Θεός, καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς αὐτοομοιότητος ὑποστάτης. (...) Τῆς δὲ αὐτοομοιότητός ἐστιν ὑποστάτης, καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ὡς μεθεκτῶς, αὐτοῖς τοῖς πρώτως ἐν τοῖς οὖσι τῆς δωρεᾶς ταύτης μετέχουσι χορηγῶν· πάντα γὰρ οἰκείως ἑαυτοῖς μετέχει τῶν τοιούτων, αἱ μὲν πρῶται· καὶ ὑπέρταται, ἀρχικῶς, τὰ δὲ ἑξῆς, ὑποβατικῶς. Οὐ χεῖρον δὲ εἰπεῖν, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ παραδειγματικοῦ τῆς ὁμοιότητος λόγου ὑποστάτης ἐστὶν ὁ Θεός, ὡς ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔχον ἀεὶ τοὺς λόγους πάντων ἀνάρχως καὶ ἑνιαίως προϋφεστῶτας, οὓς καὶ προορισμοὺς προλαβὼν εἴρηκε. (...) Τοῦτο γοῦν τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον ἑαυτῷ ὅμοιον, ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀσύντακτον (...) τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ καὶ ὅμοια τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἀνόμοια· τὸ μέν, κατὰ τὴν ἐνδεχομένην μίμησιν, οὐ γὰρ τελείως ἡ μίμησις· τὸ δέ, ὅτι μέτροις ἀπείροις καὶ ἀσυγκρίτοις τὰ αἰτιατὰ τοῦ αἰτίου ἀπολείπονται.
24 Concerning Proclus' theory about the henads or the second One, see *Plat. Theol.* III.1.5.5 – 28.30. For a systematic analysis of this theory, see H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink's introduction in the edition of vol. III (1978), IX-LXXVII. The henads are the productive aspect of the One, i.e. the participable level of its presence. They derive from the One without any intervention, while themselves they

plies the metaphysical world by means of new sources of existence, out of which the beings/phenomena of the world of sense-experience will emerge with infinite specifications. However, the same god exists in an absolute identity with himself and ontologically transcends everything he produces. This superiority is expressed by means of the category "rest". With reference to this pair, as well, the metaphysics of transcendence coexists with the metaphysics of immanence, in terms of succession. In particular, motion is presented as the source which bestows life and power, while rest is the stable basis which preserves stability and permanence both of its source and of its product. As an extension of the above relation/difference, Proclus underlines that motion develops a new ontological condition within an existence different from that which moves by means of its own causal powers. The motion of the cause is the basis and compulsory presupposition not only for the motion, but also for the existence of the effect, as well. On the contrary, rest primarily expresses that which remains firmly within the hypostasis of a superior entity in relation to those which are to be developed afterwards, and to which it bestows limitations as well. Thus, these two categories function as complementary, exclusive of whatever is about to proceed. In strict Neoplatonic terms, motion corresponds to "procession", rest to "remaining". It should be noted, however, that in other thematic unities of his work, the Neoplatonist scholarch defines motion, too, as the "reversion" of the produced beings to the source they were caused by.[25] Thus, this pair fully represents the triadic scheme "remaining–procession–reversion", the third factor bestowing completeness as an absolutely active condition, having already undertaken initiative and causation.

Referring to the concept of rest, Pachymeres stresses that we can examine it as that which ontologically corresponds to motionless identity. By means of rest he describes God's stable presence, which does not accept any change. He also clarifies

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are the initial intermediates for the beginning of the metaphysical multitude, which will lead to the production of the natural world. Their Christian equivalent in Pachymeres' texts is the divine energies, which are presented as participable, in contrast with the divine essence, which is considered to be imparticipable. Aspects of this topic as appearing in Areopagetic texts were studied by Lossky (1931).

25 *Plat. Theol.* V, 139.6 – 143.3: Καὶ οὕτω δὴ τὸ ἓν κινεῖσθαι καὶ ἑστάναι λέγων, κατὰ μὲν τὴν κίνησιν τὴν ζωογόνον ὕπαρξιν παραδίδωσι τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὴν γεννητικὴν τῶν ὅλων πηγὴν καὶ τὴν πάντων ἀρχηγὸν αἰτίαν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν στάσιν τὴν τῇ κινήσει συντεταγμένην ἄχραντον μονάδα τὴν τὰ μέσα κέντρα συνέχουσαν τῆς φρουρητικῆς τριάδος. Ὡς γὰρ τῷ πρώτῳ πατρὶ συνήνωται κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ὑπόστασιν ἡ τῆς τριάδος τῆς φρουρητικῆς ἀκρότης, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῇ γεννητικῇ τῶν θεῶν πάντων αἰτίᾳ τῇ κινούσῃ τὰ ὅλα καὶ ταύτῃ πρώτως ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς κινουμένῃ συνυφέστηκεν ὁμοφυῶς ὁ τὸν μέσον σύνδεσμον συνέχων τῶν ἀχράντων ἡγεμόνων, δι' ὃν ἐπὶ πάντα προϊὸν τὸ γόνιμον τῆς θεοῦ ταύτης ἵδρυται μονίμως ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ πάντα παράγον καὶ πολλαπλασιάζον ἐξῄρηται τῶν ὅλων καὶ ἀκλινὲς ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τῶν ἀπογεννωμένων προϋπάρχει. Κίνησις οὖν ἐνταῦθα καὶ στάσις, ἡ μὲν πηγὴ τῆς ἐπὶ πάντα προερχομένης ζωῆς καὶ γεννητικὴ δύναμις, *** ἑδράζουσα μὲν τὴν ὅλην ζωογόνον πηγὴν ἐν ἑαυτῇ, πληρουμένη δὲ ἐκεῖθεν τῶν τῆς ζωῆς γονίμων ὀχετῶν. This is a chapter where Proclus uses passages from other Platonic dialogues, e. g. *Phdr.* (245c5 – 247c1) and *Laws* (895e10 – 898b8). Cf. *In Parm.* 1152.15 – 1172.26.

that, as in the other ontological categories, every reference to rest is restricted by the limitations of negations protecting transcendence from cognitive capture. Rest is a category which particularly depicts the "remaining" of God in his own self, thus expressing transcendence. Since, however, the supreme principle functions at the same time causally as well, the Byzantine thinker stresses that God is the cause of rest and permanence of all beings and also the ontological site where they have acquired their corresponding goods in a stable way.[26] Thus, it is a category which secures a kind of transcendence even for created beings, or at least integrity, since following the Christian teaching in general the Good functions according to nature and universally defines rules of a strict quality. Since the term "motion" may cause misinterpretations when referring to God, Pachymeres excludes any similarity to the motion which relates to the sense-perceptible and the transcendent realities, i.e. the angels. Thus, he underlines that it is more exact to talk about the motion of the unmoved, which is defined as the will of God concerning the production and the bestowal of specific forms upon beings. He also defines it as the procession of divine providence, which is present to all beings in an absolute way without, however, introducing to them any relation with itself. Within the frame of Christian monism, it is stressed that as there are no other causes of beings, we cannot discuss any other kind of metaphysical motion. Thus, as unique cause, God selects any motion he thinks proper for his manifestation with respect to the material world in a creative and providential way, manifesting in such a way so as to lead the totality of beings to revert to him as their exclusive cause.[27] Therefore, the categories "rest" and "motion" implement precisely the triadic scheme "remaining–procession– reversion" and provide a perspective for the realization of the teleological or the eschatological orientation of creation. Similar correlations and differences between Proclus and Pachymeres are also seen in cases of other pairs of concepts, like that of equality and inequality.

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26 Pachymeres, *Paraphrasis*, 932d. Similarly with what was proposed in note 15 above, for the correspondences between Proclus and Ps.-Dionysius concerning the pair "motion–rest", see Corsini (1962), 92– 95.

27 Pachymeres, *Paraphrasis*, 932d-933d: Στάσιν καὶ καθέδραν τὸ αὐτὸ δέχεται, πρὸς τὴν ἀκίνητον ταὐτότητα ἑκάτερον ἀναπτύξας. (...) τὸ ἀκλόνητον καὶ ἀμετάστρεπτον τοῦ Θεοῦ, βεβαίαν στάσιν ἐκάλεσεν· ὡς καὶ τὸ καθῆσθαι τὸ ἐν ἀνονομάστῳ βάσει καὶ ἀναπαύσει διαρκῶς καὶ ἀκαταλήπτως ἔχειν· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ τῆς πάντων στάσεως καὶ ἕδρας αἴτιος, ἐν ᾧ πάντα συνέστηκεν ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις ἀγαθοῖς διαφυλαττόμενα. (...) θεοπρεπῶς τὴν κίνησιν ἐκληψόμεθα· κινεῖται γὰρ οὐ κατά τινα τῶν ἐξ παρὰ φιλοσόφοις κινήσεων, οὔτε κατὰ γένεσιν, οὔτε κατὰ φθοράν, οὔτε κατὰ αὔξησιν, οὔτε κατὰ μείωσιν, οὔτε κατὰ τόπον, οὔτε κατὰ ἀλλοίωσιν. (...) Ἀλλὰ κίνησις τοῦ ἀκινήτου ὡσαύτως ἔχοντος λέγεται ἡ εἰς τὰ ὄντα βούλησις αὐτοῦ· καὶ αἱ πρόοδοι τῆς εἰς πάντα προνοίας αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ παρεῖναι πᾶσι τῇ πάντων ἀσχέτῳ καὶ ἀπολύτῳ καὶ ἀσυναφεῖ περιοχῇ. (...) ἡ κατὰ γένεσιν κίνησις εὐθέως γίνεται, τὸν τῆς γενέσεως αἴτιον θεοπρεπῶς κατ᾽ εὐθεῖαν κινεῖσθαί φαμεν.

V. Conclusions

After what has been examined, we can formulate the following concluding remarks:

1. Pachymeres is indicative of the way Byzantine thought approaches ancient Greek philosophy in a sober and fertile way. In his texts Proclus and Plato are used and evaluated in a way that allows the spiritual dimensions of their thought to emerge in the context of the attempt to analyze the production of the world of sense experience. Indirectly, but clearly, he describes how we can use elements from the Neoplatonic tradition to comprehend in detail the transition from the metaphysical to the sensory world.

2. He accepts the mobility of the metaphysical plane and excludes those static ontological schemes causing gaps between the transcendent and the natural worlds. The two worlds communicate by means of the multiple immanent presence of the former within the latter. Of course, this presence presupposes whatever preexists in the metaphysical world as its plan.

3. He consistently moves within what is defined by the Christian affirmative theology, which emphasizes the limits of the human cognitive spectrum. In particular, through the theological utilization of Proclus' ontological doctrines, he proves that part of, or rather, one way of existence of the triadic god can be the object of knowledge by means of evidential reasoning. These are the divine energies, which he sees in their philosophical dimensions in the Platonic ontological categories and their Neoplatonic interpretation. By means of these categories he describes the theonymies as perceived by Christianity. In this way the theonymies can to an extent be transposed to a system of thought different from their own. It could be argued that he thus introduces a version of metaphysics as a cohesive system of truths, which human cognition can approach theoretically and through which interpret its initial aims. In other words, it is a rational construction of metaphysics, which allows its research through its own products or presences in the world of sense experience. Undoubtedly, Pachymeres makes theology a strict science with a philosophical background. On the other hand, he is already the bearer of a tradition which had formed the necessary conceptual and methodological stuff for the systematic articulation of theology.

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III Proclus in Arabic philosophy and Early Modernity

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On the Absence of the Henads in the *Liber de Causis:* Some Consequences for Procline Subjectivity

The extent of the influence of both the *Arabica Plotiniana* and *Proclus Arabus* on early Arabic philosophy is difficult to determine and remains a question open to study. Nevertheless, those remarkable mutations of the *Enneads* and the *Elements of Theology*, early products of the transmission of Greek scientific texts into Arabic,[1] each in its own way had significant influence on both Arabic and Latin medieval philosophy. Their study is both worthwhile and likely to be fruitful, especially if we come to a better understanding of their relations to their Greek originals. This is not to say that no excellent studies exist; quite to the contrary, exceptional work has been done on revealing the nature of the doctrines of these texts, particularly but not exclusively by Richard Taylor and Cristina d'Ancona. However, what has been little considered as yet is how the omission from Arabic Plotinus and Proclus of certain elements or doctrines found in, and crucial to, the original texts has affected the transmission of key ideas from these originals. This article is an attempt to do just that, but only with respect to one work in the larger collection sometimes referred to as *Proclus Arabus* and, even then, only with respect to a very specific question, namely the question of the individuation of incorporeal entities, particularly souls.[2]

The question arises from recent re-evaluations of Proclus' doctrine of henads which show that the Gods (henads) in Proclus' philosophy are primal individuals and are thus the source of the individuality of all inferior beings.[3] Now, it is precisely the henads whose importance to Proclus' metaphysics is manifest in his *Elements of Theology* and whose absence is most conspicuous in the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī l-khair al-maḥḍ*—the Arabic version of the Latin *Liber de Causis* and which I will refer to as the Arabic *Liber*—which was derived primarily from the content of the *ET*. It would stand to reason that, if the henads are the ultimate principles of individuation in Proclus' metaphysics, their absence would result in a loss of the conceptual means to

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1 They are generally agreed to be products of the circle of translators and scholars gathered about the philosopher al-Kindī in the late 9th century; see, e.g., d'Ancona (1995a); Endress (2007a); Endress (2007b).

2 In this essay, I only consider the propositions contained in Badawi (1955), hereafter cited as *Liber* followed by Badawi's pagination and lineation. I do not consider the somewhat different arrangement of propositions in Thillet and Oudaimah (2001–2002); nor the different collection of 20 propositions edited and commented on in Endress (1973); nor again the two additional propositions in Zimmerman (1994).

3 Butler (2005) and (2008). Dodds already in the commentary to his translation of the *Elements of Theology* had recognized the One as such a source of individuality. Dodds (1963, 1992²), 199.

ensure individuation, at least for incorporeal beings, unless replaced by some other principle or principles. It is my contention that the Arabic *Liber* does not, in fact, offer a viable principle of individuation for incorporeal beings. From an ethical perspective this is not a trivial lack: the henads are metaphysical principles which Proclus can and does use to justify attribution of unique essential identities to individual souls. This allows him to avoid the unwanted loss of individuality that would otherwise follow upon the separation of souls from matter, if matter were the only available principle of individuation. In such a case, souls, when released from matter, would simply merge into a single, universal soul or a series of identical universal souls (which amounts to the same thing).

This is an unbearable solution for philosophers who tend to a Platonic view of human nature. Late Ancient Neoplatonists, indeed, recognized this problem and sought to address it. They saw clearly that the doctrine of the immortality of the rational soul to which they held posed a significant challenge to those wanting to give an explanation of the diversity of souls. In other words, what prevents all souls, when separate from body,[4] from being just one single soul or a series of identical souls?[5] This challenge is only made more acute by the fact that this same position prohibits them from making body or matter a principle of individuation, as at least some Peripatetics could reasonably do and had done. Instead, they need a principle of individuation consistent with their metaphysics, where the individuality of souls is preserved independently from matter. Proclus' solution to this problem was to posit an individual form for each soul.[6] Accordingly, individuality for Proclus—what we might call personal identity if we are careful not to think of it in post-Cartesian terms—is an essential attribute of soul, not an accident of embodiment. Yet, Proclus takes this solution further. It is not enough to posit a form for each soul; rather, in accordance with his ontology this form must have its ground or foundation in a higher principle. Thus, human individuality as expressed by the form of soul, like all individuality, finds its ultimate origin prior even to Form and Being, in the Gods or henads themselves. This is because the henads are prior to and beyond Being as the causes of Being, and thus the ultimate foundation for all Forms, themselves grounded in Being Itself.

This conception of the individuality of souls is attested in a number of passages in Proclus' works, but not explicitly in the *ET*. Nevertheless, the principles laid out there synthesize in such a way as to lead to this conception which Proclus lays out more clearly elsewhere. In particular, as I will show, the ultimate principles of Proclus' view of the individuality of souls are indeed outlined in the propositions

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4 This is the true test of the uniqueness of souls. So long as a soul is in a terrestrial body, the composite of this soul and body is easily distinguishable from others (with the exception perhaps of some sets of twins). It is only when the particularities of body (i.e. matter) are stripped away and soul is left on its own that it becomes difficult to distinguish individual souls from each other.
5 These sorts of issues were already addressed with respect to Plotinus in Armstrong (1977), but have now been discussed in detail concerning Proclus in Riggs (2015).
6 *In Parm.* 819.13–16; *idem*, *In Ecl.* 212.4–16; *In Tim.* III.279.11–30; *ibid.*, III.262.6–10.

on the henads; when considered in relation to the relevant propositions on soul, the result becomes evident. Once this has been demonstrated, it will be possible to show how the Adaptor[7] of the Arabic *Liber* re-works Proclus' propositions in a way that diminishes the capacity for these propositions to be used to account for the individuation of souls.[8] This constitutes the first and larger part of the essay; the second part will show, through engagement with the works of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870–950 CE), how the absence of this capacity could have affected the attempt of early Arabic philosophers to account for the diversity of souls while holding to a Platonic or quasi-Platonic notion of authentic self.[9]

I. Remarks on the Structure of the Arabic *Liber*

The Arabic *Liber* is a short arrangement of 31 propositions composed mainly of translations and paraphrases of propositions and portions of propositions from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.[10] However, some of the propositions are augmented by translations or paraphrases of passages from Plotinus' *Enneads* and, on occasion, even whole propositions seem to have their source in the Plotinian work.[11] This is not an unreasonable strategy: Proclus' metaphysics is obviously indebted to and is a particular development of the metaphysical formulations first proposed by Plotinus. Certainly, the Plotinian material as it is re-worked in the *Plotiniana Arabica* does not contradict the Procline spirit of the *Liber*.

Cristina d'Ancona has written extensively about the structure of the *Liber*. She suggests that the text be considered to be organized in two main parts, the first laying out the hierarchy of supersensible principles while the second enumerates their characters and functions.[12] She determines a number of sub-sections within these two broad parts according to the sections in the *Elements of Theology* from which the Procline material in the *Liber* has come and according to the thematic unity in the propositions within such a group. These divisions, although the justification for their lim-

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7 I name the unknown author of the Arabic *Liber* the "Adaptor", following Peter Adamson's designation of the unknown author of the Arabica Plotiniana; see Adamson (2002).

8 Whether the Adaptor did this wittingly or unwittingly has no bearing on the subject at hand.

9 The concept "authentic self" is one which I have used elsewhere to designate the essential, immutable self-identity which the Platonic soul represents, in contradistinction to post-Cartesian conceptions of self which tend to incorporate the contingent or embodied aspects of human experience which authentic self would exclude. See Riggs (2011).

10 As is well known, some of the later Latin translations of the Arabic *Liber* have 32 rather than 31 propositions, the fourth proposition being split into two. I will refer exclusively to the ordering of the propositions in the Arabic text.

11 The English translation of St. Thomas Aquinas' commentary on the Latin *Liber de Causis* conveniently offers references to relevant passages from the *Enneads*; see the notes for the relevant propositions in the English translation of Aquinas' commentary on the *Book of Causes*, Aquinas (1996).

12 D'Ancona (1995e), 52.

its is quite plausible, have little bearing on the thesis of the present article. What is more significant for my purposes is, rather, D'Ancona's enumeration of the "interventions doctrinales" employed by the Adaptor when arranging the Procline material to accommodate his own ends. These interventions are the principal means by which the Adaptor has made his new arrangement to hold together and to express through the arrangement the meaning which he intended to convey. In abbreviated and paraphrased form, these interventions are as follows:

1. The Adaptor systematically suppresses Proclus' references to a plurality of Gods.
2. Contrary to Proclus, the Adaptor refers to the first principle as "Pure Being", just as the Adaptor of the Arabic Plotinus does.
3. Contrary to Proclus, the Adaptor regards the first principle as universal cause of all being, creating from nothing.
4. Contrary to Proclus (but like Plotinus) the Adaptor posits a super-sensible hierarchy of only three principles: One, Intellect, Soul. The henads and the Limit-Unlimited pair have been eliminated.[13]

I am principally concerned with the consequences of the first intervention, the removal of references to a plurality of Gods. Investigation of the nature of these interventions is not the principal aim of d'Ancona's paper; she adds little more than the observation that "parmi les neufs cas où il [the Adpator] a rencontré de pareilles allusions [to the henads], sept fois il a remplacé πᾶν τὸ θεῖον, οἱ θεοί par un mot clé: Cause Première."[14] This observation is valuable, but I want to go further and explore this intervention in greater depth.

Of the 31 propositions in the *Liber*, only six seem to be derived from the propositions in the *ET* dealing with the henads. A seventh seems to be derived from both propositions in the *ET* and passages in Plotinus' *Enneads*. In every case, all reference to a plurality of henads or Gods has been removed by the Adaptor. But this is not all that the Adaptor has done. The Adaptor has also re-distributed the functions attributed by Proclus to the henads to other principles, namely to First Creating Being (God) and to First Created Being (Intellect). In other words, the Adaptor recognizes the value of the functions assigned to the henads and seems to believe that he can preserve those functions by re-assigning them either to the higher principle or the lower, whichever one seems most appropriate in relation to the overall metaphysical hierarchy. Even if he has succeeded in this, his manoeuvre has come at a price, at the loss of the role of the henads as primal individuals which the Adaptor may or may not have recognized but which nevertheless did not survive in the new adaptation. In order to understand this loss, we have to see what this lost function is and how it was present in the original *Elements*, or how it is that the henads contribute to the individuality of souls.

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13 *Ibid.*, 45–46.
14 *Ibid.*, 45.

II. Henads as Primal Individuals

In Proclus' *ET*, the henads function primarily as a metaphysical bridge between the simplicity of the One and the multiplicity of Being and, accordingly, as an expression of the One in terms of Being. In other words, the doctrine of the henads is offered as an explanation of how a principle which is a pure unity, lacking all determination because it transcends determination, can produce a principle which is a unified whole containing within itself a vast multitude of determinations: this is clear from the argument of *ET* §116 alone.[15] In such a system the henads act as the primal grounds of all things, each one individually leading a series of existing things, communicating to them their own particular character and unity. Without the henads the leap from the simplicity of the One to the complexity of Being is, as seems to be Proclus' view, incomprehensible. There is nothing belonging to the One which may be participated and so the multiplicity of Being cannot be comprehended from the bare simplicity of the One. The henads act as a bridge between the One and Being, standing as "ones" whose simplicity is marked by a singular character and whose combined simple characters produce complex Being. These characters proceed as far as, and even beyond, human soul. Fortunately, Proclus gives us in other treatises some clear indications of how the henads bestow their characters on souls.

Proclus explains in the following significant passages, within the context of soul as primary subject of discussion, the sources of soul's individuality:

> *In Parm.* 819.13–16[16]
> We ought to posit that there is an order of Forms, and that there is a simple Form [*eidos*] of every soul; every soul is monadic and subsists according to one formula [*logos*] which is proper to it. For one soul does not differ from another by means of matter; either it will differ by nothing at all or according to Form.

> *In Ecl.* 212.4–16
> For it is necessary to know this, that every soul is distinguished from every other by Form [*kat' eidos*], and for every soul there is an equivalent number of Forms of souls. In the first place, according to a single Form, there is an *hypostasis* of many individuals [which bear] the form of the One in both matter and the composites among beings, a single underlying nature participating the same Form in various ways. Therefore, if soul's being is *logos* and simple Form, either a soul will not be differentiated essentially from any other, or it will be differentiated according to its Form; for 'that which is' alone will differ, and Form alone 'is'. Whence it is clear that every soul, even though it is full of the same *logoi* [as every other soul], has obtained one Form which separates it from the others, just as the heliacal Form characterizes the heliacal soul, and so on.

Soul is differentiated by form according to the first passage, and in the brief mention of heliacal souls in the second, there is an allusion to soul's attachment to a partic-

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ular God. Soul is differentiated by form since only "what is" can provide difference and this form bears the stamp of a leader God. This is made clearer in the following selections:

> *In Tim.* III.279.11–30
> But [souls] differ from each other according to the hegemony of the Gods (for different herds are ranked by different herd-leading dominions) and according to the projections of their *logoi*. For among those [ranked] under the same God, some choose the life which is appropriate for them and others do not; some enjoy the rank of the same God according to one power and others according to another. What matter is it, if some which are suspended from the power of mantic Helios should project a medical or telestic life, but others a Hermaic or Seleniac life? For there is not the same manner of variation for both. Furthermore, [souls] are differentiated according to their *prohairēseis*; for even if two [souls] should choose the telestic life, it is possible that one should live rightly in light of its choice, and the other to live in a distorted manner. For each of the lives receives both the well and ill. Thus, if it be necessary to speak summarily, either they are perfected by the same power and choose the same life and live in the same way, or [they are perfected] by the same power but [choose] not the same life and [live] not in the same way, or [they are perfected] not by the same power but [choose] the same life and live in the same way, or [they are perfected] not by the same power and [live] not in the same way and [choose] not[17] the same life. For this is the last difference of all. Therefore, so many are the ways of differentiating [souls].

> *In Tim.* III.262.6–10
> Let us add that the Form [*eidos*] and character come to their attendants [i.e. partial souls] from the leader Gods. Now, this form is number and it defines the peculiar nature of the life. Therefore, so many as are the leaders, thus many are the forms of life which follow them.

These last two passages directly concern the influence of the Gods upon individual souls. Souls are differentiated not only by their forms but, prior to form, by the Gods to whose series they belong and according to the power of the God which is primarily manifest in them. The soul's form and the God are not two independent factors in the individuation of soul; rather, the God and the form work together, the God through the form, to individuate the soul. It is important to keep in mind that, as we see above, there are other individuating factors as well, but these must be understood to proceed from the Form of the soul.

It is my contention that, although Proclus is not concerned to make explicit in the *Elements of Theology* the henads' individuating influence on souls—the *Elements* seems to be primarily concerned with the nature of spiritual causality—nevertheless such influence is implicit in the propositions on the henads. This influence is indicated by the henads' communication of their characters (*idiotētes*) to the things which participate them. It is upon this notion of the characters of the henads, then, that our attention ought to be focused. Once we have a working understanding

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17 There is a ὑπ' which follows in the Diehl edition but which Diehl has marked for deletion. I have deleted it from the translation on account of the interruption of the sense of the passage which it introduces.

of how these characters delimit not only the henads but their productions as well, we will be prepared to consider the effects of their absence from the *Liber*.[18]

Edward Butler's recent work has shown that Proclus significantly distinguishes the mode of the super-essential (*huperousios*) henads' procession from the One from that of beings from Being, that there is a henadological procession which operates according to a logic of its own which is different and prior to the ontological procession of beings.[19] The henads proceed from the One by way of unity (*kath' henōsin*) rather than by way of sameness or identity (*kata tautotēta*) as do beings. The procession of beings, which proceeds by sameness involves a declension in power, or a diminution of being so that the most remote beings, corporeal beings, have the least power and least being. Procession by unity is implied at §132:

> *ET* 116.28 – 118.1 (§132)
> All the orders of Gods are bound together by mean terms. For all the processions of beings are completed by means of like terms. Much more then do the ranks of the Gods possess indissoluble continuity, insofar as they subsist in a unitary manner and are defined according to the One, their originating cause. And so their declensions come to pass in a unified manner and in a way greater than that according to the likeness to first things [exhibited] in the essences of secondary things, and by so much more does the *hyparxis* of the Gods subsist in unification than beings do.

The henads thus comprise a community whose unitary bond is superior to any analogous bond amongst beings. They are a unitary community of perfect individuals, not a sum of members or parts, all expressing a primal unitary nature which they share with the One Itself. The henads proceed from the One, then, and share its unitary nature, as is expressed also in the first proposition whose primary subject is the henads, §113: "All the divine number is of a unitary character."[20] Their unity is identical with their subsistence and does not come from outside of them.[21] Accordingly, there is no diminution of unity in the procession of henads; hierarchy only appears in reference to their powers which are known from the beings which participate them.

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18 There appear to be doctrinal differences between the *ET* and Proclus' massive *Platonic Theology*; cf. Lankila (2010). These differences are of no consequence for the current project: no distinctive trace of the *Platonic Theology* is discernible in the *Liber*.

19 Butler (2005). Siorvanes had already earlier asserted that the henads were principles of individuation for all beings, even future contingents and possible beings, in other words things which do not yet exist. Nevertheless, in Siorvanes' account the distinction between the henadological and ontological logics is more implicit than explicit, and the theory of henads is not so thoroughly worked out as in Butler, "Polytheism". See Siorvanes (1996), 169 – 174. Despite the clear value of Butler's work, a number of scholars seem to have been unable to agree with his ultimate conclusion, that there is no One Itself and that there are only henads. Even if it is true that Proclus' logic requires this conclusion, as Butler thinks, it is nevertheless clear that Proclus does not go so far as to make it; for such criticisms, see MacIsaac (2007), 148; Lankila (2010), 72; Chlup (2012), 118.

20 *ET* §113, 100.5.

21 Cf. Guérard (1982).

As primal unities, they possess as identical with their *hyparxis* or very nature two kinds of *idiotēs*, or character, and they possess these characters on account of their relationship to the One, the first principle of Proclus' metaphysics. The first of these is the divine character (*theios idiotēs*), the unity which is characteristic of the One and Good. On account of this character the henads are self-complete and a God (§114): "For as henad it is especially akin to the One, and as self-complete especially akin to the Good, and it participates both these aspects of the divine character and is a God."[22] This divine unity also makes the henads unknowable in themselves and absolutely simple and self-sufficient (§123 and §127).[23] The other character possessed by the henads is that which distinguishes each one from all the others as an expression of its own unique individuality, the subject of §118:

> *ET* § 118, 104.5 – 7
> Everything which may be a certain (feature) in the Gods pre-subsists in them according to their own special character and their special character is unitary and super-essential. Therefore all of their features are in them unitarily and super-essentially.

Each henad communicates its character, its *idiotēs*, through the whole series of beings which are attached to it (§125).[24] Each of the beings in the declining series possesses this character in a lesser degree than the God, according to its rank in the series. Thus, each God stamps its own individuality upon each of the beings in its series, but without diminishing that individuality in itself.[25]

Finally, it is necessary to note that the henads are both attached in a one-to-one proportion with real beings and that, at the same time, they are all of them in all beings as far as to the lowest of beings, and even non-beings (§135 and §142).[26] Thus,

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22 *ET* §114, 100.22 – 25.

23 *ET* §123, 108.25 – 110.9 and §127, 112.25 – 34.

24 *ET* §125, 110.29 – 32.

25 There is also a character (*idiotēs*) which belongs to each order (*taxis*) of henads which is communicated to beings. This is the subject of §145. It is to this character that the ordering principles outlined in §146 – 150 refer, with the actual classifications of ranks and orders following in §151 – 165. There is nothing in any of these propositions to suggest that the character of an order is an attribute which would be supervenient on the characters of individual henads within an order. The *idiotēs taxeōs* seems to be nothing more than a way to arrange both henads within an order and orders within the whole number of henads in a hierarchy in terms of the more universal and more particular and according to recognized similarities in their activities.

26 *ET* §135, 120.1 – 16: " Every divine henad is participated immediately by some one being and every divinized [being] is linked upward to a single divine henad"; *ET* 124.27 – 126.7 (§142): "The Gods are present to all things in the same way." These two propositions ought to be read in conjunction with §162, 140.28 – 142.8: "All the plurality of henads illuminating True Being is hidden and intelligible: hidden as connected to the One, intelligible as participated by Being." On this passage Dodds (1963, 1992²), 282 remarks that he is unable to reconcile the content of §162 with that of §135, in that the latter posits a one-to-one relation between henads and their immediate ontic participants whereas the former posits a multiplicity of henads illuminating (*katalampon*) the unparticipated

beings share in the particular, individual character of their leader, but also share in the presence of the other Gods in some way, although evidently the Gods are not present to beings in the way that they are present to each other. The point of all of this is that beings are determined in their individuality first by the character of their leader God, their divine principle, then in other, less salient ways, by the other Gods, always through the mediation of intermediate beings. The mediation of divine gifts, which necessarily involves a diminution of power, ensures that beings are infinitely less perfect than the Gods. Accordingly, the individuality of particular beings will be consonant with their degree of imperfection, in contrast to the individuality of the henad which is just the expression of its absolute perfection.

What we find, then, in Proclus' doctrine of henads as he presents it in his *ET* is that the henads, which constitute a multiplicity within unity, act as the ultimate principles of individuality for beings, including souls; they do so both through their intimate relation to their own series and through the mediation of their gifts through the hierarchy of beings. Thus, all beings in the cosmic hierarchy of Intellects, Souls, and bodily Natures will be more or less particular and complicated expressions of the totality of simple henadic characters, but expressing those attributes especially which belong to their leader Gods. As shown earlier, with just a few examples in the quoted passages, Proclus discusses this aspect of the henads more explicitly in some of his other works. Yet, the role of the henads as principles of individuality is amply represented nonetheless in the *ET*. That we do not find in this work the full account of the individuality of souls is of little interest. What is important is that the principles from which such an account may be drawn are present in it. When once we see how these propositions have been either omitted or altered in the *Liber*, we will be able to see easily how this short treatise has lost the ability to offer an account of individuation.

III. Re-Distribution of henadic labour in the Arabic *Liber*

As mentioned above, there are only seven propositions in the *Liber* which contain material from the propositions on henads in Proclus' *ET*, and one of these also contains a substantial amount of material which probably comes from *Arabica Plotiniana*. Altogether, in these seven propositions, constituting about a fifth of the *Liber*'s

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form of Being. *Pace* Dodds, I think that his concern is unjustified. In §162, Proclus is referring to the "illumination" of the form of Being by the first order of henads. §135, on the other hand, concerns the individual henad as leader of the series of beings which is particularly attached to it. The relationship of leader to series does not preclude the presence of the other henads to the beings in that series (as per §142), it only indicates that the leader's presence predominates.

propositions, there are represented seven propositions from the *ET* concerning henads. The correlations are as follows:

1. *Liber*, §4 = *ET* §138 (but also §177, §182 and §183)
2. *Liber*, §5 = *ET* §123
3. *Liber*, §19 = *ET* §122
4. *Liber*, §20 = *ET* §127
5. *Liber*, §22 = *ET* §134
6. *Liber*, §23 = *ET* §142
7. *Liber*, §31 = *ET* §116 (but also §107)

The presence of originally henadological material in the *Liber* is found, as indicated in the list of correlations above, in the early and later parts of the text, sometimes complemented by other material from the *ET*, but also from the *Enneads* through the *Arabica Plotiniana* (not shown in the list). These sections of the *Liber* have to do with: 1) a preliminary sketch of the intelligible hierarchy (§4 and §5); 2) the First Cause in the name of First Being as it is known through its creative activity (§19, §20, §22, and §23); and 3) return to the First Cause as the unity prior to all derivative unity (in the second part §31).[27] Passages *ET* §132, 116.28–118.1 and *ET* §118, 104.5–7 quoted above are not represented in the list. This is understandable, since §132 and §118 have to do just with the particular characters of the henads, which the Adaptor determinedly omits from his text altogether. Although these passages concern the crucial concepts of henadic unity and henadic *idiotēs*, their absence alone is not sufficient evidence for the lack of a principle of individuation in the *Liber*. The Adaptor could conceivably have found some way to retain such a principle through the material which he did borrow from the *Elements:* we have to examine the propositions in the *Liber* which depend on material about the henads to see that he did not. I will examine the propositions not in the order in which they appear in the text, but in the order which seems best to draw out the Adaptor's views on individuation; furthermore, I will not discuss §20 or §31, since neither of them seem to contribute anything of significance to the subject of individuation. I will begin with an examination of the first part of the *Liber*'s §4.

Although §138, found amongst the propositions concerning henads in the *ET* and the original source of the first part of the *Liber*'s §4, does not specifically concern the henads as primal individuals, the comparison of it with its derivative offers a prime example of the modifications made by the Adaptor. Here are the relevant portions of the two propositions:

> *Liber* 6.7–13 (§4)
> The first of created things is Being, and nothing else is created before it. This is because Being is above sense, above soul and above intellect. After the First Cause, there is not a more extensive and more abundant effect than it [Being], and for this reason it came to be higher than all cre-

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27 On the thematically coherent structure of the sections in which these propositions are found in the text, see d'Ancona (1995e), 47–52.

ated things and to be more powerfully united. It came to be so only because of its nearness to the Pure Being, the True One, in which there is no multiplicity in any way. Created Being, although it is one, comes to be multiple, which is to say that it receives multiplicity. It became many only because, although it is simple and nothing among created beings is simpler than it, yet it is composed of Limited and Un-Limited.

ET §138, 122.7–15

Of all the things that participate the divine character and are divinized, the first and highest is Being. For if Being is beyond Intellect and Life, as has been shown, if indeed it is the cause of the greatest number of things after the One, then Being is the highest. Of these [principles] it is the one more like the One and because of this is in every way more revered. There is nothing else before it except the One. Prior to the unitary plurality what else is there but the One? But the unitary plurality is Being, as being composed of the Limited and the Unlimited.

The first modification to make note of is the Adaptor's substitution of creationist language for Proclus' language of participation: the Adaptor calls Being, *anniyya*, "created", *mubtad'ā*, which is a passive participle of the root *b-d-'*, "to create", and this term has decided overtones of a doctrine of creation from nothing;[28] Proclus' Being (*to on*) is designated first of those things which participate (*metechontōn*). This is a deliberate modification in line with the monotheistic worldview of the author (whether that author was Muslim, Christian or Jewish) and is consistent throughout the *Liber* and also in agreement with the kind of causality described in the *Arabica Plotiniana*. The second thing to note is the Adaptor's replacement of the hierarchy of Being (*to on*), Life (*tēs zoēs*) and Intellect (*tou nou*) by the hierarchy of Being (*anniyya*), intellect (*'aql*), soul (*nafs*) and sense (*ḥiss*, referring to material sensible objects). This is a purely contextual modification: whereas Proclus was expositing on the order of procession of the imparticipable principles from their originating henadic orders, the Adaptor modifies the Procline proposition to conform to the hierarchy of kinds of beings which are created by the First Cause. The rest of §4 borrows from later Procline propositions pertaining to intellects and not henads; yet, as we shall see, the next few lines following those quoted above in *Liber*, 6.7–13 (§4), are important for understanding the Adaptor's solution of the individuation problem. I will, however, leave the examination of these lines aside for the time being, until after considering the significance of the content of §5.

§5 is a brief exposition of the *Liber*'s negative theology, and is dependent upon §123 in the *Elements*, abridged versions of which I will present here:

Liber 8.11–13 & 9.4–7 (§5)

The First Cause transcends description. The deficiency of languages with respect to its description is only because of the description of its being, because it is above every single cause. [The First Cause] is described only through the descriptions of secondary causes which are illuminated by the light of the First Cause. [...] For there is description only through logic, logic through intellection, intellection through discursive thought, discursive thought through imagination,

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28 For al-Kindī, in whose circle the *Liber* was most likely written, *ibda'* most certainly refers to God's creation of all things from nothing; for relevant references, see Walzer (1962), 188–190.

and imagination through the senses. The First Cause is above all things because it is the cause of them, and for this reason the description of it does not fall under sense or imagination or discursive thought or intellection or logic. Therefore, it is not subject to description.

ET §123, 108.25–110.3
All that is divine is itself ineffable and unknowable to all secondary things through a super-essential union, but is grasped and known from what participates it. Therefore, only the First is completely unknowable, because it is unparticipated. All knowledge by means of reason is knowledge of beings and has a faculty which comprehends the truth among beings (for indeed it touches intelligible objects and subsists in intellections). But the Gods are beyond all beings. Divinity is an object neither of opinion, nor of discursive thought, nor of intellection. All being is either perceptible by the senses, and then it is an object of opinion; or it is true being, and then it is intelligible; or it is between these two, at once being and becoming, and then it is an object of discursive thought. Thus, if the Gods are super-essential and subsist prior to beings, then there is neither opinion, nor science and discursive thought nor intellection of them.

The Procline proposition clearly concerns the henads, although Proclus refers to them as *pan to theion* and *hoi theoi*. Whereas Proclus posits a distinction between the One (the First divine) which is completely unknowable because imparticipable and the henads which are unknowable in themselves but known from what participates them, the Adaptor attributes the henadic character of being knowable from participants rather to the First Cause (*al-ʿilla al-ūlā*). Again, the Adaptor eliminates the language of participation and so the First Cause is not knowable through its participants but instead by the "secondary causes" which it "illuminates".[29]

Proclus is able to argue that the henads are known from their effects because he has already argued that, since they belong to the domain of the One, the henads are determinate unities (§118,104.5–7 quoted above). They do not acquire their determinate characters from their participants; that would be absurd according to Proclus' own logic. What Proclus means is that the character proper to each henad is in itself unknowable and only becomes known to us through the beings which participate it. The Adaptor's modification poses a significant dilemma, then: either the First Cause is able to bear a whole host of attributes, and is thus determinate, or the secondary causes (i.e. intellects) alone bear the attributes. The first horn of the dilemma would obviously complicate the First Cause and contradict the Adaptor's assertion, in §8 that the First is "only Being" (*anniyyat faqaṭ*) and so without Form, in the sense of exceeding Form: the First would be reduced to the level of intellect, but the Adaptor takes pains to avoid this reduction. The second horn of the dilemma relegates all determinations to an intellect or to intellects. This would be problematic because Intellects only take part in creation as mediators, each mediation multiplying and diversifying the gifts from the First: they do not contribute any particular attribute or character of their own to the Forms which they mediate, so that when we arrive at

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29 Of course, the language of illumination is not foreign to Proclus' thought. Proclus conceives of participation often in terms of illumination, as, e.g., in §§70 & 71, 66.11–68.16.

the level of rational souls, it is hard to see what attribute or character they would receive that would differentiate them from one another.

However, it seems that the Adaptor has chosen to commit to the first horn and to try to solve it by asserting that all things are in the First insofar as it is their cause – in addition to the two chapters which we will consider shortly, this claim appears either directly or indirectly in §5, §8, and §11. The Adaptor leaves us wondering how the multiplicity which resides in the First as a simplicity is able to manifest itself in the first Intellect. This problem is enhanced by the omission of Proclus' §128, §140, and §145 where he argues that the various communications of various henads and henadic orders are extended throughout the entire hierarchy of beings: by omitting the principles expounded in these propositions the Adaptor eliminates the Procline source of the individuation of lower beings. The question, then, is whether the Adaptor has recognized this and, if so, whether he tries to offer an alternative.

In fact, it does seem that the Adaptor has recognized the problem of individuation in advance of §5 and attempted to solve it in §4. In order to evaluate that solution, we must now return to §4 and examine the following lines:

> *Liber* 6.13 – 7.7 (§4)
> This is because every part of it that follows the First Cause is intellect, perfect and absolutely complete in power and the rest of the goodnesses. The intellectual forms in it are more extensive and more powerfully universal. The lower part of it is intellect too, although it is inferior to the former intellect in perfection and power and goodnesses. The intellectual forms in it are not as extensive in their abundance as they are in the former intellect. The first created Being is altogether intellect, although the intellect in it is diverse in the way in which we have said, and because the intellect is diversified the intelligible forms there become diverse. Just as from a single form, so when it is diversified in the lower world, individuals infinite in multitude come about, so too with first created Being: because it is diversified, infinite forms appear.[30] Although they are diverse, they are not different from each other as individuals are different. This is because they are united without corruption and separate without distinction, since they are a one possessing multiplicity and a multiplicity possessing unity.[31]

According to the Adaptor, the hierarchy of intellects share a single Being out of which they are diversified according as they are more or less universal; in another part of §4,[32] the Adaptor remarks that souls are differentiated in the same way as intellects. The example of diversification the Adaptor offers is highly instructive. Intellects are diversified out of the one created Being just as forms in the sensible world are diversified out of the one universal form: in other words, intellects, like sensible forms, are diversified by virtue of their substrate. Although the substrate in the case of

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30 This is a decidedly un-Procline notion.

31 The participle "possessing" translates *dhāt*, a term which is often translated in philosophical contexts with various names like "essence" and "self" but which in the present context can only bear the more rudimentary sense of the term, namely the sense of "possession" which belongs to the root word, *dhū*.

32 *Liber* 7.12 – 13 (§4).

the sensible forms is presumably matter, matter cannot be such in the case of intellects, and so the intellectual substrate remains unnamed. What can this substrate be?

The most likely candidate for the substrate is the very existence of the individual intellect, created all at once by the First Cause in its original creative act. Cristina d'Ancona has argued, through an analysis of §17 and related texts in the *Plotiniana Arabica*,[33] that the Adaptor introduced into the *Liber* a distinction, not to be found in the *ET*, between the creative activity of the First Cause and the creation *mediante intelligentia*, according to which intellect acts on lower beings "*per informationem*". On the one hand, the First Cause produces the existence of all beings from nothing: "the First Being is immobile and the cause of causes; if it gives being to all things, then it gives it to them by way of creation (*ibdā'*)."[34] This is in contrast to the causation exercised by intellect: "intellect gives to what is under it knowledge and the remaining things by way of form (*sūra*), not by way of creation; not by way of creation since that is for the First Cause alone."[35] In fact, this distinction is found in the *ET*, not in §102 on which the *Liber*'s proposition seems to primarily depend, but in §137, concerning the cooperation of the One and the henads in the production of beings. Proclus writes rather significantly there of beings that "their simply existing (*einai*) is made by the One; but their congenital (*sumphues*) existence is produced by the henad with which they are congenital."[36] From the following sentence it is clear that the "congenital" existence is just the henad's *idiotēs*. While this production takes place at the super-essential (*hyperousios*) level, at the level of essence or being (*ousia*) the distinction, were it made, would be that between the simple existence produced by the One and the *formed* existence produced by intellect.[37] Now, this is precisely the distinction that the Adaptor makes, and so it would seem that he has here re-assigned a henadic function to intellect. What the Adaptor does specifically add to this doctrine is the notion of creation, which is genuinely foreign to Proclus' thought. The result of the Adaptor's adaption and modification of the original Procline distinction combined with the content of Liber, 6.13 – 7.7 (§4), is that, as it would seem, we are encouraged to conceive of the existence given by the First Cause in *creation* as a kind of intelligible substrate which is receptive of the intelli-

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33 D'Ancona (1995d), esp. 76 – 85. I refer the reader to d'Ancona's references there and in the other articles cited in the present paper for excellent and extensive analyses of parallel passages in the *Plotiniana Arabica* and the *Liber*.

34 *Liber* 19.9 – 10 (§17).

35 *Liber* 19.11 – 12 (§17).

36 *ET* §137, 120.35 – 122.1. Dodds' translation of this statement is rather misleading. The Greek text: ἀπλῶς μὲν εἶναι τοῦ ἑνὸς ποιοῦντος, τὸ δὲ συμφυὲς εἶναι τῆς ἑνάδος ἀπεργαζομένης, ἧ ἐστι συμφυὲς. Dodds takes the ἀπλῶς to modify ποιοῦντος, but the context speaks against it. The distinction made is between two kinds of existence each being produced by its respective agent, so that what is produced by the One is simple, indeterminate existence whereas what is produced by the henad is the existence which is determinate in accordance with the henad's own *idiotēs*.

37 This simultaneous action of lower and higher causes is stated in general terms in §56, 54.4 – 22 and is represented in the very first proposition of the *Liber*.

gible content that is given by way of form from the First Cause through the mediation of the first intellect.

The relation between these two forms of causation is developed further in §19, §23 and §22 of the *Liber*. §19 concerns the simultaneity of providential activity toward beings and transcendence over them which characterizes the First Cause.[38] This simultaneous exteriority and interiority was attributed by Proclus, at §122, to the henads, and not to the One.[39] It was they who provided goodnesses (*agathotētes*) or perfections from themselves in a single procession. The Adaptor has condensed the whole range of goodnesses (*faḍā'il*) or perfections originally contributed by the plurality of henads into a single, undifferentiated emanation of Being from the First Cause.[40] It is there that the Adaptor asserts: "For the first goodness emanates goodnesses to all things with a single emanation," as was the case with the one Being, as seen above. Thus, diversity of goodnesses only results as a result of the imperfect receptivities of the recipients of the single goodness from the First Cause.[41] This is confirmed again in the *Liber*'s §23, which explains the unitary mode of the First Cause's immanence in beings[42] which, however, is diversified by its recipients. Again, this was originally posited as a characteristic of the henads by Proclus in §142.[43] The *Liber*'s §22 explains that what intellect contributes "by way of form" (according to §17) is knowledge (*'ilm*).[44] Yet once again, the Adaptor re-assigns a henadic character, here divine intellection, as in §134[45], but this time to intellect or first created Being rather than to the First Cause. Thus, it seems that the substrate that the First provides is a single emanation of goodnesses or perfections which carries, undividedly, all the goodnesses or perfections which beings may receive and is diversified by the receptive capacities of the various kinds of beings. Intellect only mediates knowledge or intellectual content to lower beings, namely souls.

Is this conception of an intelligible substrate an adequate principle of individuation for souls? It seems that it can at least give an account of the difference between *kinds* of beings, for example the difference between intellects and souls. Yet, it seems unlikely that it will be sufficient to differentiate from each other members *of the same kind*, since the only differences that the Adaptor seems to recognize amongst incorporeal beings are the difference between kinds and the difference between the more

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38 *Liber* 20.9–21.17 (§19).
39 *ET* §122, 108.1–24.
40 Goodness and Being are posited as identical ("one and the same") in §19.
41 This begs the question of how recipients of differing capacities (intellects, souls, etc.) came to be, if the First Cause created all things at once as a single Being. In other words, in order for the one Being to be diversified according to the diversity of the recipients, those recipients would seem to have to exist somehow prior to their reception of the one Being. §19 would seem to suggest this, but nowhere is the potential problem discussed.
42 *Liber* 24.2–25.2 (§24).
43 *ET* §142, 124.27–126.7.
44 *Liber* 23.6–24.1 (§22).
45 *ET* §134, 118.20–32.

and less universal within kinds. Proclus clearly saw this difficulty and argues against a material principle of individuation, as is clear in in *In Parm*. 819.13–16 and *In Ecl*. 212.4–16 quoted above: only form contains the necessary difference by which to individuate souls. His further specification that there is a Form for each individual soul implicitly argues against even the notion of a formal substrate (in other words a genus or species), like the *Liber*'s Adaptor posits. For Proclus, as well as for the Adaptor, individual souls are recipients of a formal substrate from the One and of a universal intellectual content from intellect; on the other hand, Proclus' souls also receive along with that content a Form which belongs only to them, which individuates their lives and which has its source in the absolute individuality of a leader God. Matter has no determination of its own and so cannot be a principle of difference in the way that soul's form is. Plotinus, too, explicitly posits forms for souls, at *Enneads* V.7,[46] although he does not tie them to henads, of course. The Procline and Plotinian views on the nature of the human soul as an eternal being – in this sense closer in ontological rank to the Forms in Intellect than to the forms in matter − require this doctrine in order to make sense of how such entities, none of which has more being than any other, can remain differentiated when separated from body. If soul is only differentiated by its contact with matter through animation of a particular body with particular temperaments and abilities, then in separation from body after death, there is no longer any means by which to differentiate the many souls which will necessarily be simultaneously disembodied. In separation from body all souls would just be one soul; needless to say, this is problematic for anyone who wishes to maintain that individual persons survive or to maintain a system of rewards and punishments in an afterlife. For someone like Alexander of Aphrodisias, who does not share these interests and for whom soul is nothing but the inseparable form of an organic body which is generated and perishes along with the body, adoption of matter as a principle of individuation poses either few or no difficulties. Now, the Adaptor of the *Liber* does not take Alexander's route but, like Proclus and Plotinus, maintains that soul has an eternal essence. It stands to reason then that the Adaptor would eventually be forced to confront the difficulties associated with adopting a quasi-material principle of individuation within a formal Platonic ontology; this is not the case, however, and so we have no insight into how he would have resolved the confrontation. On the other hand, we do have an example of such a confrontation in the metaphysical works of the philosopher al-Fārābī. It is to a brief examination of that particular confrontation that I will turn in just a moment.

However, before moving on to Fārābī, it is worth considering why the Adaptor did not adopt the Plotinian-Procline notion of form as principle of individuation for incorporeal beings. On the one hand, this doctrine is not explicitly stated in Pro-

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46 *Enn.* V.7 [38]. But see also *Enn.* IV.3 [44].5 & IV.3 [44].12 where the notion is implied but not stated explicitly. Blumenthal sees *Enn.* V.9 [5].12 & VI.5 [23].8 as rejections of the notion; see Blumenthal (1966), 61–80. Armstrong later argued persuasively for a consistent doctrine of forms of souls in Plotinus; see Armstrong (1977), 49–68.

clus' *Elements,*[47] even if it is so stated elsewhere in his works (as in *In Parm.* 819.13 – 16 and *In Ecl.*212.4 – 16); one might be tempted to say that the Adaptor just didn't have enough knowledge of Proclus' full body of work to make the necessary connection in the *Elements.* On the other hand, although Plotinus explicitly and (most likely) implicitly adheres to the doctrine, none of the relevant passages has been paraphrased in the *Arabica Plotiniana.*[48] Since it is clear that the Adaptor knew the *Arabica Plotiniana* quite well, the apparently determined omission of the doctrine of forms of individuals in the latter might indicate that the Adaptor's omission of the same from the *Liber* was intentional. If it is correct to regard the *Liber* as an attempt, along with the *Theology of Aristotle*, to fill perceived gaps in Aristotle's metaphysics, then this is perhaps understandable: it may just be that the Adaptor of the *Liber*, like the Adaptor of the *Arabica Plotiniana*, thought that the notion of a form of soul was too incompatible with Aristotle's criticism of Platonic forms to be believable as an Aristotelian doctrine.[49] Whatever the truth of this might be, we see a similar framework adopted in the extant philosophical works of Fārābī.

IV. Fārābī on the Individuality of Soul

Fārābī carried out his philosophical work, for the most part, in Baghdad during the first half of the 10th century CE. Accordingly, he had access to the fruits of the project

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47 Although one might reasonably suppose that it is implied in the assertion that soul's essence is eternal, as at §191, 166.26 – 168.10.

48 This is clear from Lewis' concordance of the passages of the Arabic paraphrase with their Plotinian originals, as found in Henry/Schwyzer (eds.) (1959). The list of omitted passage includes even those which Blumenthal (1966), 61– 62, considered to contain rejections of the doctrine of forms of souls.

49 Regardless of what one might these days think about the proposition that a Neoplatonic metaphysic of procession and reversion could be compatible with Aristotle's system of unmoved movers, the case had been made by the Neoplatonists of the 5th and 6th centuries CE. In addition to Proclus, some of whose metaphysical work was known to the Arab philosophers (even if not in his own name), was Ammonius son of Hermias, Proclus' student and head of the Platonic school in Alexandria in the 5th – 6th centuries CE. His treatise on Aristotle's God as efficient cause of the cosmos seems to have been known to the philosophers in Baghdad. Ammonius' treatise is mentioned in al-Fārābī (ps.–?)'s *Harmonization of the Opinions of Plato and Aristotle* (al-Fārābī [1999], 135.1– 2). Fārābī's authorship of this text has recently been questioned, most forcefully in Rashed (2009). Even if Fārābī is not the author, it seems more than likely that whoever the author is, this person was active in the same intellectual milieu as Fārābī: Rashed makes a case for Yaḥya ibn 'Adī as author. Beyond this, it has recently been argued that Fārābī was dependent to some extent upon Ammonius, although not necessarily upon Ammonius' treatise on Aristotle's God, for his understanding of the goals of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; see Bertolacci (2005). It is possible, but not certain, that Ammonius's treatise was known also in Kindī's circle. In any case, the general Neoplatonic project of harmonization of Platonism and Aristotelianism was continued there, as is shown by the doctrines of the *Arabica Plotiniana* and *Proclus Arabus.*

of translation of Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic which had begun with the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Manṣur and was still in full swing during Fārābī's own lifetime.[50] It is clear that he had access to translations that came out of the circle of translators assembled by al-Kindī and, in all probability he had access to both the *Arabica Plotiniana* and to the *Proclus Arabus*. In light of the character of his metaphysics, it seems likely that he at least read and was influenced by one or the other of these bodies of work, or perhaps by both of them. Although there is nothing in Fārābī's works which would indicate a direct relation to the *Liber*, such as borrowed phrases or common terminology, yet there are general metaphysical parallels which make a comparison between Fārābī's metaphysical writings and the *Liber* worthwhile.[51]

These parallels are manifest primarily in the metaphysical part of Fārābī's philosophy, and this part includes the perfection of human soul within its domain.[52] At the pinnacle of this metaphysics is a First Cause (*al-sabab al-awwāl*), which is the First Existent (*al wujūd al-awwāl*) and Intellect (*'aql*), from which all beings or existents receive their existence (*mawjūd*). In addition to the causality of the First is the causality of celestial souls and bodies through the intellectual activity of the secondary intellects which proceed in descending order from the First Cause. There are echoes here of the kind of causality to be found in both Proclus' *ET* and in the *Liber*, although there are also significant differences. The terminology that Fārābī uses for his conception of metaphysical causality – *f-w-ḍ* (to flow or ema-

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50 The best introduction to the 'Abbāsid translation movement is Gutas (1998).

51 A recent attempt to draw out these parallels can be found in Janos (2010). The author's attempt is much appreciated but the article's argument is plagued, at the very least, by a mis-reading of the relation between efficient causality in the *Liber* and in Proclus' *Elements*. Janos takes efficient causality to refer to causation of the very *existence* of things. On this basis, he declares that the *Liber* emphasizes the omnipotence of God and minimizes the causal power of intellects which are only intermediaries. He intends for this remark to indicate a distinction between the causality of intellect in the *Liber* and that in Proclus' *Elements*. However, this is not the case. For Proclus, the efficient cause of things is a demiurgic cause, in other words a cause which imposes form upon lower beings in accordance with the order of things as they exist in an intelligible paradigm; see *In Tim.* I.263 ff.. The One itself, the first principle, is responsible for the existence of things by virtue of its role as final cause; see it stated explicitly at Pr. *ET* 120.35 – 122.1 (§137 quoted above); stated somewhat less clearly at Pr. *ET* 14.24 – 16.8 (§13 where the One and Good conserves things in their being by being that which all things desire). That this is the relationship between demiurgic causality and the causality of the One has already been observed in Opsomer (2000), 127. With a clearer reading of effective causality, Janos' outline of the parallels between Fārābī and both the *Liber* and Proclus can be amended accordingly. For discussion of other thinkers who made use of the *Liber*, see Taylor (1986).

52 In what follows, and for the sake of brevity, I will primarily make use of the following texts: al-Fārābī, *Opinions des habitants de la cité vertueuse*, ed./trans. A. Cherni (2011a), hereafter cited as Fār. *Virtuous City*, followed by Cherni's pagination and lineation; al-Fārābī, *La politique civile ou les principes des existants*. ed/trans Cherni (2011b), cited hereafter as Fār. *Political Regime* followed by Cherni's pagination and lineation; and al-Fārābī, *Letter on the Intellect: Risâlah fî l-'Aql*. ed. Maurice Bouyges (1938), hereafter cited as Fār. *Letter on the Intellect* followed by Bouyges' pagination and lineation.

nate)[53] or *lazima ʿan* (to follow necessarily) instead of *ibdāʿ* – and for referring to the First – *wujūd* and *ʿaql* rather than *anniyyat faqat* – constitute the most immediate departure from the text of the *Liber*. Perhaps more significantly, the details of the causality of the secondary intellects differ sharply from those in the *Liber*. In Fārābī's account, the intellectual production of the secondary causes is twofold, intellection of the First resulting in the production of a lower intellect and self-intellection resulting in both self-substantiation and production of a celestial soul and body.[54] In the *Liber*, there is no such hard distinction between intellect's intellection of the First and its own self-intellection: what Fārābī divides into two acts are, in the *Liber*, just two aspects of the one act of intellectual self-constitution.[55] Regardless of these differences, what is important to see here is that there is for Fārābī, as for the *Liber*'s Adaptor, a substrate which is produced by the First Cause, which is then in-formed by the secondary intellects. In other words, like the metaphysics of the *Liber*, Fārābī's metaphysics lacks a formal principle of individuation.

A further parallel is Fārābī's conception of the incorporeal nature of the soul, at least when it attains to its perfection. Fārābī seems to conceive of soul, prior to intellection, as something like the inseparable form of the body, so that souls are initially individuated by the particularities of their body.[56] The highest faculty of such a soul is its material intellect, which is called thus because it is, prior to its use, a *tabula rasa* awaiting inscription. Through a structured program of study of reality the soul is able to actualize this intellect, to fill it both with intelligibles abstracted from matter and with higher intelligibles which are apprehended as they are in themselves without need for abstraction.[57] When the individual soul has intellected all or most of the intelligibles which there are, it has then attained to a substantial exis-

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53 Although, as we have seen above, the Adaptor of the *Liber* does sometimes make use of "emanation" as technical term, but as a synonym of "creation". The latter is never used by Fārābī.

54 Fār. *Virtuous City* 83.1–87.17.

55 *Liber* 10.14–11.12, §7: intellect knows what is above it and what is below it according to its substance (*bi-nauʿi jawhar*); *Liber* 16.5–11, §14: a knower reverts to its essence with a complete reversion and this reversion is its *qāʾim thābit bi-nafsihi* ("standing established in itself"), which translates the Greek *authupostatos* ("self-constituted").

56 Fārābī's account of the co-development of soul and body at Fār. *Virtuous City* 141.4–155.3, is nearly identical in detail to the account given by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *De Anima*, in which text Alexander makes clear that soul is the inseparable form of a body. However, at Fār. *Political Regime* 39.1–63.19, Fārābī makes an effort to distinguish souls from forms by positing that souls are potentially separable from body whereas forms of non-animal bodies are not. Soul's faculties constitute a hierarchy according to their objects' greater or lesser degree of abstraction from matter: in this sense, sense-perception is more like a form than intellection. Since the objects of soul's intellection, the intelligibles, are entirely separate from matter, then when soul intellects them, and because a complete identity between intellect and its object characterizes intellection, soul is something more than form and separable from body. This is exemplified by celestial souls, which have only the intellectual faculty and thus are always separable from the bodies that they move.

57 The outline of this very program is the subject of al-Fārābī's *The Attainment of Happiness*, *Kitāb taḥṣīl as-saʿāda*, ed. Al-Yasin (1992).

tence which is independent of body: at this stage, the soul has become the image of the Active Intellect, called acquired intellect ('*aql mustafāḍ*) by acquiring the very content of the latter, and so itself has become intellect.[58] The Active Intellect is the lowest intellect in the hierarchy of secondary intellects/causes proceeding from the First; it is both the final and efficient cause of human perfection, which perfection is just the assimilation of human intellect to the content and activity of the Active Intellect.[59] Human intellection is only possible, in fact, because the Active Intellect provides soul with the light by which it abstracts intelligibles from sensible things and apprehends the higher intelligibles. Like intellect in the *Liber*, the Active Intellect in-forms soul.

It is at the point at which soul has become assimilated to the Active Intellect that Fārābī is confronted with the problem of the individuation of souls separate from body. He recognizes clearly the result of his conception of soul's intellectual development: he says that when there is more than one individual in existence who has reached the stage of acquired intellect, then the souls of those individuals are all like one single soul.[60] Of course, this "single soul" is also nearly identical to the Active Intellect, differing from it only because the soul's content is not so complete as the Active Intellect's and because soul's intellection of the intelligibles proceeds in time from the lowest to highest, whereas the Active Intellect grasps them all at once an in order from the highest to lowest.[61] Thus, although human intellect, even in its perfection, differs from Active Intellect on account of its lower ontological status, all perfect human souls are necessarily identical and undifferentiated insofar as they have attained perfection. Although Fārābī often seems not to be concerned about the impersonal nature of the perfected soul, his concern becomes apparent when he considers the survival of perfected souls in the afterlife. Although he is not clear about his motivations in his expositions, Fārābī seems to have realized that the total loss of personal individuality which is the result of his conception of human perfection poses an ethical difficulty. In order to avoid the loss of personal individuality in the afterlife, Fārābī solution is to retain matter as the principle of individuation:

> *Virtuous City* 267.1–6
> Since these souls, which are separated [from the body], were in different matters, it is clear that the dispositions of the soul follow the temperaments of bodies, some more and others less. Every disposition of the soul is of necessity a temperament of the body which it was in and there follows the necessity that these dispositions [in the body] differ with respect to each

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58 Fār. *Letter on the Intellect*, 20.4–22.2.

59 As final cause, or goal of human endeavour: Fār. *Virtuous City* 241.6; Fār. *Political Regime* 37.1–3; *Letter on the Intellect*, 31.3–32.7; as efficient cause of human intellection, Fār. *Virtuous City* 183.4–185.15; *idem*, *Political Regime* 49.1–51.1; *idem*, *Letter on the Intellect* 25.4–27.7.

60 Fār. *Virtuous City* 261.8–263.4; Fār. *Political Regime* 165.5–13.

61 Fār. *Letter on the Intellect* 27.8–30.2.

other on account of the fact that the bodies which they were in differ. Since the difference of the bodies is without definitive limit, the differences of souls are without definitive limit too.

Somehow, in the afterlife, souls which have attained intellectual perfection still retain some relation to the body which they had previously animated. It is difficult to conceive how the particularity of bodies continues to ensure the particularity of souls after death, precisely because, for Fārābī, it is only those souls which have assimilated themselves to the universal content of intellect that survive and the loss of the organs to which the lower faculties are tied would imply the loss of those faculties. This has the look of a philosophical *deus ex machina* and, unfortunately, Fārābī gives us no more detail about his position by which we could come to a more favourable judgment.

Conclusion

If the foregoing analysis is correct, then I have shown that the omission of the henads from the paraphrase of Proclus' *Elements* which became the *Liber de Causis* is, at the least, not inconsequential. In fact, the omission may have had a tremendous impact upon those philosophers who made use of it, including Fārābī. In the process of re-assigning to either the First Cause or to the first intellect the explicit functions which Proclus assigned to the henads, the Adaptor lost the individuating principle which the very nature of the henads provided. Instead, the Adaptor posited an intellectual substrate, an intellectual counterpart to the matter of sensible things, as a principle of individuation of incorporeal beings. With this principle, the Adaptor is only able to account for the generic differences between incorporeal beings—whether a particular being is intellect or soul—and of the more and less universal within a particular kind of being. Thus the Adaptor is unable to account for the individuality of human souls, which would all have a similarly universal intellectual content. Those readers of the Arabic *Liber de Causis* who would attempt to adapt its doctrines to their own thinking, as it is very likely that Fārābī has done, would have to confront this problem, a problem, I suggest, which will also be found in the *Arabica Plotiniana*.

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Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's (d. A. D. 1043)[1] *Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* is contained in the Escorial MS 888 in the Arabic collection of the Escorial Library in Madrid. The title-page of the manuscript reads: *kitāb an-nukat wa-ththimār aṭ-ṭibbīya wa-l-falsafīya* (*Book of Medical and Philosophical Gists and Fruits*).[2] Rosenthal[3] has noted two dated owner's marks on the title-page of the manuscript (the earliest 722/1322). The manuscript consists of fourteen sections, of which the text we discuss is the eighth section, i.e. folios 91a to 114a. Brockelmann in his *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* preserves an incomplete list of the contents of the manuscript.[4]

Concerning the author of the *Istithmār*, Brockelmann provides the following information: Abu ʾl-Farağ ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ṭayyib al-ʿIrāqī was Secretary to Catholicos Elias I. He was a physician and teacher at the ʿAḍud Hospital in Baghdad; he died 435/1043.[5] On the other hand, Graf[6] provides a full account of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's life including his literary output and teaching activity.

Pythagoras' *Golden Verses* was translated into Arabic and studied by M. Ullmann in an unpublished dissertation,[7] collating a number of Arabic versions of the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. As Linley pointed out "these versions may be regarded as copies of a single authoritative translation with some variants of a minor nature."[8] Then, it is reasonable to assume that the Arabs knew the Pythagorean poem through a literal translation. In 1965 Rosenthal translated one Arabic version into German[9] and from this Marmorstein, basing on Rosenthal's translation, translated it into English.[10]

According to Linley, Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* does not depend on the standard Arabic translation of the poem itself. Regarding the question of his sources, it is possible that Ibn al-Ṭayyib consulted an Arabic or Syriac translation or even a compilation from one of his contemporaries.

1 Vernet (1971/1986²) 955.
2 See Linley (1984), Introduction, i.
3 Rosenthal (1978), 274.
4 Brockelmann (1943–1949), I, 635 and *Supplementbände* (1937–1942), I, 884.
5 Brockelmann (1937–1942), I, 635.
6 Graf (1947), 160 ff.
7 Ullmann (1959).
8 Linley (1984), Introduction, iv.
9 Rosenthal (1965), 165–168.
10 Rosenthal (1975), 118–120.

There is no hint that he may have consulted some original Greek source. However, this assumption cannot be ruled out, since he was expressly credited with a knowledge of Byzantine and ancient Greek. Whenever Ibn al-Ṭayyib "needs to quote verses, he does so by means of what must be taken as his own paraphrase of the Greek original," says Linley.[11] All the ideas of Greek origin, according to Rosenthal,[12] adduced by Ibn al-Ṭayyib were common property in his circle and required no recourse to particular sources.

The author of the supposed Commentary on the *Golden Verses*, which Ibn al-Ṭayyib says he used, is named *Brqls*, which may be read as Buruqlus, i.e. Proclus. The name of Proclus occurs twice in the Commentary, once in the title and again at the very end of the text. As Linley noticed, "the scribe who copied Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary was uneasy when confronted with Greek names."[13] Here a question is raised as to whether there ever was a Commentary on the *Golden Verses* by Proclus Diadochus. Also, one may ask whether Ibn al-Ṭayyib had access to such a commentary or whether Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary "is a misattribution, due to the misreading of Buruqlus for the less known Neoplatonist Hierocles." Reading *Yrqls* (=Hierocles) can be easily explained, since dots are not always written or not read correctly by a scribe in the manuscripts.[14]

It was Walzer who suggested the relationship of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary to that of Hierocles. The explanation hinted at by him depends precisely upon the vicissitudes suffered by Greek names at the hands of Arab scribes. The name *Yrqls* (i.e. Hierocles) can be read as *Brqls* (i.e. Proclus) just by reading *b* instead of *y*, i.e. by adding a single dot. "Since Greek names are frequently hard to identify when transcribed into Arabic, the question whether this is a case of misattribution, or misunderstanding of a relatively uncommon name – that of Hierocles (*Yrqls*) – for a commoner one – that of Proclus (*Brqls*) – becomes the more pressing."[15]

Now, in Arabic sources, there are references to a commentary by Proclus. The existence of two Arabic manuscripts, one containing a commentary on the *Golden Verses* attributed to Proclus, the other containing another commentary attributed to Iamblichus, has also been known for some time.[16] Linley indicates that Iamblichus' commentary, as opposed to Proclus' commentary, uses the standard Arabic translation of the *Golden Verses*. However, the two texts appear to have little in common. Linley then quotes Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, in which Ibn al-Nadīm mentions, in his section on Proclus, a commentary on the *Golden Verses*. He characterizes it as a "Commentary on the Golden Exhortations of Pythagoras in about 100 folios. There

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11 Linley (1984), Introduction, v.

12 Rosenthal (1978), 275.

13 Linley (1984), Introduction, vi.

14 Walzer (1986), 1339 – 1340.

15 Linley (1984), Introduction, vi.

16 Endress (1973), 26 – 27.

is also a Syriac version; he made it for his daughter. Thābit translated three pages of it, and then died, without having completed it."[17]

As Linley states, "Hierocles' Commentary[18] presents the matters raised in the *Golden Verses* in such a way as to make them suitable preparatory material for the student's progression towards the more exacting disciplines of Logic, Physics and Theology … the Pythagorean poem itself is considered to be a text upon which to base a preparatory ethical treatise avoiding questions relating to Theology and Philosophy … in the Commentary of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, questions of Theology and Metaphysics are touched upon here and there, but there is no indication that these are restricted matters."[19]

Concerning the triad Being-Life-Intelligence, its occurrence, according to Linley, "does not furnish evidence that a lost Commentary by Proclus may have formed the basis for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's work. While it is true that Proclus' system employs the triad,[20] it is equally true that the same triad is found so frequently in later Neoplatonic writers that it may be said to have become a commonplace."[21]

Moreover, Linley concluded that there was no indication that Ibn al-Ṭayyib had access to an Arabic translation of a commentary on the *Golden Verses*, and made use of it as a basis for his own work. In any case, Linley adds that "until such time as further material is forthcoming, it can be said simply that the tone, compass and atmosphere of Hierocles' work do not immediately invite the suggestion that his work formed a basis for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary; there is a thoroughly reverential atmosphere developed and sustained by Ibn al-Ṭayyib which may stem from a Greek original, but hardly from Hierocles."[22] Furthermore, following Linley's suggestions, on the grounds of all the material contained in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentary, Walzer's suggestion about the authorship's text must be abandoned. The text, according to Linley, "provides no justification for assuming a paleographical error as the cause of its attribution to Proclus, nor any convincing grounds for upholding its attribution to Hierocles."[23]

Westerink showed that the Arabic Proclus' commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* follows a Neoplatonic Greek model, excepting some Muslim (or Christian) modifications as it demonstrates a familiarity with Pythagoras' biography and with Plato's dialogues. Westerink also showed the presence in it of specific Neopla-

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17 Flügel et al. (1871–1872), I, 252.

18 For Hierocles' Commentary see Köhler (1974).

19 Linley (1984), Introduction, vii-ix.

20 For this point see Dodds (1933/1963²/2004³), propositions 101–103. Also, see Saffrey/Westerink (1968–1997), lxv-lxvi.

21 Linley (1984), Introduction, ix.

22 Linley (1984), Introduction, x.

23 *Ibid.*

tonic doctrines, as for instance: a) the hierarchy of gods, demons, heroes and souls, and b) a hierarchy of different kinds of number.[24]

With respect to the title and the text of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's treatise we may make the following remarks. The word *istithmār*, literally "extracting the fruit," like the simple form *thimār* "fruits," refers to the numerous brief summaries of the contents of Greek works prepared by Ibn al-Ṭayyib.[25] This anthology gives us at least some insight into the ethical ideas that were considered important by Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself and his circle. Furthermore, it presents Ibn al-Ṭayyib's reasons for his interest in Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. This circle of Christians and Hellenists wanted to prove not only their fidelity to the legacy of Greece but also to defend reason against the traditionalist Muslims and also their legitimacy and importance within the Muslim society.

The Golden Verses may be divided in the following manner: [1] the practical virtues and [2] the contemplative virtues. Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* is dealing with practically every aspect and affair of life: piety, modesty, justice and self-examination as ways of the soul's assimilation to God. Our analysis will focus on the presentation of some examples of each theme through Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*.

Concerning piety, reference is made to the honour of God and how the glorification of God is effected. Moreover, it is said that if a person glorifies God, then he will bring himself to perfection. Glorification of God "imparts illumination and exaltation to ourselves," remarks Linley.

Moderation is classified among the virtues. Modesty is presented as a necessary virtue of both the soul and the body. According to Pythagoras, "moderation be observed in both action and speech" (Εἶτα δικαιοσύνην ἀσκεῖν ἔργῳ τε λόγῳ τε).[26] It is noted that good conduct can be achieved through moderation in dealings with people. Pythagoras also supported that moderation in all things is best, meaning "not to squander what we possess improperly and unseasonably."[27] It is mentioned that perfection to all things is given through moderation. Being endued with wisdom and moderation, you should control the passions and confront the things which frighten us such as death. Furthermore, it is said that "love is peculiar to the rational soul, whereas moderation properly belongs to the irrational soul."[28] Concerning modesty as a virtue of the body, it is proposed to eat food so as to sustain the body and life, but not to allow ourselves to be greedy-guts eating stinking pieces of meat etc.; whereas it is proposed to eat healthy food. Excessive drinking is also said to be pernicious to the intellect. In any case, it is vital to "consume as much

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24 Westerink (1987), 61–78.

25 Rosenthal (1978), 274.

26 For the Arabic Text and facing translation see Linley (1984), 42/43. For the Greek text see Thom (1995), 94. 13.

27 Linley (1984), 70/71.

28 Linley (1984), 74/75.

food as is necessary." Further, it is necessary to "aid the soul that has been purified in its essence."[29]

Justice is considered to be an essential virtue. Virtue is identified as

> Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary*, 108b:
> correctness of belief about God, having appropriate respect for the heroes and for the inviolability of souls, honouring one's parents, striving to render favour to one's friends and relatives, and in practising justice and sound judgment.[30]

The Arabic text refers to Plato's theory concerning that "if there were no justice, there could be no injustice," explaining that:

> Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary*, 96a:
> if injustice can only be realized through justice, then how much more worthy is the virtue which arouses congeniality and causes souls to revert to the state in which they were prior to their attachment to bodies.[31]

According to the Arabic text, "justice" contains "a beauty for the soul."[32] It is proposed that a fair and impartial man should be just in his sayings and his doings, giving every individual what he deserves and making justice his main concern. Moreover, we must not think, either, that the gods are responsible for any injustice (sickness, poverty etc.), because they are not divinely premeditated. Only by having courage can one treat all the hardships.

Self-examination is regarded as necessary. Pythagoras commanded that everyone before sleep should examine himself three times for "all that he has done during the day, in order to discover where he has transgressed, and scold himself for it." It is characteristic that "the Pythagoreans used to recommend a discipline which gave them control over themselves and restrained them perforce from indulging their physical urges."[33] Moreover, Pythagoreans are not used to "countenance sleeping at sunrise, so that the giver of light and life should not rise while they were asleep, for there is no virtue in nullifying any action."[34]

For them, it is necessary during the day to examine their activities in order to find out which of them are good – so as to resume them – and which are bad. According to their belief, only by putting this admonition, e. g. examination of one's actions into practice, can a man come near to divine virtue.

All the above are considered as ways of the soul's assimilation to God. Emphasis is given to the object of the Golden Sayings, which:

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29 Linley (1984), 98/99.
30 Linley (1984), 82/83, 84/85.
31 Linley (1984), 28/29.
32 Linley (1984), 42/43.
33 Linley (1984), 72/73.
34 Linley (1984), 74/75.

> Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary*, 91b:
> is to inspire souls with longing for their perfection and purity, to make people human, and to guide them towards a proper way of life … Some maintain that the Golden Sayings act as a guide towards divine life, the imitation of God, and liberation from matter.[35]

Moreover, it is mentioned that the name of God must not be mentioned at any opportunity and particularly not in evil things in order to keep His majesty and excellence. Otherwise, God will punish those who have neglected divine matters.[36]

Reading Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary, we assume that the divine nature in man is the intellect, called also the rational or "priestly" soul.[37] It is mentioned that "the priestly nature in us lives an intellectual life that is free from blemish and harm, and sees things in a mysterious way." It is essential for the intellect not to succumb to passions, because in that case, it resembles "a dumb animal," but to overcome them.[38] The intellect plays a very important role within us and it is characterized as "divine faculty,"[39] whereas envy is a feeling that arises when a person has abundance of possessions, prominence and political power. It is noteworthy that "divine intellects have freedom of choice, still their motion is circular, because they incline fondly towards themselves."[40] Now as long as intellects – which are characterized as the soul's eyes – remain connected with matter, "they are continually being illuminated by the divine beings."[41]

Appetites are responsible for misleading the intellect, drawing it towards the body and causing it to lose contact with the divine life.[42] If someone abandons virtue, he prizes honours, possessions, authority and power, and shows a disinclination for the divine life. Man usually "partakes, in virtue of his intellect and his divine essential nature, in simplicity and unity, and, by virtue of his body, in compositeness, multiplicity and gloom."[43]

In any case, divinity in one's actions is for the purpose of acquiring everlasting life and being united with God.[44] Emphasis is given to the fact that "the ether is the most exalted place that exists beneath the lunar sphere, receiving souls that are fleeing from becoming and leading divine lives."[45] It is characteristic that living a divine life always seeks a safe and orderly environment, i.e. ether, whilst a passive life will

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35 Linley (1984), 6/7.
36 Linley (1984), 12/13, 14/15.
37 Linley (1984), 94/95.
38 Linley (1984), 94/95, 96/97.
39 Linley (1984), 62/63.
40 Linley (1984), 90/91.
41 Linley (1984), 88/89.
42 Linley (1984), 40/41.
43 Linley (1984), 86/87.
44 Linley (1984), 74/75, 76/77.
45 Linley (1984), 102/103, 104/105.

seek a disordered place that is frequently under the earth.[46] According to Pythagoras, "anyone who perseveres with these commands will ultimately reach the divine ranks."[47] Furthermore, by following these injunctions, one shall attain to divine virtue through knowledge.[48]

Furthermore, it is said that the purpose of life is to become divine and act according to its fundamental character, which is "to be by nature and immortal, possessing knowledge and having an intellective function." It is true that "through these activities, it will join its own world and revert to its eternal source."[49] A divine life will endure forever. Further,

> Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary*, 113b
> it will transcend the things which it has had to endure, which arise from mortal nature, and rid itself of the truly corruptive things which render it mortal and earthbound instead of heavenly and immortal. [50]

Now, the attribution of an Arabic Commentary on the *Golden Verses* to Proclus raises the question of its real author. For there is no evidence in Greek for the existence of such a Commentary. In other words, no Greek bibliographical source assigns such a Commentary to Proclus Diadochus. However, the absence of any mention does not rule out the possibility of its existence. On the other hand, the *Suda* lists as works of a certain Proclus Procleius of Laodicea of Syria (4th – 5th century A. D.) "a theology, an Hesiodic myth of Pandora, a Commentary on the *Golden Verses*, a Commentary on Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*, and various other treatises on geometrical works." [51]

Proclus Procleius of Laodicea in Syria, hierophant, who is not to be confused with Proclus Diadochus, is then said to be the author of a Commentary of the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. Proclus Procleius of Laodicea probably knew both Syriac and Greek. Westerink showed that this Proclus of Laodicea, a Neoplatonist of the end of the fourth century or slightly later, is not to be identified with Proclus Diadochus the successor of Syrianus in the school of Athens.[52] Furthermore, Westerink suggested that of the two men named Proclus, it is more likely that the author of the Greek original of the Arabic text is not Proclus Diadochus but Proclus Procleius of Laodicea, or perhaps another Greek Neoplatonist. Then, the famous name of Proclus Diadochus may have been chosen arbitrarily to figure as a source for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's work which contains materials of a Greek work.

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46 Linley (1984), 104/105.

47 Linley (1984), 82/83.

48 Linley (1984), 84/85.

49 Linley (1984), 102/103.

50 Linley (1984), 102/103.

51 Bekker (1854), 896 (*s.v.* Πρόκλος ὁ Προκλήιος).

52 O'Meara (1990), 232 (Appendix II).

Following Westerink, O'Meara writes: "it is possible then that the author of the Greek original of the Arabic text is either of these two Procluses or perhaps another Greek Neoplatonist whose work came to be attributed to 'Proclus'."[53] Among his remarks, Westerink, through an example, compares the theme of the hierarchy of gods, demons and heroes to Iamblichus and in particular to the unpolluted souls in Proclus.[54] In Iamblichus, adds O'Meara, such pure souls are especially significant as corresponding to the great philosophical benefactors of mankind, including of course Pythagoras.[55] However, the Arabic text does not establish this correspondence. Another interesting passage in the Arabic text introduces numerological speculations and in particular a hierarchy of different kinds of number:

> Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary*, 107b
> The first numbers are characteristic of the gods, the second represent the intelligible forms that are found in all that exists, the third are representations of soul ... the fourth are representations of natural objects, in keeping with matter and its ordering by form.[56]

O'Meara also mentions that "the Arabic Commentary contains ideas characteristic of Iamblichus' Pythagoreanizing programme which reappear in Syrianus and in Proclus." Furthermore, there are similarities on the biography of Pythagoras as depicted on *The Pythagorean Life* of Iamblichus[57] and of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*. O'Meara continues that "if then the precise authorship of the Arabic Commentary, cannot yet be determined with certainty, it can at least be seen as further evidence of the influence of Iamblichus' revival of Pythagoreanism."[58]

The Harranian pagans played an important part in the intellectual life of Baghdad. The most famous of them is Thābit b. Qurra,[59] who was born *ca.* A. D. 826 at Ḥarrān and died at Baghdad *ca.* A. D. 901. Thābit's work as a writer extended over a wide range of subjects such as astronomy, mathematics, etc. His maternal language was Syriac, but he knew also Greek and wrote his scientific work in Arabic. Among his writings on philosophy, as referred by Scott, was a translation of a part of Proclus' Commentary on the *Carmina aurea* of Pythagoras.[60] This information appears to be based on Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (Flügel et al. (1871–1872), I, 252), where it is stated that Thābit b. Qurra translated into Arabic only three leaves. Baumstark in his *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* reports that Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean

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53 *Ibid.*
54 Westerink (1987), 67.
55 O'Meara (1990), 232 (Appendix II).
56 Linley (1984), 78/79.
57 Clark (1989), 1 ff.
58 See O'Meara (1990), 232 (Appendix II).
59 Rashed/Morelon (2000), X, 428.
60 Scott (1995), 103–104.

Golden Verses is said to have been translated into Syriac.[61] One wonders whether both the Syriac translations mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm and Baumstark were a work by Proclus Procleius and not Proclus Diadochus. Further, did Ibn al-Ṭayyib draw upon such a Syriac text of Proclus Procleius or the Arabic translation based on the Syriac, which Thābit b. Qurra started to translate? No definite answer can be given on the basis of the evidence known so far. However, bearing in mind Westerink's and O'Meara's observations, one is tempted to assume that there was a Pythagoreanizing Commentary by Proclus Procleius on Pythagoras' *Golden Verses* which was translated into Arabic most probably from Syriac.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib was a Nestorian, physician, philosopher and theologian. From al-Qifṭī we have the following account of him: "That he was well versed in the philosophical and logical doctrines of the 'ancients', i.e. the Greeks, as well as in the medical works of Galen, that he revived what was lost of the Greek sciences and clarified the obscurities in them, and that Ibn Buṭlān, a student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, reported that he [Ibn al-Ṭayyib] spent twenty years on the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and fell so ill in meditating on it that he nearly died (*kāda yalfiẓu nafsahu*)."[62] As a Nestorian, Ibn al-Ṭayyib knew Syriac. Then, in regard to his sources, it is possible that Ibn al-Ṭayyib consulted the Arabic or Syriac translation of Proclus Procleius' Commentary on Pythagoras' *Golden Verses*. Further, one cannot rule out the possibility that Ibn al-Ṭayyib drew upon a compilation from someone of his contemporaries based on the same Syriac or Arabic translation. Also, one cannot rule out another alternative, namely that Ibn al-Ṭayyib may have drawn upon a Greek source, since he was credited with a knowledge of Byzantine and ancient Greek (*al-lugha al-Rūmiyya wa-l-Yūnāniyya*) according to al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*.[63] Be that as it may, according to Rosenthal,[64] all the ideas of Greek origin adduced by Ibn al-Ṭayyib were common property in his circle.

In the ninth century, Hermetic documents were most likely known to some scholars at Ḥarrān in the original Greek. "The *Hermetica*," according to Scott, "had probably been translated into Syriac long before that time, and were doubtless usually read in Syriac by Harranians and their neighbors at Edessa and elsewhere. During the time of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, knowledge of Greek must have almost, if not quite, died out at Baghdad, and the *Hermetica* must have been now read only, or almost only, in Syriac or Arabic translation."[65] The "Hermes" doctrine for law-abidingness and avoidance of alien practices extracted from Proclus' Commentary is characteristic in order to prove that Ibn al-Ṭayyib probably used a Syriac, or even an Arabic translation of the *Hermetica*.

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61 Baumstark (1922), 231.

62 See Gyekye (1979), 20.

63 Shafi' (1935), 28.

64 Rosenthal (1978), 275.

65 For further reading see Scott (1995), 102, 108.

Concerning the compilation of the *Istithmār*, Ibn al-Ṭayyib may well have been based on Syriac sources. For, we know that Ibn al-Ṭayyib translated the so-called *Diatessaron* Gospel of Tatian (*ca.* A. D. 160 – 175) from the Syriac into Arabic.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib's reasons for his interest in a Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* can be explained as follows: like many of the great physicians of Islam, Ibn al-Ṭayyib and as well as al-Rāzī (d. *ca.* A. D. 925 – 935) were physicians but they had also philosophical interests. Al-Rāzī's *Ṭibb al-rūḥānī* develops a moderately ascetic ideal of life from the premise that all pleasures presuppose a prior pain. Issues such as pleasures, appetites, passions, envy, anger, greed, drunkenness, etc., are common between Ibn al-Ṭayyib and al-Rāzī's ethical treatise reflecting the philosophical interests of their circle.

Ideas of Pythagoras and his school (including Philolaos) became known to the Islamic and to a lesser degree to the Jewish world in Islam from the end of the ninth century. Furthermore, Neo-Pythagorean texts on ethics contributed to the propagation of Pythagorean thought in Islamic and Jewish circles. Here, an important role was played by the Pythagorean *Carmina aurea* on ethical principles of life such as piety, modesty, justice, and self-examination as ways of the soul's assimilation to God. This text was known to the Arabs in an anonymous Arabic translation from the second half of the ninth century, which was integrated in Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's *Nawādir al-falāsifa*, a collection of wise sayings that was often used by Muslim authors,[66] and that in the adaptation of al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. A. D. 1089) was translated into Hebrew.[67]

Originally, the *Carmina aurea* was translated into Arabic with the Commentary by Iamblichus (*ca.* A. D. 250 – 330), a pupil of the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry (*ca.* A. D. 234 – 305). This Commentary, which is lost in its Greek original and preserved in Arabic,[68] differs from that attributed to Proclus, which in a similar manner offers Neo-Pythagorean traditions in Neoplatonic shape.[69] Iamblichus' Commentary continues the discussion of his *De vita Pythagorica* and *Protrepticus* and amalgamates Pythagorean, Platonic, Neoplatonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic ethics. Similarly, we find echoes in al-Kindī's *Discourse on the Soul*, in which al-Kindī describes the ascent and return of the soul to its divine origin through purification and increasing knowledge of God. This doctrine has been developed a century later in the *Encyclopaedia* of the Sincere Brethren[70] and has been alluded to in Ibn Sīnā's (Avicenna) (d. A. D. 1037) alleged Pythagoreanism.[71]

Finally, Linley is right when he concludes the following:

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66 Baffioni (1994). See also Khan (1964).
67 Daiber (1995).
68 *Ibid*.
69 Daiber (1988), 134 – 137.
70 Baffioni (1992), 10 – 25.
71 Chaix-Ruy (1959), 289 – 327.

... whatever original work lies behind the Commentary of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, or even if, as may be, the work is the product of his own inspiration at least in part, there is no indication of any awareness that Ethics, and ethical texts, should properly be only the groundwork for further study in Philosophy; if such a limitation on the subject matter were recognized by the writer, one might expect him to avoid touching upon Metaphysics, which he does not. There is nowhere the idea that beginners only are being addressed; the pedagogic manner sometimes adopted is appropriate enough, when one considers that readers in eleventh-century Baghdad, even, it is likely, members of a circle such as Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own, would have found specific doctrines and definitions of Pythagorean, Platonic, or Neoplatonic philosophy unfamiliar, although, as Muslims, they would have found the emphatically monotheistic tone which surfaces in places in the Commentary quite congenial.[72]

In conclusion, it may be said that Ibn al-Ṭayyib's "*Istithmār* on Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*" gives us at least some insight into the ethical ideas that were considered important by Ibn al-Ṭayyib himself and his circle. Moreover, Neo-Pythagorean ethics is mirrored in the numerous sayings attributed to Pythagoras and transmitted in Syriac and Arabic gnomologia.[73] For, we have to say that some common recurrent themes between him and al-Rāzī's ethical treatise *Ṭibb al-rūḥānī* reflect the philosophical interests of the circle of the physicians. As we have to do with an *istithmār*, a florilegium, it is important to pay attention to what Ibn al-Ṭayyib considered the most important points in his work. Ibn al-Ṭayyib appears to extract from the Commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* those ethical ideas which served his aim; namely, being a Christian and a Hellenist, he wanted to prove not only his fidelity to the legacy of Greece but also to defend reason against the traditionalist Muslims. Besides, he and his circle wanted to stress their legitimacy and importance within Muslim society. His composing the "anthology" (*Istithmār*) of the *Golden Verses* has the form of an abridged commentary, a method followed by Ibn al-Ṭayyib in other of his surviving works. Then, the exposition is clearly Ibn al-Ṭayyib's own and does not go back to any earlier literary composition. It is remarkable, according to Rosenthal, that the famous name of Proclus (*Brqls*) may have been chosen arbitrarily to figure as a source for Ibn al-Ṭayyib's work which contains materials of Greek provenance.[74]

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72 Linley (1984), viii.

73 Gildemeister (1870); Levi della Vida (1910), 595–610; Gutas (1975).

74 Rosenthal (1978), 276.

Michael Chase
Al-Šahrastānī on Proclus

The *Book of Religions and Sects* (*Kitāb al-milal wa l-niḥal*)[1] by the medieval Persian historian Abū l-Fatḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad Al-Šahrastānī[2] (1086/7–1153) is a precious source of information, not only on the history of Islamic religions, but also on the way Greek philosophy was handed down to and preserved by Islam.

Chapter six of book two of Šahrastānī's *magnum opus* is dedicated to "The sophisms (or doubts) of Proclus on the eternity of the world". It consists mainly in an abbreviated paraphrase of Proclus' treatise entitled "Eighteen Arguments Against the Eternity of the World", which is lost in its original Greek, but can be reconstructed from the fragments preserved in the refutation by the sixth-century Christian Neoplatonist John Philoponus, entitled "Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World".[3] Proclus' treatise was known in Arabic, in at least two versions. The great translator Isḥāq ibn Ḥunain (ob. 910) had made an Arabic version of nine of Proclus' eighteen arguments against the world's generation within time, while an older, perhaps complete translation, designated in Isḥāq's manuscript as "poor in quality", has only recently been edited by Elivra Wakelnig.[4] This seems to be the version that Šahrastānī used. It is not certain, however, whether the Arabic translators had direct access to Proclus' text, or whether they knew it only through Philoponus' *Against Proclus*, which seems to have been translated in its entirety.[5] Indeed, Proclus' first argument, missing from the Greek *unicum* Marcianus Graecus 236 (9th-10th cent.), has been preserved only in the Arabic.[6]

Šahrastānī provides a paraphrase of eight of Proclus' eighteen arguments, viz. nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 13.[7] At the end of his presentation, however, Šahrastānī appends a final section that appears to derive from a different source. It reads as follows:

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1 For the text, see the eds. by Cureton (1842–6) and Badrān (1951–5); for a translation, see Gimaret/Monnot (1986); Jolivet/Monnot (1993).

2 Born in Khorasan, now in north-eastern Iran, the young Muḥammad studied at Nīšāpūr, then taught briefly at the Nizāmiyya at Baghdad (c. 1117–1120), before joining the court of the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar at Marv in what is now Turkmenistan. Late in life, he seems to have returned to his native village of Šahrastān, where he died at age 66, during the destruction of Sanjar's realm by the Oghuz Turks.

3 Cf. Chase (2012).

4 Cf. Wakelnig (2012), who edits the text from mss. Petrev Pasha 617 and Üniversite Kütüphanesi 1458. I thank Dr. R. Hansberger for calling this work to my attention.

5 Cf. Scholten (2009–2011), I.38–39; Gannagé (2011), 536. Contra: Wakelnig (2012); Endress (1973), 17.

6 Hence the collaboration of Arabic scholars, who have translated Proclus's first argument in the two recent English translations of Philoponus's *Against Proclus*: J. McGinnis in H. S. Lang – A. D. Macro (2001); P. Adamson in M. Share (2005). Isḥāq's translation is as old a witness to Proclus's text as the codex which served as the basis of Rabe's (1899, 1963²) edition of Philoponus' *De aeternitate mundi*.

7 For a list of these arguments and the corresponding passages of Philoponus, *De aet. mundi*, cf. Segonds, A.-Ph.-Luna, C. (2012), p. 1658.

Al-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, p. 340, 15 ff. Cureton = p. 1031–1032 Badran
Of what has been handed down from him [sc. Proclus] about the world's eternity, he said that the coming-into-being of the world cannot be imagined unless it <exists> after not having existed, and the Creator originated it. In the case of its non-existence, one of three states of affairs must hold true: either the Creator was not powerful but became powerful – but this is absurd, for he is unfailingly powerful[8] – or /p. 341/ he did not will <to create>, and then so willed[9] – but this is again absurd, for he is unfailingly willing, or his wisdom could not decide – and this is again absurd, for existence is absolutely nobler than non-existence.[10] But if these three cases are null and void, he is equal in his characteristic property according to the Mutakallimūn, for eternity is his essential property *per se*, and they are simultaneous in being. But God is sufficient.[11]

According to this extract, "Proclus", who presumably wants to refute the possibility that God created the world in time, begins by defining the generation of the world as existing after not having existed (*ḥudūṯ al-ʿālam ... baʿda an lam yakun*). In late Neoplatonic thought, this was considered the Aristotelian interpretation of the Greek term *genêtos* ("generated"), whereas when Plato in the *Timaeus* spoke of the world as being *genêtos*, he was interpreted as meaning that the world derives its being from elsewhere and has its being in constant becoming.[12] Later Greek commentators on the *Timaeus* distinguished seven meanings of this term,[13] with Proclus coming down in favor of meanings three and four: the world is *genêtos* in the sense that it

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8 Cf. Proclus' fourth argument, with Philoponus' counter-arguments at *aet. mundi* 4, 11, p. 82, 1–84, 28 Rabe.

9 Cf. Proclus' sixteenth argument, and in general Sorabji (1983), 240 ff.

10 Cf. Proclus' seventeenth argument, with Philoponus' retort at *aet. mundi* 6, 4, pp. 128, 1–131, 25; 17.6, pp. 601, 21–604, 11 Rabe.

11 My translation from the Arabic, which I have checked against the versions of Gimaret/Monnot (1986) andJolivet/Monnot (1993) and of Haarbrucker (1850–1851).

12 Cf. Simplicius, *In Phys.*, p. 1154, 6–7 Diels: *kai gar genêton legetai to proteron men mê on, husteron de on*. Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 280b15.

13 The Middle Platonist commentator Calvisius Taurus seems to have been the first to enumerate the various meanings of the Greek term *genêton*. He distinguished four of them: (1) what is not generated but has the same genus as generated things; such things are generable in the sense that an object hidden in the center of the earth can still be said to be visible (Greek *horaton*), even if it will never actually be seen. The second meaning (2) covers what is notionally but not actually composite: things, that is, that can be analysed in thought into their component parts, as the middle note of the musical scale is composed of the lowest and the highest. The third meaning (3) of *genêtos* concerns what's always in the process of becoming; that is, according to Platonic philosophy, the whole of the sublunar world, which, like the mythical Proteus, is subject to constant change. Finally (4), *genêtos* can mean what derives its being from elsewhere; that is, from God: similarly, the moon's light can be said to be generated by the sun, although there has never been a time when this was not the case. Slightly more than a century later, Porphyry added additional meanings of *genêtos:* these include (5): what has the *logos* of generation, i.e. what can be analysed in thought. Meaning number (6) covers sensible objects like houses, ships, plants and animals, which obtain their being through a process of generation. Finally, the seventh and last meaning (7) of *genêtos* is what begins to exist in time after not having existed. It's this last meaning of 'generated' that Porphyry denies is applicable to Plato's creation story in the *Timaeus*. Cf. Chase (2011), 114–115.

is always in the process of becoming, and in that it derives its being from else-where.[14]

But if the world came into being after a period of time in which it did not exist, how are we to explain this previous period of non-existence? Šahrastānī goes on to envisage three possible explanations:

1. God was not sufficiently powerful to create at one time, and then became powerful. This eventuality is considered absurd, since God is always powerful (*li-annahu qādir^{un} lam yazal*).[15]
2. God did not wish to create at one time, then did wish to create. This is absurd, because God is always willing (*li-annahu murīd^{un} lam yazal*).
3. God's wisdom could not decide whether it was better to create or not to create. But this is absurd, for existence is unconditionally better than non-existence.[16]

Šahrastānī concludes his report with what is probably his own personal observation: if none of these three possibilities are valid – that is, if the world was not created in time – then God and the world will be equally eternal; yet eternity is an attribute that is to be reserved for God alone.[17]

I know of no Greek text in which these three objections, based on God's power, will, and knowledge respectively, are stated together in precisely the same form, although there is one from Proclus that comes quite close, as we shall see in a moment. Scholars have explained Šahrastānī's last paragraph in a variety of ways: some have claimed, erroneously, that it is a quote from Proclus; others, closer to the mark, that it has been cobbled together from elements of Proclus' twelfth and sixteenth arguments against the world's eternity.[18] It is true that there are some parallels to the arguments Šahrastānī attributes to Proclus elsewhere in Philoponus' *De aeternitate mundi*, and they have duly been pointed out in the excellent recent edition of this work by Clemens Scholten. My own impression is that these alleged parallels are not all that striking. What does strike me, however, is the parallel between the argu-

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14 Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 290.17 ff. Diehl; Proclus apud Philoponus, *aet. mundi* p. 148, 1f. Rabe. Already in Porphyry's *Sentence* 14 (p. 6, 11–13 Lamberz), bodies are said to be generated (*genêta*) in two senses: as being dependent on a productive cause (≈ meaning 4, preceding note), and as composite ≈ meanings 2; 5).

15 On the meaning of *lam yazal*, "without ceasing", see Frank (2005).

16 The symmetry of the argument would have been preferable if Šahrastānī had added "and God is always knowing". *Qādir* and *murīd* are, of course, two of the 99 divine names of God in Islamic theology, but so is *ʿalīm* (*ʿālim*, *ʿallām*), "wise, knowing, knowledgeable". On these questions see Gimaret (1988).

17 On the notion that eternity is not suitable for the world, cf. Bianchi (1984), 108 ff., citing William of Balione, Bonaventure, John Pecham, William of Falegar, Raymund Llull.

18 These two arguments were among those omitted from the Arabic translation of Proclus' treatise, perhaps because they contained doctrines (existence of an eternal model of the world and of a world soul, eternity of matter) that might have been offensive to an Islamic reading public. Cf. Jolivet-Monnot (1993), 347, n. 33.

ments Šahrastānī attributes to Proclus (412–485) and some of the anti-creationist arguments mentioned by Augustine (354–430), who wrote half a century earlier than the Lycian Diadoch. This fact, if it is one, would in turn call for a historical explanation, which I will propose a bit later.

That God is all-powerful is, of course, axiomatic in Greek, Christian, and Islamic thought.[19] But can God have lacked the power necessary to create the world at one point in time, only to obtain that power subsequently? Phrased in these terms, the entire Greek Neoplatonic tradition would have answered with a resounding "No!"

In the fourth argument of his *On the eternity of the world*, as reproduced by Philoponus, Proclus provides strong arguments against this hypothesis. His main objection is that God, as an immobile cause, cannot change: if He did, since all change is motion, and motion is an incomplete actuality, then God would undergo a transition from an imperfect to a perfect state, and this, for Proclus, would be an impious suggestion.[20] In addition, since all change takes place in time, such a change would imply that God has need of time. But in fact it is God who creates time, so it is absurd to suppose he needs time in order to act. Philoponus responds that creation is a substantial characteristic of God, but a substantial characteristic is independent of any relation to something else. If heating is the substantial characteristic of fire, then fire possesses this characteristic independently of whether or not there are any nearby objects susceptible of being heated. Thus, God's nature as creator does not depend upon the actual exercise of his creative capacity.[21] Here, however, we are more concerned with the objections to creation within time than with their possible resolutions.

The anti-creationist objections concerning God's power, will and knowledge are in turn linked to another venerable question: Why didn't God create sooner? This question goes back at least to Cicero, and probably to Aristotle's lost dialogue *De Philosophia*,[22] and was subsequently recycled by Epicureans, Gnostics,[23] and Manichaeans. Some of the most famous and influential occurrences of the argument, however, occur in Augustine. In Book XI, 10, 12 of his *Confessions*, just before embark-

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19 In this context, one may recall Gilson's comments (1986, 459) when he claims, in the context of a defense of the condemnations of Arabic Aristotelianism in 1277, that "Comprise comme une protestation contre le nécessitarisme grec, cette condamnation conduira nombre de théologiens à affirmer comme possibles, en vertu de la toute-puissance du Dieu chrétien, des positions scientifiques ou philosophiques traditionnellement jugées impossibles en vertu de l'essence des choses. En permettant des expériences mentales nouvelles, la notion théologique d'un Dieu infiniment puissant a libéré les esprits du cadre fini où la pensée grecque avait enclos l'univers". These affirmations seem highly debatable, but this is not the place to enter into the debate.

20 On this, see Chase (2013), 48 ff.

21 Similarly, Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfizārī (10th cent.), refuting Proclus, writes that God can be generous (*jawād*) even if nothing else exists apart from Him; cf. Wakelnig (2012), 55 f.

22 Aristotle, *De Philosophia*, fr. 20 Ross (1955) = Cicero, *Lucullus* 38.119: neque enim ortum esse unquam mundum, quod nulla fuerit novo consilio initio ... Cf. Effe, (1970), 23 ff.

23 Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.28.3; Origen, *De Princip.* 3.5.3.

ing upon his famous analysis of time, Augustine faces up to the objections raised by some anonymous interlocutors:

> Augustine, *Confessions* XI.10.12
> Behold, are they not full of their own venerability, those who say to us: "what was God doing before He made heaven and earth? For if he were idle," they say, "and did not perform any action, why was he not in this state always and henceforth, as he had always refrained from his work in the past?"

Any new will or motion in God, the objectors went on to argue, would eliminate God's eternity, given that his will is equivalent to his substance, and a change in a thing's substance means it cannot be eternal.[24]

Like Aristotle in the *De Philosophia*, Augustine himself is anxious to avoid the consequence that God might change his mind. A little farther on in the *Confessions*, he returns to the point that God's substance never varies though time. God does not want one thing now, another thing later. Instead, He always and eternally wills the same thing:

> Augustine, *Confessions* XII.15.18
> ....hence, it is not the case that He wills this or that, but He wills all at once and always all that He wills, not again and again, nor now these things, now those, nor does he later will after not having willed, or fail to will what he willed previously, for such a will would be changeable, and everything changeable is not eternal, but our God is eternal.[25]

For Augustine, God's will cannot change, on pain of forfeiting his eternal nature. Instead, as Gregory of Nyssa and Boethius pointed out, God's eternal will that a change should occur does not entail a changing will on His part.[26]

There has been considerable debate about the identity of the adversaries who raised the objections recorded by Augustine. The Manichaeans used similar arguments: already in his *On Genesis against the Manicheans*, written in 388 – 389, Augustine cites his opponents as asking why it suddenly occurred to God to create, after not having done so for eternity.[27] By the time he comes to write the *City of God* in 417, however, it is clearly the Platonists who raise the uncomfortable question of why it pleased God to create heaven and earth when he did, after failing to do so previously.[28] These Platonists were motivated, Augustine informs us, by their desire to

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24 Like Plotinus, Augustine would agree that God's will is identical with his essence: with *Confessions* XIII.15.18; XII.28.38 cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* VI 8 [39].13.8; 52f.

25 Cf. Augustine *De Gen. c. M.* 1, 2, 3 – 4; *De div. quaest. LXXXIII*, 28 and already Seneca, *De benef.*, 6.23.1: nec umquam primi consilii deos paentitet.

26 Cf. Sorabji (1983), 240 ff.

27 *De Gen. c. M.* I, 2, 3: et quid ei subito facere placuit, quod numquam ante faceret per tempora aeterna?

28 *Civ. dei* XI.4.2: Sed quid placuit aeterno Deo tunc facere caelum et terram, quae antea non fecisset?

avoid the unpalatable consequence that God suddenly got the idea of creating. Indeed, for Augustine, the entire Neoplatonic doctrine of continuous or eternal creation is, he tells us, an attempt to avoid the conclusion that God suddenly came up with a new idea:

> Augustine, *Civ. dei* XI.4.2
> Those, however, who admit the world was created by God, but say that it had no beginning to its time, but rather to its creation, so that in some scarcely comprehensible way it is always being created, say something whereby they think to defend God as if from a fortuitous temerity, lest it be thought that there suddenly came to his mind that which had never come before: that is, to create the world.

It is above all in the *City of God* X.31 that Augustine reveals the identity of these Platonists who, to avoid the absurdities entailed by a change in the divine will, have come up with the notion of continuous creation: it was Porphyry, probably in his lost work entitled *De regressu animae*:

> Augustine, *Civ. dei* X.31
> Why, then, should we not rather believe the divinity about these things which we cannot investigate with human ingenuity, that divinity which tells us the soul itself is not co-eternal with God, but that it was created after having not existed? In order for the Platonists to refuse to believe this, they thought they adduced this adequate cause: unless something has always existed previously, it cannot be perpetual subsequently. However, Plato openly says both of the world and of what he writes as the gods in the world made by God that they began to exist and have a beginning, but by the most powerful will of the creator he testifies they will remain for eternity. Yet they found a way to understand this, i.e. that this is not a beginning of time, but of subsistence. "Just as, they say, if a foot was in dust from eternity, a footprint would always be under it,[29] yet no one would doubt that the footprint was made by someone treading, so, they say, both the world and the gods created within it always existed, since He who made them always exists, and yet they were made .[30]

These texts from Augustine, or rather the doctrines he attributes in them to his (probably Neoplatonic) adversaries, provide some elements that exhibit parallels to the arguments Šahrastānī attributes to Proclus. But it must be admitted that the closest

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29 Bonaventure (*Commentary on the Sentences* II, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, vol. II, p. 19 ff. Quaracchi) cites this example with approval, taking it to be a good illustration of the eternal existence of matter.
30 In his collection of Porphyry's fragments (1993), Andrew Smith includes only the two lines p. 454, 12–13 as fr. 298 a of Porphyry's *De regressu*, while his fragment 298 runs from p. 452, 2–453, 3. Yet there can be very little doubt that the anonymous quote introduced by *inquiunt* at p. ch. 31, p. 545, 1–7 is also taken from the same work of Porphyry. Cf. Courcelle (1948), 174 n. 3. Porphyry's "corrections" to the doctrines of Plato were the subject of the entire previous section of the *civ. Dei* (X.30); Porphyry is alluded to immediately after the passage below (*iste*, p. 454, 13 D.-K.), and his views will continue to be discussed in X.32 ("On the universal path for the salvation of the soul, which Porphyry failed to find because he sought it poorly etc.").

parallel comes from Proclus himself, in a reference already pointed out by Jolivet and Monnot in their superb translation of the *Book of Religions and Sects*:

> Proclus, *In Tim.* I.288.13 ff. Diehl:
> In addition, if the Demiurge belongs among beings that always exist, he does not create at one point in time and release the rudder at another, for then he would not remain in the same state or be unchangeable. But if he always creates, then the created product also exists always. Why would he decide after spending an infinite time in idleness that he should turn to creative activity? Did he think it was better? But was he previously unaware of this better [outcome], or not? If as Intellect he was ignorant, that is absurd, for there would be both ignorance and knowledge in him. But if he did know it, why did he not begin to generate and create the cosmos earlier?[31] But this [activity] is not better, [someone might say]. When then did he not remain in his state of idleness, if it is lawful to speak in this way?[32] For it is impious to think that an intellect and a god could pursue what is less beautiful instead of what is more so. But this is what one must admit, if the cosmos is generated in time rather than co-existing with the infinity of time.

In this passage from his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, Proclus begins by emphasizing that the Demiurge's changelessness implies that he always creates, and that such constant creation also implies that the world always exists. A similar argument had already been put forward by Porphyry.[33] Envisaging the contrary hypothesis, that the world began at a specific time after not having existed, Proclus, like Augustine's Neoplatonic opponents, asks why God would spend an eternity without creating, only to suddenly make up his mind to create. One possible explanation is that he did so because he thought it was a better course of action. Here, however, two alternatives present themselves. If he did not know beforehand that it was better to create, he was ignorant; but this conclusion is unacceptable, since the Demiurge is Intellect. If he did know it was better to create, however, why would he have not begun to create earlier, or, we might add, perhaps from infinity? On the assumption that creating the world was not, after all, the better alternative, then Proclus will ask why God did not completely refrain from creating, since one cannot imagine that God might have deliberately chosen the worst of two possible courses of action.

Matthias Baltes has already shown persuasively that this extract from Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* derives, as far as its basic arguments and doctrinal elements are concerned, from Porphyry. If there were any doubts on the subject, they should be dispelled by another text from Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*, where the Tyrian philosopher is this time explicitly named:

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31 Cf. Hierocles, *De providentia*, ap. Photius, *Biblioteca* cod. 251, 461a13 Εἰ δὲ τὸ ποιεῖν [sc. ἄμεινον], τί μὴ ἐξ ἀϊδίου ἔπραττεν;

32 Cf. Hierocles, *De providentia*, ap. Photius, *Biblioteca* cod. 251, 461a11–12: Εἰ γὰρ ἄμεινον μὴ ποιεῖν, πῶς εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν μεταβέβηκεν; Augustine, *Conf.* XI.10. Theiler (1966, 6) assumes Augustine's source here is Porphyry.

33 Cf. the passage from Zacharias, *infra*; Porphyry, *In Tim.*, fr. 50, p. 36, 3 ff. Sodano = Proclus, *In Tim.* I.393.1–13 Diehl; Proclus apud Philop., *De aet. mundi* 225, 2 ff. Rabe, where Philoponus tells us Proclus is "once again copying Porphyry".

Porphyry, *In Tim.* fr. 46, p. 29.15 ff. Sodano = Procl. *In Tim.* I.366.20 – 368.1 Diehl:

Well, then, if the world is generated, was it from the Creator – who was not such beforehand – or from underlying nature, which was in a state of disorder? For if it was from the Creator, was it because he, too, did not exist eternally? But this is not even lawful to say, and moreover is in vain, for the same mode of questioning will arise with regard to him, too, and either we shall make everything generated or there will be something primarily ungenerated. One should rather assume that the Demiurge was not active. Does he fail to create, then, because he does not wish to do so, or because he is not able? If we say it is because he does not so wish, then we unwittingly eliminate his goodness.[34] If it is because he is not able, then it is absurd for him to sometimes have power and sometimes impotence; for thus we would eliminate his eternity. (…) And why did he not <set it in motion> earlier, when he saw that coming into being is good for things that come into being, since he was good then too, and wished everything to become like himself? The extension of providence is thus closely related to the Father's goodness, and closely related to this extension is the Demiurge's everlasting creation, and closely related to this is the universe's perpetuity throughout infinite time, a perpetuity that is coming-into-being and not steadfast, and the same argument eliminates it and the Creator's goodness. For if the Demiurge is always good, he always wishes good to all things. … that which is always good always wills good things.

As in our previous passage, the structure of the argument here is dichotomic. Assuming the world is generated (*genêton*), there must (also assuming the Demiurge always exists) have been a time period when he did not create. Such inactivity can only have been due to one of two factors: a change in will on his part, or a change in power from impotence to capability. Yet the former option would destroy the Demiurge's goodness, since, presumably, his goodness consists in his creation, and if he failed to want to create, this can only have been through jealousy. The latter option, that the Demiurge was once incapable of creating but then became capable, is also unacceptable, since such a change in the divine essence would eliminate his eternal nature. Finally, Porphyry ends his argument with the now-familiar "Why not sooner?" argument: if the Demiurge knew that existence is a good thing, why did he not begin creating earlier, since he must have been good then, too, and we know from the *Timaeus* that his goodness consists in his will to bestow existence on as many other things as possible, that is, to make everything else as similar to him as possible?

Finally, our last proof text is an extract from the dialogue *Ammonios* by Zacharias of Gaza, written around the turn of the 6th century:

Porphyry, fr. 456 Smith = Zacharias of Gaza, *De mundi opificio* p. 98,102 – 99, 143 Colonna[35]

Ammonius. Do the heavens seem to be something beautiful, or not?

Christian. Beautiful, I said.

Ammonius. Is its Demiurge also good?

Christ. How could He not be?

Amm. If, then, he said, the heavens are beautiful, and the father and maker of this universe is good, why do the sons of the Christians refuse to make what is beautiful follow upon and be

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34 God's goodness necessarily entails his constant creation.

35 Cf. the translation by Gertz-Dillon-Russell (2012), 105.

joined to what is good for all eternity? And if this universe is, as has been agreed, beautiful, how could the fact of wishing to destroy what is finely disposed and adjusted not pertain to something evil? Yet it is not lawful to think this about that first and unique principle, for jealousy is outside the Good and the One, as it is of all the divine chorus. Does it not seem so to you?

> Christ. Very much so.

Amm. Consider the following point as well.

> Christ. Which one?

Amm. Do they agree that God is good?

> Christ. How could they not?

Amm. And that the universe is beautiful?

> Christ. Yes.

Amm. How, then, could what is beautiful not exist forever? For if this universe came into being within time and is secondary to the Creator (not in value, for we too admit that, but in time), then God will seem to have progressed to its creation as if out of repentance, or ignorance of what is beautiful, or jealousy, by not having created from the beginning. Yet each of these alternatives is foreign to that blessed nature, since God is always knowledgeable of the beautiful, and is good. But consider this point as well.

> Christ. Which one do you mean?

Amm. Is this universe guided by providence?

> Christ. Yes.

Amm. Whence, then, should its destruction be introduced? Either according to God's will, or against it. If it is against this will, then He is incapable of assistance, although He longs to safeguard the world. If it is according to His will, then for what reason does He destroy the best of things that have come into being? For either it was because he was to create a better one – but that is impossible – or a worse one – but that is unlawful – or a similar one – but this is a childish pastime, apt for those who play along the beach at building castles out of sand and then destroying them. For what craftsman would waste his labor to the point of changing those of his works that have been finely realized? One concludes, therefore, from what has been postulated, that one says God is either impotent, or senseless, or what it is not lawful to say. Yet God is neither impotent nor senseless, and He is, moreover, good.

"The world is therefore imperishable. But if it is imperishable, then it is also temporally ungenerated. For if the creative cause is perpetual, what is created also perpetual in time," as Porphyry says and truth makes evident.

Here, Ammonios defends the pagan view against the temporal creation of the world by means of three arguments. In the first, he argues that if the world is beautiful and the Demiurge good, creation must be perpetual. It would be unthinkable for the Creator to destroy it, as the Christians believe: such destruction could only be imputable to his jealousy, but the divinity is bereft of all jealousy. Second, he argues that if the Demiurge is good and the world beautiful, the world must exist forever: otherwise, God will appear to have changed his mind. Three factors could explain such a change on the Demiurge's part: repentance (*metameleia*), ignorance (*agnoia*), or jealousy (*phthonos*). All three options are dismissed, of course, on the grounds that God is always knowledgeable and good. Finally, Ammonios concludes his demonstration of the world's imperishability with an argument from Providence: assuming the latter, if God were to destroy the universe, this would happen either in accordance with or against his will. The second alternative is quickly dismissed, since there can be no question of considering god impotent (*adunatos*). The first alternative, which consid-

ers God's willing creation of the world, is in turn broken down into three options. Either he wished to create a better world, which Ammonios flatly declares is impossible; or a worse one, which is unthinkable, since it would imply an evil God; or a world of equal value: but in this case God would be an idle worker (*mataioponos*), similar to children who build sandcastles only to knock them down once again. The hypothesis of temporal creation thus leads to the conclusion that God is impotent, stupid, or evil, three eventualities which correspond rather nicely with the three categories of objections, concerning God's power, knowledge, and will, that we saw Šahrastānī attribute to Proclus. Zacharias closes with a quote from Porphyry to the effect that the world's imperishability, as proved by the argument from providence, proves that the world is also ungenerated; and it was no doubt this mention of Porphyry that led Andrew Smith to include the entire passage we have just studied in his collection of Porphyry's fragments.[36]

At the end of this survey, I think we can come to two different sets of conclusions, one reasonably certain, the other less so. Reasonably certain, and argued at length with a wealth of textual evidence by the late Matthias Baltes[37] and others, is that that there was a complex of objections to the doctrine of the world's creation within time, developed in Aristotle's lost dialogue *De Philosophia* in response to a literalist reading of Plato's *Timaeus*. Some or all of these same arguments, which included the famous "Why didn't God create sooner?", were later recycled by the Epicureans against the Stoics, some of whom believed that God periodically destroys the cosmos in order to replace it with a new and better one. Finally, in response to such middle Platonists as Plutarch and Atticus, who also interpreted the *Timaeus* to imply the world's creation within time, Porphyry welded these Aristotelian arguments together into a *Beweiskette* which he used to argue for his thesis of perpetual creation. Known to such Christians as Augustine, Philoponus and Zacharias of Mytilene, who attempted to refute them in various ways, these arguments or arguments like them were taken up by such pagans as Proclus, Hierocles, Macrobius, and many others, and it is precisely the doctrinal convergence of so many mutually independent witnesses that allows us to conclude the existence of an intellectual subarchetype in this matter, namely, Porphyry.

Less clear, however, is precisely what Šahrastānī's direct source was for attributing these doctrines to Proclus. He may have been aware of at least parts of the latter's *Commentary on the Timaeus* in Arabic translation; alternatively, he may have been vaguely aware of Proclus' beliefs on the subject through Philoponus' *Against Proclus*, which as we have seen, was available in Arabic, and/or through Zacharias, many of whose works were preserved in Syriac. In any case, from whatever source they may have derived, the arguments attributed by Šahrastānī to Proclus were destined for a long, influential history in Medieval thought, as we can see from their occurrence in

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36 Cf. Baltes (1976 and 1978), 192–205, cited by Gertz–Dillon–Russell (2012), 151.
37 Cf. Dörrie – Baltes (1996; 1998).

Maimonides (*Guide* II.14; 18; 21) and throughout Latin Scholasticism.[38] But that will have to be the topic for another study.

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[38] On the medieval posterity of the theme of "Why didn't God create sooner?" see, for instance, the excellent discussion in Bianchi (1984), 104 ff.

Elias Giannakis

Proclus' Arguments on the Eternity of the World in al-Shahrastānī's Works

The present study aims, first, at examining Proclus' arguments on the eternity of the world as quoted in two of al-Shahrastānī's works, and secondly, at looking into the sources upon which al-Shahrastānī drew.

      Proclus, one of the great Neoplatonist philosophers, was an assiduous scholar and prolific writer. After attending lessons in law and studying in Alexandria, Proclus went to Athens in search of philosophical enlightenment. There he studied with Plutarch of Athens and Syrianus whom he succeeded as head of the Platonic Academy. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge and his output was vast. He is often regarded as the last great systematiser of Neoplatonism. He was not only a commentator but also a writer of independent philosophical works. Among the treatises he wrote, there was a short book (*monobiblon*) in which he argued for the eternity of the world in eighteen arguments. With the exception of the first argument, the other seventeen of his arguments survive within John Philoponus' *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Proclum*.[1] According to the Arabic bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm (d. A. D. 990) these treatises of Proclus and Philoponus were translated into Arabic.[2] A later bibliographer, al-Qifṭī (d. AD 1248), adds that he possessed a copy of that Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*, which was a "voluminous book".[3] Apart from quotations and references in some Arabic writers, none of these Arabic translations has come down to us in its entirety.[4] However, a number of Proclus' arguments on the eternity of the world survive in two Arabic versions. Version A, as has been called by Franz Rosenthal, is found in two Istanbul manuscripts which contain the first eight of Proclus' arguments.[5] The translator of version A is not known, but judging on the basis of its language and phraseology which is rather archaic, he appears to belong to al-Kindī's circle.[6] In her recent publication of Version A, Elvira Wakelnig suggested that the translator may have been Ibn Nāʿima al-Ḥimṣī (fl. 9th c. AD).[7] Version B contains the first nine of Proclus' arguments and is said to be the work of the eminent translator of ancient science and philosophy Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. AD 910).[8] Despite some differences, versions A and B reflect the same under-

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[1] For the Greek text of Philoponus see Rabe (1899). Now, there is an edition of Proclus' Greek text with English translation including the first argument from Arabic in Lang/Macro (2001).

[2] Flügel et al. (1871–2), I. 252 and 254. For Philoponus' works in Arabic, see Giannakis (2011), 975–8.

[3] Müller/Lippert (1903), 89.3–5.

[4] Giannakis (2002–3).

[5] Rosenthal (1961), 9–10. For the two Arabic versions see Giannakis (2005).

[6] For al-Kindī's circle of translators see Endress (1997).

[7] Wakelnig (2012), 61.

[8] Badawi (1955), 34–42. For the name of the translator see the colophon at p. 42.

lying Greek text of Proclus. However, Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn is closer to the extant Greek text, while the anonymous translator of Version A sometimes shortens his source.[9]

Although the two above-mentioned Arabic versions are not complete, there is evidence that the whole of Proclus' book may well have been translated into Arabic. First, an Arabic translation of Proclus' book *On the Eternity of the World* is mentioned in the *Fihrist* (*Catalogue*) of the bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm which was written in AD 987. Second, al-Shahrastānī (d. A. D. 1153) gives a summary of eight of Proclus' arguments and possible traces of others in his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, i.e. *Book of Religions and Philosophical Sects* (from here onwards to be referred as *al-Milal*).[10] The summaries of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī's work correspond to the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, tenth and thirteenth of Proclus' arguments in Greek.[11] Also, at the end of the section entitled *"Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world"* (*shubah Buruqlus fi qidam al-ʿālam*), two passages of al-Shahrastānī appear to be based on traces of the first and the sixteenth of Proclus' arguments.[12] In addition, summaries of the first, third and fourth of Proclus' arguments are quoted in another book by al-Shahrastānī entitled *Kitāb nihāyatu 'l-iqdām fī ʿilmi 'l-kalām* (*The Summa Philosophiae*) (from here onwards to be referred as *Nihāya*).[13]

With respect to Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī's works, we may make the following preliminary remarks. When we study closely the structure of the Arabic text of the section entitled *"Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world"*, in al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal*, we notice that the Arabic section in *al-Milal* begins with a short introduction in which al-Shahrastānī states that the doctrine on the eternity of the world and the argumentation for it was introduced by Aristotle, and that he was followed by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Porphyry and Proclus. Shahrastānī also adds that Proclus had even written a book arguing for the eternity of the world, and that with respect to this doctrine Aristotle was at variance with his predecessors, who all agreed that the world had an origin. The same information, though in a more elaborate way, is also found in al-Shahrastānī's *Nihāya*.[14] After these introductory re-

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9 See Rosenthal's remarks on the language and omissions in Version A, in Rosenthal (1961), 10.
10 Flügel et al. (1871–2), 252. For the Arabic text of al-Shahrastānī, see Cureton (1842–1846), 338–343. There is now a French translation with an introduction and excellent notes in Jolivet/Monnot (1993), 339–347.
11 Endress (1973), 15–18 (especially p. 17).
12 Jolivet has suggested possible traces of the twelfth and the sixteenth argument of Proclus in the last passages of al-Shahrastānī's section on Proclus' sophisms. See his note in Jolivet/Monnot (1993), 347, n. 33.
13 For the Arabic text see Guillaume (1934), 46–47. For the reading of the title of this work of al-Shahrastānī see Jolivet (2000), 275, n. 2. Guillaume (1934) renders the title of this work as "*The Present Position of Speculation and Dogmatic Theology*" in p. x of his introduction. Another translation is "*The Utmost Proficiency in Theology*", for which see Van den Berg (1954) II. Notes, p. 4 (n. on p. 3.6).
14 For the Arabic text, I refer to the page and lines in Cureton's edition of al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal* in Cureton (1842–1846), and to Guillaume's edition of the *Nihāya* in Guillaume (1934). The introductory remarks are to be found in Cureton (1842–1846, 338.15–20 and Guillaume (1934), 5.1–6.4.

marks, al-Shahrastānī presents summaries of eight of Proclus' arguments. At the end of the summary of the eighth of Proclus' arguments al-Shahrastānī refers the reader to a book he himself wrote and in which he refuted both Proclus' arguments together with those of Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā in accordance with the rules of logic (ʿalā qawā-nīn manṭiqiyya).[15] Indeed, among the works of al-Shahrastānī there was a treatise entitled *Shubuhāt Buruqlus wa-Arisṭū wa-Ibn Sīnā wa-naqḍuhā* (i.e. *The sophisms of Proclus, Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā and their critique*).[16] Unfortunately, this work does not survive. In the sequel, al-Shahrastānī follows an account most of which is drawn upon Pseudo-Ammonius' doxography, as Jolivet has shown.[17] The section on Proclus ends with two further reports, in the first of which it is stated that Proclus held the view that the Creator knew everything, both the universals and the particulars, in contrast to Aristotle who held that God knew only the universals not the particulars.[18] In the second report it is stated that if it is false that before the origination of the world, the Creator had neither the power nor the will nor the wisdom to create the world, then the Creator and the world would both be eternal and equal in respect of eternity. However, eternity is a unique attribute of God's essence.[19] So the world could not be eternal. These two passages seem to recast Proclus' argumentation, as will be shown further down. With these two reports al-Shahrastānī ends the section on Proclus' sophisms.

When we come to the passages which contain the summaries of Proclus' arguments and discuss them together with the question of al-Shahrastānī's possible source, based on al-Shahrastānī's Arabic text, we notice that he appears to quote from some source by sporadically omitting, adding or making some changes. The fact that the first three summaries which correspond to the first, third and fourth of Proclus' arguments are more or less the same in both of al-Shahrastānī's works shows that he copies his source by following closely its phraseology. In order to make clear these points, the following parallel columns present an English translation of the summaries of Proclus' first argument both in *al-Milal* and the *Nihāya*. I have enumerated the paragraphs in order to expose both the similarities and the differences between the two summaries:[20]

Al-Milal 338.15, 338.20 – 339.4	*Nihāya* 45.7 – 13

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15 See *al-Milal* 338.20 – 340.14.

16 See Monnot's table of al-Shahrastānī's lost works in Gimaret /Monnot (1986), 7–8, here p. 8 nº 24 in the table.

17 See the French translation and the notes on it in Jolivet/Monnot (1993), 343 – 346.

18 See *al-Milal* 342.15–18.

19 See *al-Milal* 342.18 – 343.4.

20 All translations are my own, unless it is indicated otherwise. I have tried to be literal and consistent in rendering the Arabic terms in al-Shahrastānī's text, although this is not always easy. Also, I have felt free to punctuate according to sense without indicating different readings on minor points.

"Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world" ... -

[1] The first sophism (*al-shubha al-ūlā*).

[1] A sophism (*shubha*) from Proclus' sophisms

[2] He says: The Creator (*al-bāriʾ*) –Exalted be He – is generous in His essence (*jawād bi-dhātihi*), and the cause (*ʿilla*) of world's existence is His generosity; and His generosity has always been eternal (*qadīmun lam yazal*); so there follows that the world's existence has always been eternal.

[2] He says: The Creator (*al-bāriʾ*) – Praise be to Him – is generous in His essence (*jawād bi-dhātihi*), and the cause (*ʿilla*) of world's existence is His generosity; and His generosity has always been eternal (*qadīmun lam yazal*); so there follows that the world's existence has always been eternal.

[3] It is not admissible that He is generous at one time and not generous at another; for it would necessitate change in His essence.

[3] He says: It is not admissible that He is generous at one time and not generous at another; for it would necessitate change in His essence.

[4] Thus he has always been generous in His essence.

[4] —

[5] He says: There is no impediment (*māniʿ*) in the way of the emanation (*fayḍ*) of His generosity; for, if there were an impediment, <the emanation of His generosity> would not be from His essence,

[5] He says: There is no impediment (*māniʿ*) in the way of the emanation (*fayḍ*) of His generosity; for, if there were an impediment, <the emanation of His generosity> would not be from His essence;

[6] but from something else.

[6] for an essential impediment would impede for ever, whereas the generosity in causing the existence of the existents is real. So this is absurd. If the impediment were from something else, then this something else would be the impelling force of the necessary of existence.

[7] But there is nothing for the necessary of existence in itself to impel it to do something or to prevent it from doing something.

[7] But the necessary of existence can neither be impelled to do something nor prevented from doing something.

With respect to these two summaries of the first of Proclus' arguments, we may make the following observations. First, the rubric "*he says*" (i.e. *qāla*), which occurs twice in *al-Milal* in paragraphs 2 and 5 and three times in the *Nihāya* in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5, indicates that al-Shahrastānī quotes from a written source. Since the wording of both summaries is more or less the same, it is reasonable to assume that al-Shahrastānī follows closely his source even if we admit that he omits or adds a phrase here and there. Second, the content of the first four paragraphs [1–4] of these summaries in both works of al-Shahrastānī reflect accurately Proclus' views in the first of his arguments, as can be seen on the basis of the extant Arabic translation both in Version A and B, i.e. the earlier anonymous translation and that of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn.[21] As noted earlier, the first of Proclus' arguments does not survive in

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21 As said earlier the first of Proclus' arguments on the eternity of the world does not survive in Greek but only in Arabic both in the anonymous Version A and Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Version B. There are several translations in European languages of the first argument based on the Arabic translation of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn: For French translations see: Anawati (1956), 223–227; and Badawī (1968), 119–120. For German translations see: P. Heine's translation in Baltes (1978), II.134–36; and Maróth

Greek but only in Arabic. Third, the content of the last three paragraphs [5 – 7] has no counterpart in Proclus' first argument in the surviving Arabic translations both in Version A and B. Since al-Shahrastānī continues to quote his source, as indicated by the rubric "*he says*", there arise the question as to what that source was. In addition, one cannot be certain to what extent he reproduces verbatim his source or to what extent he rephrases it by adding his own inferences. Since al-Shahrastānī does not name his sources, it is difficult to answer this question with certainty. Nevertheless, by closely reading the Arabic text of our two summaries, we notice that al-Shahrastānī employs the Arabic phrase *wājib al-wujūd li-dhātihi*, i.e. "the necessary being in itself" [lit. "the necessary of existence in virtue of itself"] both in *al-Milal* and in the *Nihāya* (in the *Nihāya* without the qualification "in itself"). The phrase "the necessary being in itself" was first introduced by Ibn Sīnā, and is characteristic of his philosophy. Indeed, as Wisnovsky remarks, the distinction between "that which, in itself, necessarily exists" (lit. "the necessary of existence in itself", "*wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātihi*" or "*li-dhātihi*") and "that which, through another, necessarily exists" (lit. "the necessary of existence through another", "*wājib al-wujūd bi-ghayrihi*") is regarded as Ibn Sīnā's most original contribution in Islamic philosophy.[22] In view of this, it is reasonable to assume that al-Shahrastānī here quotes from a source that derives either from Ibn Sīnā himself or from one of his disciples or from someone else, probably a *mutakallim*, who employs Ibn Sīnā's phraseology and argumentation. If Ibn Sīnā used Proclus' book, we cannot tell, since he never mentions Proclus by name in his published works. In addition, although Ibn Sīnā argued against those of his opponents who affirmed the temporal beginning of the world, I have not found in his works a text similar to these passages which contain Proclus' summaries.[23] Since there are unpublished letters and lost works of Ibn Sīnā, one cannot rule out the supposition that al-Shahrastānī drew upon some work by Ibn Sīnā. The fact that al-Shahrastānī himself argues against Ibn Sīnā in his various works makes such an assumption more probable.[24] Again, we do not know if there were summaries of Proclus' arguments in a work by a disciple of Ibn Sīnā or a *mutakallim* who employed Ibn Sīnā's terminology. Be that as it may, the last paragraphs [5 – 7] in these summaries of al-Shahrastānī follow not only Ibn Sīnā's terminology but also his line of argumentation.

(1988), 181 – 189. For English translations see: McGinnis (2001), 153 – 163; P. Adamson's translation and notes in Share (2005), 19 – 20 and 89 – 91. In the Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies on Philosophy, Spirituality, and Art in the Neoplatonic Tradition, Liverpool, 24th-27th June 2004, I presented a paper (unpublished) on Proclus' first argument of the anonymous Version A. Now, there is an edition and English translation of Proclus' arguments based on Version A by Wakelnig (2012).

22 See Wisnovsky (2005) (especially pp. 113 ff). It should be noted here that Ibn Sīnā may have been influenced by the *mutakallimūn* (Muslim theologians) in the formation of the concept of "the necessary being in itself". For a discussion of such a view see Alper (2004), especially pp. 135 ff.

23 I had no access to Ibn Sīnā's treatise mentioned by Pinès (1972), 347 – 352.

24 See Madelung /Mayer (2001).

On the other hand, it is very unlikely that paragraphs 5–7 in both works of al-Shahrastānī derive from the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus.* Although neither the Arabic translation nor the beginning of the Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* survive, one is tempted to ask whether the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* had already contained the phrase "the necessary of existence in itself". This phrase is not to be found in the surviving Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus.* However, the inference (namely the necessity of the existence of a simple eternal first Cause, i.e. God) can be drawn from some of Philoponus' statements.[25] So it would be interesting to know if this Avicennian phrase was already found in the Arabic translation of Philoponus. The influence of Philoponus on Ibn Sīnā is an issue worth pursuing.[26]

The second summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī's works is based on the third of Proclus' arguments both according to the Greek and the Arabic Versions A and B. Al-Shahrastānī's summaries in *al-Milal* and *Nihāya* read as follows:

al-Milal 339.5–9	*Nihāya* 45.14–18
[1] The second.	[1] Another sophism which is connected with this.
[2] He says: The Maker (*al-ṣāniʿ*) must always (*lam yazal*) be making either in actuality or potentiality in virtue of being able to act while he does not act.	[2] He says: The Maker (*al-ṣāniʿ*) must always (*lam yazal*) be making either in actuality or potentiality.
[3] Thus if the former, then that which has been made has always been an effect.	[3] Thus, if the former, then that which has been made has always been an effect.
[4] And if the latter, then what is potentially is not brought into actuality except by an agent who brings it about (*bi-mukhrij*), and the agent who brings a thing from potentiality into actuality is other than the essence of the thing [itself].	[4] And if the latter, then what is potentially is not brought into actuality except by an agent who brings it about (*bi-mukhrij*), and the agent who brings a thing from potentiality into actuality is other than the essence of the thing [itself].
[5] Therefore, it is necessary for there to be an external agent who brings it about [by] affecting it.	[5] Therefore, it is necessary that the essence of the Maker changes because of that which causes change.
[6] Then, this [fact] militates against his being a Maker in an absolute sense without being changed or being affected.	[6] But this is false.

Again, both these summaries are introduced by the rubric "*he says*" (i.e. *qāla*) which indicates that al-Shahrastānī drew upon a written source. With the exception of slight differences in paragraphs [2], [5] and [6], the two summaries are the same. There is a minor addition in the text of *al-Milal* in paragraph [2]. The content of the first four

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25 The unique and necessary existence of God may be inferred from some of Philoponus' statements found here and there in his text, see, for instance, Rabe (1899), 5.19–6.3; 7.1–3; 14.14–18; 36.23–27; 41.11–25; 76.21–77.3; 85.1–10, etc.

26 For influences on Ibn Sīnā, especially by the mutakallimūn, see Alper (2004).

paragraphs has more or less its counterparts in Proclus' Arabic Version A and B. However, paragraphs [5] and [6] are different in our two summaries and without an exact parallel in Proclus' third argument both in the Greek and the Arabic versions.

The third summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī is based on the fourth of Proclus' arguments both according to the Greek and the Arabic Versions A and B. Al-Shahrastānī's summaries in *al-Milal* and *Nihāya* read as follows:

al-Milal 339.9 – 12	*Nihāya* 46.1 – 4
[1] The third.	[1] Another sophism.
[2] He says: Every cause (*'illa*) of which moving and changing is excluded is a cause only in virtue of its essence (*min jihati dhātihi*) not in virtue of passing from non-actuality to actuality.	[2] He says: Every cause (*'illa*) of which moving and changing is excluded is a cause only in virtue of its essence (*min jihati dhātihi*) not in virtue of something else.
[3] And every cause which is in virtue of its essence, its effect will also be in virtue of its essence.	[3] And every cause which is in virtue of its essence, its effect will also be in virtue of its essence.
[4] Therefore, if the essence of the cause is always (*lam yazal*), so its effect will also be always.	[4] Therefore, if its essence is always (*lam yazal*), so its effect will also be always.

Again both these summaries are introduced by the rubric "*he says*" (i.e. *qāla*) which indicates that al-Shahrastānī drew upon a written source. Our two summaries are the same except for paragraph [2], where *al-Milal* reads "not in virtue of passing from non-actuality to actuality", whereas the *Nihāya* has "not in virtue of something else".

The fourth summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī is based on the fifth of Proclus' arguments both according to the Greek and the Arabic Versions A and B. Apart from the above quoted three summaries of Proclus' arguments, there is no other reference to, or quotation from, Proclus in the *Nihāya*. Now, al-Shahrastānī's fourth summary in *al-Milal* reads as follows:

> *al-Milal* 339.12 – 15
> The fourth: If time does not exist except with heaven (*falak*), and heaven [does not exist] except with time, because time is the number of the motions of heaven, then "when" (*matā*) and "before" (*qabla*) cannot be said except when time exists. But, "when" and "before" exist for ever (*abadī*). Therefore, time exists for ever. Consequently, the motions of the heaven exist for ever. Hence, the heaven exists for ever.

Although the fourth summary is based on the fifth of Proclus' arguments, it is very much shorten and rephrased. The term "before" as well as the last two sentences have no exact counterpart in either the Greek or the Arabic Versions A and B of Proclus' text.

Next, the fifth summary of Proclus in al-Shahrastānī is based on the sixth of Proclus' arguments both according to the Greek and the Arabic Versions A and B. Al-Shahrastānī's summary in *al-Milal* reads as follows:

al-Milal 339.15 – 18
The fifth: He says that the world is beautifully ordered [and] perfectly fitted together. And its Maker (*ṣāniʿuhu*) is generous [and] good (*jawādun khayyirun*). And the good [and] beautiful (*al-jayyid al-ḥusn*) will not be destroyed except by someone evil. However, its Maker is not evil, and it is not the case that someone else can destroy it. Therefore, it [i.e. the world] will never be destroyed (lit. it will not be destroyed for ever) (*abadan*). Hence, that which will never be destroyed (lit. will not be destroyed for ever) is eternal (*sarmadan*).

Here the rubric "*he says*" (i.e. *qāla*) is part of Proclus' text, as is the case in the introductory phrases of the Arabic translation in Version A. However, such an introductory phrase or rubric is not to be found in the Arabic Version B or the parallel Greek of Proclus' sixth argument. Regarding the language and the structure of the content of this argument, there are parallel phrases and/or sentences in the Arabic translation of Proclus in both Versions A and B, but not all of them are to be found there. In respect of content, this passage, too, is very much shorten but similar to the Greek of Proclus' argument.

The sixth summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī is based on the eighth of Proclus' arguments both according to the Greek and the Arabic Versions A and B. Al-Shahrastānī's summary in *al-Milal* read as follows:

al-Milal 339.18 – 340.1
The sixth: If that which has come into being exists (*lammā kāna al-kāʾinu*) without being corrupted except on account of something alien that comes upon it, while there does not exist anything other than the world outside of it, which can come upon, so that it [sc. the world] will be corrupted, then it is established that it [sc. the world] will not be corrupted. However, for that to which there is no way to corruption, there will be no way to generation or origination either. For that which comes into being is corruptible.

This summary bears few similarities to Proclus' eighth argument both according to the Greek and the two Arabic translations in Versions A and B. Upon closer examination, this summary is very much recast, and some phrases are more similar to a quotation from another work of Proclus given within the Greek text of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* than to the text of Proclus' argument. That quotation is taken from Proclus' *An Examination of Aristotle's Criticisms of Plato's Timaeus*, as Philoponus himself says at 297.21 – 23.[27] The Greek of Proclus' text reads as follows:

De Aeternitate Mundi 298.24 – 299.4
Everything, then, which comes to be is in its own right always also perishing; but, as a result of having been bound by that which is, this whole [universe] remains in [a state of] becoming [and] comes to be [but] does not perish because of the being it has drawn off from that which is. (translation after Share (2005), 119)

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[27] For Philoponus' long quotation from that work of Proclus *De Aeternitate Mundi* 297.21.24 – 299.4. Cf. also 239.9 – 13. Rabe (1899, 1963²).

The similarity of this quotation to al-Shahrastānī's passage is an indication that he drew upon an Arabic translation or abridgement of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. This suggestion was already made by Gerhard Endress.[28] As I shall show in what follows, Endress is right, because the following seventh summary of al-Shahrastānī, which is based on the tenth of Proclus' Greek arguments, clearly draws upon Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this summary here and by extension all these summaries of Proclus' arguments are based on Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*.

The seventh summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī is based on the tenth of Proclus' arguments in Greek. The Arabic translation of the tenth of Proclus' arguments has not come down to us, neither in Version A nor in Version B. Upon close examination, the summary of al-Shahrastānī is based on Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* and goes beyond the Greek of Proclus' text. In order to make the point clear, I shall give the English translation of the relevant passage of the Greek text of Philoponus next to the Arabic one. Thus, al-Shahrastānī's summary in *al-Milal* and the Greek text read as follows:

al-Milal 340.1–6	*De Aeternitate Mundi* 383.28–384.8
[1] The seventh: He says that the things which are in [their] natural place do not change or come into being or corrupted. However, they only change or come into being or corrupted, if they are in alien places, then they strive to [take] their [proper] places, as for instance, the fire which is in our bodies struggles to separate [in order to join] its station. Thus, the bond is dissolved and [our body] is corrupted. Therefore, generation and corruption occur only to compound things not to simple ones which are basic elements in their places.	[1] Things in their natural place, he says, are, because they are in a natural state, unchanging. For things that change change because they are in alien places. Our bodies, for instance, change because the elements of which they consist are being kept in an unnatural place. The fire in us, for example, since it is, contrary to nature, low [in the cosmos], races upwards out of a desire to reach [its] natural place –just as, conversely, the part consisting of earth [races] downwards. This is the source of the conflict between and separation of the parts of a compound which result in the disintegration of the complex when the elements of a compound move in opposite directions.
[2] However, they [sc. the basic elements] are in one and the same state, and that which is in one and the same state is eternal.	[2] — [translation after Share (2004), 56].

With respect to the first paragraph of al-Shahrastānī's summary here, it should be said that it is based on Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*, because the example – as to how the element of fire which is said to be in our body, by seeking its proper place leads to the corruption of the body –, is not to be found in the text of Proclus, but only within Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. Therefore, al-Shahrastānī's sum-

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28 See Endress (1973), 17.

mary here is clearly based on Philoponus' text. In addition, it should be noted that the structure of Proclus' argument is presented by Philoponus himself in a summary form in the first section –(where he explains the first main point (*kephalaion*)) – of the refutation of the tenth argument (*lusis tou dekatou logou*) in the Greek text of Rabe's edition (1899), 383.25–384.21. This is exactly the procedure Philoponus follows in all of Proclus' arguments. Namely, he first recasts Proclus' argument in summary form in the first section, and then, refutes the rest of the main points (*kephalaia*) each in turn. Since in this argument al-Shahrastānī clearly follows Philoponus, one may reasonably suggest that all of the Arabic summaries of al-Shahrastānī are based on such sections of the Arabic translation or paraphrase of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. However, one cannot tell whether al-Shahrastānī had direct access to a full or partial translation or paraphrase of Philoponus' *Refutation*, or whether his source drew upon it. Unfortunately, the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* does not survive in order to confirm to what extent he reproduces the Arabic text in front of him. In any case, the suggestion that al-Shahrastānī or his source drew upon Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* explains then not only the omissions or additions but also the divergences from Proclus' text, as we saw in the above analysis of each one of al-Shahrastānī's summaries.

Finally, the eighth summary of Proclus' arguments in al-Shahrastānī is based on the thirteenth of Proclus' arguments in Greek. Again, the Arabic translation of the thirteenth of Proclus' arguments has not come down to us, neither in Version A nor in Version B. Al-Shahrastānī's summary in *al-Milal* read as follows:

> *al-Milal* 340.6–11
> The eighth: He says: The intellect, the soul and the heaven move in circle, whereas the natural entities move either around a centre [axis?] or towards the centre in a straight line. If it is so, the reciprocal corruption in the elements (*al-tafāsud fī 'l-ʿanāṣir*) is only due to the contrariety of their motions. But the circular motion has no contrary. Therefore, no corruption occurs to it [i.e. to circular motion].
>
> He says: The totality of the elements moves only in circle, even if the parts of them move in straight line. Therefore, the heavens and the totality of the elements are not corruptible. Consequently, if the world cannot be corrupted, it cannot either have been generated.

Here again the rubric "*he says*" (i.e. *qāla*) occurs twice. As said earlier, this introductory phrase indicates that al-Shahrastānī drew upon a written source. Compared with the Greek, in this case too, Proclus' argument is very much rephrased and abridged.

With the presentation of the eight summaries of Proclus' arguments, al-Shahrastānī ends the first part of his account on "*Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world*". This end is indicated with the following words of his:

> *al-Milal* 340.11–14
> These sophisms (*shubuhāt*) are those that can be set forth and refuted. There is a kind of fallacy (*mughālaṭa*) in each one of them and most of them are arbitrary judgments (*taḥakkumāt*). I have devoted a book (*kitāban*) for them, in which I have adduced the sophisms of Aristotle and those

accounts of Abū ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, and I have refuted them in accordance with the logical rules (ʿalā qawānīna manṭiqiyya), so let one search for that [book].

In this passage al-Shahrastānī clearly says that he wrote a book in which he criticized not only Proclus but also Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā. Also, he may be taken to say that Ibn Sīnā followed Aristotle and Proclus against Philoponus, which is exactly the case. Could, then, al-Shahrastānī's source be a treatise by Ibn Sīnā who cites Philoponus' rephrasing of Proclus' arguments? Unfortunately this book of al-Shahrastānī does not survive, so we do not know the exact form and content of the arguments presented there and refuted. The reference to Proclus and Aristotle brings to mind the works of Philoponus against both Proclus and Aristotle.[29] These books of Philoponus were translated into Arabic, so most Muslim philosophers and theologians, and among them al-Shahrastānī, may have had access to a full or partial translation or abridgment of them.[30] However, we do not know either the form or the structure of the Arabic translation of Philoponus' works. In other words, we do not know whether the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* was a full translation, or a paraphrase or an abridgement of the Greek. In most cases the early Arabic translations were a free paraphrase.[31] The extant Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* presents firstly the full text of Proclus' arguments followed by the main points (*kephalaia*) and then, their detailed refutation.

Thus far, it has been shown that in terms of content al-Shahrastānī's summaries of Proclus' arguments are clearly based on some Arabic translation or paraphrase of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. In particular, he draws upon Philoponus' summary of Proclus' arguments rather than Proclus' text.

Now, if we examine the terminology, the phraseology and other stylistic features of al-Shahrastānī's summaries of Proclus' arguments we may make the following observations: first, the terminology and phraseology of al-Shahrastānī's summaries are at times closer to the anonymous translator of Version A than to that of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Version B. However, there are numerous parallels both to the vocabulary and to the style of the Arabic translation of Version A as well as to that of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Version B. Secondly, the language of al-Shahrastānī's summaries has all the characteristic features of early *kalām*. The terms "*dhāt*" [i.e. essence], "*lam yazal*" [i.e. has always been], etc. are characteristic of the *kalām* terminology.[32] Thirdly, the Arabic phrase "*wājib al-wujūd li-dhātihi*", i.e. 'the necessary being in itself' (lit. "the necessary of existence in virtue of itself") that occurs in the summary of the first of Proclus' arguments is characteristic of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. Since al-Shahrastānī read and criticised Ibn Sīnā elsewhere, it is reasonable to assume that

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29 Cf. Wildberg (1987), 197–209. Cf. also Mahdi (1967), 236.

30 See Mahdi (1972), 269, n. 1.

31 See Giannakis (2002–3), 194–5.

32 For the term '*lam yazal*' see Frank (1994). See also the list of "Technical Terms" in Frank (1978), 181–199.

he was influenced by the language and the line of argumentation of Ibn Sīnā. If this characteristic similarity in the terminology and the phraseology tempts someone to suppose that al-Shahrastānī drew upon some text of Ibn Sīnā in which he discussed both Proclus' arguments and Philoponus' refutation of them, one cannot tell with certainty.

Commenting on a specific point of terminology, we should say that the corresponding Greek word to the Arabic *shubha*, pl. *shubah* or *shubuhāt* (i. e. sophism or fallacious argument) used by al-Shahrastānī both in *al-Milal* and the *Nihāya* is also used (in its Greek original) by Philoponus, who describes Proclus' arguments as "sophistic", i. e. "fallacious arguments". In various places of his *Refutation of Proclus*, Philoponus uses the dialectical term, *sophisma*, i. e. "fallacious argument", as well other derivatives of the same root of the Greek word.[33] Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that here we have a clear case that the characterization of Proclus' arguments as "sophistic" is taken from the Arabic text of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*.

On the basis of the above analysis of al-Shahrastānī's summaries, it is unlikely that he or his source was based either on the anonymous Arabic translation of Version A or that of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Version B. For it has been shown that al-Shahrastānī's summaries follow Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* rather than Proclus' text. Also, it is reasonable to assume that the Arabic translation of Philoponus was made at an early stage and used terminology and phraseology which was close to that of the *kalām*. In turn, it may be suggested that the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* was made at the time or a little after the flourishing period of *kalām*, i. e. early 9th century A.D. The work of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* served practical needs and was useful in the debates within the Muslim community, as it offered powerful rational arguments in favour of the creation of the world.

Having examined the eight summaries of Proclus' arguments on the eternity of the world as presented by al-Shahrastānī, let us look into two further passages of Proclus' views which are added after the passages taken from Pseudo-Ammonius' doxography and at the end of the section entitled "*Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world*'" in al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal*. The first of these passages reads as follows:

> *al-Milal* 342.15 – 18
> Of what is reported from Proclus (*wa-mimmā yanqulu ʿan Buruqlus*) is that: he says that the Creator knows all the things, their genera, their species and their individuals. With respect to this he differs from Aristotle, for he [sc. Aristotle] says: He [sc. God] knows their genera and their species to the exclusion of their individuals. So His knowledge is connected with the universals to the exclusion of the particulars, as we mentioned.

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33 See for instance *De Aeternitate Mundi* 45.6; 49.25; 51.21; 52.15; 104.5.21; 105.12; 317.14; 574.21.

The view attributed to Proclus in the first sentence of this passage is indeed his and derives from his short essay entitled *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*. This essay of Proclus survives only in a thirteenth century Latin translation by William of Moerbeke.[34] Some excerpts of the original Greek are also extant in the Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. Two of these excerpts in Greek give exactly Proclus' view set forth in the first sentence of al-Shahrastānī's passage. The first excerpt is quoted by Philoponus himself three times in his refutation of the second, the fifth and the sixteenth of Proclus' arguments, while the second excerpt is found four times in the extant Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* within the text of the refutation of the first, the second, the fifth and the sixteenth of Proclus' arguments.[35] The two Greek excerpts read as follows:

> *De Aeternitate Mundi* 38.10 – 15
> ...But it [sc. the unity of providence], remaining stationary and undivided in [its] unity, also knows all things in this same mode, and not only man and sun and everything whatsoever of that kind, but also each particular thing. For nothing escapes that unity, whether it is a question of its being or of its being known. (translation after Share (2004), 40)

> *De Aeternitate Mundi* 6.17 – 21
> ...the unitary knowledge of providence is, in the same undivided [entity], the knowledge of all divided things, both of all that are most individual and of all that are most universal; and just as it has caused each thing to exist in unity, so does it know each in unity. (translation after Share (2004), 40)

In his passage, al-Shahrastānī contrasts Proclus' view to that of Aristotle. Since such a contrast is not to be found in the Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*, one wonders whether this was an addition by Shahrastānī himself or his source. Whatever is the case, it should be noted that there is a short parallel in the refutation of the sixteenth of Proclus' arguments within the Greek text of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* without mentioning Aristotle by name. It reads as follows:

> *De Aeternitate Mundi* 582.27 – 583.2
> ... then, God knows even the particulars , and it is not as some of the Greeks – not so much theorists of God as battlers against God – impiously claim, namely that God is ignorant of individual things ... A person who says that God has no knowledge of individuals clearly also destroys God's foreknowledge concerning them. For He will not foreknow what He does not know, as irrational nature does. But in the above-mentioned passages of Proclus and Plotinus we get both that God knows the future and that God's knowledge and foreknowledge extends to the ultimate individuals. (translation after Wilberding (2014), 80)

Comparing the Arabic with these Greek parallels, it is reasonable to assume that this passage in al-Shahrastānī derives from the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refuta-*

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34 There is now a new English translation in Steel /Opsomer (2012).
35 For the whole of Philoponus' quotations see *De Aeternitate Mundi* 6.14 – 21; 37.20 – 38.20; 91.5 – 23; and 569.22 – 570.18

tion of Proclus. With respect to the name of Aristotle, it may have been added by the translator or inferred by the author of the source upon which al-Shahrastānī drew.

The second passage with which ends the section entitled "*Proclus' sophisms on the eternity of the world*" in al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal* reads as follows:

> *al-Milal* 340.18 – 343.4
> Of what is reported from him [sc. Proclus] with regard to the eternity of the world (*fī qidam al-ʿālam*) is his saying: the origination of the world (*ḥudūth al-ʿālam*) cannot be imagined except after it [=sc. the world] did not exist, then the Creator (*al-barīʾ*) originated it. And in the case it (sc. the world) did not exist, it would have to be one of three alternatives: [1] either that the Creator was not able [to create], then he became able; but this is absurd, for he is always able [to create]; [2] or that he did not wish [to create], then he wished; but this is also absurd, for he always wishes; [3] or that he did not emanate the wisdom [to create], and this is also absurd, for the existence (*al-wujūd*) is nobler than the absolute privation. Thus, if those three alternatives are false, then they [sc. God and the world] will be alike in respect of the attribute which is proper [to God] and which is the eternity (*al-qidam*) according to the principle of the theologian (*ʿalā ʾaṣl al-mutakallim*); or [in other words] the eternity in essence (*al-qidam bi-l-dhāt*) belongs to Him alone to the exclusion of anything else, even if they [sc. God and the world] were simultaneously in existence (*maʿan fī-l-wujūd*). God gives success.

With respect to the three alternatives mentioned in this argument, I have not found an exact counterpart in the extant Greek of Proclus or Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. However, we have evidence that the line of argumentation and the ideas expressed in it are Proclus' own. This may be shown as follows. In the first of Proclus' arguments which survive only in Arabic, we find a partial parallel to our passage. That part of the first argument in the translation of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn reads as follows:

> Lang /Macro (2001) 156, 158[36]
> … whatever he does not do, then his not doing it is either because he does not want to act or because he cannot act (if he is one of those, who can be subject to one of these two alternatives). … In other words, the statement that he cannot make what he wants, is worthy of contempt, because whenever one is sometimes capable and sometimes not capable, [this] one must be alterable and passible. That is, one's loss of power is the cause of being affected. Now the thing that changes from not [having] power to [having] power has been altered because potency and impotence both pertain to quality, and alteration is change in quality. Thus, if he is eternally capable of making and eternally wanting to make, then it is necessarily necessary that he is making eternally, and the all is made eternally and the cosmos is eternally … (translation after McGinnis (2001), 157, 159)

In this passage of Proclus, in Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic Version B, two of the three alternatives in al-Shahrastānī's passage are mentioned. The case is similar with the anonymous Arabic Version A. The reference to the third alternative based on the term

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36 For the Arabic text and facing English translation accompanied with notes by J. McGinnis, see Appendix I, in Lang /Macro (2001), 153 – 163.

"wisdom" (ḥikma) of the Creator is missing both in the Arabic Version B and A. Again, the third alternative is not found in another closer parallel passage of Proclus in his extant Greek commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, which reads as follows:

> *In Tim.* II.366.27–367.6
> If the universe was generated and did not previously exist, was this on account of the Demiurge or on account of its substrate, which was disorderly? If it is on account of the Demiurge, is it that that too has not existed eternally? It is clearly not permissible even to say such a thing, and besides, it would be pointless. The same kind of question [will arise] in regard to him, and we shall either make all things generated or there will be something primarily ungenerated. And it is better to assume that this is the Demiurge in an inactive condition. So does he not create because he does not wish to or because he is not able to? If we say that it is because he does not wish to, we inadvertently do away with his goodness. And if that it is because he is not able to, it is absurd that he should have power at one time and [display] a lack of power at another; for [then] we shall be doing away with his eternity. (translation after Runia and Share (2008), 229)

Again, only two of the alternatives are mentioned in this passage from Proclus' Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. The third alternative in al-Shahrastānī's passage based on the wisdom of the Creator is missing. Now, as Jolivet has remarked, some pages in the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides present three proofs for the eternity of the world advanced by the successors of Aristotle and which are based exactly on the concepts of Power, the Will and the Wisdom of God.[37] This argumentation is even clearer in Maimonides' text some pages further down.[38] Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that Maimonides and al-Shahrastānī are based on some similar source. Since in other cases al-Shahrastānī followed Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*, one is tempted to assume that here too he drew upon the same source, perhaps the lost part at the beginning of the Greek in which Philoponus argued against the first of Proclus' arguments. In support of this claim, one may adduce the following passage which is taken from the refutation of the first argument in the extant Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* and which reads as follows:

> *De Aeternitate Mundi* 13.26–14.3
> So, if the impossibility of anything created being identical with its creator neither does away with [the doctrine] that God is good nor involves the consequence that he does not wish to make all things like himself nor inflicts any weakness or impotence upon him, then, when we hypothesise that the world is not everlasting, we neither do away with [the doctrine] that God is always good nor predicate weakness of his creative power. (translation after Share (2004), 26)

This passage and similar ones in the extant Greek of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* indicate that al-Shahrastānī himself or his source drew upon the Arabic translation of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*.

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37 See Jolivet's remarks in Jolivet/Monnot (1993), 346, n. 31. The relevant pages are to be found in the French translation of Munk (1856–1866), II.118–120. For an English translation, see Friedländer (1904), II.175.

38 Munk (1856–66), II.138–143. Friedländer (1904), II.181–183.

With respect to the phrase "according to the principle of the theologian ['alā 'aṣl al-mutakallim]" in the last part of al-Shahrastānī's above mentioned second passage, it should be said that it is not clear to whom it refers. Is it Proclus or an opponent of al-Sharastānī? One cannot rule out the possibility that this phrase originates with Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. Also, it may be due to al-Shahrastānī who has in mind someone of the Muslim theologians, or even Ibn Sīnā. It should be noted here that Philoponus too argues that the world cannot be co-eternal with God, because the product cannot be identical with the producer (Rabe (1899), 13.10 ff). Note also that when al-Shahrastānī answers to the first of Proclus' arguments in the *Nihāya* he writes:

> *Nihāya* 46.5 – 8
> The answer: We say: what is the meaning of your saying that the Creator (*al-bārī*') – Most High – is generous in his essence (*jawād bi-dhātihi*) and what is the meaning of generosity (*al-jūd*)? For according to us and you ('*indanā wa-'indakum*) generosity is not an essential attribute (*ṣifa dhātiyya*) additional to the essence but an active one (*ṣifa fa'iliyya*). But according to you ('*indakum*) the attributes are [1] either negations like Eternal (*al-qadīm*) or Self-Sufficient (*al-ghanī*); for the meaning of Eternal is the denial of a beginning (*nafy al-awwaliyya*) and the meaning of Self-sufficient is the denial of any need. [2] Or relations (*iḍāfāt*) like Creator (*al-khāliq*), ...

In this passage al-Shahrastānī seems to address someone who followed Proclus' argumentation. In the *Nihāya*, when al-Shahrastānī refers to his opponents, he has in mind the philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā.[39] Although the opponent is not named, the pronoun "you" may well refer to Ibn Sīnā, who argued for the eternity of the world as Proclus did.

Finally, on the basis of the above study of the summaries of Proclus' arguments quoted by al-Shahrastānī, we may draw the following conclusions: first, al-Shahrastānī's summaries of Proclus' arguments derive from Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*, which was translated into Arabic, probably early in the 9th century A.D. In particular, the Arabic summaries are based on the first section (first main point, i.e. *kephalaion*) of Philoponus' *Refutation* in which he recasts Proclus' argument before he refutes it. It is not clear whether al-Shahrastānī had direct access to a full or partial translation or a paraphrase or an abridgement of Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus*. Second, although the book of Proclus On the Eternity of the World was translated into Arabic, – while part of it is extant in two Arabic versions, namely Version B translated by Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and the anonymous Version A –, al-Shahrastānī's summaries do not depend on either of them. Third, with respect to Proclus' arguments al-Shahrastānī follows closely his source or sources by reproducing their terminology and phraseology. At other times he quoted freely by adding or omitting words or phrases, or recasting or even rephrasing the argument. Fourth, there are some indications that al-Shahrastānī may have had in front of him some treatise of Ibn Sīnā in which arguments from Philoponus' *Refutation of Proclus* were cited

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39 See Guillaume (ed./trans) (1934), 11 ff.

in order to be disproved and criticized. It is known that Ibn Sīnā held the view that the world was eternal, and thus siding with that of Proclus and Aristotle. Fifth, al-Shahrastānī himself says that he wrote a book against Aristotle, Proclus and Ibn Sīnā. So it is reasonable to suppose that he drew upon Philoponus' books both against Aristotle and Proclus which, though translated into Arabic, are not extant. On the whole, Proclus' influence on Muslim thinkers was not insignificant. However, in the Islamic world Philoponus' influence was greater than that of Proclus. Nevertheless, it is Proclus' arguments that gave the opportunity to Philoponus to form his own line of argumentation for the creation of the world, which in turn influenced the argumentation not only of the Muslim philosophers, i.e. the *falāsifa*, but also of the Muslim theologians, i.e. the *mutakallimūn*.

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Proclus as a Source for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's Arguments Concerning *Emanatio* and *Creatio Ex Nihilo*

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) is well known for his broad and general scope of learning; indeed, he is famous for the various sources he used in order to reach his goal. He resorted to non-prominent philosophers or philosophical traditions, such as the Pre-Socratics, Kabbalah, the Chaldean Oracles etc.[1] He used almost all the major philosophical, theological and mystical traditions of the ancient and medieval worlds. In particular, throughout his short life Pico evinced strong interest in the main exegetical and allegorical concepts of Proclus' texts. Proclus is undoubtedly the most important source in Pico's most significant work *Conclusiones CM Publicae Disputandae:* almost 100 of the 900 theses and arguments were drawn from Proclus.[2] Since Pico was well-versed in ancient languages, it is highly probable that he read Proclus from the Greek original and not exclusively from a Latin translation.[3] In contrast to most 15th century scholars and philosophers, Pico did not simply summarize Proclus' philosophy;[4] rather, he formulated his own philosophy based on Proclus' teachings while critically scrutinizing commonly held philosophical views. In addition, Pico was contentious and he seemed to enjoy philosophical disputes. As a result, with the intention of engaging in heated philosophical debates and promoting human understanding, he was not afraid to challenge the established ideas and criticize even key theological doctrines.[5]

Most importantly, he criticized the Judeo-Christian idea of *creatio ex nihilo* which was fundamental for Christian theology and philosophy in the Middle Ages. Neoplatonism, on the other hand, endorsed the idea of *emanatio,* namely that all things derive from the One. The difference between emanation and any other form of creation – especially *creatio ex nihilo* – is that emanation does not include any definite will in the First Cause. Despite the incompatibility between emanation and creation, early Christian scholars resorted to emanation in an attempt to explain key Christian doc-

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1 Berquist (1999); Borghesi (2012); Borghesi (2008), 214; Busi (2009); Busi (2010); Campanini (2005); Copenhaver (2002a); Copenhaver (2002b); Copenhaver (1999); Coudert (2011), 162–163; Dannenfeldt (1957); Dougherty (2008), 136; Garin (1942), 104–109; Garin (2008), 311–312; Grafton (1997), 93–134; Hanegraaf (2012), 53–68; Herufek (2011); Idel (1983); Idel (2002), 489–492; Joost–Gaugier (2009), 30–31, 87–92; Lelli (2008); Manuel (1992), 37–44; Ogren (2009a), 212–237; Ogren (2009b); Rabin (2011); Wirszubski (1989); Yates (1964), 84–116.
2 Edelheit (2008), 346–347; Farmer (1998), 25–26; Steel (1982), 14–15.
3 Kristeller (1993), 243; von Stuckrad (2007), 5–6.
4 Kristeller (1987).
5 Borghesi (2008), 215–216; Farmer (1998) 1–58; Garin (1937).

trines, such as the doctrine of the Trinity.[6] In his philosophy, Johannes Scotus Eriugena combined emanation and creation in a new synthesis, inspired by Ps-Dionysius' texts.[7] Eriugena's solution and Proclus' *Institutio Theologica* influenced Western scholasticism and the medieval mystics. Latin Scholastics, such as Albertus Magnus and Dietrich of Freiburg, relied on Proclus so as to reconcile Avicenean emanationism with Christian creationism.[8] However, it was Thomas Aquinas who was able to break the influence of the idea of emanation and favor that of creation in the Christian views.[9]

Pico's view on emanationism is ambiguous. Moreover, his position viz. emanation seems to change at times. He made his emanationism more elaborate and complex by incorporating in it Neoplatonic ideas and the Kabbalistic hierarchy.[10] He attempted a reconciliation of *emanatio* and *creatio ex nihilo*, as certain Christian Neoplatonists like Augustine did before, but Pico's main intention was not the defense of the Christian dogma. To illustrate this point, I note that he did not hesitate to interpret even the book of *Genesis* through Neoplatonism and Kabbalah, despite the resistance of the Roman Church. Philosophical accuracy and integrity was not always Pico's main concern since he intended to prove the *concordia* of all the major previous philosophies and theologies.[11] Furthermore, he disagreed with Aquinas' solution for the problem of *emanatio* and *creatio ex nihilo*. He went on defending emanationism by relying on scholastics like Albertus Magnus.[12] The aim of this paper is to explore Pico's dependence on Proclus concerning the relation of *emanatio* and *creatio ex nihilo*.

According to the prevalent scholastic solution concerning *emanatio* and *creatio ex nihilo*, "the creative activity of the emanated beings could be rightly attributed in some more eminent mode to each higher entity creating it, with the chain of causation leading back to God."[13] This solution finds its basis in Proclus. Indeed, in his *Institutio Theologica* Proclus affirms that:

6 Burton (1831), 29–30; Dechair (ed.) (1706), c.24; Logan (2004), 32–33; Migne (ed.) (1844), 758–763; Migne (ed.), (1883) 462–464; Nash (2008), 199; Osborn (1997), 123–124; Pate (2011), 165–212.

7 Barstad (1997), 52; Gersh (1978), 20–23, 283–288; Sells (1994), 35–38; Thacker (2010), 75–78, 175–176.

8 Bonin (2001); Burrel *et al.* (2009), 103–120; Copleston (1950), 297–298; Proclus, *ET* §54, 230; Elders (1990), 282; Flasch (2007), 177–185; Führer (1999); Führer (2012); Iremadze (2004), 67; Winkler (1999).

9 Aquinas, *Pars prima*, Q.45, 1–8 edition of Quartus (1888–1889); Burrell (1993); Burrell (2004); Dales (1990); Davies (1993), 33–35; Elders (1990), 277–305; Gerson (1993), 559–561; Hankey (2007); Hankey (2012); te Velde (1995), 102–108; Wippel (1984), 191–214; Wissink (1990).

10 Black (2006), 217–218; Cassirer (1963), 84–85; Craven (1981), 107–108; Blum (2010), 133–134; Whitaker (1901), 163; Wirszubski (1989), 84–90, 194.

11 Blum (2008), 49–50; Pico, *Heptaplus,* 67–384.

12 Dodds (ed./trans.) (1963), 54, 230; Farmer (1998), 34; Godman (1998), 34; Mahoney (1992); Mahoney (1997), 143–156.

13 Farmer (1998), 21.

ET §56.1–3
> All that is produced by secondary beings is in a greater measure produced from those prior and more determinative principles from which the secondary themselves derived. (ed./trans. Dodds)

In the *Conclusiones* Pico comments on Aquinas' arguments against emanation. Pico thinks that Aquinas' position can be summarized as follows: it is more rational to believe that the ability of creation cannot be transferred to a creature, given that "a creature can create" in the first place.[14]

In his *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas supports the existence of a different kind of emanation:

> As was explained above (q. 44, a. 2), one must take into account not only the emanation of a particular entity from a particular agent, but also the emanation of the totality of an entity from the universal cause, viz., God. And it is this latter sort of emanation that we designate by the name 'creation'. Now what proceeds by means of a particular emanation is not presupposed by that emanation. For instance, if a man is generated, then the man did not previously exist. Rather, the man comes from (*ex*) what is not a man, and a white thing comes from (*ex*) what is not white. Hence, if we are thinking about the complete emanation of the totality of an entity (*emanatio totius entis universalis*) by the agency of the first principle, then it is impossible that any entity at allshould be presupposed by this emanation. But nothing is the same as no entity. Therefore, just as the generation of a man is from non-being in the sense of what is not a man, so too creation, which is the emanation of the totality of *esse*, is from non-being in the sense of nothing.[15]

It is worth noting here that Aquinas rejects Augustine's view on the equivocal sense of the word "creation".[16]

In this particular passage from the *Conclusiones* (I.2.17), Pico obviously reproduces Aquinas' argument to a large extent. That would be a possible explanation for Pico's insistence on using the words *creaturam* and *creare,* when he comments on emanation. Nonetheless Pico was deeply influenced by scholasticism in general and Thomism in particular although he equally opposed Aquinas' philosophy in particular and the Scholastics in general.[17] Pico's scholastic learning led him to misunderstand the core of emanationism as presented by Proclus. On the one hand, Proclus is consistent in the use of the word παραγόμενον and other derivatives of the verb παράγω; Pico, on the other hand, prefers the words *creaturam* and *creare* where-

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14 Pico, *Conclusiones* I.2.17. All references to and translations of Pico's *Conclusions* are from Farmer (ed./trans.) (1998).
15 Aquinas, *ST*, Iᵃ q.45a.1co. A. J. Freddoso (trans.) (2016).
16 Aquinas, *ST*, Iᵃ q.45a.1 ad 1: "Augustine is here using the name 'creation' in a different sense (*aequivoce*) according to which things that are changed into something better are said to be created—as, for instance, when someone is said to be 'created' a bishop. This is not the sense in which we are talking about creation here; rather, we are speaking of creation in the sense just explained." A. J. Freddoso (trans.) (2016).
17 Edelheit (2008), 14–15, 43; Farmer (1998), 47–49; Kristeller (1939); Kristeller (1944); Kristeller (1944–45); Panizza (2000); Rebhorn (2000), 57–67.

as he should have used the verb *produco*. To this matter, Aquinas' wording is by far more precise and accurate, technically speaking. At this point, it is convenient to recall that Pico had access to Proclus' texts in their Greek original.

Pico further elaborates his views on emanationism in other theses, in which he comments on the Arab philosophers, namely Averroes, Avicenna and Mohammed of Toledo, an unidentified scholar.[18] To illustrate this point, here are a few selections:

> Pico, *Conclusiones* I.7.5
> Everything abstract depends on what is first abstract in the threefold genus of formal, final and efficient cause. (trans. Farmer, 253)

> Pico, *Conclusiones*, I.8.7
> The first substance is prior to every substance capable of transitive operation, whatever that is and of whatever cause, whether formal, or material, or efficient, or final. (trans. Farmer, 267)

> Pico, *Conclusiones*, I.13.5
> of no object can one ask whether a special creator exists. (trans. Farmer, 279)

In addition, he asks himself:

> Pico, *Conclusiones*, II.7a.7.
> Whether one should posit a nature superior to the intellectual nature. (trans. Farmer, 473)

and

> Pico, *Conclusiones*, II.7a.26.
> Whether between the cause and the caused something necessarily mediates. (trans. Farmer, 477)

In the previous theses, Pico lies closer to the conciliatory scholastic position, according to which *emanatio* and *creatio ex nihilo* could be reconciled. Moreover, Pico's wording is more precise and accurate than Aquinas'.

Pico expresses his views on emanation with more clarity and lucidity in his *Apologia*,[19] which was written after the papal rejection of the *Conclusiones*:

> Pico, *Apologia*, 189.
> God produces certain creatures immediately, and certain (creatures) through the medium of others; and just as He terminates/ends/has a limit in Himself, so certain creatures (terminate) through the medium of others, thus also the Word can terminate in Himself, as subsisting in (the) supposite, a certain creature through the medium of another; and this way the creatures, through which God produces, are called 'producing'...[20]

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18 Farmer (1998), 278.

19 Pico, *Apologia*, 114–240. All references to Pico's *Apologia* are from Petri (ed.) (1557).

20 Pico, *Apologia*, 189: *Deus producit aliquas creaturas immediate, & aliquas mediantibus aliis, & sicut in se ipso terminat, ut in fine aliquas creaturas per alias, sic etiam potest verbum in se ipso terminare, ut in supposito substantante, aliquam creaturam mediante alia. & sicut creaturae, per quas Deus producit, dicuntur producentes*[...].

He argues that God produces certain creatures directly while He produces others *mediantibus aliis*. In other words, it is possible that lower beings produce other beings; however, their creative activity should be attributed to God. At the end, even under this model, the chain of causation leads back to God. Pico's terminology is more accurate this time. He holds that God *producit*, a Latin term corresponding to Greek terms found in Proclus and other ancient Neoplatonists. Nonetheless, he identifies the outcome of production as either *creaturas* or *producentes* simultaneously.

Indicative of his linguistic confusion is the aforementioned phrase: *sicut creaturae, per quas Deus producit, dicuntur producentes*. Pico's wording and his ambivalence towards emanationism – a key doctrine of Neoplatonism – leads me to affirm that he was still strongly influenced by medieval scholasticism despite his thorough study of Proclus and other Neoplatonists. Nonetheless, the full intended meaning of technical vocabulary that Proclus used and the clarity of his views often escaped Pico, since at times was very young, hasty and rather unexperienced. Pico aimed at revealing the hidden affinities between Proclus, Ps.-Dionysius and Kabbalah because he was persuaded that all these traditions share a common substratum.[21] He was obsessed to prove his view. As a result his main concern was not the proper understanding of Procline philosophy. Pico interpreted it in order to serve his supreme cause: the concordance of all the major philosophical and theological traditions. To make things easier, the structure of the *Conclusiones* (aphorisms) – where Pico chose to present the views of ancient and medieval philosophers including Proclus – was such as to facilitate his task, because he did not have to articulate in full the views of the ancient philosophers. He rather summarized them according to his understanding and needs

Indeed, Pico studied Proclus with the genuine intention to incorporate his views. However, a possible response to Pico's negligence and inconsistencies would be that his goal was simply to reconcile Neoplatonism with Christianity.[22] I will attempt to prove that although a reappraisal of the relation between Neoplatonism and Christianism was among his concerns, he was not up to such a task during the middle 1480's, when he was in his early twenties. Several months before the appearance of the *Conclusiones*, Pico wrote a *Commento sopra una canzone d'amore di Girolamo Benivieni*[23]*:* the text is typically evidence of Pico's ambiguous view of *emanatio* and clearly depicts his confused terminology. In it, he refers to the Neoplatonic hypostases as *creaturas* in a rather simplistic way. According to Pico, Proclus, Syrianus and Hermias place a great number of creatures between God and world-soul, while Plo-

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21 Borghesi (2012), 58–60; Bori (2000), 85–94; Farmer (1998), 35–36, 148–171; Monfasani (2002), 195–196; Purnell (1986), v. 2,397–415;

22 Craven (1981), 89; Curtright (2012), 29–30; Hankins (2003), v.1,504; Kristeller (1993), 253; Pompa (2008), xxxiii.

23 Pico, *Commento*, 443–582. All references to Pico's *Commento* are from Garin (ed.) (1942).

tinus and Porphyry – the best among the Neoplatonists – place only one creature, namely the son of God who is immediately produced by God.[24]

Despite the fact that Proclus' view of emanationism is compatible with Christian Neoplatonism – as presented by Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite,[25] Pico prefers the more philosophical view of Plotinus which better suits the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle.[26] Pico himself admits that his main concern was not the defense of the Christian religion.

> In the following chapter, Pico persists that God creates Intellect, a perfect and unique creation. Pico differentiates himself from the Neoplatonists and identifies Intellect with Angelic Mind. Despite the ambiguous wording –he uses interchangeably derivatives of the root verbs *produco* and *creo* despite their conceptual differences- of the passage, the passage is indicative of his confusion. According to Pico,[27] God from eternity produced a creature of incorporeal and intellectual nature, as perfect as is possible for a created being, beyond which he produced nothing.[28]

In addition, Pico affirms that, according to the Platonists, Intellect (*prima mente*) is the sole direct creation of God.[29]

> For the most perfect cause, the effect must be most perfect and the most perfect cannot be but one. All the other effects issuing from this Intellect are secondary causes, of which God is the cause, although a mediate and remote cause.[30]

Likewise, Pico criticizes Ficino's view on the issue. Ficino supports the view that – according to Plato – human souls are immediately produced by God.[31] Pico blames Ficino's attempt to conflate emanationism and creationism because Ficino's views, as interpreted by Pico, are opposed no less to the "sect" of Proclus than to that of

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24 Pico, *Commento*, I.3: *Alcuni, come e Proclo, Hermya, Syriano e molti altri, pongono fra Dio e l' anima del mondo, ch' e la prima anima razionale, gran numero di creature, le quail parte chiamano intelligibile, parte intellettuale, e' quail termini qualche volta etiam confunde Platone, come nel Fedone ove dell' anima parla. Plotino, Porfirio, e comunemente e' piu perfetti Platonici, ponfono fra Dio e l' anima del mondo una creatura sola la quale chiamano figliuolo di Dio, perche da Dio e immediatamente produtta.* Garin (ed.) (1942), 464.
25 Copleston (2001), 22–23; Gersh (1978), 17–26; Louth (1989–2002), 78–98; Marenbon (2002), 18–19; Meyendorff (1975), 73; Riordan (2008), 71–112; Stang (2012), 134–135; Wear/Dillon (2007), 51–74.
26 Allen, (2008) 94.
27 Pico, *Commento* I.4: *Seguendo adunque noi la opinione di Plotino, nono solo da' migliori platonici, ma ancora da Aristotile e da tutti li Arabi e massime da Avicenna seguitata, dico che Iddio ab aeterno produsse una creatura di natura incorporea ed intelletuale, tanto perfetta quanto è possibile e' sia una cosa creata. E pero oltra a lei niente altro produsse.* Garin (ed.), (1942), 465
28 Stanley (1701), 196–197.
29 Pico, *Commento* I.4: *Questo basta a sapere, che secondo e' Platonici da Dio immediatamente non proviene altra creatura che questa prima mente.* Garin (ed.), (1942), 466.
30 Pico, *Commento*, I.4. Garin (ed.), (1942), 465–466.
31 Marsilio Ficino, *El libro dell' amore* 4.4. All references to and translations of this text refer to Niccoli (ed./trans.) (1987).

Porphyry.[32] Certain editors of the *Commento* prefer Plotinus instead of Porphyry.[33] In the *Commento*, Pico follows Proclus' views which were of great importance for the medieval scholastics who attempted to reconcile emanationism and creationism. He supports the view that – according to the Neoplatonists – God produced all through producing only one creature. They believe it is possible because, in the Intellect, God produced the Ideas and forms of all. According to the Platonists and the Chaldeans, the Ideas are not in God, but are produced by Him in the *mente angelica*.[34] As a result, Michael J. Allen's reading of the passage – namely that God created the Ideas in the First Mind – is dubious, since Pico prefers the words *produce* and *forma*.[35] Moreover, Pico affirms that the Intellect produces the rest of the universe, without any immediate interference of God.[36] On the other hand, Pico feels the need to illustrate that the son of God – according to *nostri teologi* – is not a creature, but one essence coequal with God, an equal cause against the claims of ancient authorities such as the Platonists, Mercury Trismegistus and Zoroaster who call the prime creature by different names.[37]

Moreover, Pico does not follow the Middle Platonists Atticus, Plutarch and the Neoplatonists on the thorny issue of the eternity of the world. Instead, he declares his accordance with the views of the Catholic Church.[38] It is obvious that Pico conflates the traditions he attempts to incorporate in his philosophy while his intention is not the reconciliation of pagan philosophy and Christianity.

Nevertheless, the problem becomes more persistent because Pico uses words that refer to creation on three occurrences in the aforementioned passages, while in the specific and consequent chapters he prefers *produsse, producere* and other derivatives of the root verb *produco*. It seems that Pico's terminology is not consistent. Furthermore, he mentions as his sources Plotinus, the famous Platonists, Aristotle and all the Arab philosophers, notably Avicenna.[39] The harmonization of the opinions of the aforementioned philosophers on the Intellect is rather superficial and

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32 Blum (2010), 133; Farmer (1998), 21; Garin (ed.) (1942), Pico, *Commento* 466; Garin (2008), 305.
33 Garin (ed.) (1942), 466.
34 Ficino, *De amore* 1.2–3, 2.4. Niccoli (ed./trans.), (1987); Pico, *Commento* I.6, I.13, II.13, Garin (ed.), (1942), 467–468, 480–481, 501–504; *Enn.* V.3 [43]. 11. All references and translations of Plotinus' *Enneads* derive from Armstrong (ed./trans.) (1968–1988).
35 Allen (2008), 95.
36 Pico, *Commento*, II.20. Garin (ed.) (1942), 511–512.
37 Pico, *Commento*, I.5: El abbi ciascuno diligente avvertenzia di non intendere che questo sia quello che da' nostri Teologi e detto figliuolo di Dio, perche noi intediamo per il figliuolo una medesima essenzia col padre, a lui in ogni cosa equale, creatore finalmente e non creatura, ma debbesi comparare quello che e'Platonici chiamano figliuolo di Dio al primo e più nobile angelo da Dio creato. Garin (ed.), (1942), 466–467.
38 Pico, *Commento*, I.7. Garin (ed.) (1942), 468–470.
39 Pico, *Commento*, I.3, I.4. Garin (ed.) (1942), 464–466.

not the outcome of solid argumentation. In the mid-1480's Pico's philosophy was not coherent.[40]

Moreover, Pico's argumentation is equivocal. He seems to stand on Christian and Neoplatonic grounds at the same time. He admits that – according to the Neoplatonists – the Intellect is a progression from the One and not a creation per se.[41] Again, Pico prefers types of the verb *produco* instead of *creare.* The two verbs invoke different philosophical perspectives, as is obvious. Although Pico seems to be confused, I do not reject that the use of words that refer to creation could be interpreted as rather loose interpretations of the Neoplatonic theory on the Intellect on the basis that the general wording of the phrases suggests that *creatura* implies the emergence of One's thought and thinking. The same confusion could be found in several passages of Pico's *Commento,* as I indicated above.

Later in the *Commento*, he argues that Intellect (*mente angelica*) consists of potency and act. Potency – the unlimited – is equated with matter while act – the limited – is form.[42] Obviously, this is a direct instance of the Aristotelian influence on Pico's philosophy, despite the fact that Pico mentions a passage from the Platonic *Philebus.*[43] Intellect, like created things, consists of different principles, while potency is imperfection, as such Intellect's imperfection is the result of its potency and its perfection of its act; hence, Pico's view lacks consistency as Allen suggests.[44]

Pico's contradictions go on. In various passages of the *Commento*, he describes the Intellect in a different way: unformed substance, i.e. the original prime matter, took its form from God and became Intellect, an obvious compressed account of Plotinus' *Nous.*[45] Moreover, in the *Conclusiones*, Pico refers to the *opifex intellectus*,[46] which can be translated as demiurge–Intellect – and not demiurge of the Intellect, as Farmer suggests.[47] Here, we have Pico's unambiguous affirmation that the Intellect creates the universe: *dalla quale poi era prodotto el resto del mondo.*[48] Similar arguments are reproduced in other passages of the *Commento.*[49] In addition Pico holds that the Intellect is greatly mixed, because the greatest mixture coincides with the greatest simplicity in the intellectual nature.[50] Pico's reference to the demiurge and his phrasing suggests that he was drawing from Simplicius' commentary on Ar-

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40 Allen (2008), 94; Sudduth (2008), 68–69.

41 Pico, *Commento*, I.5-I.6. Garin (ed.) (1942), 466–468.

42 Pico, *Commento* I.9. Garin (ed.) (1942), 471–473.

43 Plato, *Philebus*, 23C. Burnet (ed./trans.) (1901).

44 Pico, *Commento* I.9. Garin (ed.) (1942), 471–473; Allen (2008), 96–97.

45 Pico, *Commento*, I.6, I.13, II.13, II.20-II.21. Garin (ed.) (1942), 468–470, 480–481, 501–504, 511–513.

46 Pico, *Conclusiones* 3.21. Farmer (ed./trans.) (1998).

47 Farmer (1998), 405.

48 Pico, *Commento*, II.20. Garin (ed.) (1942), 511–512.

49 Pico, *Commento*, I.9. Garin (ed.) (1942), 471–473.

50 Pico, *Conclusiones*, 3.21–3.22. Farmer (ed./trans.) (1998).

istotle *Physics*.[51] Pico should have been familiar with the idea that the Intellect (*Νοῦς*), the image of the One, is an emanation of the One.[52] According to Plotinus, the One remains in his undifferentiated unity and is not the demiurge.[53] Plotinus asserted that the Intellect is identical to the Platonic demiurge (*Δημιουργός*),[54] as described in the *Timaeus*. Intellect contains the world of the demiurge and is not a product of emanation or creation from the demiurge.[55] Even in the later Neoplatonists the emanational scheme safeguards that the One is not a demiurge. The cosmos is a product of the work of the lower hypostases, namely Intellect and Soul (*Ψυχή*).[56] In the *Conclusiones* Pico admits that the demiurge of the world is the supermundane soul.[57]

Pico draws from Proclus' *In Timaeum*, where Proclus summarizes the basic arguments of Porphyry on the creation myth of the Platonic dialogue.[58] Furthermore, in the *Conclusiones* Pico adds that the seventh of the intellectual hierarchy is the demiurge of the sensible world.[59] Apparently Pico traces in Proclus evidence that Iamblichus prefigured the henads.[60]

A few years later in 1489, Pico composed the *Heptaplus*, a philosophical and Kabbalistic commentary on the first 26 verses of *Genesis*. In it Pico exposes his developed views on creation and attempts to reconcile Mosaic and pagan cosmology.[61] He argues for the existence of a crude matter capable of taking on all forms though it is devoid of form; this is in accordance with natural philosophers. As a result, the origin of natural things is privation as well as matter. Philosophers also argue for the need for an efficient cause by force of which matter – mere potentiality – is sometimes made something actual. In addition, there is a final cause since nature never acts by chance. Pico reminds us that Aristotle adds a fourth principle, form. While the Peripatetics call the workman himself a cause rather than a principle, the Platonists emphasize that only natural agents seem to us to move, shape and

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51 Simpl., *In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria* 10.1318.29 – 30 Diels (ed./trans.) (1882). Farmer (1998), 405 suggests that Pico's vocabulary indicates that he is relying on a Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle's Physics that Farmer could not identify. I argue that Pico draws from Simplicius' *In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria*. The similarity of the two passages is obvious: "Per predictas conclusiones intelligi potest, que sit omiomeria Anaxagorae, quam opifex intellectus distinguit" (Pico, Conclusiones 3>21). καὶ ὁ νοῦς δὲ παρὰ Ἀναξαγόρα διακοσμῶν καὶ κινῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰς ὁμοιομερείας διακρίνειν αὐτάς λέγεται, Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria*, 10.1318. 29 – 30.

52 *Enn.* V.1 [10].7; V.1 [10].4.6 – 8.

53 *Enn.* II.3 [52].18.15; IV.4 [28].9.9; V.2 [22].1; V.6 [24].4; VI.9 [9].6.

54 *Enn.* II.4 [12].7; V.9 [5].5.

55 *Enn.* II. 3 [48].18; III.8 [30].8.32 – 39; V.2 [11].1 ; Stamatelos (2007), 62.

56 *Enn.* III.8.4, V.9.5, IV.4.11 ; Proclus, *ET* §28, 38, 57.18 – 26.

57 Pico, *Conclusiones* 22.2. Farmer (ed./trans.) (1998).

58 *In Tim.* I, 300 Diehl (ed.) (1904).

59 Pico, *Conclusiones* 23.2.

60 Farmer (1998), 311.

61 Sudduth (2008), 67.

transform bodies. Nevertheless, they are by no means primary causes of the things that are made; rather, they are instruments of a divine art which they obey and serve. According to Pico, it is obvious that the divine Platonists propose two causes, the instrumental and the ideal. Pico concludes by saying that even the Peripatetics do not deny such a position. According to him, Moses sets up two causes, heaven and earth, namely the active and the material, act and potentiality. In other words, God created heaven and earth, the nature of act and potency respectively. The earth is void of act and empty of light. Upon the waters – the biblical *face of the deep* – was born the Spirit of the Lord, the father of lights. Pico thought of Moses as a philosopher, speaking with a veiled face.[62] God is undoubtedly the creator of all things, visible and invisible.[63] Prompted by his discussion of the angels, Pico declares that we must not believe that the formation of essence is the only work of God; He also creates.[64] It is worth noting that according to Pico the Spirit of the Lord – the Neoplatonic Intellect – is the power of the efficient cause, the instrument and tool of God, not a principal cause. God commands it because inferior causes do nothing without ordinance. Moreover, causes do not touch or penetrate an object except through the medium of its qualities.[65] Pico further elaborates his views in a purely Christian way when he comments on *Genesis*. He asserts that the threefold unity of everything derives from the One. The power of the Father creates everything and distributes his unity to all. The wisdom of the Son sets all in order, unites them and ties them together. The love of the Spirit turns everything toward God and attaches the whole work to its Maker.[66] It is worth observing here that the enrichment of the lower levels of the creation would not be possible without the intervention of an intermediary.[67] Pico's interpretation of *Genesis* is an amalgamation of Platonic, Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and Christian elements. In the *Heptaplus*, Pico articulates a philosophy based on Procline Neoplatonism under the strong influence of Aristotelianism and the Kabbalah.[68] Pico's views evolved since the *Commento* and the *Conclusiones*: his philosophy was at times under the spell of Aristotle, as his short treatise *De ente et uno* also proves.[69]

To sum up, the philosophy of Proclus was of seminal importance for Pico della Mirandola. Pico was not mainly preoccupied with defending the Christian religion in general or key theological doctrines, but was preoccupied in his early period with the

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62 Pico, *Heptaplus* 1.1–3, 5.1. All references and translations of this text refer to Wallis et al. (trans.) (1998).

63 Pico, *Heptaplus* 2.7.

64 Pico, *Heptaplus* 3.1.

65 Pico, *Heptaplus*, 1.2, 4.2.

66 Pico, *Heptaplus* 6, proem.

67 Pico, *Heptaplus*, 6.7.

68 Allegretti, (1997); Allen (2008,) 104–113; Black (2006), 26–144, 236–237; Monfasani (2008), 35; Ogren (2009b), 225–227; Rabin (2011) 50.

69 Dougherty (2008), 127; Kristeller (1964), 64; Toussaint (2010), 78.

attempt to appropriate the philosophy of the Neoplatonists – predominantly Proclus – so as to present his holistic philosophical program. Pico's goal was to reveal hidden affinities which conjoin all the major philosophical, theological and theosophical traditions of the ancient and medieval world. Proclus was the key figure in Picos' endeavor because of his importance for the Greek, Arabic and Jewish intellectual traditions. According to Pico, Proclus recapitulated the Greek philosophy and affected the vast majority of later scholars. Pico believed in innovation. He was not satisfied with the philosophical corpus of his day and he struggled throughout his life to enrich it. He wanted to promote philosophical dialogue so as to renew philosophy. His concern was to present new ideas or to reappraise common ones so as to uncover hidden knowledge and benefit humanity. Despite his intentions, Pico in the mid-1480's was not up to such a task. He was rather young and did not grasp in full depth the Procline philosophy, as has been shown previously in this paper. The ambivalences in Pico's texts and his often deficient philosophical vocabulary prove that he was fascinated by his project – the concordance of all the major philosophical, theological and theosophical traditions – but did not care about consistency. In addition he occasionally relied on untrustworthy primary sources and commentaries and he did not hesitate to present his conclusions in a way convenient for his general position. I dare to suggest that sometimes, in the early stages of his philosophical career, his argumentation shares more affinities with rhetoric than philosophy. Pico's views on emanation help us understand the fundamental purposes of his attempt and reappraise his philosophical vocabulary and method.

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Aeternall Lawe: Richard Hooker's Neoplatonic Account of Law and Causality

Central to the argument of Richard Hooker's treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1593) is his claim that God *is* law. As "first originall cause", this divine "aeternal Law" contains within itself all derivative species of law: "as ofspringe of god, they are in him as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actuallie is in them, thassistance and influence of his deitie is theire life."[1] Hooker distinguishes between a 'first' and a 'second' eternal law. The latter comprises all derivative species of law which participate the eternal law as discrete emanations ordered dispositively in hierarchical 'procession', while the former is the original, self-constituting divine source as it remains concomitantly and ineffably simple, at unity within itself — i.e. "verie Onenesse".[2] Hooker's account of eternal law as simultaneously unity in simplicity and participation of that unity by a multiplicity of derivative forms of law recapitulates the account of causality set out by Proclus in his *Elements of Theology* whereby "every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it."[3] Hooker anchors his elaborate exposition and defense of the Elizabethan religious settlement in a metaphysical theory of law which itself assumes a Neoplatonic ontology of 'participation' in the Procline tradition.

> All thinges are therefore pertakers of God, they are his ofspringe, his influence is in them, and the personall wisdome of God is for that verie cause said to excell in nimbleness or agilitie, to pearce into all intellectual pure and subtile spirites, to goe through all, and to reach unto everie thinge which is... All thinges which God in theire times and seasons hath brought forth were eternallie and before all times in God as a worke unbegunne is in the artificer which afterward bringeth it unto effect. Therefore whatsoever wee doe behold now in this present world, it was inwrapped within the bowells of divine mercie, written in the booke of eternall wisdom, and held in the handes of omnipotent power, the first foundations of the world being as yeat unlaide.[4]

The foundational proposal set forth in the first book of Richard Hooker's treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* may be concisely summarized: 'God is Law'. From a purely metaphysical point of view, this claim is neither very original nor remarka-

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1 Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie,* V.56.5; 2:237.23 – 25. All references to the *Lawes* cite the standard *Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker,* Hill (ed.) (1977 – 1997). Citations are abbreviated hereafter as *Lawes* with references to book, chapter, and section numbers followed by volume, page, and line numbers in the Folger edition (*FLE*). This is an updated essay of Kirby (2008) and has also appeared in Kirby (2015).

2 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.14 – 15

3 *ET* §35.

4 *Lawes* V.56.5; 2: 236.26 – 31, 237.15 – 22.

ble. Indeed Hooker's claim that God is law − the hidden "first originall cause" − can reasonably be viewed as a restatement of a classical *logos* theology such as one finds in both Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics, in the thought of Philo of Alexandria, derived from such pre-Socratic sources as Heraclitus, and especially as formulated in the writings of the Neoplatonists of later antiquity.[5] One finds Christian appropriation of this metaphysical theme among the early church fathers, for example in the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite,[6] a theological trope later taken up by such medieval scholastics as Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Nicholas of Cusa, and later still by certain Protestant reformers including Hooker himself and the Florentine reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli.[7] For all of these theologians, an uncreated divine principle, the Word (*logos*, or *ratio*, or *paradeigma* – reason, order, plan) constitutes the 'idea of ideas', the Platonic 'archetypal idea' and therefore the 'first principle' of all created order while the creation, both visible-material and invisible-spiritual, proceeds from and is wholly dependent upon this original, underived, hidden and transcendent first principle as its primary cause.

For Hooker, however, the investigation of this original source of being and order entails a great deal more than a metaphysical claim concerning the nature of the first principle. As the argument of Book I of the *Lawes* unfolds, it becomes plain that Hooker is deeply invested in the practical, political, and constitutional consequences of his ontological claim that 'God is law' as he is committed to its underlying metaphysical sense:

> The statelinesse of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them delighteth the eye; but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministreth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosome of the earth concealed: and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary then pleasant both to them which undertake it, and for the lookers on. In like maner the use and benefite of good lawes, all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the groundes and first originall causes from whence they have sprong be unknowne, as to the greatest part of men they are.[8]

Indeed the burden of his argument is to show that the Elizabethan constitutional and ecclesiastical order he seeks to explain and defend – the "stately house" of the established Church and the "goodly tree" of the flourishing commonwealth – has its ultimate ground and justification in an ineffably 'hidden' first principle, the unutterable 'first original' of all finite and external manifestations of order. "All that is unparticipated produces out of itself the participated; and all participated substances

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5 Chadwick (2005), 29 – 44.

6 Chadwick (1966).

7 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ* Ia qq. 14, 15, 22, 33 – 35; IIa IIae, qq. 90 – 96. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.5; II.14. See Kirby (2003c), 131 – 145.

8 *Lawes* I.1.2; 1:57.6 – 16.

are linked by upward tension to existences not participated."[9] For Richard Hooker both metaphysical ontology and the institutions of the Elizabethan religious settlement rest upon the proposition that 'God is Law'.

Hooker's adaptation of classical *logos* theology is exceptional and indeed quite original for its extended application of the highest metaphysical principle to the most concrete institutional issues of a particular time and place, viz. England in the late sixteenth century. His sustained effort to explore the intimate connections of pressing political and constitutional concerns with the highest discourse of hidden divine realities – the knitting together of Neoplatonic theology and Reformation politics – is perhaps the defining characteristic of Hooker's highly distinctive mode of thought. As C. S. Lewis points out, Hooker's universe is "drenched with Deity".[10] All dependent and derivative laws 'participate' a single eternal law that is the divine first principle and cause – "the personall wisdome of God".[11] In keeping with the thoroughly Procline presuppositions upon which his argument rests, by means of participation of the second eternal law "all thinges which God hath made are in that respect the ofspringe of god, they are in him as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actuallie is in them, thassistance and influence of his deitie is theire life."[12]

Hooker defines law in general as "that which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working... so that no certaine end could ever be attained, unlesse the actions whereby it is attained were regular, that is to say, made suteable for and correspondent unto their end, by some canon, rule or lawe."[13] This definition places him squarely within a scholastic teleological tradition derived ultimately from the metaphysics of Aristotle. Hooker's adaptation of this definition, however, goes beyond any ordinary Aristotelian or Thomistic account of causality. Working from the definition, Hooker asserts that everything works according to law, including God himself: "the being of God is a kinde of lawe to his working: for that perfection which God is, geveth perfection to that he doth."[14] There are certain structural similarities between this argument in Book I of the *Lawes* and Thomas Aquinas's short treatise on law in the second part of the *Summa Theologiae*.[15] The principal resemblance is Hooker's adoption of Aquinas's logic of hierarchical *dispositio*. Just as the Neoplatonic cosmology accounts for the genesis of the world by means of an emanation or *processio* from the principle of original unity, so also Hooker derives a diverse hierarchy of laws from the eternal law as their "highest wellspring and foun-

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9 *ET* §23.

10 C. S. Lewis (1954), 462.

11 *Lawes* V.56.5; 2: 236.28.

12 *Lawes* V.56.5; 2: 237.15 – 25.

13 *Lawes* I.2.1; 1:58.26 – 29.

14 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.6.

15 *ST* Ia IIae, qq. 90 – 96. These similarities have often been noted by Hooker's interpreters. See, e. g., Marshall (1963) and Munz (1952).

taine." His emphasis upon the divine unity is marked: "our God is one, or rather verie Onenesse, and meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things besides."[16] All derivative species of law participate in the undifferentiated unity of the eternal law which simultaneously remains ineffably one with itself, and are also discrete emanations from that original unity by way of dispositive 'procession'.[17] Hooker's account of this law which simultaneously 'contains' and 'emanates' derivative species recapitulates the logic of causality set forth in Proclus's *Elements*.[18] For Hooker,

> ... sith there can bee no goodnesse desired which proceedeth not from God himselfe, as from the supreme cause of all things; and every effect doth after a sort conteine, at least wise resemble the cause from which it proceedeth: all things in the worlde are saide in some sort to seeke the highest, and to covet more or lesse the participation of God himselfe.[19]

Hooker's ontology adheres to a Procline logic of procession and reversion as mediated by Aquinas's formulation of the so-called *lex divinitatis* whereby the originative principle of law remains simple and self-identical as Eternal Law while, at the same time, proceeds out of itself in its generation of manifold, derivative and dependent species of law: "Every order has its beginning in a monad and proceeds to a manifold co-ordinate therewith; and the manifold in any order may be carried back to a single monad."[20] In a consequential move Hooker distinguishes between a first and a second eternal law on the ground that God is a law *both* to himself (*in se*) in his inaccessible divine simplicity, *and* to all creatures besides (*ad extra*). This distinction enables him to gather together the totality of the derivative species of law within a single, unified emanation – viz. the second eternal law – rather than present these species as proceeding one by one in a dispositive emanation from the eternal law as on the account presented by Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*.[21] His discussion of the first eternal law adheres closely to traditional formulations of *logos* theology, while his use of the category of second eternal law introduces something distinctive, unusual, and unexpected from the perspective of the preceding scholastic theological tradition.[22]

"All things," Hooker maintains, including God's own self, "do worke after a sort according to lawe."[23] Whereas all creatures work "according to a lawe, whereof some superiour, unto whome they are subject, is author," nonetheless "only the workes and operations of God have him both for their worker, and for the lawe whereby

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16 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.14 – 19.

17 *ET* §26.

18 See Proclus, *ET* §38 and Allan (1985), 75.

19 *Lawes* I.5.2; 1:73.5 – 8.

20 *ET* §21.

21 Ia IIa pars, qq. 90 – 96.

22 See Gibbs' discussion of the two eternal laws in his Introduction to Book I, *FLE* 6 (1): 92 ff.

23 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:58.33 – 59.1.

they are wrought. The being of God is a kinde of lawe to his working."[24] As the first principle of law, God alone is *self-constituted*[25] and therefore *gubernator sui*,[26] and by virtue of the fullness of such being, is the cause and law-giver as well to all that is derivative of his creative will: "Being the first, it can have no other then it selfe to be the author of that law which it willingly worketh by. God therefore is a law both to himselfe, and to all other things besides."[27] All that is – both the first principle itself and all that derives from it – have their ground concealed within the simplicity of that same first principle or cause, hidden, as it were, like a foundation stone or tree root "in the bosome of the earth".[28]

The second eternal law comprises the divine order as "kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them."[29] It has a variety of 'names' depending on the different orders of creatures subject to the one divine government. The two principal derivative genera of the second eternal law are 1) the natural law and 2) the revealed law of the scriptures, sometimes named by Hooker the "divine law". The entire system of the laws comprised within the second eternal law thus expresses the Procline twofold motion of creative procession from (*exitus*) and redemptive return to (*reditus*) the original unity of the eternal law as embodied in this primary distinction between natural and revealed laws. Each of these two primary species – the natural and the revealed laws – is further participated by manifold derivative and dependent forms. The natural law, by a further procession, comprises in turn subordinate species of law which govern irrational natural agents as well as rational; the law governing the rational creatures is distinguished further into the "law cœlestial", which orders the angels, and the "law of reason", sometimes identified simply as the "natural law", which orders rational humankind. All of these sub-species represent the outward and downward *processio ad extra* of the second eternal law.

On the converse side of the second eternal law, the law of God's special revelation, the revealed law of the scriptures, presupposes the disorder introduced into the cosmos by the Fall, and is provided in order to secure the final restoration or 'return' of the creation to its original condition of unity under the eternal law. Hooker's distinction between these two *summa genera* of natural law and divine law corresponds to the cosmic logic of procession and return but also reflects the epistemological distinction of a twofold knowledge of God (*duplex cognitio Dei*), namely by the light of supernatural revelation and by the natural light of reason. There are composite species of law – such as human positive law and the law of nations, for example – which derive from a conscious, pragmatic reflection upon the general principles contained

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24 *Lawes I.2.2; 1:59.12 – 5.*

25 *ET §40 – 51.*

26 *ET §141.*

27 *Lawes* I.2.3; 1:60.16 – 18.

28 *Lawes* I.1.2; 1:57.10.

29 *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.9 – 10.

in the natural law. These additional derivative species of law are viewed by Hooker (following Augustine) as a consequence of human sin and, like the divine law, constitute a corrective to the disorder introduced by the Fall (*remedium peccati*).[30] In all of this the human creature as the *imago dei* is the focal point of the cosmic operation of procession from and return to the original fount of order established in divine simplicity of the first eternal law.

The *exitus-redditus* structure of this generic division of law in Book I of the *Ecclesiasticall Politie* shows that Hooker has read Aquinas on law very closely, as indeed numerous scholars have noted.[31] Hooker's distinction between the first and second eternal laws proves, nonetheless, to be a highly significant departure from the scholastic model. The effect of the distinction between these two aspects of the eternal law is simultaneously to widen and to decrease the distance between the creator-lawgiver and the created cosmos. The gathering together of all the derivative species of law within the second eternal law – a distinction absent from Aquinas's model which presents the eternal law as undifferentiated in itself – challenges the assumption of the primary relation between creator and creature as governed by a gradual, dispositive, hierarchical model as found in earlier scholastic thought, and emphasizes rather the common participation of these manifold species of law in a common source (i.e. the second eternal law) which, in turn, participates the divine source (the first eternal law) in its totality. In effect the second eternal law renders the participation of the manifold forms of law in their eternal source simultaneously both more transcendent and more immanent, without a gradual dispositive linking of the creature/derivative with the creator/original. Hooker's distinctive treatment of the eternal law exhibits a marked Augustinian tendency of his thought, a general theological bent which he shares with other magisterial Reformers.

The distinction between these two species of the eternal law marks a boundary between realms of apophatic and kataphatic theological discourse.[32] The first eternal law is the law in its original simplicity and self-identity, the law as it is in and for the divine lawgiver, the law "whereof it selfe must needs be author unto it selfe."[33] This is a hidden unity concerning which, Hooker states, our safest eloquence is silence.[34] The divine *logos* or wisdom whereby God works in creating is "that law eternall which God himself hath made to himselfe, and therby worketh all things wherof

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30 For coercive law as a *remedium peccati*, see Augustine, *de Civ. Dei* XIX.

31 *ST*, Ia IIae, qq. 90–108. See Munz (1952), 49–57; d'Entrèves (1959), esp. chaps. 5 and 6; Marshall (1963).

32 *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.27 and 29.

33 *Lawes* I.2.3; 1:60.13–14.

34 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.12–19. 'Dangerous it were for the feeble braine of man to wade farre into the doings of the most High; whome although to knowe bee life, and ioy to make mention of his name; yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that wee know him not as indeede hee is, neither can know him; and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence when we confesse without confession, that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnesse aboue our capacitie and reach. Hee is aboue, and wee vpon earth; therefore it behoueth our wordes to bee warie and fewe.'

he is the cause and author." This first eternal law "has bene of God, and with God everlastingly: that law the author and observer whereof is one only God to be blessed for ever, how should either men or Angels be able perfectly to behold? The booke of this law we are neither able nor worthie to open and looke into."[35] By contrast, the second eternal law comprises the divine order as "kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them."[36] Here the eternal law continues to be one, yet is adapted or accommodated nonetheless to the finitude of mortal capacity by means of the second eternal law, the first eternal law as it is knowable *pro nobis*. It is with this second eternal law that the manifold variety of the forms of law first comes into view, yet a variety which is understood by Hooker throughout as 'contained' by the original unity that is the eternal law. The first and second eternal laws are one and the same law "laid up in the bosome of God" viewed either from the standpoint of the eternal present and self-identity of the divine law-giver, or from the standpoint of its reception by all creatures. In this distinction between the two species of the eternal law, Hooker presents a marked departure from the Thomistic account of the derivation of the manifold species of law from the eternal law. This second eternal law has a variety of 'names' – angelic, natural, positive, human, revealed, etc. – depending on the diverse modes whereby creatures are subject to the one divine government.

Hooker's approach to the definition of law is remarkable for its simultaneous appropriation of a systematically Neoplatonic structure of argument and an appeal to reformed Protestant assumptions with respect to the relation of the orders of Nature and Grace.[37] He begins with an allusion to the polemical occasion of the treatise in the ecclesiological controversies that arose in England as a consequence of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, and makes explicit the intimate connection intended between the metaphysical and the polemical arguments of the treatise:

> Because the point about which wee strive is the qualitie of our *Lawes*, our first entrance hereinto cannot better be made, then with consideration of the nature of lawe in generall, and of that lawe which giveth life unto all the rest, which are commendable just and good, namely the lawe whereby the Eternall himselfe doth worke. Proceeding from hence to the lawe first of nature, then of scripture, we shall have the easier accesse unto those things which come after to be debated, concerning the particular cause and question which wee have in hand.[38]

By proceeding from 'the One' to the many – as he himself expresses his methodology, from "generall meditations" to the "particular decisions" – Hooker establishes an order of argument which is itself presented as a literary form imitative of the divine creative *processio*. By this account, the idea of law presents itself as both a 'monad' and a 'dyad'. First there is the law "which God hath eternallie purposed himself in all

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35 See *Lawes* I.2.5; 1:61.28–62.11.

36 *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.9–10.

37 See Neelands (1997), 77. For an important discussion of related questions see Hankey (1998).

38 *Lawes* I.1.3; 1:58.11–19.

his works to observe."[39] This eternal law is the "highest welspring and fountaine" of all other kinds of law, the "meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things."[40] Of this original divine simplicity, of such "verie Onenesse", says Hooker, "our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confesse without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnes above our capacitie to reach. He is above, and we upon earth, and therefore it behoveth our wordes to be warie and fewe."[41] Nonetheless, since God works not only as law to himself, but also as "first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth," and therefore also as law "to all other things besides," there is a concomitant outward showing of this first law. The showing forth of the divine power in God's "externall working" – as distinct from those "internall operations of God" as Trinity, namely "the generation of the Sonne, and the proceeding of the Spirit"[42] – is for no other purpose than "the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant vertue. Which abundance doth shew it selfe in varietie, and for that cause this varietie is oftentimes in scripture exprest by the name of *riches. The Lord hath made all things for his owne sake.*"[43]

The divine working which manifests itself in the riches and variety of the creation is presented by Hooker as follows:

> I am not ignorant that by law eternall the learned for the most part do understand the order, not which God hath eternallie purposed himselfe in all his works to observe, but rather that which with himselfe he hath set downe as expedient to be kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions herewith he hath indued them.[44]

There is indeed a considerable variety among the manifold forms of law derived from the fount of the first eternal law and understood by rational creatures under the aspect of the second eternal law (both angelic and human):

> Now that law which as it is laid up in the bosome of God, they call *æternall*, receyveth according unto the different kinds of things which are subject unto it different and sundry kinds of names. That part of it which ordereth natural agents, we call usually *natures* law; that which Angels doe clearely behold, and without any swarving observe is a law *cœlestiall* and heavenly: the law of *reason* that which bindeth creatures reasonable in this world, and with which by reason they may most plainly perceive themselves bound; that which bindeth them, and is not knowen bu by speciall revelation form God, *Divine* law; *humane* lawe that which out of the law either of reason or of God, men propobablie gathering to be expedient, they make it a law. All things therfore, which are as they ought to be, are conformed unto *this second law eternall*, and even

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39 *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.7.
40 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.21 – 22.
41 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.14 – 19.
42 *Lawes* I.2.2; 1:59.7 – 8.
43 *Lawes* I.2.4; 1:7 – 10.
44 *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.6 – 10.

those things which to this eternall law are not conformable, are notwithstanding in some sort ordered by *the first eternall lawe*.[45]

Yet, in a manner to some extent analogous to the prior division of the eternal law into the two species of the first and the second eternal laws, here too at the level of the second eternal law the appearance of the "manifold" riches of creation is itself ordered and limited within two principal derivative species of law: "natural law" and "revealed law". The former division embraces governance of the totality of creation – distinguished in a primary sense between visible and invisible, material and formal, sensible and intelligible – by containing within itself a completely exhaustive categorisation or division of the creatures and their diverse modes of subjection to the second eternal law: 1) *natures* law of "natural and necessary agents", or the material, non-thinking creation; 2) the *cœlestial* law of the purely intellectual and unfallen creation that comprises the angelic hierarchy (a law beheld by them "without any swarving"); and 3) the law of *reason* which governs intellectual creatures "in this world" where they, unlike the angels, find themselves "bound". The third category, which governs the rational but mortal creature, i.e. the human condition, is clearly understood by Hooker to be in some sense a mixed combination of the previous two categories. As intellectual natures, mortals share the desire of the angels for an infinite good in which alone such a nature can be finally satisfied. "Then are we happie therfore when fully we injoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God."[46] Yet, "of such perfection capable we are not in this life. For while we are in the world, subject we are unto sundry imperfections, griefs of body, defectes of minde, yea the best thinges we do arre painefull [...]."[47] The predicament of the human condition is to be of a mixed nature, partaking of both intellectual nature shared by the angels and the physical shared by the irrational "necessary agents". For Hooker there can be no natural overcoming of this hiatus between a 'natural' desire for divine perfection and a complete natural incapacity to achieve that end desired. While the desire for *theosis* is a natural desire – "so that nature even in this life doth plainly claime and call for a more divine perfection"[48] – nonetheless

the light of nature is never able to finde out any way of obtayning the reward of blisse, but by performing exactly the duties and workes of righteousnes. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisedome of God hath revealed a way mysticall and supernaturall, a way directing unto the same ende of life by a course which groundeth it selfe upon the guiltines of sinne, and through sinne desert of condemnation and death.[49]

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[45] *Lawes* I.3.1; 1:63.14–29.
[46] *Lawes* I.11.2; 1:112.17–20.
[47] *Lawes* I.11.2; 1:112.24–113.
[48] *Lawes* I.11.4; 1:115.18–19.
[49] *Lawes* I.11.5, 6; 1:118.11–18.

Thus he identifies the second primary division within the second eternal law, what Hooker calls the "*Divine* law". Unlike the natural law, this other way of access to the divine wisdom is 'revealed' – and therefore constitutes a mystical and 'supernatural' way rather than a 'natural' way. It is through such supernatural means that the natural desire for an infinite good overcomes the circumstance of the mortal condition of being 'bound'.

Thus, for Hooker, the form of law "to be kept by all creatures according to their several conditions" is comprised within three *summa genera* – the eternal law, the natural law and the divine law – where the latter two kinds are understood as comprehended within the first, and yet nonetheless radically distinct in their operation and in our knowledge of them. Together these *summa genera* constitute a comprehensive division of all the many and various "kinds" of law which are discussed throughout the remainder of Hooker's argument in the first book and indeed throughout the rest of the entire treatise. To understand their derivation is to gain critical insight into the underlying metaphysical structure of Hooker's argument in the *Lawes*, and moreover provides a vital instrument for interpreting the manner of Hooker's reconciliation of a Neoplatonic ontology of participation with a Reformed soteriology. Viewed from the standpoint of their divine principle of origin – i.e. in the first eternal law – these three *summa genera* of law may be considered as simply one – God, who is law and is the source of all derivative species of law, is "verie Onenesse". Viewed from below, as it were, that is from the standpoint of the finitude of creaturely mortality, this original divine unity assumes the aspect of diverse articulated kinds all of which nonetheless all 'participate' and 'proceed from' the undivided unity that is their common source.[50] This account of the simultaneous unity and multiplicity of the eternal law and its various derivative species lies at the very heart of Hooker's Neoplatonic vision and provides in turn the necessary instrument for his sustained effort throughout the *Lawes* to demonstrate the consistency of the terms of the Elizabethan Settlement with the foundational principles of Reformed theology. For Hooker, therefore, "All thinges" – including even the Elizabethan constitution in Church and Commonwealth – are God's offspring:

> they are in him as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actuallie is in them, thassistance and influence of his deitie is theire life.[51]

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50 On the concept of the *procession* of the forms of law see, for example, I.3.4; 1:68.6 – 8: '...the naturall generation and *processe* of all things receyveth order of *proceeding* from the setled stabilitie of divine understanding.'

51 *Lawes* V.56.5; 2: 236.26 – 31.

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Proclus Revenant: The (Re-)Integration of Proclus into the Creationism-Eternalism Debate in Joseph Solomon Delmedigo's (1591–1655) Novelot Ḥokhma

The following ventures to forge a consensus concerning two generalizations that may be made concerning Jewish responses to the eternalist challenge:[1] 1) The most significant arguments (both philosophically and historically) against creation were formulated by Proclus; 2) Proclus is not mentioned by name by any medieval Jewish thinker, nor are there any direct citations from his writings (in Arabic translation).[2] The conclusion that begs to be drawn from these two remarks is the following: most of the Jewish responses to the eternalist challenge are, unbeknownst to their authors, attempts to answer Proclus. We know that Proclus formulated eighteen arguments in favor of eternalism or the eternity of the world. His treatise does not survive in Greek, but John Philoponus cited his arguments and attempted to rebut them, one by one. All but the beginning of Philoponus' work is extant in Greek. Moreover, Proclus' arguments – including the missing portions of the first argument – circulated in different forms in Arabic, and these texts have survived and have been published. Philoponus also authored a work against Aristotle on the eternity of the universe.[3] In a classic study, Herbert A. Davidson showed how important the latter work was for the medieval debate, particularly in devising proofs for creation.[4] However, that text is not relevant to the present study in which I focus upon direct references to Proclus that doubtlessly derive from Philoponus' refutation.

Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591–1655), known better by his acronym as Yashar of Candia, is the first Jewish writer who inserts Proclus directly into the discussion of

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1 For the sake of convenience I refer to the doctrine that the world was brought into being at a particular point in time as "creationism", and the rival doctrine, that the world has no beginning in time, as "eternalism". I realize that these are imprecise anachronisms, that they do not capture all of the subtleties that one can pack into terms like sempiternality, and that they are used in contemporary political and religious polemics. All things considered, I find the terms useful and not misleading to my audience.

2 The Hebrew versions of *De causiis*, which have been studied in great detail by Rothschild (1994) are a very different matter. Suffice it to say for the present discussion that *De causiis*, which is extant in one recently discovered Judaeo-Arabic fragment as well as several Hebrew translations, was not known to be by Proclus, and played no role of any import in the debate over creation. Note also that Delmedigo cites in one place directly from Proclus' *ET*.

3 Wildberg (1987); other versions of the Arabic are discussed below, n. 16.

4 Davidson (1969); his findings are incorporated and refined in Davidson (1987).

creation.[5] It is clear from his dates that Yashar is not a medieval author. Indeed, his science is that of the early modernist, as one would expect of someone who attended Galileo's lectures in Padua. Yashar is also one of the earliest transmitters of the Lurianic kabbala on European soil. Though overall he maintained some distance from the kabbala, he nonetheless saw important points of contact between Luria's system and the new science, and these are very germane to his ideas on creation. Nonetheless, his deliberations on the objections to creationism "from the aspect of the agent" remain strictly medieval.

The generation of the universe is the central and binding theme of *Novelot Ḥokhmah* (literally: Unripe Fallen Fruits of Wisdom, hereafter *NH*), one of Yashar's later works, and one which presents some tough literary problems.[6] Though Proclus is mentioned occasionally in other writings of his, it is in *NH* where the objections to creationism, and Proclus' contribution to the debate, are treated systematically. Accordingly the present analysis is limited to *NH* alone. The topic may be narrowed further: Yashar here addresses only objections to creationism "from the aspect of the agent", that is to say, those conceptions of the deity that appear to contradict the notion that He would create the world at a given point in time. It seems that he does his best to review the arguments in a thorough and, as far as this may be possible, unprejudiced fashion. He does however hold fast to an opinion of his own: Yashar was not an advocate of creation *ex nihilo*, but rather of the doctrine of perpetual creation.

Yashar cites many sources – pagan Greek monotheists, Church Fathers and medieval Christian philosophers, Islamic authorities, and above all, quite naturally, Jewish writers. He displays critical acumen and surprising historical insight. Doctrinally he aligns himself with Ḥasdai Crescas, whose critical remarks he praises, and whose teaching of perpetual creation he adopts.[7] However, he arrives at his conclusions independently, after studying a whole range of sources untouched by Crescas. Moreover, he does not hesitate to criticize Crescas when he feels that the latter's argumentation is faulty.

Yashar supplements Crescas' philosophical arguments in favor of perpetual creation with his own extensive investigations into the theory of light, which are critical for the conclusions he wishes to draw. As far as I know, Crescas – for all of his involvement in physics – evinces no particular interest in theories of light. Near the beginning of *NH* (p. 14a) Yashar states:[8]

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5 Hereafter Delmedigo will be refered to as Yashar so as to avoid any confusion with an earlier figure, and family relation, Elija Delmedigo (c. 1458-c.1493) a philosopher and associate of Pico della Mirandola. The most thorough and reliable study of Yashar's life and works is still Barzilay (1974). Concerning Elija see Ross (2011).

6 These problems are discussed in Barzilay (1974), 116 – 121; see also Langermann (2014).

7 Feldman (1980).

8 All citations will be from Basel (1631) in my own translation from the Hebrew.

> I have gathered together what I have seen to be [the theory of light] that most philosophers are comfortable with, as [each] author reported them in his books on natural science. I accept that the rays (*nitzotzot*) do not really issue forth and move. Instead, the image of the sun is light, and the radiation is that which is impressed everywhere. Light is one and the same, unceasing; it is not the case that a different light is produced at each moment.

> My lengthy discourse on the nature [literally: quiddity] of light and all that it entails is not superfluous, because many great issues depend upon it, as you shall hear. All the divine scientists [theologians] of the nations likened spiritual things to light, and so did also our scholars of old and the interpreters of our Torah.

Close to the end of the book, where Yashar sums up the discussion and announces his acceptance of Crescas' view, he adds that the relation between the deity and the world is best understood as that between the sun and its light. As he stated in the passage just cited, he accepts the theory that light is not produced anew by the sun, but "rolls" along with it.

Yashar's discussion of light, unlike his discussion of creationism, does have more of an early modern ambience.[9] Nonetheless, here too he invokes the Platonists, Iamblichus, but also the Renaissance "Academy". Yet, in the enunciation of his conclusion that the relation between the deity and the cosmos is best described as being like that between the sun and its light, Proclus' name is not mentioned. Nonetheless, the theory that Yashar accepts is very much the same as that of Proclus: the world has a timeless dependence on the deity, which is analogous to the relation between the sun and its light. However, he regards himself to be a follower, not of Proclus, but of Crescas. In any case, Yashar is speaking as a Jewish philosopher, that is, someone who is propounding a theory consistent with Jewish beliefs. For this reason, at least, it is most likely that Yashar wanted to align himself with someone from within the Jewish tradition.

Yashar was a philosopher, not an historian. Overall, his classification and articulation of the arguments for eternity and the replies of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian thinkers is not all that different in method from that of Herbert Davidson in his seminal monograph of the late twentieth century;[10] very different in the classification and handling of the sources, but not all that different in the attempt to sort out the arguments, identify their sources, and see how well they have been answered. Indeed, Yashar is carrying on a tradition of Jewish writing, on which he draws. The main contributors are Isaac Abrabanel (1437–1508), who relies on the Muslim thinker Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (c. 1058–1111) as well as Moses Maimonides (1138–1204); Abrabanel's liberal citations of al-Ghazālī (from the medieval Hebrew translations) are appropriated *en bloc* by Yashar. All three (al-Ghazālī, Maimonides, Abrabanel) tried to identify the main arguments that had been raised against creationism, as a necessary prelude to their refutation. But this is itself an ancient process: I mean the process of

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9 I hope to devote a separate study to the theories of light in *NH*.
10 Davidson (1987).

distilling the controversy into a series of (presumably) tight arguments, followed by the analysis of the argument into its components; then the step-by-step refutation of the components, to be followed by another process of condensation, analysis, and systematic response. Philoponus does just that, breaking down Proclus' proofs into their components and then responding to each one.

None of the Jewish participants in this debate, and very few of the Muslims, mention Proclus by name. Indeed, the earliest of the three thinkers mentioned above, al-Ghazālī, does not connect the arguments to any names. In the preface to the first discussion of his *Incoherence of the Philosophers* he cites both Plato and Galen, both of whom, according to his information, may not have accepted eternalism, or at least did not claim that eternalism had been decisively proven. However, in the four arguments that he critically reviews, the eternalist philosophers are not named.[11]

Like al-Ghazālī, Maimonides' identifies his eternalist opponents simply as "the philosophers". However, Maimonides does cite Aristotle, taking care to praise the Stagirite's circumspection in refusing to draw solid conclusions about the eternity of the universe. According to Maimonides, Aristotle's unnamed "latter-day followers" are to blame for attributing to the master a firm conviction in eternalism, one which, Maimonides insists, he never held. Shlomo Pinès has observed that although one may claim that the post-Aristotelian proofs cited by Maimonides derive from Proclus, "the resemblance between Proclus' proofs and those set forth by Maimonides does not extend to the details. On the whole it seems more probable that Maimonides took over these proofs from some Moslem philosopher…".[12] Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (c. 870 – 950) is also cited by Maimonides as well; Pinès suggests that Proclus' proofs may have reached Maimonides by way of that seminal thinker. By contrast, Isaac Abrabanel is very forthcoming about his sources.[13] In the upcoming passages for examination, Yashar cites verbatim long quotations from al-Ghazālī that he found in Abrabanel. Yashar also takes cognizance of Abrabanel's high admiration for Thomas Aquinas.

These important figures, and others who have not yet been mentioned, all contributed to the debate. Nonetheless, it seems that most, though probably not all roads lead back to Proclus, however indirectly; and, in the early modern period, Proclus' own writings resurfaced. Three versions of Philoponus' refutation circulated in Yashar's day: the Greek text *Contra Proclum De aeternitate mundi*, in the edition of Vittorio Trincavello (Venice, 1535); the Latin translation of Gaspar Marcellus (Venice,

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11 Marmura (1997). Al-Ghazālī does open the first discussion of his *Incoherence*, whose topic is the refutation of eternalism, with references to Plato and Galen, claiming that neither advocated the eternity of the world (ibid., 12). Later on he mentions Avicenna, Plato, and Aristotle, but only in an ancillary discussion of the nature of the soul (ibid., n. 19). However, the four proofs for eternalism are not linked to any names.

12 Pinès (1963), p. lxxviii.

13 On Abrabanel see Feldman (2002) and Lawee (2002).

1551); and the Latin translation of Johannes Mahotius (Lyon, 1557).[14] Philoponus' text was widely read and is thought to have had an impact on the new physics.[15] Consequently, Yashar, in contradistinction from the medieval authors he cites, had relatively direct access to Proclus via Philoponus' refutation of Proclus. Whether Yashar read Philoponus (and Proclus) in Greek or Latin is uncertain as he mastered both languages.

Yashar displays some fine historical sensibility in detecting Proclus' footprint in the arguments of medieval thinkers. Nevertheless, his pairing of the medieval arguments with those that he found in Proclus' debate with Philoponus is at times quite surprising. I propose to take a close look at how Proclus is inserted into the debate after speaking for centuries through intermediaries, almost all of them hostile, and representing faith traditions and scriptures that he for the most part knew nothing about. This should give us some insight as to how the debate was retextured over the course of centuries of refinement and—at least in this case—interfaith cooperation, all viewed, of course, through the lens of Yashar's own personal reflection and agenda.

In the following we will first translate the four main arguments identified by Yashar and then we will address the place of Proclus therein, both acknowledged and unacknowledged. In the analysis that follows we shall see that Yashar adduces many ancillary sources. He also counters the objections, some of his own accord and sometimes by citing others. These matters will, for the most part, be left out of the discussion.

> Argument 1: (84b)
> The first argument is [this]: since the power of the blessed deity is without limit, and, from the aspect of the world, there is no impossibility in its existing before the time that it came to be, then why did He not create it beforehand, [but instead He] delayed it until then [the moment of creation]? This is the first argument of Proclus.

This is said to be Proclus' first challenge. A possible alternative translation of Yashar's Hebrew text would be, "this first argument is due to Proclus", but that seems forced; it is better to grapple with the more obvious and natural meaning which, again, is that Yashar identifies this argument as the first of Proclus' challenges to the doctrine of creation. As is well known, the first of Proclus eighteen objections is extant only in Arabic.[16] Ostensibly, then, Yashar would not have known of

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14 Lohr (2000), 39.

15 Grant (1981), 15 and the literature cited in n. 39.

16 There are at least two versions in Arabic of Proclus' eighteen objections. The first, associated with the name of the translator Isḥāq bin Ḥunayn, has been published several times, most recently with accompanying English translation and extensive notes by Jon McGinnis, as an appendix to Lang and Marco (2001). A second Arabic version of Proclus' eighteen arguments was edited and translated by Wakelnig (2012). One must also add that the direct citations from Proclus reproduced by Philoponus

it, unless he had access to relatively scarce Arabic manuscripts and could have handled a text in that language – a very unlikely scenario indeed.[17] However, there is much more to be said about the first argument and its circulation among medieval thinkers.

First, we should summarize Proclus' premier argument as it survives in the Arabic before analyzing Yashar's version. The Arabic is in fact rather complex, but it can be broken into three components: (1) the "goodness" of the maker produces everything, and the maker is not sometimes good and sometimes not, but rather always good. This idea is not found at all in Yashar's first argument, but it does appear in the second, in an even stronger moral garb. (2) The maker always desired or desires for all things to resemble himself; and he could not ever have been incapable of making things in this way. Yashar includes this element, at least indirectly, by way of his citation from al-Ghazālī, as we shall soon see. (3) The argument leads to the conclusion that the cosmos is eternal, but Proclus does not stop here: the first argument ends with a distinction between the eternity of the maker and the eternity of the cosmos. The eternity of the maker is the *aion*, "complete and simultaneous being", whereas the eternity of the cosmos is "time without limit", i.e. the cosmos is always coming into being.[18] This form of eternity ascribed to the cosmos is in essence the doctrine of perpetual creation that Yashar accepts but, as already pointed out, he does not know of its source or at least its association with Proclus.

Now let us first break down Yashar's understanding of Proclus' argument. His text is composed of three (literary) elements. (1) The power of the deity is unlimited. (2) There is no impeding impossibility in the nature of the cosmos that would prevent its being created earlier. (3) The question, Why didn't God create earlier?

Now, where could Yashar have found any or all of this in the Proclus that was available to him? To begin with, the unique Greek manuscript preserves only about half (as we may guess) of Philoponus' rebuttal, which does give the reader at least a partial idea of Proclus's objection.[19] The first element in the premier argument, that the power of the deity is without limit, is answered by Philoponus in an extant remnant of the Greek.[20] So this element at least does belong to Proclus' argument, as it can be reconstructed from Philoponus. The second element is challenging, as it addresses a problem, not "from the aspect of the agent", but from the aspect of the world. The first citation from al-Ghazālī, cited by Yashar immediately after

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at the beginning of each of the eighteen arguments are, or seem to me, to be supplemented by other citations that Philoponus introduces in the course of his refutations.

17 I have recently argued, Langermann (2013), that Yashar may well have had a good knowledge of scientific Arabic; even were this to be granted, however, it does not seem at all likely that he saw Proclus in Arabic, nor is such an explanation called for, as we shall presently see.

18 I rely here on John McGinnis's very helpful n.35 to Lang and Marco (2001), 163.

19 Indeed, as we shall soon see, the preserved Greek text preserves a paraphrase or perhaps even a direct quotation from Proclus' first argument that is not found in either Arabic version.

20 Section 3 of the first proof in Share (2005), 21–25

enunciating "Proclus'" argument, mentions a shortcoming in either the agent or the object that would prevent its actualization. Finally, the third element, which Yashar presents as the question, "Why was creation delayed for so long?", is found in Proclus' commentary to the *Timaeus*.[21] Yashar may possibly have had access to that work. In sum, then, it is not patently clear what Yashar knew of, or thought to be, Proclus' first argument.

Yashar immediately identifies the first Procline argument as the source of two texts by al-Ghazālī; both quotations from the Muslim thinker are taken over word-for-word from Isaac Abrabanel's *Mif'alot Elohim* (*The Workings of the Lord*), who cites medieval Hebrew translations. Though Yashar rejects Abrabanel's philosophical analysis, sometimes even a bit scornfully, he is always ready to exploit Abrabanel's book for source material. The first text is not an argument against creation, but rather an elaboration of the philosophical principle upon which the objection is based. It comes from al-Ghazālī's *Intentions of the Philosophers*, an exposition of Aristotelian-Avicennan philosophy that was long thought to have been written in order to set up the refutations developed in al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence*. Indeed, Abrabanel's quotation from the *Intentions* is followed immediately by one from the *Incoherence*. In his study of Procline texts extant in Arabic, Gerhardt Endress has observed that the arguments of Philoponus and Proclus are pivotal in the debate between al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd, author of a rebuttal of al-Ghazālī appropriately named *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, though neither is mentioned by name.[22]

The citations from al-Ghazālī by way of Abrabanel begin with a general observation concerning this argument: "You should know that Abū Ḥāmid considered it to be very strong." Next comes the passage from the *Intentions*, a positive statement to the effect that one of the conditions or principal causes for a thing's being actualized must be missing if it is not actualized; without this condition or cause lacking, the thing must be actualized. This of course sets up the objection that nothing is missing "from the aspect of the agent." Why, then, was the cosmos not actualized from eternity? Abrabanel continues,

> In [chapter] one of the *Divine Science* [one of the three sections of the *Intentions*] he wrote that, with regard to something that became actual after it had not been actual beforehand, there must necessarily be there some thing (*'inyan*), be it nature, will, a contingency, or an ability that came into actuality. For if one of these was not missing before, yet nonetheless the thing [that became actual now] was absent; and nothing new came about, either in the essence of the doer nor out-

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21 Proclus, *In Tim.* I.288.17–23 Diehl. Siniossoglou (2005), 222: "As Proclus puts it, did God create the world because he had the idea that it would be better that way? But this very 'better', did he not know it beforehand, yes or no? It is strange that he ignored it, says Proclus, since he is *Nous*. Then again, if he knew it all along, why didn't he create the world earlier? This argument is a *locus communis* in Platonic anti-Christian polemics and is employed in the context of Ammonius' school by Gessius, one of the key figures in Ammonius' circle and student of Galen."
22 Endress (1973), 18.

side of it, why didn't this absence [state of not being, not being actual] continue as it was at first, since there is no cause that necessitates its existence?[23]

To move on to the first query of the *Incoherence*, which in al-Ghazālī's view does indeed constitute "the strongest of their proofs",[24] one should primarily remark that the beginning of the citation in Abrabanel-Yashar is verbatim:

> And just as it is impossible for an event to exist without a cause and that which necessitates [it], it is impossible for that which necessitates [a thing] to exist with all the conditions of its being necessitating, [all the conditions] of its principles and causes fulfilled, such that nothing at all remains awaited, and then for the necessitated [effect] to be delayed.[25]

The passage in Hebrew continues a little bit further:

> So, if before the world's existence [sic], the deity wanted the world, and none of the things required for creation were lacking for Him, nor was any impediment preventing Him from creating, then it is truly a great wonder and tremendous source of consternation why He did nothing over an infinite time, and only afterwards created.

This seems to be a summary of the rest of the argument on the part of Abrabanel.

In sum, then, this "first argument of Proclus" appears to combine elements of the first of the eighteen arguments refuted by Philoponus with a passage from Proclus' commentary to the *Timaeus*. Over the course of time, the argument took on new literary forms (the philosophical thrust remains the same), migrating eventually to al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence*, where it is presented as (part of) the strongest argument against creationism. Yashar has anticipated Endress in tracing the source of al-Ghazālī's first argument to Proclus.

> Argument 2: (ibid., 84a)
> The second argument is [this], that since the existence of the world is a good, fine, and pleasant thing, whereas its non-existence is absolute evil, it is inconceivable that the good deity allowed an infinite time to precede [its generation] without doing the good; and then, he anew [i.e. by way of a new activity] began to show his munificence and good, when his good is his essence. Just as his essence is eternal, so also ought his goodness [scil., the product of his goodness] to be

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23 The first reference to al-Ghazālī is to a passage tucked away in the *Intentions*, as Delmedigo says; al-Ghazālī discusses the different divisions of reality, including (the fifth division) the division into "the cause and the caused". The *Intentions* were very popular in Hebrew, circulating in several translations; the most thorough discussion (including the many Hebrew commentaries) remains Steinschneider (1893), 298–325. Abrabanel cites from the translation of Judah ben Natan; see., e. g., MS Parma Palatina 3028, f. 37a. Interestingly enough, there exists a copy of a different translation (along with the commentary of Isaac Albalag) with Abrabanel's owner's mark (MS Moscow Russian State Library, Guinzburg 541; the passage is on f. 34b), but Abrabanel for whatever reason chose to cite a different translation.

24 Marmura (1997), 15.

25 Ibid., 15.

eternal, for so long as the good endures, so is it better. Thus have the philosophers claimed, that the species is better than the individual, because its [the former's] good endures. So long as the thing endures, it is similar to the Supreme, which is eternal. If the deity wished to show [to reveal] His image [paradigm] He ought to have created something eternal, because that which is generated neither resembles Him nor is it worthy of Him.

Therefore, wise and honest people of sound intellect opted for the eternity of the world, such as Aristotle, Alexander, Themistius and Ibn Rushd, who [all] thought this to be the glory of God. For, were you to say that the deity existed at any time without bestowing good, we would ask you if he was able to bestow good or not. But one cannot say that he was not able, nor that he did not wish [to do so], for that would imply that he was not unlimited in his power, or that he hasn't the capability to do as he wishes and to act as wishes. So also one should not say that he did not want to bestow good, for in that case he would not be supremely good, since he withholds the good; he would then be tight fisted, closing his heart so as not to bestow good – heaven forbid that there be such a defect [in the deity]!

This argument is rather long, and a number of different points are raised. Yashar gives a list of ancient and medieval authorities who subscribe to the argument; we will not be concerned with their views, or how they came to be linked to this particular argument, but rather with the authority whose name is absent, namely, Proclus. Its essence looks to be this: the deity being good, and his activity being munificence, then he ought never to have withheld his munificence; rather, he ought to be forever bestowing good on his creation, which would then perforce be co-eternal with him. This is not distant from Thomas Taylor's reconstruction two centuries ago of Proclus' first argument from Philoponus' refutations, and very close indeed to Sallust, *De diis et mundo* VII, whom Taylor cites in a note: "Since the world subsists through the goodness of the divinity, it is necessary that divinity should always be good, and that the world should always exist; just as light is consubsistent with the sun and with fire, and shadow with the body by which it is produced."[26]

Yashar, however, does not recognize this as an argument of Proclus; indeed, it is the only one of his four arguments in which Proclus's name does not appear. This furnishes additional proof that, whatever may lie behind the reference to the "the first proof of Proclus" discussed above, it does not seem to be the case that Yashar actually saw the original Procline argument in any language. Maimonides, in his *Guide* II.14, cites two arguments against creation without mentioning Proclus, and, interestingly while knowing Proclus, Yashar references Maimonides' arguments in his discussion of this second proof.

In this argument the conflation of a moral argument with a philosophical (or metaphysical) one is very evident. (The moral argument demands the projection of human ethical values onto the deity. At least one Islamic thinker, al-Ghazālī, took to its logical conclusion the theological principle that the deity owes nothing to any-

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26 Taylor (1825), 35. Taylor of course did not know of the Arabic versions of the first argument. The analogy to light, which is even more prominent on Taylor's reconstruction of the first argument than in Sallust, will be discussed below.

thing.)[27] In fact, Proclus may have already introduced a moral tone to his first proof in this reference to Plato's *Timaeus* 29e at the beginning of section 4 in Philoponus' refutation: "Another argument: If God is good, and as Plato in his wisdom says, 'in the good no envy ever arises in regard to anything'... why did he not etc.?"[28] I say "may have" because, as we have already noted repeatedly, Proclus' first proof is not extant in the Greek. Philoponus regularly breaks down Proclus' proofs into components, before beginning his refutation; but his reformulation need not reproduce precisely what Proclus had said. In one place, Michael Share gingerly suggests that Philoponus is "putting words in Proclus's mouth".[29]

Was the reference to Plato part of Proclus' original first argument? Plato is not mentioned by name in either of the Arabic versions of the first argument, nor do we find any mention of envy in either of them. On the other hand, Philoponus introduces the passage just cited as a direct quote, beginning "another argument". Certainly one would expect Proclus to be citing Plato in support of his argument here; the reference to the *Timaeus* is of no help to Philoponus. We have here an indication that the Arabic versions of Proclus' first proof have undergone significant alteration.[30]

True, the Good is a metaphysical principle. In a passage from *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*, cited by Philoponus a bit later on, Proclus states clearly that "the Good is prior to Mind (for Mind desires the Good, as, indeed, do all things, and not the Good Mind)."[31] However, envy is certainly a moral vice. It is unclear whether the implications for delaying creation – God being in that case "tight fisted" and "closing his heart" – is original with Yashar; in any case, the moral dimension to the argument is made explicit and stark.

In exploring the second proof, as in the case of the first proof, Yashar weighs the argument and counter-arguments that have been put forth in the subsequent debate. Here again the discussion takes on different trajectories, showing how the issues became intertwined over the course of centuries of debate. One comment in particular deserves our attention. Yashar delves here into the question – itself considered by some to be an independent proof – why the deity would have privileged any one moment over all of the others for the act of creation. This appears to me to be an important component in the medieval debate; it is another side to the issue of the deity changing, at a particular moment, from not-making to making, as in Proclus's eighteenth argument. Yashar cites Augustine, *City of God*, XI.5,[32] that one may as well ask

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27 Yaqub (2012).

28 Share (2005), 26.

29 Ibid., 97 (n. 87).

30 So also with regard to the "parallel drawn from the sun", at the beginning of section five (Share (2005), 28; and see his n. 57, that some of Philoponus' arguments are directed at Proclus or other unnanmed opponents.)

31 Share (2005), 39.

32 A misprint in *NH*, 85a, displays book I.

why God did not create the world in a different place, since there is an infinity of places just like there is an infinity of instances. This, however, is not at all an issue for most participants in the debate: not for Proclus, who, in his tenth argument, takes for granted the notion of proper places, nor for later figures, such as Maimonides, who does the same. Maimonides never demands a "particularizer" for the center of the cosmos, with its special properties, the way he asks for one to account for the differences between individuals belonging to a given species.[33] How many followed up on Augustine's insight? How many saw the choice of the center of the cosmos to be no less arbitrary (or willful) then the choice of the moment of creation?

> Argument three3: (ibid, 86a):
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> The third argument is:
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>> 3.1a If Exalted God is the order[34] and arrangement of all that exists, then it is not proper that He should be without the existents. For the *intellectum* that has no subject outside of the soul is considered be false.
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>> 3.1b If Plato did not posit an idea in the Intellect of Exalted God for *hyle*, since it has no form, then how much more so, *a fortiori*, [should that hold true for] absolute non-being, such as the word was before it was created. For Aristotle, this objection is even stronger: if the deity is the mover of the daily orb, then it cannot be the case that at one time He has a connection and relation to it, but at another time He does not.
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>> 3.2 This argument is raised by the author of *The Light of God* [Ḥasdai Crescas] but he did not answer it properly. Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel copied it from him in *The Works of the Lord*, book six, chapter one.
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>> 3.3 Now you should know that the Greek sage Proclus raised a similar objection in the twenty arguments that he arrayed against creation, even if Aristotle denies the forms or ideas that Plato posits. This argument is based upon their [respective?] beliefs; see, nonetheless, that they appear to be in agreement with Plato, as the author explained in length in his books.[35] In the fourth argument he said that the paradigm of the cosmos is eternal in His (may He be Exalted) Intellect, just like the idea of every thing is eternal, because no *intellectum* that had not yet been is produced in the Intellect of God. Since the form along with that which is informed belong to the category of relation, the world must be eternal just like its paradigm in the Intellect of God, which is eternal; otherwise, one of the correlates would exist without the other, and that would be false.

The above goes beyond the enunciation of the argument in order to include the reference to Proclus. For convenience, it has been subdivided into sections and subsections:

First, 3.1a is the heart of the argument while 3.1b explores the Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to the problem (from Philoponus). Next, 3.2 references the Jew-

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33 See the fictional question and answer with Aristotle in *Guide* II.19. Pinès (trans.) (1963), 305.
34 The Hebrew *nimus* is the Greek *nomos*.
35 "Books" is in the plural. Might Yashar be referring to Philoponus? I take him to mean that this argument applies to Aristotle even though he rejects the Platonic ideas.

ish writers who cite the argument and 3.3 refers to Proclus with further elaboration from Philoponus. Before analyzing this argument and Proclus's place in it, a word about the puzzling reference to "twenty" arguments. Were the propositions written out in alpha-numerics, the confusion between 2 and 20 would be relatively easy to explain; the two Hebrew letters, *beit* (numerical value of two) and *kaf* (numerical value of twenty) are very often confused. However, written out as words, the two numbers look very different. I can offer only the following suggestion. Perhaps Yashar wrote the number in alphanumeric abbreviation, but the printer, who wished to display the Hebrew words, made an error deciphering Yashar's handwriting. Nevertheless, in this argument – unlike the first and, as we shall see presently, the fourth as well – Proclus is unnamed but, rather, is included in the ancillary materials. We may infer then, that, in Yashar's reading, the main formulation – the strongest, though possibly not the earliest – derives elsewhere. Proclus is cited only later on, as another authority that raised a similar objection. In fact, Yashar's discussion in 3.1b – the distinction and significance between the Aristotelian and Platonic positions, the category of relation governing the link between cause and product, the questions as to whether the ideas are substances, and so on – follows closely Philoponus' analysis of Proclus' second proof.[36]

The gist of Proclus' argument, according to Philoponus, is based on Plato and comes down to this: if the paradigm or pattern of the cosmos is eternal, then the cosmos, which is the copy of this pattern, must also be eternal.[37] However, Yashar's "official source" for this argument is not Proclus but rather Ḥasdai Crescas, in his third argument from the aspect of the agent. In Crescas' formulation, the philosophical argument has taken on a strong theological tone:

> The third: since Blessed God is the Law of the existents, their Order and Rectifier, it is inappropriate that He be without the existents. Indeed, the *intellectum* that has no subject external to the soul is considered to be false. All the more so [is it inappropriate and false], if God is the unique mover of the first orb, that He should at times have a connection to them, but at other times not.[38]

The first part of Crescas' argument – and this is the part that is most directly relevant to Proclus – comes, possibly, from Gersonides.[39] For Gersonides, though, it is just "another consideration" on Aristotle's part, which is brought at the end of *Wars of the Lord* VI,3, after the weighty arguments have been laid out. Gersonides will help us in tracing the argument back to Aristotle:

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36 See here the very helpful notes of Michael Share (2005).
37 Share (2005), 33; so also the synopsis in Lang and Macro (2001), 39.
38 My translation from the edition (1990), 279.
39 Crescas relies heavily on Gersonides for his philosophical argumentation. See Harvey (1981), and compare Langermann (2012).

Another consideration that led Aristotle to this view was that, if God is the source of order and perfection in the world, it would be improper for God to exist without the world. For a concept in the mind that has no corresponding object in the world must, it has been thought, be false, as Averroes mentioned in his *Epitome of the Soul*. It was this reason, I believe, that necessitated Aristotle to hold that the universe is eternal; for he was aware that these arguments were not demonstrative, as shall be shown later in our examination of them.[40]

Yashar recognizes the presence of this same argument in Proclus. Not writing as an historian, he does not proudly announce his discovery of a "source". Nor does he clearly separate the source materials. As we have observed, his presentation of the Aristotelian and Platonic versions of the proof is taken from Philoponus. Modern scholars take note of the Aristotelian language found in this proof.[41] Yashar follows Philoponus' path in distinguishing Platonic and Aristotelian trajectories within this argument. In sum, the content of the argument derives from Philoponus's analysis of Proclus; nonetheless, Proclus is cited only as an additional witness. Yashar, speaking as a Jewish philosopher, prefers to take the argument from Crescas (and tries to improve on it); the historical question of the ultimate source is much less important to him.

Yashar will handle the last segment of Crescas' third argument, that which concerns God as mover of the highest orb, at the end of the lengthy discussion of his own third argument; he in fact dismisses it almost casually, as, indeed, Crescas had done in his response to this argument. The short and sufficient reply is that God does not set the orb in motion by agency, but rather by being the object of desire.[42]

Argument four (87a; 190)
The fourth argument is great and mighty. It is the sixth [proof] of the above-mentioned Proclus,[43] and it is taken from the aspect of change. Should you say that God beforehand had the potential to create the world, then afterwards He actually created it, then God has emerged from being a creator *in potentia* to being one *in actu*.[44] There is no greater change than that! It is heresy to say that He changed, when the prophet declares, "I am the Lord, I have not changed!" (Malachi 3:6). Proclus went on to say that if He changes, He moves, because all change is either motion or the result of motion. But if He moves, then he is imperfect, because motion is a defective action [scil. action of a defective being]. That which whitens, for example, is not yet perfectly white. Moreover, were He to move, it would require time, because all motion happens in time. Therefore, God would be defective, as he [would then] stand of need of all of the above [time, motion, etc.]. That

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[40] Levi ben Gershom (1999), 230. I believe that Gersonides is referring to the following passage from the end of Averroes' *Epitome of De anima* (trans. Black, 45): "We only conceive of the separate forms by the relation and analogy that they have to material forms. And analogy is only a certain relation. And whenever one of two relata exists, necessarily the other exists, and whenever it is missing, the other is missing."

[41] See Lang and Macro (2001), 41 n. 5, and Share (2005), 97–99.

[42] Fisher (ed.) (1990), 280–281.

[43] To be accurate, it is actually his fourth.

[44] This belongs to the first and strongest proof cited by al-Ghazālī's in his *Incoherence*, discussed above.

is absurd. [Heaven] forbid that one attribute to the deity defects such as these. It would be better to say that he didn't create *de novo*.

Philoponus' analyses and reformulations are worked into the citation, such that the argument ascribed to Proclus is here again a mix of Proclus' very words and Philoponus' glosses. For example, the example of the thing turning white being proof of its imperfection, as it is not yet white, comes directly from Philoponus:

> And every movement is, as has been shown by Aristotle, an incomplete activity. [The process of] turning white is an example. A thing which is turning white is neither black nor as yet white... So if movement is an incomplete activity and God is not imperfect, he does not move, and if he does not move, he does not change [...].[45]

This is not Proclus speaking, but rather Philoponus demonstrating what he takes to be a logical flaw in Proclus' syllogism.

Another minor though interesting twist is evident in the "impiety" that Proclus impugns to creationism here: "And by saying that [God] is sometimes imperfect and not always perfect and that he has need of something inferior [to himself, namely time] he is being irreverent in the extreme[...]."[46] In the passage we are now examining Yashar rewrites this as a positive statement: "Therefore, God would be defective, as he stands of need of all of the above. That is absurd. [Heaven] forbid that one attribute to the deity defects such as these. It would be better to say that he didn't create *de novo*."[47]

Since Yashar evidently did read Philoponus' refutation of Proclus, where the distinction between Proclus' statements and Philoponus' replies is usually clear enough, we may conclude that Yashar's combination of the two is clearly deliberate. But for what purpose? Is he making an historical statement, meaning that the particular combination of Proclus and Philoponus that he offers is the basis of the medieval debate? Or is the motivation philosophical, that is, that he regards the combination he produces to offer the best formulation of the argument? One can only speculate.

Here too, one can only make a few remarks concerning Yashar's very long and involved discussion of this argument; it seems that he has left the most problematic case for the last. Once again, he begins his citations from the defenders of creationism with al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence* – and again, he draws upon the first proof in the first discussion, the very same chapter that he cites in connection with the first proof for eternalism. In other words, in Yashar's analysis, al-Ghazālī's first argument is drawn from two different proofs of Proclus, the first and the fourth. In fact, it seems that in his crisp restatement of the eternalist argument, al-Ghazālī has group-

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45 Share (2005), 52.

46 Ibid., 50; cf. Lang and Macro (2001), 51 and especially 53 n.11.

47 Share (2005), 52.

ed together all of the "changes in the state of affairs" in God that would necessarily follow from the creationist doctrine: changes by way of "power, instrument, time, purpose, or nature". This one issue, the change or motion within the deity, constitutes the most serious eternalist argument.[48] However, these are separate arguments in Proclus, and later medieval thinkers too generally preferred to deal separately with questions of time, purpose or will, etc.

Yashar finds also that Averroes deals with this issue,[49] where he cites the reply of the "metaphysicians" – and he is, in fact, reproducing the argument of al-Ghazālī, in the first discussion of the *Incoherence:* God, in his primeval will, willed at a certain instant in the future to bring the world into being; that does not entail any change or movement on the part of the deity when that moment actually occurs, and the world comes into being. Yashar goes on to cite Averroes' rebuttal, and, like some modern scholars, finds some logical flaws in his argument.[50] In fact Yashar goes on for pages and pages, but Proclus is no longer part of his discussion.

Maimonides again is one of the medieval authors brought into the discussion. Yashar cites from *Guide* II.14. The argument there is that if God created the world after its non-being, then, before creating, He was a potential creator; after creating, he moved from potentiality to actuality, and a movement of that sort requires a cause. This sounds very much like Proclus' third proof. However, the key point for Yashar is that Maimonides attributes this proof to "those who came after Aristotle, who derived them [these proofs] from his philosophizing and thought to use them in order to establish the eternity of the world."[51] Yashar may well have understood that Maimonides had in mind Proclus, who certainly was the most important post-Aristotelian eternalist, and also someone who, for all of his Platonism, articulates some of his proofs in a clearly Aristotelian idiom. As we have stated often enough, Maimonides does not mention Proclus by name; Yashar may have felt that Maimonides had his reasons for covering the identity of this eternalist argument. After all, Maimonides is interested above all in ferreting out Aristotle's true and original position; the identity of the person or persons who intensified Aristotle's doubts about creation and transformed them into (what they thought to be) an invincible proof was not important. Indeed, Maimonides, like Yashar, was first and foremost a philosopher; historical insights were not the primary objective of either.

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48 Marmura (1997), 14.

49 In his middle commentary to *Physics* VIII, paragraph 15.

50 Hourani (1958).

51 *NH* 87b; 191.

Marie-Élise Zovko

Understanding the Geometric Method: Prolegomena to a Study of Procline Influences in Spinoza as Mediated through Abraham Cohen Herrera

> "We are only geometricians of matter;
> the Greeks were first of all,
> geometricians in their apprenticeship to virtue."[1]

Parallels and affinities between Spinoza's philosophy and the philosophy of Platonism include central characteristics of Spinoza's metaphysics and theory of knowledge, as well as decisive aspects of the geometric method. Spinoza's treatment of the highest principle and source of being and knowledge, the *substantia infinita*, his arguments for its singularity, existence, infinity, eternity, causality, transcendence and immanence, its relationship to the attributes and finite modes, in particular to human beings, echo essential features of the treatment of the same problems in Platonic and Platonist philosophy. His understanding of the paradoxical unity of freedom and necessity in the highest principle, and the aim of their reconciliation in the finite intellect by means of the ascent of cognition, culminating in *scientia intuitiva* and the intellectual love of God, are clearly prefigured in Plotinus, Proclus and their model Plato, as well as in Renaissance Platonists like Marsilio Ficino, Leone Ebreo (Judah Abrabanel or Abravanel, ca. 1460–1523), and Abraham Cohen Herrera (c. 1570-c. 1635). Spinoza owned the Spanish version of Judah Abravanal's *Dialogues on Love*[2] and attended the Talmud Torah school in the same synagogue in Amsterdam of which Abraham Cohen Herrera was a prominent member at the close of his adventurous life.[3]

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1 Weil (1956), 15.

2 On Judah Abravanel, cf. Hughes (2008). Standard edition of Abravanal's *Dialogues on Love* see Caramella (1929). Translations follow Friedeberg-Seeley *et al* (1937).

3 For details on the life of Herrera cf. Necker (2011). Cf. Nadler (1999), 5, 9–10. Cf. Krabbenhoft's introduction to Herrera in Krabbenhoft (2002), xvii. In the following, the works of Herrera are cited using the following abbreviations: *ECLD= Epitome y compendio de la logica o dialectica* (including the *Libro de diffiniciones*) Saccaro del Buffa (ed.) (2002), *GH=Gate of Heaven* (*Puerta del cielo*) Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002), *CD*=House of Divinity (*Casa del divinidad*) Yosha (trans.) (2002).

I. Arguments for a Platonist Interpretation of Spinoza's Philosophy

The interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy remains fundamentally disputed today, due partly to uncritical assimilation of stereotypes tracing to Spinoza's earliest reception and historiographical assessment,[4] partly to the modern tendency to view Spinoza's philosophy primarily in relation to his more immediate predecessors, Descartes and Hobbes, partly also due to the complexity of the issue of Spinoza's sources. The situation is further complicated by differing assessment of what is termed Spinoza's 'naturalism'.[5] In its earliest reception, Spinoza's 'naturalised' perspective, that is, his assertion of the unity of nature, the eternity and homogeneity of substance and universality of natural law, his decision, furthermore, to view human beings and their actions not as a "kingdom within a kingdom" but as themselves a "part of nature", whose being and behavior follow from Nature or God with the same necessity as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles, scandalized the predominantly theistic mind-set of his contemporaries and resulted in Spinoza being condemned as a determinist, fatalist, pantheist, and atheist. Today, on the other hand, Spinoza's "fully naturalized psychology" and ethics have led him to be embraced as a truly modern thinker, not only by Spinoza scholars, but by experts from fields beyond the boundaries of philosophical research, in particular by neuroscientists, cognitive scientists and psychologists, who see in Spinoza's naturalistic approach to psychology, emotion, decision-making, and social life an affirmation of insights from contemporary empirical research.[6] Changing attitudes towards Spinoza's naturalism have nevertheless failed to clarify inherent difficulties of interpretation, which result at least in part from a lack of understanding for Platonist elements in Spinoza's thought.[7]

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4 Cf. Saccaro del Buffa (2004) describes the earliest reception of Spinoza's philosophy, and the controversies it incited in the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.

5 Cf. LeBuffe (2010/2015).

6 Cf. e. g. Damasio (2005).

7 Today, understanding of Spinoza's naturalism is generally tied to "scientific naturalism", which as Van der Burg (2007), 90 describes "makes nature the foundation of all phenomena in history, culture, ethics, and maybe art." Insofar as it presupposes a materialistic and reductionist concept of nature, this point of view is unable to account for central aspects of Spinoza's philosophy, such as the unity of God's immanence and transcendence, and the unity and opposition of freedom and necessity. A materialistic interpretation of the *Ethics* like that of Bennett (1984) or Israel (2001) must, consequently, adumbrate or relativize statements by Spinoza regarding these aspects of his system. As Norris (2011), 5 describes, Bennett offers, "in the mode of Russell-style rational reconstruction... a patient, detailed, and often admiring account of Spinoza's *Ethics*" but loses his patience when confronted with *scientia intuitiva* and the 'intellectual love of God,' "at which point [...] his commentary gives voice to a sense of bafflement and downright exasperation" cf. Bennett (1984), 357 ff. Cf. Israel (2001). See Norris (2011), 3–5 for more information on the difficulties of interpreting Spinoza, ranging

To see Spinoza's philosophy as historically or intrinsically related to Platonist philosophy is to challenge prevailing opinion that Spinoza's naturalism and 'monism' are fundamentally incompatible with the 'realism' and 'dualism' of Platonist thought, which is seen as positing a separate reality of ideas and an irreconcilable opposition of the intelligible and sensible realms. The situation, however, is more complex. As in Plato, in Spinoza, naturalism and intellectualism are not opposed to one another – particularly as regards the relationship of human nature and human virtue – but form rather a paradoxical unity, which can be shown to parallel the paradoxical unity of naturalism and intellectualism explored by Plato in connection with the relationship of nature and virtue, and in his discussion of the so-called Socratic paradoxes.[8] As I have attempted to show elsewhere, refutation of stereotypical generalizations regarding Spinoza's understanding of God, nature, and the character and aim of human existence requires a proper understanding of the unity of naturalism and intellectualism which Spinoza shares with Platonist and Neoplatonist philosophy, and which is rooted in their characteristic understanding of the immanence and transcendence of the highest principle, the relationship of infinite and finite, and the paradoxical unity of absolute freedom and necessity.

Consideration of Platonist influences in Spinoza's thought is not new. Brehier noted "an external resemblance" between "Spinozism" and "the Neoplatonic theosophies that have flourished throughout history."[9] Similarly, Dunin-Borkowski elaborated on a wide range of Platonist and Platonist-influenced sources which played a role in Spinoza's philosophical development.[10] Gebhardt identified three primary "currents of philosophy" influential in Spinoza's first attempt at a formulation of his system in the *Short Treatise:* Scholastic philosophy, as embodied primarily in Thomas of Aquinas and Suárez, the Platonism of the Renaissance, and the philosophy of Descartes, among which Platonism figures most prominently.[11] Despite scattered remarks by Spinoza which seem to indicate a critical stance vis-à-vis Plato and Platonism,[12] in Gebhardt's view, Spinoza's Platonism is not a question of

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from the so-called "Pantheism controversy" of the 19th century, the atheist/materialistic interpretation, the Marxist socio-economic and even a kind of radical process metaphysics attributed to him by Deleuze.

8 Cf. Zovko (2012).

9 Brehier (1966), 160.

10 Dunin-Borkowski (1933).

11 Gebhardt (1922/1965), xvi, cf. iv-xxviii, xviixxiv. Cf. Gebhardt (1921).

12 In the *Short Treatise* I, 6 §7, Spinoza criticizes the view, which he attributes to "many of Plato's followers", according to which universal ideas are "in God's intellect" and "*have been created by God*", taking the position that universal ideas are "beings of reason" which "men have formed" and "with which they think the particulars must agree in order to be perfect", an opinion which only indicates their ignorance, since "only the particulars have a cause, not the universals, because they are nothing." In the *Theological-Political Treatise* Spinoza compares the "speculations of the Aristotelians and the Platonists" and the "delusions of the Greeks" with the uncritical ravings of those who divine "profound mysteries" in Scripture (Curley (ed.) (2002), 391). In a letter to Hugo Boxel (Ep.

some "arbitrary influence upon his system", but rather of the very "substance and value of his teaching."[13]

In "Spinoza und der Platonismus," Gebhardt outlines what he sees as the fundamental characteristics of Spinoza's Platonism, in particular with respect to Spinoza's reception of the Renaissance Jewish Platonist and Poet Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravanel), noting important similarities to Abravanel's *Dialogues of Love*, one of the few explicitly Platonic sources present in the inventory of Spinoza's library at his death.[14] As opposed to Allison,[15] Gebhardt sees both the *Ethics* and the *Short Treatise* as expressing, by their fundamental mood and approach, the same religious longing, the same mystic characteristic found in representatives of Renaissance Platonism like Abravanel. Gebhardt sees Spinoza's affinity to Abravanel as firmly rooted in the doctrine of the types of knowledge which Spinoza shares with the Platonic tradition, i. e. his threefold division of types of knowledge into empirical, rational and intuitive knowledge, descended from the division of the stages of knowledge first outlined in Plato's Divided Line, and transmitted by Aristotle and Plato's successors in the Platonic tradition from Ancient times to the Renaissance, including Plotinus, Proclus, and Nicolas of Cusa.[16] Spinoza's division of the stages of knowledge, according to Gebhardt, "separates his philosophy fundamentally from rationalism", insofar as it "elevated intuitive knowledge [the equivalent to the Platonic and Neoplatonic concept of *noesis*] above discursive...": Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* qualifies, in this vein, as a kind of "mystical vision, the *feeling and enjoyment of things, the immediate unification with the things themselves,*" and to the highest form of knowledge. [17] The Pla-

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LVI, Sept. 1674; Curley (ed.) (2002), 905), finally, Spinoza sums up his opinion of Plato in the statement: "The authority of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates carries little weight with me." Cf. Gebhardt (1921), 183.

13 Gebhardt (1921), 184.

14 Cf. Offenberg (1973), 319, and Iliesi (2007–2016). Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'Amore* were found in Spinoza's library at his death in the Spanish edition translated by Abraham Cohen Herrera: *Leon Abrabanel Dialogos de amor*. Gebhardt (1921), 186–187. On Judah Abrabanel, his *Dialoghi* and the history of its editions, as well as their influence on Spinoza, see Vila-Chã (2006/1999), 1001–1031. Gebhardt examines four passages where Spinoza may be seen as responding to views presented by Abrabanel. Wolfson, for his part, finds that, "On the whole, Leo Hebraeus' influence upon Spinoza has been unduly exaggerated." Cf. Wolfson (1934, 1962²), II 277, n. 5.

15 Allison (1987).

16 cf. Plato, *Rep.* 509d-511e, Zovko (2008), 322–330; Zovko, (2012), 16 ff. Wolfson (1934, 1962²), II, 131–163, enumerates the historical models of three- and fourfold divisions of the stages of knowledge from the original paradigm as it appears in Plato and Aristotle, to models deriving from them from ancient times to the Renaissance: Spinoza's three- and fourfold classifications can be shown to be based on Plato's original fourfold division of knowledge.

17 Gebhardt (1965), XXIV. Abrabanel and Spinoza share the ideal of the philosopher as the "eroticist" *par excellence*, whose original model is the Socrates of Plato's *Symposium* and the speech of Diotima. *Scientia intuitiva* as participation in the knowledge with which God knows himself and the love with which God loves himself (*amor Dei intellectualis*) is the highest aim and goal of human life and the attainment of beatitude.

tonic division of the stages of knowledge, moreover, forms the backbone of Platonic dialectic and underpins therewith also Proclus', Herrera's and Spinoza's understanding of method.

More recently, Kristeller noted "a distinct Neoplatonic element in Spinoza's doctrine of the highest end of life" and clear evidence of his "links to the Neoplatonic tradition" in the exposition of his doctrine of the Love of God in Part V of the *Ethics*.[18] In Kristeller's estimation, "there are many Platonizing concepts in the thought of Spinoza"; he believes, furthermore, that "even if [Spinoza] never read Plato, Plotinus or Proclus, he could not help knowing many of their thoughts through other indirect sources..."[19] Among significant points of similarity, Kristeller highlights the fact that "[t]he concept of God as a cause of himself ... is ultimately traceable to Proclus, as was noticed long ago, and the same is true of the famous distinction between God as *natura naturans* and the sum of all *modi* as *natura naturata*..."[20]

One source of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought whose kinship with the *Ethics* was still recognizable to Spinoza's contemporaries was the kabbalah. This source is of particular relevance not only as regards its Neoplatonic, philosophical interpretation (e. g. by Herrera), but also the hypothesis of its Platonist extraction.[21] Conflicting opinions exist regarding the relationship of Spinoza to kabbalah. Gebhardt sees Spinoza in decided opposition to the irrational core of kabbalist belief. [22] Richard Popkin, on the other hand, in his article "Spinoza, Neoplatonic Kabbalist?" raises the question whether "Spinoza was a secret Kabbalist, who drew his philosophical system from the mystical one of the Kabbalists."[23] A proximate source, Jacques Basnage, in his *History of the Jews* (1708), describes Spinoza as representing "a third Opinion" regarding Creation, one which he "borrowed from the Rabbis of the Nation [viz. 'Cabalists'], who were known to him," and not from "the *Chineses*, or the Heathen Philosophers."[24] Spinoza's statement in the *Theological Political Tractatus* that he had read and was "acquainted with, a number of Cabbalistic triflers whose madness passes the bounds of my understanding," [25] whilst confirming Spinoza's familiarity with kabbalist writings, appears to contradict any purported interest in the kabbalah. The remark, however, refers to the ahistorical and unenlightened approach of rabbinic interpretation of Scripture. In contrast, Herrera's works, rooted on the one

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18 Gebhardt (1922/1965), 337.

19 Kristeller (1984), 334. I thank Zev Harvey for drawing my attention to this source.

20 Kristeller (1984), 334 and 336.

21 Baeck (1926/1934) attempted to show that the *Sefer Yetzirah* or *Book of Creation*, the earliest source of Jewish esoteric thought, was an adaptation of certain central ideas of Proclus. Cf. Scholem (1987), 29, n. 46, and Merlan (1965), 181. One of the sources of Spinoza's division of the stages of knowledge, Saadia ben Joseph (b. Egypt 882/892– d. Baghdad 942), Jewish philosopher and exegete, also wrote a commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah*.

22 Gebhardt (1921), 181, cf. 180 f.

23 Popkin (1992), 388.

24 Popkin (1992), 387 and n. 1.

25 Shirley (trans.) (2002), 486. *TPT* Chap IX, 140 quoted in Popkin (1992), 388.

hand in the *Zohar* and Isaac Luria's version of the kabbalah, and on the other in the Neoplatonic philosophy of the Italian Renaissance, as mediated above all by Marsilio Ficino, with its legacy of Plotinian, Procline, and Iamblichean thought,[26] do not fit the mold of the mere "trifling" of a madman.[27] For Spinoza, who took self-evidency, rational argument, and adequacy of ideas to be the intrinsic standard of truth, the biggest drawback of Herrera's attempt to coordinate content and structure of Lurianic kabbalah with Neoplatonic ontology will have been the claim of the kabbalah itself to present a divinely revealed and esoteric body of truths inaccessible to rational reflection. Nonetheless, Abraham Cohen Herrera's *Gate of Heaven* and *House of Divinity*, to the extent that they attempt to interpret and explain the "sovereign contemplations of kabbalistic and theological mysticism" using "humble arguments of human philosophical thought", would have formed an exception to Spinoza's disapproval, and in fact, represent a comprehensive and philosophically argued view of God, the world, and the aim of human striving which is closely followed by Spinoza in many of its central arguments.[28] Moreover, the understanding of the dialectical method detailed in Herrera's *ECLD*, which is rooted in the same world view and underpinned by the same metaphysics and epistemology shared by Proclus, Plotinus and other representatives of Platonist philosophy, may well have served as a conduit for the Platonic and Procline understanding of dialectic which is the foundation of Spinoza's geometric method.

Wolfson gave only scant attention to Abraham Cohen Herrera.[29] After Johann Georg Wachter (1699), Dunin-Bukowski was the first modern Spinoza scholar to consider Herrera an important influence on Spinoza: "Zumal die fünf ersten Abhandlungen [of *Gate of Heaven*] setzen einige Hauptpunkte des späteren Spinozismus so lichtvoll auseinander, daß nur blinde Voreingenommenheit diese Quelle Spinozas übersehen kann."[30] It is unknown whether Spinoza had access to the Spanish manuscripts of Herrera's main philosophical works, *Gate of Heaven* and *House of Divinity*,[31]

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26 Cf. Scholem (1974), 8, 9.

27 Cf. Altmann (1982).

28 *CD* V, 9 quoted in Krabbenhoft (2002), xviii, cf. n. 13, stems from Yosha (1994), 109, n.99. On the existing manuscripts see. Krabbenhoft (2002), xxi.

29 Wolfson (1934/1962²), I. 10, 12. Wolfson pointed to Hebrew and Latin literature as the main sources and Hebrew literature as *the* primary source of Spinoza's knowledge of philosophy. Wolfson sees the Hebrew, Latin and Arabic sources available to Spinoza as representing a common philosophical tradition, "based upon Greek philosophy", and Aristotle "at the centre" of this tradition. In fact, it was probably Spanish, Spinoza's mother tongue, and Platonist sources like Herrera and Judah Abravanel, which first made philosophy accessible to Spinoza on a broader scale, especially at the earliest stages of his interest in philosophy, before he began to study Latin with the ex-Jesuit Franziskus van den Enden.

30 Dunin-Borkowski (1933), 188–189. See Allison (1987), 228 n.1 who describes this as "The classic study of the influences on Spinoza.",

31 cf. Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002), xxi. Two manuscripts of *Puerto del Cielo* and one of *Casa de la Divinidad* – from the hand of Samuel David Curiel, in 1675, and Samuel Abaz George – 1740 and

or to a manuscript or print version of Herrera's two-part treatise on method, the *ECLD*. Nonetheless, he would have been familiar with the central ideas of Herrera's works through his teachers at the Hebrew school, Menasseh ben Israel, himself a disciple of Israel Sarug, and Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, who was translating *Puerta del Cielo* and *Casa del Divinidad* when Spinoza was a pupil at the Synagogue school. Aboab de Fonseca's abridged Hebrew version of Herrera's works (published 1655) formed the basis for a Latin translation by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, contained in his *Kabbala Denudata*, the source of what later became known as "Christian kabbalah". As Popkin noted, Knorr von Rosenroth must have had friends in common with Spinoza in the period after Spinoza's banishment from the Jewish community;[32] and the content of the kabbalah, as well as its (also rational and philosophical) interpretation, will have formed an important topic of discussion in the Jewish and non-Jewish intellectual community of Amsterdam.[33]

Both Herrera and Spinoza are clearly influenced by a Neoplatonic vision of reality as hierarchically structured procession of the stages of being and mind from their absolute, transcendent, and immanent principle. Based on his vast knowledge of Platonic and Neoplatonist philosophy, Herrera attempts, in *Gate of Heaven* and *House of Divinity,* a philosophical interpretation of Lurianic kabbalah "in the Neoplatonic idiom."[34] He chooses for his works furthermore "an expository style that ... was associated in his time with dialectical argumentation,"[35] whereby *dialectic* is equated with the whole of logic and understood in the Platonic sense as *the* method of philosophy. In his *ECLD*, which Herrera sees as providing the indispensable methodological basis for an understanding of his philosophical works, he not only elaborates a form of humanistic dialectic rooted in a Platonic understanding of method, but unfolds a Platonic vision of the triadic and cyclical procession, conversion, and return

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1731, respectively – are preserved in the Jewish-Portuguese Seminary, Ets Haim, the successor to the Hebrew school Spinoza also attended in Amsterdam.

32 *Porta coelorum.* Tom I, pars 2, App. pars 3; *Domus Dei* Tom II, pars 3, Tractatus I, Latin translation of Aboab da Fonseca's text by Knorr von Rosenroth (1684). Cf. Popkin (1992), 391. "They both knew Leibniz. Knorr was involved with the Behmists in the Netherlands, a group that included at times Van Helmont, Peter Serrarius, Benjamin Furly, Adam Boreel and other radical Protestants who also knew and associated with Spinoza. Spinoza's publisher also published the works of Jacob Boehme and his disciples. So some of the same people would have read Spinoza, Boehme, and the work of their friend and associate Knorr von Rosenroth."

33 As Necker notes, a quotation from Herrera's *Puerta del cielo* in Menasse Ben Israel's *Conciliador o de la conveniencia de los Lugares de la S. Escrittura que repugnantes entre si parecen*, published in Amsterdam in 1632, suggests that not only Menasse, but also his readers, whom he refers to Herrera's work, must have been familiar with *Puerta del cielo*. Cf. Necker (2011), 213 f. and n. 320. The manuscripts were bequeathed to Spinoza's teacher Isaac Aboab da Fonseca.

34 Popkin (1992), 391, 392. See also Altmann (1982). Sacarro del Buffa (2002) believed, based on a statement by Herrera in *GH*, that Herrera composed a treatise, with the title *Tratado de las Unidades y Medidas,* influenced by Proclus. Necker (2011), 12, holds this conjecture to be mistaken, the topic having been treated within the *GH* itself.

35 Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002), xi.

of reality as ontological basis for dialectic – in a manner which mirrors Proclus' explication of dialectic in the Prologue to *In Eucl.*[36] Herrera's *Gate of Heaven* is structured in the spirit of Neoplatonic cosmology according to a tripartite division, comprised of 1) the *'Ein Sof*, which Herrera equates with the infinite and uncaused, necessary and eternal, immanent and transcendent First Cause, and absolute Being beyond being ("that is not and cannot be limited to any specific nature or to all of them together"), "infinite goodness and the simplest One" (the same concept of the First Principle found in Plotinus, Proclus, Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, and Ficino);[37] 2) the "procession," i.e. "emanation" or "creation", (Grk. *prohodos*, Hebrew *hit-paštut*), as explained by the Lurianic doctrines of *ṣimṣum* ('contraction' or 'withdrawal', which Herrera interprets as a "metaphorical" self-limitation of the Infinite)[38] and of *šebirah ha-kelim* (the shattering of the vessels);[39] and 3) the "reversion" and restoration of creation as contained in the Lurianic doctrines and the *tiqqun ha parsufim* (restoration of the faces). Herrera's exposition follows the Plotinian and Procline division of the fundamental principles of reality into *Hen, Nous* and *Psyche* as the foundation of the procession and return of all that is, and a division also mirrored in Spinoza's *Ethics*, which though ostensibly comprised of five parts, in fact, falls into a threefold division, concerning God (*substantia infinita*, *ens a se*, *causa sui*, *ens absolute infinitum*; part I, *De Deo*); mind (part II, *De Natura et Origine Mentis Mente*), and the human soul, its body, its powers, and our ultimate aim and blessedness (parts III-V: *De Origine et Natura Affectuum*, *De Servitude Humana seu de Affectuum Viribus*, and *De Potentia Intellectus seu de Libertate Humana*). What is generally overlooked in

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36 Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002). See Proclus, *In Eucl.* 18.17–28; 19.5–20; 57.18–26. Morrow (ed.) (1970/1992²). As Morrow remarks, procession, conversion and return are reflected in the 'microcosmos' of the mathematical proposition, which begins at a 'starting-point' (ἀρχή) which it unfolds as it 'progresses' by one of a number of given procedures ("such as division, demonstration, and synthesis") into "its inherent complexities", 'returning' from these by other procedures ("like analysis and definition") which "aim at coordinating and unifying these diverse factors into a new integration by which they rejoin their original starting-point, carrying with them the added content gained from their excursions into plurality and multiplicity." Not only the proposition, however, but the whole of mathematics mirrors this process: "For Proclus the cosmos of mathematics is thus a replica of the complex structure of the whole of being, which is a progression from a unitary pure source into a manifold of differentiated parts and levels, and at the same time a constant reversion of the multiple derivatives back to their starting-points." Morrow (1970/1992²), xxxviii.

37 Herrera *GH* Bk. I, Prop. 1, pp. 3–4; Prop. 2, p. 5 (Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002)); cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* V.4 [7] *Ennead* V.5 [32].13.33–36; *Ennead* II.9 [33].1.1–14; *ET* §9–12; Ficino *TP* II, Chs. 2 & 12.

38 Herrera, *GH*, Bk. II, Ch. 2, pp. 64 f (Krabbenhoft (2002). This contraction or self-limitation, "speaking metaphorically and in accordance with the capacity of our reason", leaves "something like a space or vacuum ready and disposed to receive and contain its future effects", enabling thus limited things, and "*first of all the first and most perfect one that contains all the others in itself*" "called 'Adam Qadmon", to come into existence). As such, it is comparable to the idea of God's being devoid of envy (*aphthonos*) as condition for the generation of the world in Plato's *Tim.* 29d-30a. Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* V.4 [7] 1.28–37; 34; *ET* §88, 6; §108, 11.

39 Herrera *GH*, Bk X Ch. V. Krabbenhoft (trans.) (2002), 445 ff.

studies of Spinoza[40] is that the *Ethics* as a whole is constructed according to a proportion like that of Plato's Divided Line, proceeding first 'downwards' from the unconditional beginning to the *infima species*, the 'order of nature' (origin of the affects as ideas of the *affectiones* of the body), and the *mens humana* in its condition of bondage to the affects, then 'turning', in a move akin to the *periagogē* of the prisoner of the Cave, to re-ascend via the path of understanding, purification, and higher virtue to the vision of the highest principle achieved through participation in *scientia intuitiva*, the knowledge with which God knows himself and *Amor Dei intellectualis*, the love with which God loves himself.

Besides these systematic elements, both Herrera's chosen "style" of writing and Spinoza's use of "geometric method" reveal important similarities to Proclus' understanding of dialectic method, and its relationship to "mathematical knowledge", as elaborated in the Prologue to his commentary to Euclid's *Elements,* and to his application of something like the geometric method in the *ET.*[41] Like Herrera's *dialectica* and Spinoza's *ordo geometrica,* in Proclus, the dialectical method functions not merely as a formalistic device, but is grounded in an integral understanding of the order of reality and knowledge as a whole as it proceeds from its highest principle, governed by the fundamental triad of *monē, proodos,* and *epistrophē*. The implementation of the dialectical method, moreover, because it is grounded in the original relationship of the highest principle, cause or paradigm to that which proceeds from it as its image or effect, constitutes a type of spiritual exercise, by which it is possible to ascend through the stages of knowledge originally defined by Plato's Divided Line, to attainment of true knowledge and virtue, unity with the unconditional first principle and the blessedness proper to human beings. Mathematical knowledge, corresponding in Proclus' exposition to *dianoia* and the third stage in Plato's Line, provides the necessary educative and purificatory propaedeutic for dialectic as a whole and the transitional stage between the world of sense and the world of intellect,[42] proceeding simultaneously from sense perception to ideas and from ideas or first principles to conclusions.[43] Herrera's treatment of dialectic in the Prologue to his *ECLD* echoes the metaphysical and pedagogical emphases of Proclus' Prologue to *In Eucl.*, in its conviction of the "close parallel between intellectual [...] and ontological processes."[44] The same triadic schema which functions as the paradigmatic and con-

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40 An exception is Deleuze (1988), 111, who noted the division of the path of knowledge in the *Ethics* into a descending and ascending movement. Deleuze also compares this dual movement to the stages of knowledge described by Plato's Line.

41 Proclus' commentary to the first book of Euclid's *Elements*, rediscovered in the middle of the 16th century, played a central role in the discussion regarding the establishment of a "*mathesis universalis*", led by Descartes and Leibniz. Cf. Rabouin (2010), 217, and below Section II.

42 Morrow (1970), 3.

43 *In Eucl.* 18.11–19.1

44 Saccaro del Buffa (2002), xxxviii: "...it is not the logical forms that determine the metaphysics...it is the metaphysical content that constitutes the basis of the explanation of the logical procedures and

stitutive principle in Proclus' system of reality[45] appears, furthermore, in analogous form in the specific subordinative and hierarchical interrelationships of Spinoza's own trias of *substantia infinita, cogitatio*, and *extensio*, and as variations on a theme in the subordinate relationships of attribute and mode, body and mind, idea and *ideatum*, as these unfold from the highest principle to the furthest reaches of the affections of the body and the order and connection of things to which they correspond.[46] Moreover, the structure and content of the *Ethics* as a whole unfolds according to the triadic and cyclical movement of procession, conversion and return typical of Platonist metaphysics. Comparison of Proclus' understanding of dialectic method as grounded in its metaphysical relationship to philosophy and reality, and similar aspects of Herrera's understanding of these same relationships, may thus provide a more complete understanding of Spinoza's geometric method and its rootedness in the metaphysics and epistemology of his philosophical system.

II. Herrera's Platonist Concept of Dialectic

It would seem natural, in seeking to explain Spinoza's decision to elaborate his philosophical system *ordine geometrico*, to turn not only to Euclid, whose *Elements* may well have dictated the formal division of Spinoza's *Ethics* into definitions, axioms or *notiones communes*, propositions, demonstrations, corollaries and scholia, but to Plato and the Platonists; nevertheless, modern studies of Spinoza's geometric method have not pursued this avenue of inquiry. It was Plato who first considered the nature of geometry in relation to philosophical inquiry into knowledge and reality, and emphasized the systematic importance of mathematical studies as a propaedeutic to philosophy and statesmanship.[47] In the *Republic*, Plato designates geometry, consisting of the three subdisciplines of line, plane and solid geometry, as the second branch in the program of higher studies (after arithmetic, before astronomy) required of the statesman and philosopher, insofar as it enables them to attain pure knowledge of "that which always is", i.e. the essence of things (and therewith of virtue and the Good), and inclines "the soul to truth", being "productive of a philosophic attitude, directing upwards the faculties that now wrongly are turned earthward."[48] But Plato also looks to geometry for the structural principles of reality and our knowledge of reality, as illustrated by the geometrical proportion of the Divided

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of the ascending and descending movement of the intellect according to the ontological order." All references to *ECLD* are from this edition.

45 Beierwaltes (1979), 24.

46 Cf. Lowry (1980).

47 Cf. Burnyeat (2000), 5 and 73. The aim of mathematical studies is knowledge of the Good (*Rep.* 526de, 530 e, 531c, 532c; cf. *Laws* 967e-968a).

48 Cf. *Rep.* 526 c-e; 527c. On the three branches of higher learning: arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, cf. *Laws* 811 e-818.

Line.[49] And it is geometry that governs the generation of the cosmos. Thus, in the *Timaeus*, the Divine Craftsman constructs the elements stereometrically, and the visible revolutions of the stars and planets imitate the motions of circle of the same and of the different which constitute the revolutions of thought in the life of the World-Soul, so that in studying them we are enabled to learn mathematics and to correct the disordered revolutions of our own thoughts.[50] Euclid himself, ὁ στοιχειώτης,, author of the *Elements*, was, in Proclus' words, of "Platonic persuasion",[51] and drew on the work of members of the Platonic academy (Eudoxus of Cnidus 408–355 BC, Theatetus 417–369 BC, Philip of Opus). Among the Platonists, Proclus stands out as the most prominent example of the central importance of geometry for the Platonic world-view (including cosmology, ontology, psychology and epistemology). Like Plato, he sees geometry, on the one hand, as one of the individual mathematical sciences belonging to the overarching category of mathematical knowledge in general (*dianoia*, corresponding to the third stage of the Line). On the other hand, he sees this mathematical knowledge as subordinate to what in a Platonic sense may be seen as a kind of 'higher geometry', namely, the practice of *dialectic* as *the* method of philosophy. Proclus discusses these relationships in the Prologue to his *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*,[52] while in his *Elements of Physics* and *Elements of Theology*, he self-consciously appropriates something like Euclid's method as a model for his own form of demonstration, applicable to all forms of human inquiry from cosmology and theology to ethics, following the legacy of Platonic dialectic.

Wolfson gives an overview of historical precedents of geometric method.[53] Among these, Euclid's *Elements* figures prominently, at least insofar as "the external

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49 On the geometric proportion of the Divided Line, cf. Zovko (2008) and Zovko (2012), 16 ff.

50 *Tim*. 39b and 47b-c. Similarly music and audible harmony serve the purpose of auxiliary to the inner revolution of the Soul. Cf. *Tim*. 53c-55b; 90d 1–2. This explains the importance of astronomy as a discipline, and astronomy is the privileged route to human understanding, since by studying the revolutions of the heavens we may repair the revolutions of our own thoughts, insofar as our rational soul-part comes to share in the thought patterns of the World Soul (90c-d). Cf. Sedley (1999), 316–323.

51 Cf. Morrow (1970), 57. In Morrow's estimate Plato's "contribution to the development of this mathematical method must have been considerable", although "this estimate of his contributions" has had to be reduced somewhat in light of "more recent discoveries regarding the methods used by mathematicians before Plato." Morrow (1970), xxvi n. 40.

52 *In Eucl.* 3.62, 3.50.

53 Wolfson (1934/1962²), I.39. A similar employment of geometric method is "also to be found in almost every mediaeval compendium of philosophy", e.g. in Duns Scotus' *Theoremata* and Burgersdijck's *Institutiones Logicae*, while an "imitation" of its partial form may be discerned in Bruno, "when he summarizes the conclusions of his doctrine and simplicity of God's being in a series of propositions." Maimonides' *Moreh Nebukim*, when it summarizes Aristotle's physical and metaphysical principles in the form of twenty-six propositions at the beginning of Part II, is seen by Wolfson to "belong to the same type of literary composition", as is the "hypothetic-disjunctive" use of syllogism in Averroes and Crescas, concluding with "the equivalent of the phrase *quod erat demonstrandum*", a

form of this literary method" is concerned. Wolfson describes Euclid's approach as consisting of the following elements:

> First, the primary truths which form the premises in the *demonstrati* are grouped together and placed apart from the demonstrations as the first principles upon which the demonstrations rest, and … divided into definitions, postulates, and axioms or common notions. Second, that which is … to be demonstrated, that is, the conclusion … is summarized apart from the demonstration in the form of a proposition. Third, the demonstration … reasons from the known, that is, the first principles, to the unknown, that is, the conclusion. Fourth, supplementary deductions, explanations and propositions are given in the form of corollaries, scholia, and lemmas.[54]

Wolfson goes on to provide examples of the partial application of Euclid's geometrical method to philosophy by means of "the reduction of philosophical views to the form of propositions", which may or may not be followed by demonstrations, among which he mentions Porphyry's *Sententiae ad Intelligiblia Ducentes* (Ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ) and Proclus' *Institutio Theologica* (Στοιχείωσις θεολογική).[55]

As Wolfson notes, it is thus "not without precedent … that one of Descartes' objectors" (Mersenne) called upon him to formulate his *Meditationes* "in the geometrical form" – a task which Descartes then also attempted in his reply.[56] For his part, Spinoza first attempted a partial application of the geometric method in his *Short Treatise*, but "carried it out in full" in his *Principia Philosophiae Cartesianae* and the *Ethics*. "Mere imitation of his predecessors," nonetheless, as Wolfson admits, "cannot … explain [Spinoza's] use of the geometrical method."[57] Many interpreters agree in regarding Spinoza's application of geometrical method as "a logical consequence of his mathematical way of looking at things," but neglect to determine more closely in what that manner of looking at things consists. Spinoza's earliest biographer P. Bayle believed that he had a "geometrical mind (*l'esprit géomètre*)". Freudenthal goes a step further when he asserts that Spinoza's decision to "style his … *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata*" was determined by "the inner necessity of his thought."[58] In considering whether "the nature of Spinoza's philosophy demanded

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phrase "also used by Avicenna at the conclusion of some of his own syllogistic arguments." Averroes' restatement of Aristotle's arguments, which are themselves "written in the form of geometrical demonstrations", "against the existence of a circularly moving infinite body in *De Caelo* I.5 – 7", is seen by Wolfson as a further "partial application of the geometric application to philosophy". Other imitations of Euclid mentioned by Wolfson include the grouping together of first principles apart from demonstrations in the form of propositions, "sometimes even called by the Euclidian terms, definitions, postulates, and axioms or common notions" in Maimonides, Bahya Ibin Pakuda, Alanus de Insulus or Nicolaus of Amiens.

54 Wolfson (1934/1962²), 39.
55 Wolfson (1934/1962²), 42.
56 Wolfson (1934/1962²), I, 44. Cf. 2nd set of Objections, compiled by Mersenne, in Cottingham *et al* (1984), 92 and Descartes' reply 110 – 120.
57 Wolfson (1934/1962²), I, 44
58 Wolfson (1934/1962²), 44 f.

that it should be written in the geometrical form," Wolfson compares statements by Descartes about the geometrical method, finding that what Descartes intended is "nothing but what Aristotle would call a scientific demonstration." Spinoza's "insistence that truth can be attained only by premises which are self-evidently true and by deduction" he sees, furthermore, as "nothing but a repetition of Aristotle's theory that demonstrative reasoning as expressed in any syllogism must start with premises which are 'true, primary, immediate, more known than, prior to, and the cause of the conclusion'."[59]

While Spinoza would certainly have agreed with the necessity of logical consistency and reasoning from self-evident premises for purposes of scientific demonstration, Wolfson fails to account for the specific character of geometric method in Spinoza, which includes aspects of, but transcends the Aristotelian standpoint. Previous attempts at explaining geometric method in Spinoza fail to adequately explain its specific characteristics and intrinsic significance for Spinoza's philosophy, precisely because they overlook the Platonic and Procline derivation of that method. Spinoza's understanding of geometric method has its paradigm in the geometric proportion of Plato's Divided Line and in the ontology which undergirds its division of the stages of knowledge. The latter forms the basis for the method of hypothetical dialectic by which the philosopher ascends through the higher stages of discursive (mathematical) and noetic knowledge to the vision of truth and union with the highest principle, the "unconditional beginning" from which all knowledge and reality proceed.[60] Moreover, Spinoza's adaptation of a method of demonstration *ordo geometrico* seems to have been mediated specifically by Herrera's exposition of dialectic in the Prologue to his *ECLD,* together with the corresponding exposition of dialectic, and detailed exposition of the individual elements of Euclid's formal method of demonstration provided by Proclus in his *In Eucl.* The implementation of elements of that method in Proclus' *ET,* and partial application of the same elements in Herrera's *GH* and *CD* may also have played a role.[61]

Spinoza mentions in a letter to Hugo Boxel from September 1674 having studied Euclid's *Elements*, whereby he compares the idea of God, which cannot be *imagined* but only *apprehended* by intellect, though our knowledge be not complete, with the property of a triangle according to which its three angles are equal to two right an-

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59 Wolfson (1934/1962²), 46 f.; cf. *Analytica Posteriora* I.2.71b., 21–22.

60 On Spinoza's reception of the Platonic division, and the proportion on which it is based, cf. Zovko, (2012), 37.

61 See Butorac (2012), 367. As Butorac noted, Proclus developed "a general conception of a hypothetical method independent of, but related to, his exegesis of the second half of the *Parmenides*" which is also "spoken of explicitly" elsewhere, "for example, in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*." This method, furthermore, may be applied for all purposes which the philosopher encounters, from the investigation of highest principles of reality, to the testing of ideas of youth and the refutation of the false opinions of the sophists. The "full logical form of the method" includes as its main elements division, collection, definition, demonstration, analysis. Cf. *Parm.* 653,3–654, 11.

gles, which he himself "clearly perceived" on the basis of his study of the *Elements*, though he was "ignorant of many others [viz. properties]".[62] This famous example, which figures prominently in Spinoza's discussion of the distinction between "an idea, or conception of the mind, and the images of things which we imagine" (including the figures of geometry in a narrow sense),[63] and is used to illustrate the necessity with which all things proceed from God (i.e. "by the same necessity as it follows from the essence of a triangle that the three angles are equal to two right angles"), by which Spinoza justifies his denial of free will in the ordinary sense, a doctrine eminently useful "both for philosophic purposes and for the wise ordering of life,"[64] stems from Euclid's XXXIInd theorem. But it is Proclus who situates the method and content of Euclid's *Elements* within the context of a metaphysics which underlies Spinoza's use of it, when in the Prologue to his commentary to the *Elements* he makes the connection of geometrical proof to our understanding of God and elaborates the pedagogical aim of the study of geometry in light of Plato's understanding of dialectic.[65]

A significant point which eluded Wolfson in this connection is the role of geometrical method and Proclus' *In Eucl.* in the debate regarding the concept of a *mathesis universalis*. Descartes' aim of establishing a *mathesis universalis* in opposition to scholastic thought was directly influenced by the rediscovery, in the middle of the 16th century, of Proclus' *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*. Contrary to prevailing opinion in the history of ideas which ascribes the appearance of the ideal of a universal science (*mathesis universalis*) to classical rationalism as defined by Descartes and Leibniz, G. Crapulli "reinserts" the debate concerning a universal science "into a more ancient history", i.e. a history whose roots may be traced from Proclus' commentary back to Plato himself.[66] Spinoza's use of geometric method, as specific embodiment of his own attempt to formulate a universal method of philosophy applicable to the whole of 'nature', also needs to be reinserted into this historical context, in which Herrera's works will have played a mediating role in pointing Spinoza in the direction of Proclus and his Commentary on Euclid's *Elements*.

Herrera's *ECLD* was intended as an introduction on method. Its task was to enable his contemporaries – who in his opinion had "sufficient understanding and

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62 *Ep.* LVI. Curley (ed.) (2002), 905.

63 *Ethics* IIp49d and s.

64 *Ethics* Ip17: "from God's supreme power, or infinite nature, infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, that is, all things, have necessarily flowed, or always follow, by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity and for eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles."

65 *In Eucl.* 5.13–23; 17.1–28.20. Euclid's *Elements* first appeared in print in Venice in 1482 (Boyer (1991), 119).

66 Rabouin (2010), 217. This research was not available to Wolfson at the time of the 2nd edition of his 2-volume work on Spinoza.

comprehension", but lacked "the art, with which philosophers represent their views on Mathematics, Morality, natural and divine objects, as well as [knowledge of] the Greek and Latin languages, in which they expressed themselves" – to penetrate the truths written about in *Puerta del Cielo* and *Casa de la Divinidad*. [67] Herrera saw knowledge of logic or dialectic as indispensable to comprehension of his major works *GH* and *HD*. Like these, the two logical treatises *Epitome y compendio de la logica o dialectica* and *Libro de diffiniciones*, the only works published during Herrera's lifetime, were written in Spanish, appearing together in a single volume.[68] While not rejecting scholastic and Aristotelian logic, the *ECLD* opposes them by equating dialectic with the whole of logic, a characteristic of anti-scholastic currents of medieval and Renaissance humanism.[69] Herrera sees the whole of logic or dialectic, furthermore, as corresponding to or mirroring the whole of reality, the cosmos in its totality, as a unified and harmonious system, whose standard of truth is therefore immanent. Logic, or dialectic, embodies thereby the "image of divinity ... upon which alone our happiness and our blessedness are founded."[70] This integral view of logic or dialectic and its bearing, as a method of moral and intellectual training, on human happiness corresponds to the intention of Spinoza's *Ethics* and his wish to demonstrate the knowledge necessary for the attainment of human happiness *ordine geometrico*. Like Spinoza, Herrera sees the attainment of *understanding* as the goal of *method*, and *understanding* as the main condition of human happiness and *blessedness*:

> Es concorde sentencia de los mas eminentes y famosos Theologos y Philosophos que la felicidad y bienaventurança de las almas intelectuales e inteligencias apartadas (que entre todas las creaturas solamente son capazes de alcançalla) consiste en las operaciones del entendimento [It is the unanimous opinion of the most eminent and famous theologians and philosophers that happiness and blessedness of the intellectual souls and separate intelligences (which alone among all creatures are capable of attaining) consists in the activity of the understanding].[71]

Herrera's aim of providing the instrument by which to access to the sources of truth is rooted in an understanding of dialectic as manifestation of the structural principle and motive force behind the generation of reality. Logic or dialectic is thereby understood as a reflection of the original creative activity of the Godhead:

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67 *ECLD,* fol. 6v-7r [p. 12]., and Necker (2011), 117.

68 Cf. Necker (2011), 116 and n. 85. In Necker's view, Herrera intended his works to be read in Spanish. The Spanish manuscripts of *Puerta del Cielo* and *Casa de la Divinidad* remained unpublished during Herreras lifetime. Necker considers possible reasons for this and for Herrera's decision, recorded in his will, to have *Puerta del Cielo* and *Casa de la Divinidad* translated into Hebrew, among them resistance of his fellow members of the Jewish community to promulgation of cabbalistic teachings in a language accessible to non-Jews.

69 cf. Necker (2011), 116 ff.; cf. Perreiah (1982). Saccaro del Buffa (2002), xxxi.

70 *ECLD*, Prologo, fol. 6r. and 6v. [p. 11 f.] : "es la ymagen de la divinidad ... en quien solamente consiste nuestra felicidad y bienauêturança." Cf. Necker (2011), 116 f. and n. 86.

71 *ECLD*, Prologo fol. 6v-7r, [12]; cited in Necker, (2011), IX.

> Logic imitates the divinity, strives toward understanding, searches for the essence, attains to truth, recognizes and concerns itself with the good, resolves multiplicity into unity and divides and distributes the unity into multiplicity ... illuminates the understanding, enkindles the will, improves the senses, moderates the passions, enlivens the intelligence, leads wisdom, guides toward science, rules the kingdoms and republics, the families and their houses, and brings human beings finally to politics, economy as well as (ethical and intellectual) perfection.[72]

Herrera, referring to Plato and Ficino, Plato's "faithful interpreter", describes "la Dialectica ó Logica" as imitating the "principio universal de todo" which is "the highest Godhead", in its relation to its effects, for which reason the divine principle is considered in three ways: first, in the manner in which it relates to its effects ("referidi a sus effectos"); second, in the manner in which the effects relate to their principle ("ó sus effectos relatados a el", and third, in the manner in which they relate to themselves ("ó sin relacion ... sus effectos".[73] Dialectic provides conversely knowledge of the divine essence and efficaciousness ("divina virtud y efficacia propagada"), by which the one gives itself to the effects, almost as if it were to distribute itself and divide itself into many ("assi casi *diuide y destrebuye*, el que es puro uno, en muchos"). The operations of logic or dialectic are also threefold, forming an analogy to the three moments of the divine principle in its relationship to its effects, which Herrera sees alluded to in the Kabbalists' concepts of "benediction", "sanctification" and "union", referring these to the Neoplatonic concepts of procession, purification and conversion, and unification. The operations of logic or dialectic enable us as such to return the manifold effects to their infinite source and permit them to be reunited with it.[74] This endows dialectic with an inalienable ethical aspect, both through its ability to motivate one to do the right and good, and to correct error and its effects. For "it fires the will, corrects sentiments and moderates passions ...

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72 *ECLD* [10 f.], following Ficino, cf. Necker (2011), 120 n. 98 and *Commentaria Marsilii Ficini Florentini in Philebo* Liber II, 433 – 435.

73 *ECLD,* Prologo, fol. 4v, 5r. [8 f.]. Cf. Necker (2011), 121 and n. 105; Saccaro del Buffa (2002) xlvi.

74 *ECLD* [10]: "digo que siendo tres las acciones, del infinito principio primero, son tres tambien las operaciones, con que la Logica las ymita, por que con la distribucion ó division, se assemeja, á la bendicion divina, decendiendo, de uno amuchos, propagandose, augmentandose, multiplicandose, y disnquiendose en ellos, mas la santificacion soberana, imita con la resolucion, leuantando y purificando los muchos y variamente compuestos que acendra y perficiona, y buelue al uno y senzillo de quien dependen. Representa finalmente, la union altissima en diffinir y argumentar, con que ajunto los generos, con las differencias el perdicado con el sugeto, el antecedente, con el consequente, las peremicias con las concluziones, y los acidentes, propriedades, potencias, y operaciones con los sugesto sessencias sustancias , y causas [...]." Cf. Necker (2011), 120. Necker follows Saccaro del Buffa in attributing this understanding of logic to developments since the Renaissance (Necker (2011) 119 and n. 95). In fact, the understanding of logic as having an "ethical and ontological perspective" which "teaches not only the differentiation between true and false, but also understanding of the hierarchy of being" (Necker (2011), 119), has its roots in the Platonic understanding of dialectic. Cf. *ECLD* Prologo, fol. 4v, 5r, [8]f.

guides prudence, teaches art, governs kingdoms and republics, families and homes, and men, making them political, economical and virtuous."[75]

Herrera's Prologue to the *ECLD* shares with Proclus' Prologue to *In Eucl.* a self-conscious presentation of the rootedness of dialectic in metaphysics and a division of the operations of dialectic according to their place in the stages of procession and return to the highest principle determined originally by Plato's Analogy of the Line.[76] In the "Prologue" Herrera elaborates a "Neoplatonic and Ficinian conception of the intellect", which serves as the basis of his arguments, according to which "understanding is the most perfect operation ... in the universe."[77] The structure of the universe extending from the "supreme and perfect divine being", whose "supreme and most perfect operation and second act" consists in its "perpetual conversion" upon itself, or pure contemplation, self-knowledge, from which all further effects derive, enables our own intellects to participate in its operations.[78]

III. Proclus' hypothetical dialectic as model for the geometric method

While Herrera's exposition of logic or dialectic in the *ECLD* did not provide the formal model for Spinoza's implementation of geometric method in the *Ethics*, the *ECLD* may nonetheless have provided a source of inspiration as regards the idea of a metaphysical grounding of dialectic, as well as its ethical implications as outlined above – and may also have pointed Spinoza in the direction of other Platonic sources like Proclus, where the connection of geometry, mathematical knowledge, ethics and metaphysics is central. In particular, Proclus' explication, in the *In Eucl.*, of the function of individual formal elements of Euclid's method appears as a probable basis and point of departure for Spinoza's thoroughgoing application of these elements in the *Ethics*.[79]

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75 *ECLD* [11]; Saccaro del Buffa (2002) xlviii.

76 Cf. *In Eucl.* 35 f. A large section of the Prologue is devoted to clarifying the place of "mathematical knowledge" ("middle dialectic" cf. Butorac (2012), 368) in relationship to dialectic as a whole. Cf. *In Eucl.* 3–34.

77 Saccaro del Buffa (2002), xlii.

78 Saccaro del Buffa (2002), xlii, n. 74, xliii, n. 77 indicates the way in which the three arguments of the first part of the Prologue are echoed in Spinoza's *Ethics*.

79 Cf. *In Eucl.* 75.6., where Proclus discusses the general arrangement of propositions in the science of geometry, which "is based...on hypothesis and proves its later propositions from determinate "first" or "common principles" (κοιναὶ ἀρχαί). These are differentiated into hypotheses, postulates, and axioms (76, 4 f., ὑποθέσεις, αἰτήματα, ἀξιώματα; in which point Proclus differs from Euclid, cf. Morrow (1970), 62, n. 62). The three types of proposition are "not the same thing". Rather a proposition which is an axiom "is something both known to the reader and credible in itself" 76.8, whereas a hypothesis is a proposition which is not self-evident to the student, but which he nonetheless "concedes...to his teacher" and therefore "posits", pending demonstration. A postulate, finally, is a "statement" which

Whatever the direct sources may have been, Spinoza's classification of the stages of knowledge clearly reflects the division of stages of knowledge first outlined in Plato's Analogy of the Divided Line, discussed in detail in Proclus' classification of mathematical knowledge in the Prologue to *In Eucl.*[80] This division provides the foundation for the Platonist understanding of dialectic as *the* method of philosophy and path to the vision of truth and to union with the highest principle. That the division of Plato's Line constitutes an analogy, and, more precisely, a geometric proportion, and that proper understanding of the law of proportion and its application to the content of the Line is fundamental to its interpretation, I have attempted to show elsewhere.[81] The Line establishes the ontological derivation of dialectic as based on the analogical relationships of the stages of being and knowledge, a tradition transmitted by Platonist and Platonist-influenced sources from Ancient and Hellenistic times to the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The significance of the close relationship between Spinoza's references to the law of proportion and Plato's construction of the proportion of the Line extends to the broader implications of Spinoza's division of the stages of knowledge, as discussed in Part II of the *Ethics* and illustrated in both the *Short Treatise* and the *Ethics* by the law of proportion, for interpretation of Spinoza's system of philosophy as a whole.[82] Plato's understanding of dialectic as method of philosophy, itself intimately tied to his division of the stages of knowledge, the so-called 'method of hypotheses' as elaborated in the *Phaedo* (99c sq.) and the Analogy of the Divided Line (*Rep.* 509d ff.), the latter with its own specific, dual understanding of the use of ὑπόθεσεις, and the interpretation of hypothetical dialectic in Proclus,[83] prove particularly relevant for interpretation of the *ordo geometrica* and its relationship to the derivation of thought and reality from the *substantia infinita*. Proclus' concept of hypothesis is, as Beierwaltes recognized, reduced in relationship to Plato's "to a simpler one", whereby "a mathematical concept of ὑπόθεσις" becomes determinative, in which the *unconditional* as ground of being is identified with the *sufficient ground* of reasoning "both in a relative and absolute sense", ἱκανόν and ἀνυπόθετον being understood both as ground in the sense of the

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is "unknown and nevertheless taken as true without the student's conceding it", in order to later be established. *In Eucl.* 77, 7 ff. Proclus discusses furthermore the division of "propositions that follow from the first principles" into "problems and theorems", whose parts are further elaborated *In Eucl.* 203.3 ff, (enunciation, exposition, specification, construction, proof, conclusion).Cf. Morrow (1970), 159: "The Greek terms here are respectively πρότασις, ἔκθεσις, διορισμός, κατασκευή, ἀπόδειξις, συμπέρασμα." Proof is discussed *In Eucl.* 206.11 ff. Different kinds of problems are discussed *In Eucl.* 221.9 ff.

80 *In Eucl.* 1.1 ff.
81 Zovko (2008); Zovko (2012), 16 ff. On analogy as structural principle and foundation of dialectic cf. Beierwaltes (1979) 65, 73, 153–158, 329–341, as well as the sources dealing with the history of the concept and problem of analogy listed on 154 n. 138.
82 Cf. Zovko (2012b), 33 ff.
83 Cf. Proclus, *in Eucl.* 76, 9–11, and Beierwaltes (1979), 261. On Proclus' hypothetical dialectic cf. Butorac (2012).

ὑπόθεσις of the One and also as ground of all other ὑποθέσεις derived from the first hypothesis. Hypothesis thus belongs together with ἀξίωμα and αἴτημα to the 'beginnings' (*archai*) of geometry, whence thought progresses by means of deduction and synthesis to inferences or conclusions.[84]

Proclus, following Aristotle, determines an *axiom* to be a self-evident proposition, a point which recurs in Spinoza's *Ethics*. Hypothesis, however, in the sense of a "geometrical sentence or definition" is not taken to be self-evident to the hearer, but functions rather as a point of departure (*archē*) for its development through deliberation, whereby the path of reflection either returns to the demonstrated truth of the proposition or to its further elaboration, in order to "establish what is sought from the beginning."[85] This function corresponds roughly to that of *propositions* in Spinoza's *Ethics*. αἴτημα, finally, is the designation for a postulate whose truth is unknown and not assumed, but nevertheless accepted as a rule of thought, a function which may perhaps be reflected in the role of the postulates in the *Ethics* (following *Ethics* 2p13, Post. 3–6 and 3, Post. 1–2). 'Hypothetical dialectic', – whether in its dianoetic function (as 'middle' dialectic), proceeding from self-evident axioms 'downward' to what can be deduced from these, or in its 'higher' or noetic function, which builds on the former, proceeding 'upward' from provisionally posited hypotheses, by testing these, to gradually approaching an ever more adequate knowledge of the causes of things, – is grounded ultimately in the "dialectic of the unconditional" as "unhypothetical" or "first science."[86]

The real "bond", however, in Proclus and also in Spinoza, is *analogy*, "bond understood as that, through which what is in the middle *is*," by which the 'means' and the 'extremes' are joined.[87] The unity of diversity and unity as basis for reality and knowledge of reality are possible in Proclus through participation of multiplicity in the principle according to which "everything is in everything but in a manner appropriate to each" (*panta en pasin, oikeiōs de en hekastoi*). This is possible only because everything that exists "is everywhere existing in proportion" (*panta pantachou ana logon esti*). As Siorvanes remarked, "this has been rightly called the 'golden rule' of Neo-Platonism, for it is the main method for explanation and analysis."[88] According to this rule, objects of knowledge are not all known in the same way, but "appro-

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84 Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 261 ff.

85 *In Eucl.* 255, 11 f. Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 262

86 Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 263–265 and *In Eucl.* 31, 11–19; 1, 9 f., 18. On 'middle' and 'higher' dialectic, cf. Butorac (2012).

87 *In Tim.* III. 22, 24–2; cf. 26: "of all bonds the most beautiful, which makes itself and what is bound one in the highest measure ... If, namely, of three numbers or measures or forces the middle one relates to the last as the first to itself, and in the same way again the last to the middle as the middle to the first, if then the middle becomes first and last, the last and first, however, both middle ones, then everything will become necessarily the same..."

88 Siorvanes (1996), 51; cf. 66, 110 f. n. 1.

priately", according to their ontological status and each aspect by which it is manifested:

> for ... a white thing is known by sense-perception and by opinion *(doxa),* and by our intellect, but not in the same way; for sense-perception cannot comprehend its proper objects of knowledge in the same way that the intellect does; for intellect knows also the cause (*aitian:* also explanation), while opinion knows only the fact (*to hoti*); it is by virtue of this, indeed, that we say that correct opinion differs from knowledge, the former knowing only the fact of the thing and being weak for this reason, the latter comprehending the object of knowledge along with its cause (or explanation) and thus able to comprehend it more strongly ... So then, knowledge varies according to the nature of the knowing agent. It is not the case that it is according to the nature of the known object that it is known by everything, but is known in a superior way by superior agents, in an inferior by more inadequate ones ... For indeed hearing perceives the objects of hearing in one way ... reason perceives in a different way both these things and all other things of which there is no sense-perception.[89]

The rule 'All in all but appropriately' permits Proclus to "formulate a general law for the plurality and diversity of beings and phenomena, causes and effects, qualities and meanings, while retaining their specialty." According to this 'rule', and in keeping with the proportion of Plato's Divided Line, "the same thing can be conceived as existing on many different levels, each with its own distinct character." It is because of this that knowledge and the processes contributing to knowledge are possible. Because of the proportionate interrelationships of the levels of being and intellection which forms the basis for dialectic

> [a] thing is not an opaque indivisible, but composed of a bundle of levels and modes. The same thing, be it a metaphysical entity, a piece of knowledge, a moral definition or a literary text, may possess diverse properties or have different meanings. It all depends on the level of analysis.[90]

The apophthegmata *panta en pasin, oikeiōs de en hekastoi, panta pantachou ana logon esti* are the expression of the dialectical mediation of the highest principle made possible by the original relationship of archetype and image, paradigm and what is modelled on the paradigm after the manner of participation or imitation constitutive for Platonist metaphysics from Plato's theory of forms to the Cambridge Platonists. This relationship makes possible the unity in multiplicity, multiplicity in unity of the individual beings which comprise the diverse layers of our experience and the hierarchy of principles which contribute to the sameness in otherness of individual identity. It also serves as the ontological basis of the efficacy of analogy, i.e. the 'rule' or proportion by which the stages of knowledge and reality proceed from and return to their source. Analogy grounds a similarity in dissimilarity, sameness in otherness, proportion in disproportion which enables the substantiality and integrity of the individual, since the identity of any finite thing depends not only on its

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89 *In Parm.,* 956.35 – 957.32 quoted in Siorvanes (1996), 52.
90 Siorvanes (1996), 55

participation in its own unity with itself and its principle, but on its diversity, i. e. differentiation from other finite things, as well as from its infinite source. Dialectic thus proceeds through analogy and negation, arriving finally by "ascent through abstraction, as purification of thought, through becoming like the source, divinisation of our humanity" at its own self-annihilation – and simultaneous preservation (*Selbstaufhebung*) – in the *negatio negationis* entailed by its union with the One.[91]

Proclus, Herrera and Spinoza share a "metaphysically structured method"[92] originating in Plato's 'hypothetical' dialectic and based on the analogous relationship of image and archetype, from which a system evolves which is more than a schematic classification of thoughts according to artificial external criteria. In Proclus, Herrera, and Spinoza *method* is grounded in the geometric proportion and dialectical procession by which the manifold of effects which constitute the entire hierarchy of being proceeds from its highest principle and first cause. In establishing the ontological basis for knowledge and reasoning, the proportion of image and archetype prescribes the path by which thought must proceed, whether 'ascending' from particulars of sense by means of an initial grasp or conviction of 'what it is' through discursive delimitation of the content of perception to intuitive insight into the whole of its categorial and predicative determination, and ultimately to a vision of the unity and totality of being and thought which is its unconditional ground – or, in the opposite direction, 'descending' from the highest principle of thought 'from ideas through ideas' to the *infima species* by which all particular things are defined. The individual hypotheses by which the system of knowledge and reality is 'demonstrated', act thereby as "starting-points" (*archai*), which reenact the role of the absolute beginning "on a smaller scale", in proportion to the level of reality at which they are employed, depending on whether they form part of the "middle dialectic" (the level of dianoetic thought) or of the "higher dialectic" (the level of noetic thought).[93] These 'beginnings' establish a twofold movement of inquiry which permeates the system, comprised of intertwined processes of collection (συναγογή) and division (διαίρεσις), synthesis and analysis, ever proceeding from the *archai* or returning to them as point of departure and aim ('that which is sought', ζητούμενον) of the demonstration. In this "is grounded the twofold unity of mathematical method: the beginning of the one is the end of the other and vice versa..." Insofar as the First Principle and Ground of being precedes and is present in the knower and the known, as well as in each level, stage, faculty or type of knowledge, as its "initiating moment" and "all-pervading principle", the path to knowledge of being is at once the path to knowledge of self and to knowledge of God, and therewith to our own perfection – in Spinoza[94] as in Proclus.[95]

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91 Beierwaltes (1979), 241.

92 Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 15 and 19.

93 Beierwaltes (1979), 16. Cf. Butorac (2012), 367, 368.

94 For "the idea of each thing caused depends on the knowledge of the cause of which it is the effect." (*Ethics* 2p7). "The power of the mind" which constitutes its *virtue*, and therewith human beings'

In Proclus, the unfolding of the system of reality according to the individual stages of being and knowledge (στοιχείωσις, *elementatio*) is not a merely theoretical endeavour by which we advance "from what is grounded to the ground, from the particular to the general, from the accidental to the essence, from the manifold to the one as the source of the whole,"[96] but also a practical 'exercise' (*askesis*) leading both to a vision of the true causes of things and the manner of their procession from the first principle and to union with the origin and goal of being and thought which is the ultimate aim of our striving. The "structural moments" of the Procline method – triad, circle, dialectic – are to be understood thereby neither as *Weltanschauungsbilder* in a Diltheyean sense, nor as "psychologically established forms of thought", but as constitutive moments of reality itself, and as structurally and formally determinative of the processes of thought.[97] Triad and circle, as complementary moments of the procession and structure of being, are also constitutive of dialectic method, the triadic structure of being grounding the articulation of levels of knowledge and being according to the elements of the individual triads,[98] and the circular movement of procession and return articulating the perennial turning back of the ascending and descending movement of discursive and intuitive intellection upon itself.

Dialectic, in Proclus the "fundamental act of philosophizing",[99] is, conversely, the crowning moment of the three structural principles of Proclus' metaphysics,[100] proceeding by tracing the procession of reality on the basis of ideas which ground the being and cognoscibility of individuals and their relationships (to themselves, each other, the whole) by means of the four moments of analysis, division, definition and demonstration.[101] As such it is the "cornice" (θριγκός) or bond (σύνδεσμος) of

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true freedom and happiness, is "defined solely by knowledge" (5p20). Adequate knowledge, by which virtue and happiness are attained, begins with knowledge of things, advances to self-knowledge, and thence to knowledge of God (cf. *Ethics* 4App4).

95 Cf. *In Alc.* 1,4. Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 15, 16.

96 Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 17.

97 Beierwaltes (1979), 19.

98 Beierwaltes (1979), 19–20; cf. 25–29, and the list of triads: πέρας–ἄπειρον–μικτόν , οὐσία–ἑτερότης–ταυτότης, ἀρχή–μέσον–τέλος , νοητόν–νοητὸν ἅμα καὶ νοερόν–νοερόν , οὐσία–ζωή––νοῦς , μονή–πρόοδος–ἐπιστροφή ibid. 30; cf. *In Eucl.* 99, 4–8 sq. The triad is significant for the "ontological grounding of geometry, since it grounds the being of surface, by encompassing duality and unity in itself and thereby limiting and separating at the same time." The triad grounds thereby the "first figure and form", similar in this respect to "to triadic nature, which originally limits all being, but also to duality which separates these." In Herrera, the "analogy between logic and divinity" is also presented as a triad, consisting of three fundamental concepts, "distribution", the pair "analysis"/"synthesis", and "definition", a triad which is "not by mere chance related to the Neoplatonic triad 'procession, change, return'." Necker (2011), 12.

99 Beierwaltes (1979), 240.

100 Beierwaltes (1979), 33.

101 Beierwaltes (1979), 245, 246.

the sciences, which grounds, encompasses and perfects them, leading ultimately to knowledge of and union with the origin and source of thought and being.[102]

Each of these structural elements may be fruitfully applied as an interpretative scheme to the structure and development of Spinoza's metaphysics in the *Ethics* as based on the foundational relationship of the *substantia infinita* to its attributes, word division and *extensio*, attribute and mode, body and mind, idea and *ideatum*, as these unfold from the highest principle, as well as to the *mens humana* in its return to its source through its striving for freedom and blessedness, as articulated through Spinoza's signature rendering of geometric method. In view of the historical precedents and the characteristics highlighted above, Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements* appears to be the most useful point of departure for interpretation of Spinoza's geometric method, and the *Elements of Theology* as most closely related in its thematic approach to Spinoza's implementation of that method in his *Ethics*, although Spinoza's theory of the emotions, and many of his specifically ethical considerations lie beyond the scope of these works. This close relationship between Proclus and Spinoza as regards geometric method, and its connection to Platonic dialectic, was noted by Dodds in his introduction to the *Elements of Theology*:

> Proclus ... adopted, at least in appearance, the method of pure *a priori* deduction known to the ancient mathematicians as synthesis and familiar to us from Euclid and Spinoza. It is substantially, as Professor Taylor points out, the Platonic method of hypothesis; and Proclus found a model for it in the hypothetical argumentations put into the mouth of Parmenides in Plato's dialogue of that name.[103]

The affinities between Proclus' hypothetical dialectic and Spinoza's geometric method provide ample evidence for a philosophically significant relationship between Spinoza's idea of geometric method and the Procline understanding of Platonic dialectic, which played a formative role in the works of Abraham Cohen Herrera. It remains to explore these relationships in greater detail, particularly as regards their implications for interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy. The central position afforded to the law of proportion in Spinoza's exposition of the stages of knowledge requires thereby that the role of *analogy* be taken into account, which functions as the fundamental principle and rule according to which Spinoza's geometric method and his system of philosophy as a whole are structured, so that differing approaches are needed for proper interpretation of different parts of the *Ethics*, depending on where one finds oneself on the scale of knowledge and being defined by the original proportion which serves as its model.[104] The *purpose* of dialectic in Proclus, in its ap-

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[102] Beierwaltes (1979), 242. Of all the sciences, *mathematics* is, after philosophy itself, the most word division dialectic, and serves as propaedeutic of philosophy. Beierwaltes (1979), 247 and *in Eucl.* 44, 13 f.

[103] Dodds (1963), xi.

[104] Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 153 ff., "Analogie als Struktur- und Bewegungsprinzip von Welt."

propriation of the aim of Platonic dialectic, i. e. the "practice of the vision of truth"[105] as a spiritual exercise by which to ascend through the stages of knowledge originally defined by Plato's Divided Line to attainment of true knowledge and virtue and unity with the unconditional first principle as source of being and knowledge and the perfection proper to human beings,[106] must also be seen as the central aim of Spinoza's application of geometric method – who proves in this and other key respects to be an heir of Plato and Platonist philosophy. Spinoza's application of geometric method in the *Ethics* needs to be more fully interpreted in the context of its Platonic and Neoplatonic derivation, and in particular, in its reflection of the triadic and circular movement of the procession of reality from its original principle. The procession of the manifold of effects from the *substantia infinita* as depicted by Spinoza in his portrayal of the origin and nature of the human mind and its affections, its servitude to the emotions in the natural order, our conversion from servitude and return by means of an ascent to adequate knowledge of the true causes of and assimilation to the intellectual order of things and union with the highest principle in *scientia intuitiva* and *amor Dei intellectualis*, emerges thereby as a reflection of the threefold structure expressed by the triad *monē-prohodos-epistrophē* in Proclus as articulation of the procession of the individual soul from its descent into the unity in multiplicity and diversity of its physical embodiment and its reversion and re-ascent to union with the One.[107]

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105 Ibid., 241: "Einübung in die Schau der Wahrheit", cf. n. 3 and *in Parm.* 1015, 38: γυμνάσιον πρὸς ἐκείνην τὴν (scil. τῆς ἀληθείας) θέαν.

106 An understanding of method whose paradigm is to be found in Plotinus. Cf. Beierwaltes (1979), 249 and n. 9. Cf. J. Trouillard (1953), 128–132.

107 On the significance of *eros*, and related uses of *conatus*, as motivating force and ultimate goal of the ascent of knowledge, for a comparison of the method of Platonic dialectic and Spinoza's understanding of geometric method, cf. Zovko (2014).

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