

A SURVEY OF PROCLUS' PHILOSOPHY

D'HOINE (P.), MARTIJN (M.) (edd.) *All from One. A Guide to Proclus*. Pp. xvi + 418, colour pls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Cased, £70, US\$99. ISBN: 978-0-19-964033-1.

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Proclus' 1600th anniversary was celebrated by various scholarly events. One of them was a major international conference held at Amsterdam in February 2012. This book, produced from this conference, presents a comprehensive introduction to the philosophy of Proclus.

The editors point out that R. Chlup (*Proclus: an Introduction* [2012]) already reserved a niche for an up-to-date introduction to Proclus in English at the time when the Amsterdam book was still in an inchoate state. Later, S. Gersh's *Interpreting Proclus* (2014) was published. The editors present this book as 'a third approach: our aim is to provide a general overview of the main aspects of Proclus' thought, including a number of subjects which would be difficult to include in a general introductory monograph, even though they represent some of the more salient aspects of Proclus' thought. Think, for example, of his mathematical, scientific, or literary views' (p. vi).

The second and more important aim, according to the editors, is to provide 'with this volume, which is the product of a unique collaboration between a great number of specialists on Proclus ... not only [with] in-depth studies on the different aspects of Proclus' philosophy, but also [with] a state of the art of Proclean studies today' (p. vi).

One can expect the very best from such authors as C. Steel, D. O'Meara and J. Opsomer, but each contribution is exceptionally learned and immensely useful for Proclean scholarship. Customary complaints about a lack of coherence and uneven quality in a multi-authored volume certainly do not apply in this case.

The editors can be fully satisfied with their achievement. The net of cross-references indicates nicely how different chapters of the book complement and elucidate one another. More than that, the project has succeeded in getting the authors to interact and elaborate their arguments during the years after the Amsterdam conference. The editors have wisely avoided forcing false uniformity. In the best of cases, chapters engage in dialogue among themselves, bringing forth different perspectives on the same problems, for example, on the question of how Proclus was involved in 'politics' in theory and praxis.

As for editorial technicalities, one can find only few typos. C. Wildberg's note 45 (p. 24) referencing the *Suda* about 'Proclus moving his insolent tongue against the Christians' is not translated. Generally, the notes and bibliography are excellent.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters with two appendices: a table on Proclus' metaphysical levels and a list of Proclus' works with information on modern translations. The most recent English translations available are listed. The book is 'much more selective for translations into other modern languages', which are only mentioned 'when either English translations are lacking or when these other translations provide ... obvious advantages' (p. 336). The 'modern languages' are French, German and Italian, thus excluding some established bodies of translated Proclus, like Spanish and Russian. Let us accept this for 'pragmatic reasons'. The existence of the whole Proclus – 40 volumes – in Modern Greek would perhaps have deserved a mention as a feat for others to emulate. One can add that *The Elements of Physics*, still unavailable in English, but translated into German, is also available in Italian (*Proclo: I Manuali*, tr. C. Faraggiana di Sarzana [1985], pp. 31–71). The editors have done a very helpful service to readers by pointing out the ongoing translation projects.

I see the book organised into four groups of essays consisting of chapters 1 and 15, 2–3, 4–7 and 8–14. The first group deals with Proclus' biography and character (1: 'Proclus of Athens: a Life', C. Wildberg) and Proclus as an influential figure in the reception of ideas (15: 'Proclus' Legacy', P. Adamson and F. Karfik). The second group situates Proclus as a Platonist (2: 'Proclus' Place in the Platonic Tradition', H. Tarrant) and a systematiser of ideas, his real role we can understand only having clarified the concept of systematicity (3: 'Proclus' System', M. and L.P. Gerson).

The third group (4–7) is familiar to anyone who has some acquaintance with Neoplatonism. Here we are introduced to Proclus' metaphysical hypostases from the ineffable One (4: 'The One, the Henads, and the Principles', G. van Riel) through the intelligible (5: 'Platonic Forms and the Triad of Being, Life, and Intellect', d'H.) and the Soul's level (6: 'Proclus on the Psychê: World Soul and the Individual Soul', J.F. Finamore and E. Kutash) to Nature (7: 'The Natural World', J. Opsomer).

The fourth group (8–14) considers the powers and weaknesses of the human soul locked in the world of becoming. The first subgroup (8–9) discusses faculties of the rational soul and disciplines associated with them (8: 'Mathematics and the Sciences', D. O'Meara; 9: 'Proclus on Epistemology, Language, and Logic', C. Helmig). Then our guides focus on contact with the Gods through various kinds of Neoplatonic theology (10: 'Proclus' Theology', L. Brisson) and salvific and performative ritual praxis (11: 'Theurgy in the Context of Proclus' Philosophy', R.M. van den Berg).

Chapters 12 and 13 deal with the human condition under divine and cosmological order (12: 'Providence and Evil', C. Steel; 13: 'The Human Life', D. Baltzly), discussing Proclus' view on the possibility to live a decent life in a human community ruled by justice and virtue. Chapter 14 ('Literary Theory and Aesthetics', A. Sheppard) deals with Proclus' principles of interpreting texts and recognising the power of symbols in the arts. It concludes that Proclus did not consider literary theory and aesthetics as autonomous disciplines but as intimately embedded in metaphysics and his highly sophisticated exegetical principles focused on Beauty.

Each chapter could be read separately as an independent study. If one reads the book as a whole, a beginner may consider reading M.'s and L.P. Gerson's dense chapter last since it has to do more with the principles of Proclus' way of making philosophy than the dogmatic content of that philosophy. When and if Proclus is already a little digested, this chapter is very rewarding.

I dedicate the remaining space to more specific remarks on two intriguing questions of theurgy and henadology. As for the specific henadological themes dealt with by van Riel, one can observe that unlike in his influential article of 2001 ('Les hénades de Proclus sont-elles composées de limite et d'illimite?', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 85, 417–32), of which the current contribution is an adaptation, he now grants firmly the status of primal henads to the principles of Limit and Unlimited (more precisely as one primal henad and its power). So one controversy seems to have been concluded. On the other hand, another is raised. Van Riel sums up his view on henads: 'Thus, I believe it is safe to say that the Henads are the unknowable and unparticipated top level of every class of intelligible beings; they are the One that combines itself with Being and through this combination obtains its own typicality' (p. 92). This would be an exact definition of Damascius' position, ascribing now his notion of 'imparticipable henads' to Proclus. But does that not contradict available evidence from Proclus himself, who never calls henads imparticipable explicitly, but always underlines their nature as the participated sphere of the One?

It is very pleasing to notice that this book testifies to one more step in the fall of the degeneration theory which interpreted theurgy as a kind of betrayal of the pure intellectual

philosophy of Plotinus. This volume shows that mainstream studies have finally abandoned the notion according to which theurgy superseded philosophy in Proclus. All the contributions touching the topic underline that philosophy and theurgy are complementary for the Later Neoplatonists. The limits of Proclus' theurgy are explicitly tackled. The current view is that Proclus' theurgy leads to the summit of noetic-noeric gods and is not to be identified with the union of the One. The models of two-or-three stage theurgy, which were still mainstream a decade ago, are gone (these are all advances).

Maybe there is a gap in the book concerning the confluences of henadology, theurgy and epistemology. That intelligible forms are present in the soul as reason-principles is brought out forcefully in these pages, but the henads' presence as the One's symbols and immanent gods in the soul is not much discussed. Van den Berg comes closest to the topic. He shows first that souls have the capacity of intellection as they receive it as illumination from the noeric gods (p. 229). Later he points out that Proclus' 'silence' and 'Faith' (not doxastic, but transcendent) is capable of establishing contact with the divine beyond knowledge and theurgic ritual (pp. 232–3). Sheppard mentions how inspired poetry 'corresponds to the type of life in which the "one in the soul" is united with the gods' (p. 279). This, however, is not related to the theory of henads. Van Riel mentions the terms 'flower' and 'pinnacle' as Proclus' references to the One, but does not discuss the distinction between self-perfect, independent henads and 'flowers' and 'summits' as terms indicating the highest psychic powers and immanent henads, a theme which appears often in Proclus. d'H. comments on divine knowledge as the Demiurge's knowledge on causes (p. 105), but not on knowledge on the henadic level. Helmig instead mentions this type of transcendent (fore)knowledge (p. 193), but the scope of the chapter does not allow further elaboration in respect of the hypernoetic level. Each chapter excels in its dedicated area. Nevertheless, the lack of synoptic survey concerning henadic symbols and hypernoetic faculties in the soul together will lead to a certain neglect of Proclus' mystical (or entheastic) dimension.

This volume is a necessary tool for every scholar of Neoplatonism and will inspire much discussion and future research.

University of Helsinki

TUOMO LANKILA
tuomo.lankila@helsinki.fi

EARLY AND LATE LATIN IN COMPARISON

ADAMS (J.N.), VINCENT (N.) (edd.) *Early and Late Latin. Continuity or Change?* Pp. xx+470, figs, ill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Cased, £74.99, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-107-13225-2. doi:10.1017/S0009840X17001949

From the article of F. Marx ('Die Beziehungen des Altlateins zum Spätlatein', *Neue Jahrbücher* 23/24 [1909], 434–48) onwards, 'submerged Latin' has been adopted as a general label in order to explain phenomena in early Latin which are absent in Classical texts, but prefigure a late Latin or Romance pattern. According to the standard view, submerged continuity originated in Latin's informal registers: sub-standard usages went underground during the Classical period (being prescriptively excluded from the literary language), but continued in the spoken language and resurfaced in the late period, when grammatical constraints were relaxed. However, as A. writes in *Social Variation and the Latin Language*