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DILLON, J.
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PORPHYRY AND IAMBlichUS IN PROCLUS'
COMMENTARY ON THE PARMENIDES

JOHN DILLON

The combined skills of Westerink and Saffrey have already, in the course of their magisterial Budé edition of the *Platonic Theology*, extracted much of value from the vast bulk of Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides*,¹ and elucidated many obscure passages of that work. Notable contributions are the discussions of the history of exegesis of the hypotheses of the *Parmenides* in Vol. I (lxxv-lxxxix), the addition to our knowledge of the doctrine of Origen the Platonist in Vol. II (x-xx), a major discussion of the origin of the doctrine of henads in Vol. III (ix-lxxvii), and in Vol. IV a survey and analysis of Damascius' commentary on the Second Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, which demonstrates his dependence on the lost part of Proclus' *Commentary*. To all of these a translator of Proclus *In Parmenidem* must acknowledge a profound debt, as I am glad to do here.²

What I propose to do on the present occasion is to contribute to the elucidation of one further aspect of Proclus' commentary, his use of previous authorities. It is notable that, in sharp contradistinction to his practice in the *Timaeus Commentary*, Proclus, in the *Parmenides Commentary*, chooses to suppress virtually all reference to his predecessors, apart from his master Syrianus — and even Syrianus is referred to almost exclusively by honorific periphrases.³ His "spiritual

¹ *Proclus: Théologie Platonicienne*, ed. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, Paris, Vol. I, 1968; Vol. II, 1974; Vol. III, 1978; Vol. IV, 1981 (2 more volumes to follow).

² Although I still venture to maintain a different opinion on the vexed question of the Iamblichean origin of the doctrine of henads (see below, note 10), I am also profoundly grateful to the honorand of this volume for his unstinting help in improving my translation of the *In Parm.* — chiefly by brilliant emendations of the text, but also by many corrections of detail.

³ Generally ὁ ἡμέτερος καθηγούμενος or something such, e.g., 640, 20; 944, 17; 1033, 21; 1061, 25, etc.

grandfather," (ὁ ἡμέτερος προπάτωρ) Plutarchus, is given one mention, à propos the subject of the hypotheses, at 1058, 22, and it is possible, as Fr. Saffrey has recently suggested, that Theodorus of Asine lurks beneath the very curious apparent reference to "the philosopher from Rhodes," just before that, at 1057, 6.⁴ but other than that, there are no references by name to any previous commentator on the dialogue. In particular, Porphyry and Iamblichus, so prominent in the *Timaeus Commentary*, are nowhere to be found, though both certainly wrote commentaries on the *Parmenides*.⁵

However, Proclus is in fact just as dependent on previous commentary on the *Parmenides* as he was in the case of the *Timaeus*. His chief debt is to Syrianus, but there is repeated evidence of his consultation of, and reaction to, other commentators throughout the work.⁶ In Books VI and VII, however, a distinctive pattern makes itself visible of a sequence of three^{6a} views on a given passage, culmi-

⁴ "Le 'Philosophe de Rhodes': est-il Théodore d'Asiné?" in *Mém. A.-J. Festugière* (Geneva 1984) 65-76. Saffrey shows first that there is no serious discrepancy between the schema presented here and Theodorus' known philosophical position (contrary to what had been argued by Westerink and himself in Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I lxxviii), and then goes on to suggest that the text ὁ ἐκ Ῥόδου φιλόσοφος is actually a corruption of ὁ Θεόδωρος φιλόσοφος. This I must say I find less satisfactory. Such a word-order (as opposed to ὁ φιλόσοφος Θ.) is not elsewhere attested, and hardly a natural one, but the truth may lie not far from this. The fact that Proclus refers to Plutarchus by name immediately after this at least increases the possibility of his giving a proper name here too.

⁵ We know that both had views on the subject matter of the hypotheses, from the scholia to 1053, 38 and 1054, 37 respectively, but that by itself would not prove authorship of a full commentary (it does not for either Amelius or Plutarchus). For Iamblichus, however, we have one clear reference in Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 38, 6 ff. (my Fr. 1), and a number of passages in Damascius, *De Principiis* (= *In Parm.*; Fragments 3-14 in my edition). For Porphyry, there is just one such reference, at *In Parm.* II, 112, 14, but it concerns a detail of the text (*Parm.* 144c5), and is found in the characteristic sequence "Porphyry — Iamblichus (Fr. 4) — Syrianus," so it constitutes pretty good evidence. I leave aside the *Anonymous Turin Commentary*, claimed for Porphyry by Pierre Hadot, as I regard the identification as less than certain.

⁶ E.g., on the subject of the dialogue, 630, 37-640, 16, an elaborate doxography; 727, 26 ff., on the validity of Zeno's argument; on the existence of an Idea of Dirt, 832, 12 ff.; on Parmenides' attitude to Ideas and participation in them, 837, 10 ff.; on whether there are Ideas of all things, 856, 9 ff.; on precisely what is being denied of the One in the First Hypothesis, 1083, 27 ff.

^{6a} Occasionally four, as will be noted at the relevant places; and in one case (4, below), I am constrained to propose a reverse chronological order.

nating in that of Syrianus (identified as "my own master," or some equivalent). It is here, I think, that we can with some plausibility postulate a sequence (which would answer to that frequently exemplified in the *Timaeus Commentary*) of Porphyry — Iamblichus — Syrianus. It is not always, unfortunately, the case that the views expressed exhibit any clear resemblance to the positions of either of these two philosophers, but there are often enough clues which render the attributions very probable.

I will first set out, in tabular form, all the passages in the *Commentary* where I discern this pattern, attributing the relevant passages provisionally to Porphyry and Iamblichus respectively, and then examine them in turn. They amount to eleven in all:

	Porphyry?	Iamblichus?
Book VI	(1) 1053, 38 — 1054, 37	1054, 37 — 1055, 25
	(2) 1089, 30 — 1090, 13	1090, 13 — 23
	(3) 1106, 31 — 1107, 9	1107, 9 — 1108, 19
	* (4) 1114, 20 — 35	1114, 1 — 14
	(5) 1118, 19 — 25	1118, 25 — 33
Book VII	(6) 1140, 26 — 1141, 13	1141, 13 — 1142, 10
	(7) 1150, 2 — 21	1150, 22 — 1151, 7
	(8) 1173, 7 — 1174, 3	1174, 3 — 22
	* (9) 1216, 3 — 15	1216, 37 — 1217, 13
	(10) 1226, 6 — 15	1226, 15 — 26
	(11) 64K.25 — 66K.24 ⁷	66K.25 — 68K.14
	* Irregular	

(1.) This first passage concerns the subject matter of the hypotheses, and is the only one for which we have reasonably secure attestation, since an industrious scholiast has identified each of the authorities mentioned in the doxography.⁸ Porphyry, then, regards Hyp. I as concerning the primal God; Hyp. II as concerning the Intelligible Realm; Hyp. III as about Soul; Hyp. IV as about ordered Body; Hyp. V, unordered Body; Hyp. VI, ordered Matter; Hyp. VII, unordered Matter; Hyp. VIII, Forms-in-Matter, as in their substratum;

⁷ This last notation refers to the pagination of Raymond Klibansky's edition of the Latin text of the last part of the *Commentary*, not preserved in the Greek manuscripts.

⁸ It is also dealt with fully by Westerink and Saffrey in Book I of their edition of the *Platonic Theology* (pp. lxxv-lxxxix).

Hyp. IX, Forms-in-Matter, considered by themselves. Iamblichus, on the other hand, while accepting Porphyry's general scheme (nine hypotheses, each having reference to a distinct level of reality), disputes practically all the details.⁹ Hyp. I for him concerns "God and the gods," which Proclus understands as meaning "the One and the henads"; Hyp. II concerns the intellectual (νοερά) realm, and *not* the intelligible, which Iamblichus seems to identify with the henads;¹⁰ Hyp. III, not Soul, but rather the κρείττονα γένη, Angels, Daemons and Heroes, thus reflecting the greater attention which Iamblichus paid to these classes of being, as we see from the *De Mysteriis*; Hyp. IV concerns rational souls; Hyp. V, secondary souls "woven on to" (προσσυφαινόμεναι) rational souls; Hyp. VI, the Forms-in-Matter and λόγοι σπερματικοί; Hyp. VII, Matter itself; Hyp. VIII, Body in the heavenly realm; Hyp. IX, generated Body in the sublunar realm — a curious sequence of topics, which Proclus has no difficulty picking holes in, but which shows Iamblichus' concern to contradict and "trump" Porphyry at every turn. Only at Hyp. VII (and to a certain extent at Hyp. VI) do their interpretations coincide.

We learn a little more about Iamblichus' interpretation of the later hypotheses from two of the passages in Damascius' *In Parmenidem*¹¹ mentioned above in note 5. *In Parm.* II 247, 15 ff. Ruelle (= my Fr. 12) confirms that Hyp. III concerns "the beings that are in

⁹ I have dealt with this in my edition of the fragments of Iamblichus' Platonic commentaries (*Iamblichi Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* [Leiden 1973] 387-9). It is, indeed, the only passage from the *Parmenides Commentary* which I then ventured to attribute to Iamblichus (Fr. 2).

¹⁰ Indeed, a passage of Damascius (*De Princ.* I 147, 22 ff. Ruelle) would seem to confirm this. There he represents Iamblichus as maintaining that ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ μένειν τὸ νοητόν, because it is more united to it, and takes its form (εἰδοποιεῖται) from it, rather than from Being. This refers primarily to the summit of the noetic realm, admittedly, but it seems to allow of henads as being in some way νοητά as well. The Iamblichean doctrine of henads would thus not be as developed as that of Syrianus, but it seems to me probable that he had one. And after all, we cannot ignore the fact that Proclus, in spite of insisting that the gods (henads) transcend νόησις (*ET* prop. 123), yet is prepared at *ibid.* 162 to refer to the πλῆθος τῶν ἐνύδων as νοητόν, as being "participated in by τὸ ὄν."

¹¹ As we may now term the second part of the *De Principiis*. See Saffrey and Westerink's remarks at the beginning of their study of Damascius' commentary on the Second Hypothesis in Vol. III of *Theol. Plat.* (pp. lxxviii-lxxix), and before that L. G. Westerink, "Damascius, commentateur de Platon," in *Le Néoplatonisme* (Paris 1971) 253-260.

constant attendance on the gods" (οἱ ἄει θεοῖς ἐπόμενοι), while at *In Parm.* II 286, 15 ff. (my Fr. 14) Damascius defends Iamblichus against Proclus' criticism of his identifications of Hyps. VIII and IX as involving composites rather than principles (ἀρχαί):

To this point of view we oppose the great Iamblichus, who well says that the composite *is* a principle; for example, the four elements are the principle of living things and the whole sublunar creation, and the heavenly spheres and the heavens are a principle and cause of generation.

This would provide proof, if such were needed, of the accuracy of the scholiast's identification.

With the rest of the passages in question, though, we are unfortunately on rather shakier ground, though not entirely devoid of supporting evidence, as we shall see.

(2.) This doxography concerns the question as to what precisely is the nature of the "many" that is being denied of the One at the outset of the First Hypothesis (137 c4). The situation is rather less clear here than in subsequent examples, since we do not culminate in an opinion expressly ascribed to Syrianus, but simply in an amplification by Proclus (Syriatic in substance) to the last opinion (1090, 25 ff.). However, the sequence of opinions seems worth including in our collection. Going back to the beginning (1089, 21 ff.), we find, first, τινές who say that it is the Many at every level (τὰ πανταχοῦ πολλά) that he is denying of the One, because the One transcends all multiplicity, both intelligible and sensible. To these Proclus objects that in Hyp. II "Many" is asserted of the One, and that certainly does not include sensible multiplicity. This seems like a Middle Platonic opinion, perhaps reported by Porphyry. At any rate, we find next, ἄλλοι ἐτι σεμνότεροι τούτων, who identify this "many" as *intellectual* multiplicity (νοερόν πλῆθος). "They argue, whereas Intellect is one-many, and Soul is one-and-many, held together by the conjunction¹² by reason of its divisibility, while Body is many-and-one, as being

¹² I accept here, with gratitude, one of Westerink's many stimulating emendations, τῷ συνδέσμῳ δεθείσαν for mss. τῶν συνδέσμων δεηθείσαν, "requiring the conjunctions," which makes some sense, but not much; Latin *coniunctione indigentem* would seem to translate συνδέσμῳ δεηθείσαν (unless William is interpreting a little), which would be more acceptable. Nothing much hangs on it, fortunately.

divided, and thus characterised by multiplicity, and Matter is 'many' alone. This 'many,' then, removes intellectual multiplicity from the first cause, in order that it may be One alone and superior to Intellect."

The presentation of Nous as πολλά is thoroughly Porphyrian (though not, of course, in any way distinctive of him), as we can see from e.g., *Sent.* 43, 1 ff. (ὁ νοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρχὴ πάντων: πολλά γάρ ἐστιν ὁ νοῦς, κ.τ.λ.), so the identification of this authority with Porphyry presents no difficulty. The distinction between Nous as ἓν πολλά and Soul as ἓν καὶ πολλά is already Plotinian (V 1, 8, 23-27).

This authority is now criticised by ἄλλοι καὶ τούτων ἐνθεαστικώτεροι (1090, 13 ff.), who do not accept νοερὸν πλῆθος as an adequate identification. They declare that "far prior to intellectual numbers there are the intelligible monads (νοηταὶ μονάδες), from which there has appeared all the intellectual multiplicity arranged in its many orders; it is that multiplicity, then, which is removed from the One, inasmuch as it is next after the One, which the intellectual is not."

This sharp distinction between the intelligible and intellectual realms is a development of Iamblichean Neoplatonism, as opposed to that of Porphyry.¹³ Indeed, since Porphyry did not observe this distinction, the criticism of him here is inapposite, but quite characteristic of Iamblichus' style of "oneupmanship," as we can see from many passages of Proclus' *Timaeus Commentary*. Also characteristic (of Proclus) is the description of Iamblichus as ἐνθεαστικός — *In Tim.* I 156, 31: Iamblichus approaches the text ἐνθεαστικῶς, as opposed to Porphyry, who gives a more pedestrian interpretation.

Iamblichus' distinction here between νοηταὶ μονάδες and νοεροὶ ἀριθμοὶ can, I think, be equated with the distinction that he is reported as making by Damascius, in his *Commentary on the Philebus* (105, p. 49-51 Westerink = my Fr. 4), between "the monads of the Forms," which manifest themselves in the Intelligible Realm in an undifferentiated (ἀδιάκριτον) manner, while the Forms (the "numbers" here) proper only manifest themselves at the intellectual level, the realm of Nous proper (as distinct from the levels of Being or Life).

This passage, then, constitutes useful confirmation of the philosophical positions of both Porphyry and Iamblichus, as well as presenting a characteristic contrast between them.

¹³ See R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London 1972) 123-4.

(3.) The next passage is of particular interest, and has actually attracted a certain amount of notice, having been made the subject of an article by Emile Bréhier, "L'idée de néant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec,"¹⁴ and an extended discussion, with translation, by Pierre Hadot, in pp. 355-375 of *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Vol. I.¹⁵ Here we have once again a sequence of authorities, leading up, not explicitly to Syrianus, but to Proclus himself (1108, 19 ff.). The issue raised here is whether it is necessary or desirable to attribute *some* "nature and characteristic" (φύσις καὶ ιδιότης) to the One, lest it be regarded as absolutely non-existent (as was the view of Origen the Platonist, who regarded the First Hypothesis as having *no* positive subject matter¹⁶). Attributing anything to the One was a constant problem, as we know, for Platonists from Plotinus on, since any epithet one might wish to attach to it, such as goodness or perfection or consciousness, is properly predicable only of Intellect; any characteristic attached to the One seems to introduce a suggestion of duality and less than absolute simplicity. Plotinus got round his difficulty (in so far as he did) by prefixing οὐν to anything he said of the One.¹⁷ The authorities quoted here attempt a greater degree of precision than that.

As I say, the sequence of authorities does not culminate with Syrianus, but with Proclus himself (dismissing all these attempts to characterise the One, as inevitably introducing multiplicity into it), but the three authorities must be fitted in somewhere in the Neoplatonic universe between Plotinus and Syrianus,¹⁸ and Porphyry and Iamblichus must be among the prime candidates.

The first authority postulates, above Nous, something called νοότης, "intellectuality," envisaged as being something "simpler" (ἀπλουστέρα) than, and presumably causative of, Nous; above this, τὸ νοοῦν (with the sense, Proclus is careful to explain, not of "intel-

¹⁴ In the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 1919, pp. 443-475; repr. in *Etudes de philosophie antique* (Paris 1955).

¹⁵ *Etudes Augustiniennes* (Paris 1968).

¹⁶ See K.-O. Weber, *Origenes der Neuplatoniker* [Zetemata 27] (München 1962) 98-104.

¹⁷ E.g., *Enn.* VI 8, 13, 50: λαμβανέτω δὲ καὶ τὸ οὐν ἐφ' ἑκάστου.

¹⁸ Certainly none of them is Syrianus, since Proclus would never dismiss his master's views in the way that he does these. Hadot actually wishes to identify them all with Porphyry, a position for which he produces persuasive evidence, but with which I am compelled to disagree, as will be seen presently.

ligising," but rather of *causing* intellection — as if it were from a non-existent νοῶν¹⁹); and above this in turn τὸ νόημα, which he claims to be primal, making the remarkable claim that "activities are prior to essences, as being more unitary than them." More remarkable still, this person postulates, prior to each of the Forms, a causative entity of the same type (with ending in -ωμα), and declares that all these are ἓν ("one" or "a one"), though what precisely he means by that Proclus professes not to understand (1106, 20 ff.). Since what is being proposed here is rather like an adumbration of the system of henads, Proclus' bafflement may be taken as disingenuous (though he does consistently object here to associating any plurality with the One of the First Hypothesis; cf. his objection above to Iamblichus).

At any rate, the next authority (1106, 31 ff.) seeks to solve the problem by making a distinction between God and the state of "being God" (τὸ θεῶν εἶναι), the latter being the proper designation of the One. This formulation, as Proclus is quick to point out, is a development (and in his view an invalid one) of Aristotle's distinction in *Met.* H3, 1042b29 ff. between the σύνθετος οὐσία of a thing and its ἐνέργεια καὶ μορφή, the latter being designated τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι. But Aristotle himself points out, as Proclus reminds us, that no such distinction can be made in the case of immaterial entities. There can be no distinction, for instance, between soul and "being soul" (τὸ ψυχῇ εἶναι, 1043b2). This view of Aristotle's the commentator here was doubtless well aware of, but chooses to disregard. Once again, the aim is to present Activity as prior to Essence — God as Essence being the subject of the Second Hypothesis.

The position of the third authority is described as follows (1107, 9 ff.):

There are others, however, who have said that since the First Principle is above Life, above Intellect, above Being itself, it possesses within itself in some way the causes of all these things unutterably and unimaginably and in the most unified way, and in a way unknowable to us <but knowable to itself>;²⁰ and the hidden causes of all things in it are models prior to models; and the primal entity is a whole prior to wholes (ὅλον πρὸ ὅλων), not having need of

¹⁹ But the (fancied) relationship of ποιῶν and ποιότης is probably a model here.

²⁰ Omitted from Greek mss., but added from Latin.

parts. A whole prior to parts has in some way need of the parts, and it is this that Plato has denied of it here (sc. 137d2-3), whereas a whole prior to wholes has no need of parts.

It is this commentator (whom Proclus also condemns, 1107, 20 ff.) that I would like to identify with Iamblichus (*pace* Hadot), and therefore one (or possibly both?) of the previous two with Porphyry. Hadot's otherwise rather implausible proposal that all three should be Porphyry (*op. cit.* 372-5) does admittedly have in its favour the fact that all three doctrines, or formulations, are to be found at various points in the works of Marius Victorinus.²¹ This is an embarrassment, since there is no evidence, apart from a mere mention, much later, by Augustine,²² that Iamblichus was known at all in the West, but I do not think that we can rule out any acquaintance with Iamblichus by Marius (either with the *Parmenides Commentary*, or with a work *On the Gods*) on such an important question as the nature of God.²³ In favour of identification with Iamblichus (and against Porphyry) I would cite, first, a doctrinal point, and then a linguistic one. On the level of doctrine, first of all, we know that Porphyry identified his First Principle with the summit of the noetic world,²⁴ whereas this authority declares God to transcend all these. Certainly, Iamblichus' metaphysics (as outlined by Damascius in the same passage) is a good deal more complex than this, but he does not introduce its full complexity into his *Parmenides Commentary*, where it would hardly fit. His primal One is entirely ineffable, but his "second" One is described by Damascius (*loc. cit.*) as being πρὸ τῆς νοητῆς πρώτης τριάδος, and ἀσύντακτος πρὸς τὴν τριάδα (in distinction to that of Porphyry).

²¹ For the first position, Hadot adduces *Adv. Arium* IV 5, 23-6, 18; for the second, *Adv. Arium* I 33, 4-9; for the third, *Adv. Arium* IV 23, 27-34, and it is hard to dispute the analogies, although Victorinus does not reflect the full elaboration of the first position as set out by Proclus.

²² *De Civ. Dei* VIII 12.

²³ R. Schmid, *Marius Victorinus Rhetor und seine Beziehungen zu Augustin* [Diss. theol.] (Kiel 1895), does in fact argue for some knowledge of Iamblichus' work by Victorinus (p. 23, note 2).

²⁴ Cf. Damascius, *De Princ.* 43, I 86, 3 ff. Ruelle: "Porphyry declares the first principle of all things to be the Father of the noetic triad," which I take to mean the "Father" element within the (Chaldaean) triad of Πατήρ - δύναντις - νοῦς, which in Platonic terms is Ὀν-ζωή-νοῦς. Cf. Procl. *In Parm.* 1070, 15 ff., which very probably refers to Porphyry.

A linguistic aspect which I think is notable is the phrase "unknowable to us" (ἡμῖν μὲν ἀγνώστως). In the *Timaeus Commentary* (III 356, 11-12 = my Fr. 88) Proclus quotes Iamblichus as declaring that the problem of how the gods create body and endow it with life is "unknowable to us" (ταῦτα γὰρ ἀγνώστα ἡμῖν ὑπάρχει). This is not perhaps much to go on, but better than nothing.

The formulation "a whole prior to wholes," as opposed to a whole prior to parts, cannot, I think, be paralleled, but it is certainly the case that Iamblichus, in his exegesis of the Second Hypothesis, makes considerable play with the idea of the One which is the subject of that hypothesis being a "whole prior its parts" (ὅλον πρὸ μερῶν).²⁵ This, however, once again does not prove very much.

As for the previous two opinions, I would be inclined to attribute the first to Amelius, who certainly loved elaborations of this sort²⁶ (a love inherited from him by Theodorus of Asine), and the second to Porphyry himself. Whoever the first man is, Proclus speaks of him as having been "already refuted by others" (καὶ ἄλλοις εὐθύνας δεδωκότας, 1106, 32), which most naturally implies, I think, that he has found a refutation of him in the work of the man whom he goes on to note next,²⁷ who would on my reckoning be Porphyry.

Again, while any exact equivalent to the formulation τὸ θεῶ εἶναι in Porphyry's extant works is lacking, the general doctrine is concordant with his relatively simplified metaphysical scheme. "God" in the present context would be the "Father of the Noetic triad," mentioned above, the subject of the Second Hypothesis, while "being God," or "the essence of God" would be the subject of the First Hypothesis. This, however, is given earlier by Proclus, in his doxography of views on this question (cf. above, p. 23), as ὁ πρῶτιστος θεός. To reconcile these pieces of evidence, what we need

²⁵ Cf. Damascius, *In Parm.* II 146, 3 ff. Ruelle (= my Fr. 6).

²⁶ A man who could conjure up a triad of demiurges on the basis of *Timaeus* 39E (Procl. *In Tim.* III, 103, 18 ff.; cf. I 398, 16 ff.), or give an arithmological analysis of the word ψυχή (*ibid.* II 274, 10 ff.) is capable of more or less anything in the area of metaphysical elaboration. This latter passage is actually attributed by Proclus to Theodorus, but he then (277, 27 ff.) reports Iamblichus as attacking it in an essay entitled Πρὸς τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἀμέλιον καὶ Νουμήνιον ἀντιρρήσεις, which suggests that Theodorus is only adopting doctrines of Amelius.

²⁷ I cannot insist on this point. It might only mean that this man, like all of the others, has been fully criticised by Syrianus. But that is not the way it comes across most naturally, I think.

to assume, I think, is that Porphyry actually saw the First and Second Hypotheses as concerning the same subject from different angles, the First dealing with "what it is to be God," independent of all attributes, while the Second presents God as the source of all Being, the Father of the noetic world, containing all within himself. If we could assume this, it would help to explain how Porphyry's exegesis of the hypotheses of the *Parmenides* can be reconciled with what else we know of his metaphysics.

(4.) But we must leave this fascinating passage, accepting that not all its mysteries can be unravelled on this occasion. The next interesting sequence of authorities occurs at 1114, 1 ff., arising out of an *aporia* which confronts the denial of beginning, middle or end to the One here (sc. 137 d4-5) with the passage of the *Laws* (IV 715e), where the Athenian Stranger says that God "possesses the beginning and the middle and the end of all existent things," which would appear to be in contradiction with the present passage.

Before giving his own (or Syrianus') solution, Proclus mentions two earlier essays at solution. Again, one would be tempted to take these as Porphyry and Iamblichus, but there are complications. The first (1114, 1-5) actually sounds more like something that Iamblichus would say:

There are some who say in reply to this difficulty that the First Principle both possesses beginning and middle and end and does not possess them; for it possesses them in a hidden mode (κρυφίως), whereas it does not possess them distinctly (διτηρημένως); for it contains everything within itself in a manner inexpressible and inconceivable to us, but knowable to itself.

Now this conjunction of terminology has a remarkable resemblance²⁸ to that of the third authority in the previous sequence, whom I have ventured to identify with Iamblichus, and indeed this propensity to see foreshadowing of entities which manifest themselves distinctly at a later stage is characteristic of Iamblichus, as we can see from his doctrine of Forms, as revealed in his *Philebus Commentary*

²⁸ κρυφίως 1114, 3 / κρύφια 1107, 14 (but this is Chaldaean terminology); ἀφράστως καὶ ἀνεπινοήτως 1114, 4-5 / 1107, 12-13; αὐτῷ δὲ γνωστῶς 1114, 5 / 1107, 14 αὐτῷ δὲ γνωστῶς (from Latin *sibi ipsi autem* note).

(mentioned above, p. 26), although this only concerns moments within the hypothesis of *Nous*. But if one adopts this view, one is constrained to argue either that Proclus is quoting his authorities not in chronological order, but in order of acceptability, or that the second authority (to whom Proclus is much more hospitable²⁹) is perhaps Plutarch of Athens, to whom Proclus is uniformly polite on the rare occasions when he mentions him. On the whole, though, I prefer to maintain the first possibility, since this second opinion seems to represent a simpler metaphysics. The second authority in effect seeks to cut the Gordian Knot by suggesting that the *Laws* passage refers not to the Supreme God but to the Demiurge. "For the phrase, 'going about his circuit' (*Laws* 716a1) is not proper to the One, and the statement that 'Right (*Δίκη*) follows upon him' (716a2) demonstrates to us that quite another order and a different god is being talked of." This eminently sensible solution (though it does not quite satisfy *ὁ ἡμέτερος καθηγεμών* (1114, 36 ff.))³⁰ seems entirely suitable to Porphyry, so I would prefer to leave Plutarch out of the reckoning, and accept that these doxographical sequences are not always chronological.

(5.) A little further on (1118, 9 ff.), at any rate, we find another sequence of authorities, this time answering an *aporia*³¹ which asks in precisely what sense the One is unlimited (*ἄπειρον*, 137d7). Three authorities prior to Syrianus are recorded, and we must consider them in turn.

Some declare the One to be termed unlimited in this sense, that it is untraversable (*ἀδιεξίτητον*) and is the limit of everything else (for the term "unlimited" has two senses, the one as being ungraspable (*ἄληπτον*) and untraversable, the other as being the limit of all things, and not having any

²⁹ οἱ δὲ γε χαριέστερον ἀπαντῶντες πρὸς τὴν ἀπορίαν, 1114, 20-1, as opposed to the previous λόγος, which is σαθρὰ φθεγγόμενος (1114, 17), as once again introducing a multiplicity into the First Principle.

³⁰ In fairness to Syrianus, it must be said that Plato in the *Laws* is, on the face of it, referring to a supreme God, not to any subordinate deity, but then no deity superior to the Demiurge is suggested in the *Timaeus* either, so that is not conclusive.

³¹ One might spare a thought, at this point, for the propounders of these *aporiai*. Who can they have been? I do not think that we need postulate a tradition of hostile commentary on the *Parmenides* (as there was on Aristotle's *Categories*, for example). It is quite possible that Porphyry (in particular) raised these problems himself only to solve them.

other limit itself; and the One is unlimited in both senses, both as being ungraspable and unencompassable (*ἀπεριήγητον*) by all that is secondary to it, and as being itself a limit of everything and not itself being in need of any other limit.

This is a most interesting passage, because it is reminiscent of, while not being entirely in accord with, Plotinus' twice-repeated distinction of two senses of *ἄπειρον* (*Enn.* VI 9, 6, 10-11 and VI 6, 17, 13-14), the first being *ἀδιεξίτητον*, but the second being, in VI 9, *τὸ ἀπερίληπτον τῆς δυνάμεως*, which is further explained as involving absolute self-sufficiency (*αὐταρκέστατον καὶ ἀνεκδέεσ-τατον*). From making this distinction to stating that it is *ἄπειρον* as being a *πέρας* for everything else, while requiring none itself, is a further step, but not a large one. In VI 6, the *Line* (*γραμμὴ*) is the subject, not the One, so it is less relevant, but interesting nevertheless, since the *Line* is declared to be *ἄπειρος* because *ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς αὐτογραμμῆς οὐκ ἐνὶ προσνοούμενον πέρας*.³² On the whole, then, I would favour the conjecture that what we have here is an opinion of Plotinus reported by Porphyry.

On the other hand, the second opinion too is quite in accord with the attested views of Plotinus (1118, 19-25):

Others take its unlimitedness to refer to its being of unlimited power (*ἄπειροδύναμον*) and that it is *generative* of all things (*πάντων γεννητικόν*), and that it is the cause of all unlimitedness in existent things and extends the gift of itself through the totality of beings; for all things are contained in the One and exist through the One, and none could come to be unless they become one by their own nature.

The actual compound term *ἄπειροδύναμος* is not found in Plotinus, being first attested in Porphyry (*Sent.* 37, p. 43, 9. Lamberz, referring to the soul), but the idea is expressed in *τὸ ἀπερίληπτον τῆς δυνάμεως*

³² All these speculations are dependent, to some extent, on Aristotle's discussion of infinity in *Physics* III 7, where the term *ἀδιεξίτητον* is employed (207b 29). On this topic, see the useful discussion of John Whittaker, "Philological Comments on the Neoplatonic Notion of Infinity," in *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, ed. R. Baine Harris (Albany 1976) 155-172.

of *Enn.* VI 9, 6, 11-12 (see above, p. 33). However, the very Plotinian quality of the doctrine is an argument also in favour of Porphyry.

The third view shows, I think, a degree of subtlety and attention to detail not present in the other two (1118, 25-33):

Others, again, take its unlimitedness in this sense: since Intellect is limit, and the One is above Intellect, for this reason they have termed it unlimited: for, they say, it is only these two things that Plato predicates of the One, unlimitedness and motionlessness, since Intellect is limit and Soul is motion, and he wants to show that it is superior to both Intellect and Soul, for there are three ruling hypostases, of which the first is transcendent over³³ the other two.

This authority, pointing out that ἀπειρον and ἀκίνητον (139a2) are the only epithets, albeit negative ones, actually applied here to the One, ingeniously concludes that this is in order to specify its transcendence to Intellect and Soul respectively. Without this special point, it would be strictly incorrect of Plato to characterise the One as “unlimited” or “motionless,” as opposed to “neither limited nor unlimited” and “neither in motion nor at rest.” This sort of attention to detail seems to me characteristic of Iamblichus, but the subject matter is not of such a nature as to make this intuition susceptible of proof. There is certainly nothing here, however, to challenge the pattern I am arguing for.

(6.) We move now to Book VII, and specifically to the commentary on the lemma 138a3-7. Proclus is here concerned mainly with the precise sense of the expression κύκλω in the phrase κύκλω που ἂν περιέχοιτο. Here we find a sequence of three authorities, culminating in Syrianus (ὁ ἡμέτερος πατήρ, 1142, 11), and the identification of the first two with Porphyry and Iamblichus is relatively easy.

The first authority (1140, 26 ff.) takes κύκλω rather prosaically (μερικώτερον, “in a rather restricted sense,” Proclus says), as meaning simply “in a place,” or “in a container,” and concludes that “what is being demonstrated to us is that the One is not in a place, if being in

³³ I now think it preferable to read ἐξηρήσθαι here with mss. D and Harl. (Lat. *exaltatam*) in preference to the ἐξηγεῖσθαι (ABC) adopted by Cousin (and myself, in my translation), since this reading adds point to our authority's remarks.

a place must involve being many, and touching its container at many points, whereas it is impossible for the One to be many.”

This is in fact, presumably, all that Plato means, but it does not satisfy Proclus, since, as he says, “There is nothing special about a characteristic which is shared even by individual souls. But what is being proved should be a special quality of the One and of the causal principle which is set above all beings (1141, 9 ff.).

The second commentator pleases him better (1141, 13 ff.):

Others, looking to the facts (τὰ πράγματα), have stated that he is denying here of the One every sense of being in something, and they are right: for in no sense is the One in something, as we have said earlier.

Even so, this solution gives rise to certain difficulties, and requires further refinement by Syrianus, in ways that need not concern us.

What we find here, first, is a contrast which Proclus can be seen to make in the *Timaeus Commentary* (I 204, 24 ff. Diehl), where he speaks of Porphyry as discussing the introductory portion of the dialogue μερικώτερον,³⁴ as opposed to Iamblichus, who treats it ἐποπτικώτερον, “in an inspired manner.” Elsewhere (I 87, 6 Diehl), Iamblichus is praised, in distinction from his predecessors, for referring μάλλον εἰς τὰ πράγματα, while at III 168, 5-7 he is reported as himself criticising his predecessors for missing ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθεια.

As regards the content, once again one seems to see an Iamblichean concern for scholastic exactness in distinguishing various senses of “in,” with a view to upstaging Porphyry's oversimplified interpretation. We find a similar concern with the various senses of “in” in Iamblichus' *Commentary on the Categories* (ap. Siml. In Cat. [CAG VII] 46, 15-47, 28) — following on Aristotle's own distinctions in *Physics* IV 3 — though in a rather different context.

There are sufficient indications here to support the identifications, with nothing opposing them. Let us proceed to the next passage.

³⁴ This term has, I think, the connotation, both there and in the present passage “without regard to the wider context,” i.e., without regard to τὰ πράγματα, the meta-physical realities.

(7.) At 1149. 26 ff., in the course of discussing *Parm.* 138b2-5, which argues that the One cannot be acted upon and act at the same time, Proclus turns to an attack on those Platonists who wish to make the One "self-constitutive" (αὐθυπόστατον). We find here a rather peculiar sequence of three authorities, *not* culminating in Syrianus, of whom the first declares the first principle to be αὐθυπόστατον, the second dares (ἐπινεανιεύόμενοι, 1150, 2) even to assert that it is αὐτοκίνητον, while the third, "true to the spirit of Plato" (ἐπόμενοι τῷ Πλάτῳ, 1150, 22), declares it to be superior to every paternal and generative causal principle (κρείττον καὶ πατρικῆς αἰτίας ἀπάσης καὶ γεννητικῆς).

As to the first authority, Proclus' description accords well enough with the doctrine of Plotinus on the One in *Enn.* VI 8, where (notably in sect. 13), he presents it as creating itself by its own will (βούλησις).³⁵ Plotinus does not employ the technical term αὐθυπόστατος (though he comes near to it at 13, 57, αὐτὸς ἂν οὕτως ὑποστήσας ἂν εἴη αὐτόν), but he certainly maintained the general position that Proclus is criticising here. In fact, the criticism contains an element of anachronism. What has happened is that for Proclus (and possibly as far back as Iamblichus), "self-constitutive" has become a term confined to the capacity of intermediate hypostases proceeding from the One, such as Intellect and Soul, to "constitute" themselves, and so such a process comes to seem beneath the dignity of the One.

The particular argument here put forward, however, for the self-constitution of the One deserves attention. According to Proclus (1149, 32 ff.) these people argue that "even as the first principle of moving things (sc. Soul) is the self-moved, even so the first principle of all those things which have any sort of existence is self-constituted, for all things subsequent to the first principle also derive from the first principle."

It seems to me that this formulation could be derived from what Plotinus says at VI 8, 13, 24-27 (though whether it is so derived by Proclus or some intermediary is another question):

³⁵ Cf. especially 13, 24-29 and 50-58. See on this whole question the comprehensive discussion of John Whittaker, "The Historical Background of Proclus' Doctrine of the Αὐθυπόστατον," in *De Iamblique à Proclus [Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt XXXI]* (Vandoeuvres-Genève 1975) 193-230 (repr. in *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* [London 1984]).

If, then, it is by this (sc. the One) that everything else creates itself, it becomes surely clear that it would be such for itself primally, since by it all other things come to be for themselves.

If this first authority is Plotinus, however, what are we to do with the two remaining authorities? The second one especially is troublesome. What Neoplatonic thinker would have been so rash as to assert that the One is αὐτοκίνητον?

One possibility is that this is a reference, not to any post-Plotinian authority, but back to Numenius, who, in a well-known passage, (Fr. 15, 8-9 des Places), declares the στάσις of the primal God to be κίνησις σύμφυτος, "from which proceed the order of the cosmos and its eternal fixity, and from which preservation is poured forth to all things." However, any sort of directly creative activity must involve some sort of *spiritual* motion, at least, and the question presents itself as to whether Porphyry, since he identifies his primal God with the "Father of the noetic triad" might not have actually been prepared to accord it a sort of Numenian "motion." Proclus does, after all, say (1150, 3-5) that those who attribute self-motion to the One "proceed to this from the concept of self-constitution, by reason of the kinship between the two concepts"; and he himself, e.g., in *Elements of Theology*, prop. 42 (Πᾶν τὸ αὐθυπόστατον πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐστὶν ἐπιστρεπτικόν), recognises that self-constitution involves a form of motion (a cycle of procession and return).³⁶ It would seem that whoever is being criticised here recognised the concept of self-constitution, which we have no evidence that Numenius did. On the whole, I would be prepared to suggest that Porphyry attributed a form of self-motion to the One, though if he did, he doubtless distinguished it sharply from the self-motion proper to Soul. But I recognise that this is a rather precarious speculation.

The third authority, on the other hand, is less problematical. Proclus approves of him, but does not grant him the accolade reserved for his master, Syrianus, so that he must be somebody earlier. This authority, as we have seen, declares the One to be superior to every paternal and generative cause (surely an attack on Porphyry!), and also to all δυνάμεις (which Porphyry, following the *Chaldaean Oracles*,

³⁶ See on this Stephen Gersh, *Κίνησις Ἀκίνητος: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden 1973), Appendix II, pp. 129-135.

ranked with the Father). This authority's argument against the One's possession of potency is of interest for its terminology (1150, 30-1151, 7):

For a power generates what it generates as inferior to its own powers:³⁷ of those things following upon the One, those which are nearest the One shine forth from it ineffably and at a hidden level (ἀρρήτως καὶ κρυφίως).³⁸ possess paternal and generative rank in respect of all beings, and produce other things by virtue of their own powers from themselves, and in this way are more multiple than the One, by generating those beings which are self-constituted, while those that are already distinct and multiplied take in to themselves the power of the self-constituted, receiving their substance from the primal causes, but being produced also by themselves; and these are dependent upon the paternal causes³⁹ which generate the forms, while they in turn are dependent upon the One, which is superior to all such causality, but makes shine forth from itself in a manner unknowable (ἀγνώστως) to all in all directions according to the first principle of beings.

I quote this at length since, if it can be claimed for Iamblichus, it presents both a good example of his criticism of Porphyry, and an exposition of his doctrine of henads (or at least of the "monads of the Forms"). It would also indicate that the move to deny self-constitution of the One was initiated by him.

In that connexion it is notable that in the *De Mystериis* (VIII 2), Iamblichus characterises, not his *primal God*, but his *second*, as "self-generated" (αὐτόγονος). The first principle transcends even this characteristic. The theology of the *De Mystериis* is considerably simpler than that quoted by Damascius (*De Princ.* ch. 43) from his *Chaldaean*

³⁷ There is an awkward textual point here. I translate the Greek text, but Moerbeke's Latin runs: *Etenim virtus secunda est ab existentia. Ante virtutem igitur causa merito superlocata est et supra laudatas paternales causas*, which betokens a quite different Greek text.

³⁸ Here again, we seem to see Iamblichus' distinction between hidden and manifest levels of Form. Cf. p. 31 above. The term κρυφίως has occurred already in two "Iamblichean" passages, 1107, 14 and 1114, 3. Cf. also ἀγνώστως below.

³⁹ Presumably the henads, as are "those things nearest the One," above.

Theology, but we have nevertheless the basic distinction between the primal God and the second, which presides (though ἀσυντάκτως) over the noetic triad. It is here that a sharp distinction from Porphyry can be made, as Damascius emphasises *ad loc.*

Once again, then, we have a doxographic sequence with a nest of problems, but we need not despair of making identifications.

(8.) We pass now to the exegesis of the lemma 139b 4-5 ("the One cannot be either the same as another or the same as itself, nor yet other than itself or other than another"). The fact that Plato here seems to be progressively denying of the One the *megista gene* of the *Sophist* leads to the question, at what level of reality the *megista gene* are to be placed. We have here a sequence of three authorities, culminating in Syrianus (1174, 21 ff.), who mediates between the first two (whom Proclus describes as "famous and divine men," 1174, 22-23).

It was the first authority (1173, 7 ff.), it would seem, who raised an *aporia* as to why only the "genera of Being," Motion, Rest, Sameness and Otherness, are denied of the One, and not all forms, and proposed the solution that it is because these genera are present at every level of being. Proclus reports this authority (1173, 24 ff.) as declaring that τὸ πρῶτως ὄν (a term which Proclus professes not to understand, 'ὅ τι ποτέ ἐστι') comprehends all these genera, "in so far as it has proceeded forth from the supra-essential (ὑπερούσιον), having become Being, and in so far as it has assimilated itself towards what has produced it, acquiring Sameness instead of Unity (ἑνωσις) while in so far as it has distinguished itself from the one, not being the One, it becomes Otherness. . . . In so far as it proceeds forth, it is established in motion, while in so far as it is established in the One, even while it proceeds, it has a share in rest. For in general, processions, as they say, are causes of motion and otherness in Being, while reversions are causes of sameness and rest."

This is a most interesting piece of doctrine, especially if we could claim it for Porphyry. This relating of Sameness and Otherness, Motion and Rest to Primal Being owes a certain amount to Plotinus' discussion of this topic in *Enn.* VI 2, but it goes beyond what is to be found there. That Sameness is an imitation of the One's unity, while Otherness is the result of its distinctness from it, Motion the accompaniment of its procession from the One, while Rest is the expression of its remaining, or return (for these two aspects of the cycle are frequently assimilated) is a creative, if rather scholastic, develop-

ment of Plotinian speculation such as one would expect from Porphyry. That Porphyry had already developed the triadic scheme of *monē-proodos-epistrophē* is indicated by its presence in the work of Marius Victorinus,⁴⁰ and from the last section of the *Anon. Taur.* commentary (XIV 21-35)⁴¹ we can derive, not only an indication of the knowledge of this triad, but also, more significantly still, of a disposition to use the genera of Being as a means of distinguishing Intellect or Being from the primal One:

καὶ πᾶσων οὐσῶν ἐνεργειῶν καὶ ὡς κατὰ μὲν τὴν ὑπαρξιν
ἐστῶσα ἂν εἴη ἡ ἐνέργεια, κατὰ δὲ τὴν νόησιν εἰς αὐτὴν
στραφεῖσα ἐνέργεια, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ζῶην ἐκ τῆς ὑπάρξεως
ἐκνεύσασα ἐνέργεια.

Here the three moments within the hypostasis are mentioned periphrastically, but clearly enough, and connected with the triad of ὑπαρξίς, ζῶη and νοῦς. Following on this, the author distinguishes the One of the Second Hypothesis from that of the First (which he describes, significantly, as τὸ ἐν ψιλόν, which I would take as expressing the same as τὸ ἐνὶ [θεῷ] εἶναι), by giving a list of its attributes, in which, it seems to me, the genera of Being are given special prominence (though they are not the only ones mentioned):

καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ἔστηκεν ἅμα καὶ κινεῖται καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ
ἐστὶν καὶ ὅλον ἐστὶν καὶ μέρη ἔχει καὶ ταυτόν ἐστι καὶ
ἕτερον, κατὰ δὲ ψιλόν αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐν καὶ οἷον πρῶτον καὶ
ὄντως τὸ ἐν οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε κινεῖται οὔτε ταυτόν
ἐστὶν οὔτε ἕτερον οὔτε ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐστὶν οὔτε ἐν ἄλλῳ.

By judicious grouping (altering the Parmenidean order), the author highlights, it seems to me, Rest and Motion, Sameness and Otherness, though he cannot omit some other epithets. His way of referring to the One of the First Hypothesis, as I say, seems to present it, not so much as a distinct hypostasis, but as the First Principle viewed *in itself*, as merely "one," as opposed to its role as Father of All, and that, if my conjecture earlier is right, is how Porphyry viewed the subject of the First Hypothesis.

⁴⁰ Hymn III, 71-74: "Status, Progressio, Regressus, O beata Trinitas."

⁴¹ Although its authorship must remain in doubt, this item of agreement aids Pierre Hadot's case. At the least, the *Anon.* must, I think, be of the "school" of Porphyry.

I realise here that I am using one disputable passage to buttress the authenticity of another (though perhaps Pierre Hadot and I would shake hands over it!), but it seems worth while, none the less, to draw attention to these scattered clues.

If we turn to our second authority, we seem once again to find attitudes and turns of phrase which I have already identified as Iamblichean. This authority firmly restricts the genera of Being to the intellectual realm (τὰ νοερά, 1174, 3), that is, for Iamblichus, the level of Forms proper. His argument is that such a number of entities (a pentad) would not arise in the realm immediately contiguous to the One, where the theologians only postulate monads and triads:

for such a number could not derive its existence immediately from the One; it is necessary that the multiplicity which manifests itself immediately from the One should be most akin to the One, constricted in quantity and incomprehensible in power (τῇ δυνάμει ἀπερίληπτον), in order that through the constrictedness of its quantity it should imitate the quantilessness (ἄποσον) of the One, and through the incomprehensibility of its power the infinity of the One *which is prior to power*; but the pentad is remote from the One and goes beyond even the first order of numbers, by which I mean the triadic; but Plato has termed the summit of the realm of beings the One Being, as being the monad of Being; whereas the theologians celebrate intelligible monads and triads, but not pentads or other numbers; so then, the genera of Being do not come immediately after the One.

We may note, in this connexion, that Iamblichus is reported by Proclus, at *In Tim.* I 230, 5ff. (= Iambl. *In Tim.* Fr. 29 Dillon), à propos *Tim.* 27D, as declaring τὸ αἰεὶ ὄν to be on a higher level than the genera of Being and the Forms, and situating it "at the summit of the noetic realm, enjoying primary participation in the One." And Proclus goes on to say that Iamblichus supported this by reference to what is said in the *Parmenides* about τὸ ἐν ὄν, and from the *Sophist*. It is also interesting that there too Iamblichus is recorded as vigorously opposing (ἐμβριθῶς διαμάχεται) those who would put them on the same level, (which is indeed the obvious interpretation of the passage); Proclus does not, unfortunately, give a name to his opponents, but they may well have included Porphyry.

If this passage can be claimed for Iamblichus, an interesting corollary ensues. Hitherto, it has been regarded as an innovation of Syrianus to see the series of negations in the First Hypothesis (and the corresponding assertions in the Second) as representing the successive levels of the noetic and noeric realms,⁴² but if Iamblichus is here asserting that characteristics proper to the *noeric* realm are being denied of the One, then perhaps he had already advanced at least some foreshadowing of Syrianus' elaborate theory.

(9.) But let us pass on. The next passage in which a doxography occurs is the commentary on 140c1-141d6, which argues that the One is neither older nor younger nor the same age either as itself or anything else. This brings us clearly into the realm of Time. The proof that the One transcends Time involves Proclus in an interesting doxographical discussion. After dismissing those early philosophers who thought that all things, including God, were comprehended by Time (1213, 17 ff.), he turns to the question of precisely what kind of Time is intended here by Plato. We find at this point a *five-part* doxography (1215, 24-1219, 9), ending with Syrianus, and with its fourth member showing significant signs of affinity with Iamblichus, as I shall demonstrate shortly. The identity of the first three is less clear, however, but some reasonable conjectures can be made.

The first is probably Plotinus, since what he is being accused of by Proclus is declaring the One to be exempt from Time without further specification (1215, 24 ff.), and Plotinus declares this of the One at *Enn.* VI 9, 3, 42, in the course of an interesting passage based on the *Parmenides*. The second authority takes "time" here to refer to Eternity (1216, 3 ff.), since that is the sort of "time" necessarily enjoyed by the One of the Second Hypothesis (Nous), in *Parm.* 152A. This position actually accords well with certain declarations of Porphyry's. Proclus reports at *Plat. Theol.* I 11 (p. 51, 4 ff. S-W) that in his *Peri Archon* Porphyry declared the highest aspect of Nous (which is united to the One) to be *προαἰώνιος*, while Nous itself is *αἰώνιος*.⁴³ The One itself, then, obviously transcends Eternity.

This identification, then, seems plausible and in accord with the relative simplicity and reasonableness of Porphyry's exegesis; but a problem then arises with the third authority (1216, 15 ff.). This person is not in disagreement with the previous position, but wants to give a

⁴² See Saffrey and Westerink, *Theol. Plat.* I pp. lxxvii-lxix.

⁴³ Cf. also *Sent.* 44, *passim*.

name to the mode of existence proper to the One. For this he chooses the term *καίρως*, "Instant," borrowed from the Pythagoreans⁴⁴ (and inspired also by such a Platonic passage as *Philebus* 66A). Proclus does not approve of this subtlety, and denies that *Philebus* 66A supports it, but our problem is rather to determine who would have proposed such an idea. It is noteworthy, perhaps, that neither Porphyry nor Iamblichus mention this doctrine in their *Lives* of Pythagoras, or anywhere else in their surviving works. On the whole, I would prefer to postulate Amelius and/or Theodorus of Asine as propounder of this particular formulation, and leave to Porphyry the simpler position.⁴⁵ One dislikes complicating the scene by the occasional introduction of Amelius or Theodorus as a *deus ex machina*, but in this case the scene is already complicated by the presence of four distinct opinions prior to Syrianus.

The identification of the fourth authority with Iamblichus, as I have suggested above, is rather less problematical. This authority dismisses the identification of "time" here with Eternity, and declares it to refer rather to "the causal principle of the intellectual order" (*τὸ τῆς τάξεως τῆς νοερᾶς αἰτίας*, 1217, 2). Proclus professes not to understand what this means, but if we consider it against the background of Iamblichus' known doctrine of Time,⁴⁶ we can see that it corresponds to the *πρῶτος καὶ ἀμέθεκτος χρόνος*, or *χωριστὸς χρόνος*, which is, as it were, the monad of the time in the physical world, or at the level of Soul. This is a curious concept, certainly, but Proclus in fact understood it perfectly well, since he discusses it himself in the *Timaeus Commentary* (III 30, 30 ff.). Here, however, he dismisses it in favour of the comprehensive solution of Syrianus, which actually sounds very little different (he identifies it as the sort of time enjoyed by divinised, pure souls).

That Iamblichus should identify the relevant level of Time here as the causal principle of the *intellectual order* is a further indication that he, like Syrianus, saw the epithets denied of the One as

⁴⁴ Cf. Proclus, *In Alc.* 121.

⁴⁵ I here contradict the position I took up in my translation, *ad loc.* — the consequence of more careful consideration!

⁴⁶ The texts relating to this (from Simplicius' *Categories* and *Physics Commentaries*, and Proclus' *Timaeus Commentary*) are collected by S. Sambursky and S. Pines, in *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism* (Jerusalem 1971). See also R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London 1983) 33-45.

representing the whole series of noetic and noeric levels of Being (cf. above, p. 42).

(10.) The next doxographical sequence is actually of very little philosophical interest, but needs to be recorded for the sake of completeness. It arises in connexion with the lemma 141a7-b3, in which Parmenides argues that what is becoming older than itself must also be becoming younger than itself. The problem raised is whether Plato is being merely sophistic here, as some commentators have considered (1226, 2 ff.), or whether there is some serious philosophical point being made. Syrianus, of course (1226, 26 ff.), is able to discern a substantial piece of doctrine here, but he is preceded by two authorities who are less satisfactory. I will simply quote them, and leave it at that.

A (Porphyry?): Others (sc. than those who simply see sophistry here), in trying to stand up to these critics, have championed the truth rather too weakly: for they say the same thing is at the same time younger and older; in respect of future time it is younger, for it has not yet attained to that; in respect of past time, on the other hand, it is older, since it has already lived through that. But this is not what it is to become both simultaneously younger and older than oneself, but rather younger than one thing and older than another. So the argument of this commentator is quickly revealed to us as being weak (1226, 6-15).

B (Iamblichus?): Another set, again, declared that everything which is older than itself is also younger, what is now existent being the "older," and what was before the "younger," and that what is now older can be said to be older than what was formerly younger; but these too fail to understand the sense of Plato's statement (141b 3-6), which puts what is against what is, what will be against what will be <and what has been against what has been>, these in all cases being relative expressions.⁴⁷ So then, it is not possible to say that that which now is older *has become*

⁴⁷ Adding τὸ δὲ γεγονός πρὸς τὸ γεγονός from Latin, and reading εἰ τῶν πρὸς τι τῶν for αἰ τῶν πρὸς τὸ τότε of Gk. mss.; cf. Latin *semper eorum que ad aliquid*, which at least shows that πρὸς τι figures here; and also 1.26 below.

older than that which had become younger; for this is to mix up times and not to preserve the rule which he himself laid down regarding all relative expressions (1226, 15-26).

The efforts of both *A* and *B* to elucidate Plato's meaning here seem eminently reasonable.⁴⁸ Syrianus, however, seeks a solution by contrasting linear and cyclical time, the latter of which is the type of time enjoyed by pure souls (the level of being which, on his theory, we should now be denying of the One); and in cyclical time what is becoming older is also simultaneously becoming younger, as getting nearer to a new cycle, since the end is also the beginning — a good example of Syrianus' creative interpretation of the text to suit his elaborate metaphysical scheme.

(11.) The final passage in which I have identified this doxographic pattern occurs in that part of the commentary only preserved in Moerbeke's Latin (p. 64, 25-66, 24 Klibansky). This concerns the final lemma of the First Hypothesis (142a 6-8), which at first sight seems to permit only a negative conclusion to the whole hypothesis: "Is it possible that all this should hold good of the One?" "I should say not!" This, it would appear,⁴⁹ was used by Origen the Platonist as a firm indication that there is no subject of the First Hypothesis, and that in turn provokes Proclus to attack him (p. 64, 1 ff.), as he had done earlier in the *Commentary* (cf. 1065, 1 ff. & 36, 19 ff. Klibansky).

Proclus proceeds next (p. 64, 25 ff.) to a doxography of those who accept that the subject of the hypothesis is the One, but are bothered by this final passage. As so often, we have a sequence of three authorities, culminating in Syrianus, and the first two lend themselves to identification as Porphyry and Iamblichus. For one thing, we find a contrast at 68, 15-16 between those who follow λογγραφικὴ ἀκολουθία (*consequentia logographica*) and those who follow ἡ τῶν

⁴⁸ It is instructive to compare Cornford's remarks *ad loc.* (*Plato and Parmenides*, p. 128): "The above argument is not a 'sophism.' Whatever exists in time must be of a *different* age at every moment from its age at any earlier moment; and the lengthening interval between its younger self and its older self must always be the *same* as the interval between its older self and its younger self. But we have seen that no propositions involving the terms 'same' and 'different' can be true of the One we have defined."

⁴⁹ Cf. Saffrey and Westerink, *Theol. Plat.* Vol. II pp. x-xx (though they do not recognise this passage).

πραγμάτων θεωρία (*rerum theoria*).⁵⁰ Just such a contrast is made by Proclus in the *Timaeus Commentary* I 73, 28-29: καὶ τοῦτο μὲν λογογραφικόν, ἐκεῖνο δὲ οἰκείον τοῖς προκειμένοις), but there too, unfortunately, he does not name his authorities. That it is the sort of contrast he makes between Porphyry and Iamblichus is shown, however, by *In Tim.* I 195, 22 ff., where Porphyry's literal, philological exegesis of *Tim.* 26 BC is contrasted with that of Iamblichus, who attends rather to τῶν πραγμάτων ἡ ὅλη θεωρία.

Certainly nothing in the content of the two opinions expressed is such as to contradict this evidence. The first authority (66, 25 ff.K.) wants to take the troublesome passage, not as the conclusion of the First Hypothesis, but as the beginning of the Second. The arguments adduced by this authority are of interest, though reported by Proclus at too great length to be reproduced in full. He points out that the First Principle in *Rep.* VI 509 B is described as being beyond Intellect, the intelligible and existence, and, since the subject of the First Hypothesis is to be equated with the First Principle described there (and with that of *Ep.* II, 312E), all the negations presented here are true of it, and this "final" sentence should thus be taken rather as introducing the Second Hypothesis than as rounding off the First: "In order to show the way to the Second Hypothesis, he says that someone may find these conclusions impossible as concerning the One. He had to bring in what was needed to pass over to the Second Hypothesis, so that we should not find anything superfluous. For these things only seem impossible because of the inexpressibleness of the One, since it is obvious to anyone that, as far as truth goes, they are not impossible."

Here Porphyry (if it is he) certainly seems to recognise a transcendent, ineffable, supra-essential One as the subject of the First Hypothesis — as after all, if he is to be a faithful follower of Plotinus, he must do. But I would maintain that it was possible for him, with some fancy footwork, to take his supra-essential One as just the First Principle in its transcendent aspect — τὸ ἐνὶ εἶναι, in the terminology of passage (3).

However that may be, the second authority (66, 25 ff.) is fairly certainly identifiable as Iamblichus. Rejecting his predecessor's solution, he regards this conclusion as "a generalisation which contains all the previous negations":

⁵⁰ This is mistranslated in Klibansky, in such a way as to obscure the contrast.

For just as there are conclusions rounding off every theorem, so this conclusion is appended to the rest, "that all things are impossible of the One. . . ." All of these, as has been shown, are impossible of the One. This is why he asks if it is possible to say these things which he has asked about of the One, and Aristotle denies it. For whatever you add to "one," any kind of existent whatever, is something other than one. If "one" has something else added to it besides what it itself is, it becomes "something that is one" (ἐν τι, *aliquid unum*), instead of being simply one (ἀπλῶς ἐν, *simpliciter unum*).

This point — provoked, perhaps, by the use of τι in the previous sentence (142a6: οὐδέ τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτοῦ αἰσθάνεται) — has a most interesting resemblance to a remark of Iamblichus on 144c5, in the Second Hypothesis, reported by Damascius, *In Parm.* II 112, 13 ff. Ruelle (= my *Iambl. Fr.* 4).⁵¹

The ninth problem is, what is the meaning of "some one thing" (ἐν γέ τι), and what is the significance of adding the word "some" (τι)? Is it because "something" is the opposite of "nothing," as Porphyry proposed, or is it because "some" is the indicator of the participated One? For if "one" is the term for the unparticipated One, then the participated is denominated "some one"; for "some" and "participated," which is what "some" signifies, are coincidental, according to the philosopher Syrianus — or, as is the view of the great Iamblichus, it is the fact that after the absolute form of each of entity (τὸ ἀπλῶς ἕκαστον) there is "a certain" particular form, so that after the absolute One (τὸ ἀπλῶς ἐν) there is the particular One (τό τι ἐν).⁵²

⁵¹ We may note here, by the way, Damascius' independent knowledge of the contributions of Porphyry and Iamblichus, since there is no reason to suppose that Proclus relaxed his reticence about naming authorities later in his commentary (which Damascius is in general following).

⁵² Cf. also Proclus' criticism of Iamblichus' views on the subject of Hyp. I at p. 36, 8 ff. above, where he himself makes a distinction between ἀπλῶς ἐν and ἐν τι in distinguishing between "God" and "the gods" (i.e., the One and the henads).

Proclus, then, salutes this solution as following more closely the metaphysical realities (τὰ μετὰ φυσικά), though Syrianus is still able to add further refinement to it (68, 16 ff.). For us, it presents Iamblichus once again in a characteristic position vis-à-vis Porphyry.

In conclusion, what has this laborious strip-mining of Proclus' text (if the results be found plausible) achieved? It seems to me that it should both throw some further light on the relations between Porphyry and Iamblichus as commentators (already amply attested, admittedly, from the remains of their commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus* and Aristotle's *Categories*), and increase our knowledge of certain points of doctrine of each of them. Of these, I would pick out Porphyry's rather baffling views on the First Principle (on which subject I can still only make some tentative suggestions, as we have seen), and Iamblichus' doctrine of henads and levels of Form: as well as his view of the levels of reality depicted in the *First and Second Hypotheses*, which seems to have to some extent anticipated that of Syrianus. In general, also, this investigation may serve to remind us that Proclus is being no more original in the *Commentary on the Parmenides* than he is being in the *Commentary on the Timaeus*; he has merely decided, for some reason, aesthetic or "political," to downplay his predecessors, except for Syrianus, into an anonymity from which it is a laborious task even partially to rescue them.

Trinity College, Dublin

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