Proclus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades, Text edited by L.G. Westerink, Translation and Commentary by William O'Neill. Platonic Texts and Translations, vol. VI. Warminster: The Prometheus Trust, no new date given (original dates 1954, 1965). ISBN 978 1 898910 497. Pp. x + 508. £25.

Even those who possess, and are able to make efficient use of, the more recent Budé edition by Alain Segonds will not find it superfluous to seat this handsome volume on their shelves. The fact that there is simply a lot more on each page means that it is in many ways easier to use than its potential rival. The entire extant portion of the commentary (to 116b), plus a few fragments of Proclus' exegesis of the *Alcibiades* (not necessarily from the identical version), can be fitted into a single volume. O'Neill's 'commentary', or, more accurately, his notes, since they occur beneath his translation) are included, as well as prefatory matter, appendices, and indices. The notes are placed at the foot of the page, so that the reader is not compelled to consult further 'Notes complémentaires' at the back of the volume. The Prometheus Trust has done a good job of integrating the various materials drawn from both volumes into a coherent whole. The work of Westerink in editing a variety of late Neoplatonist commentaries on Plato has been important to many of us, particularly to those who have worked on Olympiodorus, and it will not easily become obsolete. O'Neill's translation appeared eleven years after the edition, and antedates the considerable modern interest in the work of Proclus. That means that it cannot draw on anything like the extensive literature on Proclus that is available today, but it also helps to recreate the experience Proclus' students would once have felt as they embarked on the reading of their first Platonic dialogue—without the 'clutter' either of modern scholarship or of the entire metaphysical and theological system of Proclus himself.

Even so, those who embark upon Proclus' commentary on this work will certainly find it hard to reconcile with the dialogue's introductory status. Though the introduction is not huge, and the first lemma occurs already on p. 23, we have only reached 116b, 4108 words into the dialogue, by p. 445. Proclus has managed to write about sixteen words for every word of Plato's text, a level of detail that would only seem to be warranted by the assumption that this is an inspired text that packs in far more deep meaning than a cursory reading could yield. It is hardly suprising that this level of detail brings to light many nuances that a cursory reading must fail to appreciate. Given that many scholars see the alleged spuriousness of the work as an excuse for contenting themselves with a cursory reading, it is inevitable that Proclus is more alive to some of the finer qualities of the work than most of us are today.

The truncated text is particularly frustrating in view of the fact that it is the last ten or so Stephanus pages that have generated the most modern interest and have

the most obvious connection with what Proclus unsurprisingly takes to be the basic topic of the dialogue, self-knowledge. It is there that the very nature of the human self comes to the fore. However, Proclus' insistence on an integral reading of the dialogue means that much of his approach in the lost parts of his commentary can be to some degree anticipated, whether from his introduction or from other parts of the commentary. Occasionally the fragments, drawn mostly from the scholia, from Olympiodorus, and from other works of Proclus, flesh out our picture. Olympiodorus' complete commentary on the *Alcibiades* makes a useful contrast with that of Proclus, and we can fortunately look forward to an English translation of this from Michael Griffin shortly. However, another interesting contrast is with Proclus' own commentaries on the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides* at the advanced end of the curriculum, both similarly truncated, and making even fewer concessions to the reader than the present text.

In the light of what I have just said, one concern that I had was that the O'Neill index fails to include any references to Olympiodorus' commentary on this work, including only one reference to his commentary on the *Gorgias* and six to the *Phaedo*-commentary, of which three would now be listed under Damascius. Another is that there is no entry for the *Alcibiades* itself in this index, which means that O'Neill misses the opportunity to refer to parts of the dialogue on which Proclus' comments have been lost. Westerink helps out in this case, having over three columns devoted to citations of Plato, including the *Alcibiades*, but he does not provide an index of later passages that one might wish to compare. The Greek index is particularly helpful; for instance, it enables one to easily find out that Proclus already knows but does not value the basic division of the text into refutation, protreptic, and maieutic parts (see 8.2) that Olympiodorus diligently employs in the following century. This difference in the indexing qualities may account for the fact that I used to consult Westerink far more often than O'Neill before the Budé became available to me.

Hence, while I welcome this volume greatly, I should certainly not discourage a modern scholar from trying to improve on the whole.

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