Dirk Baltzly (ed. and trans.)

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There are times when I regret that we do not have more of Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*. It would be interesting to see what he makes of the anatomical passages, for example. Dirk Baltzly (hereafter B.) and the other members of the Australian team of translators, however, are probably relieved that the end of their ordeal is near. After this fifth volume there will be one more to complete their Herculean job—a job by which they are doing the study of the history of Platonism a tremendous service.

This volume contains book IV of Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (Diehl III 1-161, ad *Tim.* 37c6-40e4) and covers Proclus' reading of what he calls the eighth, ninth and tenth gift of the demiurge: time, the heavenly bodies and the sublunary gods. Proclus' discussion of the tenth gift is continued in what will be the final volume.

In his introduction, B. discusses three key issues: the surprisingly high position of time in the hierarchy of the demiurge's gifts (the later a gift, the higher it ranks); Proclus' ways of defending Plato's old-fashioned astronomy against the more advanced astronomy of Proclus' own time; and the tension in the insertion of a multitude (of living beings) into the universe as the last and highest gift.

B. shows that Proclus tends to consider the inspired text of Plato as the highest authority. An exception is Proclus' rejection of recession—which instead has a foundation in astrological practice. B's introduction also reveals the extent to which Proclus' physics is a search for metaphysical causes, and—although B. does not address this point explicitly—the ways in which Proclus strives to maintain the correspondence between textual structure and order of reality.

Time is given to the cosmos after soul. This is puzzling to those who consider soul the cause of time. For Proclus, however, besides transcendent Eternity, there has to be transcendent Time. Both time and eternity are participated in many ways, sometimes even together. Cosmos and souls, for instance, are both perpetual and temporal. Proclus' metaphysics of time, which is quite far from 21st century concerns, reveals that time, as the measure, but also one of the causes, of all change, is superior to soul. Therefore, it is given later.

As to the fixed and the “wandering stars” (sun, moon and the five known planets), Proclus is not interested in mathematical astronomy. He explains the irregularities in the circular motions of the heavenly bodies as willed by the

gods presiding over them, and as necessary intermediates between the circular motions of the fixed stars and the linear sublunary motions.

The last issue, the plurality of living beings as the highest gift, is perhaps the nicest example of Proclus' principles. Proclus sees this gift as giving perfection to the cosmos. He relates the four genera (celestial, aerial, aquatic and terrestrial) to the hierarchy of gods, angels/demons, heroes, mortals, not one to one, but, following prop. 103 of the *Elements of Theology*, all in all. Consequently, the gods are near us, even in our earthly dwellings, enabling our becoming like god.

One of the main challenges for the translators of the commentary was probably deciding how close to stay to Festugière's excellent French translation. Let me compare the two translations of *In Tim.* 111.1, which contains some typically convoluted sentences. In the first sentence, I prefer taking the adverbs ἀθρόως κατὰ ταῦτόν with the polysyndetic indicatives (F.), rather than with the participle (B.). This is suggested by the position of the adverbs and the explanation Proclus gives on the next page, repeating the indicatives, each time with the adverb ὁμοῦ (111.21-11), which picks up ἀθρόως κατὰ ταῦτόν.

On the other hand, B.'s translation and explanation of ὅλα (see his note 1 vs. note 1 of F.) fit Proclus' mereology and reading of the *Timaeus* much better.

Translating ὥσανει (17) as qualifying the genitives διαστάσεως and ἀντιθέσεως (F.) is more convincing than having it refer to οὐ γὰρ πολὺ τὸ μέσον (B.). Proclus wants to emphasize that "the intermediate position [between the members of the previous disjunction εἴτε . . . εἴτε, MM] is nothing much". Hence he will not soften this by adding ὥσανει, which, instead, further softens the 'disagreement and opposition'.

On the other hand, B. translates ἐστ' ἄν . . . βούλωνται more elegantly, where F. needlessly complicates matters by adding a verb (*s'obstinent*), possibly to create a symmetry with ἀνέχωνται in the next clause.

Finally, as for τοὺς μὲν . . . τοὺς δὲ . . . : B. seems to read these as two groups within the second group of the διαιροῦντες, and I am not sure that F. decides either way. I would here prefer τοὺς μὲν to refer to the 'unifiers', to whom the tetradic monad fits best, and τοὺς δὲ to the 'distinguishers', with the unified tetrad.

In general, as in this one page, neither translation is superior to the other one. B.'s translation does not lean heavily on that of Festugière, and there are significant differences between the two. That will make for interesting discussions.

B.'s notes are full of relevant information and elucidations, sometimes in surprising combinations. For instance, the fascinating note on Proclus' use of a military term, 'counter march' (ἐξελιγμός), to refer to the lowest unfolding

of forms to particular instances. B. describes the ancient varieties of ‘counter marches’ and concludes that some of them are ‘vague symbolic expressions’ of the triad of remaining, procession, and reversion (178–9 n. 397). Contrary to what I said above, notes such as these suggest that B. is enjoying himself and is in full control of, to the point of even emulating, Proclus’ style.

There are some editorial slips in the volume, which are unavoidable in works such as these. Most are harmless, except possibly one unfortunate coincidence: sometimes *logos* is left untranslated (e.g. 66.19), without an explanation in a footnote. *Logos* is also not among the English words in the English-Greek glossary. This coincidence is a pity, especially for the Greekless reader. *Logos* occurs just four times in over 300 pages, however, so enough with the niggling. In general, the analytical table of contents, references, English-Greek glossary, Greek word index, and general index are really helpful.

This is a very good translation—not least because it makes Proclus readable, without departing too drastically from the original—and a very valuable volume.

Marije Martijn

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

m.martijn@vu.nl