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Chapter 1 : Essays and Fragments of Proclus the Platonic Successor by Proclus

Proclus 15 followers Proclus Lycaeus (/ˈprɛːklɪˈtɪs ˈɛləˈsiːˌtɪs/; 8 February - 17 April AD), called the Successor (Greek Ἰπποκρίτης ὁ Λύκειος, ἡμίθεος Πρόκλος ὁ Διάδοχος), was a Greek Neoplatonist philosopher, one of the last major Classical philosophers (see Damascius).

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He studied rhetoric , philosophy and mathematics in Alexandria , with the intent of pursuing a judicial position like his father. Before completing his studies, he returned to Constantinople when his rector, his principal instructor one Leonas , had business there. Proclus became a successful practicing lawyer. However, the experience of the practice of law made Proclus realize that he truly preferred philosophy. He returned to Alexandria, and began determinedly studying the works of Aristotle under Olympiodorus the Elder. He also began studying mathematics during this period as well with a teacher named Heron no relation to Hero of Alexandria , who was also known as Heron. As a gifted student, he eventually became dissatisfied with the level of philosophical instruction available in Alexandria, and went to Athens , the pre-eminent philosophical center of the day, in to study at the Neoplatonic successor of the famous Academy founded years earlier in BC by Plato ; there he was taught by Plutarch of Athens not to be confused with Plutarch of Chaeronea , Syrianus , and Asclepienia ; he succeeded Syrianus as head of the Academy, and would in turn be succeeded on his death by Marinus of Neapolis. He lived in Athens as a vegetarian bachelor, prosperous and generous to his friends, until the end of his life, except for a voluntary one-year exile, which was designed to lessen the pressure put on him by his political-philosophical activity, little appreciated by the Christian rulers; he spent the exile traveling and being initiated into various mystery cults. He was also instructed in the "theurgic" Neoplatonism, as derived from the Orphic and Chaldean Oracles. His house has been discovered recently in Athens, under the pavement of Dionysiou Areopagitou Street , south of Acropolis, opposite the theater of Dionysus. He had a great devotion to the goddess Athena, who he believed guided him at key moments in his life. Marinus reports that when Christians removed the statue of the goddess from the Parthenon , a beautiful woman appeared to Proclus in a dream and announced that the "Athenian Lady" wished to stay at his home. It is reported that he was writing lines each day. Proclus was however a close reader of Plato, and quite often makes very astute points about his Platonic sources. A number of his Platonic commentaries are lost. The passage has been referred to as "the Eudemian summary," and determines some approximate dates, which otherwise might have remained unknown. In this work, Proclus also listed the first mathematicians associated with Plato: Some of these mathematicians were influential in arranging the Elements that Euclid later published. In addition to his commentaries, Proclus wrote two major systematic works. We also have three essays, extant only in Latin translation: Ten doubts concerning providence *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam* ; On providence and fate *De providentia et fato* ; On the existence of evils *De malorum subsistentia*. He also wrote a number of minor works, which are listed in the bibliography below. This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. This multiplication of entities is balanced by the monism which is common to all Neoplatonists. What this means is that, on the one hand the universe is composed of hierarchically distinct things, but on the other all things are part of a single continuous emanation of power from the One. From this latter perspective, the many distinctions to be found in the universe are a result of the divided perspective of the human soul, which needs to make distinctions in its own thought in order to understand unified realities. The idealist tendency is taken further in John Scotus Eriugena. There is a double motivation found in Neoplatonic systems. The first is a need to account for the origin and character of all things in the universe. The second is a need to account for how we can know this origin and character of things. These two aims are related: An important element in the Neoplatonic answer to these questions is its reaction to Scepticism. Being proceeds from the One. The One cannot itself be a being. If it were a being, it would have a particular nature, and so could not be universally productive. For this reason, even the name The

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One is not a positive name, but rather the most non-multiple name possible, a name derived from our own inadequate conception of the simplicity of the first principle. The One causes all things by conferring unity, in the form of individuality, on them, and in Neoplatonism existence, unity, and form tend to become equivalent. The One causes things to exist by donating unity, and the particular manner in which a thing is one is its form a dog and a house are individual in different manners, for example. Because the One makes things exist by giving them the individuality which makes them what they are as distinct and separate beings, the Neoplatonists thought of it also as the source of the good of everything. So the other name for the One is the Good. Despite appearances, the first principle is not double; all things have a double relation to it, as coming from them One and then being oriented back towards them to receive their perfection or completion Good. The henads exist "superabundantly", also beyond being, but they stand at the head of chains of causation *seirai* and in some manner give to these chains their particular character. He identifies them with the Greek gods, so one henad might be Apollo and be the cause of all things apollonian, while another might be Helios and be the cause of all sunny things. Each henad participates in every other henad, according to its character. What appears to be multiplicity is not multiplicity at all, because any henad may rightly be considered the center of the polycentric system. Intellect[edit] The principle which is produced below the level of the One and the Henads is the divine Intellect *Nous*. The One cannot have a determinate nature if it is to be the source of all determinate natures, so what it produces is the totality of all determinate natures, or Being. By determination is meant existence within boundaries, a being this and not that. In other words, the One produces what Plato called the Forms, and the Forms are understood to be the first determinations into which all things fall. The One produces the Forms through the activity of thinking. The One itself does not think, but instead produces a divine mind, Intellect, whose thoughts are themselves the Forms. Intellect is both Thinking and Being. It is a mind which has its own contents as its object. All things relate to the first principle as both One and Good. As Being, Intellect is the product of the One. But it also seeks to return to its cause, and so in Thinking it attempts to grasp the One as its Good. Each of these perspectives is itself a Form, and is how Intellect generates for itself its own content. Proclus systematises this production through a threefold movement of remaining, procession, and return *monē, proodos, epistrophē*. Intellect remains in the One, which means that it has the One as its origin. It proceeds from the One, which means that it comes to be as a separate entity. But it returns to the One, which means that it does not cut itself off from its source, but receives the good which is its identity from the One. This threefold motion is used by Proclus to structure all levels of his system below the One and above material reality, so that all things except those mentioned remain, proceed, and return. Proclus also gives a much more elaborate account of Intellect than does Plotinus. In Plotinus we find the distinction between Being and Thinking in Intellect. Proclus, in keeping with his triadic structure of remaining, procession, and return, distinguishes three moments in Intellect: Intelligible, Intelligible-Intellectual, and Intellectual. They correspond to the object of thought, the power of the object to be grasped by the subject, and the thinking subject. In this elaboration of Intellect as a whole, Proclus is attempting to give a hierarchical ordering to the various metaphysical elements and principles that other philosophers have discussed, by containing them within a single triadic logic of unfolding. With Intellect emerges the multiplicity which allows one being to be different from another being. But as a divine mind, Intellect has a complete grasp of all its moments in one act of thought. For this reason, Intellect is outside of Time. Soul[edit] Soul Psyche is produced by Intellect, and so is the third principle in the Neoplatonic system. It is a mind, like Intellect, but it does not grasp all of its own content as one. Intellect tries to grasp the One, and ends up producing its own ideas as its content. Soul attempts to grasp Intellect in its return, and ends up producing its own secondary unfoldings of the Forms in Intellect. Soul, in turn, produces Body, the material world. The Soul is constructed through certain proportions, described mathematically in the *Timaeus*, which allow it to make Body as a divided image of its own arithmetical and geometrical ideas. Individual souls have the same overall structure as the principle of Soul, but they are weaker. They have a tendency to be fascinated with the material world, and be overpowered by it. It is at this point that individual souls are united with a material body *i*. Once in the

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body, our passions have a tendency to overwhelm our reason. According to Proclus, philosophy is the activity which can liberate the soul from a subjection to bodily passions, remind it of its origin in Soul, Intellect, and the One, and prepare it not only to ascend to the higher levels while still in this life, but to avoid falling immediately back into a new body after death. In this he agrees with the doctrines of theurgy put forward by Iamblichus. Theurgy is possible because the powers of the gods the henads extend through their series of causation even down to the material world. And by certain power-laden words, acts, and objects, the soul can be drawn back up the series, so to speak. Proclus himself was a devotee of many of the religions in Athens, considering that the power of the gods could be present in these various approaches. For Proclus, philosophy is important because it is one of the primary ways to rescue the soul from a fascination with the body and restore it to its station. However, beyond its own station, the soul has Intellect as its goal, and ultimately has unification with the One as its goal. So higher than philosophy is the non-discursive reason of Intellect, and the pre-intellectual unity of the One. Philosophy is therefore a means of its own overcoming, in that it points the soul beyond itself. Influence[edit] Proclus can be considered as the spokesman of mature Neoplatonism. His works had a great influence on the history of western philosophy. The extent of this influence, however, is obscured by the channels through which it was exercised. An important source of Procline ideas was through the Pseudo-Dionysius. Because of this fiction, his writings were taken to have almost apostolic authority. This book is of uncertain origin, but circulated in the Arabic world as a work of Aristotle, and was translated into Latin as such. Before the contemporary period, the most significant scholar of Proclus in the English-speaking world was Thomas Taylor , who produced English translations of most of his works, with commentaries.

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Chapter 3 : Essays and Fragments of Proclus the Platonic Successor: Free Download PDF and other form

The Fragments That Remain of the Lost Writings of Proclus, Surnamed the Platonic Successor: Translated from the Greek (Classic Reprint) Published July 31st by Forgotten Books.

But assume this also from the philosophy of Aristotle. For he says, that every soul which has an energy not at all indigent of body, is likewise allotted an essence beyond and separable from body. For if we should arrange energy as existing independent of body, but essence inseparable from body, energy would be better than essence, since it would not be at all indigent of a subordinate essence, that being rooted in it, it might have a subsistence according to nature. This however is impossible. It is necessary, therefore, that the soul which has an energy separable from body, should also be itself separable. Consider then, my friend, what soul it is in us, which we acknowledge is not at all indigent of body, in the energies of itself according to nature? But every sensitive power uses corporeal instruments, and together with them energizes about its proper sensibles; viz. What then shall we say of anger and desire? But do you not see that these frequently co-operate with the corporeal parts, with the heart and the liver, and that these also are not pure from body? For how is it possible that things which energize with sense, should not also be indigent of body, since sense is always moved through body? But with respect to the orectic powers, that these energize with sense, is I conceive known to all of us. For what deprived of sense, can either be angry, or desire? Plotinus also rightly asserting, that all the passions are either senses, or are not without sense. If, therefore, that which is angry is so in conjunction with sense, possessing at the same time a sense of sorrow, and that which desires possesses a sense of delight; but that which energizes with sense energizes with body, for sense subsists with body; - if this be the case, it is necessary that every thing which is angry and desires, should energize with body. Hence, these species of life, being all of them irrational, have that energy which is according to nature in conjunction with body. Looking now, however, to the rational nature itself, consider the life of it which is seated in the inferior lives, and corrects either what is deficient in them according to knowledge, as when from above it evinces that sense is deceived about its own objects of knowledge. I mean for instance, when it shows that sense is deceived in asserting that the sun is but a foot in diameter, or when sense with its usual deception asserts of such things any thing of a similar nature: Hence Ulysses in Homer exclaims "endure, my heart," and represses the impulse of anger barking like a dog or when the rational nature represses the wantonness of desire, and frustrates its endeavours to detain the soul by the delights that germinate from the body, the petulance of these delights being ameliorated by the corporeal temperaments. For in all such energies the rational soul evidently represses all the irrational motions both gnostic and orectic, and liberates itself from them, as from things foreign to its nature. It is necessary, however, to investigate the nature of every thing, not from the perverted use of it, but from its natural energies. Hence, if reason, when it is moved in us as reason, restrains the shadowy impression of the delights of desire, punishes the precipitate motion of anger, and reproves sense as full of deception, asserting that we neither hear nor see any thing accurately, and if it asserts these things looking to its internal reasons, none of which it knows through body, or through corporeal cognitions, it is evident that according to this energy it elongates itself from the senses, contrary to the decision of which it is separated from those sorrows and delights. After this, however, I see another and a better energy of our rational soul, the inferior powers being now at rest, and exhibiting no tumult, as in many things they are accustomed to do, according to which energy she is converted to herself, sees her own essence and the powers she contains, the harmonic ratios of which she consists, and the many lives of which she is the completion, and re-discovers herself to be a rational world, the image indeed of the natures prior to herself, and from which she has departed, but the paradigm of the natures posterior to herself, and over which she presides. To this energy of the soul, my friend, arithmetic, and geometry, the mother of your art, are said to contribute much, which indeed elongate the soul from the senses, purify the intellect from the irrational forms of life with which it is surrounded, and lead it to the incorporeal comprehension of forms, extending as it were, the lustrations to the future mystics

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that are anterior to the most sacred mysteries. For consider from intellectual energies after what manner the above-mentioned sciences are allotted the purifying power of which we have been speaking. For if they assume the soul replete with images, and knowing nothing subtle, and unattended with material garrulity, and if they cause reasons to shine forth which possess an irrefragable necessity of demonstration, and forms full of all certainty and immateriality, and by no means calling to their assistance the grossness which is in sensibles, do they not evidently purify our intellectual life from those things that fill us with folly, and which are unadapted to the divine circumscription of beings? After both these energies of the rational soul, let us survey her now running back to her highest intelligence, through which she sees her sister souls in the world, which are allotted the heavens and the whole of generation according to the will of the father, and of which she being a part, desires the contemplation of them. But she sees above all souls, intellectual essences and orders. For above every soul a deiform intellect resides, which imparts to the soul an intellectual habit. She also sees prior to these, the monads of the Gods themselves which are above intellect, and from which the intellectual multitudes receive their unions. For it is necessary that unific causes should be placed above things united, in the same manner as vivifying causes are above things vivified, causes that impart intellect are above things intellectualized, and in a similar manner imparticipable hypostases are above all participants. For according to all these elevating intellections, I conceive it is evident to those that are not perfectly blind, how the rational soul leaving sense and bodies behind, is led upward by intellectual surveys about the inflected and truly mystic intuitions of the supermundane Gods. Or whence, and from what kind of energies have the progeny of the Gods unfolded to us the occult dispensations of divinity? And after what manner are souls said to energize enthusiastically, and assuming a mania better than temperance to be conjoined to the Gods themselves? I speak of the Sibyl who soon after she was born uttered admirable things, and told those who were present at the time who she was, and from what order she came into this terrestrial abode, and I allude to any other soul who in a similar manner was of a divine destiny. In short, we must say that the rational and intellectual soul in whatever way it may energize, is beyond body and sense; and therefore it is necessary that it should have an essence separable from both these. This however though of itself now evident, I will again manifest from hence, that when it energizes according to nature, it is superior to the influence of Fate, but that when it falls into sense, and becomes irrational and corporeal, it follows the natures that are beneath it, and living with them as with intoxicated neighbours, is held in subjection by a cause that has dominion over things that are different from the rational essence. For again, it is necessary that there should be a certain genus of beings of this kind, which according to essence indeed is above Fate, but according to habitude is sometimes arranged under it. For if indeed the beings which are wholly eternal are placed above the laws of Fate, but there are beings which according to the whole of their life, are arranged under the periods of Fate, it will also be necessary that there should be an intermediate nature between these two, which sometimes indeed is above the productions of Fate, and sometimes is under its dominion. For the progression of beings much more than the situation of bodies, leaves no vacuum; but there are every where media between the extremes, which also bind the extremes to each other. And not only Plato, but likewise the oracles of the Gods have revealed these things to us. For in the first place indeed, they order those divine men who were thought worthy to be the auditors of those mystic discourses, "not to look upon nature, because the name of it is fatal. For similitude every where copulates beings to each other; but that which is assimilated enjoys the same polity as that to which it is assimilated, whatever it may be, and consequently is under the dominion of the ruler of that polity. For nothing is without a ruler and a principality in the universe, whether you speak of wholes, or of parts. But different things have different rulers, because these live in one way, and those in another. Afterwards, the oracles teaching concerning our most divine life, and that immaculate polity, which we enjoy when liberated from every polity of Fate, say, "The souls that become venerable by understanding the works of the father will escape the fatal wing of Destiny. But if it wishes to conform itself to body, aspires after what are called corporeal goods, and pursues honours, power and riches, it suffers the same thing as a philosopher who is chained, and in this condition enters a ship. For he becomes subservient to the winds that move the ship, [and

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cannot help himself] if some one of the sailors should trample on him, or some fettered slave should insult him. Bidding farewell, therefore, to the things to which we are bound, we should direct our attention to the strength of virtue, and consider Fate not as effecting any thing in us, but in the things which surround us. For with respect, my friend, to all external circumstances that may befall us, enemies may demolish the walls of our city, and reduce its buildings to ashes, they may deprive us of our possessions, and leave us in a state of indigence; but all these being mortal and external, are in consequence of this in the power of other beings, and not in ours. But with respect to the things which are in our power, there is no one so potent as to able to take away any one of them, even though he should possess all human power. For if we are temperate, we shall still continue to be so, though these calamities may befall us, and if we are contemplators of true beings, neither shall we be plundered of this habit; but all these dreadful events taking place, we shall still persevere in celebrating the rulers of all things, and in investigating the causes of effects. By no means, therefore, must we reprobate the necessity of the soul from its ultimate energies, but looking to its first energies, we should admire its unconquerable power. And if we are thus wise, nothing will disturb us pertaining to the passions of the inferior parts of the soul; but when the body is disturbed, and we say that we sustain something of a dreadful nature, it is not we who thus speak, but it is the language of desire; for the delights of the body, and therefore its sorrows pertain to this part. When also being robbed of our wealth, or not obtaining riches, we are grieved, this passion belongs to that power of the soul which is a lover of wealth. And again, when being reproached, and falling from power, we are indignant, this is not the passion of the superior soul, but of that which dwells downward, about the heart. For this pertains to the part which is a lover of honour. But the reason which is in us, being in all such particulars deceived, follows and is at the same time is disturbed with the subordinate powers of the soul, being a blind intellect, and not having that eye yet purified, by which it is able to perceive itself, and the natures prior and posterior to itself. When, however, it becomes purified from those things with which it was invested when it fell, it will then know what that is which is in its power, how it is neither in corporeal natures; for these are posterior to reason; nor in those beings in whom there is the liberty of divine will; for they are prior to reason; but that it consists in living according to virtue. For this alone is free and unservile, and adapted to liberty, and is truly the power of the soul, and confers power on its possessor. For it is the province of all power to contain and preserve that which possesses it. But he who directs his attention to vice, looks at the debility of the soul, though she should possess all other power. For the power of instruments is one thing, and the power of those beings that ought to use the instruments another. Hence, every soul, so far as it participates of virtue, and so far as it is [a rational soul], is free; but so far as it is vicious and debilitated, and is not [rational], it is subservient to other things, and not to Fate only, but to every thing, in short, that is either willing to give that which is appetible, or is able to take it away. For he who possesses virtue is subservient to those beings who are alone sufficient to impart to and coaugment with him that which is desirable; but these are the Gods, with whom there is true virtue, and from whom that which is in our power is derived. Plato also somewhere says, that this voluntary servitude is the greatest liberty. For by being subservient to those who possess all the power of all things, we become assimilated to them, so that, as he says, we govern the whole world; i. This, therefore, pertains to the most divine of our souls, just as it pertains to the last of them, to be as it were bound in prison, and to live an involuntary, instead of a voluntary free life. But to the souls that have an intermediate subsistence between these, it belongs, so far as they are liberated from passions and the body, to ascend above necessity to a life which has dominion over generation. For again, if intellect and deity are prior to soul, but passions and bodies are posterior to it; and if to these it belongs to act from compulsion, but to intellect and deity, to act in a manner better than all necessity, and which is alone free, it is necessary that the soul betaking itself either to the former or to the latter, should either enter under the necessity of subordinate, or exert the liberty of more excellent natures; and that it should be subservient either to supernal dominion, or to dominion inferior to itself. But if it is subservient, it must either rule in conjunction with the powers that rule over it, or be alone subservient in conjunction with subservient natures. Here, therefore, the soul ascending and resuming its power, which is virtue, will consider nothing as

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dreadful whatever it may be, that takes place about and external to the body. For the passions of instruments do not pass to those that use them; but in whatever manner they may subsist, it is possible for the soul to energize according to virtue; strenuously indeed, if the body should happen to be languid, but moderately when it is sane. And when poverty is present, it may energize sublimely, but in affluence magnificently; but every where from occurring circumstances, it may extol virtue that uses them; and being ameliorated by its inward strength may vanquish external calamities. For you must not suppose that you mechanists alone, are to be permitted to say, that you can move a given weight with a given power; for this you are well known to assert; but it is much more possible for those who live according to virtue, truly to adorn a power given from every circumstance by another power. And he who does this is generous and free; but the bad man is the slave of all things though he should rule over all things. For he resembles those who are punished in Egypt, by laughing vizards that surround them. Over these also, who are not able to govern themselves, necessity prevails. For being elongated from the Gods, the universe uses them as brutes. When, therefore, you wish to see that which is in our power, look at the soul living according to nature. But the soul which is not debile lives according to nature. For there is nothing debile in that which is conformable to nature. The soul, however, is not debile, which is not replete with vice, [the evil of the soul]; for in all things evil is debile. And if you consider the soul in this point of view, you will see what the nature is of that which is in our power. For you will see that it uses all circumstances rightly, and either prohibits them from taking place, or providentially attends to calamitous events when they occur. It also permits Fate to act upon those things which are posterior to Fate, and of which it is the lord; but is coordinated to the natures prior to itself, and from which being more excellent than itself, it is not divulsed. And thus much for the second particular which we proposed to discuss. [Click here to return to the home page](#) [Click here to return to the main catalogue](#).

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Chapter 4 : Proclus - Wikipedia

Essays And Fragments Of Proclus The Platonic Successor Proclus wikipedia, proclus's system, like that of the other neoplatonists, is a combination of platonic, aristotelian, and stoic elements in its broad outlines.

He was educated at St. His aim was the translation of all the untranslated writings of the ancient Greek philosophers. Taylor was an admirer of Hellenism , most especially in the philosophical framework furnished by Plato and the Neoplatonists Proclus and the "most divine" Iamblichus , whose works he translated into English. So enamoured was he of the ancients, that he and his wife talked to one another only in classical Greek. He was also an outspoken voice against corruption in the Christianity of his day, and what he viewed as its shallowness. Taylor was ridiculed and acquired many enemies, but in other quarters he was well received. Among his friends was the eccentric traveller and philosopher John "Walking" Stewart , whose gatherings Taylor was in the habit of attending. Their eldest daughter, Mary Meredith Taylor " , was named after his generous patron William Meredith and married a haberdasher, Samuel Beverly Jones. His wife Mary died in He married again, and his second wife Susannah died in From his second marriage he had one son, Thomas Proclus Taylor born Thomas Taylor died in Walworth. Mead , secretary to Helena Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society. Taylor also published several original works on philosophy in particular, the Neoplatonism of Proclus and Iamblichus and mathematics. With a preliminary Dissertation on the Platonic Doctrine of Ideas. An Answer to Dr. The Works of Plato, viz. With an Appendix containing some Hymns never before printed. In which all the Propositions on the Arithmetic of Infinites invented by Dr. Wallis relative to the summation of fluxions are demonstrated to be false, and the nature of infinitesimals is unfolded. With an Appendix explaining the Allegory of the Wanderings of Ulysses. The Description of Greece by Pausanias, 2nd edition with considerable augmentations, 3 vols. Taurus, the Platonic Philosopher, on the Eternity of the World; Julius Firmicus Maternus of the Thema Mundi, in which the positions of the stars at the commencement of the several mundane periods is sic given; Select Theorems on the Perpetuity of Time by Proclus Two Treatises of Proclus, the Platonic Successor, the former consisting of ten Doubts concerning Providence, and a Solution of those Doubts, and the latter containing a Development of the Nature of Evil. On Suicide, to which is added an Extract from the Harl. Two Books on Truly Existing Being, and Extracts from his Treatise on the manner in which the multitude of ideas subsists, and concerning the Good, with additional Notes from Porphyry and Proclus.

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Although a large part of his numerous writings is lost, some major commentaries on Plato have survived though incomplete and some important systematic works. Moreover, later Neoplatonists such as Damascius, Olympiodorus, Simplicius, and Philoponus have conserved many extracts of lost work, but these fragments have never been collected see now, however, Luna's "Segonds" Endress. Not long after his birth his parents returned to their hometown Xanthos in Lycia, a maritime area of what is now southwest Turkey. He began his education in Xanthos and moved from there to Alexandria Egypt to pursue the study of rhetoric in order to become a lawyer, as was his father. However, during a journey to Byzantium he discovered philosophy as his vocation. Back in Alexandria he studied Aristotle and mathematics. In 18, 18 years old, Proclus moved to Athens, attracted by the fame of the Platonic School there. He studied for two years under the direction of Plutarch of Athens; to be distinguished from the 1st-2nd c. Under Syrianus, Proclus also came into contact with the older traditions of wisdom such as the theology of the Orphics and the Chaldaean Oracles. Since Syrianus and Proclus worked intensively together for six years, Proclus was strongly influenced by his teacher. On many occasions Proclus praises the philosophical achievements of his teacher and he never criticizes him. His tight schedule of the day, starting with a prayer to the sun at sunrise repeated at noontime and at sunset, included lectures, reading seminars, discussions with students, and literary work of his own. Though Proclus was in Athens a highly respected philosopher and had some Christian students, he had to be prudent to avoid anti-pagan reactions. Apart from an impressive teaching-load and several other commitments, Proclus wrote every day about lines about 20-25 pages. It is unlikely that Proclus published all of them. Some of his works have been completely lost, such as his commentaries on Aristotle the Organon, of others only a few fragments remain. The Platonic Theology is generally considered to be his last work. In writing the Theology Proclus heavily depends on his interpretation of the Parmenides and often refers to his commentary on this dialogue, which must have been finished some time before. However, it cannot be excluded that Proclus rewrote or modified it later. As the Alcibiades came at the beginning of the curriculum in the school, its commentary may also be an early work. The Commentary on the Republic is not a proper commentary, but a collection of several essays on problems and sections in this dialogue. The Tria opuscula all deal with similar topics, but they need not have been composed at the same time. There are plausible arguments to put the second treatise, On What Depends on Us, some years after the events forcing Proclus to go into exile. The first treatise, which in some parts depends very much on Plutarch of Chaironea, 1st-2nd c. It also contains a discussion on the nature of evil, which is much simpler than what we find in the treatise On the Existence of Evils, which is more sophisticated and probably was composed later. Because of its introductory character, one may be inclined to consider the Elements of Physics as an early work. It may be possible that Proclus revised this text several times in his career. This Platonic focus is also evident in the composition of his systematic works. Proclus probably commented on all dialogues included in the curriculum of the school since Iamblichus. In addition Proclus wrote the commentary on the Republic mentioned above. The curriculum consisted of altogether 12 dialogues distributed into two cycles. The first cycle started with Alcibiades on self-knowledge and ended with the Philebus on the final cause of everything: In the form and method of his commentaries, Proclus is again influenced by Iamblichus. He assumes that each Platonic dialogue must have one main theme skopos to which all parts of the arguments ought to be related. Thus, the Timaeus has in all its parts as its purpose the explanation of nature physiologia. More problematic was the determination of the skopos of the Parmenides. In a long discussion with the whole hermeneutical tradition since middle-Platonism, Proclus defends a theological interpretation of the dialogue. According to him, the dialectical discussion on the One and the Many ta alla reveals the first divine principles of all things. With the exception of the

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commentary on the *Cratylus*, of which only a selection of notes from the original commentary is preserved, the exegetical works of Proclus have a clear structure. This enables them to connect different Platonic dialogues into one system and to see numerous cross-references within the Platonic oeuvre. What may seem to be contradictions between statements made in different dialogues, can be explained by different pedagogical contexts, some dialogues being rather maieutic than expository, some elenctic of the sophistic pseudo-science, some offering a dialectical training to young students. A Neoplatonic commentary offers much more than a faithful interpretation of an authoritative text of Plato. As was said, the two culminating dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*, offer together a comprehensive view of the whole of Platonic philosophy. Since the whole philosophy is divided into the study of intelligibles and the study of things within the cosmos – and quite rightly so, as the cosmos too is twofold, the intelligible and the sensible, as *Timaeus* himself will say in what follows *Timaeus* 30c – the *Parmenides* comprehends the study *pragmateia* of the intelligibles and the *Timaeus* the study of things within the cosmos. For the former teaches us all the divine orders and the latter all processions of things within the cosmos. As Proclus explains at *Theol.* The first part *Theol.* The second part *Theol.* Before presenting his own views, Proclus usually critically evaluates the opinions and interpretations of his predecessors. In this respect, his commentaries are a rich and indispensable source for the history of Middle and Neo-Platonism. Thus, in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* Proclus reports and criticizes the views of Atticus, Numenius, Longinus, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Theodorus of Asine and many others, ending usually in full agreement with the explanation of his master Syrianus. Proclus notes significant differences between the two philosophers in epistemology theory of abstraction vs. According to Proclus, Plato is not only far superior to Aristotle in his theology as only Plato ascended beyond the intellect to posit the One as the ineffable principle of all things, but in all other philosophical disciplines, where we owe to him all important discoveries. Whereas the Peripatetics were accustomed to defend the superiority of Aristotle over Plato with reference to his impressive physical project, Proclus considers the latter as inferior to the great achievement of Plato in the *Timaeus* see Steel It seems to me that the excellent Aristotle emulated the teaching of Plato as far as possible when he structured the whole investigation about nature. In this domain, it cannot be denied, Aristotle did much more than his master. Whereas Plato limited himself in the *Timaeus* to an analysis of the fundamental principles of all living organisms, Aristotle gave most of his attention to the material components of animals and scarcely, and only in few cases, did he consider the organism from the perspective of the form. Plato, on the contrary, when explaining the physical world, never got lost in a detailed examination. They despised innovation *kainotomia*. There is also overwhelming evidence for continual discussions in the school on the right interpretation of Plato or on certain doctrinal points such as the transcendence of the One, or the question whether the soul wholly descended from the intelligible world. Yet on many points, he is very critical of Plotinus, pointing to contradictions, rejecting provocative views such as the thesis that One is cause of itself *causa sui*, the doctrine of the undescended soul, or the identification of evil with matter. Another radical difference from Plotinus and Porphyry is the importance attributed to theurgy for the salvation of the soul and the authority of Chaldaean Oracles. One gets the impression that Syrianus was very interested in Orphic theogony, whereas for Proclus the Chaldaean Oracles are more authoritative when developing a Platonic theology. Is Proclus after all then not so original, but only an excellent teacher and wonderful systematizer of the new Platonic doctrines which became dominant in the school since Iamblichus on? We shall never know, and it is after all not so important when assessing the philosophical merits of his works. Surprisingly, for all his admiration for the master, he can only enumerate a few innovative doctrines; and they are of such a minor importance that we shall not even discuss them in this article. This discipline may be called theology, because the principles of beings and the first and most perfect causes of things are what is most of all divine. His *Elements of Theology* can in fact be considered an introduction to his metaphysics. The work is a concatenated demonstration of propositions, which may be divided into two halves: The second half deals with the three kinds of true causes within reality recognized by Proclus: This elaborate metaphysical framework makes it possible for Proclus to develop a scientific theology, i. One, Intellect, and Soul. This

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redoubled triadic structure must be understood as expressing an intrinsic and essential relation between successive levels of being. Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it. For if it should remain without procession or reversion, it would be without distinction from, and therefore identical with, its cause, since distinction implies procession. And if it should proceed without reversion or immanence [sc. And if it should revert without immanence [sc. Dodds] Another fundamental triad is the triad Unparticipated-Participated-Participating ametheton-metechomenon-metechon. Most pressing was the puzzle: How can a Form be at the same time one and the same and exist as a whole in many participants? Proclus, however, also applies this principle to explain the most difficult problem facing Neoplatonic metaphysics, namely, how to understand the procession of the manifold from the One. How can the One be wholly without multiplicity, when it must somehow be the cause of any and all multiplicity? The One remains in itself absolutely unparticipated; the many different beings proceeding from it participate in a series of participated henads or unities gods. Even if the doctrine does not originate as such from Iamblichus himself, the existence of the divine henads somehow follows from his law of mean terms. Thus there are no leaps in the chain of being, but everything is linked together by similar terms. The henads fulfill this function, for as participated unities they bridge the gap between the transcendent One and everything that comes after it. The doctrine of the henads can thus be seen as a way of integrating the traditional gods of Greek polytheistic religion into the Neoplatonic metaphysics of the One. Auxiliary and true causes. From Middle Platonism onwards, various attempts were made to integrate the Aristotelian doctrine of causes within the Platonic philosophy see Steel This system of causes with the addition of the instrumental cause as a sixth became standard in later Neoplatonism. In his commentary on the *Timaeus*, Proclus observes that Aristotle never rises to the proper level of causality. For the four causes, as Aristotle understands them, can only be applied to the explanation of processes in the sublunary world. In the Platonic view, however, the material and formal causes are only subservient or instrumental causes. Those causes are in fact immanent in their effects and constitutive elements of the thing they produce. As Proclus asserts in *prop.* For a proper understanding of what the true causes are of all things, Proclus argues, one must follow Plato, who lifts us up to the level of the transcendent Forms and makes us discover the creative causality of the demiurge and the finality of the Good as the ultimate explanation of all aspirations. Although Aristotle also discusses efficient and final causes, he falls short of a true understanding of creative causality because he abandons the hypothesis of the Forms. Without the transcendent Forms, there can be no explanation of the being of things, only an explanation of their movement and change. Moreover, because of his rejection of the demiurge and of the One, Aristotle is also forced to limit efficient causality to the sublunary realm.

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Chapter 6 : Editions of Essays and Fragments of Proclus the Platonic Successor by Proclus

The Fragments That Remain of the Lost Writings of Proclus, Surnamed the Platonic Successor Translated From the Greek by Proclus The Fragments That Remain of the Lost Writings of Proclus, Surnamed the Platonic Successor.

He set forth one of the most elaborate and fully developed systems of Neoplatonism. He stands near the end of the classical development of philosophy, and was very influential on Western medieval philosophy Greek and Latin. He studied rhetoric, philosophy and mathematics in Alexandria, with the intent of pursuing a judicial position like his father. Before completing his studies, he returned to Constantinople when his rector, his principal instructor one Leonas, had business there. Proclus became a successful practicing lawyer. However, the experience of the practice of law made Proclus realize that he truly preferred philosophy. He returned to Alexandria, and began determinedly studying the works of Aristotle under Olympiodorus the Elder. He also began studying mathematics during this period as well with a teacher named Heron no relation to Hero of Alexandria, who was also known as Heron. As a gifted student, he eventually became dissatisfied with the level of philosophical instruction available in Alexandria, and went to Athens, the pre-eminent philosophical center of the day, in to study at the Neoplatonic successor of the famous Academy founded years earlier in BC by Plato; there he was taught by Plutarch of Athens not to be confused with Plutarch of Chaeronea, Syrianus, and Asclepigenia; he succeeded Syrianus as head of the Academy, and would in turn be succeeded on his death by Marinus of Neapolis. He lived in Athens as a vegetarian bachelor, prosperous and generous to his friends, until the end of his life, except for a voluntary one-year exile, which was designed to lessen the pressure put on him by his political-philosophical activity, little appreciated by the Christian rulers; he spent the exile traveling and being initiated into various mystery cults. He was also instructed in the "theurgic" Neoplatonism, as derived from the Orphic and Chaldean Oracles. His house has been discovered recently in Athens, under the pavement of Dionysiou Areopagitou Street, south of Acropolis, opposite the theater of Dionysus. He had a great devotion to the goddess Athena, who he believed guided him at key moments in his life. Marinus reports that when Christians removed the statue of the goddess from the Parthenon, a beautiful woman appeared to Proclus in a dream and announced that the "Athenian Lady" wished to stay at his home. It is reported that he was writing lines each day. Proclus was however a close reader of Plato, and quite often makes very astute points about his Platonic sources. A number of his Platonic commentaries are lost. The passage has been referred to as "the Eudemian summary," and determines some approximate dates, which otherwise might have remained unknown. In this work, Proclus also listed the first mathematicians associated with Plato: Some of these mathematicians were influential in arranging the Elements that Euclid later published. In addition to his commentaries, Proclus wrote two major systematic works. We also have three essays, extant only in Latin translation: Ten doubts concerning providence *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam*; On providence and fate *De providentia et fato*; On the existence of evils *De malorum subsistentia*. He also wrote a number of minor works, which are listed in the bibliography below. This multiplication of entities is balanced by the monism which is common to all Neoplatonists. What this means is that, on the one hand the universe is composed of hierarchically distinct things, but on the other all things are part of a single continuous emanation of power from the One. From this latter perspective, the many distinctions to be found in the universe are a result of the divided perspective of the human soul, which needs to make distinctions in its own thought in order to understand unified realities. The idealist tendency is taken further in John Scotus Eriugena. There is a double motivation found in Neoplatonic systems. The first is a need to account for the origin and character of all things in the universe. The second is a need to account for how we can know this origin and character of things. These two aims are related: An important element in the Neoplatonic answer to these questions is its reaction to Scepticism. Being proceeds from the One. The One cannot itself be a being. If it were a being, it would have a particular nature, and so could not be universally productive. For this reason, even the name The One is not a positive name, but rather the most non-multiple

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name possible, a name derived from our own inadequate conception of the simplicity of the first principle. The One causes all things by conferring unity, in the form of individuality, on them, and in Neoplatonism existence, unity, and form tend to become equivalent. The One causes things to exist by donating unity, and the particular manner in which a thing is one is its form a dog and a house are individual in different manners, for example. Because the One makes things exist by giving them the individuality which makes them what they are as distinct and separate beings, the Neoplatonists thought of it also as the source of the good of everything. So the other name for the One is the Good. Despite appearances, the first principle is not double; all things have a double relation to it, as coming from them One and then being oriented back towards them to receive their perfection or completion Good. The henads exist "superabundantly", also beyond being, but they stand at the head of chains of causation *seirai* and in some manner give to these chains their particular character. He identifies them with the Greek gods, so one henad might be Apollo and be the cause of all things apollonian, while another might be Helios and be the cause of all sunny things. Each henad participates in every other henad, according to its character. What appears to be multiplicity is not multiplicity at all, because any henad may rightly be considered the center of the polycentric system. Intellect The principle which is produced below the level of the One and the Henads is the divine Intellect *Nous*. The One cannot have a determinate nature if it is to be the source of all determinate natures, so what it produces is the totality of all determinate natures, or Being. By determination is meant existence within boundaries, a being this and not that. In other words, the One produces what Plato called the Forms, and the Forms are understood to be the first determinations into which all things fall. The One produces the Forms through the activity of thinking. The One itself does not think, but instead produces a divine mind, Intellect, whose thoughts are themselves the Forms. Intellect is both Thinking and Being. It is a mind which has its own contents as its object. All things relate to the first principle as both One and Good. As Being, Intellect is the product of the One. But it also seeks to return to its cause, and so in Thinking it attempts to grasp the One as its Good. Each of these perspectives is itself a Form, and is how Intellect generates for itself its own content. Proclus systematises this production through a threefold movement of remaining, procession, and return *mone, proodos, epistrophe*. Intellect remains in the One, which means that it has the One as its origin. It proceeds from the One, which means that it comes to be as a separate entity. But it returns to the One, which means that it does not cut itself off from its source, but receives the good which is its identity from the One. This threefold motion is used by Proclus to structure all levels of his system below the One and above material reality, so that all things except those mentioned remain, proceed, and return. Proclus also gives a much more elaborate account of Intellect than does Plotinus. In Plotinus we find the distinction between Being and Thinking in Intellect. Proclus, in keeping with his triadic structure of remaining, procession, and return, distinguishes three moments in Intellect: Intelligible, Intelligible-Intellectual, and Intellectual. They correspond to the object of thought, the power of the object to be grasped by the subject, and the thinking subject. In this elaboration of Intellect as a whole, Proclus is attempting to give a hierarchical ordering to the various metaphysical elements and principles that other philosophers have discussed, by containing them within a single triadic logic of unfolding. With Intellect emerges the multiplicity which allows one being to be different from another being. But as a divine mind, Intellect has a complete grasp of all its moments in one act of thought. For this reason, Intellect is outside of Time. Soul Soul Psyche is produced by Intellect, and so is the third principle in the Neoplatonic system. It is a mind, like Intellect, but it does not grasp all of its own content as one. Intellect tries to grasp the One, and ends up producing its own ideas as its content. Soul attempts to grasp Intellect in its return, and ends up producing its own secondary unfoldings of the Forms in Intellect. Soul, in turn, produces Body, the material world. The Soul is constructed through certain proportions, described mathematically in the *Timaeus*, which allow it to make Body as a divided image of its own arithmetical and geometrical ideas. Individual souls have the same overall structure as the principle of Soul, but they are weaker. They have a tendency to be fascinated with the material world, and be overpowered by it. It is at this point that individual souls are united with a material body *i*. Once in the body, our passions have a tendency to overwhelm our

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reason. According to Proclus, philosophy is the activity which can liberate the soul from a subjection to bodily passions, remind it of its origin in Soul, Intellect, and the One, and prepare it not only to ascend to the higher levels while still in this life, but to avoid falling immediately back into a new body after death. In this he agrees with the doctrines of theurgy put forward by Iamblichus. Theurgy is possible because the powers of the gods the henads extend through their series of causation even down to the material world. And by certain power-laden words, acts, and objects, the soul can be drawn back up the series, so to speak. Proclus himself was a devotee of many of the religions in Athens, considering that the power of the gods could be present in these various approaches. For Proclus, philosophy is important because it is one of the primary ways to rescue the soul from a fascination with the body and restore it to its station. However, beyond its own station, the soul has Intellect as its goal, and ultimately has unification with the One as its goal. So higher than philosophy is the non-discursive reason of Intellect, and the pre-intellectual unity of the One. Philosophy is therefore a means of its own overcoming, in that it points the soul beyond itself. Influence Proclus can be considered as the spokesman of mature Neoplatonism. His works had a great influence on the history of western philosophy. The extent of this influence, however, is obscured by the channels through which it was exercised. An important source of Procline ideas was through the Pseudo-Dionysius. Because of this fiction, his writings were taken to have almost apostolic authority. This book is of uncertain origin, but circulated in the Arabic world as a work of Aristotle, and was translated into Latin as such. Before the contemporary period, the most significant scholar of Proclus in the English-speaking world was Thomas Taylor, who produced English translations of most of his works, with commentaries. Since then he has attracted considerable attention, especially in the French-speaking world.

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Athens, Philosophy, mathematics, astronomy. Proclus received his early education at the grammar school of Xanthus, a city on the southern coast of Lycia. Returning to Alexandria, Proclus studied Aristotle with Olympiodorus the Elder and mathematics with a certain Heron, otherwise unknown. But these teachers did not satisfy him; and before he was twenty, he moved to Athens, where the Platonic Academy had recently undergone a notable revival under the headship of Plutarch of Athens. Proclus was the last great representative of the Philosophical movement now called Neoplatonism. Proclus had an extraordinarily acute and orderly mind. Because of his religious temperament he enthusiastically espoused Neoplatonism and devoted his talents and energies to perfecting it by systematizing and extending the views of his predecessors, strengthening their logical structure, and showing in detail their derivation from the teaching of Plato, who was taken as the source and final authority. But Proclus was more than a systematic metaphysician. He had a broad interest in all products of Greek culture, in religion, literature, science, and philosophy. His literary production was tremendous. Many of his writings have been lost, but those remaining constitute a priceless source of information regarding this last stage of Greek culture; and because of their underlying philosophy they embody an impressive restatement of Greek rationalism in its last confrontation with Christian thought. The goal of philosophy, according to the Neoplatonists, was to attain a vision of and contact with the transcendent and ineffable One, the principle from which all things proceed and to which they all, according to their several natures and capacities, endeavor to return. But this synthesizing insight was to be attained only by the hard labor of thought. Proclus believed that a prerequisite to the study of philosophy was a thorough grounding in logic, mathematics, and natural science. Proclus was not a creative mathematician; but he was an acute expositor and critic, with a thorough grasp of mathematical method and a detailed knowledge of the thousand years of Greek mathematics from Thales to his own time. This Ptolemaic system had arisen out of an effort to provide a mathematical explanation of the anomalies in the motions of the heavenly bodies as observed from the earth. Proclus approved the motives that led to its construction, and thought a knowledge of it desirable for his students; but he was understandably critical of its complexity as a whole and of the ad hoc character of its individual hypotheses. Several other writings on astronomy are attributed to Proclus: Planned on a grandiose scale, this work either was not completed or has been imperfectly transmitted to us. Better known is the impressive series of commentaries on Platonic dialogues: The texts of all these have been preserved. His commentary on the Cratylus survives only in fragments, and those on the Philebus, the Theaetetus, the Sophist and the Phaedo have been completely lost, as have those he is reported to have written on Aristotle. His treatises On Providence and Fate and On the Subsistence of Evils were long known only in Latin translations, but large portions of the Greek text have recently been recovered and edited. Like Aristotle, he believed that ancient traditions often contain truth expressed in mythical form. Orphic and Chaldean theology engaged his attention from his earliest years in Athens. Proclus himself was a devout adherent of the ancient faiths, scrupulously observing the holy days of both the Egyptian and Greek calendars—“for, he said, it behooves the philosopher to be the hiero-phant of all mankind, not of one people only” Marinus, ch. Proclus never married and made liberal use of his apparently ample means for the benefit of his relatives and friends. His diet was abstemious but not ascetic, although he customarily refrained, in Pythagorean fashion, from eating meat. He composed many hymns to the gods, of which seven survive, written in Homeric language and marked by literary quality as well as religious feeling. We are told that he lived in constant communication

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with the divine world, addressing his adoration and aspiration in prayers and ritual observances and receiving messages from the gods in dreams. His pious biographer also presents him as something of a wonder-worker who, having been initiated into the secrets of the hieratic art, practiced necromancy and other forms of divination and who was able by his arts to produce rain and to heal disease. Such beliefs, like the belief in astrology which both he and Ptolemy held, were almost universal in that age. Proclus deserves to be remembered, however, not for these beliefs that he shared with almost all his contemporaries, but for the qualities he possessed that are exceedingly rare in any age and were almost unique in his: Modern criticism has tended, rather hastily, to discredit his interpretation of Plato; and with the decline of interest in speculative philosophy, his writings have fallen into neglect. But it is fair to say that the wealth of learning and insight in his works does not deserve to be neglected, and that the constructive philosophy they contain still awaits adequate appraisal and appreciation by modern philosophers. Procli philosophi Platonici opera inedita, Victor Cousin, ed. Paris, 1819, contains text of Commentary on the Parmenides, French trans. Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato, L. Leipzig, 1817, French trans. by A. Paris, 1817; Commentary on the Republic, Wilhelm Kroll, ed. Leipzig, 1867, French trans. Paris, 1867; Elements of Physics, Albert Ritzefeld, ed. Leipzig, 1843; Hypotyposis, Charles Manitius, ed. London, 1898, and Glenn R. Morrow Princeton, 1970; Commentary on the Cratylus, G. Leipzig, 1867; Elements of Theology, E. Oxford, 1867; Platonic Theology, H. Berlin, 1867; and Hymns, E. Wiesbaden, 1867, Thomas Taylor, ed. An ancient biography is Vita Procli by his pupil and successor Marinus, J. Leipzig, 1817, repr. Cambridge, 1867, 1867; and E. Zeller, Die Philosophie der Griechen, 5th ed. Morrow Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

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Chapter 9 : Two Treatises of Proclus, the Platonic Successor

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