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**An Athenian Commentary on Plato's *Republic*: Poetry, science and textual
engagement in Proclus' *In Rem*.**

by

David Blair Pass

A dissertation submitted
in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Classics
in the Graduate Division
of the University of California, Berkeley

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Abstract

An Athenian Commentary on Plato's *Republic*: Poetry, science and textual engagement
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Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Republic* is the only extant ancient Greek commentary on Plato's *Republic*. Despite the fact that it includes discussions of most of the major parts of the book, it has received very little scholarly attention. This dissertation introduces the work in its entirety and tries to identify some of the most important contributions it can make to philosophical and philological scholarship on the *Republic*. I am particularly attentive to ways in which Proclus' concerns—such as responding to Epicurean critiques of Platonic myth or defending Homer—may help us see Plato's work in its cultural context.

The first chapter focuses on introducing the work and answering basic questions about the place of the *Republic* in late antique Platonism, the extent of Proclus' sources and what portions of the *Republic* Proclus discusses. I consider the form of the commentary, arranged as various essays, in comparison with Proclus' other commentaries which proceed in a line by line manner. I respond to arguments that have claimed that the commentary is not a unified work by considering the form and extent of the essays relative to the content of the *Republic*.

The second chapter argues that Proclus' commentary is not trimming the Platonic tradition to fit into the religious orthodoxy of late antiquity but rather stressing arguments and interpretative approaches that became most influential in the Renaissance. I consider several examples such as Proclus' interest in the Orphic and Pythagorean tradition, his emphasis on gender equality and the scientific aspects of his approach to natural philosophy.

The third chapter considers some important aspects of Proclus' hermeneutics. I consider how and why Proclus sometimes disagrees with Plato. In particular, I focus on some portions of the commentary that demonstrate Proclus' approach to the dramatic aspects of the dialogues and discuss why Proclus' defence of Homer includes some observations

about his Platonic hermeneutics. I consider also his responses to Aristotle's idea of catharsis and his approach to Glaucon's role in the *Republic*.

The fourth chapter translates and discusses a particular portion of the sixth essay in which Proclus argues, contrary to the view Socrates expresses in the *Republic*, that Homer is a text which teaches the political virtue of *sophrosune*. I consider the historical origins of allegorizing interpretations and then distinguish between Proclus' use of allegory and his use of other interpretative methodologies. I consider in particular Proclus' defence of the idea of *euphrosune* and compare his approach with earlier philosophical discussions which responded to the same passage of Homer (*Odyssey* 9.6-10) and interrogated the passage along the lines suggested in the *Republic*.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to Proclus' *In Rem publicam*:

- Καίτοι καὶ εἰ μηδὲν αὐταῖς τούτων ἐγίνετο, αὐτὴ γε ἡ Ἄρετή καὶ ἡ ἐκ τῆς Ἄρετῆς ἡδονὴ τε καὶ δόξα ὅ τε ἄλυπος καὶ ἀδέσποτος βίος εὐδαίμονας ἤρκει ποιεῖν τοὺς κατ' Ἄρετήν ζῆν προελομένους καὶ δυνηθέντας. Sallustius, *De Deis et Mundo*, 21.2

- Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ἐνίοτε ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐφήπτετο πολιτικῶν βουλευμάτων, τοῖς κοινοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως συλλόγοις παραγιγνόμενος καὶ γνώμας ἐμφρόνως εἰσηγούμενος καὶ ἄρχουσιν ἐντυγχάνων ὑπὲρ δικαίων πραγμάτων, καὶ τούτους οὐ μόνον παρακαλῶν, τρόπον δὲ τινα προσαναγκάζων τῇ φιλοσόφῳ παρηρησία τὸ προσήκον ἐκάστοις ἀπονέμειν. Marinus, *Proclus or On Happiness*, 15.1

There has been a recent upsurge of interest in the writings of late-antique Platonists in general and Proclus (412-485 AD) in particular from a variety of different perspectives. On the one hand, everyone recognizes the tremendous importance of the period from the standpoint of intellectual history,¹ while on the other hand old prejudices have begun to dissipate so that philosophers are more likely to approach these unfamiliar texts with the sense that sometimes what seems strangest may be the most interesting.² New editions of basic texts and/or translations like Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* (new OCT by Carlos Steel 2007-2009), Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (new translation by Harold Tarrant, Dirk Baltzly and David Runia 2007-), the *Hymns of Proclus* (Van Den Berg 2001), and the *Life of Proclus* by Marinus (Saffrey and Segonds 2001) have made much of the material far more accessible.³ Perhaps most influentially on the philosophical side, Richard Sorabji's project of translating the Aristotelian commentaries and discussing their philosophical content has had the long-term effect of demonstrating the variety and value of the material from late antiquity.⁴ By pointing out the basic paradox that most of these commentators were all in some sense Platonists, Sorabji emphasized that attitudes that had been seen as a reason for dismissing the material, such as the idea of the harmony of Plato and Aristotle, should rather be seen first as challenging and second as by no means entirely accepted among late Platonists.⁵

This movement to consider seriously the history of Platonism has been explicitly connected with doubts about the developmental hypothesis which had been used to lay the foundation of a modern approach to Plato⁶ together with a reconsideration of the

¹ See Ahbel-Rappe 2009 (434-453) for a succinct account of some aspects of this influence. R.T. Wallis pointed out: "a survey of Neoplatonism's influence threatens to become little less than a cultural history of Europe and the Near East down to the Renaissance, and on some points far beyond" (1972: 160). See also Klibansky 1982.

² See Siorvanes 1996 for a brief treatment of some surprising aspects of Proclus' reception and survey of some of the leading figures in 20th century Proclus studies (especially 34-44).

³ See also a whole sequence of translations by John Dillon which include the *Commentary on the Parmenides* (1987 with Glenn Morrow), Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (1991 with Jackson Hershbell), Iamblichus' *De Anima* (2002 with John Finamore), and Syrianus' *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* (with John O'Meara 2006).

⁴ See especially Sorabji 2005.

⁵ On this question see especially Gerson 2005, Steel 1987.

⁶ See especially the essays in the collection *New Approaches to Plato: Ancient and Modern* (2002) eds. Rowe and Annas as well as Annas' *Platonic Ethics* (1999).

relationship between Plato's texts and the broader literary and philosophical culture of antiquity including rhetoric and drama.⁷ Other scholars have begun to investigate basic questions in the history of ancient Platonism such as how Plato was read in relation to key figures like Democritus (Marciano 2007) and Pythagoras (see especially the essays in Bonazzi, Lévy and Steel 2007). Peter Kingsley's religious/ritualist approach to Plato which stresses the importance of initiation rites and mysticism is partially based on evidence from late-antique commentators,⁸ and there are two influential modern schools of thought who see some degree of esotericism in Plato's writing, the Straussians and the Tübingen school.⁹ Since all of these interpreters make at least some limited claim to be recovering ancient readings, interest in these approaches is probably also responsible to some degree for the growing interest in how Plato was read in antiquity. Not only devotees of these approaches but also those who simply want to evaluate their claims are naturally interested in understanding more about the most relevant sources.

Until this recent movement, important and valuable discussions which tried to address the general hermeneutic question about how to read Plato would then follow with wildly inaccurate generalizations about how "the ancients" read Plato.¹⁰ At other points, obviously important questions received surprisingly little modern attention; for example, reading the introduction to the *Parmenides* by Mary Louise Gill, one finds that Dodds' 1928 article was at the time (1992) not only the best but even the only widely known article on the Neoplatonic reading of the dialogue. In any case, most interpreters would agree that the sheer variety of ancient approaches to Plato is one thing that makes the subject appealing. Because the skeptical academy seemed most congenial to the predominant trends in modern philosophy, it tended to receive the most attention. This though created the paradox that the most modern attention was focused on the figures for whom we have the least evidence.

The movement to consider the later material seriously began to some extent with an attempt to separate middle Platonism from later Platonism as a way of discussing the so-called middle-Platonist material while avoiding the prejudices and controversies associated with late antiquity (see especially Dillon 1977 and Tarrant 2000). Having come this far and posed some of the most relevant questions, it became obvious that we simply did not even entirely understand the philosophy of late antiquity.¹¹ Over the last decade or two, many scholars have begun to advocate a more expansive approach. Myles Burnyeat expressed his surprise at the interest and complexity of the material at the beginning of his helpful article "First Words" (1997). The introduction by Trabattini and Chiaradonna to the volume *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism* is

⁷ See especially Andrea Nightingale's *Genres in Dialogue* (1995) and the essays in Michelini ed. 2003.

⁸ Kingsley 1995; on the same question see also Edmonds 2004.

⁹ See especially Strauss 1964, Bloom 1968, Bernadete 1989; Szlezak 1999, Reale 1997.

¹⁰ There has always been a tendency for the best readers to be exceptions. John Burnet, for example, took Proclus quite seriously in his 1928 *Platonism* (46); the premise that he accepts-- "we must remember that, when they got control of the Academy, they had access to its library, and were therefore able to speak positively about matters which are obscure to us"-- is the one that Taran's arguments (1987) tend to reject.

¹¹ On the relation between Proclus and middle Platonists generally see Whittaker 1987, especially the concluding paragraph, and Dillon 2007. The Anonymous Commentator on the Theaetetus is actually the only remaining middle-Platonist Commentary-- therefore, unless we are extremely careful, generalizations about differences between late and middle Platonists will reflect this selection bias rather than actual philosophical differences.

one of the most recent and sharpest challenges to the way the material has been traditionally dismissed or neglected; the authors point out that traditional approaches almost entirely ignored later Platonists' interest in the sensible world as though no such thing existed, thus leaving a huge body of texts all but unmentioned. In general, I will try to follow the careful approach David Sedley recommends in the volume *New Approaches to Plato* (2002); Sedley commends, with reservations, a serious examination of the material based partly on the very fact that one finds surprising claims juxtaposed with almost scholastic attention to the details of Plato's text (2002: 37).

Julia Annas' *Platonic Ethics* provides a good example of how having raised important questions about middle Platonism leads to a natural interest in source material from later antiquity. Annas argued based on middle Platonist material that the *Republic* was primarily about ethical justice rather than about politics (though certainly acknowledging that in some sense, it is clearly about both). However, there is actually a late-antique commentary on the *Republic* by the 5th century AD philosopher Proclus, and it begins with exactly this question. Having investigated the work at greater length based on this curiosity, one finds that it also turns out to contain much, much more than this and may actually end up being one of the most interesting works left to us from the period after Plotinus. There may be differences between Proclus' approach and the middle-Platonist approach-- determining how extensive they are requires a close reading of authors like Plutarch-- but the reality is that we have no middle Platonist (much less skeptical Academic or early Academic) source that treats the *Republic* so extensively and directly. At least some of Proclus' primary concerns, such as the love of Homer, can be documented for every stage of Platonism. For example, Diogenes Laertius tells us in the brief life of the skeptical Platonist Arcesilaus that he would read a passage of Homer every night before bed (4.31).¹² Thus, any reasonable approach to the commentary must acknowledge that because of the loss of other source material, it may be most interesting when it is least original.

My goal in the following chapter will be to introduce this under-appreciated work as what it claims to be, a *Commentary on the Republic*. My purpose in this dissertation will be to provide a general introduction to the work as well as to identify some of the most important and representative contributions it can make to modern debates about reading Plato and the reception of Plato in antiquity and beyond. I will focus on how Proclus reads the *Republic*, trying to identify points where his overall orientation, use of source material or particular observations or interpretative moves may actually be able to make a substantial contribution to modern scholarship on the *Republic* and to our understanding of what Platonism represented for those who spoke, read and wrote in the Greek language between the 4th century BC and the 5th century AD. The neglect of the commentary has been substantial enough that this first sketch of its contents will have more value as philology and intellectual history than as philosophy proper-- my aim will be mostly to establish the seriousness and value of the source and to ask basic questions about how Proclus approaches the *Republic*. In this first chapter, I will focus on describing the work, its use of sources and its overall approach, and then in the second, third and fourth chapters I will provide more specific examples of Proclus' hermeneutic method.

¹² cf. Lambertson 1992: 115.

The primary reason the *Commentary on the Republic* is important is simply that it is the only surviving ancient Greek commentary on Plato's *Republic*, and it was written in excellent Attic Greek by a philosopher generally acknowledged as the most outstanding in the last 2 centuries of Greco-Roman antiquity. Rather than calling this period, as Dodds does "the last age of Greco-Roman decadence," a more favorable account of the commentary would point out that Proclus' position at the end of such a lengthy tradition allowed him to survey much that had been written about the *Republic* up until that point. Proclus responds at key points to Aristotle on tragedy and the immortality of the soul, the Stoics on the divisions of the soul, Plotinus on evil, whole libraries full of interpretations of Homer and even mathematical and scientific advances which occurred in the intervening centuries. Generally speaking, I will try to show that Proclus actually does some things exceptionally well. His interest in the mythical aspects of the dialogues had no parallel in modern scholarship until fairly recently, but has now received substantial attention.¹³ Most importantly, in my opinion, is the way Proclus balances his interest in the dramatic and logical aspects of the dialogues in ways that may well be instructive for modern scholarship. He is attentive to the drama of the dialogues, which is to say the way that their poetic aspects turn readers toward philosophy and the way they offer themselves as mimetic exempla (approaches championed by Jill Gordon (1999) and Ruby Blondell (2002) respectively), and yet he by no means thinks that this recognition devalues the logical aspect of the dialogues or means that we should not separate logical arguments from the dialogues as the most serious portion and then discuss them in terms of more traditional doctrinal debates and in comparison with other logical arguments found in the work of other philosophers-- i.e. he would certainly recognize much of the leading scholarship of the 20th century as engaging with the most valuable part of Plato, the philosophical arguments.¹⁴

An encomium by Proclus' successor, Marinus, is the most valuable source for historical information about Proclus and his school.¹⁵ Marinus' work entitled ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑΣ is in some ways analogous to Porphyry's more well-known biography of Plotinus. However, the tone and the characters they depict are worlds apart.¹⁶ Porphyry begins by telling us that Plotinus was ashamed to even have a body; Marinus, on the other hand, begins by quoting Ibycus (taken no doubt from the *Phaedrus*) and proposing to explain how Proclus was not only wise but also endowed with external goods like health and beauty; the difference to some extent reflects also Proclus' doctrinal retreat from Plotinus' identification between matter and evil ([Proclus] κεχορήγητο γὰρ ἀφθόνως ἅπανσι τοῖς ἔξωθεν λεγομένοις ἀγαθοῖς; "he was well-provided with all the external goods that contribute to happiness," Marinus *Procl.* 2). Plotinus comes across as the brilliant and obsessive genius; Proclus is presented as a man who was a leader of his city, Athens, as well as of his school. Writing was a way of life for Proclus and a burden for Plotinus. Unlike the so-called *Life of Isidore*, the other important historical source on

¹³ See Morgan 2000, Partenie ed. 2009 and Collobert and Gonzalez eds. 2012.

¹⁴ See A.C. Lloyd's 1990 *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* for a serious and challenging treatment of Proclus' logic. On Proclus as essentially philosophical, all drama and allegory aside-- see the conclusion to Rowe 2002.

¹⁵ For a general introduction to Proclus see Siorvanes 1996, Rosán 1949, and the Stanford Online Encyclopedia page by Helmig and Steel (2012).

¹⁶ See also Struck 2004: 228-9.

late-antique Platonism which survives primarily as two epitomes in Photius (creating the further confusion about why Photius would have summarized the same book twice, if it is the same book and not followed his typical practice), Marinus' work was presented as a sort of funeral oration (or at least that is its literary premise) on the one-year anniversary of Proclus' death. Therefore, it is not only complete, but maintains a certain compositional unity, extremely thoroughly explicated by Saffrey and Segonds.¹⁷ The work uses Proclus' life as an exemplar of the hierarchy of virtues, a doctrine which had become the standard way of dividing between active and theoretic virtue since Porphyry.¹⁸ Marinus explains how Proclus' pursuit of virtue (*arete*) assured him of happiness (*eudaimonia*).

On the one hand, because it is fairly short and provides an overview of Proclus' life, the text is a good introduction to the concerns and contexts of the entire 5th century Athenian school. On the other hand, some of Marinus' claims raise the sort of doubts that are inevitable when any mediocre thinker with his own agenda undertakes to summarize the activity of a great philosopher (in his defence, Marinus opens by expressing similar doubts himself). Marinus' claim that Proclus was not only the best philosopher of his generation nor even merely the most virtuous man of any sort Marinus had ever met but actually the happiest man ever to have lived creates the reasonable suspicion that the author may have exaggerated (*Marinus Procl. 2*).¹⁹ Moreover, Marinus attributes to Proclus several types of activity that we do not normally associate with philosophers. For example, Proclus (according to Marinus), was especially devoted to the god Pan; Athena appeared to him in a dream; Marinus gives precise astrological details of the day of his birth; Proclus, on set days of the year, carried out traditional rites not only for his deceased parents but also for his deceased philosophical ancestors; he considered hermeneutics a divine calling (ὅτι τῆς Ἑρμιακῆς εἴῃ σειρᾶς σαφῶς [Proclus] ἐθεάσατο; *Marinus Procl. 28.34*); he even practiced magic. In any case, some of Marinus' exaggerations have probably unduly shaped the general approach to Proclus' philosophy.²⁰²¹

Nevertheless, there is no reason not to believe Marinus when he supplies basic information about the school and its context.²²²³ The account of the education of Proclus

¹⁷ Saffrey and Segonds 2001.

¹⁸ The most important primary texts for understanding this doctrine of the grades of virtue are Plotinus 1.2 and Porphyry *Sententiae* 32. There is a tremendously thorough overview and collection of evidence in Saffrey and Segonds 2001 (lxix-c). For a discussion see O'Meara 2002: 40-49; Brisson 2006 and Baltzly 2006.

¹⁹ καὶ γὰρ οἶμαι αὐτὸν εὐδαιμονέστατον γεγονέναι ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἐν μακρῷ τῷ ἔμπροσθεν χρόνῳ τεθρολλημένων, οὐ κατὰ μόνην λέγω τὴν τῶν σοφῶν εὐδαιμονίαν... : "For I believe that he was actually the happiest of all the famous men who have lived in the entire duration of previous history, and I do not mean only in terms of the happiness of the wise..." (*Marinus Procl. 2*). All translations throughout this dissertation are my own.

²⁰ Most relevantly, Baltzly claims "it seems to me that we should not conclude from Marinus' *Life* that Proclus entirely collapsed cathartic virtues into ritual purifications" (2006: 177).

²¹ Hegel noted: "In his [Proclus'] case, as also in that of Plotinus, the contrast between the insight of such philosophers and what their disciples relate of them in biographies, must strike one very forcibly, for of the wonders described by the biographers, few traces are to be found in the works of the subjects themselves" (v. 2 1894 transl. Haldane: 434).

²² For a recent and thorough historical treatment of the period using evidence from Marinus' biography with some sophistication, see Watts *City and School in Late Antique Athens*, 2006, especially chapter 4. Watts

is invaluable; it explains how he studied sophistry and rhetoric before choosing the life of philosophy and presents these pursuits as generally *sunergoi*, though in competition for the best students. The relation between rhetoric and philosophy seems to be in the time of Proclus in some broad sense either similar to what it had been since the time of Plato and Isocrates or perhaps substantially more friendly.²⁴²⁵ Proclus' education in rhetoric and sophistry is clearly a point of pride (Marinus *Procl.* 8), and even when Proclus eventually chooses philosophy (ὑπερφρονήσας τῶν ῥητορικῶν διατριβῶν),²⁶ he then finds his philosophy teacher (Syrianus) in friendly relations with a famous sophist (11). Marinus also tells us that Proclus spent two years with his teacher Syrianus devoted exclusively to the study of Aristotle (after having already studied some Aristotle before this period in both Alexandria and Athens). Other information in the biography simply provides fascinating background about the Athenian context of the school. We learn, for example, that Socrates had apparently received a hero-shrine in Athens by this point called the *Socrateion*, decorated with a stele and a spring and located along the road between Athens and Piraeus; Marinus is careful to point out that this spring provided Proclus with his first drink after his arrival in Athens (10.20-25). Marinus is also careful to associate the location of Proclus' house with well-known Athenian landmarks (29):

καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις εὐτυχίμασιν, ἀρμοδιωτάτη αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ οἴκησις ὑπήρξεν, ἣν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ Συριανὸς καὶ ὁ προπάτωρ, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐκάλει, Πλούταρχος ὄκησαν, γείτονα μὲν οὖσαν τοῦ ἀπὸ Σοφοκλέους ἐπιφανοῦς Ἀσκληπιείου καὶ τοῦ πρὸς τῷ θεάτρῳ Διονυσίου, ὄρωμένην δὲ ἢ καὶ ἄλλως αἰσθητὴν γιγνομένην τῇ ἀκροπόλει τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς.²⁷

And, in addition to his other good fortune, his house was especially fitting for him. It was the same one inhabited by his father Syrianus and his grandfather [both academically speaking] Plutarch, neighboring the famous temple of Asclepius established by Sophocles and also neighboring the temple of Dionysus which is by the theatre; it was visible and otherwise perceptible from the Athenian

adds some interesting material evidence: the library of Hadrian, the ruins of which are still visible in Athens, was apparently intact in this period. Technically speaking of course Burnet was not quite right; as he must have realized, the old Academy building had been destroyed centuries before, but there were definitely libraries. See Watts 81, 85, 95; the inscription to Plutarch the Sophist is particularly interesting (95; Watts thinks this is Proclus' teacher; Saffrey 1992 thinks there were 2 Plutarchs); presumably the school had a private collection as well. See also Saffrey 1992 for an excellent summary of the significance of this information and of our knowledge of this period in general as it relates to attitudes towards books in Athens at this period. Saffrey explains particularly clearly the evidence for the importance of the existence of active schools of rhetoric and sophistry which were not identical with philosophy.

²³ For a recent account of Proclus' school (and to some extent methods-- though see my response to Hadot 1968, next chapter) from a philosophical perspective see Hoffman 2006. For another philosophical summary see Wallis 1972: 138-146.

²⁴ On this point see Sheppard 1980: 119.

²⁵ We have fairly extensive examples of this rhetoric from the generation preceding Proclus; they include of course Libanius but see also Robert Penella's recent translations of Themistius (2000) and Himerius (2007). See also Saffrey 1992.

²⁶ See Trapp 2007: 251.

²⁷ Archaeologists seem to believe, not without some interesting evidence, that they have located this house. See Karivieri (1994: 115-140) in *Post-Herulian Athens*.

acropolis.

Marinus tells us that Proclus participated positively and usefully in civic affairs and gives several examples of ways he benefitted the city of Athens even though he had chosen the ultimately higher life of philosophy rather than the active life of a politician. He claims explicitly that Proclus learned civic virtue by reading Aristotle's political works as well as Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. Since Proclus wanted to show that his philosophy included deeds as well as words, he also undertook to educate Archiades who he thought was more fit for the life of politics (14).²⁸ What is even more interesting though relative to the commentary on the *Republic* than this straightforward claim is the way Marinus actually quotes the *Republic* at length when he is describing Proclus. As Marinus describes Proclus' natural talents, philosophical education and finally complete devotion to the philosophical life, he quotes in order the description of the natural virtues of the philosopher in book 6, the philosopher's confrontation with the dangers of public life and then the philosopher's complete devotion to philosophy after being released from the cave.²⁹ The passage shows that the *Republic* shaped the entire school's idea of what a philosopher should be.

Marinus' biography is partially constructed by stitching together quotes from Plato and Plotinus, so I do not want to give the impression that Marinus only quotes from the *Republic*. However, since my purpose is not to summarize or introduce Marinus' work but rather to say enough to introduce the *Commentary on the Republic* these quotes provide a good place to start. The way Marinus stitches together quotes from *Republic* 484-487 in order to describe Proclus' talents does actually seem to provide the longest and most direct sequence of quotes in the entire work. Marinus does not just use the words and concepts from the *Republic* (which are in this case common ideas) but rather ostentatiously quotes entire phrases without indicating the source in order to make his point. For example, Proclus was μνήμων, εὐμαθής, μεγαλοπρεπής, εὐχαρις, φίλος τε καὶ συγγενῆς ἀληθείας, δικαιοσύνης, ἀνδρείας, σωφροσύνης (Marinus *Procl.* 4.8-10, quoting *Republic* 487a;) and so by nature strove to understand everything divine and human (τοῦ ὅλου καὶ παντὸς ἀεὶ ἐπορέξασθαι θείου τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου; Marinus *Procl.* 4.33-4, quoting *Republic* 486a).

In the following section, Marinus actually refers to the *Republic* again when describing the scene of Proclus' arrival in Athens and introduction to his eventual teacher Syrianus.³⁰ The scene was clearly invested retrospectively with momentous symbolic significance. Proclus was originally born in Lycia, and after studying for a few years in Alexandria he moved to Athens at about the age of 20. By the time of his death in 485, Proclus had kept the Athenian school alive and functioning for over 50 years in the midst of a potentially hostile imperial environment and in spite of the fact that many of the activities he wished to preserve (including studying astronomy and celebrating the

²⁸ On Archiades see Watts (2006: 107-110).

²⁹ This section explains to some extent what Sedley means, "The prejudices of his [Plato's] ancient followers may be no better reasoned than our own, but at least they are the prejudices of people who lived and breathed Plato's philosophy. When we are engaged in the delicate task of recovering Plato's thought from his philosophical dramas, we ignore such prejudices at our peril" (2002: 53).

³⁰ On the relationship between Proclus and Syrianus, see Sheppard 1980. Sheppard's work remains the most thorough treatment of the *In Rem*. On Syrianus, see Wildberg 2009.

Eleusinian mysteries) were already illegal (see Watts 2006 on Proclus' success in this regard). According to Marinus, upon first meeting Proclus and recognizing his affinity for their philosophy, the sophist Lachares said to Syrianus quoting Plato and summarizing the idea in *Republic* 491E "this is the sort of person who will make all the difference, either for good or for the opposite" (11.21-13).³¹ It is particularly interesting, based on a comparison with the context of this idea in the *Republic*, that Marinus has the sophist speak this phrase. We need not assume the scene occurred the way Marinus described, but it does provide certain evidence of the seriousness with which the *Republic* was read.

Marinus also quotes the *Republic* to describe Proclus' devotion to the higher grades of virtue which he calls kathartic virtues:

αἱ δέ γε ὑπὲρ ταύτας [beyond political virtues] καθαρτικαὶ πάντα χωρίζουσι καὶ ἀπολύουσι τῶν τῆς γενέσεως ὄντως μολυβδίδων καὶ φυγὴν τῶν ἐντεῦθεν ἀκώλυτον ἀπεργάζονται, ἃς δὴ καὶ αὐτὰς ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐπετήδευσε παρὰ πάντα τὸν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ βίον.

There are some virtues, called kathartic virtues, which are even more important than political virtues. These truly separate someone entirely and release him from the taints of the cycle of birth and create an unhindered escape from the things of this world-- these are the virtues which the philosopher [Proclus] practiced during the entirety of his philosophical life.

This is clearly an allusion to *Republic* Book 7 519A9, from the point just following the description of the philosopher's cave (together with *Theaetetus* 176b1); it is the point in the biography where Marinus moves beyond describing Proclus' political virtues and mentions the famous goal of becoming like god (section 18).³² It is relevant to the reading of the *Republic* that Marinus believes these kathartic virtues include something called kathartic justice (καθαρτικὴ δικαιοσύνη κεκόσμητο αὐτοῦ ἢ σύμπασα ζωὴ, 21.15). From this point on, Marinus describes Proclus' complete devotion to philosophy, including discussion, teaching, writing and reading as well as much that we would call theology and kathartic ritual.

This emphasis on kathartic virtue has been seen as a movement in late antique Platonism that basically turned Plato's philosophy into a religion and represents the part of Proclus' philosophy that is probably generally considered least appealing to modern philosophers. Therefore, I very much agree with Baltzly's recent attempt to stress that even these kathartic virtues actually have philosophical content (Baltzly 2006; quoted above). However, I would also like to stress that many of the ritual activities Marinus mentions here are not nearly as strange as one might imagine. Some of these activities

³¹ This quote (Marinus: πρὸς τὸν φιλόσοφον εἶπε [Lachares] Συριανὸν τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο τῷ Πλάτῳ δαιμονίως εἰρημένον ἐπὶ τῶν μεγάλων φύσεων· οὗτος γὰρ ἔφη ἢ μέγα ἀγαθὸν ἔσται, ἢ γε τούτῳ ἐναντίον), provides an interesting interpretative difficulty because it is not an exact quote, yet Plato's authority is often cited for exactly this idea (see Plutarch *Demetrius* 1.7 etc.-- see the note in Saffrey and Segonds 102, n. 5); it is clearly summarizing the idea in the *Republic* (491E ff.)

³² For the earliest summary of this Platonist view see Eudorus in Stobaeus (2.7.3f). See also Annas 1999 Chapter 3 (52-71); this is the point in the biography where Proclus advances to the state of life Plotinus describes at 1.2.7.20-30.

were simply conventional, and it may well be the case that Marinus exaggerates Proclus' devotion to these activities in order to present Proclus as a paradigm of pagan piety. We should by no means imagine that these activities represent some sort of late-antique rise of the irrational or self-mortification. This prejudice could be proved false on many fronts; one example will suffice. The activity that Marinus attributes to Proclus at 22.35 which Hoffman uses to reconstruct a sample day of Proclus (τὸ προσκυνῆσαι ἥλιον) is clearly presented by Plato in the *Laws* (887e προσκυνήσεις) as extremely conventional; not only was Proclus not innovating in this regard, neither was Plato (see also Van Den Berg 2001: 145-189, Saffrey 2000: 179-91).³³

Furthermore, in the section immediately following the allusion to the *Republic* in the previous paragraph, Marinus stresses one activity in particular that demonstrated Proclus' devotion to kathartic ritual. In addition to Orphic and Chaldaean "katharmoi"³⁴ Proclus also went down to the ocean regularly:

ἐπὶ θάλατταν τε ἀόκνως ἐκάστου μηνὸς κατιών, ἔσθ' ὅτε δὲ δις ἢ καὶ τρις³⁵ τοῦ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ταῦτα οὐ μόνον ἀκμαζούσης αὐτῷ τῆς ἡλικίας διεκαρτέρει, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐταῖς ἤδη ταῖς δυσμαῖς τοῦ βίου προσομιλῶν, ἀπαραλείπτως τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔθη ὡς νόμιμά τινα ἐξεπλήρου (18.25).

He went down to the ocean without hesitation every month, sometimes even two or three times during the same month. He not only did this when he was in the prime of youth, but continued to do so when he was already on the threshold of old age, so that he continued these habits with no interruption as though fulfilling a customary obligation.

This is actually the primary example that follows the introduction of the idea of kathartic virtues. Basically Proclus went from Athens down to the sea several times a month, perhaps only for a walk or perhaps also to have a swim (Marinus' phrasing makes it hard to be sure). There is some resonance here with the way Proclus interprets the opening of

³³ cf. Hoffman's summary of Proclus' day (2006: 600-1).

³⁴ Explaining properly what this might mean would take me too far off course. The question is whether Marinus (or if not, Proclus) might well be referring at least in part to the same sort of *katharmoi* we find in Plato's dialogues: see *Laws* 735a-e (in this case there would be many such *katharmoi*; perhaps some are ritualistic; the philosopher would pick out the appropriate ones and make sure that they are applied in a way that created a healthy city-- presumably these are the political *katharmoi*; cf. Marinus 18.12). Are the ones that are beyond political in part of the type referred to in the *Sophist* 227 (referring to education) or also *Phaedo* 69c? Marinus refers partially to what must be rituals; however, the first thing that he says that Proclus did (ἐν τε τοῖς λόγοις καλῶς ἐκδιδάσκων τίνες τέ εἰσι καὶ ὅπως τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ παραγίγνονται καὶ αὐταί 18.22) is distinguish among the types -- so we cannot exclude that these higher virtues do involve some philosophical combination of reason and habit. The question is really whether the attempt to create habits that are not only in harmony with but even at times mimic reasoned accounts (i.e. rituals) is to be considered irrational. The criticism of Orphic *katharmoi* in the *Republic* (364e) is part of Glaucon's challenge and so therefore obviously does not represent the opinion of Socrates or Plato in any simple sense.

³⁵ *Philebus* 59e seems to indicate this is a παροιμία; see also at *Gorgias* 488e; *Phaedrus* 235a4; *Phaedo* 65e. Seeing this transformation from Plato's text to Proclus' habits shows something about what it means to say philosophy was a way of life.

the *Republic*.³⁶ This connection between Proclus' personal habits (or *ethos*) and Plato's text shows why there is a real sense in which Proclus can help us recover an Athenian view of Plato; his approach to this question was not the one which became conventional in the period that followed, but it is certainly one which will interest modern audiences. Though Saffrey and Segonds are certainly correct that "Il s'agit donc d'un rite religieux et pas seulement d'une pratique d'hygiène" (128), it is well worth pointing out that the kind of kathartic ritual Proclus believed to encourage separation from the body-- in this case, a trip to the ocean-- is not nearly so grim or unpleasant as we might imagine and not something that can be considered entirely irrational. This separation from the body is clearly not of the type that involves damaging the body (unlike other famous examples from late antiquity), and the other examples Marinus uses (like eating in moderation, also quoting Plato) show that if we ignore the strange language, much of what Marinus is describing is what we would simply call self-control and is certainly conducive to good health (Marinus calls it *enkratia* at 19.32); the tone of Marinus' pride in Proclus health even in old age in the quote above helps demonstrate this fact. Proclus' kathartic activities also included singing and composing hymns, honoring traditional festival days, etc.-- but none that could be reasonably understood as unhealthy.

The Life includes a tremendous number of important points I do not have space to discuss in detail here, including Marinus' explanation of Proclus' multiculturalism. The school seems to have exaggerated the religious aspect of philosophy so as to contrast their tolerance and multiculturalism with the increasingly powerful orthodoxy. Thus, Proclus becomes in Marinus' politicized version a "hierophant of the cosmos" rather than the more familiar Cynic or Stoic "citizen of the cosmos"; Marinus is obviously using here the word generally used to refer to the priest at the Eleusinian mysteries. Though presumably most religious traditions have already agreed to respect the beliefs of others, we should remind ourselves what a tremendous difference in attitude there was between Proclus and the orthodoxy that followed, particularly in the attitude towards other religious traditions.³⁷ O'Meara's reading of Marinus *Procl.* section 30 seems fully supported by the text (2003: 130-1); the episode seems to represent the tremendously significant historical moment at which the cultural system of the Greeks was transferred from the Acropolis to the school (see also Saffrey and Segonds 2001: 164 n. 14, 15), and it is surprising that Classicists do not seem to be broadly aware of the fate of the statue of Athena on the Acropolis; which statue is indicated has not been conclusively established, but the symbolism of the episode is clear.³⁸ Siniosoglou offers a reading of the striking phrase *λάθε βιώσας* (Marinus *Procl.* 15) which makes it representative of the fate of the

³⁶ cf. ἡ τε γὰρ γένεσις ἀλμυρᾶς ἐστὶ πλήρης ζωῆς καὶ ζάλης μεστὴ καὶ τῶν τρικυμῶν τῶν τὰς ψυχὰς βαπτίζουσῶν (*In Rem.* 1.17.25-18.2). The word *ἀλμυρᾶς* refers to the traditional epithet for ocean water; in this passage, Proclus is explaining why the *Republic* is set in Piraeus (cf. also *Laws* 705a-b).

³⁷ καὶ γὰρ πρόχειρον ἐκεῖνο εἶχεν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔλεγεν ὁ θεοσεβέστατος ἀνὴρ ὅτι τὸν φιλόσοφον προσήκει οὐ μίας τινὸς πόλεως οὐδὲ τῶν παρ' ἐνίοις πατρίων εἶναι θεραπευτὴν, κοινῇ δὲ τοῦ ὅλου κόσμου ἱεροφάντην. "For the most holy man [i.e. Proclus] always had that saying in mind and repeated it frequently-- that the true philosopher should not honor only the religious traditions of a single city or the native customs of certain peoples but ought rather to be the common priest of the entire cosmos" (19.28-30). When this "priest of the cosmos" is demonstrably devoted to studying Euclid, Homer, Ptolemy, etc., it becomes unclear whether this claim is religious at all in the way we understand that term.

³⁸ Proclus' understanding of Athena is particularly clear in the last extant pages of the *Cratylus* commentary immediately before the text gives out.

philosopher in Byzantium (2011: 55-56). Sinossoglou's account is interesting though it should be noted that it is somewhat unclear simply reading Marinus whether the phrase refers only to the year in Asia, rather than all of Proclus' activity afterwards. I certainly do not think this motive alone explains why Proclus chose the commentary form; I see more continuity with the activity of earlier less threatened philosophical commentators.

The Commentary itself-- which is identified by the single extant manuscript as ΠΡΟΚΛΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥ ΛΥΚΙΟΥ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΟΥ ΔΙΑΔΟΧΟΥ³⁹ ΕΙΣ ΤΑΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΣ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ ΥΠΟΜΝΗΜΑ and generally called by the Latin title *In Platonis rempublicam commentarii*, or *In Rempublicam* (Rappe 2002 uses the English "Commentary on the *Republic*" while Hunter 2012 uses "On Plato's *Republic*") -- has received very little academic attention relative to its philosophical value and historical significance. The form of the work is probably partly responsible for this neglect. On the one hand, it was outside the realm of what was traditionally published by philosophers studying Plato (though perhaps, as I indicated, this is changing). Therefore, almost no books on the *Republic* even acknowledge the existence of a Greek commentary.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the work was somewhat too specifically concerned with reading Plato to find a central place in accounts of late antique philosophy or Neoplatonism in general. Some older works on the latter subject even regretted its existence. A.C. Lloyd in the 1967 version of the *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* says only: "in the case of the [Proclus'] commentaries on the *Republic* and *Cratylus* it would have been no loss to philosophy if a good deal less had been written" (305; this is the only mention of the work). The newer version (Gerson 2009) though avoiding this sort of judgment, also does not have a place to discuss the work.

Dörrie's (and Baltes') monumental *Der Platonismus in der Antike* seems at times almost to share the opinion that we would be better off without the work. Even concerning subjects where Proclus provides the clearest testimony left from antiquity (such as on book 5 of the *Republic*), the *Commentary on the Republic* is usually entirely omitted or relegated to a footnote in Dörrie's own commentary section rather than presented as a text for consideration. In his section on commentaries on Plato's political dialogues, Dörrie basically discusses the evidence that earlier authors wrote such commentaries-- most of which is simply citations from Proclus' work on the *Republic*-- before finally telling readers that Proclus' work is not a commentary on the *Republic* at all. Apparently, this mistake occurs because Dörrie has accepted too uncritically (and even exaggerated) Gallavotti's claims; for this reason, I will spend some time analyzing Gallavotti's arguments below. Dörrie's work is extremely valuable as long as it is considered as what it is-- not an authoritative or even representative selection of material,

³⁹ Proclus was called "the successor to Plato" due to his fame as an interpreter of Plato and referring also to his role as head of the Athenian school. Technically others like Marinus and Damascius were also *diadochoi* of the school but generally speaking due to the length of his tenure and breadth of his writings, only Proclus is identified as *the* successor.

⁴⁰ There are exceptions; Ferrari's 2007 introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* notes Proclus' association between Plato and Homer and the extensive bibliography provides a reference to Kroll's Greek edition as well as Festugière's French translation. Other books generally do not even provide the reference much less a mention accurately indicating the spirit of the work.

but a presentation of the entire subject of Platonism in antiquity as the editors see it.⁴¹

Part of the reason that the work has not received much attention is simply that the assumption has been that late-Platonist concerns were so other-worldly that they were not interested in the phenomenal world at all, including both science and politics.⁴² It is true that antique Platonists take the higher portions of Platonic philosophy very seriously. However, since the grades of virtue were considered as part of the process of ascent, and the lower political grades were considered necessary for the higher, it may well be the case that stressing the process of ascent was in part a way of assuring the cultivation of political virtue.⁴³ Understood this way, generally encouraging the process of ascent would assure at the very least more feet on the lower steps, and this view basically fits everything we know about Platonism in antiquity from the time of Cicero all the way to Proclus' education of Archiades. Plutarch's scorn for Epicureans is primarily directed not at their doctrine of pleasure but rather at their arguments against political participation and against some role in philosophy for civic pride and worldly reputation. Just as Trabattoni, Chiaradonna and others have pointed out what an enormous amount of late-antique science was ignored because it was supposed not to exist, Dominic O'Meara has recently challenged the claim that there was no such thing as neo-Platonic political theory (2003).⁴⁴ He even claims that the Emperor Julian's "mythical account of the origin of his political mission echoes the image of the cave of Plato's *Republic*" -- Julian ascends through education but then returns to the cave with a political mission (2003: 79). He does discuss the *In Rem.*; his treatments of the commentary are fairly brief, but they are the only serious discussion of some important portions so far, and I will use his work as I go along.⁴⁵ Though his project is different than mine-- I am interested in what Proclus can offer as a reader of the *Republic* and the specifics of Proclus' hermeneutic method rather than the relationship between Proclus' philosophy and late-antique politics-- his account is invaluable because it places the work in its historical context.^{46,47}

O'Meara's work was particularly groundbreaking for his discussion of the Anonymous Dialogue *On Political Science* (2002: 171-182). A brief comparison with this dialogue allows one to make two key points which will help to introduce the *In Rem.* First of all, the mere existence of the dialogue proves that neither the art of dialogue writing nor the vivid discussion of political themes in a relevant fashion seems to have been lost during the period. O'Meara points out how carefully the author has imitated the style of a Platonic dialogue in order to discuss contemporary themes (2002:174).

⁴¹ See especially v.3 1987: 207, quoted below. Trabattoni and Chiaradonna express a similar opinion relative to the neglect of science: "Bréhier's and Dörrie's works are old and somewhat outdated, as their overall interpretations have been substantially revised" (2009: 2). They also indicate that one point that especially needs revision is our understanding of the way later commentaries used earlier ones, a main point of this chapter (the interpretation of Proclus' use of sources in Kechagia 2011 below basically comes from Dörrie).

⁴² Kristeller 1987 points out that in the Renaissance Proclus was valued above all for his science; only in the early part of the 19th century did interest begin to focus on his metaphysics.

⁴³ See also chapter 3 of Annas 1999 which makes a similar suggestion.

⁴⁴ His introduction summarizes the traditional opinion and his disagreement (2003: 3-7).

⁴⁵ See especially his comments on Proclus on book 5 (2003: 83-87).

⁴⁶ His summary of politically influential students from Proclus' school is especially useful (2003: 21).

⁴⁷ Remes 2008 also includes a chapter on ethics and politics (175-196), though only barely mentioning this commentary and perhaps concluding too hastily that later Platonists were short on specific ethical discussions. The question as I indicated above is how one distinguishes between *ethos* and kathartic ritual.

Secondly though, Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* is not that sort of work-- it does not directly engage contemporary issues in the way the Anonymous dialogue does. Proclus' focus is resolutely philosophical and theoretical, not practical and the work contains almost no direct references to the political situation of Athens or the empire. It is interesting to note that this dialogue, like parts of Cicero's *Republic*, was recovered by Angelo Mai (Mai also claimed he had intended to produce an edition of the unavailable portions of Proclus' work, a project he did not complete—see chapter 2).

Because of this relative philosophical neglect the commentary has received, the most positive comments about the commentary have come from historians of literary criticism. Donald Russell, for example, claimed that Proclus' "commentaries on the *Republic* offer the fullest and most sophisticated discussion of the place of poetry in intellectual life that any ancient author has left us" (1989: 325). Similar comments came from Coulter, whose *Literary Microcosm* (1976) provided one of the earliest and still in some ways most lucid treatments: "the Neoplatonists proposed solutions to stubborn critical problems which deserve considerably more critical attention than they have received" (30). Sarah Ahbel-Rappe's *Reading Neoplatonism* discusses the commentary briefly in a more philosophical context as part of her general effort to understand the odd Neoplatonic combination of textual engagement and philosophy of the ineffable (2001: 173-177). It is interesting, therefore, to compare this attempt to understand some of the most difficult and strange portions of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* with Coulter's earlier treatment of the *In Rem*. Coulter, looking for the origin of the ideas of literary figures like Goethe and Coleridge presents a picture of Proclus as an urbane and admirable literary critic; Rappe, using the ideas of modern philosophers like Derrida and Gadamer, shows us a far more baffling and strange philosophical movement. Both are accurate though they present only a portion of the subject, and the difference in some respects replicates debates about Plato himself. In any case, Rappe's important book focuses mostly on the *Platonic Theology*. The assessments from a literary-theory perspective generally focus exclusively on the 5th and 6th essays. My goal will be to treat the work as a complete commentary on the *Republic* and ask what it can contribute to our understanding of the *Republic*.⁴⁸⁴⁹

Because of the limited bibliography and remarkably prevalent misrepresentation-- some scholars seem to think the work is only about the Myth of Er rather than a complete commentary on the *Republic* -- the first thing to do when introducing the work is to describe it and its importance accurately. Currently, no such description in English has been published. Relative to Proclus' extant commentaries on the *Cratylus*, *Parmenides*,

⁴⁸ Anne Sheppard's 1980 *Studies on the 5th and 6th Essay of Proclus' Commentary on the Republic* together with Chapter 5 of Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian*, provide some of the most extensive English language treatment available of the *In Rem*.; I will use and discuss these treatments of the 5th and 6th essays together with Kuisma 1996 as I proceed; see especially the final chapter for more extensive discussion of Proclus on Homer.

⁴⁹ On other portions of the Commentary see Mansfeld's brief but useful comments on the striking opening lines in his *Prolegomena* (1994: 30-32); Michael Allen's discussion of the reception (or rather non-reception) of Proclus on the nuptial number (1994: 30-39); more generally see Abbate 1999 and 2006, and Pichler 2006; There are translations of a couple pages of the Commentary in Bychkov and Sheppard 2010 (pp. 236-9 = Kroll 1.77.7-179.3; 2.107.14 -108.16), and Russell 2010 (p. 203 = Kroll 2.166-7) and more substantially Stalley 1995. Whittaker's 1918 *Neoplatonism* ended with a discussion of the work which is refreshingly straightforward and free from the prejudice and confusion one finds in some later accounts.

Alcibiades and *Timaeus*, the *Commentary on the Republic* stands out because it is fairly complete and deals with the work as a whole. Somehow, the false idea has taken hold in secondary literature that it is not a true or complete commentary but rather a disparate collection of material cobbled together at different points in Proclus' life. The reality is the opposite-- of Proclus' commentaries, it is the most complete. It is, as I said, the only extant ancient Greek commentary on Plato's *Republic* and includes such key points as the unity of the work, the arguments about justice in book 1, the radical proposals of book 5, the idea of the good, the philosopher's cave and the Myth of Er, and yet it has received very little serious academic attention.

The difference between the *In Rempublicam* and Proclus' commentaries on the *Parmenides*, *Timaeus*, *Alcibiades* and *Cratylus* is that the other commentaries proceed line by line whereas the *Commentary on the Republic* is more discursive, arranged in separate essays. The *Commentary on the Parmenides* occupies over 800 pages in Carlos Steel's recent three volume Oxford edition of the Greek text (counting only the Greek text transmitted in the manuscript); the *Commentary on the Timaeus* occupies over 1100 pages in Diehl's Teubner edition. Nevertheless, the Greek text of the *Parmenides* (excepting what was re-constructed) stops at 141E7 in the case of the *Parmenides* and 44D in the case of the *Timaeus*. The lemmata vary in length, but nevertheless it is clear that if Proclus treated the *Republic* in the same fashion, it would have created a text somewhere between 10,000 and 30,000 pages long. Not only would this have been basically either impossible or unreadable, but probably the form of the *Republic* itself contributed to the choice. Dense though it is, the *Republic* is somewhat more discursive than the portions of the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* Proclus discusses at such length. The *Commentary on the Alcibiades* might therefore be thought a more reasonable comparison in terms of the density of the discussion. Even here though, the 157 (large) pages of Westerink's edition of Proclus' commentary only make it through 13 Stephanus pages of the *Alcibiades* I (from 103 to 116) before the text leaves off. At this pace, a full commentary on the *Republic* might have been humanly possible but still enormous even for Proclus, and this is without taking into account the expansion of obviously more dense sections like the Myth of Er or the nuptial number. Therefore, it is basically certain that the form and length of the *Republic* dictated the form of the commentary; we need look no farther than common sense and necessity to explain why Proclus did not adopt the form of the commentaries on the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*.⁵⁰⁵¹

The definition of a commentary seems to have become recently a topic of study in its own right. Though individually some of these studies are important contributions, I am not actually terribly interested in the exact definition of a commentary. If someone preferred to call it a book about the *Republic* which discussed the characters, arguments, important philosophical claims and ideas but insist that a commentary was something else besides this, I would have no objection. It is particularly interesting though that much of this recent work seems to have been motivated by deep reconsideration of the state of human culture in which some form of textual authority is more or less taken for granted.

⁵⁰ cf. Sheppard 1980: 34-35. I do not think there is any evidence that the *Republic* was not extremely important in Proclus' school.

⁵¹ See the introduction to Miira Tuominen's *The Ancient Commentators on Plato and Aristotle* for some general and common sense thoughts about what constitutes a Commentary (pp. 1-40). See also Hoffman 2006.

The best of this work points out the complexity and variety of the purposes a commentary can serve in various cultures and historical moments so that it is impossible to generalize about the purpose of commentaries (see Most 1999: vii-xv). At the most basic level, commentaries provide a resource for those engaged with the same tradition by explaining the language and meaning of difficult texts, identifying key points and addressing interpretative difficulties. However, commentaries can also attempt to undermine or simply re-interpret a cultural tradition; or, they can do the opposite and attempt to preserve challenged cultural authority; or, they can become a vehicle for presenting radical arguments in a conventional guise. If one had to generalize, one might say that commentaries are a way of preventing authoritative texts from being used to prevent intellectual advances while at the same time preventing these same advances from destroying the cultural authority of traditional texts-- as such they are a basic response to a necessity inherent in the transition from oral to literate culture (Baltussen 2007 is especially useful in part because he approaches the issue this broadly). The range of this recent work shows the breadth of this conversation about textual authority (the conversation is similar in its range to those who have discussed Proclus under the heading "allegory"); this recent work stretches from Christopher Rowe's reflection on English commentaries on Plato and their utility relative to extremely difficult passages of the *Republic* (2002) to Dale Eickelman's reflection on emerging attempts to re-interpret textual authority in the Muslim world (1999). To the extent that we maintain any interest in discussing and evaluating the arguments and ideas of the past, recent or remote, we necessarily accept discussion and debate about which figures are worth studying and how the representations of the thought of those figures should be interpreted. If we are interested at all in the ideas of figures in the past, then we are equally interested in assuring that these ideas are not misrepresented, misunderstood or appropriated by those devoted to different agendas. In so far as this recent scholarship is connected with modern skepticism about textual authority, then it perhaps shows how particularly interesting Proclus' *In Rem.* will be, since the text is clearly one of history's more interesting examples of engagement with textual authority.⁵²

Returning to the question of the place of the *In Rem.* in Proclus' work, a comparison with the commentary on the *Cratylus* is instructive. The commentary on the *Cratylus* seems to be composed of lecture notes or perhaps some type of excerpt/epitome. It is clear that what we have is not exactly what Proclus wrote. The work refers to Proclus in the 3rd person multiple times (30.4, 49.5, 58.4, 113.1, 154.3) (see Duvick 2007: 3 and Van Den Berg 2008: 94-95).⁵³ In contrast, the *In Rem.* has a consistent authorial voice so that the *ego* that appears on the first page is clearly the same *ego* that

⁵² Perhaps the most concise statement of the broad historical questions addressed by this literature is found in the preface to Most 1999; see also Goulet-Caze 2000, Geerlings and Schulze 2002 and Gibson and Kraus 2002; directly related to Proclus (though without much direct discussion of him) are Sluiter 1999 and Rowe 2002. For interesting approaches to Proclus' work as a part of this discussion see Dillon 1999 and Vallance 1999 (though they do not discuss the *In Rem.* itself). Vallance's work is particularly important, mainly on the Euclid commentary (see next chapter); see especially the generalizations and questions about Proclus' activity at 1999: 243-244.

⁵³ The title provides further confirmation of this point: ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥ ΠΡΟΚΛΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΙΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΡΑΤΥΛΟΝ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ ΕΚΛΟΓΑΙ ΧΡΗΣΙΜΟΙ.

proposes to explain the Myth of Er to Marinus in the second volume.⁵⁴ Compared to these other four commentaries of Proclus, the commentary on the *Republic* is the only one that is complete because it is the only one that continues through to the end of the work in question; the text that we have of all of the other commentaries unfortunately leaves off less than half-way through-- the rest of the text has been lost. Those familiar with the quality of Proclus' work will realize that this loss (since the gap is not filled by other commentaries) is tremendous. However, we seem to have the majority of the *In Rem*.

Furthermore, rather than a fault, the difference in style between these essays and Proclus' other commentaries means that the *Commentary on the Republic*, relative to the other commentaries, contains a little of the intermediate style Carlos Steel praises in the case of the *Monibiblia*.⁵⁵ Proclus' writing is excellent Attic Greek; Proclus notes that Porphyry criticized Colotes for being "ἄγευστον λογογραφικῆς καὶ σοφιστικῆς χάριτος καὶ μούσης Ἀττικῆς" (2.111.11), and Proclus seems to have taken particular pride in possessing these qualities himself. The majority of unfamiliar words a reader of Plato's Greek finds in Proclus turn out to be technical terms from Aristotle's logic or Plotinus' philosophy.

Two anecdotes from the late-antique *Life of Isidore*, a biography of an Alexandrian scholar who post-dated Proclus (c. 500 BC), preserved as an extract in Photius (Codex 242), help us see how the activity of writing philosophical commentaries was understood by those engaged in the activity.⁵⁶ Together the anecdotes show a remarkable self-consciousness about the limits and purpose of philosophical commentaries. In one case, Marinus (now in Alexandria) wants to show off his commentaries on the *Philebus* (ὑπόμνημα πολύστιχον εἰς Φίληβον) which he has just written. He asks Isidorus if they are worth preserving and is told: "actually, the commentaries of your teacher [i.e. Proclus] are probably sufficient" at which point, without complaining, Marinus commits his own book to the flames (Photius 338a.17-27). Though the anecdote is meant to demonstrate in part the respect accorded Proclus relative to his student (and most of all the judgment of Isidorus who gives Marinus this advice), the surrounding discussion indicates as well a deep awareness of the necessity of not overwhelming students with recently composed scholarly work in a way that hinders direct appreciation of the original text-- one of the more perennial Platonic concerns. Unfortunately, we do not even have Proclus' commentaries on the *Philebus*. The second anecdote has an opposite effect. The philosopher Hierocles (5th century AD) was lecturing on the *Gorgias*, and one of his students decided to take real notes (ἀπεγράψατο τὴν ἐξήγησιν). After a period of time, the same teacher gave another lecture on the *Gorgias*, and the same student took notes. The student then compared the two sets of notes and realized that they had nothing whatsoever in common. The author

⁵⁴ Hoffman 2006, speaking of Simplicius but describing Proclus: "the commentaries of Simplicius, too, are, like the great commentaries of Proclus, the fruit of a personal labor of composition and writing: they are a genuine "oeuvre," sometimes polemical in tone and sometimes animated by a concern to summarize the philosophical tradition and to defend the ancestral religion of the Greeks" (615).

⁵⁵ "His style of writing is intermediate as well: not the grand rhetoric of the *Platonic Theology*, not the almost mathematical austerity of the *Elements of Theology*"-- referring to the "On the Existence of Evil" (Steel 2003: 1).

⁵⁶ This text is also called *The Philosophical History*. See the recent English translation, with introduction and notes, by Polymnia Athanassiadi (1999).

of the book summarized by Photius believes the episode is entirely to the teacher's credit - it shows the great depth of his mind (338b.36).

The other difference between the commentary on the *Republic* and Proclus' other works is the extraordinary reception history of the *In Rempublicam*. A single carefully written manuscript was purchased by the Medici from one Harmonius of Athens in 1492; it was then at some subsequent point split in two and the second half was heavily damaged. The first half ended up in the Laurentine library in Florence and was used to create a printed edition in 1534; the second half ended up in the Vatican and was not available to the public. Though this extraordinary story is reminiscent of popular fiction, it seems to be true and to be accepted by the limited number of scholars who have published anything on the subject (as far as I know of, just Festugière 1970 and Michael Allen 1994). Kroll, the editor of the Teubner edition says, narrating the recovery of the manuscript: "At paulo post Ric. Reitzenstein codicem ipsum, quem frustra quaesiverat Schoell, apud Pitram abscondi cognovit" (vii). Most importantly, in terms of the reception history, neither Marsilio Ficino nor Thomas Taylor translated the work (except in small portions). Taylor did create English translations of the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* commentaries. His translations, whatever their faults, did allow even his critics to read the works in their native language and so gain some sense of the contents. Without an available translation, probably very few people read a long commentary on a long work that was available only in Greek particularly if the tone of contemporary scholarship discouraged doing so. The 1534 edition was probably fairly rare, and we can basically be sure that almost no one except the Vatican librarians read the entire text before 1900. Because scholars tend to discuss what other scholars have already discussed, the fact that the entire text was simply not available to the 19th century has probably contributed tremendously to its neglect-- we can be sure that important figures who laid the foundations of modern Plato scholarship, figures like Zeller, Grote, Karl Friedrich Hermann,⁵⁷ and Jowett never even had access to more than half of the text.

I will provide here an overview of the work, listing each section that has its own heading separately.⁵⁸ These titles are included in an index and then repeated at the beginning of each essay. The defence of Homer has further sub-headings which are also listed in the index and then repeated before each section. I have provided the English headings, then quoted the Greek title. The various sections have traditionally been referred to as individual essays and assigned numbers; this is a modern system with no basis in the manuscript or ancient tradition. Though I will disagree with the way the contents of the commentary have traditionally been evaluated, this system is convenient, and I will continue to use it. I have listed these traditional numbers in front of each index heading and will continue to refer to the portions of the commentary using them. Thus, the "third essay" would be the analysis of the arguments of Thrasymachus and the "16th essay" is the exegesis of the Myth of Er, etc. It is important though to stress that this does not indicate the work is an essay collection rather than a commentary. This summary should show the form of the work. Proclus discusses every book of the *Republic* and

⁵⁷ for a brief introduction to the Plato scholarship of these important figures see Tigerstedt 1977 (Zeller 16; Grote 17; Hermann 27-30).

⁵⁸ cf. Sheppard 1980: 203. Sheppard accepts Gallavotti's recommendations (surprising since her criticisms of his arguments are in some respects similar to what I have said below) and provides additionally a translation of all the sub-headings found in the 5th and 6th essays.

these discussions are arranged in order; I have listed the index headings under the book of the *Republic* they deal with in order to make this evident. Pages refer to the Teubner edition of Kroll published in two volumes, 1899 and 1901; I have put the amount of pages, not the page numbers since I am trying to give an overview of the contents, not provide a table of contents for Kroll's edition.

Book 1:

- [1] Discussion of the purpose (*skopos*) of the *Republic*, including its dramatic frame and narrative style (Περὶ τοῦ τίνα χρῆ καὶ πόσα πρὸ τῆς συναναγνώσεως τῆς Πολιτείας Πλάτωνος κεφάλαια διαρθρώσαι τοὺς ὀρθῶς ἐξηγουμένους αὐτήν) [mostly missing] 15 pages remain.

- [2] Analysis of the arguments about justice with Polemarchus. (Περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὸν ὄρον τῆς δικαιοσύνης τὸν τοῦ Πολεμάρχου ῥηθέντων ὑπὸ τοῦ Σωκράτους συλλογισμῶν) [entirely missing; Index heading only].

- [3] Analysis of the arguments about justice with Thrasymachus (Περὶ τῶν ὑπὲρ δικαιοσύνης τεττάρων λόγων ἐν Πολιτεία πρὸς τὰ Θρασυμάχου τέτταρα δόγματα περὶ αὐτῆς). [mostly missing] 7 pages remain.

Book 2:

- [4] Discussion of the theological principles in the second book of the *Republic* (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ τῆς Πολιτείας εἰρημένων θεολογικῶν τύπων). 15 pages.

Books 2-3:

- [5] General discussion of Plato and poetry (Περὶ ποιητικῆς καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτὴν εἰδῶν καὶ τῆς ἀρίστης ἀρμονίας καὶ ῥυθμοῦ τὰ Πλάτωνι δοκούντα). 28 pages.

- [6] Response to Socrates' criticisms of Homer (Περὶ τῶν ἐν Πολιτεία πρὸς Ὅμηρον καὶ ποιητικὴν Πλάτωνι ῥηθέντων). 136 pages.

Book 4

- [7] On the parts of the soul and the types of virtue (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ τῆς Πολιτείας ἀποδείξεων τοῦ τρία εἶναι μόρια τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς καὶ τέτταρας τὰς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀρετάς). 30 pages.

Book 5:

- [8] The proposals for gender equality in book 5 (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ τῆς Πολιτείας δεικνύντων λόγων κοινὰς εἶναι τὰς ἀρετάς καὶ τὴν παιδείαν ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν). 14 pages.

- [9] Response to attempts to ridicule these proposals and additional arguments of Theodorus of Asinus concerning this issue (Περὶ τῶν Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ἀσιναίου λόγων τῶν κατασκευαζόντων τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρετὴν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι καὶ γυναικός, καὶ ὃν ὁ Σωκράτης εἶπεν ἐξέτασις). 6 pages.

- [10] The distinction between philosophers and lovers of opinion (Περὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ τῆς Πολιτείας λόγου δεικνύντος, τίς ἢ τῶν φιλοσόφων φιλομαθία καὶ τίς ἢ τῶν πολλῶν). 10 pages.

Book 6:

- [11] The idea of the good (Περὶ τοῦ ἐν Πολιτεία λόγου τοῦ δεικνύντος, τί ποτέ ἐστι τὰγαθόν). 18 pages.

Book 7:

- [12] The philosopher's cave (Περὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ ἑβδόμῳ τῆς Πολιτείας σπηλαίου). 9 pages remain; a substantial portion (perhaps more than remains) of this essay is missing due to a single lacuna.

Books 8/9:

- [13] The nuptial number and the corruption of the best city (Μέλισσα εἰς τὸν ἐν Πολιτεία λόγον τῶν Μουσῶν). 82 pages remain; text is incomplete.

Book 9:

- [14] Three reasons why the just person is happier than the unjust (Περὶ τῶν δεικνύτων τριῶν λόγων εὐδαιμονέστερον τοῦ ἀδίκου τὸ δίκαιον). 2 pages.

Book 10:

- [15] Summary of the main points of book 10 (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ δεκάτῳ τῆς Πολιτείας κεφαλαίων). 11 pages.

- [16] Line by line commentary on the Myth of Er (Εἰς τὸν ἐν Πολιτεία μῦθον). 263 pages.

And:

[17] Additional Observations concerning Aristotle's criticisms of Plato's *Republic* (Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν ὑπ' Ἀριστοτέλους ἐν δευτέρῳ τῶν Πολιτικῶν πρὸς τὴν Πλάτωνος Πολιτείαν ἀντειρημένων) [partially missing. Translated by R. Stalley, 1994]. 8 pages.

Thus, the commentary is complete in the sense that it begins with a discussion of the *Republic's* dramatic frame and ends with a discussion of the Myth of Er covering the important arguments and topics in between including all the most famous portions in the order in which they appear in the *Republic*. Each discussion indicates the intent to maintain focus as a commentary on the *Republic*. For example, the discussion of Homer is specifically geared towards answering Socrates' objections in order, passage by passage. It does provide a general view of Proclus' approach to Homer but only in so far as this arises necessarily because of the breadth of Socrates' criticisms. The beginning of the essay on the philosopher's cave almost indicates reluctance to discuss a subject about which so much had been written already but seems to acknowledge the necessity of the discussion-- exactly the sort of necessity one would feel if writing a complete commentary on the *Republic*; Proclus also indicates in this section awareness of the purpose of the present work (1.295.29) and refers readers to other works for a more complete treatment of the same subjects.

Based on this sketch, one can also comment about what seems to be missing from the commentary and what portions of the *Republic* Proclus does not discuss. Initially one might think that the first part of book 2 (Glaucon's challenge, etc.) is not discussed, but the introductory discussion is so thorough that it may well have included an analysis of this section in the discussion of the overall structure of the work. Likewise, discussion of the opening arguments with Cephalus could have easily been included in the lost portions of the first or second sections (either as part of the discussion of the dramatic frame or as a prelude to the examination of Polemarchus' argument). Books 2-3 are treated in two essays. The first poses ten general questions about Plato and poetry; the second provides a defence of Homer together with a defence of the traditional Greek theological myths which Socrates seems to reject in the *Republic* (more on this below). On book 4, we seem to have everything the manuscript ever included, so we can note that his discussion

of book 4 seems to have been somewhat less extensive than that of other books like 1, 3 or 10. The commentary is quite dense though, so the 30+ pages on book 5 end up being substantial. One wonders at points whether the headings of the commentary and the way certain issues are addressed are designed to avoid controversy; rather than devote an essay directly to the idea of philosopher-kings (which would have obviously been extremely controversial at the time), Proclus offers the essay on the arguments at the end of book 5 (discussing Stephanus pages 484-488). As with book 4, we seem to possess the entirety of the discussion of book 6, which consists of the single essay on the idea of the good. However, the following essay on the philosopher's cave does compare the image of the cave with the division of the line that ends book 6 and so still relates to book 6. The discussion of book 7 seems again to have consisted of a single essay (on the philosopher's cave), but in this case there is a significant gap in the manuscript (*Kroll In Rem.* 1.293.22), so it is unclear how long this essay may have been. Books 8-9 seem to be treated only very strangely. Rather than the psychological or historical discussion we might hope for, Proclus treats these books only as part of the discussion of the nuptial number (in the essay referred to as the Melissa). What remains does not seem, for example, to compare this typology of states with the version in the *Statesman* or Aristotle's *Politics* much less provide any sort of historical commentary. Even this though is somewhat unclear; the discussion is quite far-ranging, and again much of it is missing, so it would be unwise to jump to conclusions about what Proclus did not discuss. The essay does seem in some (very unfamiliar) sense to be a general essay on the degeneration of states covering books 8-9. The only section devoted exclusively to book 9 is extremely short (2 pages). The treatment of book 10 includes a section summarizing the main points of book 10 and then the line by line treatment of the Myth of Er.

The most significant omissions may well be due more to pages lost from the manuscript than to parts of the *Republic* Proclus did not discuss. The most significant lost portions seem to be in the Melissa (the 16th essay, where it is entirely unclear what portion of the work we possess, particularly at the beginning), in the essay on the philosopher's cave (12th essay) and in the introduction (1st essay). The sections missing from the introduction show most clearly that any perception that the *In Rem.* is not a unified work is probably due to these omissions.

The first couple of pages are basically an introduction to the entire first essay in which Proclus enumerates seven headings that he will discuss and which must be discussed and considered before reading the *Republic*. Though only 2.5 of these discussions remain, we have this point-by-point introduction, so we can be more certain exactly what is missing than is possible with the other lacunae. I will discuss these opening pages more extensively in the following chapter. For the present purpose, it is sufficient to point out what the seventh heading was:

ἔβδομον τὴν δι' ὅλου τοῦ συγγράμματος διήκουσαν τῶν δογμάτων ἀκολουθίαν ὑπ' ὅσιν ἀγαγεῖν καὶ ἐπιδείξαι, καθάπερ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Φαίδρῳ φησὶν (264C), ὡς εἰς ἐνὸς ζώου μέρη τε καὶ μέλη συντεταγμένα πρὸς ἄλληλα σύστασιν τὴν πραγματείαν ἅπασαν ἀπηκριβωμένην· ἐν γὰρ ταύτῃ τῇ διεξόδῳ καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν κεφαλαίων ἔσται γνῶριμον, καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτοῖς

είρομένη τάξις κατάδηλος ὀφθήσεται, καὶ ὅπως εἰς τὸν ἕνα βλέπει πάντα σκοπόν. (1.6.24-7.4)

The seventh topic will be to show the sequence of thought and of ideas that extends through the entire text [of the *Republic*] just as Plato himself said in the *Phaedrus*, as though the complete work was so polished that its pieces have been ordered together like the parts and limbs of a single living thing.⁵⁹ In the course of this exposition the cause for this number of main points and the ordered chain of thought will become clear as well as how the entire dialogue is oriented towards a single goal.

We simply do not have the expansion of this heading (not to mention the ones that precede it). One could guess that the discussion of this point alone may have been between 1 and 15 pages. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that any perception that the commentary did not intend to deal with the *Republic* as a whole is due primarily to the pages which are missing from the manuscript.

As I said, the pages are missing from the manuscript in the midst of the third of the seven headings. The purpose of this third heading is to describe the characters, setting and occasion of the *Republic* (τρίτον δὲ τὴν ὕλην καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐπισκέψασθαι τῶν ἐν τῇ Πολιτείᾳ λόγων, ἣν ἔν τε προσώποις καὶ τόποις καὶ καιροῖς θεωρεῖσθαι συμβέβηκεν; "the third topic is to discuss the material of which the arguments in the dialogue are composed, material which must be examined as it exists in characters, locations and occasions" 1.6.7-10⁶⁰). The pages are missing as soon as Proclus begins to describe the characters. Based on comparison with his analysis of the four characters in *Timaeus*, it seems likely that Proclus explained a Pythagorean interpretation of the *Republic* based on the fact that there were 10 participants. The final lines are (Kroll 1.19.23-5): Λείπεται δὲ ἔτι περὶ τῶν προσώπων διελεῖν. οὐκοῦν δέκα μὲν οἱ συνόντες ἀλλήλοις...

The lacuna that follows includes the rest of the seven points, all of Proclus' analysis of the discussion with Polemarchus and the majority of the analysis of the discussion with Thrasymachus. About 7 pages of the latter remain. It is extremely unfortunate that these missing pages include the majority of Proclus' discussion of book 1 of the *Republic* including some of the portions of the work that have received the most scholarly attention. However, we do have enough information to know that the work seems to be meant as a relatively complete commentary.

It is worth dwelling at greater length on what it means to say this is the only commentary on the *Republic* left from antiquity and how it helps us see the *Republic* in its ancient context. Is the work about politics or ethical justice? How would a Platonist respond to Aristotle's idea of katharsis or Aristotle's criticism of the unity of the *Republic* in his *Politics*? How does the image of the divided line relate to the image of the cave that follows? Why does Socrates criticize Homer? How would a Platonist respond to

⁵⁹ See also Coulter 1976: 127-8.

⁶⁰ The use of the term ὕλην to describe the material substrate of the dialogues depends upon a pervasive comparison between the creator of a dialogue and the creator of the cosmos, see for example *Anonymous Prolegomena* 13-16.

Stoic and Peripatetic arguments that defended a more traditional role for women? How would a Platonist respond to Epicurean critiques of Platonic myth? In each of these cases and many more, Proclus uses the best sources to respond to the most important questions. Thus, Proclus' work does not just place Plato's *Republic* in its cultural context (i.e. Orphic religion, multiple divinities, etc.), but more importantly by engaging with arguments of the other major schools like Peripatetics and Epicureans, it helps us see Plato's work in the philosophical context of antiquity. The excellence of the work consists primarily in the ability to identify and discuss concisely the most important ideas of Plato's rivals -- when discussing books 2-3 Proclus responds to Aristotle's idea of katharsis; discussing book 4 he addresses the Stoic conception of an 8-part soul; discussing the Myth of Er, he responds to Epicurean critiques of myth, etc. We may not always agree with Proclus' answers, but he is clearly engaging logically with the philosophical mainstream. The commentary would be invaluable for the questions it asks alone so that Sedley's comment on the Anonymous commentary on the *Theaetetus* certainly applies as well to Proclus: "[Anon] reads the text of Plato with a respect and commitment few of us can hope to match. It would be unwarranted complacency to assume we have nothing to learn from him" (1993: 149). I would even claim that our knowledge of Proclus' identity and biography together with the certainty that he was an Athenian scholar universally acknowledged as the best philosopher of his century is probably more important than the distinction between middle and later Platonism.

The most obvious reason to take the work seriously is that it uses a multitude of sources which were later lost; these citations provide every indication that the author is capable of using his sources extremely well. Many of these sources are from the latter half of antiquity, including middle Platonists-- Proclus gives for example a list of 7 authors he has consulted on the interpretation of the Myth of Er (2.96.10).⁶¹ He uses even far more than these in the *Melissa* (ex. Dörrie picks up on the citation of Dercyllides and Remes uses the citation of Amelius-- both figures we otherwise know next to nothing about). He clearly has far more sources than he cites at all points; he simply happens to list names at the beginning of the commentary on the Myth of Er in order to honor those he cites. Moreover, he also uses at essential points much earlier very basic works which we have also lost, including the *Nomoi* of Theophrastus, the *Aitia* of Callimachus, pre-Socratics like Philolaus, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Heraclitus, some information about early Platonists like Xenocrates, an Epicurean source criticizing Platonic myth and more. Sometimes when he refers to a famous work only once and briefly, he does so to make a tremendously important point. Frequently these references, most of which have already been entered into our collections of fragments, exist nowhere else (Diels-Kranz

⁶¹ This is the section Dörrie uses. Proclus cites Numenius (Dillon 1977: 361-79), Gaius (Dillon 1977: 266-7), Albinus (Dillon 1977: 267ff.), Harpocration (Dillon 1977: 258-62), Euclid (probably the figure in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, section 20), Maximus of Nikaia, and clearly admires Porphyry above all. The identity of Maximus is uncertain. Dörrie (1987 vol 3 p. 152) suggests that he is to be identified with the Maximus in the *Life of Plotinus*, 17.14. However, the context makes it seem more likely that the Maximus in that case is Maximus of Tyre (who would be Numenius' rough contemporary). Thus, Proclus might be referring to Maximus, the tutor of Julian; see Eunapius, Zosimus on this figure; the Suda entry (Μάξιμος, Ἡπειρώτης ἢ Βυζάντιος φιλόσοφος) would then refer to Nikaia near Byzantium or Nikaïopolis in Epirus. Porphyry *Vita Pl.* 20.59 is interesting on Euclid because it indicates one of the ways information about earlier authors may have reached Proclus. Stobaeus 2.8.39-42 may preserve part of the relevant work of Porphyry (the latter is Kroll's suggestion).

Democritus fragment 1 is an example). Almost as frequently though, they are far more interesting in their complete context than they are in isolation; the most interesting part is to see how and why Proclus cites these works to address certain questions that arise when reading the *Republic*. Because this is one of the most obvious aspects of the *Commentary's* value, I will discuss some representative examples.

Some of the most serious source criticism so far was contained in the 1987 volume entitled *Proclus, Lecteur et Interprete des Anciens* (the volume presents the results of a conference organized in 1985 by Jean Pépin). Westerink argues that Proclus does actually have access to the complete poem of Parmenides (1987). Taran's discussion of Proclus' early academic sources (including Xenocrates, Speusippus and others) does prove at least that Proclus had some remnants of this material which were later lost (Taran is skeptical, but the fact remains whatever Proclus had, whether entire works or just epitomes or doxographies, we do not have; see the list of works of Xenocrates and Speusippus in Diogenes Laertius, 4.4-5 and 4.11-14, for a sense of what a tremendous amount of written material is under discussion). These cases (the poem of Parmenides and the works of the early Academy), are clearly two of the most important and controversial cases due to the puzzling relationship between Plato and Parmenides and the prominence of the theological reading of the Parmenides in the first case and, in the second case, Proclus' claim to be representing an interpretative tradition that stretches back to Plato's personal associates and first successors.⁶²

My point however will be to stress that the works Proclus uses are by no means confined to these most controversial examples. The works of Aristotle's students seem to have provided a tremendously valuable source for Proclus and the rest of antiquity. It must be the case (as it would be with any scholar) that Proclus often cites these sources simply to prove or support his own points; however, it is clearly also true that much of the time he cites them to disagree (even including the figures whom he deeply admires, like Xenocrates) or cites them to gloss or discuss obviously interesting points that will interest modern readers just as they interested Proclus (Is the title of Plato's work original? What would an Epicurean say about that? etc.). I will choose as examples the *Nomoi* of Theophrastus (together with some works of Aristotle), the *Anon. in Theaetetum* and the book of the Epicurean Colotes as examples, first because these examples avoid the vexed debates about Parmenides and the early Academy, second because in two of the cases it seems fairly likely (though of course unprovable) that Proclus possessed the entirety of the book(s) he uses, and third because the way he cites these works give a good sense of the breadth of his concerns in the *Commentary on the Republic*. Considering the use he makes of these lost sources, and the way he applies them to the important questions gives some introductory sense of his interpretative universe.

The reference to the *Nomoi* of Theophrastus occurs as Proclus discusses the question of whether the *Republic* is about a political constitution or about justice. Proclus clearly knows that many interpreters have argued each side of the question. Generally

⁶² Few texts give as clear a sense of the variety of books which would have been available to these later Platonists and the types of philological discussions they would have enabled as the excerpt from Porphyry found in Eusebius *Pr. Ev.* 10.3. Porphyry assumes that everyone present is capable of arguing over the style of Ephorus and Theopompus. In the final portion of the fragment, one speaker complains that books from the time before Plato are scarce and yet nevertheless claims to have read a copy of a book of Protagoras which he believes Plato has used. It is also notable that Porphyry clearly wrote a dialogue.

speaking, he only cites sources to make specific points or to honor those he particularly admires (as at the beginning of the exegesis of the Myth of Er); it is clear that at many points he must have far more sources than those he cites. This opening discussion provides one of the most vivid examples: "There are very many interpreters who think the purpose of the *Republic* is to discuss a political constitution" whereas "there are others, no less in number than these who think that the entire work is simply about ethical justice" (Kroll 1.7.5 and 1.8.5). The specific citations of sources only occur when Proclus uses the title of the work (*Politeia*) as evidence in this debate. Like modern scholars, he is aware of the vicissitudes of manuscript transmission and aware that some of the headings attached to some of Plato's works may not be genuine. In order to prove that the title of the *Republic* is original, he cites some early authors who also call the work by this title:

καὶ γὰρ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐπιτεμνόμενος τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην οὕτως φησιν, ἐπιτέμνεσθαι τὴν Πολιτείαν, καὶ ἐν τῷ Συσσιτικῷ τοῦτον αὐτὴν προσαγορεύει τὸν τρόπον καὶ ἐν τοῖς Πολιτικοῖς ὡσαύτως, καὶ Θεόφραστος ἐν Νόμοις καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοῦ. τῆς δὲ ἐπιγραφῆς ἀρχαίας οὕσης... (1.8.11-16)

For Aristotle too, summarizing this work speaks in this way, saying that he is "summarizing the *Republic*"; he also calls it by this name in the *Sussitikos* and the *Politics*. It is also called by this name by Theophrastus in his *Laws* and in many other places. Therefore, the title must be ancient...

When Aristotle discusses Plato's *Republic* in his *Politics*, he does not use this word ἐπιτέμνεσθαι; therefore, it is unclear whether what we have is a reference to two works (if this phrase was found in the *Sussitikos*) or three works (I have taken the *kai* to indicate the latter possibility, but this reading is not certain). Therefore, we are probably dealing with not one but two works of Aristotle which discuss the *Republic*, which Proclus possesses and which we do not have. The first of these works might be the same as that which is listed in the catalogue of works of Diogenes Laertius (5.22) as Τὰ ἐκ τῆς πολιτείας α_ β_ which seems to be a summary or excerpts from the *Republic* (I am proposing this tentative identification based on the meaning of the word "epitemnesthai"; the preceding entry clarifies that Plato's *Republic* is intended by the title; the identification is tentative both because it is uncertain that the list of Diogenes can be trusted and whether, if such a work existed, it would be the one referenced by Proclus).⁶³ The second work was called the *Sussitikos*, the same name used in Greek for the famous Spartan dining communes.⁶⁴ The third work of Aristotle which we do possess, the *Politics*, calls Plato's work by this title just as Proclus says it does (1261a6, 9; 1264b29).

⁶³ See also the note in Saffrey and Segonds glossing the quote from Marinus above (section 14) about how Proclus learned political virtue which also discusses the possibility that Proclus is reading additional political works of Aristotle (2001: 112-113 n.15).

⁶⁴ See also Rose fragments 180, 181. Rose cites this passage with Athenaeus 5.2. There is such a work mentioned in the catalogue of works of Aristotle in Diogenes Laertius (5.25). The existence of such a work could point out something important about Aristotle's approach to the *Republic*-- perhaps the provisions he rejected as politically possible he accepted when writing "symptotic laws" or instructions for private clubs.

Additionally, in his *Nomoi*, Theophrastus must have discussed the work and referred to it by this title. The Teubner editor, Kroll, noted "locus Theophrasti fragmentis addendus"-- i.e. we have no other source that provides this information from Theophrastus and the information had not been collected when Kroll published the *editio princeps* in 1899 and 1901.⁶⁵ Furthermore, we have no reason not to believe that Proclus does have a range of fairly early books in mind when he says καὶ ἄλλοθι πολλαχοῦ (it is unclear in this latter case whether the reference is to other works of Theophrastus or, more likely, to other authors). If we want to ignore Proclus or simply extract references from him to earlier authors (as has been done in the past), this sequence of thought is not helpful since he does not actually cite the various authors who argue on each side of the justice/politics question.⁶⁶ If he had, we would have an anthology, not a commentary on the *Republic*. Instead, he provides the arguments on each side of the question and responds. I chose this example because it is a small point but well-applied to an important discussion.

For my second example, I will use a brief passage in the commentary on the *Parmenides* which provides a historical summary of Platonist approaches to the prologues (658.32-659.23). John Dillon's summary of this passage indicates that Proclus provides a historical summary of developments since Porphyry and Iamblichus (Morrow/Dillon 1987), which is odd because Proclus does not actually mention Porphyry or Iamblichus here at all, something he is generally quite happy to do. Proclus seems instead to provide testimony as a reader of the dialogues of Theophrastus and Heraclides Ponticus that the prologues of these dialogues are not analogous to Plato's prologues-- the prologues of these other authors do not have much connection with what follows, he says-- but every school of Platonists would agree that Plato's prologues do (cf. Taran 1987: 269). I particularly want to stress though that Proclus refers to whole groups of Hellenistic interpreters who interpret the prologues in terms of what is "kathekon" (659.2-10). Interestingly, the discovery of the *Anon. in Theaetetus* allows us to confirm that Proclus was actually representing accurately here a group of Platonists whose texts he apparently had some knowledge of, does not even deign to cite by name, and which later became entirely lost. The issue relates directly to how much and what sort of knowledge Proclus has of what must have been entire libraries of Hellenistic work on Plato. *Anon.* uses exactly this approach to interpret the prologue of the *Theaetetus* (4.22). It is not very compelling as a reading of the *Theaetetus*, but the parallel should be given its due importance in any evaluation of Proclus' use of sources.

Proclus' response to the Epicurean critique of myth is a much larger point, and provides one of the most important of these examples of his use of lost works. It is worth explaining as an example of his sources and the value of the commentary because it is so central to the concerns of this commentary in particular and to the practice of ancient

⁶⁵ See Szegedy-Maszak 1981 for a useful discussion of the *Laws* of Theophrastus (79-87); he does not though include or discuss this fragment. Szegedy-Maszak, "Its true importance is for the history of ideas. As a companion to the *Politics* it provides, even in its fragmentary remains invaluable evidence about the empirical background for Aristotle's political theory" (87). Even though Proclus does not write about the empirical background of political theory, we have no reason for assuming he would not have done his background reading and known his Theophrastus just as he knew his Ptolemy, Euclid, Homer, etc.

⁶⁶ Proclus' reference to groups of interpreters who believe the "skopos" of the dialogue is "justice" rather than a particular polity could be thought to support Annas' (1999: 88-89) claim that at least some Platonists read the work primarily as a contribution to moral theory (though Proclus disagrees with the interpreters who approach the dialogue this way).

philosophy in general (i.e. it relates to the difference of opinion between Epicureans and Platonists concerning the philosophical use of myth). The example demonstrates the importance of the lost works Proclus uses because (as often) we do not have any other Greek sources which provide such detailed information; furthermore, the example shows why for this very reason Proclus' *In Rem.* is an important source for understanding ancient philosophy even for those who may find themselves ultimately more in agreement with the arguments of Plato's opponents.

We know from Plutarch that the first-generation follower of Epicurus, Colotes, was critical of all of the other philosophical schools in a manner that made Plutarch single him out from his teacher Epicurus for criticism and response (see Kechagia 2011). However, we know only from one other source that some work of Colotes (or any other Epicurean for that matter) specifically mocked Plato's myth of Er. The other source is Macrobius' commentary on the Dream of Scipio which transmits some of the same information as Proclus, but in far less detail as part of a defence of Cicero's myth; Colotes was obviously not referring to Cicero, but Macrobius correctly assumes that most of the same arguments would apply to Cicero's myth as apply to Plato's.⁶⁷ Proclus apparently has the book of Colotes that criticized Plato's Myth of Er and responds in detail to its allegations. This kind of argument is a perfect example (one of many) of what it means to say that Proclus has a tremendous range of sources that allow him to engage with ancient debates about the value of Plato's *Republic* and how it should be read.

Colotes' arguments are interesting enough that they are worth quoting. His main points were:

1. Plato abandoned the pursuit of truth (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀφείξας τὴν ἐπιστημονικὴν περὶ τὸ ψεῦδος διατρίβει μυθολογῶν ὡς ποιητής, 105.23)
2. Plato criticized underworld myths in the first part of the *Republic* only to reverse himself and create frightening tales himself in the same work (ἐλοιδόρησε [Plato] τοὺς ποιητὰς ὡς περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου φρικτὰ [τοῖς ἀκούουσιν] πλάσαντας καὶ θανάτου φόβον ἐντεκόντας τοῖς ἀκούουσιν, ἐπὶ τέλει δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς μεθήρμοσεν τὴν φιλόσοφον μούσαν εἰς τραγικὴν τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου πραγμάτων μυθολογίαν, 106.1-5).
3. These types of myths are not popular among the many, and they are of no use to philosophers. (καὶ τὸ τρίτον, ὅτι τοὺς τοιούσδε μύθους πολὺ τὸ μάταιον ἔχειν ἀναγκαῖον· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πολλοῖς οὐδὲ συνεῖναι δυναμένοις αὐτῶν εἰσὶν ἀσύμμετροι, τοῖς δὲ σοφοῖς οὐ δεομένοις ἀμείνοσιν ἐκ τῶν τοιῶνδε γίνεσθαι δειμάτων περιττοί, 106.10-12).

Thus, we know from Proclus, and only from Proclus, some very specific information about how Epicureans read and criticized Plato's work. We know these criticisms that many puzzled modern readers would probably share as well as some still more specific criticisms Proclus explains as he proceeds: Colotes mocked Plato's play on the words *alkimos* and *Alkinous*, calling the introduction of the myth juvenile (2.111.6-9) and asked why Er's body did not decay when it sat there for 12 days (2.113.6-12).

We can safely infer that at least since Colotes the ability to respond in some way to these criticisms must have been constitutive of what a Platonist was; all Platonists must

⁶⁷ See Macrobius *In Somnium Scipionis* 1.2 (Armisen-Marchetti 2001: 4-9 with notes). As I will show in the next chapter, the reception history of Proclus' work also became entangled with the story about Cardinal Mai's partial recovery of Cicero's *Republic*.

have responded to these sorts of charges with a more careful interpretation of the Myth of Er and an explication of its purposes together with some serious thought about the purposes of myth in general. One could cite the careful dramatic framings of some of Plutarch's dialogues or also the 4th essay of Maximus of Tyre as examples that show this trend was pervasive. Proclus of course does not cite these examples because for him, these literary (Plutarch) or rhetorical (Maximus of Tyre) examples of popular philosophy (perhaps what we would call philosophical writing rather than philosophy proper) were probably not very serious compared to the books of Albinus, Gaius, and others which he consulted. Proclus' response to these Epicurean criticisms of the myth in Plato's *Republic* is extremely worthy of attention simply because it is the only such Platonist response that survives (in terms of a specific response on the Myth of Er); it was kept secret and hidden in the Vatican library until the latter part of the 19th century when finally published (in Greek only) by Kroll in 1901.

Knowledge of the existence of this debate about the purpose and philosophical value of Plato's myths (including the radical Epicurean position that they were simply ridiculous) provides really substantial help in analyzing the range of responses to Plato's work among the different schools in antiquity and the types of debate prevalent among philosophical readers in antiquity. Proclus' answers are interesting, but for now I simply want to point out that Proclus chose not to respond to contemporary opponents but seems to have chosen instead to address what he must have considered either the most famous book or the most cogent and serious set of criticisms. In this case, like Plutarch, he apparently singles out Colotes partly as a way of attacking the follower and answering the most important arguments while maintaining some degree of respect towards Epicurus and Democritus. Colotes mocks Plato; Proclus never mocks Epicurus, but saves his scorn for Colotes. It seems to be the case that this represents the type of polemic between schools that was standard in antiquity rather than any more radical rejection of Epicurean materialism (i.e. Proclus definitely does not represent the sort of radical rejection of materialism Greenblatt explains (81-109); see also my final chapter). It is hard to think Proclus would have attacked Colotes for his ignorance of Democritus' work (particularly for the reasons he does) if he had not been just as interested in seeing Democritus' work preserved for posterity as any other philosopher not of the same school had ever been; one might even guess based on this passage (which provides Diels-Kranz fragment 1) that he may well have been far more interested in seeing Democritus preserved than Platonists of previous centuries had ever been. However, if his authority was not even sufficient to transmit a full text of the Chaldaean oracles or the Orphic poems or Aristotle's *Sussiticos* or his own *Commentary on the Theaetetus* or any these works of the other Platonists he singles out for honor-- not even the work of his teacher Syrianus that he specifically recommends his readers consult or the poems of Antimachus whom he identifies as the sort of poetry most appreciated by Plato (*In Timaeum* 1.90.20)-- why should we be surprised if Proclus' preference for the philosophy of Democritus was overwhelmed by events?⁶⁸ In any case, the same economy of discussion and identification of the most important debates is evident throughout the work. Proclus seems to survey the philosophical tradition and identify with some skill the arguments of rival schools and then defend Plato's position.

⁶⁸ See also Marciano 2007.

Elena Kachagia has recently provided a valuable discussion of Plutarch's *Against Colotes* which both appreciates Plutarch's concerns as a Platonist and points to the interest of the debate even for modern readers who simply regret the loss of Epicurean source material. However, she incorrectly indicates that Proclus is copying this discussion from Porphyry rather than responding to the work himself. Proclus certainly seems to be responding directly to a work which he knows Porphyry has also read and discussed. Proclus says: Ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸς τοὺς τοιούσδε λόγους οὐχ ὅσα μόνον ὁ φιλοσοφώτατος κατέτεινεν Πορφύριος ἔχοιμεν ἂν ἀπαντῶντες λέγειν.⁶⁹ (2.106.14-15). He does not exactly say "I provide more of the arguments than Porphyry," rather that "I have more to say in response," so it is logically possible it could mean more in response to arguments I have taken from Porphyry. However, Proclus does not indicate that he used Porphyry as a source of Colotes' arguments or even that Porphyry transmitted Colotes arguments at all; instead, he cites Porphyry's criticism of Colotes in a tone which indicates Proclus was not all motivated to disguise his debt to Porphyry-- he is proud of it.

It is of course always possible that Proclus copied the entire discussion from Porphyry, but in making the claim Kechagia does not even seem to have considered what Porphyry's commentary on the *Republic* was (is it partially preserved in Stobaeus as Kroll's footnote indicates?) or how many other sources Proclus cites (not to mention the deep connection between Epicurus and Athens). This question could arise any time a scholar references a book, giving the impression they read it, responds to the arguments of the book and then cites someone else who also discussed the same book. If the first discussion of the original book is lost, someone could always claim that the second scholar simply copied from the first rather than reading the original book themselves (it is interesting to note that this claim would be possible even if Colotes' book itself were extant today-- as long as Porphyry's book is lost, it is technically possible to claim Proclus copied Porphyry's summary of the points). Thus, in some technical sense, because Porphyry's book is lost, Kechagia's claim is irrefutable; it is a however, an extremely unlikely possibility with no arguments or evidence or historical plausibility in its favor. It is clearly at odds with the tone of the commentary which indicates Proclus read and responded to a book Porphyry also read; Proclus cites the arguments of the book at length with no indication he takes these arguments from Porphyry. Not only do we have this information about Colotes' work only from Proclus, but we also know only from Proclus that Porphyry also read and responded to the same work. Both pieces of information are extremely valuable taken separately; the citation of Porphyry clearly demonstrates the even greater value of Proclus as a source because he not only provides the best source of information about Colotes' critique but also provides evidence that others responded to this same critique.⁷⁰⁷¹

At other points, Proclus' analysis is extremely valuable even when he is using sources that are still available to us. For example, he refers to Aristotle's logical works

⁶⁹ "I have even more to say in response to these arguments than the most philosophical Porphyry said."

⁷⁰ I am disagreeing with Kachagia directly here exactly because I think her work is a such a valuable contribution. However, as in the earlier stage of consideration of Plato in antiquity, she is trying unnecessarily to wall off "middle-Platonism" from later approaches. The arguments Kechagia uses in her introduction for taking Plutarch seriously also apply to Proclus.

⁷¹ cf. Dörrie/Baltes v. 3, 152-3 n.2, 6.

twice in a close analysis of Glaucon's inability to follow Socrates, and he quotes the *De Anima* twice in the explanation of the Myth of Er (I'll say more about both of these portions of the commentary in a later chapter). The way he uses Aristotle to describe what Glaucon misses is really surprising; the way he cites Aristotle in the Myth of Er is in some ways probably obvious to modern Aristotle scholars (i.e. cites the *De Anima* 3.5 once to say that even Aristotle could agree to this, meaning some immortal portion of the soul, then cites the *De Anima* again to say obviously Aristotle would never agree to this, meaning re-incarnation). In any case, the majority of these valuable references to works that are not lost are to Plato's other works. The cross-references to Plato's other works are useful even when they are of the sort already acknowledged by the modern scholarly community. For example, he references and discusses *Laws* 739b-c in the introduction (Kroll 1.9-10), and he naturally cites *Laches* 188d to supplement the *Republic's* discussion of musical modes (Kroll 1.61.29). Neither cross-reference is surprising or unfamiliar to the modern scholarly community, but the economy and clarity of Proclus' presentation is still impressive. Other references are more surprising, follow from Proclus' general way of approaching Platonism and yet still show serious concern for the most important philosophical issues found in the Platonic dialogues.

Given the newly open debate about the interrelationship among the ideas and characters in Plato's dialogues and the general disillusionment with the developmental hypothesis, Proclus' often quite straightforward claims about the way the dialogues connect with each other provide a valuable set of ideas to compare with the modern debate (I will discuss some of these points in greater detail in a subsequent chapter). Relative to all of Proclus' other commentaries if not to all other extant ancient commentaries on Plato period, this work seems to be richer in discussion about how the different dialogues relate to one another. It is probably the richest source left from antiquity for explaining how serious Platonists approached the complex interpretative project which Plato's dialogues represented without using the developmental hypothesis to explain away apparent contradictions; perhaps this very fact partially explains why it has been so neglected.⁷²

Though much of Proclus' approach is strange or foreign, I think it is actually possible to articulate in a general sense what his overall approach can offer modern scholarship. If we ask basic questions about how native Greek speakers interpreted Plato's work in the 800 years between 350BC and 500 AD then Proclus is probably one of our best sources of information. How, for example, would an auditor like Nikeratus (327c2), who Xenophon tells us memorized all of Homer, have responded to the work (see Xenophon *Symposium* 3.6)? This is particularly important in the case of the *Republic* since there are such basic questions about how it should be read. For example--are the radical proposals meant ironically?

Proclus actually believes that the proposals about gender equality are to be taken entirely seriously. On the other hand, he demonstrates convincingly that the criticism of Homer and the poets is an elaborate example of dramatic irony.⁷³ Dramatic irony (when Socrates criticizes Homer the author for not speaking in his own voice) is simply not the same thing as proposals which appear ridiculous only because they are unfamiliar (the

⁷² I think it can make a significant contribution to almost all of the questions Griswold enumerates in the new preface to *Platonic Reading, Platonic Writing* (1988/2002: xiii-xv).

⁷³ Coulter already noticed this irony in 1976 (46); it is unclear how Sheppard 1980 missed it.

idea of female education). Proclus does not think Socrates is being ironic when he proposes that philosophers should rule or that women should be educated. He sees the *Republic* as representing a theoretical ideal which, while not impossible, is not primarily valuable for the practicability of the proposals in question. The debate about whether the proposals are meant as a serious possibility or instead simply ironic obscures the fact that the answer is probably neither. The fact that such a state is possible is used primarily to stress the value of the theoretical model-- Plato does say that such a state is possible, but surely also intended the *Republic* primarily if not exclusively for readers who would never live in such a state. A reading that stresses what is theoretically ideal is simply not the same as an ironic reading (though it may be related in some ways). In terms of female education, Proclus' discussion very much seems to imply at least in part that he does intend the ideas as not only theoretically possible but also practically beneficial. In other respects, he tends to stress the theoretical nature of the proposals (particularly in terms of the possible existence of an ideal state).⁷⁴

In fact, one could almost say that the value of the proposal of a perfect state is exactly that it is very unlikely to be put in practice; this distance between the philosophically ideal and the laws of any existing state prevents the codification and calcification of the interests of any existing state or class into an ideal, the process we call ideology. The theoretical ideal creates a space for theoretical discussion, and then theoretical discussion may well contribute at some remove to law-giving (it is interesting to contrast Cicero's *Republic* in this respect-- Cicero does actually relate the traditional laws and customs of his own state to his theoretical ideal). Furthermore, Proclus seems to see the *Republic* as a sort of initiation for philosophers which provides a scheme for organizing philosophical education as much as a scheme for a distinct political society. The ability to seriously (i.e. unironically) posit an ideal while at the same time believing that the value of an ideal exists apart from its practicality is one of the most interesting aspects of the tradition. All the same, in his discussions of this heavenly state, Proclus bends over backwards to show the criticism of Homer is ironic whereas gender equality in education would be a very beneficial and entirely practical measure for existing societies. He finds Plato and Socrates to be radical innovators in one respect and yet deeply respectful of the poetic tradition in the other.

Broadly speaking, Platonic philosophy does seem to have opened an avenue for female participation in intellectual life but does not seem to have prevented critical admiration of the best poetry among Platonists. Plutarch's works provide abundant evidence that something like this approach may have been common throughout the Platonic tradition.⁷⁵ His works in general prove that he was an astute reader of tragedy and comedy. Nothing about his admiration for Plato prevented him from scouring the comedies of Cratinus for a few quotes about Pericles or sprinkling his lives with innumerable other quotes from tragedy and comedy. Russell and Hunter basically agree, quoting *Republic* 607d7 to indicate, "The earliest and most influential response to that challenge [the *Republic*] which we possess is Aristotle's poetics. Plutarch's essay (*De*

⁷⁴ Citations of discussions these points would include the entirety of modern scholarship on the *Republic*; Clay 1988/2002 poses the question particularly clearly.

⁷⁵ We even know that Plutarch wrote a lost work entitled "That women should be educated" (Πλουτάρχου ἐκ τοῦ Ὅτι καὶ γυναῖκα παιδευτέον); the work is referred to multiple times by Stobaeus (4.31b.36; 4.32a15; 4.52b.43), though the quotations do not seem to relate to the title subject.

Audendis Poetis) is another kind of response, and like much else of what we know of the ancient reaction to Plato-- including the fullest such discussion we possess, in Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic*-- an important part of its strategy is to show that poetry and philosophy work to the same ends and, indeed, that philosophy has borrowed from the poets" (4). Nothing about Plutarch's testimony seems to contradict the (scant) evidence we have from the earlier tradition. We are even told by Plutarch that Xenocrates himself contributed tragedies to the god: Ξενοκράτης καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος εἰς ἄστυ κατήει Διονυσίων καινοῖς τραγωδοῖς ἐπικοσμῶν, ὡς ἔφασαν, τὴν ἑορτήν⁷⁶ (Plutarch *De Exilio* 10; 603BC; Parente *Senocrate* Fragment 22 p. 65).⁷⁷ We do not have to take this surprising anecdote at face value to recognize that it basically matches much of what we know about respect for poetry among ancient Platonists. Therefore, I think it is very likely that the approach to the text we find in the only ancient commentary on the *Republic* represents at least to some degree the philosophical mainstream of Platonism: the proposals for gender equality in Plato's *Republic* were meant seriously whereas the criticisms of Homer are both an example of dramatic irony and a challenge to develop a critical reading of Homer.

How does this compare to modern esotericists?⁷⁸ Proclus is very attentive to the way that Glaucon's character shapes the content of the work we have. There is no trace however, of the idea that the proposals for gender equality in book 5 were a response to Glaucon's eroticism. In fact, this entire line of thought would not make sense to Proclus because of the way he believes that the erotic element has a natural and healthy place in the philosophical life. Proclus does, on the other hand, certainly think that Plato is at times being extremely clever and allusive with his quotations of Homer, and this attitude is sometimes associated with Straussian interpreters.

Relative to the Tübingen school, Proclus does see a basic metaphysics of the one and indefinite dyad as fundamental for Plato. He presents this especially clearly while discussing the two jars at *Iliad* 24.527 (Kroll 1.96ff), and the presentation of this doctrine in this sixth essay on Homer might be thought to indicate some esotericism. However, for the most part, Proclus actually finds his doctrine in Plato's writing; even when he disagrees with one of the philosophical speakers, he does so based on a dramatic reading of the dialogue recognizable to sophisticated modern readers rather than any presumption of esoteric or orally transmitted doctrines. Proclus shows a sympathy with esotericism which is absolutely outrageous by modern standards; and yet, even so, he creates his Platonism by carefully cross-referencing other written dialogues and discussing them together with other ideas written down by other philosophers in the intervening period. He seems (at least in what we have) less interested in the possibility of oral transmission of doctrine even than other late Platonic sources (cf. especially the *Anonymous Prolegomena* which simply splits the difference as though incapable of coming up with anything more complex-- see 13.10-22, still an interesting passage). Reale's treatment of

⁷⁶ "Xenocrates went down to the city each year in order to decorate, as they say, the festival of Dionysus with new tragedies." The activity of "going down" here refers to the fact that the Academy was outside the city walls. This latter fact is in and of itself a significant distinction-- the first Academy buildings were outside the walls. Proclus' school was at the heart of the city-- in the 5th century AD, philosophy was Athens' most important business.

⁷⁷ For a Platonist's appreciation of Sappho, see *On the Pythian Oracle* 397a; or *How We May Become Aware of Our Progress in Virtue*, 81d-e.

⁷⁸ See Ausland 2002 for a critical discussion of modern esotericist approaches.

the idea of the good in the *Republic* (see Reale 1997: 191-220) does not use Proclus' reading of the passage at all, at least not explicitly; Proclus' reading of the idea of the good in the *Republic* actually depends on Glaucon's character, Aristotle's logic and a connection to the *Parmenides*, not on unwritten doctrines as Reale's does. Moreover, Proclus would never accept *Phaedrus* 276 at face value as Szlezak does.⁷⁹ Proclus would see this portion of the *Phaedrus* as partially ironic-- Socrates who wrote nothing says something that Plato the author obviously cannot mean in any simple sense. The primary sort of esotericism that Proclus sees in Plato probably has more to do with Greek religion in a broader sense including the Eleusinian mysteries and Orphic initiations rather than specifically Platonic doctrine.

Response to Arguments Against the Unity of the Commentary

The argument that the work was not actually a commentary on the *Republic* but a mixed collection of disconnected essays assembled by someone other than Proclus goes back to the article "Eterogeneita e cronologia dei commenti di Proclo alla Republica" by the Italian scholar Gallavotti in 1929, published not even three decades after the *editio princeps* of Kroll.⁸⁰ This article seems to have been taken seriously and to form the basis of the common opinion.⁸¹ Gallavotti went wrong from the way he posed the question: "Il problema è questo: Quelli che dicono i commenti di Proclo alla Republica sono un'opera sola e coordinata, fatta secondo un unico piano e un solo punto di visto e composta tutta in un torno di tempo, o è da credere l'opposto? E (in questo caso) ci è possibile determinare la serie cronologica dei commenti, che non sarebbero più un'opera

⁷⁹ See Szlezak 1999: 29-30, 35, 44-45.

⁸⁰ Gallavotti's first article on the subject was published in 1929, and so could be a response to the conclusion of Whittaker's 1918 *Neoplatonism* which ends with a discussion of the contents of Proclus' commentary. Gallavotti's first article starts off somewhat carelessly, claiming that the work was preserved for us by chance, in his opinion. His second article on the subject, in 1972, maintains the same opinion about the unity of the commentary, but starts off with a much more reasonable tone by describing the carefully written and carefully corrected manuscript, surely not transmitted by chance; Gallavotti does not add any research, he simply reproduces what is found in Kroll's introduction minus Kroll's comments about why the work was not published sooner. Furthermore, he begins in the second article by noting the missing pages, something he omitted from consideration in the first. He re-states though his original opinion: "questi che egli [the scribe] intitola in *Platonis rem publicam commentarii* in realtà sono un *corpus* di opere varie, scritte da Proclo in tempi diversi e con diversi intendimenti, con maggiore o minore maturità di pensiero" (45) and "Che questa confezione della corpus risalga allo stesso Proclo, mi pare da escludere" (47).

⁸¹ Lamberz 1987 accepts it (2 n.3); Sheppard 1980 notes how weak most of the arguments are and points out that there are better ways of explaining the differences between the 5th and 6th essays, but still somehow tries to work within the paradigm. Her criticisms of Gallavotti are extensive and perceptive and overlap considerably with my points. Most notably, and proving it is the common opinion Dörrie/Baltes: "Proklos selbst hat nur einen Kommentar zum Er-Mythos geschrieben; denn das unter dem Titel "Eis tas politeias Platonos hupomnema" überlieferte Werk des Proklos is weder ein Kommentar noch eine einheitliche Schrift, vielmehr ist es eine Zusammenstellung von sehr unterschiedlichen Schriften des Proklos zum Staat, eine Zusammenstellung, die zudem nicht von ihm selbst, sondern erst nach seinem Tode vorgenommen worden ist" (v.3 1987: 207). Dörrie/Baltes cites only Beutler 1957 vol. 23 193ff, Sheppard 1980 and Lamberz (all of whom I have consulted) but is clearly reproducing the arguments attributed to Gallavotti (as Sheppard and Lambertson realize-- and realizing this they treat the arguments extremely skeptically). Siorvanes 1996 though sounded a note of skepticism, and Coulter 1976, with an appealing fluency, barely acknowledged the arguments.

organica e unitaria, ma un insieme di scritti ben distinti nel tempo e nell'evoluzione speculativa del pensiero procleo" (208-209).

He offers no citations here or elsewhere to explain who the people are who propose the unity of the work. There is no reason to claim that the commentary was composed "all at once"-- a physical impossibility for something over 700 pages long-- or from some sort of monolithic point of view, nor is there any reason to propose the opposite in order to avoid the claim that such an important work was composed "tutta in un torno de tempo."⁸² My claim is simply that the difference between different sections of the commentary is entirely explained by the fact that they deal with different sections of the *Republic* rather than that they show an evolution of Proclus' thought over time. Secondly, the existence of these "essays" on different portions of the *Republic* is almost impossible to explain without positing that Proclus undertook the project of creating a commentary on the *Republic*. It may have taken him decades to complete the work, but there is not any external or internal evidence that indicates the work was composed at different periods of his life nor do the essays show an evolution of his thought over time. It is odd how "developmentalism" became a sort of academic reflex response which was applied even totally in the absence of evidence and at the cost of ignoring far more interesting conversations.⁸³

Gallavotti proposed that there was an actual commentary (an *hupomnema*, referencing the title) mixed with 5 other works, the 6th, 10th, 13th, 16th and 17th essays. What is distinctive about Gallavotti's approach is not just this improbable claim but the way it was used by Gallavotti and has been used since to indicate that the work is some sort of mish-mash probably not worth our attention; this problem is really a matter of tone, so the best thing to do is simply respond to Gallavotti's arguments. Separating these 5 sections from the rest of the work has a number of absurd consequences, not the least of which would be that the actual *Commentary on the Republic* would then not include serious discussion of the specific criticisms of Homer nor the nuptial number nor the details of the Myth of Er. How could any reader of Proclus' commentaries on the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* think that Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* would have included only the less than four pages of discussion of the Myth of Er found at Kroll 2.91-94? Gallavotti additionally argues that the 10th essay must be part of a separate *hupographe* because it basically covers the same ground as the previous essay. In reality this is not true. The first essay focuses on the arguments for gender equality; the second essay begins with the arguments Socrates uses (and rejects) to challenge the idea; it then includes reference to Theodorus of Asinus apparently because Theodorus added some important discussion to the arguments Socrates uses.⁸⁴ The section titled

⁸² cf. Dodds 1963 xiii- xviii. Among other observations, Dodds points out that Proclus' commentaries seem to have been revised over time. Dodds claims that this invalidates the dating attempts of Freudenthal (1881).

⁸³ In this section, I will more or less agree with Lamberz 1987, who in examining the form of the commentaries asks "welche spezifischen Formelemente sich in den Kommentaren des Proklos und anderer Neuplatoniker aufzeigen lassen, wenn man sie in erster Linie als literarische Erzeugnisse und nicht als Niederschlag mündlicher Exegese betrachtet (1987: 2);" though, based on a closer reading of the *In Rem.*, I do not agree with his conclusions about this commentary (he follows and cites Gallavotti as I indicated above).

⁸⁴ Gallavotti, in 1929, imagined what someone might say in response as an explanation for the reason Proclus includes an extra essay on this theme: "Tale questione, si può obbietare, doveva essere

"*Episkepsis*" seems to be exactly what it claims to be -- a section following the *Commentary on Plato's Republic* and responding to Aristotle's objections; it seems natural that this would follow the rest of the commentary, and it is hard to explain why it would be entitled "*Episkepsis*" (or additional observations) if it was not intended to do so.

The kinds of information that Gallavotti cites to indicate dates of composition are unconvincing. For example, the opening line of the *Commentary* is as follows:

Τοὺς προλόγους τῶν Πλατωνικῶν διαλόγων ὅπως χρῆ διατιθέναι τὸν μὴ παρέργως αὐτῶν ἀπτόμενον δηλῶσαι βουλόμενος, ἐνδείξομαι καὶ ὑμῖν ἐφ' ἐνὸς τοῦ τῆς Πολιτείας συγγράμματος· (Kroll 1.5).

Anyone concerned with reading Plato seriously must deal with the prologues; therefore, I will demonstrate to you too how one should treat the prologues of the Platonic dialogues using a single dialogue, the *Republic*, as an example.

Gallavotti says he cannot possibly read the story in Marinus of Proclus' decision to leave Alexandria without naturally connecting them with these opening words.⁸⁵ Thus, Gallavotti reasons καὶ ὑμῖν must mean you too, in addition to those in Alexandria, and therefore indicate an early date of composition, immediately after Proclus' arrival in Athens, when Proclus was barely 20. There is no other evidence or argument of any sort that indicates this might be the case. First of all, Gallavotti's reading depends upon a reading of the Life of Marinus which would understand that Proclus was dissatisfied with the teaching of Plato in Alexandria whereas the life of Marinus actually indicates that he was studying Aristotle with the younger Olympiodorus.⁸⁶ However, this point is relatively minor. More fundamentally, there is no reason at all to read the passage this way even if Proclus was dissatisfied with the study of Plato in Alexandria. This would be an extraordinarily unlikely sense for καὶ ὑμῖν which could refer to any other group of students, philosophers or associates at any time.⁸⁷ As I proceed, I will suggest that this phrase should be read as, in part, an address to the reader of the *Commentary*-- a slight shift is used, as is common throughout Greek literature, to create a tone in which the address to the internal audience (whoever was reading with Proclus in Athens) reads exactly as an address to the external audience. Additionally, Gallavotti seems to think that everything except the 5 essays he identifies would be part of the same early

specialmente cara al filosofo neoplatonico, nell'antagonismo sempre più vivo tra Cristianesimo ed Ellenismo: la tanto celebrata dignità restituita alla donna già era stata patrocinata cinque secoli prima di Cristo, nel modo più radicale, da Socrate e Platone. Sia pure" (211).

⁸⁵ "Ora, io non posso leggere queste parole [Marinus *Procl.* 10 see n. 67 below] senza collegarle naturalmente a quelle con cui Proclo esordisce" (1929: 214).

⁸⁶ Saffrey and Segonds, referring to this passage in the biography of Marinus where Proclus is dissatisfied with the Alexandrian school of Olympiodorus the younger ("ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ συναναγνώσει τινὸς ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ οὐκέτι ἀξίως τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου διανοίας φέρεσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεσιν;" 10.2) and decides to move to Athens, comment: "nous préférons croire qu'Aristote est ici désigné plutôt qu'Platon" (93).

⁸⁷ cf Marinus *Procl.* 38: πολλοὶ γὰρ αὐτῷ πολλαχόθεν ἐφοίτησαν, οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ ἀκροάσει μόνον ψιλῆ, οἱ δὲ καὶ ζηλωταὶ καὶ διὰ φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῷ συσχολάσαντες; "Many students came to study with him from all over the world; some came only to be auditors whereas others were true followers and spent their time in philosophy together with him."

hupomnema; the 12th essay though clearly refers to Proclus' *Monobiblia* which was obviously not written this early (see Steel and Opsomer 2003).

Furthermore, Marinus tells us that after arriving in Athens, Proclus studied Aristotle for two years with Syrianus. Gallavotti claimed based on this information that the *Episkepsis* which follows the commentary on the *Republic* must have been written during this period when Proclus was studying Aristotle. There is no evidence or indication of this at all except for the fact that the essay deals with Aristotle, and Marinus tells us that Proclus studied Aristotle at this period. Proclus clearly used Aristotle and engaged with Aristotle in his commentaries throughout his life, at times using Aristotle's ideas to explain Plato and at others comparing their ideas and defending Plato's approach (no serious scholar argues otherwise)-- therefore, the period during which Proclus first devoted two years to studying Aristotle obviously cannot be supposed as the date of composition of any portion of Proclus' work that happens to be particularly concerned with Aristotle. The argument is rather like looking at a modern academic who wrote an important book on, say Heidegger, and then, based on evidence of the person's undergraduate transcript which showed a relevant class, concluding that the book must have been written while the scholar was an undergraduate. Actually, it is worse than that since there simply cannot be any doubt that Proclus was concerned with Aristotle throughout his life.

Gallavotti adds other specious arguments. For example, "già nel Commento esiste un capitolo (II.84) che brevemente tratta del mito di Er nella Republica; è impossibile conciliare queste due trattazioni diverse in un'unica opera" (212). The reality is that this preliminary section seems very obviously to complement the full exegesis of the Myth of Er. Plato's Myth of Er is, according to Proclus, only one of the three main points discussed in book 10 of the *Republic*. The section entitled "On the Main Points of Book 10" is a general summary of the points in book 10, and it occupies 11 pages in Kroll's edition. It seems to be complete. The first two sections discuss Book 10 on poetry and on the immortality of the soul; the final 3-4 pages deal with the third of the main points of book 10, which is the Myth of Er. This section is followed by the entire line by line commentary on the Myth of Er which occupies over 250 pages in Kroll's edition. The final sentence of this first shorter section refers to the aspects of the Myth of Er it summarizes as *prokeimena* (see the quote below). Throughout Proclus' commentaries, the *prokeimena* are the material to be discussed and indicate a discussion that is to follow. The phrase proves that this first section is obviously just intended as an introductory section to the longer exposition of the myth which follows. Exactly the same phrase occurs, for example in the second heading of the sixth essay. First there is an introductory section of a couple of pages, then, beginning under a separate heading, Proclus says "Τὰ μὲν δὴ προκείμενα τοιαῦτα ἅπτα ἐστίν, περὶ ὧν ποιήσομαι τοὺς λόγους" (1.72.21-22) and then continues to discuss the issues summarized in the rest of the essay. In this case, the phrase *prokeimena* is clearly used as a way of referring to the introduction of the points to be discussed, and the introduction is contained in a section separated by a heading from the longer discussion. Exactly the same sequence of thought connects the short introductory essay to the rest of the analysis of the Myth of Er. There really is not much room for ambiguity about this. *Prokeimena* is used in this sense frequently (see 1.149.14; 1.197.16; 1.207.151; 1.273.17). At 2.257.26-2.258, the phrase is used in this sense in the actual exegesis of the myth of Er. Proclus identifies the

important topics to be discussed-- in this latter case, which are the lives and which are the lots referred to in the myth-- and having posed this question, he calls this sketch of the questions to be answered the *prokeimena* and then proceeds to discuss said points (the term is repeated in the analysis of the Myth of Er at 2.322.25 and 2.334.1). In fact, part of what makes Proclus interesting reading even for those who are not drawn to his answers is the clarity with which he lays out these *prokeimena*-- which often include puzzles he finds in the text or questions he has-- before trying to answer them.

Thus, Proclus ends the section on the main points of book 10 ("15th essay" above) with 3-4 pages summarizing the Myth of Er, calls these points *prokeimena* and then proceeds to discuss these puzzles in great detail in the next essay. The final sentence of this first, shorter section is: Τόσαῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ μύθῳ σπέρματα νοημάτων ἀναγεγράφθω προκείμενα τοῖς ἐξεργάζεσθαι βουλομένοις τε καὶ δυναμένοις ἀνελίπτειν (2.95). The next essay then opens with an entirely different tone, not as a summary of the main points of book 10 but as though faced with an enormous and difficult project (μέγας εἶναί μοι φαίνεται καὶ οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν ἀγών, at 2.96.17), the complete explication of the Myth of Er referred to in the closing lines of the previous section; the reference to "those who are willing and capable" at the close of the previous section is answered by the address to Marinus in the section that follows.

Gallavotti's reading methods are the same throughout. For example, he claims the fact that the book of the Epicurean Colotes is mentioned twice as evidence that Proclus discusses the same topic twice-- therefore, he concludes, the essays must be separate works written at separate times. Gallavotti then additionally claims that the various essays do not cross-reference each other. The reality is that this mention of the same topic twice is exactly what indicates the unity of the work and is exactly the sort of cross-reference Gallavotti claims does not exist. There are many examples, but I'll use the one Gallavotti cites and I have already discussed, the book of the Epicurean Colotes. The same subject is broached in multiple places with an economy that fits well the portion of the *Republic* Proclus is discussing; this shows a certain unity of theme. Proclus' defence of Homer is based partly on the fact that Plato also uses myths. Therefore, when discussing the critique of Homer's underworld myth in book 3 of the *Republic*, the topic of myth and those who wish to entirely abolish myth occurs naturally. At this point, Proclus mentions briefly the book of Colotes and Colotes' general scorn for myth. Then, in the final portion of the commentary, he discusses some of Colotes' more specific critiques of the Myth of Er as part of the exegesis of the Myth of Er. The same goes for other topics (like the *apologos* of Alcinous) naturally suggested by both the critique of Homer in books 2-3 and Plato's Myth of Er.

The fact that some topics are mentioned in the commentary on books 2-3 as well as the commentary on book 10 is simply explained by the fact that Proclus' approach to Homeric and Platonic myth is similar. This initially surprising fact is explicit; one of the sections in the defence of Homer is entitled Κοινὴ ἀπολογία ὑπὲρ τῶν Ὀμηρικῶν μύθων καὶ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν ("Common defence of Homeric and Platonic Myths"). Therefore, it is not surprising that some of the same subjects arise in the commentary's discussion of books 2-3 as arise in the discussion of book 10. All the same, the sixth essay basically discusses in order Socrates' criticisms of Homer whereas the last essay basically discusses the exact sense of the Myth of Er. The same topics are mentioned but the ideas and presentation are not the same; the economy and specificity of the argument

together with the clear presence of shared themes tends to indicate the unity of the *Commentary* rather than the opposite. It is interesting to note that tearing the manuscript in two and separating the two halves while maintaining the second half entirely unpublished and inaccessible even to the most serious scholarly research (the situation for a couple hundred years before 1900) would have made it impossible to recognize these types of cross-references between the discussion of Homer and Platonic myth (between the discussions of books 2-3 and book 10 of the *Republic*).

Furthermore, it appears as though Proclus might cite the other portions of the commentary specifically and exactly. Twice in the commentary on the Myth of Er, Proclus states that he has already discussed the issue in his discussion of the palinode (at 312.3: ἐξητασμένου μοι τοῦ πράγματος ἰκανῶς ἐν τοῖς τῆς παλινωδίας ὑπομνήμασιν; and at 2.339.15: εἴρηται καὶ ἡμῖν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς τῆς παλινωδίας ὑπομνήμασιν). This seems very much like a reference to the section of essay 6 in which Proclus discusses the palinode of the *Phaedrus* together with some other famous palinodes (Kroll 1.173-177). In each case, Proclus is talking about the Orphic mysteries so, broadly speaking, the subjects match; however, one could still be uncertain whether Proclus is referring to a more direct and extensive discussion than that provided by Kroll 1.173-177. Additionally, since Proclus refers to the same discussion in the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, the cross-reference would not in and of itself prove the unity of the work.⁸⁸ The context of the discussion in both cases in the *In Rem.* shows that if there is another work, it would have to be a work on the Orphic Mysteries with a title referring to the palinode in the *Phaedrus*, perhaps part of the lost *Commentary on the Phaedrus*.⁸⁹ If the reference is to a separate lost work then it still shows the unity of theme.

Additionally, in the discussion of the Myth of Er, Proclus comments, discussing the function of myth (2.109.2): Ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν μύθων τὰς αἰτίας καὶ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ τῶν μυθικῶν συμβόλων ἐξειργάσμεθα. Again, this seems very much like a direct reference to the 6th essay. The content matches exactly. However, also in this case it is possible that Proclus also wrote another, longer work which had the same content as the 6th essay and this title; this longer work would then be more specifically about mythic symbols rather than about the symbolic function of mythology in Homer. Thus, both of these references could be references to other works of Proclus rather than the 6th essay. However, though the argument is actually less conclusive than the argument about the term *prokeimena*, the fact that Gallavotti does not mention these points tends to indicate that his arguments are not very serious. Part of his argument is that the later essays do not reference the former essays but rather repeat the same arguments. Obviously Proclus did not recognize the modern numbering of the essays. It would be hard to imagine any more direct method of citation than this in an era before page numbers or any clearer way to say I've already discussed this earlier in the work. However, to repeat, I do not conclude that these are references to the previous essay-- more research is required.

Gallavotti also argues that the title which refers to Plato's work in the plural as *tas politeias* indicates that the title was added later by the same person who collected the scattered writings and ordered them in the form we have. The argument is that the habit

⁸⁸ Obviously, a lack of cross-references would not disprove it either, even without the *lacunae*. Sheppard was right to call this argument "a straw in the wind" (16).

⁸⁹ Or, if another work, perhaps one that shares content with this section of the *In Rem.* but also includes some of the odd stories about Aristotle?

of referring to Plato's work in the plural was a habit only developed in the latter half of the sixth century AD. It is immediately obvious why this apparently technical point might have some larger resonance, but as a technical point, I do not think it actually implies anything about the state of the *Commentary* we have. Lamberz even implies that Westerink (1981) supports Gallavotti's argument when he claims that this use of the plural to refer to Plato's work was developed only in the latter half of the 6th century AD, though actually Westerink does not mention Proclus' commentary in the article cited. In fact, something far stranger is going on in the *Anonymous Prolegomena*. Anonymous actually claims that Proclus did not even accept the authenticity of Plato's *Republic*-- something which neither Proclus nor any other ancient or modern author seems to have ever claimed and which must have seemed obviously absurd even to a moderately educated reader (both that it was not authentic and that Proclus claimed that).⁹⁰ However, after indicating this and citing Proclus as the relevant authority for this opinion, Anonymous proceeds to count it as authentic a few lines later, but now numbers it as 10 books rather than one. He treats the *Laws* the same way, thus giving the same numbering as was attributed to Thrasyllus (Diogenes Laertius 3.67), and providing a reasonable suspicion that the plural title was also known by the time of Diogenes Laertius (entire discussion at *Anon. Prol. 26*). Therefore, I do not think the use of the plural dates the title. Nevertheless, it may well be the case that the title is late and that the title and index were added later by someone else. However, even if this were true, it would by no means indicate that the text was collected or re-arranged at the same time; the Teubner editor Kroll certainly thought the text was edited by Proclus himself.⁹¹

It seems likely that we can see here some ancient equivalent of the modern scholars who do not want to accept the unity of the *Republic* (sufficiently refuted by Kahn 1993). For those worried about the late antique theological orthodoxy as for those worried about Communism, the idea of the unity of Plato's *Republic* probably seemed to be a dangerous idea. The strange numbering seems to assert the determination to see a variety of ideas in the book, equally and separately interesting in their own right, and the plural title *tas politeias* would indicate the book is to be seen not as a prescription for an ideal polity but as a conversation about polities. I find both of these impulses extremely appealing; however, I believe we must find more sophisticated means to the same end. Just as I agree with Kahn's article in modern scholarship, it seems pretty clear (based on the quote above) that Proclus did acknowledge the unity of the work we call Plato's *Republic* which he generally refers to in the singular. However, it could still be the case that Proclus referred to the work in the plural in the title as a way of stressing what he

⁹⁰ Exactly what he means by *ekballei* (vs. *notheuei*) would take me too far off course, but might well refer to some of Proclus' comments in the *In Rem*.

⁹¹ cf. Westerink introduction to the *Anonymous Prolegomena* (1962) xxxvii-xl; and Sheppard pp. 34-35 (I think Sheppard misunderstands Westerink a bit here; I do not think Westerink suggests that later Platonists were not interested in the *Republic*). On Anonymous' general claims (apparently taken seriously by Freudenthal in 1879), Westerink says, "There may be some misunderstanding here... Nobody will now feel inclined, I think to adopt Freudenthal's notion that Proclus was rash enough to discard a work on which he had written a long commentary himself" (xxxvii). See also Dörrie 1993, v. 3 203-4. Hoffman 2006, responding to Sheppard's interpretation of Westerink: "A long work like the *Republic* had no place in this scheme [i.e. Iamblichus' scheme supplied by Anonymous], but it was not on that account neglected or forgotten in Neoplatonic instruction, as demonstrated by the very existence of the great Commentary by Proclus on this dialogue" (606).

certainly discusses at many points in the *Commentary* itself-- there are multiple desirable constitutions according to Plato, and we should carefully distinguish them from the best and not apply the same standards to all.⁹²⁹³

The fourth of the seven introductory points (the discussion of which is missing, as I said) particularly discussed this idea:

τέταρτον, ἐπειδὴ περὶ πολιτείας ὁ πολὺς ἐν τῷδε τῷ συγγράμματι λόγος, διελέσθαι τὰς πολιτείας κατὰ Πλάτωνα τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον, ὃν ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ παρ' αὐτῷ διήρηνται, καὶ εἰπεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς ποίας ἐστὶν αὐτῷ πολιτείας ὁ λόγος (Kroll 1.6.11-13).

The fourth thing to do, since the majority of the argument in this text is about a political constitution, is to divide the types of polities according to Plato in the way in which here and elsewhere they are divided in Plato's work and then to discuss which of these the argument of the *Republic* concerns.

The fifth heading is also relevant to this theme:

πέμπτον τὴν κατὰ λόγον μόνον πολιτείαν αὐτὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς λαβόντας ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ τὰ πάθη πολιτειῶν, κατιδεῖν εἰ μία μόνον ἢ καὶ πολλαί, καὶ εἰ πολλαί, πόσαι καὶ τίνες, καὶ ταῦτα καταδησάμενον δι' ἀναγκαίων λόγων, περὶ ποίας τῶν πολλῶν τούτων ἔσται προηγουμένως ἡ θεωρία τῷ λογισμῷ λαβεῖν. (1.6.16-21)

The fifth thing to do is to take the *politeia* that exists only in theory as itself and on its own terms by separating it from the polities that exist in the realm of experience and then to see if it is single or multiple, and if there are multiple how many and which ones they are. Having firmly established this by necessary arguments, the examination will focus upon which of these many it is most important to understand by reasoning.

We know only from the index that some sections of the commentary are missing-- primarily Proclus' discussion of Socrates' conversation with Polemarchus. These discussions are not mentioned in the index, but only in this enumeration of the points to be discussed in the first essay which occurs on the 2nd and 3rd pages of the commentary. It is extremely unlucky that we have lost these sections of the commentary since the full discussion of these points is perhaps the portion of the work that was most likely to explain clearly how Proclus approached the *Republic*.

Leaving Gallavotti's arguments aside, the basic issue which makes it initially somewhat difficult to determine the character of the work is that in the *Commentary on the Republic*, Proclus treats three issues at great length, in some ways focusing the most

⁹² On this question in general, see also Saffrey and Segonds 2001: 113.

⁹³ The Suda mentions a work by Proclus on the *Republic* in four books. I have not emphasized this point first because Gallavotti agrees this could refer to the work we have and secondly because the catalogue of works in the Suda obviously is not complete or reliable (i.e. it omits many works of Proclus we do have). It is interesting though that the Suda seems especially aware of Proclus as an author who wrote on Homer.

attention on the issues that have received the least in modern scholarship -- a defence of the myths of Homer which Socrates criticizes in the *Republic*, an explanation of the nuptial number and an interpretation of the Myth of Er. Each of these sections of the *Republic* clearly poses unique interpretative difficulties and puzzles for scholars of any age. Proclus answers these puzzles in a manner generally unfamiliar to modern scholarship. I will give a quote that is representative of the content of each.

Generally speaking, in this dissertation, I am trying to identify points of the commentary that I think are particularly valuable, that either provide otherwise lost information or make some interesting hermeneutic claims. I should stress that there are such moments even in these strange essays. One could emphasize the valuable knowledge, otherwise unknown about the way Amelius, student of Plotinus, divided between theoretical and practical virtue (see II.27.7-9 and Remes 2008: 193), or point out that many of the interpretative moves Proclus uses to defend Homer involve the same type of philological explanations Long identifies in the case of the Stoics (Long 1992), or that in his discussion of the Myth of Er, Proclus does basically think that each myth is introduced to serve the argumentative purposes of each dialogue (as does Ferrari 2009).⁹⁴ However, at this point, I am particularly concerned with choosing quotes that demonstrate the unfamiliar content of each section. These sections are strange enough that one can understand why there have not been many objections to Gallavotti's attempts to separate them. Nevertheless, Gallavotti's arguments are not sound philology, and in order to understand what we can use from the commentary, we need to examine the contents clearly. Therefore, I will select quotes that I think are most representative of what is strange about Proclus' approach and what most summarizes the way his concerns differ in baffling ways from those of modern Plato scholars:

On the myths of Homer and Hesiod (6th essay):

Φέρ' οὖν ὅσα κἀνταῦθα⁹⁵ τοῦ καθηγεμόνος ἡμῶν ἠκούσαμεν περὶ τούτων διαταπτομένου καὶ τῆς κοινωρίας τῶν δογμάτων, ἣν ἔχει τὰ Ὀμήρου ποιήματα πρὸς τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐν ὑστέροις χρόνοις καθεωραμένην ἀλήθειαν, συλλαβόντες ἐν τάξει διέλθωμεν καὶ θεωρήσωμεν πρῶτον μὲν, εἴ πῃ δυνατὸν τὰς τοῦ Σωκράτους ἀπορίας διαλύειν· δεύτερον δὲ τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς φαινομένης ταύτης πρὸς Ὀμηρον ἀπαντήσεως· τρίτον δὲ αὐτὴν τῶν Πλάτωνι δοκούντων περὶ τε ποιητικῆς αὐτῆς καὶ Ὀμήρου μίαν καὶ ἀνέλεγκτον ἀλήθειαν πανταχοῦ προβεβλημένην.

Come now, let us take together and go through in order also in this regard all of the things that I heard from my teacher as he was explaining this subject. Let us explain the partnership of doctrines which the poems in Homer have with Plato's truth which was seen in later times. I will examine first if somehow it is possible to answer Socrates' criticisms (τὰς τοῦ Σωκράτους ἀπορίας διαλύειν).

⁹⁴ On the latter point, see Kroll 2.111: τοῦ Πλάτωνος τὰ τοιαῦτα πλάττοντος μὲν οὐδαμῶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν χορείαν τῶν προκειμένων ἀεὶ παραλαμβάνοντος καὶ χωμένου πᾶσι [i.e. all the myths] μετὰ τῆς πορεύσεως περιβολῆς καὶ οἰκονομίας, ὡς καὶ τῆ Μαντινικῆ ξένη καὶ τῷ κατὰ τὸν Γύγου πρόγονον διηγήματι καὶ τῷ κατὰ τοὺς Ἀτλαντίνους λόγῳ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ὁμοίοις. The word-play on Plato's name here is particularly interesting.

Secondly, I will examine the goal of this public yet specious attack on Homer. Third, I will explain the single and irrefutable truth which was approved by Plato with regard to Homer and the poetic art itself-- a truth which Plato both proposes and holds out in his own defence.⁹⁶

On the nuptial number (13th essay):

Τὴν μέλισσαν ἱερὰν μὲν φασὶ τῶν Μουσῶν εἶναι, βασιλείας δὲ καὶ πολιτικῆς ζωῆς ἀνθρώποις διδάσκαλον. τὴν τοίνυν κεφαλαιώδη τῶν εἰς τὸν λόγον τῶν Μουσῶν τὸν παρὰ Πλάτωνι τοῖς παλαιοῖς δοξάντων καὶ ἡμῖν προσεξηυπορημένων ἔκθεσιν εἴ σοι φίλον μέλισσαν ἐπονομάζειν, οὔτε αἱ Μοῦσαι τῷ ὀνόματι μέμψονται οὔτε Πλάτων, ὁ προφήτης ὡς οἶμαι τῶν Μουσῶν, περὶ τῆς τῶν πολιτειῶν μεταβολῆς ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ λόγῳ πραγματευόμενος, ὃν ταῖς Μούσαις ἀνέθηκε. (2.1.4-12).

They say that the bee is sacred to the Muses and teaches men about political life and kingship. If it is pleasing to you, I will call "bee" the summary presentation of the things that were approved by the ancients and those additional things discovered by me with regard to Plato's *logos* of the Muses. The Muses will not criticize this name nor did Plato, who I believe was the prophet of the Muses, when he was concerned with the origin of change in cities as part of that *logos* which he dedicated to the Muses.⁹⁷

On the myth of Er (16th essay):

καὶ οὐ μόνον τοὺς τῆς δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀδικίας ἀναδιδάσκει μισθοὺς οἵτινές εἰσιν ἀπελθούσαις ἐνθένδε ταῖς ψυχαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς πολιτείας ὅλης τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῷ παντὶ προὔπαρχον ἀποφαίνει καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ παντὶ γένεσιν πρώτοις μέσοις τελευταίοις· ἵνα μὴ μόνον πολιτικῶς ὁμοῦ τῆ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ὁ περὶ τῆς ἀρίστης πολιτείας συνεξετάζεται λόγος καὶ διὰ ταύτης ἐκείνη γίγνηται καταφανής, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν θεωρητικώτερον τρόπον καὶ μυθικῶς, μᾶλλον δὲ μυστικῶς, εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἡμῶν ἀνατεινομένων τὰ αὐτὰ μειζρόνως ἀναφαίνεται. (2.99.14-22)

The myth not only teaches about the rewards of justice and punishments for injustice which are waiting for the souls that leave this world, but also shows how the form of the entire *politeia* has its prior existence in the universe itself and in the levels of creation which exist in the universe-- the first, the middle and the last. The myth assures that the *logos* about the best *politeia* is not only examined politically in terms of justice and not only does justice become visible by means of this polity, but that it also becomes visible in a more contemplative sense and mythically or rather mystically so that the same issues may appear to us much larger as we are raised on high.

⁹⁶ The sense of *προβεβλημένην* is quite difficult; I have opted to err on the side of over translation, considering especially *Laws* 201b.

⁹⁷ See Saffrey 1992 for discussion of Proclus' attitude toward the Muses.

When judging the character of the work that we have, we do not actually have to judge the validity of these interpretative approaches. The impulse to athetize or question the unity and integrity of a source on philological grounds when there is no real evidence for doing so shows fundamentally an inability to evaluate openly ancient sources and simply disagree if necessary rather than reject the source as spurious. Each of these three essays clearly represents approaches to the *Republic* very different from those of modern scholars. The philological question is simply whether such long discussions of these interpretative puzzles would have been imagined in antiquity to form a natural part of a commentary on the *Republic*-- at any point between 350 BC and 500 AD and not merely in late antiquity-- or whether, on the other hand, we can imagine with Gallavotti that Proclus would undertake to write a commentary on the *Republic* and omit these interpretative puzzles (the relationship between Homer and Plato, the nuptial number and the Myth of Er). The extraordinary amount of attention Proclus spends glossing parts of the *Timaeus* that are not nearly so puzzling as *Republic* book 8 546-7 decides the question. It is unreasonable to posit that Proclus wrote an *hupomnema* on the *Republic* that somehow omitted discussion of the nuptial number or the Myth of Er.⁹⁸

There are two issues that should be noted about these essays that might be thought to indicate that the various essays were meant to be separate works and which Gallavotti cites to this purpose. First is the frame of the 6th and final essays. The sixth essay is presented as though Proclus is trying to remember Syrianus' teachings about Homer, and makes reference to a conversation that occurred on the day of Plato's birthday celebration.⁹⁹ However, the reference is quite vague. Proclus does not say that Syrianus is recently deceased or indicate that the written work we have replicates a conversation which took place on Plato's birthday celebration. All he says is that recently, on the day of Plato's birthday celebration, there was a conversation about Homer and Plato. Now (it is unclear when), given that the issue has come up recently, he says he will try to explain what he learned from Syrianus about Homer. The audience is a more noticeable presence in this essay as it was also in the first essay (compare *humas* at 71.22 with *humin* on page 1, though similar moments occur elsewhere). In both cases, Proclus lays some stress on the idea that he will explain the issue "to you"; this has sometimes been taken to indicate that the text is a transcript of a conversation, though, as I have already indicated it reads very much like an address to the audience of the written text.

The final essay is addressed to Marinus, and this does indicate to some extent its special status (Proclus refers twice to Marinus' interpretative mistakes). The only other indication of the special status of these essays (besides length) is that Proclus' name is repeated before and after the 6th essay as though it required a separate title. This does not prove anything more than the frame, and the same explanation will serve to explain both peculiarities. The simplest explanation seems to be that Proclus used a connection between his discussion of Homer and his discussion of the Myth of Er as a bridge in his relationship between his teacher and his successor. The work seems to present knowledge about Platonic myth as a kind of charge passed from teacher to student; the more esoteric explanations of Homer Proclus states that he learned from Syrianus while the discussion of the Myth of Er is devoted to Marinus.¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ See Sara Ahbel-Rappe on Proclus' interest in mathematical puzzles (2001: 117-142).

⁹⁹ *Anon. Prol.* indicates this was the seventh of Thargelion (section 1).

¹⁰⁰ See Sluitter 1999 on the role commentaries played in the student-teacher relationship (173-205).

In conclusion, there is no evidence that these essays form part of anything but a *Commentary on the Republic* meant to be presented in the order they are found in the manuscript. What is interesting is that Proclus' comments on Homer present themselves as an attempt to remember the conversation of Proclus' teacher, and the exegesis of the Myth of Er presents itself as addressed to Proclus' student, Marinus. Because in the one case, Proclus is trying to remember what he learned from Syrianus about the relationship between Homer and Plato (see above) whereas in the other case he is trying to explain to Marinus something about the nature of the universe, it seems to me entirely unreasonable to imagine that the commentary was written all at once. However, even if we imagine that Proclus considered the work for decades, the contents very much seem to form part of a single commentary on the *Republic*. It certainly seems to have been composed by a scholar very aware what sort of commentary on the *Republic* he would leave behind for his successors.

The second thing that has been taken to indicate the commentary is not complete is the difference in tone and content between the fifth and sixth essays. These essays do not follow the order of the *Republic* as the rest of the work does but rather represent two different discussions of some similar material. Gallavotti was correct to argue that Proclus begins the next (6th) essay with a completely transformed tone (1929: 210). The question is simply whether the claim that therefore Proclus must have written the second portion at a different time in his life is the best explanation of this transformed tone and different mode of explanation. Gallavotti, when he makes this claim, gives no indication of the contents of the 6th essay. In reality, the contents of the essay show very clearly why the two discussions of poetry are separated.¹⁰²

The basic difference is that the 5th essay explains the paideutic function of poetry whereas the 6th essay explains the inspired function of poetry. In Proclus' terms, the Apollonian function of poetry versus the Dionysiac function of poetry. These identifications are explicit. The 5th essay ends with a small and allusive ode to Apollo whereas Dionysus is identified several times with the inspired function of poetry in the 6th essay. The 6th essay is furthermore distinguished because it disagrees with Socrates. Thus, another way to describe the difference is to say that the 5th essay discusses what Plato wrote in the *Republic* whereas the 6th essay specifically focuses on discussing what Plato does not say in the *Republic* at least concerning Homer (though it draws heavily on his other works). The premise of the 5th essay is, as in the *Republic*, that people generally imitate the poetic images they perceive; therefore, the poet should create images that are positive models. The 6th essay then explains a different function of poetry which does not work by simple imitation but rather requires symbolic analysis. Because, according to Proclus and Plato, people generally tend to imitate their poetic models, this type of poetry is only appropriate for those who are already educated and know how to seek the symbolic meaning and not simply imitate the mythological stories. On the one hand, this latter approach might seem too esoteric for the modern imagination; on the other hand, it is after all difficult to save the myths of Homer and Hesiod without something like it.

However, because the essays very clearly describe different functions of poetry,

¹⁰¹ On the idea of teaching as initiation (if only metaphorically) see Sluiter 1999.

¹⁰² As Sheppard noted: "we are dealing here not with a self-contradiction but with a difference of attitude between the two essays of the kind that Gallavotti describes only in very general terms" (1980: 18).

there is no reason to posit that they indicate an evolution in Proclus' thought over time; it is obvious that while he discusses one function he still holds the same opinions about the other function. For example, even though the 5th essay proceeds to discuss poetry in a manner different from the 6th, the 5th essay clearly acknowledges that its author recognizes the function of poetry discussed in the 6th essay though he chooses not to explain it at that point (ὡς γοῦν αὐτός φησιν, καὶ τὴν ψευδῶς τὰ θεῖα μεμιμημένην ἐν μέσοις ἱεροῖς χώραν ἔχειν) (1.48.1). The entire section entitled Περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς τῶν θεῶν μύθων διασκευῆς ἀρὰ τοῖς θεολόγοις αἰτίων ἀποδόσεις καὶ λύσεις τῶν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐπιστάσεων (the first of the sub-headings under essay 6 above: "Concerning the manner of the preparation of the myths about divinity, an account of their causes and solutions of the relevant difficulties for theologians"), expresses this idea very clearly over and over again. For example, he tells us at 1.76: πρῶτον μὲν διαιρετέον οἶμαι τὰς τῶν μύθων προαιρέσεις καὶ χωρὶς ἀφοριστέον τοὺς τε παιδευτικοὺς λεγομένους καὶ τοὺς ἐνθεαστικωτέρους ("the first thing is to distinguish between the purposes of the myths and to divide those that are called educational from those that are more enthusiastic and inspirational")-- the verbal adjective emphasizes the necessity of separating the two types-- and then emphasizes at 1.77.4-6: καὶ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν τρόπον τὰς τε τῶν μύθων ἰδέας διαστήσαντες ἀπ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑποδεχομένων αὐτοὺς ἐπιτηδειότητας ("and in this way we should separate the different forms of myths from one another as we do with the different capacities of those who are their audience"). We do not even have to agree with him about the reading of the *Republic* (much less the functions of poetry) to see that he has clearly divided his discussions of poetry exactly according to how he believes poetry should be divided; he believes these two types of poetry differ in their function and in those for whom they are appropriate; therefore, he discusses them separately. As Coulter noted already in 1976:

"Now, it is also true, in Proclus' view, that at certain times even symbolic poetry should be banned, but only, first of all, from the reach of those who because of limited faculties or training are incapable of seeing it as anything but mimetic, and who fail, therefore, to grasp its symbolic qualities. And, secondly, it should be kept from the young of the ideal state. For such as these, it is admittedly inappropriate. These qualifications aside, however, it is the highest form of poetry" (47).

The distinction between this type of poetry, and the type of poetry discussed in the previous essay is absolutely fundamental for Proclus and fully explains the separation of the two essays.¹⁰³

I will differ from everyone who has published about the work so far in my interpretation of the particular frame of the 6th essay and the intended audience of Proclus' *Commentary*. I think it is overly simplistic to assume that any written work which presents itself as a record of or an attempt to remember an oral conversation is actually nothing more than a record of that conversation. We now recognize universally in the case of Plato that the dialogues are not simple representations of the conversations in question. I argue that it is equally simplistic to think that Proclus' commentaries are actually a written record of a particular instance of *sunanagnosis* or "reading together"

¹⁰³ cf. Halliwell 2002: 327, 329.

(for this term see *In Rem.* 1.1 and 1.5-- it is in the title of the first essay-- and Marinus 10.2, quoted above).

This becomes obvious as the conversation proceeds. Why would Proclus refer his listeners to Syrianus' book on Homer if the purpose of the present work were simply to transmit the oral teachings of Syrianus? Why pretend that Proclus is only trying to remember what Syrianus told him if in reality everything is already written down by Syrianus himself? It seems that the purpose is rather to create a written image of an oral conversation, as part of a literary technique obviously learned from Plato. Plato's work tries to re-create the feel of discussing philosophy with Socrates in the 5th century BC; Proclus' work tries to re-create the feel of reading Plato with Proclus in the 5th century AD. Both seem to use esotericism primarily as a literary premise. The sixth essay ends with an injunction to its readers not to reveal the contents to others: ταῦτα, ὦ φίλοι ἐταῖροι, μνήμη κεχαρίσθω τῆς τοῦ καθηγεμόνος ἡμῶν συνουσίας, ἐμοὶ μὲν ὄντα ῥητὰ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ὑμῖν δὲ ἄρρητα πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς (1.205.21-3). Rather than an indication that the work was not intended for publication (which again, I think is excessively simple in the case of a written work we possess),¹⁰⁴ we should compare this moment with *Republic* 595c3-5 where Socrates asks Glaucon to promise not to reveal the contents of their conversation to the tragic poets. Proclus exploits here the same sort of dramatic irony he recognizes so capably in Plato's writing. The written text creates a feel of intimacy, of being part of a privileged and controversial conversation-- and yet, by its very existence, it announces the intent of publishing the conversation for the use of a wider audience-- of telling us too what Socrates did not say about Homer.

¹⁰⁴ cf. Kroll 1901, Lamberz 1987, and Gallavotti 1929 who implies the work was passed on by accident.

Chapter 2: Notes on the Reception of Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic*

ἔσται γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο χρόνῳ πᾶσιν ἀρέσκον. Proclus (*In Rem.* 1.243.23-4).

ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἀστέρων καὶ πρόφασιν αὐτοῖς ἢ ζήτησις ἔχει καὶ κατόρθωσιν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἢ εὐρησις, ὅπως ἀποδείξωσιν ὁμαλῶς πάντα κινούμενα τὰ ἐγκυκλίως φερόμενα· τοῦτο γὰρ φασὶ θείοις σώμασιν προσήκειν. καὶ ἔγωγε φαίην ἂν καὶ αὐτὸς ἄλλ[οι]ς μὲν τὸ ὁμαλὲς μόνως, ἄλλοις [δὲ πάλιν τ]ὸ ἀνωμάλως ὁμαλές, ἄλλοις δὲ [τοῖς ἐ]ν γενέσει μόνως τὸ ἀνώμαλον μὴ[νως]. Proclus (*In Rem.* 2.234.22-235.1)

Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* has received so little explicit attention that it would not even have been possible to introduce it the way that E.R. Dodds introduced his brilliantly thorough 1936 edition of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Dodds produced three editions for the Clarendon Press, Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Euripides' *Bacchae* and Plato's *Gorgias*, and it is apparent from his autobiography that he saw the connection between these works; it even appears likely that the importance given in Proclus' work to Dionysus inspired his work on the *Bacchae*. Saffrey, in a valuable summary of Proclus' reception, cites the contemporary reviews to note that Dodd's edition "fut salué pour ce qu'il était réellement: le début des études procliennes modernes" (Saffrey xvii). Explaining his interest in Proclus in the preface to his *Elements of Theology*, Dodds argued for "the historical significance of Proclus as one of the chief links between ancient and medieval thought" (1936/63: ix; cf. xxvii-xxx). Though this may be partially true in the case of the *Elements of Theology*, in what follows, I will try to articulate almost the opposite approach to Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic*-- what makes this work especially interesting is that it very clearly cannot be made to fit the traditional way of reading Plato or Proclus. My goal in this section will be not so much to survey the reception of Proclus generally, but to focus specifically on the unusual story of the reception of Proclus' *In Rem.* together with some of its contents. I want to contrast the idea of Proclus as a link to the medieval with the evidence that Proclus, like much of the rest of the Classics, was actually far more important in the Renaissance than in the medieval period. Dodds' introduction seems to emerge from an atmosphere in which he was expected (if not required) to excuse his interest in Proclus, the author on whom his career was based, by the type of wild, dismissive and inaccurate generalizations which characterize his introduction (including his claim that Proclus was not capable of free thought). I do not mean to criticize Dodds, who clearly meant to promote rather than discourage the study of the material, only to indicate an approach to the subject which might make it possible to better understand why some aspects of the Platonic corpus and approaches to Plato's philosophy have been so historically influential.¹⁰⁵¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Dodds provided in a 1946 article "Plato and the Irrational" an impressive list of names of modern intellectuals he believes have been influenced by what he calls the "irrational" aspect of Platonic philosophy. He claimed that future historians would recognize that preoccupation with what he calls the "surd" in Plato "has haunted minds as various as Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger in philosophy; Jung in psychology; Sorel, Pareto, Spengler in political theory; Yeats, Lawrence, Joyce, Kafka, Sartre in literature; Picasso and the Surrealists in painting."

¹⁰⁶ On Dodds' Platonism, see Hankey 2007.

Typically, Proclus and late antique Platonism have been presented as a philosophical movement responsible for integrating Platonism into Christianity. Bertrand Russell, for example, in his *History of Philosophy* says with regard to Plotinus, his final section on Greek philosophy: "To the ancient world, weary with centuries of disappointment, exhausted by despair, his [Plotinus'] doctrine might be acceptable, but could not be stimulating"¹⁰⁷ as though he has forgotten how long a century is and how much stimulation was derived from Plotinus in antiquity and later adds "After the death of Augustine in 430, there was little philosophy" (366). Russell's structuring premise is the idea that "the later pagans trimmed the Greek tradition until it became suitable for incorporation in Christian doctrine" (xvi). Whatever Russell's achievements may have been, this approach either displays a silence which would impress any Pythagorean initiate or an ignorance which should be surprising to students of history or philosophy (i.e. this part of his history simply contains a gross error of fact, as though he claimed Columbus sailed in 1550 and then went on to talk about why this date is important for understanding the history of the first half of the sixteenth century).¹⁰⁸ More serious English historians of ancient philosophy (such as Guthrie) generally did not make it nearly far enough to discuss Proclus.

Hegel was either more open or more knowledgeable and, unlike Russell, he did not openly misrepresent the subject-- he even concludes his discussion with a brief and enthusiastic defence of Neoplatonism (1974 v.2: 452-453).¹⁰⁹ More importantly, he acknowledges the existence of Neoplatonic science (v2: 435; though as Trabattoni and Chiaradonna 2009 noted in their introduction, he did not have any place to discuss it) and the quality of the commentaries, and he concludes his section on the philosophy of the Greeks by pointing out that whatever its merits, Proclus' approach to philosophy simply

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Russell 1945: 60 and 306; on p. 209 he discusses Proclus referencing the passage discussed below. See also on p. 292 where Russell, pointing out that "There is in the mysticism of Plotinus nothing morose or hostile to beauty" seems not to realize that there is actually far less ground for accusing Proclus of this fault than there is for accusing Plotinus since Proclus retreats from Plotinus' identification of matter with evil.

¹⁰⁸ Reading the closing section of Russell's history on Plotinus ("Science was no longer cultivated" etc., 296-7) shows why I insist on the importance of Proclus' *Hypotyposis* and insist on the importance of claiming that it displays the astronomical method of Plato's *Republic* applied by a great thinker to some of the most important scientific developments of antiquity. The work which both respects Ptolemy (who, obviously, he knows came after Plato) and then proceeds to point out the weaknesses of the system could be compared with what Russell says regarding Renaissance science elsewhere ("it is not what the man of science believes that distinguishes him, but how and why he believes it. His beliefs are tentative, not dogmatic; they are based on evidence, not on authority or intuition" 527). The fact that we have scientific works by Proclus and not by Plotinus points to one of the largest distortions that occurs by adopting the idea that important Greek philosophy ends with Plotinus, and it has the effect of distorting Plotinus' significance as well by implying that Plotinus' philosophy cannot or did not coexist with serious science (in reality, the reason we do not have scientific works by Plotinus himself could be explained by any number of factors-- his location in Rome, the way his work is preserved, or (most likely) the direction in which his special genius was directed-- rather than implying any necessary hostility between his way of thinking and scientific activity; Proclus' work proves the latter did not exist).

¹⁰⁹ I am using the older Haldane and Simson translation of this text because the 2006 translation by Robert Brown uses only the 1825-6 lecture series, and thus omits some of the most relevant text, including the conclusion to volume 2 in the previous translation; see Brown 2006: 1-42 on the history of the text and his editorial decisions.

became illegal.¹¹⁰ All the same, he claims that Proclus' philosophy was preserved in the church, focuses his discussion on the divine trinities in book 3 of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* and indicates that this approach to divinity is Proclus' most important contribution (435-449).¹¹¹ Some of Proclus' ideas were incorporated by the later tradition, but for Hegel discovering this genuine mystic link provides the majority of his treatment of Proclus. Hegel's treatment is a brilliant philosophical synthesis-- it is in fact so brilliant and so original in the way it focuses on a particular portion of Proclus' thought that Hegel probably deserves far more credit for creating this link, which is clearly an important part of his philosophy, than Proclus does (particularly since Proclus was obviously trying to do the opposite). Zeller, whose section on Proclus is long, detailed, knowledgeable and serious¹¹² still claimed: "Das System des Proklus bildet insofern nicht bloß den Schluss-punkt der griechischen Philosophie, sondern auch das Bindeglied, das ihren Uebergang in die mittelalterliche Wissenschaft bezeichnet."¹¹³

Russell's view actually seems to have been until recently closest to the common consensus, at least exoterically, both in terms of what he says and in terms of the extraordinarily small amount of attention he gave to the subject. The idea or assumption is that Proclus somehow actively encouraged, promoted, or enabled the incorporation of Platonic philosophy into Christianity and thereby additionally was somehow complicit in excluding or suppressing or merely driving underground elements of the tradition that did not fit this orthodoxy.¹¹⁴ The claim was not merely that medieval Christianity appropriated the thought of Proclus just as it also integrated other Hellenic philosophies, but rather that Proclus somehow particularly transformed Plato in a way that made this possible. The period of unchallenged imperial Christian orthodoxy followed Proclus; moreover, Renaissance philosophers like Ficino claimed Plato and Christianity were in harmony, and they also read and translated Proclus. Surely then it is the influence of Proclus and other late Platonists that explains why this idea was so popular in the Renaissance?

This view is very obviously false and openly at odds with the simplest outlines of Proclus' philosophy. The reality is that though some aspects of Proclus' thought were

¹¹⁰ Hegel claimed: "We cannot fail to see in him [Proclus] great profundity of perception, and greater capacity for working a matter out and clearness of expression than are found in Plotinus; scientific development also advanced with him, and on the whole he possesses an excellent manner of expression" (v.2: 435).

¹¹¹ On Hegel's interest see also Saffrey xiii-xv; Hegel's claim 435 "he [Proclus] distinguishes himself entirely from Plotinus by the fact that with him the Neoplatonic philosophy, as a whole, has at least reached a more systematic order" has particularly influenced serious Proclus scholarship; see Beierwaltes 1987 for an evaluation.

¹¹² The only modern attempt that can be compared seems to be that of Reale; on Proclus see Reale 1978 v.4: 663-688.

¹¹³ Zeller 1902: 847. On Proclus see 834-890. Zeller's monumental work even includes separate sections on Hermias, Syrianus and Damascius.

¹¹⁴ The recent summary in Helmig and Steele 2012 is more nuanced, and claims "the real re-discovery of Proclus started in the Italian Renaissance"; Siorvanes 1996 suggests all sorts of connections between Proclus and modern culture from Kepler to the Rolling Stones; recent treatments of allegory, by Whitman 2001 and Copeland and Struck 2010, indicate the importance of neo-platonic textual approaches for a variety of modern and post-modern literary and philosophical movements. Standard treatments of Proclus' philosophy like Hoffman 2006 and the introduction to the Tarrant/Baltzly translation of the *Timaeus* commentary note Proclus' paganism. Rappe 2001 suggests connections with Nietzsche and Lacan.

certainly appropriated by the later tradition there is no reason to think that the fact that Platonic philosophy was, in Nietzsche's words, "the raft on which much was saved" implies that late Platonists also sunk the ship. The fallacy seems to be caused in part by a teleological view of history which assumes that historical developments which followed temporally a given thinker were somehow caused by that thinker, in part by the fact that many who study the period prefer to maintain this approach, and in part by simple ignorance. The idea that Proclus caused or even enabled the developments that followed is simply an application of this fallacy to questions of historical causality. The way that Nietzsche expresses this point, particularly in the *Genealogy of Morals*-- that history does not always move in a forward or linear direction, does not always develop-- seems to be one of the central differences between his approach to the history of philosophy and more conventional Hegelian approaches. Though on the one hand, some aspects of Proclus' approach to religion and philosophy do seem to have been incorporated into the culture that followed, if one wanted to press the point, the evidence for discontinuity of the sort that Nietzsche saw would be far stronger than Zeller's presentation of connection and continuity. Proclus' approach to religion¹¹⁵ seems equally foreign to the medieval spirit (which wanted to privilege religious authority at the cost of scientific and mathematical discussion) and the modern spirit which wants to purge religious attitudes from scientific discussion, and yet surprisingly close to the spirit of very many of the best authors and philosophers in antiquity and since the Renaissance.

Renaissance scholars like Ficino argued that Plato and Christianity were basically in harmony, and they used some of Proclus' ideas to make this claim. However, at least since Nietzsche, this principle has begun to be turned on its head so that a noble fiction that promoted the study of Plato gradually (when believed) came to be for many a reason for *not* studying Plato, for avoiding Plato in favor of Thucydides or the pre-Socratics who supposedly provide a more true and healthy example of the Greek spirit. At least since Nietzsche, there has been a tendency to see even Plato as somehow representing a principle or movement contrary to the healthy spirit or healthy culture of the Greeks; this belief is the modern mirror image of Ficino's noble fiction and maintaining it involves at least partially ignoring a good 800 years of Greek intellectual history. Based on Proclus' testimony, I would argue that we should seriously question whether there is any truth to this view at all.

It is also true that Proclus interprets Plato in some ways that are quite unfamiliar. Serious consideration of Proclus' work could thus form part of a project of de-familiarizing the Classics and revealing a tradition stranger and more interesting than the one we are used to. The history of Platonism is not monolithic. Furthermore, Platonism in antiquity does not seem to have been necessarily hostile to the mainstream of culture in antiquity or, more importantly, the mainstream intellectual developments in other fields like rhetoric or medicine or literature. The fact that Cicero and Galen and Apuleius were Platonists shows us something about the intellectual range of Platonism in antiquity.¹¹⁶ Proclus' approach to Plato emphasizes diversity (what is "poikilos") and it is multi-cultural, not only incorporating an entire tradition which is partially other to us (Hellenic

¹¹⁵ Morrow's translation of the *Commentary on Euclid* (1970) includes an admirably straightforward introduction to Proclus' religion. See especially the long paragraph in his introduction from xix to xx.

¹¹⁶ See the recent contribution by Richard Hunter (2012) who notes that this type of study of Plato's literary influence had barely been attempted previously.

antiquity) but also showing respect for and interest in other traditions that were "other" even to Greek antiquity, like the Chaldaians. Though Proclus can be a part of the project of de-familiarizing the Classics, on the other hand, by reading Proclus, it becomes clear that even if we try to see Plato's work in its cultural context or read Plato together with Orphic poetry (see Brisson 1987), respect for Plato's philosophical reason will not only survive this process of de-familiarization but will even likely be increased. Most importantly, our ability to ask and answer the question of what parts of this philosophical project transcend their context and can be usefully strengthened and re-interpreted will be tremendously improved.

If we think of a religion as, in Clifford Geertz's terms "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions in an aura of factuality so that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" then it becomes apparent why Proclus' approach is particularly interesting. The cultural system of the Greeks appears in Proclus explained in a way that harmonizes with Plato's philosophy and seems to particularly support a life lived according to a virtue in a civic context. We may even end up wondering if a significant portion of the history of science in the Western world could be explained as in part a consequence of these "long-lasting moods and motivations" and a system of symbols that was used to promote love of knowledge. Proclus' symbols-- his religious system, explained at length in the sixth essay and the *Platonic Theology*-- and the *ethos* they supported are different from those of the culture that followed.

A discussion about what type of public culture does and does not support the cultivation of knowledge obviously has tremendous contemporary relevance. The Greek "cultural system"¹¹⁷ has been admired for exactly this reason since the Renaissance and seems to be particularly identified since the Renaissance with many of the most important movements in art, music, literature and philosophy. Thus, there is no call for the kind of fatalism Dodds displays by ominously (as though intending to banish Greek philosophy from Western culture) quoting Al-Ghazali -- an Arabic thinker whose project was basically the opposite of Proclus'-- at the opening of the final chapter of his *Greeks and the Irrational*. Surely the very openness of the West stems in part from (and will be lost without) knowing that our own culture is founded in part upon this tradition which will always remain mostly lost and partly foreign. Western culture already contains at least five centuries worth of examples of ways we can engage with if not entirely resurrect a cultural system that is no longer traditional; therefore, it is absurd to imply that we cannot engage constructively with the material simply because it represents a no longer traditional religion; works from Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* to Emerson's "The American Scholar" prove otherwise.

I do not mean to criticize those who still find Ficino's necessary Renaissance fiction noble or to undervalue the extent to which the complexity of Proclus' conversation about divinity may have provided an important resource for philosophers in the past to discuss first causes. Proclus' influence on Christian philosophy and theology and on Arabic philosophy and theology is undoubtedly one of the more historically significant

¹¹⁷ To use Geertz's term for religion; Geertz acknowledges the influence Weber's concept of religious rationalization and even notes the puzzle posed by the role of the Greeks in this scheme.

aspects of the reception of his work.¹¹⁸ Since though we now live in a world where inhabitants of the American continent worry seriously about whether female inhabitants of Afghanistan will receive a proper education, it is probably not the *most* significant aspect of the reception of Platonism. Expressing clearly Plato's historical influence with regard to the development of the West in terms of feminism and other aspects of modernity is probably as important for maintaining the serious study of Plato in the modern world as Ficino's fiction was in the Renaissance (not to mention that it also seems to be substantially more true). There is certainly a reality to the theological influence of Proclus' work,¹¹⁹ and it should be studied more extensively. It is though generally acknowledged that only very few people read Proclus during the medieval period (see Helmig and Steele 2012). Whatever continuity there was to the Platonic tradition seems to be due more to explicitly Christian authors like Dionysius the Areopagite (whose enormous debt to Proclus has been well-documented)¹²⁰ or Calcidius' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (see Klibansky 1982). It may well be the case that serious consideration of this material has moderated religious partisans as well as philosophical opponents of religion in the past, and one hopes that it still has the power to exert this influence by pointing the way to a conversation about divinity flexible enough to accommodate scientific advances and happy to interpret and engage with rather than destroy foreign traditions.

I do however want to challenge the story of Proclus as a link to the medieval by focusing on the Renaissance reception of the *In Rem*. Though many of Proclus' ideas seem to have been appropriated by means of some Christian filter, other of Proclus' ideas seem to have all but disappeared. All of Greek literature continued to be influential in some form throughout the Byzantine period and indirectly by various means also in the West. There really is not much indication that Proclus was more known, approved or acceptable in the West during the medieval period than the other authors we call the Classics; perhaps the case was actually the opposite. Like much of the tradition, some parts of his work were acceptable and others definitely were not and so remained entirely unknown in the West until the Renaissance (the comparison between Proclus and the rest of the Classics would hold-- knowing Macrobius instead of Proclus is much like knowing Virgil instead of Homer, etc.). Thus, I will propose that like any great thinker, such as Aristotle, Proclus' influence was felt in a variety of ways in different historical periods for a variety of different reasons; his influence on medieval Latin theology is not necessarily the most interesting aspect of his reception except for those primarily interested in Latin theology.

The *Commentary on the Republic* not only does not in any way "trim the tradition to fit Christianity" but seems to have been written with exactly the opposite purpose in mind-- to prevent the appropriation of Plato's thought by the new imperial orthodoxy. Proclus means to accomplish this by glossing Plato's words carefully, preserving important distinctions and generally providing enough information to preserve the connections and context that allow a reader to see Plato as an integral part of Greek culture and understand the text within the context of that culture. There is no doubt

¹¹⁸ One wonders if the existence of this material has, since the Renaissance, prompted Christians to be more intellectual and intellectuals to take conversations about divinity more seriously.

¹¹⁹ Particularly as it has been presented recently; see Rappe 2009, Helmig and Steele 2012, and the introduction to Opsomer and Steel 2003.

¹²⁰ On this figure see especially O'Meara 2002: 159-171; Struck 2004: 257-264 and Ahbel-Rappe 2009.

whatsoever that the commentary is written for readers who want to read Homer, study Aristotle, celebrate the traditional Athenian rites and rituals and sing hymns for the traditional deities (Proclus' hexameter Hymns are actually included in the same manuscripts as the Homeric Hymns, see Van Den Berg 2000). The fact that not all of these possibilities are still open to us is no more a reason for not taking an interest in Proclus than the fact that we must read tragedy without the music or the ancient performance context would be a reason for taking less interest in tragedy (rather than studying it more carefully to glean what we can). In this commentary, Proclus provides a defence of the traditional myths in Homer and Hesiod and explains, using Plato's philosophy, how Plato both supports and employs in his own work both the Apollonian and the Dionysiac functions of poetry.

Some of the differences between Proclus and the tradition that followed have absolutely momentous historical significance. These differences include, for example, the question of whether religion does or does not support and encourage the study of the sciences.¹²¹ For example, if one reads the last chapter of the last book of Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica*, one sees that the idea of a purely aporetic Socrates (together with, surprisingly, Aristippus of Cyrene) is one of the most useful historical figures for Eusebius. Eusebius cites a Socrates very much like Vlastos' Socrates as his authority for literally rejecting all of Greek mathematics and physical philosophy (what he calls elsewhere the entirety of physical and allegorical theology). It simply is not entirely clear whether after Socrates theology and science were separable if they were separable before; when Xenophon describes Anaxagoras he refers to him as ὁ μέγιστον φρονήσας ἐπὶ τῷ τὰς τῶν θεῶν μηχανὰς ἐξηγεῖσθαι (*Memorabilia* 4.7.6-7). The word here ἐξηγεῖσθαι is extremely important; we should not make any assumptions about whether Xenophon represents Socrates accurately (obviously a larger theme than I can discuss here), but it does provide unambiguous evidence of the terms in which at least some people understood (at least in ostentatious public presentations like the *Memorabilia*) the debate. Proclus stresses in his interpretation of the *Timaeus* (see especially *In Timaeum* 1.203-4) that it is the same familiar Socrates who asks for a new physical philosophy since he rejected Anaxagoras' physical philosophy. Socrates' statements about Anaxagoras in the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* seem to culminate fairly naturally in the *Timaeus* with no need for the developmental hypothesis to explain the relationship. Proclus says, commenting on *Timaeus* 27B: δεῖ γὰρ τὴν ἀληθινὴν φυσιολογίαν ἐξάπτειν τῆς θεολογίας, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ φύσις ἐξήρτηται τῶν θεῶν καὶ διήρηται κατὰ τὰς ὅλας τάξεις αὐτῶν (*In Tim.* 1.204).¹²²

We obviously do not need to agree with this approach to theology or physical philosophy, or even attribute any elaborated version of it to Socrates, to see that it was so widespread in antiquity that rejecting this theology of multi-valent and layered causation almost included rejecting the sciences themselves. The key realization is that in the

¹²¹ There are other points equally significant. Strabo for example uses the *Republic's* opening reference to the festival of Bendis as an example that shows Ἀθηναῖοι δ' ὥσπερ περὶ τὰ ἄλλα φιλοξενοῦντες διατελοῦσιν, οὕτω καὶ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς (10.3.18), which basically matches in some respects how Proclus interprets the opening of the *Republic*. The entire context of the passage and surrounding sections in Strabo is also instructive.

¹²² See Martijn 2010: 7-10, 20-65, etc. for discussion. For more general discussion of this mode of thought see also Hadot 2004.

ancient world this attitude did not really place any theological restriction on science (because theological explanations were themselves malleable and open to discussion and revision) but did provide an umbrella which incorporated the study of science into the larger culture and the general project of philosophy. The famous Stoic dictum-- "live according to nature, which is to say, according to god" -- is a reflection of the same approach (in a broad sense; the Stoic approach is not identical in meaning). Furthermore, it has become typical to see Democritus as the true scientist because we assume that serious science is materialist (Democritus, who we can at least be sure was one of the greatest philosophers, becomes a particularly useful anti-platonic hero because we know so little about his work it is possible to project our fantasies on him; see Marciano 2007 for a more sophisticated approach to the relation between Platonism and Democritus in antiquity). A totally different approach would be to stress that unsophisticated materialist explanations can be quite foolish and perhaps Plato's (Pythagoras'?) innovation has more to do with the relationship between mathematics and materialist physics, insisting that this relationship between matter and mathematics was the key to understanding nature-- which has of course provided the Western tradition with its greatest advances-- than with theological restrictions on scientific investigation.

This attitude towards the sciences is only one of many key points. The general idea that I wish to stress in this chapter is that not only does Proclus not incorporate Plato's philosophy into the medieval orthodoxy, it is probably the fear that Plato's text is being misused and appropriated by his opponents which explains above all the extraordinary attention to detail of these commentaries. Proclus wants to preserve an approach to Plato's text which not only explains why Plato inspired authors like Cicero, Galen and Apuleius but also shows that Plato's philosophy does not discourage its students from admiring the art of Pheidias, the geometry of Euclid, the poems of Homer and in short not only respecting but even improving upon the best art and natural science of the Greeks.

Except for the controversial last line of Marinus' *Life* there is no evidence that Proclus wanted to limit diffusion of Greek literature. This line-- so unlike anything which is found in Proclus' work (Hegel's opinion, quoted in Chapter 1, is useful here)-- does claim that Proclus would have restricted access to all books except Plato's *Timaeus* and the Chaldaian Oracles. This line must be explained. Marinus is not an entirely reliable source particularly when such an enigmatic phrase is so clearly opposed to the entirety of Proclus' work. We know that among the two books Marinus thinks Proclus considered most healthy for the broadest audience (Plato's *Timaeus* and the Chaldaian Oracles), only one survives intact; likewise, among his own works, Proclus' two favorites were his *Commentary on the Theaetetus* and on the *Timaeus*-- only one survives and only partially. When he mocks the Epicurean Colotes, he begins by criticizing him for his ignorance of the work of Democritus. It is very clear that Proclus' approach to the tradition is not the one that determined which works were passed on. Comparing this last line of Marinus with my second example below indicates that if Marinus represents Proclus' opinion at all, Proclus did not want to limit diffusion of Greek literature to make said literature fit Christianity, but rather wanted to keep Greek books (including almost all of Plato himself!) out of the hands of those who would, by their own misunderstanding (τῶν διαστρόφως χρωμένων, 1.75.25; see below), use the contents as an excuse for destroying Greek temples. Plato's *Timaeus* and the Chaldaian Oracles

seem to be unusual because they could not possibly be put to this purpose, nor could they possibly be used in any way by the sort of literal creationists by whom Proclus seems to have felt existentially threatened, much as the modern world has at times been threatened by their intellectual progeny. Proclus must have been afraid that those who misunderstand books would contribute to "the present destruction" (1.74.8-9). We have to either abandon the idea that Marinus' phrase means anything very serious at all (which in my opinion would be reasonable), or admit that it also includes most of Plato-- perhaps Proclus was actually especially afraid of the influence of Plato's books, like the *Republic*, and perhaps this even explains the odd opinion cited by the *Anonymous Prolegomena* that Proclus did not accept the authenticity of the *Republic*.¹²³

The preceding reflection on the way Proclus interprets Socrates' role in the *Timaeus* (see the passage above), can also help to understand more clearly this infamous last line of the life of Marinus. As I said, we must either admit that the phrase does not indicate actual policy (rather as though I said, if I were President, I would...) or that it also includes almost all of Plato. Perhaps both-- it does not represent serious policy, but also includes Plato in a wish which does say something about Proclus' mindset. Why would Proclus say that? One only has to look at how authors like Eusebius use Plato to see exactly why. Proclus wants above all to prevent this sort of partial appropriation of Plato's thought.¹²⁴ This motive explains the wish expressed in this last line of Marinus. One sees that remarkably learned authors like Eusebius find almost nothing to quote with approval in the *Timaeus*, except by positing that Plato does not really mean what he says there.¹²⁵ Proclus must be substantially more worried about his opponents misusing works like Plato's *Republic* than he is about their misusing authors like Sappho, Epicurus or Democritus which popular ignorance often argues that late-antique Platonism somehow opposed or replaced. Plato's modern critics (for example, Karl Popper) can be clearly seen to be reacting to the legacy of this misinterpretation of Plato rather than anything that characterized Platonism between the time of Plato and Proclus.

We would normally think that the *Republic* is a somewhat more exoteric work, meant for a larger audience than the *Timaeus*. The modern developmental approach tends to promote the idea that works like the *Apology* should receive the largest circulation. Different scholarly readers use different dialogues to structure their reading of the corpus-- for example, Vlastos 1991 basically assumes the Socrates of the *Apology* is the real Socrates whereas Hadot 1995 uses the Socrates of the *Symposium* to structure his reading of the corpus. Ancient readers, part of a more aristocratic, less democratic culture seem to have mostly felt that Plato was speaking directly to them, or at least directly to the most important audience, in the *Alcibiades* rather than the *Apology*. The *Alcibiades* seems for this reason to have been frequently used as an introductory text (see

¹²³ Compare *In Rem.* 163.3 (discussed below) with *Anonymous* 26.6.

¹²⁴ cf. Dodds xiii and xiii n.2 which has remained the standard citation on this issue (see Saffrey and Segonds 2001: 44n4). cf. Lambertson 1986: 180. The best general response to the impression left by Marinus' controversial statement is probably Saffrey 1992.

¹²⁵ Whereas, they find quite a bit to quote with approval in works like the *Republic*, the *Euthyphro*, the *Crito* and the *Apology*, etc. See especially section 13.14 of Eusebius' *Praeparatio* where the causes of Proclus' preference for the *Timaeus* become particularly clear; for other interesting contrasts, see 13.19, 13.20 of the same work.

Proclus' *In Alcibiadem* 6; 11.10-17).¹²⁶ We prefer the *Apology* partly because we tend to identify with the democratic jurors and so either feel Socrates is speaking to us or that we could be forced to speak in a similar way to our peers (the voice of the dialogues creates a powerful feel, including the opening address to the men of Athens in the *Apology*, and the *Republic's* opening first person). Oddly, Proclus (if, again, we are to believe Marinus) would prefer the *Timaeus* to receive the widest circulation rather than any of the dialogues whose morality and philosophy might seem more popular and accessible. This opinion presents quite a puzzle; if Marinus is right, Proclus prefers the *Timaeus* not only to the dialogues we prefer but also to the dialogues antiquity put first. I would argue that, having noted what Proclus says about the Alcibiades, we should realize that if there is anything left to explain, this last line of the life of Marinus must therefore mean that he would prefer the masses to read the *Timaeus* and not understand it rather than read the *Republic* and misunderstand it.

Therefore, the last line of the life of Marinus has nothing to do with some imaginary concern for the easily corruptible morals of the masses (i.e. is not aimed at writers like Epicurus); Proclus seems especially afraid of anyone who might try to use Plato's authority to destroy the religion and the science of the Greeks. It is important to remember that the idea that Socrates was an essentially aporetic character who focused on basic moral issues and did not take an interest in advanced science or mathematics was a crucial element of the Christian rhetorical strategy used to reject Greek science. Opponents of Greek science cannot find any support in the *Timaeus* for the idea that the Socratic and scientific aspects of the tradition are entirely opposed¹²⁷; an amateur might think that the *Timaeus* was a work which somehow incorporated Platonism into Christianity or set theology above science, but the reality is that in the ancient world there seems to have been general agreement that the case was the opposite exactly because the *Timaeus* tried to maintain some harmony between physical philosophy and theology. Socrates appears as a character who though he had not himself engaged in extensive scientific investigations was ready to listen sympathetically and flexibly to the attempts of others. Dodds describes the realm of Dionysus in his commentary on the *Bacchae* as "all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature" (xii; citing Plutarch *Isis and Osiris* section 35; cf. *In Rem.* 1.125-- Plutarch's quotation of Pindar is very similar to the poetry Proclus quotes here). We do not generally connect this to the idea in Plato's *Timaeus* that the world is alive, but ancient Platonists certainly did.

In this chapter, I will focus on five clear examples of the sorts of distinctions Proclus stresses and the purposes that motivate the commentary in case skeptical readers are slow to give up deeply held prejudices against it. Again, the reason to stress these examples and their Renaissance reception is simply to show that Proclus' activity does not seem to have in any way exerted what might be called a historically regressive influence. The evidence indicates Proclus' work is a link to the Renaissance, not the

¹²⁶ Denyer's arguments for removing this text from the list of spuria are obviously very important for how one approaches Plato.

¹²⁷ cf. Vlastos 1991, example 5, comparison of Socrates A and B (48). Proclus certainly admires the elenctic, ironic, demotic and daimonic character of Socrates as he appears in the Platonic dialogues-- he simply does not believe that such a character is necessarily unaware of much less uninterested in more advanced science and metaphysics. One of Cicero's characters puzzled over the same thing.

medieval. Moreover, his philosophy represents a lost cause only from the perspective of the middle ages; from our perspective, it is easy to see that for centuries scholars, scientists, philosophers and authors of all sorts have been trying to find what is most useful in this now partially foreign and potentially controversial tradition. I'll discuss these examples separately as they appear in the commentary first before proceeding to explain the available evidence concerning the Renaissance reception and then some of the indications that these same examples were actually quite influential in the Renaissance. I will focus on the following five: first, Proclus' references to the Orphic/Pythagorean tradition, second the defence of the traditional stories in Hesiod and Homer which he undertakes more because of than in spite of their outwardly violent form, third his discussion of the theological *typoi* in book 2 of the *Republic*, fourth his discussion of book 5 of the *Republic* and fifth, a portion of the astronomical discussion contained in the discussion of the Myth of Er.

Example 1: Orphism and Pythagoreanism

I began this chapter with Dodds in part because I believe his work, the *Greeks and the Irrational*, is actually one of the most serious attempts to explain Proclus' *Platonic Theology* 1.25.24-26.4. On the other hand, despite its serious consideration of important themes, Dodds for the most part simply labels the foreign (to us) cultural element as "irrational". This proceeding is rather as though someone proposed to remove Pheidias from the ranks of artists and instead discuss his sculpture under the heading "idol-worship". The famous statues of antiquity were adorned with puzzling symbols and embedded in cultic practice; all the same, one would be surprised to hear an art historian use such dismissive language. The Western and the rational are so naturally identical to Dodds that he considers other traditions only in so far as he uses them to label enormous parts of Greek philosophy as "irrational." Proclus, on the other hand, sees models for understanding or promoting rationality in exactly the parts of the tradition that Dodds presents as most irrational and which are most foreign to us. This is an enormous discussion, and I do not mean to try and fully explain Proclus' claim here. This section of the *Platonic Theology* has been controversial at least since Lobeck's 1829 *Aglaophamus* (quite a bit of attention for a name that only appears twice in the TLG; Ficino had also already used the same passage), and has been recently given a nuanced modern treatment by Sara Ahbel-Rappe in her *Reading Neoplatonism*. Rappe's treatment is far more ambitious than what I can provide here, and is outstanding in part because she seems to recognize that it is exactly this aspect of ancient Platonism Dodds had in mind when he provided such an extensive list of modern thinkers enchanted by the surd. I will simply give two examples or reflections (one on Orphism¹²⁸, one on Pythagoreanism) that show what an enormous portion of our understanding of the Classics is at stake in our understanding of this puzzling phrase in the *Platonic Theology*.

First of all, it is necessary to point out that "Plato" does not exactly or necessarily criticize Orphism in the *Republic* in any simple sense (cf. Burkert 1985: 297). The passage at 364b-365a is part of Glaucon's challenge; one could equally claim that "Plato"

¹²⁸ For a judicious introduction to the question of Orphism in ancient Greek culture which considers the parallel between the Derveni Papyrus and what is found in the ancient commentators like Proclus, see Parker 1995. On Orphism in Proclus, see Brisson 1987; on Orphism in the imperial period preceding Proclus, see Brisson 1990.

provides in the *Republic* an impassioned defence of injustice. A more reasonable reading would stress that Socrates responds to this aspect of Glaucon's challenge just as he responds to the rest of Glaucon's speech. Thus, not only does Socrates not accept this criticism of Orphic religion, but actually the Myth of Er is the response to this criticism of Orphic religion just as the rest of the *Republic* responds to the rest of Glaucon's speech (Καὶ οὕτως, ὦ Γλαύκων, μῦθος ἐσώθη at 621b8¹²⁹). Proclus does frequently quote Orphic sources in his discussion of the Myth of Er, and in some very broad sense he does believe it is an Orphic-Pythagorean myth. However, he certainly does not claim that Plato simply reproduces a unitary pre-existing monolithic tradition. In fact, the case is the opposite. He claims that Plato presents his myths in the form which is best suited to the philosophical content of each dialogue and serves the overall philosophical purpose (*skopos*) of each dialogue (in this case, justice). Thus, according to Proclus, Plato provides a philosophical context and a particular philosophical frame for what was previously and very much seems to have continued to be afterwards a heterogeneous tradition with a range of different practitioners.¹³⁰ Rather than rejecting Orphism, Plato provides a context that is meant to prevent it from being put to the use Glaucon indicates in his speech and turns its energies instead towards more serious scientific conversations.¹³¹

Consider what Dodds claims Orphism represents for Plato in the *Phaedo*. Dodds claims that Orphism: "by crediting man with an occult self of divine origin, and thus setting soul and body at odds, introduced into European culture a new interpretation of human existence, the interpretation we call puritanical."¹³² Dodds then (perhaps intending a farce?) proposes to take the idea of "Hyperborean" influence on 5th century Pythagoreanism as a literal truth with the Thracian Orphics as the critical intermediary. That is to say, like Burkert in his *Lore and Science*, he reads the tradition as if he were Charmides in the dialogue of that title, rather than a reader of the dialogue privy to Socrates' opening aside to Critias. If Dodds is right then we would have to consider this Socrates of the *Phaedo* as not merely someone explaining one part of his philosophy on a memorable day but as an irreconcilably different character from the Socrates we find in Xenophon who lectures Epigenes on the importance of the body (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.12-- is Socrates/Plato's division of body and soul, which the 20th century has rushed to reject in so many ways from literature to neuroscience, actually meant in part simply as a way of ensuring some modicum of fitness and self control?). Nietzsche, on the other hand, found that the Dionysiac spirit represented the principle of enthusiasm, vitality, artistry and energy of the 5th century BC which Socrates and Plato ultimately rejected. For Dodds it is Plato's Orphism whereas for Nietzsche it is his rejection of Dionysus that signals his rejection of the healthy balance and enthusiastic physicality of Greek culture.

¹²⁹ See Segal 1978: 329 on this phrase. Segal's excellent meditation on Homer and Plato even mentions Proclus (330).

¹³⁰ See also Morgan 2000, Halliwell 2007 ("Er's soul journey... is neither a replication of a culturally canonical narrative nor a total invention of Plato's," 447), Ferrari 2009 and Lear 2006: 38-42.

¹³¹ Burkert claims "These works [Orphic poems] are not pure poetry; they were simply ignored by later literary theory" (1985: 296). The claim that they were ignored by later literary theory is simply false (or at least can be reduced to a claim that the *Phaedrus* is not in some sense literary theory). Proclus' *In Rem*. is exactly the type of literary theory which does not ignore these works; Burkert's claim here must be contrasted with Coulter 1976 and with the quote from Russell 1989 in the previous chapter.

¹³² cf. Edmonds 1999 and 2004.

What is odd then is that for Proclus, Dodds' Orpheus (whom Dodds thinks Plato embraced) and Nietzsche's Dionysus (whom Plato supposedly rejected) are actually exactly the same cultural movement which neither Socrates nor Plato rejects. In the *In Rem.*, Proclus says that Orpheus was the ἡγεμῶν τῶν Διονύσου τελετῶν (1.175.1), and it very much seems as though this testimony could be made to match the most unimpeachable references in the earlier tradition, like *Frogs* 1032 and *Phaedo* 69c (Burkert's treatment in his *Greek Religion* basically agrees with this much though without acknowledging how much of this discussion is found in Proclus).¹³³¹³⁴

Secondly, in terms of Pythagoreanism,¹³⁵ Dodds' approach was adopted and expanded in Walter Burkert's *Lore and Science* (see Dodds 1951: 143 for his version of Pythagoras the shaman).¹³⁶ Despite his erudition, Burkert somehow claims that Pythagoras represents something different than what everyone in antiquity thought he represented (with the exception perhaps of the school of Eusebius). It will suffice for my current purposes to simply show some portion of what Proclus thought Pythagoras represented. Proclus clearly has many sources on the history of mathematics that were subsequently lost so completely that we are lacking even the basics; these sources include obviously important works like Eudemus' *History of Mathematics* (cf. Burkert 1972: 449-453). Proclus cites Eudemus in multiple places (*In Eucl.* 125; 299; 333; 352; 379; 419), and he even also cites some lost work of Hippias of Elis and certainly must have had many other important works as well. In two of the places he cites Eudemus, (333 and 352) he adds information to the historical summary found at *In Eucl.* 62-68 by citing specifically Eudemus' *History of Mathematics*. The end of the historical summary (section 68, see below) seems to indicate that Eudemus or someone of his generation is Proclus' primary source for this portion of his summary of the history of mathematics because it appears from this section that Proclus' historical sources actually end in the generation before Euclid (i.e. when Eudemus died); when he proceeds, he is no longer summarizing a historical source but is now trying to triangulate himself based on primary source material as a modern scholar would (he adduces from the fact that Archimedes quotes Euclid that Archimedes must have been younger). He obviously lacks a proper history here; therefore, the history he uses is unlikely to have been written much later than this. Therefore, there is every reason for thinking that the following passage about Pythagoras can be traced to Eudemus' history of mathematics.¹³⁷ Proclus claims:

¹³³ The recent contributions by Rappe (2001), Edmonds (1999, 2004) and Wildberg (2011) to this theme have already abandoned Dodds' approach to the subject; Edmonds is particularly critical. Dodds' treatment does though maintain extraordinary value for its concision, for his articulate awareness of the stakes of the debate and above all for the breadth and sensitivity of his use of sources. It is interesting to note that though his approach to Orphism has been abandoned his conclusions about the historical date of the introduction of Chaldaean Oracles to Greece (1951: Appendix II, 283-311) are still cited as authoritative (see for example Brisson 2003).

¹³⁴ Note that this discussion seems to be connected to what follows. In the *Commentary on Euclid*, Proclus indicates that he has read a book called ταῖς Βάκχαις by Philolaus. Note furthermore that the religious attitude to mathematics apparently contained in this book by no means prevents Proclus from also providing the very practical praise of mathematics found in section 63 of the same work.

¹³⁵ On Pythagoras in late-antique philosophy generally see also O'Meara 1989.

¹³⁶ For a critical review of this idea, see Hadot 1995: 279-285.

¹³⁷ Tarán agrees that Eudemus is Proclus' source, though without mentioning this passage, and that Proclus must have had access to the book of Eudemus (1987: 273). On the Euclid commentary more generally see Heath 1925: 29-45, Morrow 1970, Mueller 1987, and Vallance 1999.

ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις [previous geometricians] Πυθαγόρας τὴν περὶ αὐτὴν [geometry] φιλοσοφίαν εἰς σχῆμα παιδείας ἐλευθέρου μετέστησεν, ἄνωθεν τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῆς ἐπισκοπούμενος καὶ ἀύλως καὶ νοερώς τὰ θεωρήματα διερευνώμενος, ὃς δὴ καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀλόγων πραγματείαν καὶ τὴν τῶν κοσμικῶν σχημάτων σύστασιν ἀνεύρεν. (*In Eucl.* 65.15-18)

After these, Pythagoras transformed the philosophy concerned with geometry into a form fitting for a free education, examining the foundations of it from above and investigating its theorems in an immaterial and intelligible manner-- the same man discovered the subject of irrationals and the system of cosmic shapes.

The way Burkert treats this passage can stand as a useful example of the "source-criticism" method in general. This same phrase εἰς σχῆμα παιδείας ἐλευθέρου μετέστησεν is also found in Iamblichus (*De communi mathematica scientia* 70). It is a striking phrase, and if the phrase were actually found in Eudemus' history as part of Pythagoras' achievement (or considered conventional from any other source like Aristotle's work on the subject), it is no surprise that it should be quoted multiple times in multiple contexts. In fact, source criticism often argues for a common source from exactly this sort of evidence. Somehow though Burkert's book on Pythagoras has used the fact that this phrase is found twice as grounds not for discussing its significance but rather for dismissing it together with the entirety of the surrounding passage from serious consideration. The rest of the sentence and context in Proclus does not match what is found in Iamblichus. In fact, the phrase in Iamblichus seems to be reacting to a pre-existing source-- Iamblichus does not simply assert that Pythagoras shaped mathematics into a form appropriate for education, he asserts something about *how* he did that as though the phrase Proclus also quotes was taken for granted. Burkert though extrapolates that because the same five word phrase is found in Iamblichus, it must have been invented by Iamblichus and therefore, Proclus must have taken it from Iamblichus. Burkert then infers that probably Eudemus had nothing to say about Pythagoras and Proclus simply borrowed the entirety of his testimony from Iamblichus or simply made it up. The weakest part of the argument is that anyone who reads the text carefully can see that Proclus goes along smoothly when summarizing his historical sources and then stops when he lacks sources and tries to make inferences. Proclus seems to be quite open about places where he lacks evidence, and it is possible by reading the following section carefully to see exactly how he operates when there is a gap in his historical sources (see section 68ff, the passage referred to above: οἱ μὲν οὖν τὰς ἱστορίας ἀναγράψαντες μέχρι τούτου [the first generation of Plato's students] προάγουσι τὴν τῆς ἐπιστήμης ταύτης [geometry] τελείωσιν). In this instance as in many others throughout *Lore and Science* (which remains an invaluable collection of evidence), Burkert seems to treat the ancient evidence too dismissively.¹³⁸

Remember, this brief summary is found only in Proclus not because other earlier authors say anything different but because *Proclus is the only source we have* that claims

¹³⁸ See *In Eucl.* 426.7 for an example of Proclus' reference to doubtful historical sources and the general tone of his respect for and attitude towards Pythagoras and Euclid; he seems to actually prefer the method of the latter, as found in the *Elements*, to the fantastic stories about the former.

to present a summary of this portion of the history of mathematics. And, Proclus' school was certainly not responsible for the loss of a book like Eudemos' *History of Mathematics*! The claim that "all the evidence is late" simply ignores that none of the earlier books exist, neither Aristotle's work on the subject nor Xenocrates' work nor Speusippus' work nor any of the other works everyone agrees well-known figures (Ion of Chios the 5th century poet, Antiphon, Heraclides of Ponticus, Aristoxenus the student of Aristotle, Timaeus the historian, Hermippus the biographer, etc.-- all of these authors Diogenes Laertius quotes just in the first 10 sections of his life of Pythagoras, not to mention Heraclitus and Parmenides whom he also quotes) actually wrote before 200BC and which formed the mass of material used by authors like Diogenes Laertius. If it is true that most of the real science and mathematics should be attributed to Pythagoras' followers rather than Pythagoras himself (which I agree seems likely), then this fact ought to at least be used to counter the "ipse dixit" criticism of Pythagoras rather than to characterize the entire legacy of Pythagoreanism as un-philosophical.

In fact, if Proclus has the book of Eudemos -- which he certainly seems to and which Burkert does not try to dispute -- then it is implausible in the extreme to posit that Eudemos' *History of Mathematics* simply did not discuss Pythagoras.¹³⁹ Therefore, though it is not possible to prove that Proclus is following Eudemos on this point (such a thing cannot be proven either for or against), it is absolutely necessary (if scholars are to treat their readers not like Socrates treats the young Charmides but rather at the very, very least as openly as Plato treats his readers in the same dialogue), to point out that Burkert does not have a single argument or observation which indicates Proclus' summary might not be broadly accurate. Proclus seems to be following Eudemos and his testimony seems to fit the testimony of others like Aristotle and Aristoxenus (both of whom Burkert also dismisses relative to this same question). The argument that the phrase is not from Eudemos at all but actually from a history of Hippias of Elis would be just as strong as the argument for dismissing it (Proclus quotes a lost work of Hippias in the previous sentence)-- both are somewhat improbable speculations. If Proclus thought history had advanced to the point where he need not fear being drowned in the sea for this short phrase, then I do not see why we should not also reproduce his history in a fairly straightforward and unprejudicial manner (cf. Burkert 1972: 411).

In any case, I want to focus more attention on the phrase σχῆμα παιδείας ἐλευθέρου also found in Iamblichus than the question of whether Pythagoras discovered irrationals and whether the question might have been an interesting addition to Dodds' book on the subject. This phrase seems to indicate that rather than shamanism, Pythagoras was basically attributed in antiquity with an approach to mathematics that made it an essential part of a free education; perhaps something like what we see *Theaetetus* doing in the dialogue of that name just before his conversation with Socrates begins. Because this is such an important concept given what the study of Greek has represented in universities and in Western culture in general at times in the past -- the form of a free education, either meaning the education fitting for a free person and/or an education aiming at maintaining freedom in general (cf. quote from the end of Sallustius

¹³⁹ Burkert's argument is: "If in a context [i.e. Proclus in the passage above] whose significant parts are obviously derived from Eudemos, the passage dealing specifically with Pythagoras has been supplemented with material from Iamblichus, this is an indication that there had been a gap to fill, and that Eudemos did not give enough information about Pythagoras or even none at all" (1972: 411).

in the opening chapter)-- it seems that we ought to give the idea a little more thought than Burkert does, and we ought to be sure we have exhausted its resonance and relevance before we consign it to the dustbin of history. It of course also matches in some very important respects the type of education that Plato proposes in the *Republic*. In any case, it is a vexed subject and at other points Burkert takes exactly the right tone. Considering the question of the early origin of the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition in his *Greek Religion*, he says "the difficulties of a precise demarcation should not lead to a denial of the phenomena themselves" (1985: 300).¹⁴⁰ I would add that the center of this discussion about Orphism and Pythagoreanism ought to be, not "shamanism"-- interesting though that discussion may be-- but rather the question of how Plato's thought relates to the musical culture of the Greeks and the serious study of mathematics in antiquity and beyond.

Example 2: The Defence of Traditional Myths

Proclus' discussion of the traditional myths is obviously related in some ways to the Orphic aspects of his philosophy since the Orphic tradition seems to include allegorical interpretations of myths. However, Proclus' attempt to save traditional myths can also be seen as distinct from this tradition, based on its own arguments and interpretative approaches and with its foundation in his reading of Plato and his respect for Homer. Proclus begins his discussion of the traditional myths by noting that some people might actually draw a connection between Socrates' criticisms of these myths in the *Republic* and "the present terrible and disorderly destruction of the holy statutes." The essay (Gallavotti actually expresses this well) has the goal of not only saving Homer from Socrates' criticisms but also saving Plato from any blame occasioned by these criticisms, above all for any responsibility for the contemporary widespread disrespect shown toward the ancient myths. Proclus notes:

καὶ δὴ διαφερόντως οἱ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἄνθρωποι τοῖς παλαιοῖς μύθοις ἐπιτιμᾶν εἰώθασιν, ὡς πολλῆς μὲν εὐχερείας ἐν ταῖς περὶ θεῶν δόξαις, πολλῆς δὲ ἀτόπου καὶ πλημμελοῦς φαντασίας αἰτίοις γεγονόσιν καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ πρὸς τὴν παρούσαν τοὺς πολλοὺς δεινὴν καὶ ἄτακτον σύγχυσιν τῶν ἱερῶν θεσμῶν συνεληλακόσιν. (1.74.4-9)

The men of our times are particularly prone to criticize the ancient myths on the grounds that they have been the cause of much simple-mindedness in beliefs about the gods as well as many strange and false images so that these myths have done nothing less than driven the many into the current terrible and disorderly destruction of the holy statutes.

What is remarkable is the addressee in this quote-- Proclus assumes that all of his readers find the "present terrible destruction" a bad thing, but he disagrees with those who blame the myths themselves rather than the misunderstanding of the masses.

¹⁴⁰ In terms of Proclus' Pythagoreanism, several scholars have begun to tackle the question of philosophically serious Pythagoreanism in late antiquity by bracketing off the problematic relation to the earlier tradition, see O'Meara 1989 and Steele, Bonazzi, Lévy and Steel 2007. On Pythagoras generally see Riedweg 2005 and Kahn 2001. Hadot 1995 provides a careful summary of this issue.

He makes these points as an introduction to his defence of these myths and explanation of these myths in relation to Socrates' criticisms in the *Republic*. According to Proclus, the myths have their purpose which he describes as:

δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ τὸ τῶν ποιητικῶν πλασμάτων τραγικὸν καὶ τὸ τερατώδες καὶ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν κινεῖν τοὺς ἀκούοντας παντοδαπῶς εἰς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ζήτησιν (85.16).

It seems to me that the tragic and portentous aspects of these myths, as well as the stories they tell which are contrary to nature,¹⁴¹ actually have the function of stimulating listeners in all sorts of ways to search after the truth.

He admits that sometimes people misuse or misunderstand them, but uses the analogy of the discussion of drunkenness in the *Laws* in their defence. The traditional myths, like drunkenness can be abused, but he argues that:

οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν διαστρόφως χρωμένων τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἀρετὴν τε καὶ κακίαν κριτέον, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας ἕκαστα φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὀρθότητος δοκιμάζειν προσήκει (1.75.25-28).

The virtue and the evil of each thing ought not to be judged based on the actions of those who misuse that thing but rather each thing should be judged based on its essential nature and on the correctness that exists in it.

He believes we should judge the value of the traditional myths not by those who use them like Pheidippides in the *Clouds* or Euthyphro in the Platonic dialogue, but rather according to the canons of those who interpret them intelligently and, at times, allegorically (the *exegetai*).

Moreover, it is by no means the case that Proclus' defence of Homer is based entirely on allegory or late antique exegetical strategies. In fact, the foundation of the defence is the skill with which he reads the *Republic's* dramatic irony. Proclus believes that Plato's discussion(s) of writing and mimesis are reflexive and should be applied directly to Plato's own text. This argument, once pointed out, is basically irrefutable because of the way the *Republic* is written. Socrates proposes to kick Homer out of the city because he "hides himself", and because some parts of Homer, if taken the wrong way, could be morally harmful. Proclus makes the logical connection:

ὁ αὐτὸς οὖν λόγος καὶ τὸν Ὅμηρον ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλειν τῆς πολιτείας καὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα αὐτόν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐκάτερον μὲν ἡγεμόνα τῆς ζωῆς ἐκείνης καὶ ἀρχηγὸν ἀποφαίνειν, τὸ δὲ μιμητικὸν ἀμφοτέρων διὰ πάσης ὡς εἰπεῖν τῆς ἐκατέρου πραγματείας διήκον ἀποδοκιμάζειν (1.161.9-13).

According to exactly the same argument which throws Homer out of the city we would also throw Plato out of the city. Rather, we should show that each of them

¹⁴¹ Though not the purpose of this chapter, it is interesting to compare the way that Proclus indicates that myths contrary to nature can actually stimulate thought to the way that Snell approaches the same question Snell 1975: 202-204.

is a leader and a guide of that best life while we reject the mimesis that extends through the entire work of both authors.¹⁴²

μήτ' οὖν τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν μόνον τῆς πρωτίστης ἐκβάλλωμεν πολιτείας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Πλάτωνος πραγματεῖαν μετ' ἐκείνης, ὡς πολὺ τῆς μιμήσεως ἀπολαύουσιν (1.163.2-5; cf. 1.119.1).¹⁴³

So then, if we follow that approach, let us not only throw the poetry of Homer out of the best city, but also all of the works of Plato together with it since Plato's works too are based on mimesis.
and later:

καὶ Πλάτωνα μιμητὴν ἂν οὕτως τις ἀποφῆναιε καὶ τρίτον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας (1.199.5-6).

On these grounds, someone could easily show that Plato too is an imitator and third from the truth.

By ἀποδοκιμάζειν he certainly does not mean that we should neglect the importance of *mimesis* which continues to form the foundation of not only his literary theory but also his educational theory (in fact, he continues to stress elsewhere that Socrates is in a sense a mimetic exemplum); what he means is that we should not consider it the goal or the ultimate point of Plato's philosophy or Homer's poetry.

Proclus claims that the goal of the one is ἡ φιλόσοφος θεωρία whereas the point of Homer's poetry is ἐνθεασμὸς (Ὀμήρου τοίνυν ὁ μὲν ἐνθεασμὸς τὸ πρώτιστόν ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν ἐν τῇ ποιήσει, 1.199). He points out both that mimesis extends through Plato's entire text and that someone could easily take Calicles' or Thrasymachus' arguments the wrong way. To Proclus, readers of Plato who quote Thrasymachus with approval are like readers of Homer who quote Thersites with approval; Proclus even seems to realize that these examples are tough because both Agamemnon and Socrates are sometimes wrong (i.e. it is not impossible for intelligent readers to actually explore this option of agreeing with Thrasymachus or Thersites). However, he seems to think it is reasonable for a reader of Homer to sympathize with Achilles' revolt, not Thersites, and he applies the same approach to Plato. He reads Socrates' criticisms of Homer as challenges to a critical reading of Homer. Therefore, in the commentary on the *Republic*, he naturally answers these challenges using a variety of philological, sociological and philosophical arguments. It is clear throughout that one of his primary goals is to prevent the *Republic* from being misunderstood in a way that would provide support to those who opposed the continuance of Greek religious practice.

¹⁴² The exact sense of this phrase-- ἀποδοκιμάζειν τὸ μιμητικὸν-- is obviously extremely important for understanding what Proclus means and in fact for understanding his entire approach to Plato and poetry and even philosophy itself. It cannot possibly mean stop reading and producing mimetic texts-- it must mean something like "try to see the truth in or through mimetic texts" and focus on this truth rather than the mimetic surface. Proclus seems to think the existence of the latter is as necessary as the existence of the phenomenal world.

¹⁴³ The word used here, ἐκβάλλειν, is exactly the same that the *Anonymous Prolegomena* uses to say that Proclus did not recognize the authenticity of the *Republic*.

Example 3: Proclus' discussion of the theological proposals in book 2

Proclus' discussion of the theological "typoi" in book 2 of the *Republic* begins by addressing a question that often arises even when students are reading Greek in a classroom setting. Why would Plato in the *Republic* refer to "ὁ θεός"?¹⁴⁴ Proclus answers:

δεῖ τοῦτο πρῶτον ἐννοεῖν, ὅτι πάντα λέγει θεόν. ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ἄρθρου πρόσθεσις ἢ τὸ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν δηλοῖ μόνον (ὡς ὅταν λέγωμεν· ὁ ποιητῆς εἶπεν, τῷ ἀκροτάτῳ τοῦτο ἐξαίρετον ἀπονέμοντες), ἢ τὸ ὅλον πλῆθος, ὡς ὅταν λέγωμεν· ὁ ἄνθρωπος λογικός, ἀντὶ τοῦ παντὸς τὸ ἄρθρον προσάπτοντες. οὐκοῦν ἐπέιπερ οὕτω φησὶν· ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθός, ἢ τὸν πρῶτον λέγοι ἂν ἢ πάντα θεόν. (1.27.15-20)

It is important to realize first of all that he means each god. The addition of the article either indicates simple superiority (such as when we say "the poet said" giving this exceptional honor to the very best¹⁴⁵) or the entire multitude of gods, such as when we say man is logical,¹⁴⁶ using the article instead of the word "each". So then since he spoke in this way: god is good, he must either mean the first god or each god.

Later he is even more explicit when discussing the *Republic's* principle that no god can be changed by anything external. He is clearly worried about misunderstandings of this point. He says: δόξειεν δ' ἂν οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἓνα μόνον ποιεῖν θεόν· πολλῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἔστι καὶ τὸ δυνατώτερον (1.33.30-34.2). This basic approach, including the reference to a most powerful god, is evident much earlier in the tradition, prominent in Cicero, etc. My point here is less to discuss the general point, but rather to explain what this means for our understanding of Proclus' general activity as a commentator. He is obviously not trying to fit Plato into the new religion, but is trying to stress the distinctiveness of the Platonic tradition.¹⁴⁷

Example 4: The Proposal for Female Education

Proclus' comments on book 5 of the *Republic* provide a particularly striking illustration of the fact that his disagreements with the legally enforced orthodoxy were not merely theological. Proclus mounts a direct defence of the principle of educational equality that Socrates expresses in book 5 of the *Republic*-- that women should receive the same mental and physical education which had traditionally been reserved for men. Hypatia has come to symbolize the exclusion of female philosophers from history; she

¹⁴⁴ Dodds 1946 thought: "like Taylor [A.E.], I feel that Plato's attitude to him [God] 'is charged with a deep emotion of a kind that can only be called religious' [from Taylor's *Mind*, N.S. 47 (1938), 190]. I incline to see in him the highest God of Plato's personal faith, whom we meet also at the end of the Sixth Letter, and whom I suppose Plato commonly has in mind when he speaks of "o theos" in the singular without further explanation." Proclus' explanation brings out well I think the value of a commentary by a native speaker.

¹⁴⁵ Sometimes this phrase is used in English of Shakespeare. Proclus of course means Homer.

¹⁴⁶ Obviously the fact that this second portion simply cannot be translated is the essence of the difficulty-- it is not possible to say "the man is logical" in this sense in English.

¹⁴⁷ On this question in general, see the essays in eds. Mitchell and Van Nuffelen 2010 and in eds. Frede and Athanassiadi 1999.

was of course a member of the same school of late antique Platonism and her existence proves that Proclus' arguments were probably widely representative of late-antique Platonism as a whole and were practically applied rather than merely theoretical possibilities. The most striking aspect of Proclus' approach is simply his overall sense of what Plato/Socrates says in book 5; some commentators discuss book 5 as though what it said was something like "men should hold their wives in common"; Ficino's discussion of book 5 for example begins in this way-- as though the primary controversial proposal of book 5 was the abolition of private property and traditional marriage. Proclus, on the other hand, very clearly seems to think that the primary point of book 5 is the proposal that women should receive the same mental and physical education as men. Proclus' commentary on book 5 begins with the following words:

Τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν πολιτικὴν οὐκ ἀνδράσι μόνοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναιξὶ κοινὴν ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ τῆς Πολιτείας Σωκράτης ἐπιδείξει βουλόμενος ἀναγκαίως πρὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὴν παιδείαν τὴν αὐτὴν ἀνδρῶν εἶναι φησι καὶ γυναικῶν, ὅσῃν καὶ οἷαν ἀφώρισεν, τὴν διὰ μουσικῆς καὶ τὴν διὰ γυμναστικῆς (1.236.5-10).

Since Socrates wants to show in the fifth book of the *Republic* that political virtue is a common possession which belongs not only to men but also to women, he necessarily says first that the education of men and women should be the same, and he defines the quantity and type of this education-- namely mental education through music and poetry as well as physical education.

Proclus explicitly connects the importance of this provision to the fact that Hellenists acknowledge both male and female divinities (1.247.20 and 1.253.27). As Plato does also, he indicates the goddess Athena is the divine model which inspired these provisions, the same goddess whose statue he removed from the acropolis and transferred to his school when it was attacked by hostile crowds (see *Life of Marinus* and previous chapter).

He even goes so far as to defend entirely seriously the principle of women in combat. He cites the Sauromatiae and the Lusitanians as positive exempla and points out that the Lusitanians provide an example of the complete reversal of gender roles:

Σαυρομάτιδας οὐ μείον τῶν ἀνδρῶν πολεμικὰς καὶ τολμώσας ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς· Λυσιτανῶν δὲ ἀκήκοα τὴν πολιτείαν ἰστουργίαν μὲν ἀποδιδόναι καὶ ταλασίαν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, πολέμους δὲ καὶ ἀγῶνας ταῖς γυναιξίν. οὕτως ὁμαλὴ γέγονεν ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσις πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐκ τῆς δημιουργίας. (242.4-9)

The female Sauromatians are no less war-like and daring amidst danger than the men are. I have also heard that the constitution of the Lusitanians gives weaving and spinning wool to men but war and athletic contests to women. This example proves how equal the nature of men and women essentially is.

He returns to this point again when discussing the logos of Theodorus:

καὶ γὰρ Ἀμαζόνες ἀνδρικαὶ καὶ Σαυρομάτιδες ὡς Θρᾶκες, παρὰ δὲ Λυσιτανοῖς, ὡς φασι, στρατηγοῦσι μὲν αἱ γυναῖκες καὶ πολιτεύονται καὶ πάντα πράττουσιν, ὅσα παρ' Ἑλλήσιν οἱ ἄνδρες, καὶ ἱστοποιοῦσιν καὶ ταλασιουργοῦσιν οἱ ἄνδρες καὶ πάντα πράττουσιν, ὅσα παρ' Ἑλλήσιν αἱ γυναῖκες. εἰ οὖν ταῦτα διωμολόγηται, μηδὲν οἰώμεθα διαφέρειν πρὸς ἀρετῆς κτῆσιν τοῦ θήλεος τὸ ἄρρεν, μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν ταῦτα διορίζωμεν, ἀλλὰ ταῖς φύσεσιν, ἃς τὰς αὐτὰς οὐσας δείκνυσιν ἢ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔργων ἐπιτήδευσις, εἰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἄλλοις τόποις (1.253.17-26).

And they say that the Amazons are brave, and the Sauromatians, considering they are Thracians, and among the Lusitanians, they say the women are generals and participate in politics and do everything that men do among the Greeks, and the mean weave and spin wool and do everything that the women do among the Greeks. If we agree on this, we shall not believe that the male differs from the female in any way with respect to acquiring virtue, nor will we define these things merely according to custom, but rather we will make these decisions with regard the natures of each sex, natures which are essentially the same as is proven by the ability to engage in the same activities since this does actually occur in many different places.

Likewise, his stress on the importance of education also continues the tradition of Greek philosophy. He repeats that men and women have the same nature and stresses the importance of education as something which completes nature:

ἡ φύσις κοινὴ καὶ τῶν ἀρρένων ἐστὶ καὶ τῶν θηλειῶν, καὶ κοινὰ πάντα ἀμφοτέροις τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, τὸ ἄρχειν τὸ ἐπικουρεῖν τὸ τεχνικῶς ζῆν, (1.242.21-24); however, he stresses that education is necessary to provide equality: ἡ γὰρ φυσικὴ ἐπιτηδειότης ἀτελής, ἡ δὲ παιδεία πρὸς τὸ τέλειον ἄγει τὴν φύσιν, (1.241.26-27).

Male and female have essentially the same nature and therefore they should share the same habits-- namely, ruling, assisting rulers and living the life of artisans...Natural tendencies can remain undeveloped-- education is what brings nature to completion.

These statements about education are extremely significant. Elsewhere, Proclus tends to concentrate on the most difficult philosophical points and interpretative difficulties; authors frequently do not say what they take for granted except in works particularly devoted to the appropriate subject (which, in Proclus' case, we simply do not have). Discussing book 5, Proclus has occasion to state quite clearly how he believes education (παιδεία) relates to human nature (φύσις) and the role it should play in the good life.

He does acknowledge that there are some limits to the fact that men and women have the same nature, but denies that these are extensive enough to undermine the general point about the value of equal educational opportunity. The examples he chooses of natural differences are positively modern. For example, he notes that wine is not healthy for pregnant women:

καὶ τῶν κυουσῶν γυναικῶν ἐστὶν ἴδια ἐπιτηδεύματα, οἷα προσέταξεν ἐν Νόμοις Πλάτων,¹⁴⁸ γυμνασίαν καὶ δίαιταν ἀνοῖνον καὶ εἴ τι τούτοις ὅμοιον. ταύτη μὲν οὖν διαφέρουσιν· ταῖς δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν δυνάμεσιν οὐ διαφέρουσιν (244.23).

There are also separate practices for pregnant women, such as Plato prescribes in the *Laws*, exercises and a diet without wine and this sort of thing. In this way, men and women differ. They do not differ with respect to the power of their souls.

He also includes some of the same claims found in Aristotle and other ancient authors and so universally rejected by modern western society-- that women are weaker or more liable to *pathos* (which he considers the opposite of *logos*) than men. However, what is extraordinary is that he actually uses these claims to stress that women *should* receive the same mental and physical education (τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον τῆς περὶ αὐτὸ παιδείας τῷ νομοθέτῃ φροντιστέον, at 1.247.11)-- basically, he says that if women are in fact weaker, then all the more reason that they should receive the same physical and mental education so that they can be improved. His attitude is so open and so unconventional that one almost wonders if he has accepted these arguments partly as a rhetorical strategy simply to make his overall point more refutable.

As also is the case in the *Commentary on Euclid*, where he is far from being a simple Pythagorean enthusiast (again, see section 429) but seems to actually prefer the careful method of Euclid, he also takes a careful stance toward the Pythagorean tradition in this respect. Considering the question of whether Socrates learned this idea from the Pythagoreans, he says no, not exactly-- he learned it rather from his search for the form of virtue together with his observations of human affairs:

ἢ μὲν οὖν κατ' εἶδος τῆς ἀρετῆς ...[text missing in original] ἀνέπεισε τὸν Σωκράτη κοινὴν ποιῆσαι τὴν παιδείαν· ταύτην δὲ εὗρεν λαβὼν ἀπὸ τῶν πραγματῶν, ὅτι τινὲς γυναῖκες ζῶσι τὴν ἀνδρῶν ἀρετὴν (1.248.21-23)

The form of virtue itself convinced Socrates to make education a common possession of men and women. He realized this by his examination of affairs, by noticing that in fact some women live according to the same virtue as men.

The lacuna makes it difficult to tell exactly what was said here, but the second sentence seems fairly clear. He does follow this quote by referring to the Pythagorean women who he says made it particularly easy for Timaeus the Pythagorean to accept the same

¹⁴⁸ Proclus seems to rationalize here what is found in the *Laws* (775b-c together with 789a-e) without quite claiming that Plato says exactly this. Plato stresses the importance of sobriety on the night of conception for men and women (a not entirely irrational theory, perhaps to be compared to Lamarck's hopeful idea of the inheritance of acquired traits which also of course turned out to be entirely wrong), and proposes a law that pregnant women should continually walk around. Proclus on the other hand (perhaps informed by the medical advances since Plato's time??) seems to indicate something very close to the modern standard practice.

principle-- it seems to be less a matter of Pythagorean tradition than a historical observation that such women existed in Pythagorean circles and so made the principle easier to see. What is quite striking is the language Proclus uses to describe Socrates in this respect, particularly since some modern interpreters have simply doubted that it is possible that Socrates could have proposed any such thing in 5th century Athens. Proclus, defending Socrates, echoes Socrates' own language in the *Gorgias* (521d6) by saying that also in this respect, Socrates has seemed at times to be alone (μόνος ἑαυτῷ σύμφωνος, 1.252.22).

Proclus' thought is not only unconventional relative to his time or in comparison with the period which followed but is actually inherently, philosophically opposed to a narrow interpretation of convention. He includes a particularly clear critique of the entire idea of what we would call convention, using the word *ethos* in the sense of "custom": τὸ γὰρ ἔθος διττόν, ἢ οὐ λόγος πατήρ, ἢ οὐ πάθος αἴτιον· καὶ τὸ αἰσχρὸν διττόν, ἢ τὸ τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν τοιοῦτον φανταζόμενον, ἢ τὸ τοῖς ἀνοήτοις (1.243.16-19). He uses this dual sense of αἰσχρὸν as a way of countering the arguments of those who criticize Socrates' proposals simply based on convention, because they seem ridiculous or because such proposals seem shameful. He does believe that shame is socially important, but does not believe it applies in this case-- there are two types of shame, he says, that which applies to people who have sense, and that which is based only on common, potentially false prejudices or misunderstandings.

In some ways, his approach to the use of cross-cultural exempla in these passages is as important as his approach to the gender question itself. He stresses that only some human customs are actually natural whereas the vast majority are due to habit or convention. We need not therefore simply accept convention or assume that proposals which violate convention are necessarily absurd or impossible. The philosopher can propose changes in convention (ἔθος) based on an understanding of nature and looking at how people in other places and other cultures do things is one of the basic types of observations that allow a philosopher to gain a broader view of nature. All of the language in this section is quite striking in its unconventionality and inherent openness to change: εἰ γὰρ ἔδει τοῖς πονηροῖς ἔθεσι δουλεύειν, οὐδέποτε ἂν ἐγένετο μεταβολή, τῶν χειρόνων τῶν προτέρων ἀεὶ κρατούντων ("If it were necessary to be enslaved to bad customs, then there could never be change because the bad practices of previous generations would always continue to dominate" 1.244.1-3). This way of thinking is deeply rooted in the Greek philosophical tradition and deeply aware of the extreme variability in human political cultures. Cultural relativism is not, for Proclus, a challenge to importance of philosophical reason or the Platonic tradition but rather one of the basic observations that demonstrate its value.

He openly acknowledges that many will criticize these provisions because they will seem ridiculous or impossible but simply points out that everything which is contrary to the common habit seems shameful at first. He argues in clear and striking terms that an *ethos* which seems against the common understanding but is nevertheless supported by a strong *logos* should be introduced to cities even if it seems ridiculous or impossible at first. He notes in striking language that if any society were to adopt these provisions, they would eventually be universally accepted: ἔσται γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο χρόνῳ πάσιν ἀρέσκον (1.243.23). Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* actually seems to include the clearest if not the only extant essay from all of Greek and Roman antiquity that defends

unambiguously and with clear philosophical arguments the idea that women should receive the same physical and mental education as men (setting aside of course book 5 of the *Republic* itself). What is almost as significant is that the same portion of the commentary includes some of the clearest and most comprehensible statements which explain Proclus' general theory of *paideia* as the set of physical (διὰ γυμναστικῆς) and mental (διὰ μουσικῆς) practices which bring human nature to completion. He explains:

καὶ γὰρ ἀνάγκη τῇ μὲν φύσει τὴν παιδείαν ἐπομένην εἶναι, τῇ δὲ παιδεῖα τὴν ἀρετὴν, τὴν μὲν τελειοῦσαν τὴν φύσιν, τὴν δὲ τέλος οὖσαν τῆς παιδείας. (1.236.13-16)

It is necessarily the case that education should follow nature and virtue should follow education, since the one perfects nature whereas the other is the purpose of education.

Example 5: Heliocentrism and the theory of elliptical planetary motion

Helmig and Steel note in their article on Proclus in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy that "Proclus' arguments also played an important role in the scientific discussion of the Ptolemaic hypotheses in the 16th and 17th century." Some authors have been even more emphatic than Steel and Helmig in expressing the connection between Renaissance Neoplatonism and the development of the heliocentric hypothesis. Siorvanes' 1996 stressed the influence of Proclus' claim that "the sun is in the center."¹⁴⁹ Thomas Kuhn claimed in his 1956 book *The Copernican Revolution* that Neoplatonic philosophical/religious respect for the sun had been a key ingredient in the Copernican revolution.¹⁵⁰¹⁵¹ In fact, it seems that Kuhn's detailed study of this episode provided the background for the more well-known controversial claims in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Interestingly, in spite of the centrality of this episode for Kuhn's approach to the history of science, he either did not realize or did not acknowledge that Proclus actually wrote an astronomical work. Probably this is not at all his fault; his work

¹⁴⁹ Siorvanes 1996: 262-316 seems to be the most thorough treatment of Proclus' astronomy, including a comparison of the commentaries on the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* and an indication of some of the most important ways Proclus influenced the Renaissance.

¹⁵⁰ This idea preceded Kuhn and continued after him as he acknowledged; I will address Kuhn in particular because his work is clear, he references Proclus specifically, and his work obviously led to some more significant larger claims about the scientific project. For a more contemporary and concise treatment see Allen 2003. Knox 2002 provides a useful summary of the bibliography on this question (400n.4). On the one hand, Knox's approach is a bit too skeptical; he basically accepts the idea though he almost writes as though he does not. What does it even mean to say that some advance derived "not from Renaissance revival of Platonic philosophy" "but from humanist revival of Greek learning" when the bit of learning being referenced is clearly Platonic? 416; perhaps what he means is that Copernicus' Neoplatonism has less to do with Ficino's brand of Platonism in the *De Sole* (what Kuhn claims) and more to do with simple Classicism. cf. Donahue 1981 on Vesalius and Copernicus: "The authors were guided by a form of classicism, an enlightened obedience to ancient authority, whereby it was the methods of the ancients rather than their opinions, that were respected." On the other hand, Knox does provide a very interesting and valuable attempt to show that some of Copernicus' ancient sources were probably more valuable for the serious science they contained than they were for their religious orientation (drawing on the Suda entry for *kinesis*).

¹⁵¹ For concise bibliography relating to the origin of this idea, see Allen 2003: 249n.15.

displays an extraordinary breadth, and he apologizes in the introduction for not being able to do the work of a specialist in every field. The reality though is that Proclus' multi-faceted scientific critique of the Ptolemaic system was probably at least as influential as his religion. Kuhn claimed:

"Neoplatonism completes the conceptual stage setting for the Copernican Revolution, at least as we shall examine it here. For an astronomical revolution it is a puzzling stage, because it is set with so few astronomical properties. Their absence, however, is just what makes the setting important" (132).¹⁵²

Thus, Thomas Kuhn's work-- which, in spite of the criticisms which follow, I find extremely valuable -- provides a particularly good index of what an enormous intellectual shadow is cast by misrepresentation of Neoplatonic science and the European reception of the thought of late-antiquity. Kuhn gives an enormous role to Proclus and Neoplatonism in the development of the Copernican hypothesis and yet somehow indicates that this role had nothing to do with the existence of Neoplatonic science but rather represented the cultural influence of Neoplatonic religion. Parts of the story one would have thought essential-- for example, the first Latin translation of Proclus' *Hypotyposis* in 1579, and the existence of multiple Greek copies of the work in Renaissance Florence (called by Neugebauer "the first and last summary of the contents of the *Almagest* from antiquity"¹⁵³) simply were not mentioned by Kuhn. Even from the cultural standpoint it would seem that Ficino's discussion of Plato's *Epinomis* (dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici) must have at the very least provided a significant impulse to the development of astronomy for philosophical rather than religious reasons.

It is fairly obvious why a serious scientific analysis of Ptolemy's system by an ancient reader who also knew Aristarchus' work would have been influential. Furthermore, Proclus' *Hypotyposis* is extraordinary for the clarity and simplicity with which it lays out both the intellectual origin and the problems of the Ptolemaic system.¹⁵⁴ The entire methodology of the *Hypotyposis* is clearly related to Plato's proposals for studying astronomy in the *Republic*, and displays an admirable freedom of thought in the way it discusses so clearly both the observations that prompted the creation of the Ptolemaic system and finally the problems left unresolved by that system. The reality, as I will show, is that a large part of the reason Proclus' work was so influential is that astronomy and geometry seem to have continued to advance after Euclid and Ptolemy. Proclus' attitude toward science was influential-- but just as influential was the fact that he simply discussed more recent scientific advances and perhaps made some interesting proposals of his own. Neoplatonic mysticism and spiritualism, the Hermetic corpus, even perhaps quotes from the Chaldaian oracles, etc. may well have played an important role in the Renaissance and even been quite influential among serious scientists. However, none of this should detract from the fact that the most basic and most important reason Proclus' thought was influential among Renaissance scientists was simply the quality and importance of the *Hypotyposis* and *Commentary on Euclid*.

¹⁵² Compare also Kuhn "with Ficino as with Proclus, we are obviously a very long way from science. Ficino does not seem to understand astronomy. He certainly made no attempt to reconstruct it" (130) with Neugebauer's comments quoted here.

¹⁵³ 1975: v.2 1036. For a more updated view, discussing Theon of Alexandria rather than Proclus, see Jones 1999.

¹⁵⁴ cf. Segonds 1987 on Proclus' astronomy.

Proclus does not seem to actually propose a system in which the earth revolves around the sun though some passages are difficult enough to read that there is plenty of room for doubt; even the *Hypotyposis* clearly indicates at multiple points that it is only telling part of the story (ex. μύσας ἐν τῷ παρόντι at 1.5). The issue becomes complicated for a number of reasons. First of all, Copernicus in his *De Revolutionibus* indicates that he believes his system was the system of ancient Pythagoreans,¹⁵⁵ and Proclus obviously associates Plato closely with the Pythagoreans.¹⁵⁶ Galileo and others who later supported this hypothesis clearly saw themselves as essentially defending a Platonic system against an Aristotelian system (see the *Dialogue Concerning the Two World Systems*); Galileo even seems to think that Aristotle in the *De Caelo* is actually referring to Plato when he criticizes those who think the earth moves (perhaps connecting the passage with something like the reference to the story in Theophrastus, see below on Plutarch *Platonicae Quaestiones* 1006C, rather than any particular reading of the *Timaeus*). Proclus, on the other hand, disagrees with this directly in the *Commentary on the Timaeus* and thinks that Aristotle and Plato were using the same order of heavenly spheres (*In Tim.* 3.133ff); however, Proclus then also disagrees with Plato on this point and considers another order of the spheres in the commentary on the *Republic*.¹⁵⁷ Essentially, Proclus, like every Greek scholar, philosopher and historian of antiquity, identifies Plato closely with Pythagorean philosophy. Proclus though also distinguishes carefully between Plato's philosophy and particular claims of particular Pythagorean philosophers. He treats the claims of Pythagoreans like we would the claims of any other philosophers-- they are philosophical or scientific claims to be discussed critically and approved or refuted. However, it seems to be the case that in the Renaissance the general sense that Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy were in harmony, and the references in ancient sources to the idea that the sun moved around a central fire, were sufficient for supporters of the new system to claim Plato as an ally. Most likely, episodic accounts like that attributed to Theophrastus in Plutarch's *Platonic Questions* (1006c1) together with the complexity of the discussion that follows this point in Plutarch (and elsewhere) seemed to support this opinion.

¹⁵⁵ He cites *Life of Numa* and Ps. Plutarch; the *Life of Numa* must have been a particularly important work for Italian republican humanists. The reference in the *Life of Numa* probably indicates a central fire not identical in any simple sense with the sun since it seems to be the same view as what Ps-Plutarch ascribes to Philolaus (895e, 896a); there are indications though in pseudo-Plutarch of something closer to the Copernican system (see also 889b9; 891A6). Copernicus seems to conflate the central fire and the heliocentric hypothesis; it seems unlikely that he did not notice the difference, but perhaps these references were simply the best for his rhetorical purposes-- it is easy to see from the context why he might have chosen the passage from the *Life of Numa* even though, for example, *De Facie* 923A provides more complete evidence of the claim that some in antiquity held this system (i.e. one reference is shrouded in Roman piety, the other includes a reference to a legal charge of impiety). Or, perhaps Copernicus was simply convinced of an esoteric reading of ancient Pythagoreanism (which is certainly what his reference to the Lysis letter implies). Heath notes that the clearest references to the system of Aristarchus is in Archimedes, followed by Archimedes' puzzling and dismissive interpretation (Heath 1913/2004: 301-4). Copernicus later references book 7 of the *Laws* as another authority.

¹⁵⁶ Martens points out: "Kepler himself called Plato and Pythagoras his true masters (in a letter to Galileo) presumably on the basis of a shared belief in mathematical metaphysics" (2000: 34; see Martens for the citation of this letter).

¹⁵⁷ Siorvanes 1996 seems to be the first person to point this out.

Thus, though Proclus does not seem to advocate a Copernican system (even this is unclear), he does do a number of things in the *Commentary on the Republic* that may be thought to have had a considerable influence. What is initially surprising to modern readers is that the quite serious and in many ways fully scientific (i.e. it appreciates the importance of observation and of testing whether various models will explain the observed phenomena) astronomical discussion is actually found as part of the interpretation of the Myth of Er. Because Proclus believes the "sphonduleis" represent the heavenly spheres, the discussion of the myth and the explanation of its details involve astronomical details; Proclus both explains the details and considers the possibility, or rather certainty, that Plato was using an outdated astronomical system. In a sense, Proclus' admiration for "Platonic" astronomy is analogous to Renaissance admiration for Platonic astronomy (see Martens 2003 and Allen 2003) because when Proclus claims to admire Plato's astronomy, he is indicating admiration not for the letter of Plato's text but rather for a general approach to the subject.

One wonders if Renaissance readers (particularly those familiar with passages like in the *Life of Numa*, section 11) simply misunderstood the striking phrase of the *In Rem.* that "sun is in the middle"; though the meaning is different, the phrase is basically the same as that used by authors like Kepler to describe the Copernican hypothesis.¹⁵⁸ Proclus says that the gods set the sun in the middle (τὸ ἡλιακὸν πῦρ κραδίης τόπῳ ἐστήριξεν, 1.220.1; cf. Siorvanes 1996). What Proclus means by this phrase is that the sun is the fourth in order (moving from the fixed sphere of the stars or from the earth) among the seven heavenly bodies. The Ptolemaic order is, moving from the earth outward, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. Aristotle and Plato both used a different order which had the moon closest to the Earth and the Sun immediately above it. Therefore, in the Ptolemaic system, the sun is in the middle in the sense of the middle of the seven. Proclus is far less clear about this meaning though than, for example, Macrobius in his commentary on the dream of Scipio. Because this phrase essentially describes the Ptolemaic order, it is not actually found in Plato's *Republic* but it is found in Proclus' commentary (since Proclus considers an order different from the one represented by the Myth of Er). One actually finds this same striking phrase in Cicero's work itself since the order with the sun "in the middle" was widely accepted by Cicero's time. Macrobius (1.19.1) points this out clearly, and also even includes an entire section stressing that this does not mean that the sun is in the center of the universe/solar system in the sense of place (1.19.15). Macrobius' insistence does show that he acknowledges the possibility of misunderstanding as well as the existence of those who do or might mistakenly ascribe to Cicero the view attributed in antiquity to Aristarchus and Seleucus (the latter, interestingly, apparently of Chaldaian origin).

Proclus does not explicitly criticize the heliocentric view of the universe in the *In Rem.* as Macrobius does in his commentary on Cicero. Thus, a Renaissance proponent of the heliocentric theory might upon reading Cicero initially wonder if Cicero was agreeing with the heliocentric theory, but then reading Macrobius it would become clear that only the traditional Ptolemaic system was meant. A reader of Plato and Proclus would have the opposite experience-- after reading Proclus' commentary it would actually seem more likely that the philosophy of the *Republic* could be harmonized with the Copernican

¹⁵⁸ Donahue proposes the idea of "creative misunderstanding" (17).

hypothesis. A few places in the text make it very difficult to tell if Proclus does actually embrace a heliocentric system. Though the phrase with "the sun in the middle" does mean the Ptolemaic system, Proclus proceeds beyond this point with his explanation, indicating the existence of and offering himself further modifications and criticisms. He is clearly doing something far more than Macrobius, including references to an ongoing and open discussion in a way that Macrobius is not. There is no reason he could not have proposed such a system since he clearly criticizes both the system of Eudoxus and the system of Ptolemy. He obviously would have been aware of it since he discusses Aristarchus in the *Hypotyposis*. However, either because of the damaged text or for some other reason, it is not clear whether Proclus means to express disagreement with Ptolemy about the order of the heavenly spheres in the same way that he so clearly does (see below) on the question of planetary motion. As often when reading Proclus, it is clear from several passages that he has far more to say about the subject than is contained in his extant writings (see for example in the *Timaeus* commentary where another book is promised and the entire astronomical discussion is called, for the moment only a "parergon"; or in the *Hypotyposis* passage quoted above; the troubling phrase at 2.217.15; and also at 2.231.15 πολλῶν δὲ ὄντων καὶ ἄλλων...).

The reason then the work may have been so influential in the Renaissance is that Proclus' *In Rem.* juxtaposes a few extraordinary interpretative moves in the same section (2.220-235). First, Proclus compares the merits of various orders of the heavenly spheres and cites the famous line of Ibycus as an appropriate apology for someone considering a new order. Secondly, he makes the striking claim that the sun is located at the heart of the universe (without clarifying this as directly as Macrobius does). Third, he follows this striking phrase with quite extensive criticism of the Ptolemaic model. The focus of his criticism is that the Ptolemaic system is overly elaborate and artificially contrived (Platonic philosophy does not accept, according to Proclus, τὰς μεμηχανημένας αἰτίας τῶν κινήσεων, 2.233.23). He cites the simplicity of the Egyptian and Chaldaian systems with approval, because they do not use the Ptolemaic elaborations (2.236).

However, the foundation of his criticisms of the Ptolemaic system are not religious. He criticizes the system first of all because the elaborations are artificial:

οἱ δὲ ἐ[πίκυ]κλοι πολλὴν εἰσάγουσι τὴν τῶν μηχανημάτων ἔννοιαν· εἴτε γὰρ κυκλίσκους νοήσαιμὲν τινὰς, ἐφ' ὧν οἱ ἀστέρες ἔνεισι, κινουμένους ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμοκέντρων, πολλὴ ἀλογία κύκλους ἐν οὐρανῷ ποιεῖν ἀντὶ σωμάτων δινουμένους· εἴτε σώματα ἅττα σφαιροειδῆ ταῖς σφαίραις ἐνδεδεμένα καὶ δι' αὐτῶν φερόμενα καὶ τὰ ἄστρα ἐπὶ τούτων, ἔτι ἀδυνατώτερον καὶ πλάσματωδέστερον· (2.229)

Secondly he indicates that it simply does not match the type of movement one would expect from heavenly bodies: γελοῖον δὴ τοὺς τὴν κίνησιν ὁμαλῆ φυλάξαι προθυμουμένους οἶεσθαι τοῦτο ποιεῖν, εἰ τὰ κινούμενα διπλασιάσαιεν (2.229). Thirdly, he contrasts what he calls a philosophical method with an unphilosophical mathematical method:

οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐροῦσιν, ὅπως τὰ φαινόμενα διασώσωνται, τοιαύτας λαμβάνειν ὑποθέσεις· οἱ δὲ εἰς φιλόσοφον Μοῦσαν βλέποντες τὸ

μηδὲν ἀλόγως γίνεσθαι χρῆναι διαφυλάττειν· ἐν οἷς μάλιστα μηδὲν εἰκῆ
μηδ' ὡς ἔτυχεν, ἀλλὰ πάντα κατὰ λόγον· (2.229)

The primary value of the system should be, he says, to "save the phenomena" but he notes that Ptolemy's system does not actually entirely accomplish this purpose: τὰς ὑποθέσεις [i.e. the Ptolemaic] αὐτὰς ἐληλέγχθαι παρὰ τῶν ὕστερον, ὡς μήτε πάντα τὰ φαινόμενα σώζειν δυναμένας μήθ' ὅσα καὶ σώζουσιν ἀρκούντως ἀποδεικνύσας (2.230.11-13).¹⁵⁹ His own explanation will use more advanced mathematics; the distinction is clearly not against mathematics in favor of religion but between arbitrary mathematical models and models that use mathematics but match a philosophical *logos*.

Finally, Proclus says explicitly that one should not actually imagine the solar system to work the way Ptolemy indicates. He includes together with all of this some approving reference to the Pythagorean system which he contrasts with the system he is criticizing. Unfortunately, part of the text is missing here:

τῶν μὲν [γὰρ] Πυθαγορείων παρακείμενα ἦν δι' ἐλαχίστων καὶ ἀπλουστάτων ὑποθέσεων χρῆναι τὴν φαινομένην ἀνωμαλίαν τῶν οὐρανίων ἀπευθύνειν εἰς ὁμαλότητα καὶ τάξιν· (2.230.2-5).¹⁶⁰

This is particularly important because from Copernicus to Galileo and beyond, the supporters of the new model believed, not without some reason, that they were resurrecting the Pythagorean system. However, there is a problem with the text at this point, so it is not possible to tell exactly what Proclus said about the Pythagoreans in this connection.

This final point that the Ptolemaic system did not fit observations should be stressed. The story that Proclus tells is that the original system of Callippus and Eudoxus (used by Aristotle and Plato) did not actually fit observation and so was abandoned for a better one. However, he stresses that the new system of Ptolemy also does not fit the observations: Εἴτε δὲ τὴν προτέραν [Eudoxus] εἴτε τὴν δευτέραν [Ptolemy] ἐγκρίνοι τις γραφήν, οὐ πάνυ συνάδουσιν ταῖς τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα τηρήσεσιν (2.219). It is true that a modern reader is surprised by the approving references to the Egyptians and Chaldeans which Proclus includes in this section, but we should not misunderstand Proclus' method or consider it, in our sense, religious (ancient Greek readers freely acknowledged that the length of the observations of the Egyptians and Babylonians made their astronomical work invaluable). In any case, he clearly means Chaldaian astronomical observations more than the Chaldaian oracles when he refers to this material. He is very clearly trying to find a mathematical model that fits the observed phenomena, and this includes serious study of mathematics and serious attention to observation. The observational aspect is particularly evident when he notes that observations since the time of Ptolemy have not tended to entirely confirm Ptolemy's system (what he calls ταῖς τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα τηρήσεσιν, 2.219.22); the mathematical aspect is particularly evident in the *Commentary on Euclid* where he considers types of

¹⁵⁹ cf. Lloyd 1978.

¹⁶⁰ The textual loss makes it difficult, but I am claiming that Proclus uses this principle differently here than he does in the *Hypotyposis* 1.35 where he compares circular motion and its opposite.

motion which were not studied until after Euclid (see particularly the reference to Geminus at *In Eucl.* 111; see also Mueller 1987: 314 who gives a quick summary of some of the important names).

What is most extraordinary is that Proclus actually follows this approving reference to the Pythagorean principle of finding the simplest possible type of mathematical explanation by proposing elliptical planetary orbits as a solution to the inadequacies of the Ptolemaic system.¹⁶¹ Walter Burkert thinks Pythagoras is not a scientist because it is difficult to establish any particular discoveries that can be traced to Pythagoras with certainty. For Proclus though, Pythagoras represents not particular discoveries, but a method-- find the simplest mathematical explanation to fit the observed phenomena. Such a method obviously includes knowledge of mathematics and the phenomena. When pressed (see following chapter) to explain the difference between what he proposes and the ideas of his teacher, Plato, Proclus as I said, quotes Ibycus (borrowing of course from Socrates' palinode in the *Phaedrus*) to say-- after all Plato was only a man whereas understanding the natural world is a divine project. What follows is only a preliminary sketch of this subject; understanding Proclus' ideas of planetary motion will require more research (particularly comparisons with the *In Tim.* and the *Hypotyposis* as well as with Simplicius and Theon of Alexandria). However, I think this example is particularly important because it will show something about the so-called "Neoplatonic" system as a whole-- it may actually be a far more powerful tool for thinking than has been generally realized. Proclus develops his idea of planetary motion in this regard using the overall metaphysical tendency to distinguish between levels of being. His innovation (or presentation of an older system if it is that) is to stress that because the heavenly bodies are not pure immaterial nous-- they are after all bodies-- they cannot fully participate in the circular motion which characterizes nous. The idea that the heavenly bodies necessarily had to move in a perfectly circular fashion was deeply imbedded in the thought of Aristotle and Ptolemy; it is universally recognized that the essence of Ptolemy's system is an attempt to preserve this perfectly circular motion of the heavenly bodies. Proclus disagrees with it using the same impulse to distinguish between mind and soul which characterizes his philosophy as a whole.

It is generally assumed that the discovery of elliptical orbits was one of the decisive advances of modern science (particularly since Aristarchus obviously anticipated the heliocentric model; cf. Burkert 1972: 322). However, Proclus very much does seem to propose elliptical planetary orbits. He proposes a single simple type of motion which combines the properties of circular and straight motion. Ptolemy's system modifies the properties of circular motion by adding additional circles or using eccentrics-- the one constant is that all heavenly bodies move circularly. Proclus proposes a combination of circular and *straight* motion: μέσην ἔχοντα τάξιν καὶ κίνησιν τῶν τε μόνως κυκλοφορουμένων καὶ τῶν μόνως εὐθυπόρων (2.33.18). The conclusion of the

¹⁶¹ Some of these conclusions are similar to chapter 3 of Vlastos' *Plato's Universe*; the helix he describes for the sun (based on *Timaeus* 39E) is of course based on a combination of circular motions, as was the following system of Eudoxus, but he acknowledges being astonished upon realizing that the Platonic approach in the *Timaeus* was actually scientific advance: "In the short run the Platonic had distinct advantages, which, contrary to all expectations, made it in major respects more useful than its rival for the science of the day." Whose expectations was this contrary to? See especially note 103, p. 63. I am trying to show that even as late as Proclus the same approach was still leading to advances; there can be no doubt (even if my hypothesis in this section is wrong) that Vlastos should have said "in the long run."

Hypotyposis seems to allude to the same idea. The entire section is very difficult to read because of the textual problems. However, in the part of the text that seems to me to make these proposals (2.230.14-233.20), one finds at the very least what follows in some of the more clear portions:

Ptolemy discusses these things in his book of premises. There are very many things and things different from what follows which one could say in response to these principles as foundations of the science of astronomy, however adding only what follows to what I have already said, I will proceed with the topic at hand [i.e. the Myth of Er] (230.14-18)... So, if it is necessary that there is order in the revolutions even among the bodies that are said to wander, an order that is more simple than the movement of the bodies beneath them [i.e. the entirely disordered movement of bodies "below the moon"], and yet less simple than the movement of the bodies above them [i.e. the fixed spheres], one should analyze this problem - if there is an order of a movement which is uneven and yet contains this apparent unevenness in defined periods of time so that even in 1,000 years one can say of it how each of the different types of this unevenness will have their development. If this movement should be at times faster and at times more slow, yet in an ordered way, and also makes additions and subtractions in opposite directions, preserving in defined periods of time a position closer and farther from earth, I believe that I see an answer which is not at all unworthy of divine bodies that move according to mind (231.2-231.13).

Proclus does not then literally say "the planets move in elliptical orbits" but he basically says this, simply using somewhat different language (if the text were complete we might see that he said it more directly). What distinguishes Proclus' approach beyond a shadow of a doubt from Ptolemy's and Copernicus' is that Proclus proposes to explain the motion of the planets not by a combination of circular motions but by a single simple motion which combines the properties of *straight* and circular motion, what he calls a mixed motion. The thought experiment from the *In Rem.* of an ant in a cylinder, or a point moving along the axis of a moving cylinder, shows very clearly what sort of thing Proclus has in mind (2.234.15-20). This thought experiment follows Proclus' criticism of Ptolemy quoted above as part of his proposed improvement. This thought experiment obviously produces a helix (cf. *In Eucl* 105.22-25 where exactly the same thing is discussed), but obviously (and as would no doubt be clear without the textual problems) he is not proposing a helix as the solution to planetary motion because then the planets would go flying off into space. The discussion of a cylindrical helix is merely the simplest way of pointing to a type of line which mixes the qualities of circular and straight. If the point moves up and down on the cylinder so as to return to the same position (what he calls the ἀνταποδόσεις), it will create an ellipse. Perhaps the clearest passage is as follows:

ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἀστέρων καὶ πρόφασιν αὐτοῖς ἢ ζήτησις ἔχει καὶ κατόρθωσιν οὐ
τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἢ εὐρησις, ὅπως ἀποδείξωσιν ὁμαλῶς πάντα κινούμενα τὰ
ἐγκυκλίως φερόμενα· τοῦτο γὰρ φασὶ θείοις σώμασιν προσήκειν. καὶ ἔγωγε
φαίην ἂν καὶ αὐτὸς ἄλλ[οι]ς μὲν τὸ ὁμαλὲς μόνως, ἄλλοις [δὲ πάλιν τ]ὸ

άνωμάλως ὀμαλές, ἄλλοις δὲ [τοῖς ἐ]ν γενέσει μόνις τὸ ἄνωμαλον
μό[νω]. μήποτε γὰρ οὐδὲ ἄνωμαλίαν χρῆ λέγειν, ἐφ' ὧν αἱ ἀνταποδόσεις
ὀμαλείς καὶ τάξιιν ἔχουσαι πάντως ἀναγκαίαν. (2.234.22-235.2)

As it relates to the stars, this type of investigation is easily excused and in fact the discovery [i.e. the Ptolemaic system] provides a considerable improvement in terms of allowing them to show that everything which moves circularly moves in an even manner. They say that this is fitting for divine bodies. I would say myself though that to some simple evenness [of movement] is fitting whereas to others the type of movement which is both even and uneven and to still others, those which exist only in the realm of becoming, pure unevenness is the most fitting. For, one should never call it unevenness in the cases where the opposed forces are balanced and contain a necessary order.

He describes this motion as ἄνωμάλως ὀμαλές (*In Rem.* 2.234.26-7), using the same terminology that he uses to describe combinations of straight and circular motions in his commentary on Euclid. He is explicit in the commentary on Euclid that this type of mixed movement is a way of creating an ellipse (*In Eucl.* 106.9-15). Proclus notes that Euclid did not actually describe these mixed lines (*In Eucl.* 113.15); he draws on work done since Euclid by Apollonius and Geminus and refers the student to Geminus for further proofs. Proclus clearly indicates that since these mixed lines exist, there are motions that correspond to them (*In Eucl.* 104.23-5). He refers to exactly these motions in the *In Rem.* as a better way to describe the movement of the planets than the Ptolemaic system; in the *In Eucl.* he refers to an ellipse as a mixed line, and in the *In Rem.* he proposes using mixed lines to explain the motion of the planets.

Basically, the language in all of these passages seems to describe exactly the same thought experiment that is found at *In Eucl.* 106.12-19. Here he explains that if we imagine a line moving within a right angle, only the center point creates a circle. This matches exactly what is described in *In Rem.* 2.233.16-17: τὰ μὲν εὐθυπορικῶς κυκλίζεται -- this part of the clause corresponds exactly to what is described in the *In Eucl.* as a way of creating perfectly circular motion through the balance of straight motion. The second part of this clause (2.233.17-18) is I think still describing exactly the same sort of device; this section of the clause describes the movement of the heavenly bodies: τὰ δὲ κυκλοφορικῶς εὐθυπορεῖται which refers to a point not on the center of the line and also then generates a mixed motion, exactly the same sort of mixed motion described also in the *In Eucl.* 106.19. The idea is still more clear if we compare ἄνωμάλως at *In Rem.* 2.234.26 with the same word *In Eucl.* 106.14, and then compare ὀμαλῶς at 106.13 with the use of the same word also at 2.234.27 (quoted above). It then becomes clear that Proclus is referring in this passage of the *In Rem.* to exactly this thought experiment in *In Eucl.* where τὰ δὲ ἄλλα σημεῖα γράφει τὴν ἔλλειψιν (*In Eucl.* 106.14-15).¹⁶²

¹⁶² γεννάται γὰρ τῆς μὲν εὐθείας κύκλω κινουμένης περὶ τὸν ἄξονα τοῦ κυλίνδρου, τοῦ δὲ σημείου φερομένου ἐπὶ τῆς εὐθείας, δύο τοίνυν κινήσεις αἱ ἀπλαί τὴν ὑπόστασιν αὐτῆ παρέσχον, ὥστε τῶν μικτῶν ἐστὶ γραμμῶν καὶ οὐ τῶν ἀπλῶν (*In Eucl.* 105); note that the point in the cylinder is the same thing described by the ant in a cylinder thought experiment at *In Rem.* 2.230. This means that the passages correspond in subject matter quite directly in a number of different ways: describing a point moving in a

It does not actually work like the ant in a cylinder, he says; the spheres are not cylinders. But this type of demonstration helps us understand a motion whose simplicity mathematicians are not capable of understanding. The ant in a cylinder passage very much seems to point out the lack of a calculus. He compares those who use the Ptolemaic system to alchemists who claim to make gold. Proclus distinguishes between something that is composed of like parts but yet not simple (*In Eucl.* 105-- i.e. the cylindrical helix is like in all its parts, yet not simple; it is still a mixed form), but says the single form of gold has been composed by nature out of elements that far precede in their simplicity the elements the alchemists try to combine in order to create it-- gold is composed of like parts, yet not simple (*In Rem.* 2.234.16). The comparison to alchemy does not show Proclus is unscientific-- it does the opposite; it provides an interesting example of why the Ptolemaic system, like alchemy, does not actually work. He says though, approvingly, that human nature proceeds in all investigations of nature in the same way as alchemists and as those who developed the Ptolemaic system did-- our mind tries to construct artificial mechanisms by which we can understand the otherwise hidden operations of nature (τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς ταῖς εὐμηχάνοις ἐπιβολαῖς τὰ ἔργα τῆς φύσεως θηρῶν ἐφιεμένης καὶ ζητούσης, at *In Rem.* 2.34.20). However, he further admits that (unlike apparently the alchemists) the Ptolemaic system was originally a substantial advance and very useful for predicting heavenly movement (2.234.24).

Proclus' theory of the ellipse is not an incidental discovery-- it is structurally a part of his Neoplatonic system. In a sense, the Neoplatonic ellipse should be seen as analogous to the famous Epicurean swerve in terms of its deep resonance throughout the philosophic system from the physical all the way to the ethical in terms of the way it explains how physical bodies partake of intelligible forms which can only be described by mathematics. Nous naturally represents the spherical (ὅπου νοῦς ἐστίν, ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸ ἰδίωμα τὸ σφαιρικόν; ἢ γὰρ νοερὰ ἐνέργεια τοιαύτην ἔχει τὴν οὐσίαν *In Tim.* 2.77). Soul is a principle of motion that naturally tries to imitate nous. But, if soul is contained in a body at all, then it necessarily falls short (*elleipsei*) of the divine movement of nous (see *In Eucl.* 54.7-14; also 147-149). It falls short because this is the nature of material (*hyle*) (ὅλως δὲ ἀνομοιότης μὲν καὶ ἐκ τῆς ὕλης παρεισδύεται πως εἰς τὰ ὄντα, *In Tim* 2.78). A hypostasis and an ellipse are actually linked concepts (see *Elements of Theology*). Thus, the theory of the elliptical movement of heavenly bodies is at its origin an elegant way of using the Neoplatonic divisions between mind and soul and the distinction between material and immaterial bodies to explain movement. Every movement that characterizes anything that has a body (versus what does not, which Proclus also believes exists in some sense) necessarily *falls short* (ὁ δ' ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς καὶ τῆς ἀκριβείας ὕφεσιν ἔχων καὶ ἀνάπλεως τῆς εὐθείας καὶ τῆς καθαρότητος τῶν ἀύλων ἀπολειπόμενος, *In Eucl.* 54.11-14)-- i.e., in the case of heavenly bodies, most similar to divine immaterial spheres, it describes an ellipse. Elliptical motion characterizes the first hypostasis below nous, the difference between soul and nous or to put it another way, between hypercosmic and encosmic deities (the latter are of course planets). Proclus substitutes the distinction between purely intelligible (identified with circular motion) and the material (straight motion) for the Aristotelian distinction between heaven (circular motion) and earth (straight motion).

cylinder, describing mixed motions and even the reference to the nature of gold.

The doctrine can also be seen as one of the most successful and historically significant elaborations of the Platonic idea that material bodies "participate" in immaterial forms-- the first, simplest type of participation is the participation of the planetary bodies in circularity, and this participation creates an ellipse.

I believe that this theory has been mistaken because most who bothered to read the work simply assumed that Proclus was not scientific. We assumed that Aristotle and Ptolemy represented the height of ancient science, and so when scholars read that Proclus wanted to abolish the entire system of epicycles (Burkert provides a good example of this reading), they were alarmed that he displayed such a religious disdain for true science. In reality, his science is Pythagorean. He describes its origins in the *Timaeus* in the passage I quoted above. Thus, though his thought has a strong religious element-- like Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, he says repeatedly that the sun is a god-- he is clearly scientific and mathematical about it as well. He discusses the best observations (without prejudice or chauvinism with regard to which culture created them) and the best mathematics and searches for the simplest theory that will fit the observations. He criticizes the Ptolemaic system not because he does not appreciate science or astronomy, but because it does not work and seems artificial. When he proposes to abolish epicycles, it is not because he is not a scientist or because he privileges the religious over the scientific (except in the general Pythagorean sense of the above quote from the *In Tim.*). He criticizes the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic system for the exact reasons the modern world did-- they are artificial, they do not really fit the observations, and there are simpler types of movement that provide a better explanation.

This claim, if true, would represent a substantial revision in our understanding of the history of science and the contribution that late antique science and Greek civilization in general made to the Renaissance and to European science. Histories of astronomy universally indicate that the discovery of elliptical planetary orbits was one of the key contributions of the modern period and that, in contrast to the heliocentric hypothesis, no one had thought of it before Kepler. More research is needed to determine the truth of the situation, and to determine how this claim would relate to the work of those scholars who have discussed the relationship between Platonism and the history of science. My primary claim, in order to be clear at the risk of needless repetition, is simply that Proclus' *In Rem.* seems to reference as a way of explaining planetary motion the demonstration found in Proclus' *In Eucl.* 106.12-19; if this is true, much more research is needed to explain the significance of Platonism as a part of the scientific tradition of the West.

For now, the most important point is to note that because of the way Proclus interprets the Myth of Er, his commentary on the *Republic* actually includes some of the most direct and extensive criticism of the Ptolemaic system left from antiquity¹⁶³ together with the claim that the system is not actually true and does not fit with the simplicity of Plato's approach to the heavenly spheres in the *Republic*. The Myth of Er itself provides a sort of shell which expresses the relationship between a huge and evolving scientific/theological discussion and the *Politeia*. Far from representing the rise of the mythical/irrational in late antiquity by the fact that discussion of the myth takes up such a large portion of Proclus' *Commentary* yet such a small portion of the *Republic*, another

¹⁶³ As far as I know; I am currently checking other possible sources, like Theon of Alexandria's commentaries, for similarities.

possibility is that Proclus actually preserves the relationship between text and interpreter (which is also the relationship between political myth and science) presupposed by the form of the myth itself in the *Republic*. In this case, the extremely concise form of the Myth of Er presupposes the activities of a scientific/philosophical interpreter (it is certainly hard for one to think that parts of it could be understood without such activity) and is perhaps kept concise exactly for the sake of not limiting scientific advance by textual authority. Perhaps this is overstating the case, but some parts of Proclus' discussion of the Myth are clearly serious enough and scientific enough that the truth must be somewhat closer to this proposal than has been recognized so far.¹⁶⁴

If this claim about elliptical orbits is true, it raises the question of how it could have escaped the notice of other historians of science. On the one hand, of course the commentary was not available before 1900 (after having been available but very difficult to read at least until the 18th century) so that the common assumption was already very well entrenched. On the other hand, a very capable scholar like Thomas Kuhn seemed to be unaware even of the existence of Proclus' *Hypostasis* much less of the fact that the *In Rem.* contains an astronomical discussion (and still less that others, like Thomas Linacre, apparently were so convinced that Proclus was a good astronomer that they published parts of Geminus under the title of Proclus' *Sphaera*¹⁶⁵); of course additionally, the work was available only in Greek throughout most of the past century (and there is a real question whether anyone would see the parallel if they only read the French), it is very long, the discussion is very difficult to understand at first, and the Teubner editor Kroll added comments indicating that Proclus does not understand astronomy (which are, according to Neugebauer, simply false, see 1034 n.10). I should mention here also the clarity with which Trabattori and Chiaradonna have recently pointed out that Neoplatonic science does in fact exist even though it was often assumed not to exist; when the misrepresentation is that large, obviously the important points would not be noticed. All the same, a few people probably have realized this already; after writing this portion of the chapter, I noticed Otto Neugebauer must have considered this possibility and perhaps many others have as well.¹⁶⁶ I would modify substantially the tone of some of Neugebauer's comments about the relation between Proclus' astronomy and his philosophy (Neugebauer seems to have been more interested in establishing the value of Babylonian astronomy than increasing the total of Greek achievements), but this has more to do with how one understands the relation between science and philosophy in the Platonic tradition in general and the complicated Platonic attitude toward the

¹⁶⁴ Interesting in this regard is the phrasing when he considers the two different orders of the spheres (at 2.218.1 διττῆ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ γραφὴ τῆς ταῦτα τὰ βᾶθη διοριζούσης λέξεως and then also at 2.218.29, Ἡ δὲ δευτέρα καὶ νεωτέρα, κρατούσα δὲ ἐν τοῖς κεκωλισμένοις ἀντιγράφοις) which almost seems to imply that he is dealing simultaneously with textual variants (as Burnet's *apparatus criticus* implies, not wrongly) and also different scientific systems. The discussion shows what Proclus cares about is the scientific systems, not the question of which textual version is prior, but the differing versions almost imply that Plato's text was so concise in this enumeration of the position of the spheres that it was possible to change it when it became out of date.

¹⁶⁵ See Brown 2003: 26-28 with citations.

¹⁶⁶ Neugebauer does not make the argument about elliptical orbits I have made here. However, he does notice the astronomical discussion in the *In Rem.*, and he even cites in this connection the most important portion of the *Commentary on Euclid*-- this alone is enough to show he has considered the possibility (1975: 1035 n.17).

*philothemon*¹⁶⁷ than any specific astronomical doctrine. However, Neugebauer certainly realizes that Proclus understands astronomy quite well. He comments, "Proclus, in particular, had an excellent command of Ptolemaic theory and it is probably due to his influence that astronomical knowledge remained alive among his pupils and successors" (1975: 1032).

Renaissance Reception of the *In Rem.*:

1. Manuscript and Publication History:

Unlike Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, there is no evidence that his commentary on the *Republic* was known in the West during the middle ages. The work exists only in a single carefully written 10th century manuscript, the only manuscript for which we have evidence. The Teubner editor, Kroll, says that it was written with exceptional care ("summa cum cura scriptus" 1.vi; Schöll 1886:4 says: "Codex optima est notae, in membranibus manu saeculi X. et eleganter scriptus et singulari diligentia distinctus"). Kroll's laconic Latin introduction shows his awareness that he is telling an extraordinary story. The manuscript seems to have been purchased by the Medici in 1492 and transferred to the Laurentine library in Florence where Kroll indicates it was *expositu ad usum omnium*. The evidence for this story is basically the note inscribed on the cover together with the evidence from a letter of Marsilio Ficino which confirms the story (see below). Ficino's use of the text seems to provide confirmation that it was in fact first available only in 1492. Allen indicates that a note attests that Ficino loaned the book on July 7, 1492 (1994: 37-38). Allen further concludes that the second portion of the text was not available at all until years later, though Kroll does not really say this and there does not appear to be any direct evidence that the text was separated before rather than after it was brought to Italy (1994: 38n91). Allen is (reasonably) inferring from the fact that Ficino does not seem to make any use of Proclus at all in his work on the nuptial number, in spite of generally admiring and imitating Proclus elsewhere and even translating a small portion of the first portion of the *In Rem.* in a letter to a friend (Allen 1994: 38), that the text must not have been available. Actually, we do not seem to know whether the second portion arrived in Italy with the first portion or whether the second portion of the text was accessible for a period of time before finally being moved to the Vatican. However, Allen's work on Ficino does seem to provide significant support for the idea that the book was available only after 1492.

Schöll 1886: 4 actually provides an extended quote from the relevant letter of Ficino which is worth reproducing and which provides the strongest evidence for the idea that the book was not available in Italy until 1492. The letter is dated Aug. 1492:

Post discessum ex Italia tuum advecti sunt e Graecia mox ad magnanimum
Petrum Medicem¹⁶⁸ libri multi ex quamplurimis electi nuper, electore Lascari¹⁶⁹
Graeco admodum elegante, pro regia illa bibliotheca iam pridem a Magno

¹⁶⁷ See Mattéi 1988/2002: 76-79 for discussion; Mattéi's discussion can be profitably compared with Proclus' use of this word, *philothemon*, in the opening of the *Hypotyposis*.

¹⁶⁸ A manuscript of Ficino's *De Sole* shows he address Piero de' Medici in these terms in 1493. See <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58263c/f4.image>.

¹⁶⁹ See Basel Universitätsbibliothek 1992: 403 for an interesting portrait as well as the reference to a contemporary source found at 1992: 396. It includes the following quote from that source (a 1577 reprint of a work of Paolo Giovo): "Ioannes Lascares Graecorum fere omnium, qui Othomannis armis patria pulsus in Italiam confugerunt, nobilissimus atque doctissimus fuit" (1992: 403).

Laurentio feliciter instituta. Ego autem inter multa ut soleo semper in primis legi
platonica, primaque inter haec Procli in sex Platonis de Republica libros
principiumque septimi...

Kroll 1899/1901, Reitzenstein 1887 (see below), Festugière 1970 and Saffrey 1987 all agree with this story; no one seems to dispute the story or claim that the manuscript was somehow available earlier.¹⁷⁰

The production of the first printed edition in 1534 provides clear evidence that the work was noticed and introduced to Europe by men like Erasmus and Thomas More.¹⁷¹ Because the printed edition was created from a manuscript copy made several decades previously, the same story is an interesting example of how knowledge was diffused from Italy to English humanists by means of travel and manuscripts even before printing. This printed edition was in a volume printed as part of the second complete printed edition of Plato's work (one volume contained Proclus' commentaries on the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*, the other the works of Plato). The text originated from a manuscript copy brought to Oxford by William Grocyn, whose Greek manuscripts provided the foundation of the library of Corpus Christi College in Oxford. Nigel Wilson indicates that the manuscript was "From Grocyn's library, as shown by the note on 1r: hic liber emptus fuit ab heredibus Guilielmi grocini Anno Domini 1521 pro collegio corporis Christi claimondo preside" (p. 17; Wilson even includes a picture of the title page, plate 36). Wilson also explains the association between this collection and the origins of the library, stating that "Grocyn had gone to Florence in 1488 to study with Angelo Poliziano and Demetrius Chalcondyles, and doubtless some of his manuscripts will have been acquired there... How many of the other manuscripts produced for him came into his possession then as opposed to being ordered later, after his return to Oxford in 1491 to teach Greek, remains unclear" (ix). If the dates for the purchase of the manuscript from Harmonius are actually correct, then this must be one of the latter. It does at least seem certain that its origins can be traced to these connections with Florence because it is a copy of Florence, Laurentianus 80.9. Grocyn seems to have been at the center of the Humanist circle and closely connected with more famous figures like More and Erasmus. This is particularly interesting because one of Grocyn's teachers, Chalcondyles, also produced the first printed edition of Homer. Even a scan of Proclus' title page would have clearly been helpful for these Renaissance scholars committed to studying both Homer and Plato. The title page includes headings like: Ὅτι πανταχοῦ τὸν Ὅμηρον ὡς ἡγεμόνα πάσης ἀληθείας ὁ Πλάτων εἶωθε γεραίρειν (1.3).

The printed edition contains a Latin introduction by the Greek scholar Simon Grynaeus (who uses the name of the Greek month to give the date of the printing as the 13th of Thargelion, 1534 at the end of the Greek text).¹⁷² The introduction provides a general prose ode to philosophy as well as some information about the production of this edition. Grynaeus worked as a Greek scholar at Heidelberg and Tübingen and was the one responsible for researching the manuscript and producing the first edition. Grynaeus

¹⁷⁰ See Saffrey 2000: 277-293 on Ficino's Platonism together with the manuscript collection efforts of the period.

¹⁷¹ This edition is described, including a picture of the title page and some notes about the context and importance, in Basel Universitätsbibliothek: 219- 222.

¹⁷² The letter is available only in a copy of the original 1534 edition, though it is summarized in German in Basel Universitätsbibliothek 1992: 219-222.

indicates in the introduction his proud awareness that he was producing a first edition, and he was also of course aware that the Basel press was supplying the second complete printed edition of Plato. The introduction is dedicated to the son of Thomas More, an interesting counterpoint to the introduction to the first or Aldine edition of Plato's works, dedicated to Pope Leo the X (both editions otherwise include the same introductory material, including the poem of Musarus and the life of Plato by Diogenes Laertius). The dedication is also an interesting choice because, based on the publication date one cannot help but be struck by the possibility of some allusion to all of the famous controversies about sons (or the lack thereof) and daughters and their potential for education and philosophical rule.

Grynaeus especially thanks Erasmus for providing his letters of introduction. He dedicates the edition to John More (whom he mentions throughout) with the following words: "Hos porro Platonis libros, Ioannes More charissime, non nullo aut iure nostro aut tua gratia et merito, novos ac praecipuis in locis doctissimi viri Procli commentariis illustratos, sub nomine tuo emittimus." Grynaeus stresses all of the help provided to him by Thomas More (whom he refers to in the dedicatory letter as *amplissimus vir pater tuus*). In spite of the fact that Thomas realized Grynaeus differed with him on religious questions (*omnem meam de religione sententiam locis non paucis diversam ab ipsius esse haud difficulter sentiens*), Grynaeus says that Thomas continued to support his project so completely that Grynaeus all but gives Thomas More credit for producing the edition. Grynaeus says that, "he so aided me with his efforts and advice that he basically completed my entire project with his own resources" ("opera consilioque sic iuvat nos tamen, ut omne mihi negotium sumptibus etiam suis confecerit"). He says at the sight of the companion Thomas More provided for him, the libraries and the hearts of learned men were opened to him as though touched by the wand of Mercury. This included the library of John Claimond (simply the Corpus Christi library?)-- he especially thanks John Claimond for his extraordinary generosity, and says that in this library he came upon the books of Proclus (including the commentary on the *Timaeus* as well as the *Republic*) as though he had found a treasure (*velut thesauro invento*). Thomas More (still addressed as *pater tuus*) sent him home, grateful and in debt to More (*beneficiis suis plane cumulatum*) with as many books of Proclus as he thought he could print in a couple years. Grynaeus states that he wrote the letter (from Basel) in the third year after he arrived in England, dated in Latin to the Calends of March, 1534.

The second half of the text was not included in this printed edition and so remained almost entirely unknown to the general public. Because the printed edition itself stemmed from this Oxford copy, not the Florentine manuscript, this fact does not really provide evidence that the 2nd portion had already been separated (though this seems to be the most likely case). The notes of a series of heads of the Vatican Library provide evidence that they had reviewed the second portion already in the 17th century. It had been separated at some point from the first half (it is not clear exactly when) and was eventually transferred from Florence to a private collection and from there to the Vatican as part of a larger collection. At some point after being separated, it was heavily damaged and yet saved from complete destruction so that the majority remained legible. The first portion on the other hand is in good condition with the exception of the very important missing pages. I have not been able to add anything to the research of Wilhelm Kroll (or rather, his circle, since the production of the edition was clearly a collaborative

project) in terms of when and why this separation occurred. Kroll quotes Lucas Holstenius who complained in 1640 about the miserable state of the second half of the text. This same letter is quoted by Schöll 1886:6 and seems to provide the best evidence indicating the situation at this period. Apparently, the most complete manuscript was being carefully guarded in Florence by the Salviati, the rivals of the Medici, and Holstenius complains bitterly about their irresponsibility (*ut simiae prolem prae nimio affectu suffocant, ita invidi illi et magni librorum custodes, dum thesaurum nimium abscondunt, eundem et sibi et publico perdidierunt*, he says). Thus, in 1640, it was still in Florence though apparently either not available at all or only barely available (we have evidence that Alexander Morus reviewed it as well). From Florence, it was later transmitted (18th century) to another private collection (of the Colonna family) and then from there to the Vatican.¹⁷³

This second portion was actually not recovered until the latter part of the 1880s. Angelo Mai had obviously reviewed the contents when he published the first edition of the palimpsest of Cicero's *Republic*; he notes some of the parallels of the contents, and refers to it simply as an unedited portion of Proclus.¹⁷⁴ However, after Mai's publication, an edition did not follow immediately (though Reitzenstein indicates Mai intended to produce one). In fact, no one seems to have had access to the manuscript-- apparently, it had been completely misplaced. Progress was made when Rudolph Schöll located a copy in a separate Roman library which was published as *Partes Ineditae Procli Commentariorum in Rempublicam Platonis* in 1886.¹⁷⁵ Shortly thereafter, Ricardo Reitzenstein gained access to the entire manuscript. Kroll describes this as "apud Pitram abscondi [Reitzenstein] cognovit" (vii). Reitzenstein announced the discovery in 1887 in a review of Schöll's work; an extensive quotation is justified here because Reitzenstein also confirms the outline of the entire story:

Durch Angelo Mai ward bekannt, dass diese zweite Hälfte später in die vatikanische Bibliothek übergegangen ist, doch machte er keine näheren Angaben, und alle Bemühungen Schölls und anderer, sie wiederzufinden, blieben fruchtlos. Schöll sah sich daher gezwungen, seiner Ausgabe des Zweiten Teiles dieses Kommentars (die erste Hälfte wurde schon 1534 durch Simon Grynaeus veröffentlicht) eine unvollständige Abschrift des Lucas Holstenius, welche sich in der Bibliothek der Barberini befindet, zu Grunde zu legen. In diesem frühjahr gelang es mir nach langem Suchen, die verschollene Hs. in einem Anhang der vatikanischen Bibliothek wieder zu entdecken (Reitzenstein 1887: 836).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Schöll 1886: 3-12 provides the best source of information about this period, including quotes from some of these heads of the Vatican library who had reviewed the manuscript, especially Lucas Holstenius, who created the copy Schöll published. The quotation of Holstenius 1640 (Schöll 1886:6) could be taken to indicate Holstenius was actually viewing the missing pages of Kroll volume 1 as well.

¹⁷⁴ See Mai 1846: 19, 219-228 for an indication of how much Proclus' text was on Mai's mind when he made this publication; his footnotes identify and quote at length some of the clearest and more interesting unpublished passages of Proclus' work. He refers to it here simply as Procli ineditae. Note that Mai's various editions of Cicero's *Republic* which appeared after 1819 have different pagination and different notes, sometimes referring to different portions of the Proclus. It is interesting episode in intellectual history in and of itself to see how Mai uses the Proclus to gloss the Cicero.

¹⁷⁵ See Schöll 1886: 9-10 on this copy.

¹⁷⁶ See also Reitzenstein 1889. Saffrey 1987 provides a summary of some parts of the same story (xvi-xv).

Wilhelm Kroll, who finally produced the Teubner edition, states at the end of his introduction that Reitzenstein was the one who gave him the idea for producing the complete edition (*mihi edendi Procli auctor fuit*).

The article by Ernst Diehl announcing the recovery of the pages that are now located at the beginning of the second volume of Kroll's edition provides a good introduction to the research circle that eventually not only gained access to the manuscript but even located some missing pages that had been removed and placed in another book. These missing pages, which now open Kroll volume 2 and refer to Plato as "the prophet of the Muses," were first published in this article (Diehl 1899: 196-200). Still writing in Latin, Diehl expresses an ambiguous opinion about the work of Thomas Taylor¹⁷⁷ (1891: 171) and yet, in the same article, shows an amazingly keen eye for the most interesting passages and variant readings in manuscripts of Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*. Diehl indicates that Hermann Diels was the one who originally located one of the manuscripts he was studying and assured that it would receive the proper attention (1899: 171). The article shows by its extraordinary diligence and clear connection to the best that was being done in German philology at that point that these authors by no means allowed the kind of prejudice one occasionally found in the English-speaking world to interfere with their philological and historical interest in Proclus (though they were not apparently so eager to reproduce Taylor's effort and create a vernacular translation). Zeller's history also demonstrates the same serious interest in Proclus which does not seem to have a parallel in the English-speaking world. In any case, because the manuscript had been divided and been inaccessible for so long, the *editio princeps* of the entire work was that of Wilhelm Kroll in the remarkably late date of 1901.

The entire story is almost incredible in the way it aligns with symbolic markers of humanism and modernity. In 1492, it was brought from Greece by Janus Lascaris to the Florentine library of the Medici. In 1534, the first half was published by the Basel printing press as part of a collaborative effort stemming from the Oxford manuscripts of Corpus Christi college and deeply supported behind the scenes by Thomas More. The remaining portion then did not receive public notice until Angelo Mai pointed out the parallels in content while publishing one of the 19th century's most famous textual discoveries in about 1820. At which point, the manuscript then became somehow lost or inaccessible so that the 19th century, steeped in the Classics, was never even able to read the text. Finally, the situation was transformed by the indefatigable curiosity and

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Taylor seems to have published a translation of the majority of the sixth essay, found in Taylor 1969; it would be interesting to know the earlier publication history of this work (it does not generally seem to appear in catalogues of Taylor's work). The publication of this translation (or republication?) in 1969 preceded all of the modern work on the sixth essay, and it is interesting that the vast majority of the academic work has concentrated on this essay. Part of the reason for telling the story above of course is that while Taylor gave the 19th century all that was available of the commentary on the *Timaeus*, he obviously did not have access to the second half of the *In Rem*. However, even the majority of the first half seems to have been left untranslated, at least as far as I know. The portion Taylor translated may be the same as that translated into Latin in 1543 by Conrad Gezner; I have not been able yet to see this rare book described by Kristeller 1987: 204. The more substantive charge leveled against Taylor at the time (cf. the quotes from Tigerstedt in the following chapter) was that he had translated from the Latin, primarily Ficino's Latin, rather than the original Greek. If in fact Taylor translated only the same portions of the *In Rem*. as were already translated into Latin by Gezner, it would seem to provide some strong evidence that this may have actually been correct.

diligence of the Teubner editors of the latter part of the 19th century before an *editio princeps* finally appeared exactly at the turn of the century.

2. Contents

Each of my five examples above corresponded to major innovations in the Renaissance. The Renaissance reception of the Orphic and Pythagorean elements of Platonic philosophy present a puzzling contrast to the way that Dodds and Burkert tried to discount the great wealth of ancient testimony that indicates Orpheus was primarily a musician and Pythagoras at least in part a mathematician. Renaissance scholars, reading Plato together with Proclus, seem to have seen these figures as intimately related to the project of humanism and as providing key models for a general revival of the arts and sciences.¹⁷⁸ Marsilio Ficino is probably the best example of the Renaissance reception of the Orphic aspect of ancient Platonism. For Ficino, Orpheus was certainly in part a theologian and even a magician; he represented a portion of ancient Platonic theology that had been rejected in the middle ages but which Ficino wished to resurrect.¹⁷⁹ However, for my current purposes, it is more interesting to stress that Ficino also believed that Orpheus represented the tradition of Greek lyric poetry (most of which of course had been in some sense about the gods). An interesting article on Ficino's private concerts of lyric poetry provides the evidence that he began composing "Orphic" poems for his friends and encouraging the work of poets, a tradition that obviously continued very broadly in European poetry well into the 20th century when it influenced famous figures like Rilke.¹⁸⁰ There is no reason for thinking the Orpheus figure thoroughly explored by Segal is not the same one referenced by the Platonists (1989).¹⁸¹ Voss provides a quote from one of Ficino's letters: "This age, like a golden age, has brought back to light those liberal disciplines that were practically extinguished: grammar, poetry, oratory, painting, sculpture, architecture, music and the ancient singing of songs to the Orphic lyre" (2002: 227). If Voss is correct then this means that Orpheus in the Renaissance was not only associated with poetry in a literary sense but actual music as well.

Renaissance interest in Pythagoras as a scientist was extremely broad and seems to have lasted as long as scientists felt that the project of recovering ancient science was not entirely separate from advancing contemporary science. I have already indicated that Copernicus attributed his system to the Pythagoreans as did its defenders like Galileo. However, Johannes Kepler's work provides the clearest example of a scientist who

¹⁷⁸ Saffrey: "On pouvait voir à cet occasion que ce 'retour de Platon' avait été en meme temps celui de Pythagore, d'Orphée, des Oracles" (2000: 157). The occasion was an exhibition in Florence in 1984 celebrating *Marsilio Ficino e il Ritorno di Platone*.

¹⁷⁹ On Ficino's theology see Celenza 2002 and 2011.

¹⁸⁰ On Rilke as well as the figure of Orpheus in Latin poetry, see Segal 1989.

¹⁸¹ Compare for example Segal 1989: 157-9 with *In Rem*. 1.174.21-29. See also Segal 1989: 16. One of the greatest differences between ancient readings of Plato and modern ones is that ancient readers universally disagree with what Segal says here-- they simply do not think that Plato rejects what Segal calls "the ancient poetic magic." Orpheus is considered one of the archetypes of the entheastic poet throughout the *In Rem*. Dodds of course realizes this and is writing about the Platonic Orpheus in *The Greeks and the Irrational* which is why his character does not even resemble Segal's Orpheus. However, in so far as we have evidence, antiquity seems to have believed that Plato more or less accepted and embraced (perhaps appropriated) the character whom Segal describes so well.

understood his mathematical project in explicitly Pythagorean terms. Kepler quoted extensively from Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid* to explain his own mathematical project (see below). Riedweg provides a useful historical summary of Pythagoreanism in the work of Copernicus and Kepler (2005: 130-2).

Proclus' influence is clearly evident in Thomas More's *Utopia*. I hope the obvious connection to the *Republic* and the reception information I have provided is enough to mention More's work in this context (obviously the printed edition was created well after *Utopia* was published, but the manuscript copy would have been at Oxford well before). Several aspects of the Utopians' life is reminiscent of Proclus-- some of them worship the sun; their highest god is much like Proclus' highest god ("far beyond the grasp of the human mind" etc. Logan and Adams ed. p. 96); they have many religions that are paths to the same goal, etc. In other respects, the Utopians' philosophy is of course quite different from Proclus'.¹⁸² In a broad sense, as is generally recognized, the work is an attempt to reimagine the conversation of ancient philosophy and what could be done with it if it were given free range, and it is only as such that I mention it in this context (ex. on natural philosophy, the Utopians "Generally treat of these matters as our ancient philosophers did, nor do they have any generally accepted theory of their own," Logan and Adams ed., 67). In any case, More emphasizes one trait above all -- tolerance. I think it is very likely that the religious tolerance of the West that we have slowly developed (unlike of course in the Arab world where Al Ghazali's approach was victorious) comes in large part from this very circle, from those that realized deeply that the art, science and literature they admired was fundamentally rather than incidentally a product of a different religion and in fact a religion that had been actively suppressed by the one that was now conventional.

In a broader sense, of course the fact that Proclus wanted to preserve the traditional myths resonated in the Renaissance when depictions and discussion of the mythical stories of the Greeks again became extremely popular. The idea that Proclus is somehow a link to medieval authors like Dante founders on this point. Proclus barely adds a single story of underworld punishment or ascent to heaven to those found in the earlier tradition; rather, he insists that we should still read the stories of Homer, Hesiod and others. He wants to tell the same stories about the gods using the same names and the same divine personalities that are familiar from Homer. He may understand them differently, but this is not an obstacle to creating new art and new literature based on representations of Greek myth.

The evidence that Proclus' work may actually have directly influenced the (very) gradual trend towards providing something more closely approximating equal educational opportunity to both genders is most evident in the person of Thomas More. More's decision to educate his daughter, Margaret, has recently become famous. His biographers, in particular John Guy, claim that More was either the first person in Europe to choose to educate his daughters as well as his sons or at least extremely unusual in this regard and a model for others, like Erasmus;¹⁸³ such education included of course not only the ability to read and write but even the ability to do so in Greek and Latin, the foundation of the humanist project.

¹⁸² I think the stark choice one finds in *Utopia* between believing in the immortality of the soul and the abyss of Epicureanism is actually one of these. As is also the fact that the Utopians do not worship images.

¹⁸³ See Guy 2009: 60, Ackroyd 1998: 142-144.

Turning finally to the astronomical discussion found in the *In Rem.*, there are strong reasons for thinking that Kepler actually learned the idea of elliptical planetary orbits from Proclus. In fact, if one asks how Proclus could possibly have proposed elliptical planetary orbits and yet no one has noticed, the answer could be that someone did notice-- Kepler. He is obviously exactly the sort of person who would notice and try to expand/ prove the idea. As I indicated above, we know that Kepler understood the importance of his mathematical and scientific studies in terms borrowed directly from ancient Platonism and quoted Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid* as a way of describing his project.¹⁸⁴ Because Kepler quotes Proclus so admiringly at the beginning of the work, it would be very surprising if he did not also study closely passages such as the ones I cited above (sections 54; 147-52 of the commentary on Euclid, etc.). Remember, my primary claim was that in the *Commentary on the Republic*, Proclus uses the language and concepts that he uses in the Euclid commentary to describe and analyze elliptical motion to describe the motion of the planets. Since we know Kepler was familiar with the Euclid commentary, it would not have taken much to either realize what Proclus said elsewhere or, if I am mistaken in this chapter about my reading of this portion of the commentary (though I do think it is correct), to make the same mistake I have. Furthermore, because Kepler himself wrote an allegorical astronomical dream work called the *Somnium Novum*,¹⁸⁵ we can be certain that the mentality that would include real science as a commentary on a dream or myth sequence like that found in Scipio's Dream and Plato's Myth of Er would have been deeply familiar to him. Surely Kepler must have known that Macrobius and Proclus were the outstanding examples of scientific commentaries on astronomical myths from antiquity. Because we know how much he admired and quoted Proclus on Euclid, it seems fairly certain that he would have eventually known to look for this bit of ancient astronomy in exactly the place where it has escaped the notice of so many historians of science, though it may have taken him a while to realize exactly what Proclus was saying.¹⁸⁶

We know Kepler read the Euclid commentary; it is unclear when, how or if he read the *Commentary on the Myth of Er*. The Euclid commentary was available in a Latin translation. The *Commentary on the Republic* was still in Florence in the library of the Salviati (cf. Kroll intro). It does seem though that for anyone steeped in the Euclid commentary, the suggestion Proclus makes would be immediately intelligible. One should also note that Georg Hirsch published a Latin translation of Proclus' *Hypotyposis* in 1589 and a further commentary on the same work in 1609.¹⁸⁷ The *Hypotyposis* does not seem to provide the important suggestion (Proclus indicates in the introduction that he intends for the moment to ignore the fact that these systems do not work and simply explain them as clearly as possible); however, the publication of the Latin translation

¹⁸⁴ See Martens 2000: 35 who points out that Kepler opens his *Harmonice Mundi* with a long quotation of Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid*. I believe the quotation is from *In Eucl.* 1.22.17ff. More generally on Kepler see Linton 2004; Donahue 1988; Wilson 1968; Caspar 1959. Dear stresses that part of what was unique about Galileo and Kepler was the role they accorded mathematics in the study of physical philosophy (2001: 72-79).

¹⁸⁵ See Swinford 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Martens 2003 provides an excellent introduction to the grounds of Kepler's Platonism.

¹⁸⁷ I have the reference to Hirsch 1589 from Donahue 1981 (who mentions only this work), and Google Books has digitized the 1609 commentary allowing me to establish that there were two separate works.

does show that the latter part of the 16th and early 17th century was familiar with Proclus the astronomer.

Thus, almost all of the potentially controversial aspects of Proclus' work I have discussed in this chapter seem to have had been quite influential in the Renaissance. I have mentioned Ficino's performances of Orphic poetry, Chalcondyles' production of the first printed Homer, Thomas More's education of his daughter Margaret, the same More's presentation of a partially polytheist Utopia and Kepler's astronomy. The list could be expanded. Of course, Proclus was at home in the Renaissance even in a much broader sense-- the general devotion to preserving the statues of the gods and all of the best science and math of antiquity is one of the most impressive features of Proclus' thought, and of course still what impresses us about the Renaissance approach to the Classics. Men like More and Kepler were clearly at the heart of the scientific and political life of Europe, and yet both produced works that display the sort of literary extravagance and creative exuberance that must have seemed necessary for presenting somewhat outlandish and controversial ideas to their contemporaries. No doubt, because of the contents of the *In Rem.*, it was read with great interest by scholars across Europe and probably there were far more influences than these.

The extraordinary influence I am claiming for this commentary makes more sense if it is seen as a natural extension of the influence of Plato's *Republic*, a work which was clearly at the center of ancient Platonism. The reality is that Proclus' *In Rem.* seems to include antiquity's most clear defence of the importance of educating women together with the insistence that women can exercise political virtue. It also seems to follow a criticism of the Ptolemaic model with an explanation of a type of movement that combines the straight and circular into a single simple movement. Therefore, I do not think the validity of the potentially controversial claims I am making depends on the difficult task of tracing the exact links between More's education of his daughter and Queen Elizabeth's tutors, or upon knowing exactly what Kepler was reading when. If these claims about the contents of the work are true, then the arguments about its reception follow naturally as, at the very least, serious possibilities. The commentary clearly does not seem to be in any way a work that helped incorporate Platonic thought into the middle ages. Rather, it seems to engage with some of the best thinkers since Plato in ways that arise naturally from the *Republic's* content. In a way, it is entirely natural that a work like the *Republic* would inspire these types of Renaissance influences-- Plato's own work provides a powerful and innovative impulse towards gender equality and scientific progress. What Proclus does then that makes such a difference (taking only these two points here, the gender question and scientific progress) is that he glosses these points in comparison with some of the best thought that had been done since Plato. In the case of the gender question that meant defending the idea of equality of educational opportunity against the more traditionalist arguments of the Stoics and the Peripatetics. In the case of astronomy, that meant discussing some of the mathematical advances that had occurred since Plato and even since Euclid and comparing them with the most recent efforts in the field of astronomy.

Proclus' importance continued to be strong after the Renaissance though, as I will indicate at the beginning of the next chapter, it was significantly curtailed by the influence of Lutheran theology and various types of Protestant puritanism. This continued influence of Proclus has been discussed elsewhere, and seems to have been

particularly felt through outstanding figures like Hegel and included poets as well as philosophers. Recent discussions by Whitman 2000 and Struck 2010 trace some of Proclus' ideas (under the heading "allegory") all the way through a range of post-modern thinkers. Dodds concludes his introduction to the *Elements of Theology* by quoting Spenser and Coleridge (xxxii-xxxiii).¹⁸⁸ I will conclude with Emerson, in part because essays like *Circles*, the *The Over-Soul* and the *The American Scholar* are fundamentally based on Proclus' approach to Platonism.¹⁸⁹ However, in addition to his extraordinary importance for American literature, I will conclude with Emerson because his extensive journals allow us to confirm what in the case of the other figures we may only suspect--his private praise of Proclus was far more direct than anything one finds in the works he prepared for publication. In 1844-1845 he wrote in his journals (quotations from *Selected Journals*, ed. Rosenwald 2010):

Proclus. I not only do not think he has his equal among contemporary writers, but I do not know men sufficiently athletic to read him. There is the same difference between the writings of these Platonists and Scotch Metaphysics as between the sculptures of Pheidias and the statues of Tom O'Shanter and My Uncle Toby. They abound in personification. Every abstract idea, every element, every agent in nature or in thought, is strongly presented as a god, in this most poetic philosophy, so that the universe is filled with august and exciting images. It is imaginative and not anatomical. It is stimulating. (243)

and:

When I read Proclus,¹⁹⁰ I am astonished at the vigor and breadth of his performance. Here is no epileptic modern muse with short breadth and short flight, but Atlantic strength everywhere and equal to itself, and dares great attempts because of the life with which it is filled. (351)

¹⁸⁸ See also Struck 2004: 254-277.

¹⁸⁹ On Emerson, see Goodman 1997 (also articles in the SEP on Emerson and Transcendentalism by Goodman), and Madsen 2010: 233-237.

¹⁹⁰ The quotations seem to refer mostly to the *Platonic Theology*, though elsewhere he is clearly reading the *In Timaeum* and discussing some of the same myths found in the *In Rem.*, see ed. Rosenwald 2010: 78-79 for a particularly interesting example.

Chapter 3: Proclus' Hermeneutics-- Using Plato to read Plato

τοῦ Πλάτωνος τὰ τοιαῦτα πλάπτοντος μὲν οὐδαμῶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν χρείαν τῶν προκειμένων ἀεὶ παραλαμβάνοντος καὶ χρωμένου πᾶσι μετὰ τῆς προεπούσης περιβολῆς καὶ οἰκονομίας... Proclus (*In Rem.* 2.110-25-111.2)

Common misconceptions about late antique Platonism led in the past to a deep reluctance to consider it seriously. In reality, in addition to the complex metaphysics, Proclus' thought often turns out to be far more appealing than secondary literature led most readers to believe. Recent approaches to the material have tended to stress the importance of determining how exactly ancient readers approached the text. Christopher Gill notes, based on Sedley's analysis of three approaches to the *Theaetetus*, "the high degree of sophistication in interpreting the dialogue form" found in ancient readers, whereas Bowen 2002 gives a summary of ancient readers' approaches which refers to Coulter's 1976 *Literary Microcosm*. These articles are exceptional because they occupy important places in important collections; each article shows that when we step back to articulate a general approach to Plato's dialogues, we would like to do so with some basic awareness of how ancient Platonists approached the question, even if only for the sake of contrast. For Gill, this means an emphasis on the unique world of each dialogue whereas Bowie stresses the distinction between the philological process of determining what the text says and the philosophical project of discussing the ideas which arise from the text. Ultimately, I agree with both authors that understanding ancient approaches may be useful above all for creating a contrast with modern approaches or a backdrop against which modern approaches can be understood. I agree that it is as interesting to know how ancient readers approached the text as it is to understand the doctrines they found in Plato. Proclus' *In Rem.* is especially rich in cross-references to other dialogues and other examples which show how he approached Plato's text; thus, it should be a substantial contribution to this debate. The form of the work itself both relative to the more systematic work of a philosopher like Plotinus and to the line by line method Proclus adopts in other commentaries means it is particularly rich in general hermeneutic discussion. I'll give in this chapter five examples of Proclus' interpretative method which counter some of the most common prejudices. Developing a modern approach to Plato obviously depends on an open evaluation of how ancient readers approached the text, yet somehow this evaluation never actually occurred.

Thus, inspired by Bowen's work on Tigerstedt's *Interpreting Plato*, I would like to take a step further back and offer some extensive quotes from Tigerstedt's *The Decline and Fall of the Neoplatonic Plato*. The two works of Tigerstedt are basically companions which together trace the development of Platonic interpretation since the Renaissance. As Bowen notes, Tigerstedt's work has the potential to offer surface judgments and misrepresent the depth and complexity of individual scholars' approaches to Plato. All the same, the subject is so vast and yet so important that Tigerstedt's work represents an extraordinarily valuable entry point for anyone who wants to interrogate the tradition; the footnotes allow readers to check his work and pursue further the most interesting leads. In spite of some of Tigerstedt's narrative generalizations and the book's title, what actually emerges from the work is the surprising fact that this process of evaluating seriously ancient approaches to Plato never really occurred. If we add to the narrative the

fact that some of the most interesting and important texts simply were not available at all during the period surveyed (including volume 2 of Proclus' *In Rem.*) then we have a good sense of the situation (Saffrey 1987 expresses this in his narrative of 19th-20th century reception). Again, in spite of the book's title, one of Tigerstedt's main goals is to counter the Tübingen school reading (which somehow posits esoteric, oral transmission but yet does not make very much use of the hermeneutical strategies of ancient readers) by pointing out that Schleiermacher did not actually reject ancient Platonists at all. The really surprising fact then that emerges from Tigerstedt's narrative is that the rejection of ancient Platonism cannot be traced to any of the figures that modern philosophy and modern scholarship would really prefer to acknowledge as ancestors; in fact, it often appears that when we look at the figures who laid the foundation of modern scholarship, like John Burnet or Schleiermacher, we find a limited discussion but guarded praise. Schleiermacher is a particularly interesting case study because unlike Thomas Taylor (they are comparable in the breadth and timing of their translation projects), he was taken seriously academically at the time and is still respected for the quality of his translations. As Tigerstedt points out, he actually he found the ancient Platonists were "am meisten zu loben" because they developed their philosophy into a full system.¹⁹¹

Basically, what Tigerstedt's narrative uncovers is that if the rejection of ancient Platonism can be traced back to any one figure, it is the historian of philosophy Jakob Brucker, and if it can be traced to a single cause it is probably the influence of particularly dogmatic Lutheran theology. Tigerstedt's account is invaluable because of the extensive footnotes and the way it provides an introduction to sources that are otherwise difficult to see in overview, so I will simply quote Tigerstedt, beginning with the theologian Johann Lorenz von Mosheim:

Being an ecclesiastical historian, Mosheim dealt with Neoplatonism and its interpretation of Plato, even with Platonism itself, only in so far as they played a part in the history of the Church. All the same, his views, expressed in an often reprinted work, carried great weight, not the least with a younger contemporary of his, who finally produced the exhaustive history of philosophy the age was expecting, Jacob Brucker... Being, like Mosheim, a Lutheran theologian and educator, Brucker narrates and judges the history of philosophy from a moderate but firm Protestant viewpoint which enables us to select the best from all philosophies and submit ourselves to the teaching of Christ" (56-57).

Tigerstedt continues: "Thus [in Brucker's work] the nearly 300 pages on the Eclectic school become one long furious indictment of the Neoplatonists... It is the opinion of Mosheim which Brucker here expresses with even greater vehemence, which also appears in the judgments he passes on Ammonius' disciples and successors. They are all-- from Plotinus to Proclus to Olympiodorus-- madmen, liars and impostors, vain and foolish forgers of a most detestable and false philosophy. (58)

Brucker's work was then copied by a prominent German encyclopedia published in 1741 (61), by Diderot in the *Encyclopedia* (62), and by the first reviewers of Thomas Taylor

¹⁹¹ See Beierwaltes 1987 on this idea.

(62) who, in Tigerstedt's words "gleefully quote his [Brucker's] worst diatribes against the Neoplatonists apropos of Thomas Taylor's translations of Plato" (Tigerstedt 62: 1974). Even Zeller is still using Brucker's concepts (he calls late antiquity "eclectic philosophy"), but in his history of course the discussion has transformed into something far more serious. It is partly for this reason and for the sake of contrast that I presented the information about the interaction between Thomas More and Simon Grynaeus in the previous chapter, both of whom were obviously in some sense serious Christians. Somehow something of the spirit with which Grynaeus praised More (in spite of their religious differences) and came upon the material in the library at Corpus Christi in Oxford (*velut thesauro invento*) had been lost and replaced with a new Lutheran dogmatism. It very much seems to be this dogmatism rather than the Enlightenment commitment to reason in and of itself which provided the background for the general habit of denigrating or ignoring late antique Platonism.

Thus, what emerges from Tigerstedt's account is not a narrative of decline and fall but rather the realization that there really was not a point when this material was either considered openly or entirely rejected. Rather than progress toward a modern view, we see a contrast between broad-minded figures like More, Erasmus, Goethe and Emerson, interested in the more general cultural renewal we call the Renaissance, and more narrow-minded theologians who became particularly energetic in 18th century Germany but all the same by no means prevented philosophers like Hegel and Zeller from reading the material very seriously. One can find plenty of modern interpreters who have not discussed the material or have perhaps simply repeated prejudices against it because that is what they found in the authoritative histories of philosophy (as Diderot echoed Brucker, not because he agreed with Brucker's philosophy but because Brucker spoke with a tone of authority about obscure subjects), but it is hard to find a true philosophical or academic ancestor who considered it seriously and entirely rejected it. In fact, the case is the opposite-- those who seem to know the text of Plato best generally express a qualified admiration, all the way from Schleiermacher to E.R. Dodds.

Even quotations that could seem dismissive actually upon further consideration only provide evidence that scholars have been struggling to understand this material for a long time. For example, A.E. Taylor while reviewing Friedlander's edition of Plato criticized Friedlander's relatively free approach to the prologues and noted that no one would really propose to read the prologues the way Proclus did. In retrospect, the quotation seems less dismissive and more curious or searching. Taylor seems to think that the prologues represent what actually happened; while most would now agree this is too literal, in his defence, the reason he says this is because he feels they do capture something essential about the tone and spirit of intellectual life in the 5th century BC. Taylor's interpretation was surely too literal; one the other hand, even admiring them, I would still think that Proclus' interpretations must be too elaborate and artificial. What the quote shows then is less dismissiveness than the fact that the best scholars have always been cautiously and for the most part privately considering what sense could possibly be made of the material and using it as a point of comparison for modern approaches (the question Taylor considers is the same one that Burnyeat addressed in his

groundbreaking article "First Words").¹⁹² What seems to be the reality then is that though the best scholars have been considering the material for a long time (above all of course Dodds), ancient readers' approach to the text was not actually examined openly very seriously until quite recently and has simply for the most part continued to be characterized by inherited prejudice.

One still finds in much if not the majority of published scholarship very many wildly false generalizations about the material which seem now to stem less from these old prejudices than simple ignorance. Very many people, looking for a footnote seem to stumble instead upon an ocean and then fall back upon quotations of the common opinion which, in some cases, happens to be wrong. One reads for example that ancient Platonists did not pay any attention to the reading of the prologues, that they paid no attention to the interplay of character in the dialogues, that they did not notice places where the dialogues seem to conflict (because this difficulty is supposed to be the origin of the developmental hypothesis), that they were bound by religious necessity to agree with everything Plato said or, more generally, that their interpretation was entirely dogmatic and so therefore not dramatic or dialogic. Therefore, the goal of this chapter will be to examine Proclus' hermeneutic method in the *In Rem.* in order to contribute to the growing body of scholarship which has begun to ask some basic questions about how Plato was read by those who spoke, read and wrote the same language he did. I will mention at the outset some of the recent scholarship which has already more or less reversed the traditional neglect of this topic. Besides general works which I mentioned in the introduction (like Tarrant 2000 and Annas 1999), I am particularly interested in scholarship which has begun to ask the question of how ancient readers approached very specific questions. Outstanding and particularly relevant examples are Hunter 2012 on the tripartite dramatic structure of the *Republic* as compared with Odysseus' narrative (46-50), Sedley 2002 on whether ancient interpreters recognize irony, Brisson 2005 on readings of *Republic* 509A-C and Miles Burnyeat 1997 and John Dillon 1999 on the question of interpreting the prologues. I will discuss five examples: Does Proclus ever disagree with Plato, does he notice places where the dialogues conflict, does he recognize what we call dramatic irony, does his approach save tragedy and comedy from the charges in the *Republic*, and how does he approach the question of the role of the character Glaucon in the *Republic*?

1. Does Proclus ever disagree with Plato?

If it were not possible for Proclus to disagree with Plato, then Proclus really would not be capable of free thought. Ancient writers were obviously aware of this difficulty as well. Cicero mocks Pythagoreans who simply quote Pythagoras as though that were a sufficient answer to any question (*De Natura Deorum* 1.5); and then the same Cicero of course goes on to give Pythagorean doctrine himself, not the least of which is the harmony of the spheres in his *Republic*. Was he even mocking serious and actually existing Pythagoreans at all or just expressing common and even conventional disdain for an unphilosophical attitude? Numenius, comparing the Epicureans and the new Academy seems to half criticize and half admire the Epicureans for being the most devoted

¹⁹² For another example, see Shorey 1938: 36-61 which shows at the very least a serious attempt to come to terms with the material in a way he freely acknowledges others have simply not been equipped to do, largely because of the breadth of the subject.

followers in all antiquity (φιλακόλουθοι).¹⁹³¹⁹⁴ It does seem to be the case that Lucretius exceeds almost all of the philosophical texts we possess in terms of his reverence for the founder of his school. Of course in antiquity, the tendency of each school to develop into or be presented as a "hairesis" meant that all of the schools display a tremendous, almost religious reverence for their founders which should not be confused with the inability to think freely. It should be noted that Christians used the reverence of philosophers for the founders of their schools as a reason for rejecting the philosophical schools entirely, and authors like Lucian mocked the followers by comparing them to the founders. Lucian extends his mockery to all the schools-- Platonists, Cynics, Stoics etc. We must begin by seeing Proclus' attitude toward Plato in this context, not in comparison with modern attitudes towards written texts.

Part of the answer to the question of whether Proclus' freedom of thought was restricted by the necessity of agreeing with Plato is the obvious one that the Platonic dialogues present a very complex interpretative project. Because every phrase must always be interrogated, it is hard to say what it actually means to be a doctrinal Platonist assuming that the Platonist in question does not ever assume that anything written in any dialogue can be taken to represent Plato's opinion in a simple fashion. Proclus seems to have been accused of both being forced by religious necessity to always agree with Plato, and yet on the other hand always using Plato's words without cause simply to license his own philosophical project-- this seems unfair. A better start would be to focus on the idea that this ambiguity and the near impossibility of constructing any conclusive authority seems to be a fundamental part of what makes Plato's text a particularly good text for thinking with. Proclus thinks he hears Plato's voice when the philosophical characters speak, but there is always room for doubt. For example, he is aware that Er is a rather obscure prophet; it is not difficult for Proclus to disagree with Er the way it is for a reader of the Old Testament to disagree with Moses. On the other hand, Proclus does go to extraordinary lengths to show that everything that is written in the Platonic dialogues, whether a bit of myth or a logical argument, actually means something important. This project though is so complex that answering questions about the text becomes inseparable from engaging with other philosophers' arguments about important questions in ways that are more familiar to modern readers less devoted to defending Plato.

However, the reality is that of course Proclus disagreed with Plato. Part of the problem is that modern interpreters are so eager to find mistakes in their canonical texts

¹⁹³ [The Epicureans] ἦσαν καὶ εἰσὶ καί, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔσονται φιλακόλουθοι, 3.24.35-36, see also the entire preceding paragraph. My point is not that he was correct-- perhaps Philodemus and others did feel free to modify Epicurus in a more open and philosophical spirit-- only to show that ancient authors were very aware of this difficulty, and it was by no means Platonists who suffered from the criticism of excessive unanimity.

¹⁹⁴ Though somewhat peripheral to the present point, one sentence of Numenius is particularly worth quoting given the theme of this dissertation and the discussion that will conclude the following chapter: Ἐοικέ τε ἡ Ἐπικούρου διατριβὴ πολιτεία τινὶ ἀληθεί, ἀστασιαστοτάτη, κοινὸν ἓνα νοῦν, μίαν γνώμην ἐχούση. ("the school of Epicurus is like some true polity, entirely without dissension, with one common mind and one single purpose") (3.24.33-35). Too many discussions of ancient Epicureanism begin from our modern conceptions of the subject without realizing that this idea does seem to capture something essential about the way the school was viewed in antiquity. Numenius' quote seems to capture some real sense in which the Epicurean community was compared-- as an ideal but ultimately impractical community where everything was designed for the needs of philosophers-- to the spirit of Plato's *Republic*.

that they gleefully announce the discovery of a fallacy and turn the mistake directly against the author in question. Some of the difference is as much a matter of tone as substance. Remember that Proclus actually offered sacrifices for all of his philosophical ancestors and his teachers. The quotation that displays this tone most clearly, the tone which he chose when he wanted to disagree with Plato, which I have also mentioned elsewhere, is his use of the same Ibycus quotation found in Plato's *Phaedrus* to express his respect for the divine project that is interpreting nature and what really is versus the possibility that Plato had some things wrong.

Two places that Proclus disagrees with Plato stand out, both because they prove the general point and because they relate to the crucial issues that I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation-- Proclus' approach to the poetic tradition, and his respect for scientific progress. In book 10 of the *Republic*, Socrates makes a rather odd criticism of Homer (599-600)-- if Homer was wise why did he not leave behind students or found a school or benefit particular cities? On the one hand, it is easy to see that Socrates' remarks not only reflect honor on Socrates himself who inspired a huge range of students (Aristippus, Aeschines, Xenophon, Plato, etc.) but also force us to think about the institution founded by Plato, the Academy. On the other hand, as a criticism of Homer it really does not make much sense. How could Socrates or Plato possibly know? I imagine many readers are immediately struck with the same reflection. Thus, Proclus' comments are refreshingly reasonable:

Ἐνταῦθα δὴ λοιπὸν ἐπιρρεῖ παντοίων ἐρωτήσεων πλήθος, τίνας ἐπαίδευσεν Ὅμηρος, εἴπερ μὴ μιμητῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ δημιουργὸς παιδείας ἀληθοῦς, τίσι τῶν πόλεων ἔθετο νόμους, τίς πόλεμος δι' ἐκείνον ἐπράχθη καλῶς, τίνες ἰδίᾳ τῆς Ὀμήρου παιδείας ἀπολελεύκασιν. πρὸς δὴ ταῦτα πάντα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα φήσομεν, ὅτι καὶ τὸ μῆκος τοῦ χρόνου τὴν ἐν ταῖς διαδοχαῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων μνήμην ἀφήρηται, καὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς καιροὺς ἀνδρᾶς ἱστορεῖν τὰ τοιαῦτα δεινοῦς τῆς διὰ τούτων ἡμᾶς διδασκαλίας ἀπεστέρησεν, ὧν Ὅμηρος ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ κοινῇ ταῖς πόλεσιν εἰς παιδείαν καὶ εὐνομίαν συνετέλεσεν. ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε τῶν πόλεων τινες ἐν τοῖς ὕστερον χρόνοις διαμφισβητήσασι πρὸς ἀλλήλας Ὀμήρω δικαστῆ καὶ τοῖς Ὀμήρου γράμμασιν ἐχρήσαντο τῶν δικαίων, ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας παρελήφαμεν. τί οὖν θαυμαστόν, εἰ καὶ ζῶντα νομοθέτην τινὲς προεστήσαντο καὶ ἰδίᾳ διδάσκαλον ἐποίησαντο καὶ ταῖς ἐκείνου συμβουλαῖς ὡσπερ ἐπῳδαῖς ἐχρήσαντο; ταῦτα δὴ ἠγνόνηται τοῖς ὕστερον. (1.200.5-21)

At this point a multitude of questions follow: Did Homer ever educate anyone? If he was not merely an imitator but also a creator of real educational value, which cities did he serve as a lawgiver, what war was ever completed successfully because of Homer, or who had ever benefitted even privately from a Homeric education? In response to these questions and to all criticisms of this sort, I will point out that the length of time has destroyed the memory of past events typically transmitted by generations of men. Additionally, there do not seem to have been in that period men devoted to writing histories of this sort of thing and for this reason we have been deprived of the knowledge of the things which Homer

contributed both privately and publicly to cities with regard to education and good order. In fact, we do learn from histories that some cities in later times have used Homer as a sort of judge for conflict resolution and used the writings of Homer for legal purposes. Why would it be surprising if in fact some cities elected him as a law-giver while he was alive and privately used him as a teacher of justice and even used the advice of Homer as though it had the power of a charm or spell? All of this is completely unknown to men of later times like us.

The example is obviously related to the general case discussed below (example 3). However, it is especially clear that Proclus is simply disagreeing because there is not really any definite sign in the text that Proclus identifies (such as a misquotation, or inherent dramatic irony) which licenses him to claim that Plato actually intended the argument he uses. Proclus may have thought that what he says was also apparent to Plato (in fact, it is so obvious how could it not have been), but he does not bother to assert it. Basically, he just says this argument is unfair, it does not make sense and Socrates (who he generally imagines to speak for Plato) does not have enough evidence to make this claim.

It is interesting to compare this passage with the fact that we have a life of Homer attributed to Proclus. In fact, the life attributed to Proclus seems quite skeptical about the claims of others who have written biographies of Homer. It begins (as most of the lives do) by stressing that all the other authors disagree about Homer's biography, leading uniquely though in the life of Proclus to the interesting claim: *καὶ καθόλου πᾶσα πόλις ἀντιποιεῖται τάνδρος, ὅθεν εἰκότως ἂν κοσμοπολίτης λέγοιτο*. He later expresses similar scorn for those who claim that Homer and Hesiod were contemporaries. Additionally, the life provides some excellent evidence of the extent of Proclus' sources on Homer. Proclus cites the famous Homeric scholars Aristarchus and Crates (presumably Crates of Mallus), simply reporting and comparing their conclusions (still with skepticism) about the age when Homer lived. Additionally, he has some information about how Hellanicus, Damastes and Pherekydes approached the question of Homer's biography. He even says that Gorgias traced Homer's lineage back to Musaeus. The source of this information is otherwise lost to us (some of it is found also in the other lives), and provides yet another example of how careful we should be before underestimating the extent of Proclus' sources. Almost all of the extant lives seem to cite important works which are lost (such as Ephorus or book 3 of Aristotle's *On Poetry*), but there does seem to be a certain economy and knowledge in the way Proclus groups Hellanicus, Damastes and Pherekydes and then contrasts Aristarchus and Crates. The citations of Gorgias and Hellanicus remind us that the fanciful connection between Homer and the traditions associated with figures like Orpheus and Musaeus is certainly not something that is unique to or even that particularly characterizes the late-Platonic school. The fact that Proclus both has such a huge range of sources we are missing and yet still responds to this passage of the *Republic* with the straightforward observation that we do not really know anything about Homer's biography thus provides an excellent example of his reasonable interpretative approach (for a translation and text of this life, see West 2004: 418-25).

A second example is perhaps still more significant. The contrast between textual authority and scientific progress is one that we have learned to see as fundamental to the

history of our society; in fact, it is probably this very conditioning that makes us so scornful of the way ancient Platonists display reverence for Plato's text. And, Proclus does actually think that Plato is in some sense a prophet, the "prophet of the Muses." However, as occasionally becomes clear, Proclus does not actually think that this means the author of the text is a god or that the text is infallible. This is a tremendously important distinction-- how does one react when the preponderance of scientific evidence indicates that one's preferred text is clearly incorrect? Proclus reacts, as I indicated in the previous chapter, by quoting Ibycus to say that it would be terrible to exchange honor among men for honor among gods-- that is to say that nature is divine, but the Platonic texts are merely divinely inspired, like other divinely inspired texts such as Homer, and so may simply be incorrect. A text that claims some access to divinity the way Plato's text does for Proclus provides the foundation for a totally different type of civilization than a text that claims divinity the way some of the texts of the revealed religions do. The way Genesis begins creates innumerable difficulties for the serious and educated Christian; the *Timaeus*, on the other hand, just begins with a clever quotation and by thanking the audience for showing up to discuss such difficult issues.

This second example is the astronomical discussion I already discussed in terms of its scientific value in the previous chapter. I want to add here some of Proclus' specific statements that he uses to explain why Plato got it wrong and how he excuses himself for pointing out that Plato got it wrong. The way that Proclus expresses this point is either extraordinary (if you thought Proclus was incapable of free thought and forced to always agree with Plato) or quite obvious and unremarkable if you did not think this. He approaches the question exactly as any modern scholar would. Why does Plato get the order of the heavenly spheres wrong? He considers it a sufficient explanation and defence of Plato to say that: τῆ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀστρονομία περὶ τούτων ὁ Πλάτων συμφέρεται; he repeats the striking phrase and apparently considers that this obvious explanation is enough to protect Plato's reputation for wisdom and justify his own consideration of other possibilities (2.220.1; repeated at 2.220.20). The thought is (as in the previous example of Homer) similar in part to what any modern scholar might resort to when trying to be reasonable-- Plato did care about science and did make an effort to use the best science of his day, and he is not to be blamed if science has advanced since then. Proclus' response is obvious; on the other hand, it reduces to incoherence the equivalence some have tried to draw between Proclus and others whose respect for textual authority opposed the advance of scientific knowledge. These later Platonists seem to have had the Ibycus quote so readily at hand for exactly this reason.

Proclus even adds an interesting, almost comic reflection on Er. The tone is almost sarcastic-- apparently Er did not quite report everything exactly as he saw it:

ἔοικεν δ' οὖν ὁ Πλάτων ἀκολουθήσαι τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀστρονόμοις· ᾧ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι οὐ πάντα ὁ τοῦ μύθου διήγγειλεν ὡς ἰδὼν αὐτὸς τούτου πατήρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς προσέθηκεν, ὅσα τοῖς κατ' αὐτὸν εὐδοκιμωτάτοις ἤρρεσεν· ὡσπερ δὴ καὶ τὸ τὸν ἥλιον ἑβδομον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλανοῦς εἶναι καὶ προσεχῶς ὑπὲρ σελήνην· οὐ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν Τιμαίῳ τούτο φαίνεται λέγων. (2.220.1-7)

Plato seems in this regard to follow the astronomers of his time. Therefore, it is

clear that the father of this myth did not actually report everything simply because he had seen it, but must have also added a bit himself, things that were simply pleasing to the men of high repute in his time-- such as that the sun was seventh in order from the fixed sphere and immediately above the moon. Not only here but also in the *Timaeus* it is apparent that he says this.

The slippage in the last line between referring to the prophet, Er, and Plato himself in the *Timaeus* is significant. Proclus' approach does encourage close reading, but it does not seem to use textual authority for inhibiting scientific progress. It is unfortunate that we do not have the rest of the *Timaeus* commentary because if we did we would be able to judge this question much more clearly. I have discussed each of these broad subjects (Proclus' approach to Homer and to astronomy) more fully elsewhere. However, my point in this section was to stress not the way Proclus claims Plato agrees with him based on his particular approach to the text-- i.e. that Plato believed the foundational principles of astronomy should be simple, or that Socrates' criticism of Homer is clearly ironic-- but the more simple and direct way in which on these two points (Did Homer have students? Why did Plato have the order of the spheres wrong?), Proclus simply disagrees with Plato.

2. Does Proclus notice places where the dialogues seem to conflict and how does he deal with this?

It is also commonly claimed that Proclus pays no attention to points where Plato's dialogues seem to conflict with one another (cf. Bowen 58). The reality is that Proclus seems very aware of the interpretative difficulties posed by apparent conflicts; he certainly notices these places. He simply resorts to different types of interpretative strategies to explain these (such as close attention to fine distinctions in language or close attention to character and setting). We do not have to accept Proclus' answers to the questions he asks, but to claim he is not an astute reader and does not notice places where Plato's dialogues seem to conflict is simply misrepresentation. Several passages in the *In Rem.* show Proclus addressing the general issue directly. He claims, for example, that Plato was obviously aware when composing the *Republic* of what he had written in other dialogues (1.202; see following chapter). What Proclus says in this passage is that it would be unreasonable to imagine Plato as an author who while writing some dialogues took no account of what he had already written in others. Proclus obviously makes this claim exactly because he too notices the apparent conflicts. He expresses at several points (particularly in the fifth essay) the question of how Plato can possibly agree with himself given the variety of claims in the dialogues (πὼς ἂν αὐτὸς συνάδοι πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, 1.51.27-8)-- he sees answering the question as the essence of the project of interpreting Plato.

Proclus' answers to these specific questions show why his approach can be interesting. Proclus' approach forces him to try to explain the differences that he finds. He even explicitly describes his hermeneutic project by posing exactly this question, "how can Plato be shown not to be in disagreement with himself" (τὸν Πλάτωνα τῆς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐξέλοι διαφωνίας, at 1.70.3-4; see also passages quoted in the previous paragraph). We may very well question whether this is necessary-- whether the dialogues may actually represent different stages of the author's thought and therefore be in

irreconcilable disagreement. However, since the evidence for such development is so slight, and, perhaps more importantly, so unphilosophical, it does seem that Proclus' approach is worth some serious consideration.

The particular example I will discuss here occurs in the fifth essay. This section of the fifth essay (the 10 questions found at 1.42-43) demonstrates very clearly why the *In Rem.* is valuable for the questions it asks alone even if we do not accept Proclus' answers. Proclus compares *Symposium* 223d and *Republic* 395a in order to ask:

πὼς ἐν Συμποσίῳ μὲν [Plato] ἠνάγκαζεν τῆς αὐτῆς ἐπιστήμης εἶναι
κωμῳδίαν καὶ τραγωδίαν ἐργάζεσθαι τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἀγάθωνα καὶ
Ἀριστοφάνη συνομολογεῖν, ἐν Πολιτείᾳ δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλει τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι
τούτων δημιουργόν, καὶ ταῦτα ἐγγύτατα οὐσῶν, οὐδέ γε ὑποκριτὴν
ἀμφοτέρων, οὐχ ὅτι μιμητὴν τὸν αὐτόν (1.42.16-22).

How is it that in the *Symposium* he forces people like¹⁹⁵ Agathon and Aristophanes to agree that making a tragedy or comedy is part of the same knowledge whereas in the *Republic* he does not want the poet of tragedy and comedy to be the same person, even though they are similar, nor the same person to be an actor of both since really he does not want the imitator to be the same.

It seems as though one could say far, far more than Proclus actually does when trying to explain this puzzle without the developmental hypothesis. After all, in the one case Socrates is expounding his theory to Agathon and Aristophanes, all presumably fairly drunk, during the middle of the night after a long symposium. In the other case, Socrates is speaking at the house of Cephalus in Piraeus with 10 participants who have challenged him to speak about justice. Proclus' answer though does not reference the setting or scene or characters; instead, he focuses on exactly what is said. He contrasts ἐπίστασθαι ποιεῖν at *Symposium* 223d4 with εὐ μμεῖσθα at *Republic* 395a4. Mimesis is a matter of habit whereas *technē* is a matter of knowledge; Proclus claims that knowing how to do a thing is not the same as being in the habit of doing it. The distinction seems to refer ahead to the rest of the *Republic*, particularly book 10-- in theory an artist could create from a standpoint of knowledge as though of a form (though it is not clear what such a person would choose to create), but for the most part artists seems to create by imitation, based on their habits. So a novelist, for example, could create based on deep knowledge of human affairs and of the novelist's own society together with the sorts of things people say and what effects they would produce, or they could create based on some combination of imitating other novelists and patching episodes together from their own life and habits. Even the latter work might turn out well, if the person had some talent for imitation the way some people seem to have a talent for drawing. The difference in language in the two cases does seem to leave a space for this reading which stresses that some artists have knowledge while others do not. In any case, whether or not we accept this explanation, there is no reason to think that the dialogues represent different stages of the author's development. It is obvious that though Socrates' words might seem to

¹⁹⁵ The sense of τοὺς ἀμφὶ here is bit unclear-- actually he just forces Agathon and Aristophanes to agree; it could perhaps indicate a crowd around them or the other interlocutors but this does not fit the scene in the *Symposium*.

conflict, the behaviour of Agathon and Aristophanes in the *Symposium* tends to agree with what is said in the *Republic*. It is interesting therefore that Proclus does not even adopt this strategy of explanation based on character in this case but instead focuses very closely on the exact words and concepts Socrates' words express.¹⁹⁶

3. Does Proclus recognize dramatic irony in Plato's dialogues?

Proclus seems to recognize both Platonic and Socratic irony. In his article on the subject, David Sedley notes that Proclus believed that Socrates employs irony particularly with less philosophical interlocutors and that this general approach "seems to offer a most promising perspective on Socrates' modes of discourse." It could also perhaps be reconciled with Ferrari's discussion of Socratic irony as pretence (2008). Sedley also points out the importance of the reference to Socratic irony at *In Rem.* 1.60.20-28; in this passage, Proclus indicates that Socrates disavowed knowledge until his last day because of his irony. Sedley concludes that: "by this Proclus must mean that Socrates' strongly positive philosophical stance in the *Phaedo*, untinged by his usual doubts, reflects not merely the philosophical maturity of his company in the prison cell, but also a decision on his final day to reveal a degree of philosophical conviction which he had, no doubt for didactic purposes, long kept hidden by the habitual device of irony. Here too, then, Socrates' different philosophical mode in the *Phaedo* could be explained historically, without recourse to modern developmental interpretation of Plato" (Sedley 2002: 43-44). This is an interesting interpretation of this puzzling and difficult passage in the commentary,¹⁹⁷ though Proclus does not seem to actually recognize such a strong distinction between Socrates' narrative voice in the *Phaedo* and his voice elsewhere.

The greatest difficulty in understanding how Proclus viewed Socrates' narrative voice is caused by the fact that we simply do not have the relevant writings of Proclus. The commentaries on the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* of course deal with a dialogue where Socrates is not the main speaker. We do not have Proclus' commentaries on dialogues like the *Philebus* or the *Theaetetus* (which he certainly created) which would have given a better sense of how Proclus approaches these difficulties. We do not have any reason to think Proclus would have accepted the approach suggested by Numenius (frag. 23, tantalizingly incomplete), but we can confirm that he was part of an interpretative community which was aware of a tremendous range of ways of explaining Socrates' irony and narrative voice. The *In Alcibiadem* might seem to be a promising source, and does provide some hints which could be expanded into a typology.¹⁹⁸ However, this dialogue too is an unusual case, and we only have part of Proclus' commentary. The opening portions of the *Republic* commentary which are missing seem as though they would have been very likely to explain his approach to this question. Based on what we do have though, it is apparent that Proclus not only recognizes Socratic irony, but also recognizes a whole range of ways that Socrates modulates his narrative

¹⁹⁶ See also Sheppard 1981: 116-117.

¹⁹⁷ Which could perhaps be reconciled with Ferrari 2008.

¹⁹⁸ See especially *In Alc.* 8.13-9.1; the extremely elaborate explanation of Socrates' use of οἶμαι at 22-23 which uses "third from the truth"; examples of how Socrates speaks specifically for Alcibiades throughout the commentary; the typology at 27.12-13: Τριττῶν τοίνυν οὐσῶν τούτων ἐπιστημῶν ἃς ὁ Σωκράτης ἑαυτῷ φαίνεται μαρτυρῶν, τῆς διαλεκτικῆς, τῆς μαιευτικῆς, τῆς ἐρωτικῆς leading to the claim at 28.10-11: πανταχοῦ γὰρ ὁ Σωκράτης τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις προσώποις οἰκείως προάγει τοὺς λόγους.

voice. His approach indicates that Socrates has an entire repertoire of modes of operation (τῆς διαλεκτικῆς, τῆς μαιευτικῆς, τῆς ἐρωτικῆς, see note below; such as with Protagoras, Theaetetus and Alcibiades) and strategies (including: προτροπαὶ καὶ ἀποτροπαὶ καὶ ἔλεγχοι καὶ μαιεῖαι καὶ ἔπαινοι καὶ ψόγοι, at *In Alc.* 8.13-14) and employs them carefully in order to interact with particular characters.¹⁹⁹ We have the best evidence for how Proclus employs this interpretative strategy in the cases of Glaucon and Alcibiades. Perhaps the greatest argument in favor of Proclus' general strategy versus the modern developmental approach is simply the fact that the Platonic dialogues are so carefully arranged to depict such a variety of characters with such specific and distinct dramatic premises. It certainly seems to be the case that the dialogues are arranged in order to show Socrates interacting with a wide range of characters in some very specific situations.

The essay on Homer is the essential point at which Proclus acknowledges the enormous difference between Socrates as speaker and Plato as author.²⁰⁰ The point here is basically a recognition of what we call Platonic or dramatic irony.²⁰¹ Proclus is referring in this passage to types of myth that require allegorical explanation:

οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ τῶν Σωκρατικῶν λόγων οὐκ ἐπησημένοι πόρρω ποι τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου διανοίας ἀποπεπνωκότες διαβάλλουσιν ἅπαν τὸ τοιοῦτον τῶν μύθων εἶδος. (1.79.23-26).

The majority of Socrates' arguments have fallen far from the thought of the philosopher (even though the audience does not notice) and slander this entire form of mythology.

This observation is not an incidental and isolated instance explained by Proclus' love for hexameter poetry or infatuation with religious myths, but rather provides what is in some ways the linchpin of his entire Platonic hermeneutics.

The jumping off point for some of his most interesting observations about reading Plato is provided by his observation that Socrates misrepresents Homer by quoting minor characters out of context and attributing the quotations to the poet himself. He seems to claim that Socrates' misuse of Homer actually shows us how *not* to read Plato. The following passage is included as part of his analysis of *Republic* 381b where Socrates criticizes Homer by quoting *Odyssey* 17.485. In this passage, Homer presents the words of a typical, anonymous suitor criticizing Antinoos for throwing the chair at Odysseus; Socrates in the *Republic* gives no indication of the speaker, but rather simply quotes the passage to indicate that Homer thought the gods could change their form-- the "god" in question in the passage Socrates quotes turns out of course to be only Odysseus. The same passage of Homer forms part of the foundation of the allusive introduction Plato's *Sophist*. Proclus analyzes *Republic* 381b as follows:

¹⁹⁹ See also Ferrari 2010.

²⁰⁰ cf. Sedley "they [ancient commentators] never, in so far as I know, seriously problematize the relation of Plato, as author, to Socrates as speaker" (38). Proclus' critique of Socrates' approach to Homer is exactly where the relation is problematized.

²⁰¹ On Platonic versus Socratic irony, see Nehamas 1998: 19-98.

καίτοι με οὐ λέληθεν, ὅτι τὰς προκειμένας ῥήσεις τῶν μνηστήρων τις αὐτῷ [Homer] πεποιήται λέγων, ἀφ' ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν τὸν ποιητὴν εὐθύνην. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν Καλλικλέους λόγων οὐδὲ τῶν Θρασυμάχου τὴν τοῦ Πλάτωνος δόξαν αἰρεῖν δοκιμάζομεν, οὐδ' εἴ τις ἐλέγχειν ἐπιχειροῖ τὸν Πλάτωνα διὰ τῶν τοῖς σοφισταῖς ἀποτετολμημένων ῥημάτων, κατὰ πόδας αὐτὸν ποιεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐλέγχους φήσομεν, ἀλλ' ὅταν Παρμενίδης ἢ Σωκράτης ἢ Τίμαιος ἢ ἄλλος τις τῶν οὕτω θείων φθέγγηται, τότε τῶν Πλάτωνος ἀκούειν ἠγοῦμεθα δογμάτων. καὶ οὖν καὶ τῶν Ὀμηρικῶν ἐπιβολῶν ποιησόμεθα τὴν κρίσιν οὐκ ἐξ ὧν οἱ μνηστήρες λέγουσιν ἢ τῶν παρ' αὐτῷ τις εἰς πονηρίαν διαβεβλημένων, ἀλλ' ἐξ ὧν αὐτὸς ὁ ποιητὴς ἢ Νέστωρ ἢ Ὀδυσσεὺς φαίνεται λέγων. (1.110.8-20)

And furthermore, it has not escaped my notice that in Homer's poetry it is one of the suitors who speaks the previous words, and it is not reasonable to blame or criticize Homer based on the words of the suitors. Neither would we think that we could find and approve the doctrine of Plato in the words of Callicles or Thrasymachus, nor if someone attempted to refute Plato based on the overly bold words spoken by the sophists in his dialogues would we say that he was really on the track of Plato. Rather, whenever Parmenides or Socrates or Timaeus or some other godlike man speaks, then we believe that we hear the doctrines of Plato. Therefore also in the case of Homer we will judge criticisms and approaches not based on things said by the suitors or other people whom he has clearly described as worthless but rather based on the things spoken by the poet himself or Nestor or Odysseus.²⁰²

This passage clearly shows that Socrates' approach to Homer in the *Republic* is used by Proclus as an example of how one should not read Plato. Moreover, it is clear from this passage that Proclus does generally believe that we should find Plato's ideas in the words of Socrates and the other philosophical characters (cf. Zuckert 2009); he simply does not believe that we can always assume Socrates is directly Plato's spokesperson (on the complexity of Socrates' narrative strategy, see Ferrari 2011). It is extraordinary though that he compares the way Socrates criticizes Homer to the proceeding of someone who would try to quote Callicles' mockery of Socrates as though it were Plato's opinion (see also 1.160.1-2 where this is still more explicit).

Following the passage I quoted, Proclus then even claims that if we did want to quote the words of the young suitor as representing the thought (*dianoia*) of Homer, it would still be possible to find grounds for doing so. The hermeneutic approach expressed in these passages is thus extremely broad and reasonable. We should generally expect that the philosophical characters express Plato's opinion, but this is not necessarily always the case; furthermore, there is nothing to prevent us from also examining whether even the other characters may also in some sense represent Plato's opinion. However, no one could really claim to refute (ἐλέγχειν) Plato based on the opinions of these characters. We ought to consider seriously what they say, but if they are incorrect, Plato cannot be accused of a fallacy.

²⁰² cf. Catherine Zuckert's *Plato's Philosophers* which is focused upon explaining extremely thoroughly the consequences of realizing that Plato's dialogues contain multiple philosophical voices (2009).

In the section I quoted in the previous chapter, the section which claims that the same arguments used to kick Homer out of the city would also be used to kick Plato out of the city, Proclus includes the following observation which gives a good sense of the breadth of his approach to Plato's work. Again, it is important that it is the defence of Homer that causes Proclus to point this out so clearly; Proclus' point is that because Plato's work is entirely characterized by mimesis, it would have no more place in a perfect city than Homer would:

ἡ τοῦ Πλάτωνος αὕτη πραγματεία παντοδαπὰ μὲν εἶδη ζωῆς ἀποτυποῦται, πᾶσι δὲ ἀποδίδωσι τὸ πρέπον ἐν τοῖς λόγοις <καὶ> φθέγγεται ὥσπερ ἐν σκηνῇ κατ' ἐξουσίαν ἕκαστος, καὶ ὁ σοφὸς καὶ ὁ ἀμαθής, καὶ ὁ σῶφρων καὶ ὁ ἀκόλαστος, καὶ ὁ δικαιοτάτος καὶ ὁ ἀδικώτατος, καὶ ὁ ἐπιστήμων καὶ ὁ σοφιστής, ἀγῶνες δὲ παντοῖοι τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ δογμάτων ἀνακινουῦνται, καί ποῦ καὶ πιθανώτεροι τῶν τὰ ἀληθῆ κατασκευαζόντων εἰσὶν οἱ τῶν ἀντικειμένων ὑπερηγοροῦντες (1.160.26-161.5)

Plato's activity represents all sorts of forms of life and gives to each what is fitting in their various speeches. Each speaks as though on a stage according to ability, both the wise and the foolish, the self-controlled and the licentious, the most just and the most unjust, both the knowledgeable and the sophist so that all sorts of contests and competitions about philosophical doctrines arise.²⁰³ And really in some places those who speak in favor of the truth are not as convincing as those who voice the opposite opinions.

This last claim is particularly surprising, but he does not explain exactly which speeches he is thinking of (is he thinking of the speeches of Glaucon, Protagoras and Callicles?).

If I am reading this correctly, Proclus is admitting that sometimes Socrates' opponents speak very well in Plato's dialogues. One thing then that makes Platonic dialogues so challenging is the quality of the speeches attributed to figures like Aristophanes and Protagoras. Proclus' conclusion is that we should by no means be so foolish as to try to separate the "pragmateia" of Plato from Plato's philosophy (τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πλάτωνος πραγματείαν δῦιστάνειν τῆς Πλάτωνος ἐπιστήμης, 1.159.20-22) by insisting that we should only read texts that present the simple, unadorned truth or by avoiding texts that contain convincing and dangerous falsehoods or alluring mimetic representation (all of which is said in this context to save Homer). This particularly important phrase seems to indicate that somehow Plato's philosophy is inextricably linked with reading and considering dialogues; Proclus does search for doctrines and ideas and arguments (which is part of the process of reading) and apply them in other contexts, but also implies that in some sense these ideas are inseparable from the dialogic stage. Somehow, for Proclus, doing this--separating the "pragmateia" of Plato from Plato's thought-- is analogous to kicking Homer out of the city.

4. Does Proclus' approach save tragedy and comedy?

For the most part, Proclus does not defend tragedy and comedy. His devotion to

²⁰³ cf. Mattéi 1988/2002.

Homer simply does not extend to the tragic or comic poets; he does not even cite any of the great tragedians by name (though, as always, this picture might change if we had the rest of his work). He seems to say that they are entirely the lowest kind of mimesis (phantastic mimesis, see next chapter)-- they aim at *psuchagogia* by imitating things not as they are but as they seem, without the purpose of educating people, or leading them towards virtue or teaching people about the actual nature of reality (tragic poets are μιμηταὶ ψυχαγωγίαν τινὰ μεμηχανημένοι τῶν ἀκουόντων, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὠφέλειαν πρὸς ἀρετὴν, καὶ γοητεύοντες τοὺς πολλοὺς, ἀλλ' οὐ παιδεύοντες, 1.203.2-5).

However, this does not necessarily mean that his theory does not leave open the possibility of a role for tragedy. Though he does not defend tragedy as he does Homer, and he certainly says that Plato criticizes Homer because of the popularity of tragedy, the same interpretative strategies could be used to find a role for tragedy (i.e. claiming that the poets do have some knowledge or are inspired or do intend to educate, perhaps along the lines one finds in Aristophanes' *Frogs*). In fact, because Proclus' entire religious system is so fundamentally based on conceptions of divinity that almost seem to be the origin of tragedy and comedy (see next chapter on the laughter and crying of the gods), and because he wants to delineate so many different ways that mimetic poetry can answer Socrates' charges in the *Republic*, the reality seems to be more that he did not defend tragedy than that one cannot find a place for it within his system. All of the strategies Proclus uses to defend Homer could also be employed to defend tragedy (one could claim that it does educate people, does create inspiration, etc.); Proclus simply does not deploy his interpretative categories for this purpose in his extant writing.

At one point, Proclus addresses directly the famous doctrine of *katharsis* found in Aristotle's *Poetics*.²⁰⁴ *Katharsis* is a key concept for Proclus; he sees it as a large part of the goal of philosophy itself. However, he disagrees with Aristotle's idea of the kathartic function of tragic performances. He acknowledges that humans have some need for cleansing themselves of potentially damaging emotions by witnessing likenesses of these emotions, but he calls this process "ἀφοσίωσις" in order to distinguish his idea from Aristotle's. He explains:

ἐπεὶ καὶ διαφερόντως αἱ ποιήσεις αὐταὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τῆς ψυχῆς ἀποτείνονται τὸ μάλιστα τοῖς πάθεσιν ἐκκείμενον, ἢ μὲν τὸ φιλήδονον ἐρεθίζουσα καὶ εἰς γέλωτας ἀτόπους ἐξάγουσα, ἢ δὲ τὸ φιλόλυπον παιδοτριβοῦσα καὶ εἰς θρήγους ἀγεννεῖς καθέλκουσα, ἑκατέρω δὲ τρέφουσα τὸ παθητικὸν ἡμῶν, καὶ ὅσῳ ἂν μᾶλλον τὸ ἑαυτῆς ἔργον ἀπεργάζεται, τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον. δεῖν μὲν οὖν τὸν πολιτικὸν διαμηχανᾶσθαι τινὰς τῶν παθῶν τούτων ἀπερᾶσεις καὶ ἡμεῖς φήσομεν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥστε τὰς περὶ αὐτὰ προσπαθείας συντείνειν, τούναντίον μὲν οὖν ὥστε χαλινοῦν καὶ τὰς κινήσεις αὐτῶν ἐμμελῶς ἀναστέλλειν· ἐκείνας δὲ ἄρα τὰς ποιήσεις πρὸς τῇ ποικιλίᾳ καὶ τὸ ἄμετρον ἐχούσας ἐν ταῖς τῶν παθῶν τούτων

²⁰⁴ 1.49-51: Τὸ δὲ δεύτερον [i.e. the second of the 10 questions; cf. 1.42.10.16] (τοῦτο δ' ἦν τὸ τὴν τραγωδίαν ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ κωμῳδίαν ἀτόπως, εἴπερ διὰ τούτων δυνατὸν ἐμμέτρως ἀποπιμπλάναι τὰ πάθη καὶ ἀποπλήσαντας εὐεργὰ πρὸς τὴν παιδείαν ἔχειν, τὸ πεπονηκὸς αὐτῶν θεραπεύσαντας), τοῦτο δ' οὖν πολλὴν καὶ τῷ Ἀριστοτέλει παρασχὸν αἰτίασεως ἀφορμὴν καὶ τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν ποιήσεων τούτων ἀγωνισταῖς τῶν πρὸς Πλάτωνα λόγων οὕτωσιν ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐπομένως τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν διαλύσομεν.

προκλήσεσιν πολλοῦ δεῖν εἰς ἀφοσίωσιν εἶναι χρησίμους. αἱ γὰρ ἀφοσιώσεις οὐκ ἐν ὑπερβολαῖς εἰσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν συνεσταλμέναις ἐνεργείαις σμικρὰν ὁμοίότητα πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἔχούσαις ὧν εἰσιν ἀφοσιώσεις. (1.50.11-1.51.26)

Since these types of poetry are especially aimed at that portion of the soul which is particularly involved in the passions, both nourish the emotional parts of us -- the one [comedy] stimulating the pleasure-loving part and producing unusual and unnecessary laughter, while the other exercises the pain-loving portion and drags it down into ignoble laments. And in fact, the more each one [i.e. tragedy and comedy] completes its own function, the more it nourishes our emotional nature. In fact, I agree that the statesman should contrive some ways of purging these passions, but not in a manner that actually increases these passionate responses. Rather the goal is the opposite, to release these tensions and draw in their movements in a harmonious fashion. Since these types of poetry, in addition to their intricacy, are also inherently based upon summoning unlimited amounts of pain and laughter, it is far from being the case that they are useful for purification. For purifications are not accomplished in representations of excess but rather in limited activities which create a small likeness of the thing relative to which they are purifications.

The first important qualification is to note that these comments occur in the 5th, not the 6th, essay.

In fact, there are some ways in which Proclus' entire entheastic doctrine of tragic myth as expressed in the 6th essay takes over the function that Aristotle claims for *katharsis*. *Katharsis* is, for Aristotle, an explanation that answers Socrates' charges in the *Republic* by positing that in some conditions we do not become like the models we view or imitate, but rather the opposite occurs-- viewing scenes of anger or fear we become less fearful and angry. It is a doctrine, as many have noted, which is puzzling and not fully explained (see Lear 1988). Basically, Proclus' doctrine of entheastic, symbolic interpretation (6th essay) accomplishes the same thing-- in both cases, the observer of tragic myth ends up cleansed of the overly human emotions of fear and pity. However, Proclus divides this function between ἀφοσίωσις and the type of poetry that works through inspiration and hyperbole (ἐν ὑπερβολαῖς, explained in the 6th essay). Therefore, the entire section must be compared with 1.122-8 where he explains why the gods laugh and why they cry as part of his defence of tragic myth and explanation of this phrase ἐν ὑπερβολαῖς. This division of functions does seem as though it would enervate tragic performances by reserving the extremes for religious ritual, but this process had presumably occurred long before Proclus lived. Proclus seems so committed to taking his religion seriously that he does not appear to be particularly interested in theatrical productions that use stories about the gods purely for entertainment (cf. 1.51.7-12). However, if in fact tragedies and comedies were originally performed at religious festivals, then Proclus' theological analysis (i.e. his explanation of why laughter and mourning would be attributed to the gods) might actually already provide a fairly

profound defence of why such productions would be appropriate during the appropriate festivals.²⁰⁵

Besides the potential importance of this theological defence, one passage is especially remarkable for its simple explanatory power. This passage, more directly than any other in the commentary, does really save a tremendously important role for tragedy. Proclus claims that tragedy indiscriminately stirs up powerful emotions-- good and bad. He further notes that if we imagine a society which was a mix of good and bad habits, practices and emotions, we can see that some societies will be worse than this mixed society (like a tyranny) and some societies will be better (like Plato's *Politeia*). Therefore, he says, for any society that is worse than a mixed society-- any society that tends primarily to promote dull, degraded, ignorant or slavish thoughts, habits and characters -- tragedy would actually have a positive effect. It would stir up all sorts of emotions, and this mixture which would be far preferable to the low mental state enforced by a bad regime. In such a case, tragedy would be liberating:

οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὴν τῶν ποικίλων μιμητικὴν ἡθῶν εὕροισμεν ἂν πού τιςιν ὠφέλιμον, οἷς τὸ μὴ ποικίλον τοῦ ποικίλου βλαβερώτερον· διὸ δὴ πρὸς τὴν τυραννικὴν ἄπασαν πολιτείαν εἶναι χρήσιμον, οὐκ ἐῴσαν ἐνὶ χαίρειν τῷ χειρίστῳ τῆς ζωῆς εἶδει μόνον, ἀλλ' ἐπεισάγουσαν τὴν ἐκ τῆς τῶν παντοδαπῶν ἡθῶν μιμήσεως ἀγωγὴν, τὴν ὁμοῦ καὶ τὰ ἀμείνω καὶ τὰ χείρω περιπτυσσομένην ἐπιτηδεύματα. καὶ γὰρ ἔοικεν ὡς τῷ βασιλικῷ καὶ θείῳ τῆς πολιτείας εἶδει τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ποικίλον βλαβερόν, οὕτω τῷ ἐσχάτῳ καὶ τυραννικῷ ὠφέλιμον· διττὸν γοῦν τὸ ἀπλοῦν, ἢ τὸ κρείττον ἢ τὸ χείρον τοῦ ποικίλου, καὶ τὸ μὲν βλάπτοιο ἂν τῷ ποικίλῳ προσχρώμενον χείρον γινόμενον, ὡς τοῦ χείρονος ἀναπιμπλάμενον, τὸ δὲ ὠφελοῖτ' ἂν κρείττον γινόμενον, ὡς τοῦ κρείττονος ἀπολαῦτον. (1.48.11-24).

In this way even the imitator of all sorts of varied habits²⁰⁶ we may find to be useful-- such an artist will be useful to those for whom simplicity and single-mindedness is more harmful than dissolution and corruption. Therefore, it would be useful in every sort of tyrannical society since it would not allow the people to enjoy only the single worst form of life encouraged by their polity but would introduce instead instruction based on the imitation of all sorts of varied characters and habits, a type of instruction which would actually be useful because it contains both good and bad practices mixed together. It seems that just as this diversity would be damaging to a kingly and divine form of polity, it would also be useful for the worst and most degenerate form, a tyranny. For simplicity is of two types, that which is better and that which is worse than what is varied and mixed-- that which is better is damaged by using that which is varied and becomes worse by being filled with what is bad, whereas that which is bad

²⁰⁵ See for example the comment of Maximus of Tyre in his first essay-- ποιητοῦ καιρός ἐν Διονυσίοις, ἐπειδὴν χοροῦ δέη-- mentioned also in the following chapter.

²⁰⁶ It is particularly difficult the capture the clarity and simplicity of the language in this passage. The phrase I have translated τὴν τῶν ποικίλων μιμητικὴν ἡθῶν I have simply translated as "the imitator of varied habits" but I have tried to achieve a basic rendering of the sense rather than maintain consistency in the use of terms.

actually becomes better because it benefits from something better than itself.

On the one hand, we could surely develop an even more robust defence of tragedy. On the other hand, this principle is extraordinarily powerful, and it seems as though it might explain very many historical instances in which famous writers or philosophers have found tragedy liberating. How far it extends (i.e. whether Proclus would have even extended it to much of the empire under which he lived or, even more provocatively, to almost all actually existing societies-- cf. 1.162.3-19-- in which case it would become a very serious defence of tragedy) simply depends on how one judges the society in which one lives.²⁰⁷

5. How does Proclus interpret Glaucon's role?

The importance of understanding Glaucon's role in the *Republic* is broadly recognized. Many interpreters have noticed that what Socrates says and does not say seems to be limited by what he thinks Glaucon can understand; it seems that understanding how Glaucon's character shapes the work might have a tremendous amount to do with understanding the work as a whole. Ferrari, for example, points to the way that Glaucon causes Socrates to maintain his focus on the human realm (2005: 32).²⁰⁸ Proclus' reading of Glaucon's role, though we are probably missing part of it (since the general introduction to the characters of the *Republic* is missing, see chapter 1 of this dissertation), remains one of the most detailed and impressive portions of the commentary. The part of Proclus' analysis that we do have which discusses Glaucon's role focuses on the more difficult portions of books 6 and 7.

Luc Brisson has contributed an important article on this subject, examining ancient Platonist readings of *Republic* 509A.²⁰⁹ Brisson claims that the Neoplatonic system of metaphysics cannot find any real support in Plato's text. He notes that one passage in particular might be thought to support the Neoplatonic system-- *Republic* 509A-- which he considers a sort of lone and almost irrelevant anomaly in the corpus. The idea of his article is to see if later Platonists picked up on this passage and used it to support their system-- if they did, he claims, we would learn something very interesting about how their system was constructed out of a reading of Plato's text. If they did not, then Brisson's sense that this system is merely an arbitrary construction with no foundation in Plato's text would be confirmed. Brisson concludes that they did not use the passage to support their system.

Unfortunately, Brisson simply neglects to discuss Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* in this article. This neglect allows him to claim-- "Such an interpretation [the interpretation of Plotinus] itself implies an approach to *Republic* VI 509A-C10 that is characterized by a dogmatic orientation-- one reads a text in order to find in it indications

²⁰⁷ cf. Sheppard 1981: 18, 110-113, Halliwell 2002.

²⁰⁸ Christopher Rowe (2002: 312-314) discusses exactly this point (though without mentioning Proclus) as part of a general discussion on the value of a commentary.

²⁰⁹ See also Brisson 2002 which presents an odd combination of praise of Harold Cherniss and consideration of this same passage; this article also does not mention Proclus' *In Rem.* except allusively (94). Brisson claims also here that this interpretation indicates "un désintéret pour toute dimension littéraire" which is simply false. On the same question, see Baltes 1999. See also Vegetti 2002 together with the entirety of Reale and Scolnicov 2002; as an interesting and approachable prologue to the individual approaches in this impressive collection, see Gadamer 2001.

of a given doctrine to which one adheres-- and a disinterest in all literary dimensions" (Brisson 2007:17). The reality is that Proclus' commentary is the only commentary on the *Republic* from any period of antiquity; thus, if we want to know how Platonists read this passage, it should be the first place we look. Proclus' approach to this passage is entirely dialectical; he very much sees the interplay of character between Socrates and Glaucon and remains interested in the literary dimensions of the work at this point as he is throughout the rest of the work.

The conclusion Proclus reaches is very similar to the one proposed by Mitchell Miller.²¹⁰ In any case, Proclus uses the rare word "kenembateo" to describe Glaucon's experience at this point (1.274.6). Glaucon is "walking on empty" at the point when he can no longer follow Socrates. This point is clearly is one of the most philosophically significant moments in the entire commentary (I will treat it more fully later). For now though, I only want to show enough to indicate that Proclus' treatment of the issue fully appreciates dialogic context and character. He uses the passage (509A) to contrast the *Republic* with the "longer path" in the *Parmenides*:

καὶ εἶπερ μὴ κατέγνω τοῦ Γλαύκωνος ὡς γελοίως ἀποκριναμένου πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ὑπερουσίου διὰ τῆς ἀναλογίας ὑπόμνησιν, ἤκουσας ἂν αὐτοῦ περὶ ἐκείνου κατατείνοντος τοιαῦτα, οἷα ὁ Παρμενίδης εἰς τὸ ἐν ἀνέπεμψεν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἰδὼν τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐκτείνειν οὐπω πρὸς ταῦτα τὸν νοῦν ἱκανόν, πολλὰ τῶν αὐτῷ δοκούντων ἔφατο παρήσειν καὶ παρήκεν· (1.285.31-1.286.6)

And, if he had not recognized Glaucon's inability on the grounds that Glaucon responded with hilarity to the mention even by analogy of what is beyond being, then you would have heard at this point Socrates say all of the sorts of things about what is beyond being that Parmenides attributed to the one. But instead, seeing that his auditor was no longer capable of expanding his mind to this theme, Socrates said that he would leave out much of what he thought, and in fact he did leave it out.

Based on this reading, Proclus seems to think that at times Socrates determines based on the interlocutors ability how the discussion would proceed. Moreover, Proclus' reading does not really imply that Socrates tries to deceive Glaucon or hide the truth-- it is meant rather to describe why Plato chooses the method involving *eikones* rather than the more purely dialectical method of the *Parmenides*.

What is more extraordinary is that Proclus' reading of the passage actually identifies a previous point where Glaucon showed his limited understanding. Proclus claims that Socrates recognized Glaucon's difficulty at this point and used this recognition to shape the conversation that followed. Proclus believes Glaucon went wrong at 477A1 when he accepted the premise that everyone who knows anything knows

²¹⁰ "If we stay within the dramatic context of the dialogue, we can see why Socrates offers such a partial and incomplete characterization. As keen and receptive as they are on political and ethical matters, Glaucon and Adeimantus are limited interlocutors on metaphysical issues... Socrates measures his words to what Glaucon and Adeimantus are prepared to understand" (2007: 310).

something that is.²¹¹ Proclus distinguishes carefully between the two questions at 476E7 and 476E9 (2.264.20-30). The entire passage of the *Republic* is obviously a bit curious because Socrates has actually asked Glaucon to play the role of someone whose beliefs are based only on opinion (476 D-E).²¹² According to Proclus, Glaucon plays the part he is asked to play quite well. Glaucon answers the second questions (less hilarious than he becomes at 509A, but obviously anticipating his later response), "how could something that does not exist possibly be known?" Thus, Socrates decides, based on the answers of Glaucon (ἐκ τῆς ἀποκρίσεως τοῦ Γλαύκωνος μὴ δυνηθέντος τὸ μὴ ὄν διελεῖν ὅσαχῶς λέγεται, 1.265.28-9) to continue the conversation by presenting a series of *eikones* rather than pursuing a logical conversation-- the *eikones* that follow include many of the *Republic's* most famous images, such as the analogy of the sun and the cave, each of which are actually called by the word *eikon* in the Greek (cf. Miller 2007: 316). Thus, though Proclus' reading does indicate that Socrates lets Glaucon's mistake at 476-477 slip by unnoticed and unexplained, it does not really imply that Socrates intends to deceive Glaucon or that the more exoteric teaching Socrates provides Glaucon is intended primarily to conceal (rather than represent) the more esoteric teaching of the *Parmenides*. At other points, Proclus does suggest this simply adding that Socrates also probably did not want to say exactly what he thought in the presence of sophists. However, the primary force of the reading is the opposite-- Socrates actually tries to indicate to Glaucon what he thinks. According to this reading, when one method fails, Socrates simply switches gears so that the images of sun, line and cave are not meant hide the truth from Glaucon but rather to explain it in a different way.

Proclus claims that Glaucon's mistake is the inability to recognize non-being and then consider carefully the consequences. Proclus' reading of this passage is impressively detailed in the way it identifies and discusses so exactly Glaucon's logical mistake. One of Proclus' more interesting claims is that Aristotle actually demonstrates the principle Glaucon misses in the *Prior Analytics* (1.265.13). The idea is that one, and nothing and that which is not are all logically opposed to that which is, so that also multiple terms should be opposed to that which is not. Regardless of what we think of this approach to the text and to Platonism, this entire section of Proclus' *In Rem.* at 1.265ff is impressively detailed and concise in the way it lays out the foundational premises of Proclus' Platonism and explains exactly where and how Proclus relates these premises to the text.

As a conclusion to this chapter I would like to compare the results of this examination with Pierre Hadot's 1968 article "Exégèse, philosophie, et théologie" (reprinted in 1998). There are a number of reasons this comparison is particularly useful, the first of which is simply the breadth and historical awareness of the article which demonstrates clearly the importance of the conversation. The second is that Hadot is considering some of the most important and most relevant cases, mentioning explicitly the Neoplatonic reading of the *Parmenides* and the ancient Platonist school in general. His article is still cited as authoritative in the most relevant sources such as Hoffman 2006 and Brisson 2005. Most importantly though, his article shows an approach which dismisses ancient reading strategies with broad generalizations, including particularly by claiming that ancient readers had an undifferentiated methodology for generating

²¹¹ cf. Sedley 2007: 258.

²¹² cf. Reeve 2010: 215.

nonsense ("*contresens*") whenever it suited their purposes. He basically claims that ancient readers had methods for transforming the sense of a text so that it agreed with their position even when this involved claiming the text meant the opposite of what it said. In fact, Hadot's definition of *contresens* is actually very close to what Vlastos defines as the simplest modern understanding of irony (see Vlastos 1991: 21-44). We should view Proclus' interpretative efforts as part of the same sophisticated conversation which discusses a range of interpretations we would call "ironic" even when not using the same Greek word.²¹³

I have chosen this article particularly because it presents such a useful contrast to Proclus' approach to the *Republic*. In the one case, his reading of Homer, Proclus does actually create a sort of *contresens*-- he claims based on close reading something which is almost the direct opposite of what Socrates says. However, in another case, the reading of Glaucon's role, Proclus' approach is based on an extremely close engagement with the characters and exact questions posed by Socrates together with Glaucon's exact responses. The latter reading does not endorse dogmatism at the cost of dialogic context; in fact, extremely close attention to character and dialogic context is its essence. It also does not involve any irony or *contresens* (Proclus states with emphatic simplicity, Socrates said he would leave a lot out, and he did). Therefore, these two examples, Glaucon's role and the defence of Homer, taken together, show that Proclus' reading strategies seem to be quite serious. In the one case, he recognizes the very specific dramatic irony inherent in Socrates' narrative voice and applies it particularly to the specific claims where it is most relevant (the attack on Homer). In the second case, he examines very carefully places where Glaucon did not give the answer that he perhaps should have so as to indicate how the *Republic* connects to the *Parmenides*.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this approach and one which can be stated most generally is that Proclus uses Plato to interpret Plato. He applies the critique of mimesis in the *Republic* and the critique of writing in the *Phaedrus* directly to Plato's own text. Proclus' recognition that Plato's text is entirely permeated by mimesis seems to license a range of complex interpretative strategies. His warning that we should not entirely separate Plato's text from the knowledge it teaches seems to represent his conviction that the search for knowledge can be profitably pursued by interpreting this dialogic "stage". He also insists that the mimetic portion is not the most important part (of Homer or of Plato) but something we should try to see through to some deeper reality. And yet, in spite of repeatedly stressing the importance of this deeper reality, he seems to think that the existence of the mimetic dialogue is analogous in its importance to the existence of the entire material, phenomenal world-- both are, in some sense, both a stage and a *cosmos*. The material of a dialogue is compared by analogy to the material of the world,²¹⁴ based on a comparison between the two sorts of creators both of whom he thinks employed *paidia* and *paideia*. This approach creates a further analogy between the

²¹³ It should be noted that Hadot 2004 discusses quite clearly and accurately the spirit of some of the material that is found in Proclus' *In Rem*, though without much mention of the work itself (the Heraclitus quote, for example, is used in this sense in the *In Rem* at 2.107.5-8; cf. Hadot 2004: 55-65). This later book shows the same breadth and historical awareness as the older article without the distortions or overly broad generalizations of the earlier piece. The way he connects this theme to such a range of modern authors and philosophers is extremely valuable and impressive. However, my subject in this chapter is to examine specifically Proclus' approach to the text and his particular reading strategies.

²¹⁴ See also the conclusion to Coulter 1976: 129-130.

use of a full range of complex reading strategies when approaching a text and the use of the senses when approaching the material world-- neither of which Proclus rejects.

Chapter 4: Euphrosune

ὀηθέντων δὲ τούτων τῶν ἐπῶν οὕτω σφοδρῶς φασιν θαυμασθῆναι τοὺς
στίχους ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὥστε χρυσοῦς αὐτοὺς προσαγορεύοντες πρὸ
τῶν δείπνων καὶ τῶν σπονδῶν προκατεύχονται πάντες. Alcidas

It is no wonder that the 6th essay of Proclus' commentary on the *Republic* has received by far the most attention. Any student of Greek literature cannot help but be struck by Proclus' impassioned defence of Homer. If we did not have Proclus, we might never realize that a commentary on the *Republic*, even by the most committed and doctrinal of Platonists, would include such a strongly worded and unequivocal defence of Homer. The importance of the essay is shown by the variety of interpretative strategies from which it has been approached. James Coulter discussed Proclus' significance as a literary theorist and emphasized that Proclus dealt in a serious way with some of the more intractable problems of textual interpretation such as the question of the unity of a text, the function of symbols and metaphors and the relationship between symbolic thought and mimetic representation (1976). Robert Lamberton examined the sixth essay's importance as one of the preeminent examples of an interpretative tradition "that made of Homer a theologian and, beyond that, a sage providing access to privileged information about the fate of souls and the structure of the universe" (1986: 10). Stephen Halliwell included an important analysis in a general survey of the theory of mimesis in antiquity (2002: 323-34). Kuisma approached the essay as what it claims to be-- a defence of Homer specifically relative to Socrates' criticisms in the *Republic*-- and stressed, as I will in this chapter, that in spite of Proclus' deep interest in the magical and symbolic properties of language, most of his interpretations are not actually symbolic but represent a fairly practical exegetical approach to particular specific problems of Homeric interpretation (1996: especially the summary at 114-115). Luc Brisson placed less emphasis on Proclus' concern with Homer in particular but included Proclus' work in his general treatment of how philosophers saved myths as a text that has the power to fundamentally revise our understanding of the relationship between *muthos* and *logos* in ancient philosophy (Brisson 2004: 87-106; Brisson tends to overemphasize the Chaldaean Oracles and understate Proclus' concern with Homer given that Proclus' general defence of myth is clearly presented in the context of a defence of Homer). Peter Struck's 2004 *Birth of the Symbol* discusses the full importance of the way that Proclus' metaphysics and systematization of previous traditions gave the idea of a literary symbol a transcendent significance it had not had previously and even claims that this idea entered the literary mainstream of the West (2004: 227-253; and 254-277 on reception; for his general view see especially 241).²¹⁵ Ann Sheppard's treatment of the 5th and 6th essays is still the most thorough; she places the essay in the context of late-antique philosophy and focuses particularly on the relationship between Proclus and his teacher, Syrianus, which plays such a large role in the essay (1980).²¹⁶

Some previous interpreters have expressed undue surprise at the fact that Proclus defends Homer and even indicated that Proclus' impulse to defend Homer was an

²¹⁵ "In his commentary on the *Republic*, Proclus produces the first surviving systematically formulated alternative to the notion that literature is an imitation of the world" (Struck 2004: 238-9).

²¹⁶ See also Rangos 1999 for a general treatment of the 5th and 6th essays.

innovation of late antiquity or some sort of apostasy from the typical Platonist position. I have already indicated several times why I do not believe this was the case, including the dramatic irony obvious in the *Republic* as well as strong evidence that committed Platonists remained lovers of Homer and Greek poetry during all phases of the Platonic tradition. The way Proclus approaches Homer may be unique, but the fact that he chooses to defend Homer surely is not. In a similar vein, some have even disputed the quality of Proclus' linguistic analysis, claiming that Proclus uses Greek words in a way that is obviously false; it generally turns out that the modern interpreters are themselves mistaken and one can find evidence from Aristotle to Apion and Porphyry agreeing with Proclus' reading of words that have been cited as erroneous.²¹⁷ Furthermore, the most interesting aspect of the essay-- barely acknowledged by any of the treatments mentioned above-- is the way it combines a very close reading of the *Republic*, including the *Republic's* dramatic irony and the striking lines I have quoted previously ("using these arguments you would also kick Plato out of the city") with an explanation and defence of exactly the passages of Homer criticized in the *Republic*. I believe part of the cause of these misinterpretations and the misunderstanding occasionally evident in previous approaches to the essay is simply the complexity, density and variety of Proclus' analysis.

Therefore, my approach in this chapter will be to translate only a small portion of the 6th essay and discuss it together with some other Platonist texts that analyze the same passage of Homer. I will focus on a particular portion of Proclus' non-allegorical readings of Homer, in order to claim that Proclus does not save Homer only for Neoplatonic spiritual purposes, but rather intends to preserve Homer for a full range of readers. The essay is clearly written for philosophers, and yet if one looks closely one can see that Proclus' overall approach is attentive to the ways other readers, particularly active politicians, may use Homer as well. Therefore, I will focus on an under-appreciated portion of the essay which engages directly with key elements of the plot and human drama of the epics. I will translate and discuss a short section in which Proclus defends without symbolic or allegorical interpretation the importance of Homer as a text that can teach the political virtue of *sophrosune*. This section not only shows how Proclus approaches Homer but also happens to give a very clear picture of how Proclus viewed the proposals of the *Republic* itself alongside the broader tradition of Greek culture.

By focusing on Proclus' non-allegorical readings, I do not mean to deny that much of the content of the 6th essay does include an allegorical reading of Homer. In fact, recent scholarship has advanced tremendously in its understanding of allegory. One common element of these advances is the stress laid on distinguishing allegory from other interpretative methods like etymology, metaphor, simile and analogy.²¹⁸ It is clear that ancient interpreters shared these concerns and even invented elaborate typologies of

²¹⁷ Compare Lamberton 1986: 179n.57 on Pandarus with Apollonius the Sophist *Lexicon Homericum* section 31 on "anti". Note that Apollonius only cites Aristarchus relevant to the Amazons (which seems to be an ambiguous case), not to the Cyclops or Pandarus nor does he indicate that Aristarchus denies any ambivalent sense to the word. Even if Aristarchus had denied it, the mere fact that he did and the passage as a whole still clarifies that the usage seems to have occasioned differences of opinion even in antiquity, and Proclus' reading precedes the 1st century AD at least. Proclus' interpretation of the passage also broadly matches the opinion attributed to Aristotle by the *Iliad* scholia (Rose fr. 151).

²¹⁸ Russell and Konstan 2005: "It is important, as has been indicated, to distinguish allegory proper from other critical approaches to myth and the Homeric poems" (xxi).

allegory. More fundamentally, recent scholarship has stressed the importance of the recognition that what we call allegory itself requires explication and is a product of our own historically situated interpretative tradition. In the introductions to *Interpretation and Allegory* (2000: 3-59; 280-304 on the modern period is particularly valuable), John Whitman provides an impressive overview of the way allegory has been treated in the past from Luther ("I hate allegory") to Northrop Frye ("every commentary is an allegory").²¹⁹ The introduction by Struck and Copeland's *Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, is also particularly useful in this regard and concludes by discussing Walter Benjamin's interpretation of allegory in the Baroque *Trauerspiel* as representative of the modern condition, "both calling for and yet resisting interpretation" (2010: 1-11).

It is now generally agreed that the origins of allegory reach back well into the 5th if not the 6th century BC. Early criticism of Homer by pre-Socratics like Xenophanes must have been accompanied by types of theological explanation which tried to save Homer from these rationalist critiques. Secondly, there must have always been a deep relationship of some sort between the ritual practice of Greek religion and the stories which we call Greek mythology. The *Cratylus* refers to entire groups of interpreters of Homer (οἱ νῦν περὶ Ὅμηρον δεινοὶ 407a8-9; cf. 391c-d); the *Ion* includes a whole list of those famous for interpreting Homer (Μητροδώρος ὁ Λαμψακηνὸς οὔτε Στησίμβροτος ὁ Θάσιος οὔτε Γλαύκων οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδεὶς τῶν πρόποτε γενομένων, *Ion* 530c). Xenophon indicates that entire books of it were already well-known in the fifth century (Στησιμβρότω τε καὶ Ἀναξιμάνδρῳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς, *Symposium* 3.6.6-7).²²⁰ When we put fragments of authors like Metrodorus (A 3-4 DK) and Theagenes (A 2 D-K)²²¹ and Aristotle together with these references to entire books of which we do not even have fragments, it seems clear that there must be an enormous and quite early discussion we are missing. Interpretations of Homer must have run the gamut quite early from religious or ritually based, to sophistic display pieces to genuinely philosophical attempts before finally becoming combined in various combinations with serious philological and scholarly attempts to understand the epics. To dismiss these interpretations or underestimate the variety and complexity of what has been lost, to

²¹⁹ On Frye, see also Mailloux 2010: 255-56; Frye's work provides the intellectual background also for Coulter 1976.

²²⁰ Pfeiffer proposed to read this passage as ironic; I find this unclear but not impossible. However, even if Socrates is directing some irony towards either Cleitophon's expenditure and/or *huponoia* in general (which would not necessarily be the same as disrespect for all complex interpretations of Homer), it is almost impossible to read the passage in a way that indicates the work of Stesimbrotus, Anaximander, etc. did not actually contain explanations of Homer's *huponoia* which is what Pfeiffer does. The passage seems to state as clearly as one could possibly hope for, given that we do not actually have these books or any significant fragments of them, that the work of these authors and many others did contain what Greek readers understood as allegory or *huponoia*; see Pfeiffer 1968: 35-6 and 36n.5 who disagrees with Buffière 1956: 132-6. Buffière and Pfeiffer are polar opposites in terms of their approach to the entire question of Homeric scholarship. Buffière tries to understand the ancients on their own terms, and therefore his book remains, despite the more recent work, by far the most thorough treatment of the issue of allegory, philosophy and Homer in antiquity; he has clearly read Proclus and discusses him, though it is odd the way Proclus is omitted from the inventory of sources (1954: 66-78). Pfeiffer is at least correct that we cannot assume based on the available evidence that Stesimbrotus' readings were of the same type as the readings of Metrodorus. The best reading of the Xenophon passage together with the *Ion* may well still be Richardson's (1975: 65-66; and 77-81 on Antisthenes); see also the suggestions of Homeric *huponoia* in Plato (1975: 67). On the Xenophon passage, see also the careful reading in Naddaf 2009: 118.

²²¹ On this figure, see Naddaf 2009: 108-111.

dismiss the perspective of those who clearly did read and know these interpretations or to insist on constructing historical stories based only on preservation bias would be nothing less than to announce one is not interested in the history of Greek literature.^{222 223}

The discovery and interpretation of the Derveni Papyrus seems to have been especially influential in countering the claim that allegory was a late invention.²²⁴ Dirk Obbink, discussing the Derveni papyrus claimed, "Thus it is clear from early on in the Greek tradition there existed different types of allegory, and not only allegory but also etymology, metaphor, simile, polyonymy, analogy" (2003: 180) and "to conclude, as far as we know, the earliest form of scholarly exegesis in the Greek tradition derives not from grammarians in museums but from the sphere of ritual and religion" (2003: 188). This approach certainly suggests that much of what Proclus says may have as much in common with approaches in the 5th century BC as it does with medieval allegory. Proclus indicates that he thinks interpretation of Plato's myths is part of the same tradition that we now know from the Derveni papyrus, of interpreting Orphic myths. Much as the papyrus find of the *Anon. in Theaetetus* confirms what Proclus says about the reading of prologues, it is certainly striking that such a limited papyrus find seems recognizably related to the theogonies found in later authors, including in some of the strangest aspects.²²⁵ Recently, scholars have become much more careful in dealing with this very point; while Lambertson 1986 claimed that Proclus was primarily interesting as a link to the medieval, Struck and Copeland carefully note that it seems to have been rather Macrobius, Prudentius and other Latin writers influenced by Neoplatonic ideas who were particularly influential in the medieval period, particularly writers who actually created what Long calls "hard allegories" themselves rather than simply interpreting the previous tradition.

One could say without exaggeration that being a Greek intellectual involved having an interpretation of Homer, and from the very beginning the methods involved included a range of interpretative and inspired responses.²²⁶ The foundations of the allegorical approach which Proclus uses in some of his responses are evident as early as Theagenes of Rhegium and Aristotle (for some indication that Aristotle also used allegory, see Rose fr. 175). Moreover, much of Proclus' analysis does not depend on any sort of allegory but rather on the types of mythological interpretation (soft allegory) and philological analysis Tony Long identifies in the case of the Stoics or the types of social analysis Richardson points out in the case of Aristotle.²²⁷ Any perception that the

²²² See also Lambertson 2000, Baltussen 2007 for similarly broad approaches to this issue.

²²³ For a general treatment of allegory see also Pépin 1958 (for his general attitude see 477-480; cf. Pfeiffer 1968). Like Buffière 1956, Pépin's work displays an extraordinary breadth not always evident in the more recent treatments; unlike Buffière, he continues to discuss Christian authors and yet stops before Proclus (1958: 475); he also organized the conference the results of which are published in Saffrey 1987 as *Proclus: Lecteur et Interprète*. For other recent treatments of allegory generally, see Boys-Stones 2003. See also the essays in Wiens ed. 2009 and in particular Naddaf 2009: 99-131; see also Ford 2002: 67-89.

²²⁴ See Ford 2002: 73-76, and especially the conclusion of this chapter (2002: 88-89) for an evaluation of the relationship between Orphism and other types of Homeric interpretation.

²²⁵ See Parker 1995 for a careful evaluation of the significance of this parallel as it relates to discussions of the earlier Orphic tradition. See Betegh 2004 for an extremely detailed study of the papyrus together with a conservative evaluation of the relationship between its theogony and the versions found in later Platonists.

²²⁶ See Long 1992: 44-45.

²²⁷ Long 1992; Richardson 1992-- on p. 37, for example, Richardson discusses Aristotle fr. 166; Aristotle makes here essentially the same point as Proclus.

allegorical method was a later invention (i.e. by the Stoics or by the neo-Platonists) is probably simply based on preservation bias²²⁸; we do not have evidence that Platonists before Eudorus did not take an allegorical approach; we simply do not have any evidence at all based on which we could decide.²²⁹ Robert Lamberton notes, "There is a remarkable continuity, both in the questions and the solutions, from the classical period down to the end of the tradition, and the baggage of interpretative material that the epics accumulated seems to have grown continuously, such that the periodic compilations produced by scholars such as Aristotle, Porphyry, and Proclus represent attempts not so much to change the history of the interpretation of Homer as to assemble and organize that history" (1992: xv-xvi). Proclus' interpretations, allegorical and otherwise, probably draw on a range of philosophical traditions.²³⁰

Furthermore, there is no reason for thinking that Plato rejected allegory or serious interpretation of poetry; it seems far more likely that Plato would have appreciated or agreed in some sense with Aristotle's claim that καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἔστιν (*Metaphysics* 982b18).²³¹ Xenophon depicts Socrates praising Homeric interpreters who explain the poet's *huponoia* (3.6.7; names quoted above with footnote). It has sometimes been assumed that *Republic* 378d-e presents a contradictory opinion. However, the passage obviously refers only to young people and only those young people who live in the very best state (ὁ γὰρ νέος οὐχ οἴος τε κρίνειν ὅτι τε ὑπόνοια καὶ ὁ μή, 378d7-8).²³²²³³ In fact, Proclus actually takes 378a5-6 as the starting point for his interpretations - what seems to us a throw-away phrase is to Proclus a serious restriction, and he reasons that what occurs in the most rare and important sacrifices must be the most important type of interpretation (1.80.12-20).²³⁴ Moreover, Plato very obviously uses allegory in his own work, for example, in the speech of Poros and Penia in the *Symposium* and more profoundly in all of the myths.

The *Protagoras* is also often cited in this context as providing evidence that Plato rejected serious and complex interpretation of poetry. First of all, such a reading of the *Protagoras* ignores the way the dialogues themselves serve as mimetic exempla-- we see

²²⁸ I.e. it may seem to some that the Stoics invented allegory simply because our first surviving examples of Homeric interpretation date from the (very long) period when Stoic philosophy was predominant whereas we simply do not have the books of Protagoras, Metrodorus, Xenocrates, Speusippus, Stesimbrotus, etc. etc. See Long 1992.

²²⁹ Most claims "Plato's first successors in the Academy, Speusippus and Xenocrates, sought their gods not in traditional poetry, which they entirely neglected [?!], but in (quasi-) mathematical objects and other entities" (2010: 27). There is no reason to think they cannot have done both, just as Proclus does. Given how little we know about Xenocrates, the passage at Stobaeus 1.1.29b is basically decisive evidence that Xenocrates did use some sort of allegorical theology at least related to the one found in Proclus. See also Diogenes Laertius 4.26 on Krantor. Richardson identifies the emergence of elaborate interpretations of Homer with the sophists, which seems more historically accurate (1992: 33); on allegory and the sophists see also Ford 2002: 85-87.

²³⁰ For surveys of philosophical approaches to Homer's myths see especially: Buffière 1954; Richardson 1975; Brisson 2004.

²³¹ cf. Brisson 2004: 27.

²³² See also Lear 2006: 26-29.

²³³ See Coulter 1976: 119 for a similar interpretation. More profoundly, Coulter even claims: "Plato really should be thought of as the father of allegory, not because allegory, as has sometimes been mistakenly argued, began as a reaction to his strictures against the poets, but because the view of the world he left to posterity was deeply congenial to the allegorical mentality" (1976: 37-38).

²³⁴ On this phrase in the *Republic*, see Ford 2002: 86-7.

in the *Protagoras* both Protagoras and Socrates take poetic interpretation very seriously-- in fact, Protagoras chooses the poem and Socrates, not knowing which poem will be chosen ahead of time, already has it memorized (339b5). I find this impressive and cannot help but think that Plato meant to impress us. The dialogue presents an extraordinary display of respect by Socrates for poetry for this reason alone, no matter what we think of his interpretation of Simonides. What Socrates does say at 347c-e is that he and Protagoras ought to also be able to set aside the poets and discuss what is true rather than merely what Simonides meant. Everyone can agree that Plato thinks the most important sort of knowledge emerges in philosophical discussion²³⁵ and (in this case) the search for the definitions rather than the interpretation of poets; however, this provides no reason for thinking that Plato's thought did not preserve an extremely large role for poetry. *Cratylus* 391c-d presents a particularly interesting contrast.

Plato's depreciation of particularly rough versions of rationalization in the *Phaedrus* (229) also provides no reason for thinking that his followers would not have engaged in the sort of defence and explication that Socrates in the *Republic* particularly invites and welcomes (607c3-d2).²³⁶ The interpretation Socrates criticizes in the *Phaedrus*, the overly rude sort of wisdom, tries to explain the myth away leaving it with no significant truth at all. The explanation criticized does not find any *huponoia*-- it simply says that the entire story is a false exaggeration, a linguistic error magnified into superstition. Furthermore, the tone of Socrates' response leaves room for doubt about his true opinion-- one would need a lot of leisure to discuss that type of question, as for myself, I am still trying to know myself, he says. And, the great speech of the *Phaedrus* very clearly not only requires something beyond a simple interpretation but also of course suggests that knowing ourselves may turn out to have something to do with myth and allegory after all-- it would not be hard to see the palinode as modifying our interpretation of this first comment about myth just as it modifies Socrates' first speech.

Hermias responds to this directly in his commentary on the *Phaedrus*. His commentary provides interesting evidence that some people in antiquity did read the *Phaedrus* this way-- it is hard to know whether these "some people" are schools of Platonic interpreters or serious philosophers of other schools or simply rhetorical straw-men (Ἐντεῦθεν τινες ᾤθησαν τὸν Σωκράτην μὴ ἀποδέχεσθαι τὰς ἀναπτύξεις τῶν μύθων, οὐ καλῶς ἐννοήσαντες, 30.10-11-- referring with Ἐντεῦθεν to Socrates' comments on the story of *Pharmakeia*). Besides pointing out that this approach is silly because Plato obviously uses and accepts myths, Hermias also discriminates between types of allegory, particularly between an approach that identifies only material causes and one that finds more profound significance:

²³⁵ This is the primary point of Tate 1929.

²³⁶ On this question, see Tate 1929. Tate argues against Adam's note to *Republic* 378d (Adam 1902: 114; Adam gives a reasonable summary of issue). Both sides of the disagreement are substantially closer to the truth than some scholarship of the latter half of the 20th century-- neither Tate nor Adam dispute that allegory was well-established by the 5th century BC or claim that Plato necessarily meant to completely reject it. Adam actually claims, "Plato's attacks upon Homer lent a great impetus to this method of exegesis-- the only method, as it was thought, by which his animadversions could be met" (1902: 214); Tate disagrees. Tate's reading of this passage of the *Republic* though, unlike Proclus', takes insufficient account of the most important two distinctions-- we do not live in Socrates' ideal state, and even in such a state, Socrates is referring only to young people.

δήλος γάρ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς πολλαχοῦ τοὺς μύθους ἀποδεχόμενος καὶ χρώμενος αὐτοῖς. Ἀλλὰ νῦν κακίζει τοὺς <εἰς> ἱστορίας τινὰς καὶ εἰκοτολογίας καὶ εἰς ὑλικὰς αἰτίας, ἀέρας καὶ γῆν καὶ πνεύματα ἀναπτύσσοντας καὶ μὴ ἐπὶ τὰ ὄντα ἀναλύοντας καὶ ἐφαρμόζοντας τοῖς θείοις πράγμασι τὰς ἀναπτύξεις. (30.11-15; cf. Proclus *Plat. Theol.* 1.22-23)

Clearly Plato himself accepts and uses myths in many places. Now though [i.e. this passage of the *Phaedrus*] he is criticizing those who explain myths with reference to certain histories and probable stories and material causes like air and earth and breezes rather than explaining them with reference to what really is and harmonizing their explanations with divine affairs.

We do not have to accept Hermias' interpretations to see it is hard to argue from a dialogue like the *Phaedrus* that Plato rejected allegorical interpretations of myths.

One could compare Proclus' explanation of the judgment of Paris, which draws upon and quotes the *Phaedrus* in its explanation (1.108-9; quoting *Phaedrus* 252E and 265C). The equivalent to the interpretation Socrates rejects would be to say that the whole story of the judgment of Paris simply arose when Alexander met three women on Mt. Ida (almost a sort of euhemerism), who, perhaps because of their names, later became confused with goddesses. Such an explanation would, like the one criticized in the *Phaedrus*, explain only how such a story arose, not what it means. The type of explanation criticized in the *Phaedrus* is the sort that explains a myth away and vacates it of meaning. Proclus interprets the judgment of Paris by saying that it represents Paris' (ultimately destructive) choice for the erotic life rather than the life of philosophy represented by Athena. Interestingly, Proclus does not propose that Paris should have rejected the erotic life, but rather that he should have chosen a mixture, a version of the erotic life-- the short section is one of the easiest and most comprehensible of Proclus' allegories, and provides an interesting contrast to Hegel's discussion of Proclus' divine trinities.

Perhaps the most important precedent for understanding the relationship between Proclus' essay and the previous tradition is provided by Plutarch's essay *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat*; Hunter and Russell, the editors of the most recent Cambridge edition also make this connection, as I noted. The most important passage in Plutarch is carefully written and makes several points in a single sentence. Plutarch compares Homer to a story that Euripides defended his (lost) play *Ixion* by saying that he did not remove Ixion from the stage before he received his punishment (i.e. the play was criticized for immorality and this was Euripides' defence); Plutarch points out that Homer cannot make a similar defence (παρὰ δ' Ὀμήρω σιωπώμενόν ἐστι τὸ τοιοῦτο γένος τῆς διδασκαλίας, 19E--i.e. Homer does not always show bad people receiving a just reward). However, Plutarch still thinks that one can infer moral lessons from studying the text, and he says this approach has a purpose:

ἀναθεώρησιν ὠφέλιμον ἐπὶ τῶν διαβεβλημένων μάλιστα μύθων, οὓς ταῖς πάλαι μὲν ὑπονοίαις ἀλληγορίαις δὲ νῦν λεγομέναις παραβιαζόμενοι καὶ διαστρέφοντες ἔνιοι μοιχευομένην φασὶν Ἀφροδίτην ὑπ' Ἄρεος μηνύειν Ἥλιον, ὅτι τῷ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀστέρι συνελθὼν ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεος μοιχικὰς

ἀποτελεῖ γενέσεις (19E-F).

[This mode of analysis]²³⁷ contains a useful reexamination particularly of the myths that have been most criticized, the myths which some of the ancients twisted and distorted using what used to be called "under-senses" and are now called allegories in order to claim, for example, that the real meaning of the myth that the sun announced that Aphrodite was committing adultery with Ares is that Mars [the planet] was coming together with Venus [the planet] and completing illegitimate births.

This provides important evidence that later critics imagined themselves to be referring to what Plato and Xenophon called "huponoia" with the word "allegoria".²³⁸ On the surface, the passage indicates a preference for broader considerations of the plot in order to draw a moral lesson even in cases where the poet does not explicitly express a moral judgment. However, Plutarch is not necessarily criticizing all allegorical readings here, but rather a certain type. He seems to be referring to naive physical or material explanations, perhaps the same type criticized by Hermias or perhaps a very simple sort of allegory. In this case, he criticizes the idea that the story of Ares and Aphrodite is a cryptic reference to astronomical phenomena with astrological significance. He then provides instead a moral interpretation of the story-- the poet uses the story to show the dangers of a soft lifestyle, of laying always in bed, according to Plutarch. Proclus' explanation of the same story is different. It is cosmic, but has nothing in common with the obviously foolish astral analogy Plutarch criticizes (*In Rem.* 1.141-3). In fact, it is unclear whether Plutarch's simple moral tale and Proclus' cosmic explanation may not be complementary. Plutarch says "by misusing" not "by using allegory" which implies the fault is in the use, not the instrument. More importantly, the structuring premise of Plutarch's dialogue is that Plutarch is explaining how young people (οἱ σφόδρα νέοι, 14E5) should read poetry, obviously the central concern of the *Republic* as well. Proclus simply gives the adult version.²³⁹

Why then would Socrates make these criticisms of Homer in the *Republic*? Proclus asks and answers this question a number of different ways. I'll try to answer briefly so as to stay focused on the section I've chosen. Proclus' approach almost seems to imply that the *Republic* is meant to stimulate the sort of response Proclus gives. Proclus identifies points where Socrates misquotes Homer or misrepresents Homer's words as though the author of the *Republic* intended the work for readers who would be able to do this. He clearly believes that Socrates' words do not represent Plato's thought. In fact, if one thinks about the *Republic*, the extensive quotes of Homer in the *Republic* are inherently puzzling. Socrates quotes and focuses the reader's attention on exactly the parts of Homer which are supposedly the most problematic. Plato's *Politeia* not only includes but even emphasizes exactly the lines which Socrates proposed to exclude from his imaginary *politeia*; the written work does exactly the opposite of banning or excising these lines-- it circulates to a broad audience and highlights exactly the lines which have

²³⁷ The first "mode of analysis" refers to general consideration of the plot.

²³⁸ For a thorough discussion of these terms see Pépin 1958: 85-92.

²³⁹ See Hunter and Russell 2011: 109-111, who also note similarities between Proclus and Plutarch; they point out that Plutarch does use allegorical interpretation elsewhere (for example in the *Isis and Osiris*).

been criticized. On the surface, Socrates rejects these lines, but the dramatic irony is that Plato has caused us to think about these very lines of Homer far more than we would have otherwise. Then, we find that the only extant ancient commentary on the *Republic* includes a detailed explication of exactly these problematic lines with some indications, including particularly the efforts of Aristotle and Porphyry, that other students of Plato engaged in the same sort of explication. Therefore, I would conclude that part of the point of the *Republic* is to challenge readers to develop a critical reading of Homer.²⁴⁰

In any case, in the final section of the sixth essay, Proclus addresses this question directly in the section with its own subheading entitled: Διὰ ποίας αιτίας ὁ Πλάτων ἐλέγχειν εἶλετο τὸν Ὅμηρον ὡς μὴ ὄντα παιδευτικὸν ἀνθρώπων ἰκανόν (1.202). The entire section (1.202-205) is balanced against the concerns that open the sixth essay. At the opening of the essay, Proclus had pointed out that people in his day were especially prone to criticize the ancient myths-- therefore, Proclus pulls out all the stops to defend them. However, in Plato's day the case was the opposite. He thinks that Plato saw his contemporaries entirely enchanted by mimesis, caring nothing for the life of philosophy or for knowledge in general (τοὺς τῆς ἐπιστήμης λόγους, 1.202.16) and convinced that poetry and tragedy alone would provide sufficient education (1.202.15-22). Plato saw the many absolutely captured by mimesis (τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐαλωκότας ὑπὸ τῆς μιμήσεως ἐώρα, 1.203.28-9); we should think of the scene Plutarch depicts of the Athenians singing songs from Euripides to their Syracusan captors after a sort of tragic politics had led them to their destruction. Therefore, Proclus says, Plato established these contests (τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐνστήσασθαι τούτους, 1.202.22) in which he refutes the sophists and the demagogues and the poets (καὶ τοὺς σοφιστὰς ἐλέγχει καὶ τοὺς δημαγωγούς, 1.203-26-7) in so far as they do not create virtue or contribute to education (1.203.4-5). Proclus indicates that Plato meant this contest to be contested-- and it was for 800 years, throughout antiquity, so that when Proclus arrived in Athens he found his philosophy teacher still dining with and competing for students with sophists and rhetoricians and still studying the best poetry of the Greeks. Proclus himself discusses several ways he thinks Homer easily passes the test. He even claims that Plato was aware of these ways of saving Homer (οὔτε γὰρ ἐλάνθανεν αὐτὸν τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν ῥηθέντα καὶ ὅσα αὐτὸς ἐν ἄλλοις ἀνέγραψεν, 1.202.11-2).

Therefore, I will focus particularly on a portion of Proclus' non-allegorical readings not because his allegorical readings are not interesting and valuable, but because the portion of the essay I have chosen has particular resonance for Proclus' broader understanding of the relationship between Homer's dramatic world and Plato's *Republic*. First though, I must explain briefly the distinction between Proclus' allegorical readings of Homer and his non-allegorical approach to the text. Because the sixth essay has the particular purpose of responding to Socrates' criticisms, it tends to focus on these portions of Homer that have a hieratic or entheastic purpose. However, Socrates' criticisms extend beyond these portions of Homer which involve violent or sexual myths about the gods. When Proclus answers these broader charges, he often uses non-allegorical methods such as plot analysis, even referring to local customs to defend some of the practices of Homer's heroes. Moreover, the sixth essay has not only the purpose of answering all the

²⁴⁰ As does Richardson 1992: 35-36. I think this section of the *Republic* may have represented one of the primary sources of what Nagy calls "Homeric questions" (see 1996: 2-3). Proclus gives the same answer as Aristotle to the question Nagy uses as his example (1.150).

criticisms, but also tries to prove a couple other points which extend beyond the scope of Socrates' criticisms. Proclus wants to show that Homer is actually an excellent text for educating people, that Plato praises Homer in other dialogues, and even that Plato borrows from and imitates Homer.

The portions that require allegorical explanation are the portions that attribute violent or unseemly behavior to the gods (μοιχείας λέγω καὶ κλοπὰς καὶ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ῥίψεις καὶ πατέρων ἀδικίας καὶ δεσμοὺς καὶ ἐκτομάς, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα παρὰ τε Ὀμήρῳ θρυλεῖται καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ποιηταῖς, 1.72.20-23). In a sense, Proclus uses allegory particularly as a method for explaining this sort of violent myth; it is a method for explaining Homer only in so far as this myth forms part of Homer. As I have already indicated, the essence of Proclus' approach to myth is to differentiate between types of poetry that can be imitated and used for educational purposes (5th essay) and kinds of poetry or mythology that cannot provide mimetic exempla and would in fact be dangerous and corrupting if we attempted to imitate the behaviour depicted in these myths. It is obvious then why certain myths fall in one category and not the other (cf. also 1.193.12-14).

Proclus finds his doctrine of inspired poetry in a reading of Plato's *Phaedrus*, and it is obvious that some type of inspired or Dionysiac poetry must have been present at least as early as the 5th century BC. There are at least two different reasons that Proclus does not want to reject this type of poetry or the myths associated with it. Proclus does claim that if we were to reject this sort of myth entirely the "hieratic art" would be destroyed. However, an episode from the life of Plotinus by Porphyry also shows that this type of poetry also existed outside of ritual contexts:

Ἐμοῦ δὲ ἐν Πλατωνείοις²⁴¹ ποίημα ἀναγνόντος τὸν ἱερὸν γάμον, καὶ τινος διὰ τὸ μυστικῶς πολλὰ μετ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ ἐπικεκρυμμένως εἰρησθαι εἰπόντος μαίνεσθαι τὸν Πορφύριον, ἐκεῖνος εἰς ἐπήκοον ἔφη πάντων· ἔδειξας ὁμοῦ καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν καὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον καὶ τὸν ἱεροφάντην. (*Vita Plotini*, 15.1-6)

As I was reading a poem entitled "Sacred Wedding" during the birthday celebrations of Plato and someone said I was crazy because so many things were spoken mystically and with an enthusiastic esotericism, Plotinus said in my defence, in front of everyone-- you have displayed all at once the character of a poet, a philosopher and a priest.²⁴²

What makes Proclus' approach to Homer surprising then is that he seems at times to discuss Homer as though it is a text whose primary purpose is to accomplish the same sort of inspiration that Plotinus praised in Porphyry. Proclus is certainly discussing Homer together with types of entheastic poetry that existed at the time he was writing but were later lost, such as the poem recited by Porphyry. The portion of Homer that seems to correspond to this episode in the life of Plotinus is *Iliad* 15.151-353, sometimes

²⁴¹ This seems to refer to the birthday celebrations of Plato, the same occasion referenced in the 6th essay itself. It is perhaps even more surprising to see the celebration being observed in the school of Plotinus than it is in Athens.

²⁴² ἱεροφάντης is of course the word for the priest at the Eleusinian Mysteries.

collected in textbooks of Greek religion (see for example Rice and Stambaugh 1979; cf. Burkert 1985: 108-11). There is some reason for thinking that in a sense Proclus does think of Homer as a text whose main purpose is to accomplish this sort of entheastic inspiration. In fact, he basically says this in the passage I quoted in the previous chapter: "Ὅμηρου τοίνυν ὁ μὲν ἐνθεασμὸς τὸ πρῶτιστόν ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν ἐν τῇ ποιήσει, τὸ δὲ μιμητικὸν ἔσχατον" (1.199.11). He quotes the *Ion* (533e) in order to claim that Plato also accepted this function of poetry:

εἰ δὲ τὴν Ὅμηρου ποίησιν, τὸ μέγιστον αὐτῆς ἔργον εἰς τὴν τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἡμῶν τελείωσιν ἀποκείσθαι διατεινόμεθα, καὶ οὐχ ἡμεῖς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Πλάτων, ὅταν λέγῃ τῷ ποιητῇ τῷ κατόχῳ ταῖς Μούσαις καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας συνενθουσιᾶν καὶ συνεπαίρεσθαι πρὸς τὴν θεῖαν μανίαν. (1.201.18-23)

With regard to Homer's poetry, I insist that its greatest function is the perfection of our mind and our power of thought. And, I am not the only one who thinks this but Plato himself believed it, particularly when he says that the poet who is possessed by the Muses causes those who are listening to be carried along by his enthusiasm and raised up towards divine madness.

Elsewhere he claims that the enthusiastic (τὸ ἐνθουσιαστικόν, 1.197.14) function of poetry is the one most characteristic of Homer. Thus, what characterizes the sixth essay is the way he connects Plato's description of enthusiasm in the *Ion* and mania in the *Phaedrus* with the discussion of imitation in the *Sophist* in order to provide an explanation for many of the passages of Homer that Socrates criticizes in the *Republic*. The *Ion* of course does not even seem to suggest that rationalizing interpretations could extend this type of enthusiasm so that it affected even the most rational parts of the soul (the *nous*), but that is exactly what Proclus claims.

Another example helps one to see the significance of this type of allegorical interpretation. Remember, passages that call for this sort of interpretation, and are in fact socially dangerous without this sort of interpretation, are passages which depict gods or heroes engaged in cruel or violent behaviour. For example, at *Iliad* 1.599ff. the gods mock Hephaestus as he walks through the halls of heaven. Based on a simple theory of mimesis, if we imitated the gods in this case then we would mock lame people and simply be bad people; this is exactly the type of worry, based on a simple theory of mimesis, that caused Plato to criticize passages of Homer as being unsuited for young people in the *Republic*-- young people are liable to simply imitate rather than interpret the myths. Therefore, the passage clearly calls for some more complex interpretative theory. It also helps to know that intellectuals in the Western tradition have been struggling with making sense of these types of passages for a very long time. Emerson for example referenced exactly this myth in his journals (vol 3. 78-79). Proclus' interpretation (1.126-8) is that the demiourge is lame because the act in which Zeus throws Hephaestus from heaven represents the act of creation; Zeus' violence indicates the necessity behind the creation of the material world-- a sort of forceful eviction from the Epicurean peace represented by the banquet of the gods. Proclus does not think the demiourge of the *Timaeus* represents "god"; he thinks instead it represents Hephaestus. To complete the

interpretation, we have to come to one of Proclus' claims which is most shocking not only to our worldview but also to the way we generally think of Platonism. Proclus actually thinks that the entire material universe (represented by Hephaestus, who created it by force and necessity) is somewhat funny and somewhat lame simply because it is material, rather in the way that an author like Aristophanes got so much mileage out of the weakness of the flesh. To Aristophanes, people overcome by fear, sexual desire, hunger, old age or any number of other universal human ailments could be funny. Proclus thinks that to the "hypercosmic gods" who represent principles of causation, who are enjoying their banquet in peace (exactly as it is described in Epicurean sources), Hephaestus' busyness (which represents creation itself) is funny; the gods, secure in their banquet, are laughing at the creation of the material world. The laughter of the gods rather than being a model which promotes cruelty (as it would be under a simple theory of mimesis) is directed at all of us who participate in the material world. In Proclus' world, the gods still laugh (because all creation is a bit silly, relative to the perfection of their banquet) and they cry (because our human fate is sad, as in Zeus' affection for Sarpedon).

This explains why Sheppard, Lambertson and Kuizman and others were not entirely incorrect in complaining that Proclus' view of Homer turns Homer into something of an entheistic text, even using language borrowed from hieratic practice. However, it is by no means the case that Proclus preserves Homer only for theurgical purposes. I will claim that we should not be misled by the fact that his allegorical interpretations form the majority of the sixth essay into thinking that allegory is the essence of his approach to Homer. Proclus states explicitly that it is only limited portions of Homer that require allegorical explanation; he is obviously aware that passages like *Iliad* 15.153-351 which correspond to the poem Porphyry recited are a minority in Homer (1.193.12-14). These explanations form the majority of the 6th essay because Plato specifically singled out these portions of Homer for criticism in the *Republic* (but not exclusively these portions, see below). Proclus explains these sections criticized by Socrates in large part in order to save the rest of Homer.

In a key section, he differentiates three functions of poetry, all of which he believes Homer's poetry contains.²⁴³ What is particularly impressive about the essay is the way he has organized Plato's various discussions of Homer, poetry and sophistry; so the *Phaedrus*, the *Ion* and book 3 of the *Laws* contribute to number 1 below, all of Plato's discussions that use Homer as his authority for dividing the soul contribute to number 2, and the distinction between eikastic and phantastic mimesis in the *Sophist* juxtaposed with *Republic* 10 contributes to number 3 (1.180-191). The functions are (see also the helpful chart in Brisson 2004):²⁴⁴

1. The inspirational function (called variously entheistic, enthusiastic and requiring symbolic interpretation-- this also seems to characterize Proclus' own poems):

ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἐνθουσιάζων ἐνεργῆ καὶ ταῖς Μούσαις κάτοχος ὢν καὶ τὰ μυστικά περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν θεῶν ἀφηγῆται νοήματα, τῆνικαὶτα κατὰ τὴν πρωτίστην ἐνεργεῖ καὶ ἔνθεον ποιητικὴν (1.192.9-12).

Whenever a poet operates in a state of enthusiasm and is possessed by the Muses

²⁴³ See also Struck 2010: 67.

²⁴⁴ Most of the treatments I mentioned in the introduction discuss the 3 types of poetry; for more discussion of what I have presented in summary form here, see Sheppard 1980: 162-202; Kuizman 1996: 122-130.

and explains the mystic thoughts about those goddesses themselves, then, in that case, the poet operates according to the highest and most divine type of poetry.

2. The function of transmitting knowledge which occurs when a poet does actually have knowledge about the objects of his poetry:

ὅταν δὲ αὖ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ζωὴν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ φύσει διαφορὰς καὶ τὰ πολιτικὰ καθήκοντα διεξίη, τότε δὴ μάλιστα κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην διατίθησιν τοὺς λόγους·

When the poet presents accurately the life of the soul and the varieties of nature and scenes which are appropriate models of political behaviour, then, in that case, the poet does in fact arrange his work according to knowledge.

Proclus seems to respond to the discussions found in Plato about whether a poet has knowledge of the things he imitates (see, for example, the *Ion*) by simply saying that he thinks in some cases Homer does have this knowledge.

3. The mimetic function, further divided into 2; the divisions are obviously taken from the *Sophist*:

A. Eikastic: ὅταν δὲ ἄρα τοὺς προσήκοντας ἀποδιδῶ τῆς μιμήσεως τύπους τοῖς τε πράγμασι καὶ τοῖς προσώποις, τῆνικαῦτα κατὰ τὴν εἰκαστικὴν προίσταται τὴν μίμησιν· (1.192.15-17)

When the poet uses in his imitative art the forms which are fitting for various actions and situations as well as for various characters, then, in that case, he is operating according to eikastic mimesis.

B. Phantastic: ὅταν δὲ οἶμαι πρὸς τὸ φαινόμενον τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ ὄντος ἀποτείνηται καὶ οὕτω δὴ τὰς τῶν ἀκούοντων ἐπάγηται ψυχάς, τότε πού κατὰ τὸ φανταστικόν ἐστὶν ποιητής (1.192.18-21)

I believe however that when a poet creates only with an eye to how things appear to the many with no regard for the truth or reality of the situation and leads the souls of listeners in this manner, then in fact the artist is what we call a phantastic poet.

This theory has some interesting consequences and difficulties. First of all, whether some bit of poetry falls into category 3A or 3B seems as though it will be infinitely debatable and basically inseparable from a discussion about what the most important types and characters are. It would be easy to defend tragedy using this same approach-- one would just have to argue that it does aim at virtue and education and present the heroes in appropriate ways; in fact, it seems that one could easily claim that tragedy fit in categories 1 and 2 as well. Basically, in spite of the fact that Proclus says it is not really appropriate to call the top two categories mimetic, mimesis seems to extend through all of the categories²⁴⁵ (as Proclus claims it also extends through all of Plato's work) so that it is no longer a matter of dismissing poetry because it is mimetic but asking whether as part of the mimesis there are included and presented true arguments and accurate depictions of character. The typology is more a guide for discussing any

²⁴⁵ Halliwell 2002 raises this issue.

mimetic text than it is a set of clearly bounded categories-- it will be impossible, using these categories, to separate the process of judging a text (in the case of Homer, tragedy or Plato) from discussing what is true, appropriate and inspirational because only by knowledge of the latter could one possibly decide in which category a particular type of poetry belonged.

Moreover, an even more profound worry is whether we will be able to distinguish between 3B and category 1. In fact, it seems as though the way Proclus describes phantastic mimesis is very similar to some pre-Socratic arguments about the traditional Greek deities. Because the myths in category 1 present what is contrary to nature and thereby encourage us to consider causes that precede the visible world, it might be hard to recognize when a symbolic interpretation was called for since false presentations in category 3B will also present stories that are contrary to nature. In fact, Proclus' example of category 3B in Homer almost seems to exacerbate this difficulty (*Odyssey* 3.1, the rising of the sun from a lake, at 1.191.22-25; the example also shows Proclus by no means feels obligated to use allegory to save everything Homer says). One could say the same thing about parts of Plato's corpus (like the myth of Pharmakeia in the *Phaedrus*-- is Plato rejecting allegorical reading here, as many think, or himself using a symbol in a much more complicated way?). One person's fantasy is another person's symbol. The phrase from the 5th essay is particularly striking: τὴν ψευδῶς τὰ θεῖα μεμιμημένην ἐν μέσοις ἱεροῖς χώραις ἔχειν (1.48.1-2). Proclus does not want to abolish representations of divinity (i.e. all of the festivals and statues of the Greeks) simply because he realizes that in some sense they are not true (nor is he an atheist because he thinks the highest god is "beyond being"); but, he does seem to think that dealing with this odd sort of ambiguity is a job for the noblest sort of sophist. Thus, it seems to be the case that throughout the system, the interpreter and creator of mythical representations has a great responsibility.

Proclus obviously recognizes, as we do, that the majority of Homer's text is the human drama. He calls the imitation in this portion of Homer second best, holding the line that everything about the gods is the most important (1.199.20)-- but he still clearly wants to save the human, mimetic portions of Homer. He says (1.199.26-9) that Homer does actually have knowledge when he provides advice (συμβουλεύοντα καὶ περὶ τῶν δικαίων εἰσηγούμενον, 1.199.26-9), so that many portions of his text fall under category 2 or category 3A. Proclus had described this in the previous section as:

ὅταν τοὺς ἥρωας μιμῆται πολεμοῦντας ἢ βουλευομένους ἢ λέγοντας κατὰ τὰ εἶδη τῆς ζωῆς, τοὺς μὲν ὡς ἔμφρονας, τοὺς δὲ ὡς ἀνδρείους, τοὺς δὲ ὡς φιλοτίμους, τῆς εἰκαστικῆς ἂν εἴποιμι τὸ τοιοῦτον ἔργον ὑπάρχειν (1.192.28- 1.193.1-4).

When it imitates heroes making war or taking counsel or speaking as is appropriate for their particular types of lives, some as reasonable men do, others as brave men do, others as honor-loving men do-- I would call all of this the proper function of "eikastic" mimesis [i.e. the sort of mimesis that aims at creating reasonable likenesses].

Thus, Proclus' sixth essay basically interweaves two separate parts: one part explaining the symbolic portion of Homer, particularly including myths about the gods, and a second part explaining that the remaining non-symbolic portion of Homer is both the majority (of Homer, certainly not of the essay) and actually good for educating even the uninitiated. The sixth essay is easy to misinterpret because these purposes and argumentative strategies are interwoven with each other and even with an explanation of how Plato himself sometimes employs the same strategies. The essay both explains symbolic poetry and explains that, for the most part, Homer is an excellent text for educating people, even those who are not quite ready to be invited into the inner shrine of the orphic tradition.

Furthermore, in addition to these two parts (one answering Socrates' criticisms, the second part explaining that the majority of Homer is good for educating even young people), a further distinction must be stressed. Not all of Proclus' explanations which answer Socrates' criticisms actually depend on the type of allegorical explanation he uses in the case of the examples above (the *hieros gamos* and the laughter of the gods). Remember, Socrates basically criticizes portions of Homer in which young people who applied a simple mimetic response would be led astray. Some of these cases, but not all, involve the theological myths which Proclus interprets symbolically; there are also other circumstances in which a simple mimetic response would prove disastrous. To take a simple case, people could and do choose to imitate evil characters in works of fiction even if a reasonable interpretation of the work as a whole clearly shows that the characters eventually get what they deserve (cf. 1.201.5-14). Ancient readers were very aware of the complexities of representation whereby an author might create a misguided or dangerous but alluring character. Simple mimesis can also cause problems if applied in other ways, such as to the practices of other cultures which might be perfectly blameless in context; there are some striking examples of this in Homer of practices that were shocking already to the 5th BC century Athenians. Using the three categories above, we can see that Socrates' criticisms of Homer in the *Republic* cross all three. Proclus' use of theological allegory defends Homer only against criticisms that fall in category one.

Thus, Proclus was not some sort of indiscriminate allegorizer. He applies allegory primarily, almost exclusively in this essay to the theological myths (he also recognizes that some other interpreters apply allegory to the human drama, particularly to the plot of the *Odyssey*, but he unfortunately does not even give that allegory here, see below). Since Socrates criticizes all the portions of Homer which he believes are unsuitable for simple mimesis, not just the theological portions, sometimes Proclus' answers depend on very simple strategies like a more complex plot analysis or seeing the passage in context. These strategies include (this numbering is mine):

1. Sociological: Occasionally Proclus argues from *ethos* (using the word as he does in his discussion of book 5) to claim that even if the behaviour of the heroes is unacceptable to us, they belonged to a different culture and so we cannot blame them for following the habits of their own culture.
2. Philological: Socrates misrepresents Homer or the words have a more subtle meaning.
3. Plot analysis: Occasionally Proclus simply analyzes the plot of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to explain a character's behaviour in context and by doing so stresses that Socrates' criticisms take the relevant lines out of context.

4. Reflexive/dramatic irony: Plato does this too, so Socrates cannot be taken seriously.
5. Most cities are not perfect, so even if the imaginary guardians should not read Homer, most people in the real world probably should.

The way that Proclus interweaves these strategies in his defence of Homer is one of the most interesting portions of the essay and one that is particularly evident in the passage I will translate. Sometimes, as in the passage I will translate, Proclus clearly thinks these types of explanation can work together so that more than one approach would serve to save Homer from Socrates' criticisms.

One further distinction needs to be added in order to help see what Proclus is doing in the following passage. Additionally, the following quotation shows most clearly that it is certainly not the case that Proclus believed Homer was a text whose sole value was its inspired function or that Proclus wanted to preserve Homer's authority only as a religious text. Proclus uses the idea of the hierarchy of virtues to distinguish between characters and to imply that certain types of emotional involvement are appropriate for those who lead an active life which would be inappropriate for those who lead a philosophical life.²⁴⁶ In fact, of all of Proclus' interpretations this seems to be one of the weakest in the sense that though it might work as a reading of Homer, I am not sure that it actually answers Plato's criticisms in the *Republic*. I could actually believe more easily that there is already by the time of Plato an entire world of ritual and esoteric explanation behind some of the theological myths. In this case, the point of the criticism in the *Republic* seems to be that the *pathos* of Homeric heroes makes readers weak and unfit for war; therefore, it is hard to see how it answers this charge to say that such *pathos* is appropriate for those engaged in an active life.²⁴⁷ The passage which follows does though prove that Proclus wants to save Homer for readers who lead an active life just as much as he wants to save Homer for entheastic purposes. The passage responds to Socrates' charges at *Republic* 387-88:

Λέγωμεν τοίνυν καὶ πρὸς ταύτας τὰς ἐπιτιμήσεις, ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ἥρωας ἐν πράξεσιν ὄντας καὶ τὸν ταύταις προσήκοντα βίον ἡρημένους ὁ ποιητὴς παραδιδούς εἰκότως καὶ παθαινομένους περὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον καὶ ζῶντας ὡσαύτως εἰσήγαγεν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ φιλοσόφοις καὶ καθαρτικῶς ἐνεργοῦσιν ἡδοναὶ καὶ λύπαι καὶ αἱ τούτων μίξεις οὐδαμῆ προσήκουσιν...τοῖς δὲ ἐν πολέμῳ στρεφομένοις καὶ κατὰ τὸ παθητικὸν ἐνεργοῦσιν ἡδοναὶ τέ εἰσιν σύστοιχοι καὶ λύπαι, καὶ συμπάθειαι καὶ ἀντιπάθειαι, καὶ σκηνὴ παντοίων παθῶν. καὶ πῶς ἂν ἡ περὶ τὰς πράξεις συντονία χώραν ἔχοι, μὴ καὶ τῶν ὀρέξεων ἐπιτεταμένων; καὶ Πρίαμος οὐκ καὶ Ἀχιλλεύς, οὔτε φιλόσοφοι ὄντες οὔτε γενέσεως χωρίζειν ἑαυτοὺς ἐθέλοντες οὔτε τὸν τῶν [διὰ] φυλάκων ζῶντες τρόπον, εἰ καὶ θρηνοῦσι τοὺς οἰκείους καὶ οἰκτίζονται, θαυμαστὸν οὐδέν. καὶ γὰρ φίλων ἀποβολαὶ καὶ παίδων ἐρημίαι καὶ πόλεω

²⁴⁶ On the idea of the hierarchy of the virtues, see Saffrey and Segonds 2001; O'Meara 2002: 40-59; Baltzly 2006 and Brisson 2006.

²⁴⁷ Proclus does though, which is very interesting, make a comparison between Apollodorus' tears in the *Phaedo* and the tearful behaviour Socrates criticizes in Homer (1.122.29-123.4). This is another example (see previous chapter) that shows how Proclus uses a sort of Homeric hermeneutics not only to defend Homer but also to interpret Plato; it is one of the examples of why one could kick Plato out of the city using the same arguments Socrates uses against Homer. Richard Hunter has recently given more attention to this portion of Proclus' analysis than it received in previous treatments (2012: 46-50).

ἀφανισμοὶ τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἀνδράσιν μεγάλην μοῖραν παρέχεσθαι δοκοῦσι τῆς ἀθλιότητος. προσήκει δὲ ἄρα τὸ μεγαλοουργὸν αὐτοῖς ὡς φύσιν ἥρωϊκὴν λαχοῦσιν, τὸ δὲ παθητικὸν ὡς περὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα στρεφομένοις· ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῶν θεῶν, ὅταν δακρῦειν καὶ ἐκεῖνοι λέγωνται ἢ ὀδύρεσθαι τοὺς φιλτάτους, ἄλλος ὁ τρόπος καὶ τοῖς μυθοπλάσταις πάλαι δεδογμένος (1.124.1-26).

Let us say in response to these criticisms that the heroes are involved in action and since the poet has presented us with heroes who have chosen the active life, it is natural that he should depict them suffering in regard to individual actions and living in this manner. Pleasures and pains and mixtures of them are not appropriate to philosophers and those whose activity is entirely kathartic... but pleasures, pains, sympathies and hatreds and the entire stage of human emotion are natural consequences for those who spend their time involved in war and are active with regard to the experiential element of life. How could the conditioning necessary for action be maintained if desires are not strong? Since they are neither philosophers nor do they want to separate themselves from the cycle of birth or to live in the manner of the guardians, it is not at all surprising if both Priam and Achilles mourn and grieve for their friends and family. The loss of friends, the lack of children and the destruction of cities seems to warriors to cause a tremendous amount of misery. Great deeds are appropriate to these men because they have received a heroic nature whereas emotional involvement is appropriate for them because they are concerned primarily with worldly affairs. With regard to the gods, there is a different way of explaining why they too are said to cry or mourn their favorites-- a type of explanation which was approved long ago by those who create myths.

The first underlined portion is somewhat surprising. It certainly proves that Proclus' concerns are more practical than they have often been made out to be, and it certainly saves Homer, but it does seem to be a retreat from earlier philosophical commitments (cf. Aristotle *Ethics*). Elsewhere (1.120ff) Proclus discusses Achilles' famous claim at 11.489-91 that he would prefer to be a servant on earth rather than dead in the underworld. Again, he explains this with reference to Achilles' character which he contrasts to the character of Hercules (oddly, though we might think of both as basically heroes whose fame was based on physical strength, Proclus recognizes Hercules as a character who achieved true divination, reflected already in the *Odyssey*). Proclus says that it is natural for Achilles to say this because his body is exceptional and the source of his fame and so he is still in love with the tool that is necessary for practical (vs. kathartic) virtue. However, it is hard to see again in this case that Proclus' explanation completely answers Socrates' charges in the *Republic*-- he seems to have simply explained his reading of the Homer passage and said "so it is not surprising that Homer would say this" without quite answering Socrates' criticisms (whereas I do think in the longer passage below his interpretative claims actually completely answer Socrates' criticisms). In a way, he simply seems to be saying that Homer is a particularly good text for practical men who do not live in Plato's *Politeia* while at the same time by close reading Homer teaches us to distinguish between the *eidolon* of the soul, the body and the

soul itself which is something that has value also for philosophers. The last line of the quote above (also underlined) is particularly important because it demonstrates the care with which Proclus divides up his explanations without using the same method for all cases. The human drama has a practical explanation, based on dividing types of character and using the idea that different lives are appropriate for different types of people; Proclus employs the symbolic/allegorical mode of defence only for the portion of *Republic* 388 that addresses the gods.

One of the Emperor Julian's orations provides an important example of the type of reader for whom Proclus certainly would have wanted to save Homer (Marinus actually dates Proclus' death from the death of the Emperor Julian). Most of Julian's surviving writings show a deeply committed Neoplatonist. This oration is particularly striking for its engagement with Homer. Julian's oration shows that he admires Homer especially in terms of the type of poetry which Proclus calls above "eikastic mimesis" and certainly appreciates in Homer (3a above, which requires discussion, as I said, of individual cases to distinguish it from 2). Julian is obviously engaging with the text in exactly this way, as a set of models of behaviour in war and in counsel which the active leader could not only imitate but also strive to surpass (as Julian says he thinks is the case for the most part of the Christian Emperor Constantius who he is praising); Julian's speech displays an ethic that used Homer simultaneously as a source for rhetorical and sophistic display pieces, including letters and forensic speeches, as well as more profoundly the cultural training ground for the active and political life. Julian seems to be entirely sincere about the importance of demonstrating Homeric *paideia* in action (ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν παιδείαν ἐπιδεικνύμενον, 50c); he even begins this oration with a discussion of the same example-- the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles-- which Proclus discusses in the passage I have translated below. There are other examples of similar engagement with the Homeric heroes as models for the active life in the first oration and elsewhere in Julian's work. As I have indicated in the passages quoted above (1.192.28- 1.193.1-4; 1.199.26-9), Proclus clearly appreciates the importance of this type of engagement with Homer even though it is not the aspect of Homer he discusses most extensively in the 6th essay (though he may well have done so elsewhere in works we are missing). Much of the consequence of responding to Socrates' criticisms and stressing that we should not get rid of Homer is simply to preserve Homer for this more public sort of use and clarify that Platonists by no means oppose this more traditional, more sophistic and less esoteric sort of engagement with the text.

The passage I am translating here I think is especially remarkable for the way it shows Proclus' attention to the human drama of Homer and in particular the political drama. It employs the strategy I listed as number 5 above with simple elegance, and it shows one of the reasons why it was so important to Proclus to maintain the link between Plato and Homer. Plato proposes of course in the *Republic* that everything the guardians read and use for educational purposes should contribute to their obedience. One thing that many observers have noticed seems to characterize the 20th century is the desire to posit rebelliousness in and of itself as an ideal and a virtue. The thought experiment that is Plato's *Republic* allows Plato to posit perfect obedience as a political virtue. However, as Proclus notes, in Socrates' *politeia*, the rulers would be perfectly just, in which case obedience would always be called for, whereas rulers for the most part generally are not. Proclus' approach indicates that Plato's *Republic* allows us to see the theoretical virtue of

obedience, but we are meant to read it together with Homer's *Iliad* which shows a noble character opposing unjust authority. Proclus' sympathy with Achilles is almost surprising-- one might have expected Achilles to be blamed more for some of the disasters that follow-- but at least in this portion, Proclus does not indicate such a reading.²⁴⁸

This section is Proclus' response to the criticisms of Homer Socrates voices at 389e.²⁴⁹ Socrates claims that the most important part of *sophrosune* is for those who are not in charge to obey their rulers and for those who are in charge to maintain control over their desires for food, drink and sex. Glaucon agrees, and Socrates then specifies some passages of Homer he thinks were well spoken and tend to promote this portion of political *sophrosune*. Socrates then adds some others which he thinks were not well said and for which he criticizes Homer. It is a very brief passage of the *Republic*, but it strikes right at the heart of what Homer probably represents for most readers-- Socrates attacks the rebellious Achilles for criticizing Agamemnon, and he attacks Odysseus for praising the banquet of the Phaiacians. That is to say, he attacks some of the most memorable ways that the Homeric epics seem to deal with the problems of political action and with the enjoyment of pleasure. In the first case, he quotes *Iliad* 1.225 where Achilles mocks his ruler, Agamemnon. In the second case, he criticizes Odysseus for saying that the best of all things is a table full of food and a glass constantly refilled with wine 9.8-10. The passage of the *Odyssey* seems, the way Socrates quotes it, to establish the pleasure of eating as the goal of the good life, and it was in fact strongly identified with Epicurus by the later tradition. Socrates says that his guardians would never hear this sort of thing if it were up to him; the entire passage of the *Republic* is quite grating to modern ears.

This passage of the *Republic* obviously falls into the same category as that discussed in the previous chapter, one where Socrates criticizes Homer indiscriminately without regard to the speaker. In fact, this example seems much more egregious than the one Proclus uses (384d3-4) to articulate the general point which I discussed in the previous chapter. In this case, Socrates says that it is inappropriate for "the wisest (sophotaton) of the Greeks" to say what Odysseus says at *Odyssey* 9.8-10. Socrates does not actually name Odysseus here. We have to assume that the identification was conventional or that listeners/readers should know enough to supply it. However, in the following two sentences, with no indications that he is now quoting from a different speaker, he quotes *Odyssey* 12.342 (390b5); a reader who did not know the *Odyssey* would assume it was the same speaker. It does not take much reflection to see that this completely mangles the entire plot of the *Odyssey* and deeply misrepresents what the *Odyssey* actually seems to be about. Right from the beginning of the work the poet identifies the decision of Odysseus' companions to eat the cattle of the sun as the cause of their destruction (*Odyssey* 1.7-9). Indeed, most readers of the *Odyssey* would tend to agree that one of its central themes is the way that Odysseus seems to triumph by mastering bodily desires and at least delaying gratification (and in fact, Plato of course cites Odysseus' words to this effect in defence of his own division of the soul). On the other hand, his hapless companions' inability to display this same self-mastery seems to

²⁴⁸ Compare Moss 2006: 442 ("Imagine an *Iliad* cast only with Nestors"). I do not mean to disagree with her interpretation, only that the reflection and the contrast shows the importance of Proclus' approach.

²⁴⁹ Also analyzed by Kuisma 1996: 89-91.

be the reason they are destroyed. This second quotation is actually from Eurylochus' speech convincing his companions to eat the cattle of the sun.

In dealing with this passage of the *Republic*, Proclus is also extremely aware that by quoting only *Odyssey* 9.8-10, Socrates has misrepresented the passage, and in fact has left out the fact Odysseus began by praising Demodocus. Proclus later discusses Demodocus as the very model of the entheastic poet (quoting *Odyssey* 8.488-90) and noting that the similarity between Demodocus and Homer is obvious to everyone (1.193-4).²⁵⁰

Moreover, there is something very studied about the way that Socrates refers to what he calls the *kalliston* of all. The actual words of the *Odyssey* refer instead to the τέλος χαριέστερον. As I will show particularly in the case of Eudorus (or perhaps another imperial philosopher responsible for the material in Stobaeus), the philosophical tradition was extremely aware of the resonance of this sense of τέλος, even using it as it appears in this passage to define the Homeric approach to the good life in general.

Secondly, Socrates' quotation also leaves out the key word εὐφροσύνη. This word appears only twice in Plato (*Cratylus* 419d4-7, and *Timaeus* 80b6), and in each case its exact meaning is carefully highlighted (though it appears in a much more general sense in Xenophon). The passage of the *Timaeus* is particularly striking-- *Timaeus* says that what the foolish call pleasure, the sensible call εὐφροσύνην (ἡδονὴν μὲν τοῖς ἄφροσιν, εὐφροσύνην δὲ τοῖς ἔμφροσιν). The reference to swallowing (καταπόσεως 80a1) at the beginning of this passage of the *Timaeus* as well as the discussion of music makes it probable that Plato has the *Odyssey* passage in mind when he refers to εὐφροσύνην here. The *Cratylus* passage is implausible etymologically, but the derivation from φέρω, indicating a sense of movement and flux based on the sense of being born or carried (rather than the more obvious word for mind) does seem to refer to the same conception of εὐφροσύνη as an experience (μίαν ἐξ ὀξείας καὶ βαρείας συνεκεράσαντο πάθην, *Timaeus* 80b4-5) that occurs based on a balance of forces ἐν θνηταῖς γενομένην φοραῖς (cf. τὰ τῶν ὑδάτων πάντα ρεύματα, etc. in what follows). Remember as well that Proclus believes the *Timaeus* is part of the same dramatic sequence as the *Republic*, which means that it provides a more physical description of the soul meant to follow directly the political discussion of the *Republic*. It certainly seems possible that the exact word Odysseus uses in this passage of the *Odyssey*, the one Socrates omits, provides Plato with his term for the sort of physical well-being that it is most appropriate to pursue. The *Cratylus* seems to highlight the definition of the word by (comically or ironically?) calling an etymology obvious which far from being obvious is not really an etymology in the strict sense at all but rather a definition based on a very particular conception of the soul: παντὶ γὰρ δῆλον ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ εὖ τοῖς πράγμασι τὴν ψυχὴν συμφέρεσθαι τοῦτο ἔλαβε τὸ ὄνομα, εὐφροσύνην τὸ γε δίκαιον· ὅμως δὲ αὐτὸ καλοῦμεν εὐφροσύνην. (419d5-7)

The entire section of Proclus is as follows:

Defence of the aspects of Homer's poetry that seem to encourage listeners to disregard self-control in all sorts of ways:

²⁵⁰ ὁ μὲν γὰρ Δημόδοκος ἔνθους ἦν, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, καὶ τὰ θεῖα καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀφηγοῦμενος, καὶ θεόθεν ἐξάψασθαι λέλεκται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μουσικὴν (1.194.9-11).

Let these explanations suffice about the laughter of the gods which Homer's poetry called unquenchable for the reasons I explained. The next thing which must be examined after this sort of question is the discussion about self-control (σωφροσύνη), so that it may not somehow seem that Homer's poetry weakens us with respect to self-control. The most important form of self-control, Socrates says, is respect (αἰδώς) towards rulers; the second greatest form is being able to master the desires and the pleasures that exist in the soul, and the third most important, which I will examine a bit later, follows these. So, given that these are the two greatest forms of self-control, it seems that Achilles violates the one while Odysseus violates the other. Achilles seems to lack respect towards his rulers when he says this sort of thing towards his ruler, Agamemnon:

"you have the eye of a dog, heavy with wine" (Iliad 1.225)

as well as what follows this line, whereas Odysseus seems to violate the other forms of self-control, particularly when, defining the best of all lives, he says that he especially approves of that constitution of men in which:

all the people are in a state of good cheer
and the diners throughout the house listen to a singer
seated side by side, and next to them are tables full
of bread and meat, while a wine-pourer provides
and pours wine from the barrels into the cups.

In these lines Odysseus does nothing less than establish much-cursed pleasure and the fulfillment of desire as the end and purpose (τέλος) of life.

Given that these are the things which Socrates says blaming the poetry of Homer, I will respond to the first accusation first, as follows. The guardians who Socrates says should be the rulers of the city have received such an excess of superiority because of their education and virtue relative to those they rule that it would be fitting for them to receive also the greatest and most extraordinary honor and respect. For, they were established to be truly the saviours and benefactors of the entire constitution, and one would not expect that anything unhealthy or unjust would ever happen to the city from the side of those people who ruled with justice and intelligence. However, the poet has agreed that Agamemnon is neither superior to all of those under him with respect to virtue nor is he one of those people who do good for others, but rather he is one of those who simply benefits himself from his position, and in particular he benefits from the military skill of Achilles. Naturally therefore, Homer depicts Agamemnon being criticized by those who are his betters and who provide greater benefits to the commonwealth, those against whom Agamemnon has transgressed while gratifying his own emotions; Homer shows the best of the Greeks speaking freely (μετὰ παρρησίας) and openly with him and taking no account of the quantity of soldiers who are present nor of the presence of the nautical force. Virtue is honored everywhere whereas the instruments of virtue are not necessarily always to be honored.²⁵¹ Therefore, we will not say that someone has violated true rulers and saviours of the whole when they dare to speak these types of criticism against

²⁵¹ In Greek this potentially ambiguous phrase is: ἡ γὰρ ἀρετὴ πανταχοῦ τίμιον, ἀλλ' οὐ τὰ ὄργανα τῆς ἀρετῆς.

those who are superior to those below them in the quantity of their possessions but actually far inferior in terms of virtue. Particularly since in fact the king of these innumerable soldiers admits the difference in virtue between himself and Achilles and mourns his own ill-fortune:

I was foolish, and I will not deny it myself
and:

that one man
who Zeus loves in his heart as he does this one,
is worth as much as many other men (*Iliad* 9.116-118)

In response to Socrates' criticism of Odysseus' speech, let it be said that these statements have seemed to have a symbolic interpretation (συμβολικώτερον ἀφερμηνεύειν) to those who approach the so-called wandering of Odysseus allegorically (ὑπονοίας) and believe that the Phaiacians and the happiness that exists among them should be considered as something beyond and above mortal nature. According to this reading, the banquet and the feast and the harmonious song is said in a way that indicates something other than what most people think. However, let it also be said that even for those who chase only the surface appearance of poetry it is also possible to respond to Socrates' criticisms. Approaching the question in this way, the first thing to stress is that the wisest of the Greeks did not think that simple pleasure (ἡδονήν) should rule in proper constitutions, but rather thought that good cheer (or "joy" = εὐφροσύνην) was what was most important. We have learned from Plato himself how these two things differ from each other [cf. *Timaeus* 80b, above]. Secondly, we also know that he thought all of the city should be harmonized with itself by music so that it would become like-minded and listen to songs which led it toward virtue. He thought that not just anyone should be in charge of creating music for the masses, but rather someone who was possessed by divine inspiration relative to music and by those who could spread from on high throughout all of the constitution education and true virtue. Third, it is important that for those who have taken a share in this divine harmony, he also assigned a bountiful supply of the necessities of life, of which the great majority of the people in cities always have need. He did not praise so strongly continually being stuffed with these things, but rather the state of not lacking anything which completes and makes possible mortal life. Therefore, the wisest of the Greeks actually spoke in a way which is entirely consistent with the doctrines of our school and with unperturbed notions about common happiness (τῆς δημοτικῆς εὐδαιμονίας). If someone were to take away the joy and good cheer and the education that occurs through inspired music (τὴν διὰ τῆς ἐνθέου μουσικῆς παιδείαν) and instead claim that Odysseus is praising instead simply the tables themselves and the boundless enjoyments which regard only physical pleasure, then in fact Socrates would be correct in saying that this sort of thing is naturally far removed from what he considers the best city. It is not customary or proper for boundless pleasure and the life which suits only the gluttonous to rule in cities (1.129-132.7).

Proclus' interpretation of this passage of the *Odyssey* is particularly important first because of the way it reverses what the *Republic* seems to say, and second because we have testimonies from several other authors who discuss the same passage of Homer. Perhaps the earliest comes from the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, sometimes identified as the work of Alcidas the sophist and contemporary of Isocrates.²⁵² The story of this sophist goes that Homer recited exactly these lines to extreme popular approval:

ῥηθέντων δὲ τούτων τῶν ἐπῶν οὕτω σφοδρῶς φασιν θαυμασθῆναι τοὺς
στίχους ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὥστε χρυσοῦς αὐτοὺς προσαγορεύοντες πρὸ
τῶν δείπνων καὶ τῶν σπονδῶν προκατεύχονται πάντες. (*Certamen* 90-94/
Alcidas Fr. 5).

When these words had been spoken, they say that all of the Greeks so admired these lines that they called them golden and everyone said them as a prayer before dinners and libations.

If the lines were actually this popular, it would imply that not only readers as educated as Cleitophon were meant to recognize the misrepresentation, but perhaps the passage was meant to catch the attention of most readers of Plato's day.

One of the lives of Homer (the second attributed to "Plutarch") also leans heavily on these lines. The extended quotation of these lines immediately following the reference to those who established philosophical schools:

Εἰ δὲ δεῖ καὶ τῶν ἰδίας τινὰς αἰρέσεις ἐλομένων μνημονεῦσαι, εὗροιμεν ἂν
κάκεινους παρ' Ὀμήρου τὰς ἀφορμὰς λαβόντας, (1873-4)

If it is proper to mention also those people who have established private schools (αἰρέσεις), we will find that they too have taken their start from Homer.

This testimony seems to indicate that these lines were particularly identified with the origin of the philosophical schools for reasons (the reference to the *telos* of life) that become explicit in the discussion attributed to Eudorus (see below). This life of Homer even claims that these exact lines provided Epicurus with his doctrine about the *telos* of the best life (τούτοις παραχθεις καὶ Ἐπίκουρος τὴν ἡδονὴν τέλος εὐδαιμονίας ἐνόμισε, 1888). The same passage of the life claims to find the Homeric origins of the ideas of Democritus and Aristippus. If this claim is presented in a strong sense-- as the idea that Democritus and Aristippus really did simply take their ideas from Homer-- it becomes simply ridiculous. However, if seen instead as part of a cultural history of contested readings of Homer, the particular moves made by particular philosophical schools (and the fact that Homer is a text which can provide a foundation for these debates) are quite important and worthy of consideration in their own right as examples of how philosophers engaged with Homer. The readings attributed to Aristippus and Democritus are somewhat different-- these particular lines are still identified primarily

²⁵² This quotation is actually from the same section of the *Certamen* as the quotation found at Stobaeus 4.52.22 which prompted Nietzsche to make the original identification in 1870, thus making it quite likely this portion as well can be attributed to Alcidas (see West 2003: 298).

with Epicurus. The identification between these lines of the *Odyssey* and Epicureanism seems pervasive.²⁵³²⁵⁴

One of the most important texts that makes this identification between these lines and Epicureanism, and perhaps the most important comparandum for Proclus' approach to these lines, is the *Homeric Problems* of Heraclitus.²⁵⁵ In fact, this same passage of the *Odyssey* provides the conclusion for the work of Heraclitus. Heraclitus assumes that these lines provide Epicurus with his idea of the good life, as does "Plutarch", and makes a similar claim about why Epicurus was mistaken (he even refers to him as Ὁ δὲ Φαίλαξ φιλόσοφος Ἐπίκουρος, 79.2). Proclus seems to actually accept and praise these lines and agree that εὐφροσύνη is actually a laudable goal. For Proclus, the important distinction is that εὐφροσύνην is simply not the same thing as ἡδονή and that what Odysseus actually says is above all a praise of the inspired poetry of Demodocus. Proclus agrees with Odysseus, provided we understand what he says correctly and do not take it the way Socrates does in the *Republic*. Heraclitus' reading is much harsher. He contrasts Odysseus' words here with his ability to withstand trials throughout the work; interestingly though, this does not necessarily mean Heraclitus is a Stoic-- in fact, his reading of this issue basically matches what pseudo-Plutarch attributes to Aristippus. The key point is that Heraclitus, in contrast to Proclus, insists that Odysseus did not actually mean what he says here, but was rather forced by circumstances to speak these words in order to flatter his host.

ἂ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς ὑποκρίσει παρ' Ἀλκίνοῳ μὴ φρονῶν ἐψεύσατο, ταῦθ' ὡς ἀληθεύων [Epicurus] ἀπεφήνατο τέλη βίου· (79.3)

and:

Ἄ δὴ παρὰ τοῖς ὑποδεξαμένοις ἐνομίζετο τίμα, τούτοις ἐξ ἀνάγκης συγκαταινεῖ· ... Ἄλλ' ὅ γ' Ἐπίκουρος ἀμαθία τὴν Ὀδυσσέως πρόσκαιρον ἀνάγκην βίου κατεβάλετο δόξαν, ἂ παρὰ Φαίλαξιν ἐκείνος ἀπεφήνατο κάλλιστα, ταῦτα τοῖς σεμοῖς κήποις ἐμφυτεύσας. (79.8;10).

The lies which Odysseus told at the house of Alcinoos, not speaking seriously, Epicurus identified as the ends of life as though Odysseus had been speaking the truth.

²⁵³ See for example this association in *Athenaeus* 12.7. The similar discussion, also citing these exact lines of Homer and associating them with Epicurus, in the epitome of Athenaeus makes it particularly easy to see the breadth of the conversation about luxury in Greek culture attached to the discussion of these lines (2.2.74.30-36). See also Athenaeus 1.28.28 for Eratosthenes' revision and comment upon these same lines. The same lines are discussed also at Athenaeus 2.12.5 and 5.19.15, each interesting and worth more discussion than I have space for. Particularly relevant is the sense of the range of meanings of the word *telos*; for example, in the latter passage the speaker comments on the word *telos* as it appears in Homer: τελετάς τε καλοῦμεν τὰς ἔτι μείζους καὶ μετὰ τινος μυστικῆς παραδόσεως ἑορτὰς τῶν εἰς αὐτὰς δαπανημάτων ἔνεκα.

²⁵⁴ For a reading of this passage of the *Odyssey* see Ford 2002: 29-30. Buffière discussed the various ancient interpretations of this passage of the *Odyssey* and the Epicurean associations of the lines, including Maximus of Tyre though not including the parallel with the *Republic*, Proclus' interpretation or Eudorus (1954: 318-322). Trapp 1997 briefly notes the discussion in Stobaeus and provides some additional bibliography (1997: 187n.2).

²⁵⁵ Heraclitus' anti-Platonic diatribe also provides an interesting contrast to Proclus' view (section 76-79; see Russell and Konstan 2005: 122-9).

and:

Odysseus praised out of necessity the things which were considered most honorable among those who were his hosts... But, Epicurus, because of his foolishness established what Odysseus said by necessity as his opinion about all of life, and he planted in the holy gardens what Odysseus said among the Phaiacians was the best.

Proclus' approach, on the other hand, in no way indicates that Odysseus' words are insincere, even on the surface. The contrast between Proclus' approach to this passage of the *Republic* and Heraclitus' approach to the same lines shows how Proclus' reading brings his Platonism very close to a mildly approving attitude towards Epicureanism, at least as it relates to what he calls "demotic eudaimonia."

Maximus of Tyre's 22nd essay provides yet more evidence of how closely these lines were read in antiquity and actually provides an earlier example of an approach quite similar to Proclus' interpretation.²⁵⁶ The entire 22nd essay clearly begins by considering these lines of the *Odyssey* together with, or in the manner suggested by, Socrates' criticism in the *Republic*. The essay begins by interrogating exactly the passage that Socrates criticized: ἐρωτῶ δὴ τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα· τί ἡγεῖ εἶναι τὴν εὐφροσύνην, ᾧ σοφώτατε ἀνδρῶν; (22.1.12-1). The tone of this interrogation and the open question helps show how I think how readers were meant to respond to this point of Plato's *Republic*-- not by kicking Homer out of the city, but by interrogating the meaning of the words and by striving for a critical interpretation. Maximus connects these lines, as does Proclus, with a demotic sort of pleasure: δεινός τις εἶ, ᾧ σοφώτατε Ὀδυσσεύ, ἐπαινέτης εὐφροσύνης δημωδεστάτης (22.2.1-2); however, on this point Maximus actually seems at first to disagree with Proclus' approach. For Maximus, demotic *euphrosune* seems at first to be a bad thing-- he compares it to the destructive behaviour of the Greeks when they sack Troy. Proclus on the other hand, stresses that even demotic *euphrosune*, when properly understood, is a good thing. Maximus though then continues on to indicate the importance of understanding these words as meaning something more complex than it initially seems on the surface (i.e. something more complex than what Socrates' words in the *Republic* imply/take for granted): Μήποτε οὖν ἔοικέν τι Ὅμηρος αἰνίττεσθαι ἄλλο κρεῖττον ἢ ὁποῖον τὰ ἔπη λέγει οὕτως ἀκούσαντι εὐθύς; (22.2.7-8). However, it is not clear that by this he means a true enigma or allegory; he seems instead to follow the reference with praise of the sort of simple reading of the *Odyssey* lines with which Proclus concludes (εὐσχήμενά τινα [Homer] ἔοικεν εὐωχίαν διηγείσθαι ἡμῖν, 22.2.12-13). Perhaps, his first criticism of demotic *euphrosune* turns out to be more rhetorical than genuine and dissipates as he proceeds to a reading very close to Proclus' reading. Having suggested that Odysseus is praising a

²⁵⁶ Michael Trapp has contributed a very useful critical edition (1994) and translation (1997) of Maximus' essays, so it is surprising that he misrepresents this particular essay by neglecting not only the tone of Maximus' discussion of instrumental music and history but the entire conclusion of the essay including what a paean actually is (2007: 212-13). See also Trapp 1997: 194n.32. This final paragraph of the essay can be best understood by comparing it to Maximus' essay 1, section 3 which even includes the clear testimony-- ποιητοῦ καιρός ἐν Διονυσίοις, ἐπειδὴν χοροῦ δέη-- and so provides a much more unambiguous sense of the relationship between philosophy and the mainstream. This portion of the first essay is clearly parallel; it even quotes the same portion of the *Odyssey* and states clearly that the time for a singer and the cithara is at a banquet.

dangerous type of mob pleasure, he then settles on the obvious point that Odysseus seems to refer instead to an ordered banquet.

What is unique about Maximus of Tyre's essay is the way his elegant rhetoric includes in its sweep such a broad meditation on the proper objects of the intellectual life. He sets off on this discussion by questioning what sort of harmony (cf. *Timaeus* 80b7) is most effective at shaping (κατακοσμούσης) souls during a banquet. The entirety of Maximus' discussion is illuminating, but my primary point here is to point out that he uses exactly these lines of the *Odyssey*, beginning with the interrogation suggested by the *Republic*, as the starting point for the entire discussion. He moves from indicating his appreciation of music to praising *logos* above music, and then from there to a discussion about which type of *logos* or type of music is most appropriate. His choices in this regard provide some interesting cultural context even when they are critical (compare 22.4 with Xenophon's *Anabasis* 6.1.7-8). He praises Persian custom relative to Attic custom, and then follows this with an encomium of reading history which even indicates his interest in reading histories and ethnographies of foreign lands-- his praise of history refers equally to what he calls τὰ Ἀσσύρια, τὰ Αἰγύπτια, τὰ Περσικά, τὰ Μηδικά, τὰ Ἑλληνικά (is this partly a jibe, by way of omission, at the Romans?). With the elegant simplicity that must have long characterized trained sophists, he has transitioned from interrogating *Odyssey* 9.2-11 in terms of what kind of accompaniment to a symposium is most appropriate to using the famous opening of the *Odyssey* to praise the reading of history:

εἰ δὲ καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς σοφὸς ὅτι πολύτροπος ἦν καὶ
πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστη καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων,
πολύ που σοφώτερος ὁ τῶν μὲν κινδύνων ἐξιστάμενος, τῆς δὲ ἱστορίας
ἐμπιπλάμενος. (22.5.17-22)

And if Odysseus was wise, since he was a man of many ways and:
"Saw the cities and came to know the minds of many men
striving to preserve his life and the homecoming of his companions"
far wiser is the man who fills himself with knowledge of history while removed
from danger.

Maximus then ascends beyond this praise of history in order to choose instead the speeches of philosophers (ἐγὼ δὲ ποθῶ πρὸς τὴν εὐωχίαν τροφὴν λόγων ὑγιεινῶν, καὶ ἀνόσου τοιούτου δέομαι σιτίου ἀφ' οὗ καὶ Σωκράτης ὑγίανεν καὶ Πλάτων καὶ Ξενοφῶν καὶ Αἰσχίνης, 22.6.19-21) before finally returning in conclusion to Homer and Hesiod. He no more rejects history or music than he rejects Plato in favor of Homer. At the end of the essay, having praised and considered music, dance, history and philosophy as accompaniments to a banquet, he returns to the praise of the same sort of inspired poetry (Demodocus as representing Homer) which was actually found in the original quote from the *Odyssey*. Maximus concludes:

ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀδέτω εἶτε καὶ Ὅμηρος εἶτε Ἡσίοδος εἶτε τις ἄλλος ποιητῆς
δαιμόνιος θεὸν παιάνα ψυχῆς παθημάτων· ἄξια ταῦτα τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος,

ἄξια τοῦ Διός.²⁵⁷

But, let either Homer or Hesiod or some other daimonically inspired poet sing to me a godly paean of the sufferings of the soul: such songs are worthy of Apollo and worthy of Zeus.

In this way, Maximus' interpretation is brought quite close to Proclus' emphasis on the idea that Demodocus represents an entheastic poet. Maximus' approach lacks Proclus' philosophical seriousness, and his rhetorical fluency can almost seem shallow at times; however, the essay provides an excellent example of the way an educated Platonist, committed to maintaining and supporting traditional *paideia*, well-versed in rhetoric and so committed the study of poetry that he seems more a sophist than a philosopher, approached *Republic* 390a8-b3.

One of the most interesting passages discussing these lines of the *Odyssey* is found in Stobaeus as part of a summary conventionally identified as a summary of the work of Arius Didymus.²⁵⁸ However, I suggest that it is just as possible that the doxography is by Eudorus whose work provides the nearest named citation (on Eudorus see Dillon 1977: 114-135). It seems likely at least that the section which appears in Stobaeus as Περὶ τέλους is part of the work of Eudorus because it is concerned primarily with explaining Plato and secondarily with explaining Plato's agreement with Aristotle and Democritus. Having discussed this much, it moves on to a different theme without discussing other Hellenistic schools like the Stoics-- this would seem to indicate that it is in fact still a summary of the work of a Platonist. Most likely Eudorus' work extends at least through 2.7.4b; it does not actually seem totally out of the question that Eudorus' work extends through the end of Stobaeus section 2.7. Stobaeus clearly has this book and praises its contents which is more than we can say for the other possibilities; the contents of Eudorus' book clearly include a complete summary of ethical philosophy. In fact, this phrase βιβλίον ἀξιόκμητον (2.7.2.65) seems to be unique in all of Stobaeus.²⁵⁹ When Stobaeus indicates ἀρκτέον δὲ τῶν προβλημάτων at 2.7.2.135, this seems to echo προβληματικῶς at 2.7.2.66 which provides strong evidence that the section that follows is still borrowing from Eudorus (particularly since there is only one other occurrence in all of Stobaeus of any form of the word πρόβλημα). In any case, it does seem certain that the substance of this section is taken from one or several doxographies from the late Republic or early imperial period, either entirely from Eudorus or perhaps Arius Didymus or perhaps someone else (i.e. if it is not actually Arius Didymus, then the ultimate source is something of similar antiquity; it does though seem very possible that the collection and summary here is Stobaeus' own and certain that the only book we can

²⁵⁷ This phrase θεὸν παιᾶνα is also found at Isyllus line 37; see also *Iliad* 1.473; Alcman fr. 98 (= Strabo 10.4.18); cf. Plutarch *De E Apud Delphos* 388-389; Apollonius *Lexicon Homericum* 126.

²⁵⁸ On the difficult question of the attribution of this portion of Stobaeus, see Hahm 1990. I am not disagreeing with Hahm-- whose tone is perfectly suited to the difficulty of the question (see 2937-2938)-- simply suggesting that the academic discussion ought to begin with the question of how much of this portion of Stobaeus can be attributed to Eudorus rather than how much can be attributed to Arius Didymus (on the origins of this attribution, see Hahm 1990: 2936; on the book of Eudorus, see Hahm 1990: 3041).

²⁵⁹ It would be difficult to overstate the interest of this phrase given the time at which Stobaeus lived-- it is exactly the sort of phrase that ought to have contributed to the survival of the book in question but apparently did not suffice or was not broadly shared.

be sure he was using in this section is that of Eudorus).

The work which is cited or summarized here is particularly interesting in this context because it actually identifies these lines of Homer as the origin of the concept of an "end" of the best life and uses them in its discussion of what the Greek word "telos" means in a philosophical context:

Τὸ μὲν οὖν ὄνομα τοῦ τέλους εὐρίσκειται καὶ παρ' Ὀμήρω·
Οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγέ τι φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι.
Ἄλλ' Πυτος μὲν δημοτελεῖς εἰσήγαγε τὸ τέλος, Πλάτων δὲ διέστιξε²⁶⁰
πρῶτος τὸ κατ' ἄνδρα καὶ βίον ἰδιάζον ἔν τε τῷ Τιμαίῳ κἀν τῷ
Πρωταγόρῳ (Stobaeus 2.7.3d)

The word for the end or purpose [*telos*] is found also in Homer:
For I say that no purpose is more pleasant
But, Homer introduced a demotic purpose. Plato though was the first to mark the purpose individually according to each man and life, in the *Protagoras* and the *Timaeus*.

The passage seems to indicate that Plato thought different people had different ends and was the first to divide his discussion of the *telos* of life accordingly; thus *Protagoras* 354b-d would present the *telos* of a demotic life whereas *Timaeus* 90d would present the *telos* of a philosophical life. Both passages use the word *telos* to describe the purpose of life; in the one case Socrates is ventriloquizing the opinions of the majority (352d5 with 353c1, etc.) whereas in the other case Timaeus the Pythagorean is speaking while Socrates listens.

The doxography then returns again to these same lines of the *Odyssey*:
Λέγωμεν οὖν περὶ τῶν πρώτων εὐθύς, ὅποιοι ἦσαν οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχικῶν
ἀναγόμενοι. Ὅμηρος, δεδόσθω γὰρ τῇ ἀρχαιότητι προνομία, ψυχικὸν
ἀπεφήνατο τὸ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας τέλος, καὶ ταῦτα διὰ τοῦ παρεισαγομένου
προσώπου σοφωτάτου παρ' αὐτῷ. πεποιήται γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀναφωνῶν·
Οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγέ τι φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι
ἢ ὅταν εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχη κατὰ δῆμον ἅπαντα.
Ἡ δ' εὐφροσύνη ψυχικὴ τίς ἐστι διάθεσις, ἣν ἂν τις ἐξηγήσαιτο καλὴν
φρόνησιν, τοῦτο δ' ἂν ἐκδέξαιτο τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς καλοῖς φρόνησιν. Ὅμήρω μὲν
ἀρκέσει προμετρηθὲν τὸ τῆς τιμῆς διὰ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα, ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς
φιλοσόφους ἰτέον. (2.7.3e)

Let us speak about the first people who were raised up by the properties of the soul. Homer-- let the first place be granted to what is ancient-- said that the end of life was a mental state, and said this through the mouth of the character who was considered the most wise in all his work. For, his Odysseus speaks as follows:

For, I say that nothing is more pleasant

²⁶⁰ This word is not found before the approximate date of Stobaeus; it seems to support the idea that what we have is Stobaeus' summary, perhaps of Eudorus, rather than an excerpt from a book like Arius Didymus.

than when all the people are in a state of good cheer
Good cheer (*euphrosune*) is a psychological state which could be explained as good thoughts, and further expanded as pride in thinking about what is good and beautiful. This degree of honor will suffice for the ancient Homer; now I will turn to the philosophers.

This doxographical summary gives the obvious gloss of the term *euphrosune*. The *Cratylus* and the *Timaeus*, on the other hand, actually seemed to interpret the term in a more complex way as though trying to give it some very large philosophical significance. This doxographical summary makes a simpler and easier point, focusing on the division between those who see the *telos* as a bodily good and those consider it psychological. Homer, if we interpret the term *euphrosune* properly, is considered one of the latter. The previous quote in this source of these lines of Homer was particularly interesting for the clarity with which it identified these lines as the poetic predecessor and first Greek source which identifies a *telos* of the best life. This second quotation of these lines is particularly interesting because by creating such a broad distinction between those who consider the *telos* psychic and those who consider it somatic, the author is able to use this distinction to stress the harmony between Democritus and Plato. Both, he says, consider the end of the best life as essentially a psychological goal: Δημόκριτος καὶ Πλάτων κοινῶς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν τίθενται (2.7.3i, including also the following more complete statement of the grounds of their agreement).

One of the largest misrepresentations of late-antique Platonism is the idea that it was somehow irreconcilably hostile to Epicureanism and even responsible for the destruction of the Epicurean philosophy. This view has been presented in a facile form by Stephen Greenblatt who somehow even manages to see the Italian Renaissance as though it were primarily characterized by the recovery of Epicureanism rather than Platonism. A different way to present the issue would have been to say that the Renaissance was characterized by the studying together of Epicureanism and Platonism in a way that also characterized late- antique Platonism. Unfortunately, we do not have the portions of Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* most likely to have discussed and explained this approach, but this comment on Homeric *euphrosune* is more than sufficient to show that Proclus' interpretations of Plato were certainly not designed to demonstrate the impossibility of coexistence with Epicureanism.

With this in mind, it is worth examining in some detail the evidence used by those who claim that Epicureanism was destroyed by the Pythagoreans and Platonists. Most prominent are two letters of the emperor Julian, one of which provides instructions to Theodorus who he proposes to place in charge of the shrines of Asia, and the other to the philosopher (or sophist?) Themistius.²⁶¹ In these letters, there are a couple prominent reasons that Julian disagrees with the Epicureans. It is important to consider these reasons separately and then to distinguish them from the thought of more philosophical writers.

²⁶¹ Ferguson 1990 agrees that this letter cannot be taken at face value, certainly not to indicate that the books of Epicurus are no longer available. Contrast his curious omission of the passages from Themistius (2318)-- the letter between Julian and Themistius seems to actually be one of the more significant explorations of the status of Epicureanism in the 4th century AD-- and his odd reading of Marinus 15 (2326).

The first reason is a matter of imperial policy, and is best explored in the letter to Theodorus. Julian seems to feel that Epicureans will be the natural enemies of the priests and the shrines that he is trying to promote. This worry may well have increased in the latter part of antiquity and led to some broad reluctance on the part of late pagan philosophers to widely circulate the books of Epicurus, though not at all for the reasons that are generally indicated. As the traditional practices began to seem more genuinely and existentially threatened by the one group, the Christians, there may well have been a tendency to look with less tolerance than had previously been the case upon the other opponents of traditional religious practice and belief, the Epicureans. This is probably the best way to understand Julian's comments in the letter to Theodorus. The philosophy of the Pythagoreans was more amenable to the maintenance of traditional religious practice (which must have necessarily, as at Delphi or in the Athenian mysteries, involved a certain amount of stagecraft), but this certainly did not endear it to the Christians any more than the philosophy of Epicurus.²⁶² The passage at the end of Lactantius 5.21 explains perfectly why Julian would have opposed the Epicureans in his letter to Theodorus.

However, Julian was not a philosopher. Therefore, the second reason he opposes the Epicurean philosophy, best explored in his letter to Themistius, is the most revealing, the most profound and the most seriously considered. In this case, the Epicureans are not a side note in a longer letter, but seem to be the actual subject of the letter (apparently responding to Themistius' comments about Epicureans). Julian seems to think admiration of their philosophy is incongruent with the active political life he has accepted. This motivation is familiar from Cicero's letters to Atticus and from Plutarch's criticism of Colotes. The entire letter is focused on Julian's pride in the toil he has accepted as a necessary accompaniment of the life of politics. He mentions Epicureanism with scorn as a sort of temptation (2.31-6). His point here is not so much to reject Epicureanism entirely, but to reject it as a possibility for himself-- it represents a life of obscurity and pure philosophy which he is simply not allowed to lead.

The most interesting part of this letter is the way Epicureanism is associated with Athens. Julian seems to particularly associate the Epicurean way of life with residence in Athens, and in order to make this point, he even refers to exactly the same Athenian

²⁶² Lactantius' work provides ample evidence of this point. See for example 7.12 where Pythagoreanism is called a philosophy "more worthy of an actor than a philosopher." This can be compared with the reference to religion and theatricality at 5.21 which is followed by an approving reference to Epicureans (cf. Maximus of Tyre, essay 1). Furthermore, at 7.1 Lactantius tells us that Epicurus alone, following Democritus, saw the truth about the temporal creation of the world, as opposed to the eternal world posited by Plato and Pythagoras. The idea that imperial Christianity chose to ignore/destroy Epicureans while siding instead with Platonists and Pythagoreans, or at least engaging with (if only to disagree) the latter while entirely mocking or ignoring, for constructive purposes, the former, is simply false (thus Greenblatt 2012: 100-101 on Pythagoreans: "it made some sense to argue with the former [Pythagoreans] while the latter [Epicureans] were best simply silenced" is not really accurate). See for example 3.12 for Lactantius' approving citation of the Epicurean view of god. The Christians engaged with, approved of parts and disagreed sharply with other parts of all of the philosophers; they actually found the most rationalizing anti-deistic parts of the philosophical tradition particularly useful because they provided arguments for rejecting traditional conceptions of divinity (see for example Lactantius 1.14-15 on Euhemerus). The best generalization is that found in Lactantius 5.25 regarding all of the types of knowledge (music, geometry, reading, grammar, rhetoric, etc.) required by philosophy. Knowledge itself, not merely pleasure, is Lactantius' target.

landmarks that Marinus describes so carefully when narrating the story of Proclus' arrival in Athens. To Julian, residence in Athens means accepting a life of pure philosophy and includes aspects like respect for and serious consideration of the Epicurean life which he seems to feel is not appropriate for his situation as an active leader. Julian, discussing someone like himself who he says wants to cultivate the divine aspect of his soul, questions whether:

ἀρά σοι φαίνεται τὴν ἐπικούρειον θαυμάζειν ἀπραγμοσύνην καὶ τοὺς κήπους καὶ τὸ προάστειον τῶν Ἀθηνῶν καὶ τὰς μυροίνας καὶ τὸ Σωκράτους δωμάτιον; Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπου γε ἐγὼ ταῦτα προτιμήσας τῶν πόνων ὄφθην. (Letter to Themistius, 5).

So, does it seem to you that such a man [one like Julian, the speaker, committed to an active life] could possibly admire Epicurean inactivity and the gardens and suburbs of the Athenians together with the garlands and the shrine of Socrates? You will never catch me honoring these things above labor and toil.

What makes this letter even more important for understanding attitudes towards Epicureanism is that we actually have the work of Themistius himself so that we can compare his more philosophical attitude and make some reasonable suppositions about how Themistius must have tried to defend Epicureanism in his letter to Julian. Whatever Julian may have written either signaling his defence of Greek temples or his devotion to the active life, it is clear that his attitude cannot be used to summarize or represent more truly philosophical authors and certainly cannot be considered characteristic of late-antique Platonism as a whole. One must distinguish carefully between the type of polemic between schools and strongly worded disagreement that always characterized the tradition, and the actual intention to destroy another school-- disagreeing with one's opponents is not the same as attempting to destroy them. In this respect, Themistius' opinion expressed in the passage that follows is not actually the most philosophical, since the most philosophical approach is represented by full tolerance of the harsh polemic and sharp disagreements that characterized the earlier tradition. However, Themistius does provide testimony in a funeral oration for his father (philosophical or biological?) that both identifies an Aristotelian attitude critical of Epicurus (note that this method fits what Julian commends to Theodorus) and contrasts with his own more ecumenical approach. It is particularly interesting and particularly relevant that this passage obviously references Socrates' infamous lines about Homer as a way of describing a late-antique philosopher's approach to Epicurus only to categorically reject such an approach just as clearly as Proclus denies that Socrates' phrase is to be taken seriously in so far as it relates to Homer.

Ἐπίκουρον δὲ τὸν Νεοκλέους κομψὸν μὲν ἠγεῖτο καὶ τῶν ἀτόμων οὐκ εἶναι τομόν, εἰσελκυσάμενος δ' ἂν αὐτὸν πολλάκις, ὅσον ἐπιδείξει τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν, ὡς τάχιστα ἀπέπεμπεν ἐκ τοῦ καταλόγου, μύρον κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς καταχέας ἅτε ἐραστοῦ τῆς ἡδονῆς. τοῦτο μὲν δὴ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγασθαι ἦν. οὐδεμία γὰρ φιλοσοφία πόρρω ἀπώκισται καὶ μακρὰν ἀποσκηνοῖ τῆς ἐτέρας, ἀλλ' οἷον εὐρείας ὁδοῦ καὶ μεγάλης μικροῖ

διασχίσεις τε καὶ ἀπονεύσεις, αἱ μὲν πλείον, αἱ δὲ ἔλαττον περιελθούσαι, εἰς ταῦτόν ὄμως πέρας συνθέουσιν. (*Epitaphios* 236a-b)

He [Themistius' teacher who is being praised] considered Epicurus the son of Neocles to be especially clever and that it was not possible to divide what is indivisible. He would frequently introduce Epicurus into his lectures just enough to show him off to those who were unfamiliar with him, and then he would quickly send him away again out of the ranks of philosophers, pouring perfume on his head as he did so, on the grounds that Epicurus was a lover of pleasure. He should not have dealt with this issue in this way. In fact, no philosophy is so different from another that they cannot share the same city and the same stage in peace. In reality, it is as though there is a great and broad road with smaller divisions and diversions, some take a longer path whereas others take a shorter, but nevertheless they all arrive at the same end.

Themistius expresses his attitude toward Epicurus in a different context in defence of his decision to accept a political office:

Μὴ οὖν ἀπρίξ ἔχου τοῦ ῥήματος, μηδέ, ὅτι Πλάτων ἐν Πολιτεία τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς θείας θεωρίας καταβαίνοντας εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ὑποκορίζεται τούτῳ τῷ ῥηματίῳ, οἷου καὶ μικρὸν πολιτεύεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖ τὸ ἄνω καὶ κάτω ὡς οὐχ ἀπλοῦν. ἀλλ' Ἐπίκουρος μὲν μικρός, καὶ ὅστις ζηλωτὴς Ἐπικούρου, σαρκὸς ἡδονὴν τεθαυμακῶς, Πλάτων δὲ ἄνω αἰεὶ, καὶ ὅστις ἔπεται Πλάτωνι, τὴν πρὸς θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν μεταδιώκων. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν μεταίχμιῳ, ἀγαπῶντες, εἰ ποτὲ μὲν ἄνω εἴημεν, ποτὲ δὲ κάτω. καὶ τὸ κάτω δὲ ἡμῶν οὐ παντάπασι κάτω ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν ἐξήπται καὶ ἀπευθύνεται. (*In Defence of Accepting Political Office*, 30).

Do not hold so tightly to the exact word, nor, as Plato does in his *Republic* criticize those who descend from divine theory into human knowledge with this word and say that such men are only engaging in the insignificant sort of politics. Rather, realize that what is up and what is down is not a simple distinction. Epicurus is small, and whoever is an admirer of Epicurus and displays excessive admiration for a little bit of flesh, whereas Plato and whoever follows Plato is always looking upwards, pursuing the goal of becoming like god. We, on the other hand, live as though in the space between two battle lines, and are satisfied if at times we are looking up and at times down-- and, in fact, our down is not always down but hangs and is ordered from on high.

In this context and in conclusion, I can return to the significance of Proclus' reading of *Republic* 390a8-b3. It seems as if there are at least three possibilities for explaining his initially surprising approach. Two would involve a sort of historical developmentalism. Perhaps, this approach to Homer was pioneered in the late Republican or early imperial period (around the time of Eudorus and Arius Didymus) as a sort of eclectic philosophy which read the highly developed philosophical discussion about the *telos* of the best life alongside a key passage of Homer. In this case, this

reading of the *Republic* would have its origin in the consideration of the sort of material preserved in Stobaeus under the heading Περί τέλους and represent a sort of moderate eclecticism occasioned by deep engagement with Stoics, Epicureans and other Hellenistic schools. A second possibility would be that this reading of the *Republic* is an attempt to bring Platonism closer to Epicureanism similar to the way that Themistius tries to assert the harmony of the various schools when faced with the threat of those who reject philosophy entirely. In this case, the reading would be a development of late-antiquity, and Proclus, now faced with truly radical opponents, would simply be trying to prevent the *Republic* from being misused by the opponents of what he calls "demotic eudaimonia", even at the cost of twisting or ignoring the surface meaning of Plato's text. The third and final possibility, and the most intriguing, would be that Proclus' reading of this passage uncovers something essential about the way the *Republic* is written, and in fact, for that very reason, can help us understand why, for over 800 years between the time of Plato and Proclus, Plato's thought seems to have supported rather than suppressed such a wide range of the arts and sciences-- rhetoric, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, prose literature, inspired poetry and other philosophies-- that contributed to demotic well-being.

If this third possibility is correct, then one would say that by criticizing Homer, Plato instituted those contests in order to create a space for science and knowledge within a society founded and structured upon admiration of the poets, above all Homer. He tried to create a space for discussions about the way things really are, in biology or politics or physics rather than merely what authoritative poets said about things; we can imagine the difficulty and importance of this project only by considering a world in which our biology and physics professors relied primarily on quotations from Shakespeare. All the evidence from antiquity indicates that Plato's project succeeded spectacularly. His success in this regard however provides no reason whatsoever for thinking that his philosophy devalued or dismissed cultural knowledge. In fact, the case is the opposite-- we have far more evidence for how Plato's thought was integrated into a system of cultural knowledge in antiquity than we have for any of antiquity's other philosophies. More serious examination of this material can only help to increase our respect for the reason and the culture of the Greeks.

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