

# **THE METAPHYSICS OF POLYTHEISM IN PROCLUS**

**by**

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“But apparently the One neither is nor is one,  
if this argument is to be trusted.”  
(Plato, *Parmenides* 141 E)

To Jennifer

### Acknowledgments

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: General Characteristics of Henadic Multiplicity	17
Chapter 2: The Gods and Being	61
Chapter 3: The Integrity of Pantheons	96
Chapter 4: Henads and Monads	151
Chapter 5: The Three Intelligible Triads	185

Chapter 6: The Order of the Intelligible-and-Intellectual Gods	255
Chapter 7: The Order of the Intellectual Gods	323
Conclusion	377
Appendix: A Review of Selected Literature on the Henads	384
Bibliography	444

## Introduction

This dissertation seeks to restore the doctrine of the henads to its proper place at the center of our understanding of Proclus' metaphysics. To do this, it is necessary to correct two key mistakes made by modern commentators on the henadology.

The first is the tendency to overlook unique logical and structural characteristics of the henadic manifold setting it apart from any ontic manifold, that is, any multiplicity of *beings*. Once we see that a logic really distinct from that which applies to beings applies to supra-essential entities, the henads will no longer seem, as they might otherwise, a mere structural complement within the system. We shall see, in short, the *work* the henads do. The whole concept of the supra-essential or "existential," that which lies *beyond being*, will therefore acquire for us true content, whereas otherwise it might seem mere hyperbole or obscurantism. To arrive at a *contentful* interpretation of Proclus' key philosophical concepts is a requirement of hermeneutic charity, and we must not allow an appearance of exoticism such

as Proclus may present to us in one respect or another to excuse us from the burden of taking him seriously as a philosopher, just as we must not assume that because his dominant medium is commentary, that we shall not find in him originality of thought.

The second problem which has hindered the contemporary understanding of the henadology has been the inability of commentators to integrate the religious and philosophical dimensions of the doctrine. The henads are also the Gods; and this has caused inexplicable problems for commentators who would not, to put it bluntly, find it so difficult to grasp the interplay and interdependence of philosophy and theology in a Christian, Jewish or Muslim philosopher. In such a case, one would recognize the positive contribution that the attempt to rationally articulate a religious position could make to a philosopher's thought; one would not see the philosopher in question as merely engaged in an exercise of special pleading. Such an attitude toward the relationship between religion and philosophy is perfectly defensible on its own grounds, but it must be applied with fairness across the board. An implicit assumption in the background for many commentators with respect to the henadology seems to be the following: if the identity of the henads and the Gods is to be taken seriously, then the philosophical significance of the henads must be minimal, while if their philosophical significance is to be affirmed, then their identity with the Gods must be a mere concession to vulgar opinion, even if the vulgar opinion is Proclus' own. Upon either alternative, the *integration* of the philosophical and theological dimensions of the henadology is practically ruled out from the start.

What is the source of this presupposition? One could attribute it simply to the difficulty that modern commentators have often found taking the classical paganism of the West seriously. The images of Homer's Olympians seem incompatible with either sincere piety or profound theological reflection. Indeed, it is a habit of long standing to see the birth of philosophy itself in the West as a function of the progressive estrangement from paganism. This view, of course, features in a particular metanarrative of the spiritual history of the West. To trace the history of this metanarrative and criticize the notions upon which it rests is not the task of this dissertation. Nor does this metanarrative suffice by itself to explain the complex of assumptions which have prevented the proper grasp of the henadology. Instead, we may find upon examination that the roots of the incapacity to integrate the philosophical and theological dimensions of the henadology lie in the first problem I outlined, namely the incomplete understanding of the special logic of supra-essential existence in Proclus. For it is not merely a question of a reflexive cultural bias privileging monotheism, but beyond this, of a logic of unity and multiplicity for which intelligibility can only come at the cost of reducing multiplicity to unity and the diverse to the same.

The thesis of this dissertation is that Proclus interprets the primacy of *unity* in the Neoplatonic tradition as the primacy of *individuality*, and the first principle of Neoplatonism, the One Itself, as the principle of individuation. Furthermore, the One Itself, despite its hypostatization for discursive purposes, is actually not different from each member of the ultimate class of individuals: the One *is* each henad. Proclus can thus be seen, from different points of view, as a monist or a pluralist, for while there is for



him a single principle from which all of reality depends, and in that respect he is unquestionably a monist, that principle is also really *many*. It is not, however, as many henads that the One is the first principle, for the first principle cannot be many. Instead, the One is the first principle *as each henad individually*. That is, it is in the *uniqueness* of each henad that the first principle is manifest, not in that henad's membership in any group or class. Failing to grasp the true nature of the relationship between the henads and the One, commentators have naturally seen a tension between Proclus' polytheism and his Neoplatonism. For they have assumed that the unity of the One Itself must trump the multiplicity of the henads, making of polytheism a mere appearance veiling an underlying unity. But in this they have failed to take seriously the negations laid upon the One in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, for Proclus the most canonical of Platonic texts. For the One neither *is*, nor is *one*. Naturally this does not mean that it simply fails to exist or that it is ontically many. When I say that the One is not ontically many, what I mean is that the ultimate source of Being is not many *principles*, but just one, the principle of individuation. But that source is no *one thing*. Proclus is not therefore a pluralist in the sense of, say, Empedocles, for whom there is a discrete set of distinct principles, themselves beings, which constitute all the rest. Instead, we might say that for the purposes of *ontology*, he is a monist, while *existentially*, that is, with reference to the supra-essential realm, he is a pluralist.

This distinction between ontological and existential registers of philosophical reflection parallels the distinction between philosophical and theological discourse; and this is why the two misunderstandings preventing

a proper grasp of the henadology, namely the distinct logic of unity and multiplicity applicable to supra-essentials and the relationship between the philosophical and theological dimensions of the henadology, depend upon each other. For if the distinction between philosophical and theological discourse were fully collapsed in Proclus, then he would be either a pluralist à la Empedocles, betraying his Neoplatonism, or his polytheism would be a mere appearance, inasmuch as the many Gods would in every respect simply derive from a One which, whether producing them or comprising them, either way *totalizes* them. But this would, in a word, reduce Proclus' philosophy to nonsense. His protestations to the contrary, the relationship between the One and the henads would be in every way assimilable to that between any other principle and its products/participants, and while we might still find worthwhile material in his ontology, his account of the supra-essential domain would be at best uninteresting and at worst a philosophical embarrassment. What we find instead is a doctrine of remarkable subtlety, for the distinction between philosophical and theological discourse for Proclus is that between a discourse of *classes* and a discourse of *proper names*. The philosopher, except for purposes of illustration, has nothing to do with particular deities, but only with *classes* of Gods. Henads, while they are all supra-essential by nature, fall into classes based upon their activities with respect to Being. In this way we can speak of classes of deities mirrored by the hierarchy of ontic hypostases, all the way up to the class of Gods *simpliciter*, which is the class corresponding to the One Itself. However, each henad is also an individual God with a proper name and an identity primordially distinct from the rest. To deal with particular, named Gods is the province of

the theologian and, of course, the individual worshiper. The proper domain of philosophy, that is, the domain of *form*, is bounded above and below by a domain of individuals, below by those individuals falling short of formal unity or identity, namely individuals like us, those who fall under *infima species*, above by those individuals *transcending* formal unity, and who are thus uncircumscribed by the laws governing the unity and multiplicity of ontic sets, namely the henads.

In the ontic realm, all multiplicity is subordinate to unity; and in this sense, that is, *ontically*, the same can be said for the henads. Gods are formally subordinate to the quality of Godhood; this is no more and no less than analytic. For this reason, it would make no sense to speak, as an Empedoclean pluralist would, of an *ontic* multiplicity of first principles, for then they would be no longer *first*. Such a discourse merely fails to take stock of its own tacit presuppositions. The multiplicity of the henads takes place in a different register which grounds the realm of forms and upon which therefore the latter can make no claims. But this is not to withdraw support from the realm of Form; rather, the story which must be told through the henadology is how the realm of formal unity comes into being from out of the realm of transcendent individuality. It is not a story of the descent from “unity” to “multiplicity” – this oversimplified picture of the generic Neoplatonic system has held sway for too long. Instead, it is the story of the constitution, the emergence, of one type of unity out of another. The key to this emergence is the distinction between the existence, or *hyperaxis*, of each God and that God’s powers, or *dunamis*, for it is out of this opposition that the opposition between the supra-essential and Being arises.

The distinction between *hyparxis* and *dunamis* resembles the distinction between an agent and that agent's actions. The Gods can be classified according to their *dunamis*, but the qualities they possess, as compared to the qualities possessed by beings, are more akin to things the henads *do* rather than things they simply are. This is important, because it is the tendency of Platonic ontology to reduce individual beings to bundles of qualities. The qualities possessed by the Gods are as specific as we can discern, as generic as simply being Gods. Students of comparative religion have carried out such classifications literally for thousands of years. Thus we compare deities of different pantheons according to their functional characteristics, such as Zeus and Indra, or Demeter and Isis. If we stipulate, however, which students of comparative religion have *not* always done, that these are indeed merely *comparisons* between really distinct entities, and are not therefore to be taken for *identifications*, then we are confronted by the problematic lying at the nexus of philosophy and theology for Proclus. For if the logic of unity and multiplicity governing the realm of forms governed also the Gods, then not only would Zeus and Indra be one to the degree that they exhibit common qualities which will make of them participants in some common form, but all the Gods will be one insofar as they participate in the quality of Godhood, and the realm of form in general will have the same priority over the Gods as over any other entities instantiating this or that assemblage of qualities. The Gods would be, like ontic individuals, just bundles of qualities, except they would be the first bundles. Thus would the henadology collapse into triviality.

Instead, in Proclus' system, the qualities one God possesses in common

with another *for us*, their common *dunameis*, have no capacity to unify the Gods over and against their unique individuality. For the uniqueness of each henad is something above and beyond formal determination; it is not given by their reciprocal or diacritical differentiation from the rest (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), even if that is how it is given for us, that is, even if that is as far as we can cognize it. The realm of form is the creation of the Gods, the residuum of their activity; there can be no question of deriving them *from it*. Instead, Proclus must account for how the realm of form comes to possess the power it has for us, the power to grasp, on its own terms and within its own limits, the Gods themselves, that is, classify them even so far as to speak of their cause and unity, which is, “existentially” speaking, nothing at all. But it is conceived by virtue of turning the intellectual structures generated by divine activity back upon the Gods themselves. The account of the emergence of formal unity is primarily to be gleaned from the *Platonic Theology*, and therefore the last three chapters of this dissertation are devoted to a close reading of this text.

The genesis in question is not, of course, a genesis in time and space, but an ideal constitution. The schema of this genesis is provided by the negations of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, which for the Athenian school of Neoplatonism after Syrianus had the significance of laying out, in the language of philosophy, the successive ranks of the Gods, as well as indicating the hierarchy of ontic hypostases. The ranks or classes of Gods and the ontic hypostases are essentially one and the same, the hypostases being the universal dimensions of the Gods’ activity. The series of qualities which are denied of the One Itself – and therefore denied of *each* God *qua* absolutely

unique individual – represent the fundamental ontological determinations indispensable to the cognition of reality, such as Unity and Multiplicity, Whole and Part, Sameness and Difference. Each rank in this hierarchy represents at once a manifested power of some class of Gods, as well as the *reserving* of the Gods of this class of their transcendent individuality, for it is none other than this transcendent individuality of each God that *is* the One Itself. The manifested powers of the Gods are thus the ideal structures around which beings achieve concretion; the ontic hypostases and intelligible forms thus generated, the principles that populate the philosophical taxonomy, are not the Gods themselves, but the results of their activity. Being is constituted by the activity of the Gods. At every level of Being, the condition of the possibility of the mode of being corresponding to that level is the existence of an order of Gods manifesting *in itself* the appropriate structure. Every God is a supra-essential henad, regardless of the level or levels of Being at which their activity is manifest. The Gods do not themselves come to be; but they lend themselves, as it were, to Being's generation.

At first, they lend themselves simply as the individuals they are, befitting their primordial individuality, in which lies their supra-essential status. The "intelligible" order of Gods, then, which is treated in the third book of the *Platonic Theology*, which corresponds to and *constitutes* Being Itself, Being *qua* Being, expresses not a disposition of Gods relative to each other but the characteristics inherent in each and every God. Every God is, by default and even if manifesting him/herself at no subsequent level, an intelligible God. For this reason, the intelligible order takes the form of three triads, which in themselves correspond to the three major ontic hypostases of Being, Life and

Intellect. The presence of these qualities nascently in every God provide the condition of the possibility of the manifestation of any God at any level of Being in principle. This order of Gods is discussed in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

The second tier of manifestation is the level of the “intelligible-and-intellectual” Gods. This corresponds to the second ontic hypostasis, that of Life. Here for the first time Gods emerge *together*. However, the nature of this co-emergence is not yet such as would allow us, had the procession of Being gone no further than this, to constitute a *philosophical* system. Therefore, instead of forming a logical *class*, the Gods emerging together at this level constitute a common *field* which is conceived in terms at once proto-spatial and mythical. In other words, the description proper to this level makes use only of those determinations which have come into being with this level. The members of the intelligible-and-intellectual order of Gods are disposed relative to each other, but not as members of logical classes or species but as occupying a common *mythical space*. This “space” is also, from an abstract viewpoint, the scene of intellection, that is, the movement of thought prior to the hypostatization of relations. This order of Gods is discussed in the fourth book of the *Platonic Theology* and in the sixth chapter of this dissertation.

The third tier of manifestation is the level of the “intellectual” Gods. Once again, that a God is an “intellectual” God does not mean that s/he is actually at the level of the ontic hypostasis of Intellect, but that s/he is a supra-essential God whose *activity* is such as to constitute as its residue the ontic hypostasis in question. The emergence of intellectual being is accomplished

by the activity of an order of Gods amongst whom an additional characteristic comes forward: the new element present in the intellectual order of Gods is *narrativity*. The Gods of this order are not merely *present* together, they engage in *activity* together, which takes the form of *mythological narrative*. Narrative action implies fully reciprocal relations of the Gods to each other, and hence the hypostatization of relations themselves. The members of the intelligible order of Gods – which is every God simply *qua* God – had no relationship to each other. Rather, each simply *contained* the All. Within their potentialities, their *dunamis*, were the potential for many specific relations to other deities, but these were not to be fully actualized as relations, that is, as “thirds” beside the two deities concerned, until the intellectual order. This is because relation in general achieves concretion in the intellect. The concretion of relation permits at last the genuine *unification* of the Gods into a class represented by the power to quantify over “All the Gods.” Indeed, with the emergence of intellect, all that is necessary for philosophy is in place; the Gods have provided humans with the capacity to understand the cosmos at the same time that they have imparted to the cosmos itself a fully intelligible structure. And so when we speak of an intelligible or an intelligible-and-intellectual *class* of Gods, we are regressively applying to these orders of Gods prior to the emergence of intellectual being characteristics appropriate to intellectual being.

Each stage of the emergence of Being from the activity of the Gods is also a stage of theological hermeneutics: the Gods as individual icons, then together as in a place, then as actors determined reciprocally against one another in mythological narrative. But how are we to understand the



application of this schema to concrete religious texts? I have avoided, in my brief resume of the stages of the constitution of Being above, speaking of the specific deities and texts to which Proclus has recourse in the *Platonic Theology*. This is because it is my thesis that the latter are meant to be *illustrative* rather than exhaustive. Proclus' goal in the *Platonic Theology* is not to exhaustively catalogue the company of the Gods; he never says as much. Rather, his goal is to show how *Plato* is in harmony with *Hellenic* theology. The *Platonic Theology* is, in other words, the application of Proclus' system to a particular task. That Proclus' own religious practice extended beyond the Hellenic Gods is clear from the account of his biographer. These are important points, for they follow from the principles underpinning his philosophical system as a whole. The individual deities discussed in the *Platonic Theology* must be there as representatives of the *classes* of deities in question, for a philosophical discourse about hypostases can only connect to a theological discourse in pertaining to a *class* of deities. Only a theologian can, through intellectual inspiration, that is, by participating in the very constitution of the cosmos by the Gods with whom s/he is in contact, affix particular deities to roles within the cosmos. This is the task, in other words, of myth and of revelation rather than of dialectics.

When a theologian, that is, a theologian in the full-blooded sense, like the authors of the Orphic theogonies, gives an account of the activities of particular Gods in the constitution of the cosmos, what is the status of such an account according to Proclus? For Proclus, revelation and dialectic each possess their own perfection and their own truth and neither needs to or even *could* assert its hegemony over the other. The philosopher deals with

forms and with classes, the theologian with particular individuals. Nothing said by the one could possibly affect the other. It is not for the philosopher to say what deities actually fill which classes; for this, the philosopher may turn to the pre-existing corpus of mythological material as raw data from which to abstract formal, that is, intelligible, content. Nor is it for the theologian to assert that the Gods they worship fill *uniquely* the positions in the hierarchy of Being that are discernible through reason. Such a statement simply lacks any content at all, being an improper hybrid of two distinct modes of discourse which cannot be made to fit together in that fashion.

What would be the status, then, of the claim that all the Gods of different national pantheons are really the same limited set of deities under different names, or that all of the various deities are merely names of one God? These, too, are statements without content, inasmuch as they abrogate the relations between theological and philosophical discourse which arise from the fundamental hypothesis of the existence of the Gods. For if individuality is the ultimate form – and this is the meaning this dissertation proposes that Proclus accords to the doctrine of the One Itself – then the very regime of Form *upon its own assumptions* refuses to be placed above that of the proper name, and the move which would assimilate deities to one another based upon their functions, that is, subordinate individuality to function, existence to quality, cannot get off the ground, for it subverts itself. It would no more make sense to say that deities from two different cultures who are both demiurgic deities, are for that reason *the same*, than it would to say that the positing of the One Itself prior to Being means that all the Gods are really “one.” For to posit the One Itself prior to Being is no more than to posit, in

the ontic language of principles and classes, a domain of absolute individuality prior to the domain of formal unity.

One final note is required with respect to the method of this study. The goal of this work is not to do justice to any particular text of Proclus', but to do justice to the doctrine of the henads itself. I thus present a *synoptic* account of the doctrine drawing upon all of Proclus' texts. It is my conviction, based upon my study of Proclus' texts, that there is no reason to posit any important changes in the doctrine of henads over the course of his career, nor that there are differences in the doctrine from text to text requiring much in the way of special treatment. This is not to say that different texts do not provide different perspectives on the doctrine in accord with the special aims of those texts; and I discuss at several points the special aims, in particular, of the *Elements of Theology* and the *Platonic Theology*, principally in order to clear up certain misunderstandings as to these aims. But this is not a matter of differences in the doctrine, but at most of different aspects of the doctrine which are highlighted by different sorts of treatment. As often as not, the differences that may appear from text to text are a result of the refinements Proclus continually attempted to make in his ways of *expressing* the novel elements of the doctrine of the henads in a fashion that best conveyed its harmony and continuity with historical Platonism; for it was ever Proclus' conviction that, were they only properly understood, philosophers of worth would not be seen to conflict with one another.

*A Note On the Texts of Proclus*

Passages from the *Elements of Theology* and the *Parmenides* commentary appear for the most part as translated by Dodds and by Morrow and Dillon, respectively, with the exception that they have been modified throughout to accord with stylistic choices, such as capitalizing the names of hypostases or the word “Gods,” as well as to standardize the translation of important technical terms and, at times, to render them more literal. This is typically the approach with other modern (20th century) English translations of ancient texts in this dissertation as well. Translated passages from the *Timaeus* commentary, the *Platonic Theology*, and other texts of Proclus referred to in passing, freely incorporate elements from the French translations as well as from the early 19th century English translations of Thomas Taylor in order to embody what I regard as the clearest, most literal and most systematically fruitful reading of the Greek text.

Citations of the *Platonic Theology* [PT] appear in the following format: book number, chapter number, page number in Saffrey and Westerink’s French edition, line number in the Greek text; and citations from all other texts in the series of Les Belles Lettres are done in analogous fashion. Where the book number, chapter number, or page number is evident from context, these may be omitted, starting from the book number; references more general in scope may omit line number or page number. Citations from the *Timaeus* commentary [IT] are by volume and page of Diehl’s edition. Those from the *Parmenides* commentary [IP] are according to Cousin, except for the Latin section, the numbers of which are followed by a “K,” all of which is in

accord with the marginal numbering in Morrow and Dillon's translation. Citations from the *Cratylus* commentary [IC] are by the paragraph numbers in Pasquali's edition; citations from Marinus' life of Proclus are cited by the paragraph numbers in Boissonade's edition. Citations from the *Republic* commentary [IR] are by volume and page of Kroll's edition.

## Chapter 1:

### General Characteristics of Henadic Multiplicity

A useful text from which to begin our inquiry comes from Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*. In this passage, Proclus explicitly contrasts the mode of existence of the forms with that of the henads:

all the henads are in each other and are united with each other, and their unity is far greater than the community and identity among beings. In these too there is compounding of forms, and likeness and friendship and participation in one another; but the unity of these former entities, inasmuch as it is a unity of henads, is far more uniform and ineffable and unsurpassable; for they are all in all of them, which is not the case with the forms. These [the forms] are participated in by each other, but they are not all in all. And yet, in spite of this degree of unity in that realm, how marvelous and unmixed is their purity, and the individuality of each of them is a much more perfect thing than the

difference of the forms, preserving as it does unmixed all the divine entities [*ta theia*] and their proper powers distinct [...] (IP 1048. 11-26)

In this passage there is nothing whatsoever of the One Itself; rather, it is a question of a straightforward contrast between *henads* and *forms* or, more simply, *beings*. The text lays out a series of contrasting characteristics. The henads are *all in all* or *all in each*, in which lies their “unity” (*henôsis*). Notice that this unity is not a matter of their union *with or in the One*, but the presence of all the henads in *each other*. The “unity” of the henads thus conceived far exceeds that which beings possess by virtue of the corresponding phenomena among them, namely community, identity, compounding of forms, likeness, friendship, and participation in one another. This latter, in particular, is mentioned twice, and thus makes the clearest contrast to the all in all of the henads, which is mentioned three times. So far, it would seem as if what is at stake here is a difference in the degree to which entities are united *with each other*, with the various relationships mentioned as existing among beings serving to unite them with each other to a lesser degree than that to which the henads are united with each other. “Unity” then would be a matter of the reduction of difference to identity. But then Proclus proceeds to contrast the purity and individuality [*idiotês*] of the henads to the difference [*heterotês*] of the forms. It cannot be a matter, then, of entities simply becoming more united with each other, and hence less differentiated from each other, as we ascend to the One Itself. A henad is both more united to the other henads than a being is to other beings, *and also more distinct from the other henads than a being is from other*

*beings.*

There are only two options: Proclus is either simply positing an irrational *coincidentia oppositorum*, or propounding a philosophical doctrine of more subtlety than has hitherto been appreciated. That he intends what he says here to bear philosophical weight is indicated by his remarks a page later: "So much, then, may be said concerning the situation of the primal henads and their communion with and distinction from one another, of which we are wont to call the one particularity [*idiotêta*], the other unity [*henôsin*], distinguishing them thus also by name from the sameness and difference manifested at the level of Real Being" (1049). The attempt to establish technical terminology respecting the difference in question hardly seems consistent with an appeal to a *coincidentia oppositorum* beyond our rational powers. Let us proceed, then, to try to better understand what Proclus means by the contrast he draws here.

Among the characteristics attributed to beings in the passage cited above, the ones that stand out especially are sameness or identity (*tautotês*), difference (*heterotês*), and participation (*methexis*) in one another. These are both the most frequently repeated characteristics, and also those with the clearest systematic functions in Proclus' thought. Participation is perhaps the most familiar of all concepts in historical Platonism, which is not to say that there is a uniform doctrine with respect to it. Indeed, for Proclus, participation has different qualities at different levels of Being, which is his chief strategy for handling problems with the concept. What is important for our purposes, however, is to figure out what general characteristics of participation are here



being *denied* of the henads. For Proclus' remarks here, where he contrasts the all-in-all of the henads to the participation in each other of the forms, should be seen in the light of his rejection elsewhere of henads participating altogether, that is, not just in each other, but in *anything*. Proclus states in proposition 118 of the *Elements of Theology*, for instance, that the Gods "have no attribute by participation, but all according to *hyparxis* [existence] or implicit in their causality [*kat'aitian*]" and at *In Tim.* I, 364, we read that "every God is essentialized [*ousiôtai*] in being a God, or rather is supra-essentialized [*huperousiôtai*], but there is not anything which is participated by him; because the Gods are the most ancient and venerable of all things." This latter passage is particularly significant, inasmuch as it explicitly states that the fact that the Gods possess a common characteristic does not mean that they participate in something.

This, we must recognize, would represent a clear break with one of the most basic axioms of Platonism, namely that common characteristics belonging to coordinate entities are to be explained by reference to their common participation in some single principle of a higher order of being than they.

In Proclus, participation as such tends to be superseded by a more general relationship, that between a manifold (*plêthos*) or class (*taxis*) and its principle or monad, with its complementary concepts of procession from (*proödos*) and reversion upon (*epistrophê*) the principle. The basic concepts are laid out in prop. 21 of the *Elements*, which states that "every class originates from a monad and proceeds to a coordinate [*sustoichon*] manifold, and the manifold of any class is carried back to one monad." In the body of the proposition, we read that

since ... in every class there is some common element, a continuity and identity in virtue of which some things are said to be coordinate [*homotagê*] and others not [*heterotagê*], it is apparent that the identical element is derived by the whole class from a single principle. Thus in each class or causal chain there exists a single monad prior to the manifold, which determines for the members of the class their unique relation [*hena logon*] to one another and to the whole.

Notice that the relationship of members of such an order to one another and to the whole is *mediated* by the monad prior to the manifold in question, the monad being equivalent to a single *logos* uniting the members of the order; and through the monad the series or class is one (*mia*, 21.5). This principle of mediation, where beings relate to each other indirectly through a superior principle, can be generalized to the whole of Being. At *IP* 703f we read that just as "there must exist ... prior to all beings the Monad of Being, through which all beings *qua* beings are ordered with respect to one another," so "we seek to know of them, in so far as they are beings, what sort of monad they have which embraces and unifies them." And again, "all beings are actually from a single monad which is and is called primarily Being, by which they are and are named beings according to their respective classes [*taxin*]; and from this monad all beings are sympathetic with one another and are in a sense identical, as holding existence from the One Being"; indeed, "all things, insofar as they participate in the One Being, are in a sense the same as one another and one" (704).

Ontology, therefore, is *monadology*. The concept of the monad with respect to Being is to express the participation of any sort of being whatsoever

in unity *as a being*, that is, as such and such a *type* of being, in short, specific or formal unity, which is essentially a play of identity and difference. The unity of beings is thus a unity of mediation, as much when we are speaking of the unity of some being as such a kind of being, for as far as form can determine the individual, as when we are speaking about the unity of beings with the whole of Being, their identity in and with Being. For the unity which is granted to beings through structures of mediation also undercuts their unity in the sense of individuality or uniqueness because of the holistic system into which they are folded by the very structures from which they derive determinacy. We read in prop. 66 that “every being is related to every other either as a whole or as a part or by identity or by difference.” We can see this as an axiom of the universality of mediation with respect to beings, inasmuch as the part is, naturally, mediated by the whole; that which is identical to another is mediated by that quality with respect to which the two are identical, or with respect to which something is self-identical; things which are different are mediated, likewise, by that quality in respect to which they differ; and finally, the whole is itself mediated by the parts, for even the “whole-before-the-parts” of, e.g., prop. 67, that is, “the whole in its cause” or “the form of each thing ... pre-existing in the cause,” is still “a whole of parts” albeit prior to them (prop. 73).

What I am calling the universality of mediation with respect to beings is in fact expressed in Proclus in terms of the universality of *mereology* or the logic of whole and part. For of the four relations which exhaustively determine beings, identity and difference are ultimately subordinated by Proclus to relations of whole and part. For identity and difference are simply

the positing of beings in relation to, that is, mediated by, classes of which they are or are not members. And according to prop. 74, "every specific form is a whole, as being composed of a number of individuals [*ek pleionôn huphestêken*] each of which goes to make up the Form." Furthermore, "even the atomic individual is a whole as being atomic, although it is not a Form," (i.e. it is a whole with only abstract or dependent parts) from which Proclus concludes that Wholeness is the more extensive predicate than Form, and thus ontologically prior. Indeed, we can think of the parts which constitute a form either extensionally, or intensionally, as we can see from a discussion at *IP* 1105 on the distinction between the One, which is "without parts," and that which is merely said to be "partless." The geometrical point, e.g., is partless, but

the definition of the point is made up of certain components, and all the elements comprising it hold the rank of parts in relation to that which is comprised of them. Similarly the monad, because it is not made up of distinct parts as is every number derived from it, is partless; but because it is comprised of certain elements which make it a monad and make it differ from a point, one would not be wrong in calling these components of the definition of the monad 'parts'; for those things that make up the definition of each form are assuredly parts of it, and it is made up of them as of parts, and it is a whole experiencing oneness only as an attribute, but not being the One Itself, whereas only that which is simply One is composed neither of continuous parts nor of distinct ones nor of component ones, being solely One and simply One, not something unified.

(The term "monad" retains here its earlier, mathematical connotations, as it

often does for Proclus). There is another, similar discussion of the different senses of the term “part” at *IP* 1113. “Primal Being” alone is prior to Wholeness, according to prop. 73, inasmuch as being is predicable even of parts *qua* parts. Of course, if *to prôtôs on* is prior to Wholeness, the henads must *a fortiori* be prior to Wholeness as well, for “every God is above Being, above Life, and above Intelligence” (prop. 115), that is, the first three ontic hypostases of later Neoplatonism. This is the meaning of the constant epithet of the henads, namely “supra-essential” (*huperousios*).

Discovering mediation and holism underneath ontic unity brings us to the point where we can see the contrast posed in the passage with which I began this chapter at last as a confrontation between *two modes of unity*. It is important to situate the contrast in terms of modes of unity for the difference in question must be located at the very point where Being and the supra-essential domain confront each other. If we recall to mind the order in which ontological terms emerge in the negations of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, then we shall see that *whole* and *part* only emerge through the activity of the second rank of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, that is to say, the second rank of the order of Gods corresponding to the second ontic hypostasis of Life. *Identity* and *difference*, for their part, do not emerge until even later, being products of the intellectual Gods. *Unity* and *multiplicity* are the first products of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, and the first *objective* products of the Gods in general.

The structure of monad and manifold is broad enough to encompass even the relationship between the One and the henads in prop. 21, whose

corollary cites these as the culmination of a series of examples of monads and manifolds. There is Nature and the many natures, Soul and the manifold of souls, Intellect and the manifold of intellects, while “for the One prior to all things there is the manifold of henads, and for the henads the upward tension [*anatsis*] toward the One.” We shall see just how far this analogy goes, for like every analogy in Proclus it has its proper sphere of application beyond which what is, properly used, a heuristic device, becomes an obstacle to understanding. The purpose of displacing the concept of participation in favor of the more generic concept of procession and reversion upon a principle (*archê*) seems to have been that different types of relationship to the principle became possible. One such is difference is that between *proödos* in a narrower sense, which denotes the production of inferior hypostases by superior, such as the generation of Soul by Intellection, and *hupobasis*, which denotes the production of, e.g., intellects by Intellect. Another type of difference, however, within the generic concept of causation expressed by the monad doctrine, concerns the very status of the causative principle in relation to its products.

At *IP* 1190, there is an interesting consideration of the applicability of the notion of difference to the relationship between the One and the Many (*polla*), the context being the affirmation at *Parm.* 139e that “the One cannot be other than, or the same as, either itself or another,” that is, the negation of identity and difference with respect to the One, to which corresponds the third order of the intellectual Gods. Proclus explains that despite their transcendence of difference (*heterotês*) as such, there is still differentiation among the Gods.

[T]he Many *qua* different are necessarily also in all ways 'other' [*alla*], but are not *different than* the One. For as he himself has declared, what is 'different' [*heteron*] is *different than another*; and so, even if they should be called 'others' [*alla*] and different than the One, one would not say it in the sense that they have made a procession from it by means of Difference ... let us grant that there is a declination [*huphesis*] from the One to these; but not every declination is the product of Difference, but only that declination which is in the realm of the forms.

Proclus goes on to explain that "the others than the One" will be called "different than the One insofar as by becoming *other than each other*, they are separated from the One, which absolutely rejects the title of reciprocal otherness [*tên allêlôn prosêgorian*]." And so "in the supra-essential realm," that is, the realm of the henads, "instead of the difference of superior forms from inferior, we must postulate transcendence [*huperochên*], instead of that of inferior from superior, declination [*huphesin*], and in place of the distinction [*diakriseôs*] of coordinates [*homostoichôn*] from each other, individual peculiarity [*idiotêta*]." The "Many" of the present passage are thus evidently the henads, whose individuality – note the use of *idiotês*, which was introduced as a technical term at *IP* 1049 – is contrasted with the "reciprocal otherness" of the forms, "the distinction of coordinates from each other," *other than-ness* or determinate difference of beings that are coordinate, that can be assigned to a common order or reduced to common "elements" (*stoicheia*).

The passage therefore constitutes an important amplification of the

passage from 1048 quoted at the beginning of the chapter. It is particularly important inasmuch as it deals more with the aspect of distinction and differentiation among henads and among forms, and it also brings in the One. The Many (that is, the henads) are “other” (*allos*) in relation to the One, but not different (*heteros*) than the One. This would seem to be nonsense if it were not for the explanation that what comes to be other *than* or different *from* the One, does so through coming to be other than its coordinates. That is, when determinate relation amongst coordinate entities arises, so too does a determinate relationship arise between them and their principle, ultimately the One. For *onta*, there are four types of relation (*pros allêla*), namely whole and part, identity and difference (prop. 66 ET); but the henads transcend relation (*schesis*) on account of their “purity” (*amigês*) (prop. 126), inasmuch as relation is a “qualification of being” (*prosthesis tou einai*) (prop. 122). The different position relative to the One of the henads and the forms is therefore a matter of the emergence, in the forms, of mediating relationships among them. Simultaneously to these, a relationship emerges between the forms and the One, where no clearly defined relationship existed between the One and the henads. The term *allos* refers to this looser, generic form of “differentiation.”

There are two relevant species of relationships in question here: the “vertical” relationships of superior and inferior entities, and the “horizontal” relationships of entities on the same “level” to each other. For the *single* vertical relationship between the superior and the inferior which is, among the forms, characterized by difference, Proclus substitutes in the supra-essential realm the *two* complementary notions of transcendence and



declination. These notions are not important in themselves. What matters, rather, is the strategy of breaking up the single relation into two, because of the way it forecloses mediation. Rather than a single substantial relation mediating two henads – *and hence uniting them in some third* – the relationship exists as a potential in each of the members. This potential is actualized and *becomes* a substantial relationship, a third, when the hypostasis of intellect is fully constituted. We shall have more to say below about this doctrine of relations among the henads as well as the way Proclus applies it to mythological hermeneutics. The special importance of the hierarchical relationship – for the “horizontal” relationship among the forms of reciprocal otherness or the distinction of coordinates he substitutes simply the *idiotês*, the individual peculiarity, of the henads – the reason why it is singled out here, is because were the relations of subordination between more “universal” and more “specific” henads to be granted the status such relations possess among forms, then the more “universal” henads would be *more* henadic than the more “specific” ones. But there are not degrees among the Gods. Proclus is quite clear that even an infra-intellectual God is still altogether a henad: the assimilative Gods (constitutive of the form of Likeness, that is, of assimilating participants to the forms they participate) are “according to their *hyparxeis*, beyond essence and multiplicity; but according to the participations of them which receive the illumination of a procession of this kind, they are called assimilative” (PT VI 16. 79. 7-10)

Here we see, I believe, the formal structure distinguishing the multiplicity of forms, and, by extension, of beings in general, from that of the henads. Coordinate terms, terms subsumed under a single class, are *other*

than one another, that is, they are reciprocally or *diacritically* distinguished, which implies mediation. The Gods' transcendence of *relation* lies in their transcendence of *mediation*. But how can this be if they are subject to the rules governing the relationships between monads and their manifolds in prop. 21? The henads cannot proceed from the One either by *hupobasis* or by *proödos*, for either of these imply some sort of *decline*, and there is no decline from the One to the henads. For if the One declined, as it were, from unity to multiplicity, then we would need to posit the activity of some principle of materiality as responsible for this multiplication. Proclus resists this, for example, at PT II 7. 50. 20-2: "For if the Good is multiplied through weakness [*astheneian*], the whole of things will proceed through a diminution [*huphesis*], rather than through a superabundance of goodness." The language of "diminution" here recalls the description of *hupobasis* at IP 746, where it was defined as the production by a monad of things "as if from the entirety of their natures but *diminished* for particular instances, their specific character being preserved but becoming more partial in them," like, e.g., intellects from Intellect. *Huphesis* is also the relationship between more "universal" and more "specific" henads, and therefore the "procession" from the One to the henads cannot be like that from, e.g., the intelligible to the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods. But neither can the henads come about by *proödos*, that is, "by a change in essence, as in the case of the production of the procession of images from paradigms" (ibid), for this mode of causation does not even exist among intelligibles, much less supra-essentials: "the forms are called *paradigms* of beings, while Being is cause, and not paradigm, of all that comes after it; for paradigms are causes of things differentiated [*diêrêmenôn*]

in their Being and which have essences characterized by difference [*diaphorous*]" (PT III. 52. 2-7). Similarly, in a remark at PT III. 3. 121-2 we read that: "in the first causes ... the motion of the cause [does not], bringing about a diminution of power, entail the generation of the whole of things into dissimilitude and indefiniteness [*eis...aoristian*]." The point of this passage is to rule out the sort of role in the production of the henads that might otherwise be envisaged for some principle akin to the Pythagorean "indefinite" – *aoristos* – Dyad. It is not some sort of proto-materiality that gives rise to the many Gods, nor is their multiplicity a "decline." As for matter, I will discuss it in detail later on. Let it suffice to say for now that "matter" is, insofar as it has any existence, a *product* of divine activity and not a cause of anything with respect to the Gods.

While Proclus may extend to the relationship between the One and the henads the structures truly appropriate rather to beings, he is at the same time constantly aware of the properties he wishes the henads to have in order to render with fidelity his combined philosophical and theological vision. Indeed, it seems to be a matter for him of balancing two sets of exigencies. One is the novel characteristics of the henadology, some of which it probably already possessed prior to him, others which were doubtless his contribution; the other, the inherited corpus of Platonic thought spanning hundreds of years, with respect to which Proclus' goal is to be as syncretistic and conciliatory as possible. Over the course of his career, he can be seen persistently refining the manner in which he expresses the doctrine in order to strike the best possible balance of these two sets of demands. Sometimes these efforts are quite subtle, and easily elude a reading insufficiently fine-

grained. For example, Francesco Romano has noted for the first time a distinct propensity throughout Proclus' work to use the term *aitia* in reference to the One, as opposed to *aition*, seemingly in order to avoid the hypostatizing connotations of *to aition*.<sup>1</sup> Given his strong tendency to downplay his own novelty and to harmonize his thought with that of his predecessors, we must be especially sensitive when reading Proclus to give due weight to those moments in which he permits himself a novelty, whether it be overt or subtle. Given what Romano has pointed out about the use of *aitia* to refer to the One, which is already evident in the *Elements*, we should not accord more weight than is merited to the extension of the structure of monad and manifold to the One and the henads. Indeed, according to prop. 21, a monad is simply that which "has the relative status of a principle (*archês echousa logon*).<sup>2</sup> In turn, an unparticipated principle "has the relative status of a monad (*monados echon logon*)" (prop. 23). The designation "monad" carries the minimum of ontological commitment, inasmuch as it is applicable even to the individuals under *infima species*. The most specific Ideas are those "that are participated by individuals, such as Man, Dog, and others of the sort. Their 'makings' have as their immediate result the generation of individual unities [*tas en tois atomois monadas*] – Man of individual men, Dog of particular dogs, and Horse and each of the rest in like manner" (IP 735). Similarly at IP 752 "monad" is used to refer to "the many separate individuals" under some Idea, e.g., "the infinity of existing men" under the Idea of Man.

The commonality between these usages of "monad" and those more akin

<sup>1</sup> "L'Idée de Causalité dans la Théologie Platonicienne de Proclus" in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne: Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 Mai 1998) en l'honneur de H. D. Saffrey et L. G. Westerink*, eds. A. Ph. Segonds & C. M. Steel.

to prop. 21 is the idea of some common *logos* in a multiplicity, with the degree to which we are entitled to hypostatize that *logos* being variable. The key, then, is to understand what aspects of “monadicity” are really appropriate to the relationship between the One and the henads and which are not. The important concept here seems to be mode of procession. In the passage from *IP* 1190 cited above, Proclus contrasted the mode of procession of the henads from the One to the “procession by difference” of the forms. Proclus speaks at *IP* 745 of three modes of procession:

In general, procession occurs either by way of unity [*henôsin*], or by way of likeness [*homoiotêta*], or by way of identity [*tautotêta*] – by way of unity, as in the supercelestial henads, for there is no identity among them, nor specific likeness, but unity only; by way of identity, as in the indivisible substances, where that which proceeds is somehow the same as what it came from, for being all safeguarded and held together by eternity, they manifest in a sense the identity of part to whole; and by way of likeness, as in the beings of the intermediate and lowest levels, which, though intermediate, are the first to welcome procession by way of likeness, whether in some cases it be identity and difference or likeness and unlikeness that is their cause.

The “procession by identity” of this passage is evidently the same as the “procession by difference” of 1190, since identity and difference share the same formal structure. In the scheme of the four ontic relations identity and difference were both reducible to relations of whole and part, because beings are identical and different with respect to the classes – i.e. wholes – of which they are parts. Identity and difference also arise simultaneously in the

intellectual order. There are thus for our purposes only two modes of procession here, the procession by unity of the henads, and the procession by identity-and-difference of beings, with procession by likeness included under the latter (“whether in some cases it be identity and difference...”), just as the form of Likeness emerges in the infra-intellectual orders where what is at stake are degrees of assimilation of participants to the forms. Beings also proceed by identity, because to *be* is on some level to be identical, as a part of Being, with the whole of Being. All that is, is the same as Being because every being is, and is one – a monad of some sort and an *hênômenon*, a unified entity, just like Being Itself. Being is one and many, identical and different, like all the beings themselves, for Being accepts all the determinations the One rejects in the first hypothesis.

What, then, is this “procession by way of unity” Proclus accords to the henads, and how does it differ from procession by way of identity? We find the same formulation in the *Platonic Theology* III 3. 11f, where, after having laid out a line of reasoning essentially the same as that of prop. 28 of the *ET*, i.e. that “[e]very producing cause brings into existence things like to itself before the unlike,” he concludes that

It is necessary therefore that it [the One] must produce from itself, prior to all other things, a unitary manifold [*plêthos heniaion*] and a series [*arithmos*] most akin to its cause [*tê aitia suggenestaton*]. For if every other cause constitutes a progeny similar to itself prior to that which is dissimilar, much more must the One reveal after this manner things posterior to itself, since it is beyond likeness, so the One Itself must produce according to unity [*kat’ henôsin*] things which primarily proceed from it. For how can the One give subsistence to

its progeny except unitarily [*heniaiōs*]?

It is not just a question, then, of the sorts of things that a producing cause brings to light or reveals (*ekphainei*), but also of *how* it reveals them. *Physis*, we read, produces “physically” (*phusikōs*), *psyche* “psychically” (*psuchikōs*), *nous* “intellectively” (*noerōs*) (III 3. 12). It is all too easy to overlook these disjunctions and the corresponding diversity, failing to think through the real differences in how these entities emerge or are posited in the unfolding of the system. Right now, however, we are concerned with just one such causal relationship, that by which the One brings forth the henads “unitarily.” What are the characteristics of this series so “akin” to its cause that it transcends the very economy of likeness and unlikeness which is the condition of the possibility of procession itself?

If that which primarily produces all things is the One, and the procession from it is unitary, it is necessary that the manifold thence produced should consist in *self-perfect henads most allied to their producing cause* [*henadas autoteleis huparchein tô paragonti suggenesteras*]. Further still, if every monad constitutes an appropriate series, as was before demonstrated, by a much greater priority must the One generate a series of this kind. For in the procession of things, that which is produced is frequently dissimilar to its producing cause through the dominion [*epikrateian*] of difference: for such are the last of beings, which are far distant from their proper principles. But the first series, which is *connascent* [*sumphuomenos*] with the One, is uniform [*henoeidēs*], ineffable, supra-essential, and perfectly similar to its cause. For in the first causes, neither does the intrusion of difference separate from the generator the things begotten, and transfer them into a different class, nor does a motion of the cause,

bringing about a diminution of power, entail the generation of the whole of things into unlikeness and indefiniteness [*aoristian*]; but the cause of all things, being unitarily [*heniaiôs*] raised above all motion and division, has established about itself a divine series, and has united [*sunênôsen*] it to its own simplicity. The One therefore prior to beings has given subsistence to the henads of beings. (12. 11 – 13. 5)

In the last beings, a gulf of difference separates producer and product; in the first series, however, the difference approaches zero: the henads are “connascent” with the One. There is no difference to separate them from their principle, for they would then lack the very unity, that is, individuality, integrity, and simplicity *each in itself* that is the very characteristic imparted them by the One. They would fall short in their unity were the One to be set over and above them. This is what makes the series, or *arithmos*, of the henads “ineffable”: the character of ineffability refers to the impossibility of drawing the inferences in respect to this series which would apply to any other class (*taxis*). For instance, the resolution of the aporia of the “Third Man” lies in recognizing the impossibility of placing participants and the form in a common class in respect of the characteristic imparted by the form, that is, in recognizing the transcendence of the form. Yet here, such a status is *denied* the One as cause of the henads, not because, like inferior classes of forms, it *falls short* of such transcendence, but rather because it *surpasses* transcendence.

Proclus discusses at *PT* II 3. 23f the nature of the “likeness” which is sublated in the relationship between the One and the henads:



it is necessary that every thing which is produced with reference to, and on account of it [viz. "the cause of all beings"], should have a certain relation [*schesis*] with it, and through this also, a likeness to it. For every relation of one thing towards another, is predicated in a twofold respect, either from both participating one thing, which affords to the participants a communion with each other; or from one of them participating the other ... Hence it is necessary ... either that there should be a certain third thing the cause of the relation, or that the principle should impart to the natures posterior to itself a tendency to itself, and that desire through which everything is preserved and exists.

The reference to a "third thing" puts us in mind of the problematic of the Third Man. To avoid an infinite regress of relations and causes of relations, the first series must relate to its cause through a desire – and hence a likeness – which does not cause us to posit any *relation* at all. Propositions 29 and 32 of the *ET* account for procession and reversion in general, and thus the entire domain of ontic production, by means of likeness. That the form of Likeness only arises in the infra-intellectual orders means that its application to the highest reaches of the system can only be regressive or retrospective. In this way the system can be levelled, in abstraction, to the state of its full intellectual determination, which tends to be Proclus' strategy in the *Elements*. In actuality, this involves pushing the lower-order principles to their limits and beyond to their nullification. Hence the *likeness* which would, analogically or regressively, apply to the production of henads by the One, is not likeness to anything different, but the very sublation of likeness, the "desire" imparted to the henads for the One – recalling the *anataxis* of the corollary to prop. 21 – a desire for *self*.

This is evident simply from the nature of the characteristic imparted by the One. The One or the Good is *sôstikon hekastou*, that which “conserves and holds together the being of each several thing,” (ET prop. 13). Desire of the One, therefore, is desire as *autopoiesis*, a self-production. In desiring the One/Good, entities desire their individual integrity. At IP 54K Proclus speaks of “a natural striving after the One” in everything: “What else is the One in ourselves except the operation and energy of this striving? It is therefore this interior understanding of unity, which is a projection and as it were an expression of the One in ourselves, that we call ‘the One.’ So the One Itself is not nameable, but the One in ourselves.” Again, “we should rather say that it is not the One that we call ‘one’ when we use this name, but the understanding of unity which is in ourselves” (ibid). This striving is aptly referred to at PT II 8. 56. 25-6 as a “desire for the unknowable nature and the source of the Good.” If for beings, the guarantor of this integrity is their form, then it is through the mediation of the form that the being desires itself, and constitutes itself through reversion upon its form. This means that for beings, the desire-for-self leads to the sublation of the self as narrowly conceived. For any being, reversion upon its form will reveal that the given being is mediated by the whole of Being. There is the caveat, however, that beings participate, not only in ontic classes, but also in divine series; and it is only through participation in such a series that a being has real subsistence *as an individual* rather than as instantiating form. Two modes of reversion are thus possible for individual beings: one by way of form, which is mediated by the whole of Being, the other by way of theurgic *sunthemata* and reversion upon the tutelary deity. I will discuss this more in subsequent chapters.

For the henad, however, there is, existentially, only itself. For as we read at *Decem Dubitationes* X. 63, "The One and the Good exist, in effect, in three ways: according to cause, and this is the first principle; for if this is the good and is it through itself, it is inasmuch as it is cause of all goods and all henads; or according to existence, and this is each God, since each of them is one and good existentially; or according to participation, and this is what there is of unity and goodness in substances."<sup>2</sup> This corresponds to prop. 65 of the *Elements*, which states that "all that subsists in any fashion is either according to cause in the mode of a principle [*archoeidôs*], or according to existence [*huparxis*] or according to participation in the mode of an image [*eikonikôs*]." But the interesting thing about the way in which the axiom is applied in the passage from *Dec. Dub.* is that usually when Proclus speaks of something subsisting *kat'aitian* it is a matter of seeing "the product as pre-existent in the producer" (prop. 65), as when we would speak of the subsisting of intellect in Being *kat'aitian*. But here, the subsistence of the One Itself *kat'aitian* actually posits it in things which ostensibly are *from* it, namely "all goods and all henads." And yet *this* is the One and the Good as "first principle." Where it is a matter of the subsistence of the One and the Good *kath'huparxin*, which is generally where "we contemplate each thing in its own station, neither in its cause nor in its resultant" (prop. 65), the One and the Good exists *as each God*.

In the "production" of the henads from the One, then, the normal economy of causal procession seems to break down. It has to, because what the One imparts, with surpassing perfection, to each God is that God's unique

<sup>2</sup> *Existentiam, Existens* render *huparxis* in this passage according to Carlos Steel, "Huparxis chez Proclus" in *Huparxis e Hypostasis nel Neoplatonismo* ed. F. Romano & D. P. Taormina (Leo S. Olschki Editore: Firenze, 1994) p. 94. The correspondence is, at any rate, evident from the parallel structure of *ET* prop. 65.

and absolute individuality. *The One would sacrifice its own perfection were it to subsist as something over and above the Gods, lest each God be less one.* This is the ultimate consequence of pursuing the concept of unity to its radical conclusion. A One over the many or subsuming the many must as a result impart a lesser degree of unity to them. Proclus says in the passage quoted above from *PT* III. 3. 12 that the henads are *suggenêstaton* in relation to the One, a term which can on the one hand simply mean “most akin,” but *suggenês* also means *cognate*, to the extent that, according to Isaeus (8.30, cited in Liddell/Scott p. 1660), the term would not properly be applied to the relationship between parents and children. Given the common analogy between causation and parentage, the connotation is important, and reinforced by *sumphuomenos* in the same passage, again on the one hand simply “connascent” or “connatural” but also literally *born with*. Procession by unity, of which the henads are the sole example, is in an important sense not procession at all. There is no One beyond the henads, only not through some failure of unity, but from each henad’s perfect unity. Procession by unity is not a question of the multiplicity of the henads vanishing into the One, as if the One is something simply perceived *by us* through “aspects,” “adumbrations” or “perspectives.” The One is not one, and its purpose is not the subordination of multiplicity. The unity which opposes multiplicity emerges at the beginning of the intelligible-and-intellectual order. The unity represented by the One is *individuality*, which in its perfection is present in a class of absolute and primordial individuals, the Gods.

The technical term for the type of unity possessed by the henads is *heniaios*, “unitary.” Prior to Proclus the term usually simply means a

unifying agent. "Unitary *Logos*" is for Aristides Quintilianus (*De Musica* I 3. 9) an epithet of the demiurge, where "unitary" is glossed as "making the many and diverse beings to rest by indissoluble bonds in one comprehension"; similarly Iamblichus, *De Myst.* VIII 3. 265. 6, which reports an ostensibly Egyptian doctrine respecting a "supreme unitary cause of all things" which "masters" the "indeterminate nature" (*tês aoristou phuseôs*) as or in conjunction with "a certain determinate measure" (*tinou hōrismenou metrou*). Notably, however, the term is also used in the plural by Iamblichus, *In Nic. Arithm.* 81. 15, which explains that all multiplicity which is brought together according to summation (*sōreia*) or herding together (*sunagelasmos*) it is possible to discriminate (*diakrinai*) into *heniaia*. *Heniaia* are here obviously integral individuals whose assemblage into a common body is adventitious in relation to their own individuality. This is quite consonant with the use of the term in Proclus with respect to the henads, the quality of which is perhaps best conveyed at *ET* prop. 127, on the "simplicity" and "self-sufficiency" of the Gods. Deities are "perfectly unitary," and as such are

simple in an especial degree ... whereas the composite is dependent, if not upon things external to it, at least upon its own elements, the perfectly simple and unitary, being a manifestation of the One which is identical with the Good, is wholly self-sufficient; and perfect simplicity is the character of deity. Being a pure excellence, deity needs nothing extraneous; being unitary, it is not dependent upon its own elements.

The quality of being unitary, then, is a matter of the integrity and autonomy of an individual irreducible to its elements, which contrasts with the lesser

integrity of that which participates unity, possessing unity merely as an attribute, the “unified” or *hênômenon* (cf. *IP* 1105). But what makes a “unified” individual less individual than a “unitary” individual is more than just that the former is a bundle of qualities with only an adventitious unity, as we might say of a composite substance; for even hypostases like Being Itself are “unified” rather than “unitary” – prop. 115 of the *Elements* states categorically that “every God is above Being, above Life, and above Intellect” because “Being, Life and Intellect are not henads but *hênômena*.” The question, rather, goes to the very nature of the unity in question. Prop. 18 of the *ET* states that “[e]verything which by its being [*einai*] bestows a character on others itself primitively possesses that character which it communicates to the recipients.” Thus Being is also itself a being, and with respect to its unity, which unifies beings *qua* beings with each other, is itself also *unified*, that is, a monad. The monad is the ultimate expression of the principle expressed in prop. 18, because it unifies others *and* is unified itself. As a result, it is only the positing of a manifold like that of the henads above and beyond the succession of monadic manifolds that prevents an infinite regress of the “Third Man” variety. The multiplicity of the henads is different from that constituted by monads in a crucial respect: the henads are not *unified* by any monad above them; that is, they form no whole. Instead, the role which would be played by a monad above them, the role played nominally by the One Itself, is played in reality by *each* henad for each contains the all and grounds the “whole,” rather than that “whole” being grounded, as in every other case, by some unique principle.

Proclus sometimes expresses the specific difference in the manifold

constituted by the henads by the use of the term *arithmos*, as he does in the passage from *PT* III. 3. 11 and at *ET* prop. 113, viz. “The series of the Gods is unitary in its totality [*Pas ho theios arithmos heniaios estin*].” The henads are formally and functionally distinguished as an *arithmos heniaion*, a unitary “series” or “set,” from the ordinary *plêthos*, which is governed by the rules laid out in prop. 21. (O’Meara, in *Pythagoras Revived*, remarks on the “broad, non-mathematical sense” of a “group or class” that Proclus gives to the term *arithmos*, noting astutely that Proclus distinguishes the henadology in this way from a “theologizing arithmetic” that would, e.g., “attribute them [the henads] to particular members of a numerical series” (205); I revisit this question in chapter 6.) The use of *arithmos* helps to distinguish a “unitary” manifold from a “unified” one, the former having its unity secured through the all-in-each of the members, the latter by a unifying monad. See also *IP* 1212, which refers to “the totality of the divine series [*pas te theios arithmos*], in virtue of which is the being, or rather pre-being [*proeinai*], of the Gods and of the whole divinized class of being [*pasa hê ektheoumenê taxis tôn ontôn*].” The “pre-being” of the Gods is here secured, *not* as one might otherwise expect, simply by reference to the One, but to the totality of the *arithmos* itself; it is as much as to say that the Gods possess their Godhood from themselves. *Arithmos* stands in for *plêthos*, for the latter notion has a distinct position in the procession of Being, namely in the intelligible-and-intellectual order (see chapter 6). In this order a number of crucial concepts first emerge: unity and multiplicity (*plêthos*), whole and part, finite and infinite. This is also where the negations of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* begin. And so Proclus can say that “a multiplicity of henads is discernible first in the first rank of the

intelligible-and-intellectual" (IP 1091), that is, a manifold *that unifies*.

The distinction between a "unitary" and a "unified" manifold is expressed nicely at IP 641f, where Proclus explains that the One "exists otherwise in the Gods than in the beings that come after the Gods; in the one case, it is self-sufficient, not like something existing in a substratum ... So in the former case the One *truly is*, while in the latter case it exists as a character in something" (my emphasis). By contrast we read at IP 970 that "every form is a whole experiencing as an attribute the One within it but not being that One," and at 1105, that "those things that make up the definition of each form are assuredly parts of it ... and it is a whole experiencing oneness only as an attribute, but not being the One Itself ... [which is] solely One and simply One, not something unified." The point of the passage from 641 cannot be that the One exists among the Gods as something *separate* – some *one* thing *different* from the rest, and so forth? – nor can it be to fold the Gods into it. At PT III 4, 123-4, for instance, Proclus explains that by establishing the henads, neither each as one *only*, in the same manner as the One Itself, nor each as one *and many*, like Being, we not only preserve the transcendency of the first, but also ensure that "the henads proceeding from it are unconfused either with respect to themselves, or to the one principle of them." And yet if the unity of the henads constituted a whole, rather than the all-in-each of a unitary set, the henads would precisely *not* be unconfused with respect to each other, nor to the One Itself, for if the One were really a monad declining into multiplicity then the henads would be contained in the One as effects in their cause. The One is not in the henads in the way that a monad is in its *plêthos*, by uniting them through a common characteristic, for the characteristic the



henads possess in common is none other than *irreducible uniqueness and individuality*. This uniqueness and individuality is not negative, a function of each henad's *difference* or *discernibility* from every other, but *positive*. Every henad is different from every other, but this is its ontic distinction, which is the shadow of a superordinate supra-essential distinction. Theirs is not an individuality borne upon identity and difference, but expressed in the proper name.

An ordinary monad would mediate the relationship of the henads to each other while also reserving its own difference and subsistence. The One does not *mediate* the henads because the One truly is *each henad*. This is the One's "self-sufficiency" – it is self-sufficient as *each* henad. Rather than a *summum genus*, then, at the top of a Porphyrian tree, the One is primarily a *principium individuationis*, hence the consistent stress by Proclus on the *individuality* of the henads in contrast to the reciprocal *difference* of beings. It is clearly the individuality of the henads which is the property they receive from the One, for otherwise the passage from 1048 would simply pose the henads as a multiplicity more unified, i.e. experiencing a greater degree of fusion, than the whole of Being, instead of going to pains to explain that the henads possess an individuality more perfect than the difference distinguishing beings. Furthermore, the unity described in prop. 13 of the *Elements* as being the contribution of the One/Good is manifestly individual integrity, for it is described as "that which conserves and holds together the being of each several thing [*sôstikon kai sunektikon tês hekastôn ousias*]" protecting it from "dispersion" (*skedasmos*). There is nothing in the proposition to imply that the function of the One is anything other than, as

Dodds characterizes it, “the ground of individuality” (p. 199). And the all-in-each of the henads *is* in fact the ground of their individuality, inasmuch as that which has no other outside it, that has its other in itself, is more *individual* than that which confronts an other through difference; therefore the all-in-each of the henads is the One Itself. In perfect accord, then, with the conclusion of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* that the One neither *is*, nor is *one*, we should say that the One *is* as each henad or, we might even say, as *henads*, rather than as the hypostatized entity that, for our own convenience, that is, in order to be able to refer to the phenomenon of divine causality in generic fashion, we refer to as “the One Itself.” In this sense, there is *no such thing* as the One Itself, if by that we mean something *different* than the henads. Thus we may clearly and unequivocally distinguish the One from the One-that-is, the Monad of Being, which subsists itself as something unified. The so-called first principle would thus, more properly, be first *principles*. And indeed, we read at 1048 that

It is the same to say ‘henad’ as to say ‘principle’, if in fact the principle is in all cases the most unificatory element [*to henikôtaton*]. So anyone who is talking about the One in any respect would then be discoursing about principles, and it would then make no difference whether one said that the thesis of the dialogue [the *Parmenides*] was about principles, or about the One.

What is remarkable about this passage is the lack of concern that Proclus evinces about the radical dispersion of the One across the entire hermeneutic field of discourse about *archai*. The pluralism thus entailed implies no relativism for him.

The radical autonomy of each henad is secured in large part because of the special way in which relations subsist amongst the henads. Proclus discusses the status of relations in the supra-essential realm at *IP* 936:

There is yet another sense in which “relative” might be used, one more perfect and more suitable to self-substantiating entities, in reference to cases where a thing, being primarily “for itself,” is also “for another,” that other thing being also primarily “for itself”; as for instance the intelligible is “for itself” and the Intellect is “for itself,” and through this very relation the Intellect is united with the intelligible and the intelligible with the Intellect, and the Intellect and the intelligible are one thing. Whereas a father in *this* realm, even though he is naturally a father, yet is not first “for himself,” and only then father of someone else, but he is what he is solely “for another,” in *that* realm any paternal cause is primarily “for itself,” completing [*plêrôtikon*] its own essence, and only then bestows an emanation [*proödon*] from itself upon things secondary to it; and any offspring exists “for itself,” and only then derives from something else. So when we speak of things being relative to each other in that realm, we must remove from them any notion of bare relation, devoid of essence; for nothing of that sort is proper to the Gods. Instead of relativity we must apply the concept of self-identity, and prior even to this self-identity the existence [*huparxin*] of each entity in itself; for each thing exists primarily “for itself,” and in itself is united to everything else [*ta alla*] ... Such an entity There, then, is non-relational, though productive of a relation.

Particularly interesting in this passage is that the dimension of the “for itself” as present in hypostases like Intellect and Being serves ultimately to *unite*

them, since in their very nature they co-posit each other. Thus in prop. 115 of the *ET* the henads are said to transcend Being, Life and Intellect inasmuch as “these three, though mutually distinct, are each implicit in the other two.” They achieve *their* self-substantiation by returning, as parts, to their originating wholeness, whereas the “for itself” of the henads, by establishing their existence prior to determination by their relations, saves them from being dissolved into a third term which would embody the being “for another” of those relations. Insofar as relations come to be “for another,” the diverse relata come to be unified in some one (recall *IP* 1190, where a determinate relationship between entities and their principle – “difference from” the principle – arose through coordinate entities coming into determinate relations to each other – coming to be “other than” each other). Instead, the relations emerge in the context of a henad fulfilling its essence, that is, through the constitution of Being by divine activity. In a similar vein, at 942 Proclus remarks that theologians employ the terms Mastership Itself and Slavery Itself “to indicate the controlling and subservient powers among the Gods; as indeed the paternal and maternal faculty appears in one form at the divine level, and in another at the level of the forms, not being even among these a mere relationship, but rather a generative power and a substance suitable to Gods.”

The Gods have, naturally, relationships among each other, but unlike beings, a God is “for itself” prior to these relationships, which do not therefore limit them in the way such relationships limit beings. Instead, the relationships are present incipiently as the “powers” of each deity. Proclus distinguishes explicitly between the powers of the Gods and their *hyparxis*, or

“existence,” a term which we have already encountered a few times. *Hyparxis*, which I will generally leave untranslated henceforth, is a technical term in Athenian Neoplatonism referring to the *existential* dimension of the henads inasmuch as they are prior to Being Itself and to the opposition of Being and Non-Being.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the general opposition of *hyparxis* or “existence” to Being is the opposition between considering the Gods with respect to their *huparxeis* and with respect to their *dunameis*. At IP 1128, for instance, intellectual shapes “are knowable and expressible as pertaining to the powers of the Gods, not to their substances [*tais huparxesin autais*], in virtue of which they possess the characteristic of being Gods, and to their intellectual essences, and it is through these that they become manifest to the intellectual eyes of souls.” The contrast between *hyparxis* and power in the nature of the Gods can also be expressed in terms of *henôsis*, the unity or integrity of the divine individual, as in ET prop. 93, concerning the infinitude of superior principles relative to inferior ones: “though they [the inferiors] unfold the powers contained in it [the superior], yet it has something unattainable in its unity [*henôsin*].” The “powers” of the Gods are also mentioned at PT III 24. 164-5: “We must never think therefore that all power is the progeny of essence. For the powers of the Gods are supra-essential, and are consubsistent with the henads themselves of the Gods. And through this power the Gods are generative of beings.” The powers of the Gods are, then, although in opposition to their “existence,” still themselves supra-essential. And indeed, it is in the opposition between *hyparxis* and *dunamis* that the opposition between the supra-essential and ontic domain takes root. For not only are the

<sup>3</sup> For the history of the term *hyparxis* in Neoplatonism, see *Hyparxis e Hypostasis nel Neoplatonismo* ed. F. Romano and D. P. Taormina (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1994).

Gods generative of beings through their powers, but one might say that it is through their powers that they themselves can be treated as beings – grouped into classes, for instance, as we shall see.

The distinction between the powers and the *hyparxeis* of the Gods serves a very practical purpose in Proclus, because it enables him to accept conflicting stories about the Gods. If according to Hesiod, Okeanos and Tethys are the siblings of Kronos and Rhea, while the *Timaeus* has it that Okeanos and Tethys are rather the parents of Kronos and Rhea, both can nevertheless be true, because what comes first is the individuality of Rhea, say, in whom – because all the other Gods are in her in some way – is a power of being-daughter-of-Tethys as well as a power of being-sister-to-Tethys, while in Tethys there is likewise a power of being-mother-of-Rhea and a power of being-sister-to-Rhea. In just this way, Proclus says of Hestia and Hera that “each of these divinities, together with her own proper perfection, possesses, according to participation, the power of the other” (IC 139). The reference to “participation” here is on the one hand merely analogical – later in the same text, Proclus will simply refer to “the Artemis and the Athena which Kore contains” (179) – but also appropriate to a point further on in the procession of Being when Gods will indeed “participate” each other, through the mediation of the demiurgic intellect. It is at that point that these relations of powers come to be “for another,” a process which I will discuss in more detail later. At any rate, we see here the application to mythological hermeneutics of the very doctrine whose technical formulation we read at IP 1190, by which what would be *relations* between beings mediating them, are instead *powers* possessed by Gods without any “reciprocal otherness” constituting a third.

Many examples of divine series are provided in the *Platonic Theology* in which some myth or attribute is assigned to a higher or lower emanation of a particular deity than some other with which it conflicts. There is thus a “higher” and a “lower” Persephone, for instance: the former is the Orphic Kore whose union with Zeus conceives Dionysos, while the latter is the Kore abducted by Hades into the Underworld. Proclus speaks as well of two Aphrodites and three Athenas. This process is in no way *ad hoc*, but has real systematic significance. For when Proclus opposes unity and multiplicity among the Gods, it is never a question of opposing a phenomenal multiplicity of deities to a more sublime unity, but rather a matter of the distribution of the powers present integrally at the summit of *each deity* among the lower hypostases of *that deity*; hence prop. 125 of the *ET*: “From that station wherein he first reveals himself every God proceeds through all the secondary orders, continually multiplying and particularizing his bestowals, yet preserving the distinctive character [*idiotêta*] of his proper nature.” For example, Proclus discusses “the multitude of the powers of Apollo” (*IC* 174-5), which are, in their totality, “not to be comprehended, nor described by us. For when will man, who is merely rational, be able to comprehend not only all the idioms of Apollo, but all those of any other God?” These powers, however,

subsist in the God himself in an united manner and exempt from other natures, but in those attendants of the Gods who are superior to us, divisibly and according to participation; for there is a great multitude of medicinal, prophetic, harmonic, and arrow-darting [i.e. possessing the qualities of Apollo] angels, daimons and heroes, suspended from Apollo, who distribute in a partial

manner the uniform powers of the God.

Again, at *IR* I, 147. 26-30, we read that, given the existence of an “Apolloniactal series [*seiras*]” we must, in regard to a given Homeric text, “consider who the Apollo is that sits with Zeus and the Olympian Gods; who, that convolves the solar sphere; who the aerial Apollo is; who the terrestrial; who, that presides over Troy; and who, that is the peculiar guardian of Hector,” and so forth. In this way the individuality (*idiotês*) of each God finds its way down to the lowest reaches of Being without in any way compromising the supra-essential status of the God.

Proclus’ mythological hermeneutic expresses his attitude toward the status of myth, which flows in turn out of the doctrine of the henads. The multiplicity of inconsistent narratives about a given deity is not dealt with by him either by downgrading the myths to mere allegories, or by dogmatically choosing some one as true and dismissing the rest as false. The existence of such a multiplicity of narratives about the Gods does not dismember the Gods, for the individuality of each God is privileged over the narratives in which they feature. But this does not mean that the myths are just stories humans tell about the Gods. Myths are not, for Proclus, *representations* of the divine; they are revelations *from* the divine and play an infrastructural role, so to speak, in the constitution of Being. They are, like the powers of the Gods, supra-essential in origin, although they are also transitional between the Gods and Being. Myths, for Proclus, form each an armature for some level of Being; which level in particular we must learn by examining the myths themselves. It is not a question here of the concrete mythic text, but of the



divine activity of which the myth is a residue.

Due to its special status, every myth is true. But this multiplicity of truths is not in itself relativism, inasmuch as the myth shares the supra-essential status of the Gods. Once a fully ontic discourse has been constituted there is only one truth, which such a discourse approaches asymptotically insofar as it frees itself of “mythological” elements. The work of philosophy is to fashion itself into just such a discourse, reflecting in its very emancipation from the contents of revelation, its autonomy relative to the circumstances of its emergence, the perfection of the emergence of Being from the Gods. Philosophy thus lies at the end of the process of the emergence of Being from the supra-essential *hyperaxis* of the Gods, a process which begins from the distinction between the powers or attributes of the Gods and their *hyperxeis* and then proceeds through the constitution of mythic narratives. This is a process of increasing abstraction from the Gods which ends, at last, in intellectual determinations which can be turned back upon the Gods and applied to them like any other domain of objects, even though they are not, in fact, like any other domain of objects. Nor is myth exhausted in the process of the emergence of intellect; there can be no final “demythologization” in which all mythological content has been metabolized, so to speak, into rational content. This is because the primary function of the myth is not to help us understand something, but rather to *do* something, to play *our* role in the constitution of Being. This performativity is the essence of *theurgy*, and expresses a fundamental characteristic of all language for Proclus, rooted ultimately in the power of each God’s name to invoke their presence to the worshiper. From this site of emergence, divinity infuses language through

myth, which persists as a living contact of discourse with its origins. That certain genres of discourse have as their goal total emancipation from myth no more means that the myths lose their vitality, than does this continued vitality of the myth mean that the emancipation in question has failed. Philosophy is not reducible to myth nor myth to philosophy; myth informs philosophy and philosophy interprets myth. The myth exists as a means for humans to continue indefinitely forging anew their connection to the Gods and is, in this respect, an inexhaustible instrument, a token of divine activity constantly operating on levels that will always be beyond our grasp, for they bear witness to the constitution *from above*, as it were, of the ontic hypostases which we can only grasp *from below*. But that does not mean that in the labor of interpretation we do not constantly contribute, in our roles as microcosmic demiurghi, to the very same task, namely the constitution of the cosmos.<sup>4</sup>

### *Polycentric Polytheism: An Historical Example*

The distinction between the relationship of parts mediated by the whole, on the one hand, and the all-in-all or all-in-each on the other hand has profound implications for Proclus' theology, for it represents the difference between subordinating the many Gods to the One as if they were but names, aspects, or adumbrations of it, and preserving the pure and radical autonomy of each henad. The nature of Proclus' theology can best be described, I think, by borrowing a term Diana Eck has used to describe Hinduism, namely

<sup>4</sup> A discussion of what I have characterized as the theurgical "performativity" of discourse for Proclus is to be found in Sara Rappe's *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus and Damascius* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), chap. 8, "Language and Theurgy in Proclus' Platonic Theology."

"polycentric polytheism." Essentially the same structure has been proposed by Erik Hornung with respect to Egyptian religion. It shall be worthwhile to analyze the stages in Hornung's argument. First, Hornung gives an account of the concept of the nonexistent in Egyptian thought (pp. 172-85) from which we may discern that the Egyptian concept of the nonexistent (*tm wnn, nn wn* [p. 173]) is akin in an important way to the Neoplatonic One; for the nonexistence before the creation is described as that state in which "there were 'not yet two things'," (176, quoting *Coffin Texts* II, 396b and III, 383a). The consequences of this underlying ontology, in which absolute unity is equivalent to nonexistence, are reinforced according to Hornung by a logic characteristic of Egyptian religious thought which Hornung compares to the concept of "complementarity" in physics (241), by which "for the Egyptians an exclusive unity or oneness of god was unthinkable, in the full sense of the word, because they thought in terms of complementary propositions" (243). Ontology and logic thus converge, so that "an absolute unity and transcendence of god, indeed any absolute feature of god, is contrary to the Egyptian conception of the existent; only a nonexistent God can have absolute qualities" (242).

Hornung would have it that "the opposition monotheism/polytheism ... is too narrowly formulated" (252) to characterize Egyptian religion. Egyptian religion, then, would be *neither* monotheistic nor polytheistic. But we must understand this position in light of the data Hornung provides in the course of his study on the substantive value of polytheism in Egyptian religious thought. Hornung stresses that "[d]espite the multiplicity of the names and forms of gods and despite the phenomenon of syncretism, the Egyptians

attach great importance to maintaining the uniqueness of each of their deities" (185), explaining that "the apparent contradiction in logic between the epithet 'unique'," – also "without equal," (ibid) – "and the many deities to whom it is applied is easily explained. Extended and more precise forms of the epithet make clear its true referent, which is the unique character of the divine in general. Every Egyptian god is 'unique in his fashion' ... : there is no god who is the same as him. In the daily cult service the priest must declare before the god who is being worshiped, 'I have not equated your nature with that of another god' ... Every deity [is] unique and incomparable, despite the many characteristics they share in common" (186). This attitude bears obvious resemblance to the status of the henads in Proclus.

The only instance in which "unique" is properly understood as implying "absolute oneness", Hornung explains, is "when reference is being made to the creator god, who was unique in the beginning and 'made himself into millions (through his work of creation)'," that is, "in the fleeting transition from nonexistence to existence" (186). This once again goes back to Egyptian ontology, where absolute oneness is nonexistence. This continuum from nonexistence or unity to existence and multiplicity, however, is not a statement concerning the absolute number of deities that there are or were, but rather a statement about the way the Gods lend themselves to the concretion of the cosmos. A God, in making him/herself *real*, makes him/herself *many*, which is at once the becoming real of the world. The Gods, in becoming real, become the world, involving and implicating themselves in the multiplicity of the world. We shall see in the latter part of this dissertation how akin this is to the emergence of cosmic order from

henadic individuality in Proclus.

A statement even that a certain God created the others would not sacrifice the autonomy of the other Gods to that one, under the conditions of the Egyptian onto-logic concerning absolute attributes and the Gods. No statement about the relationship between one God and the others has the power to rule out other, contradictory statements. Therefore the Gods are not *limited* by the relationships existing amongst them, such relational statements having no power over their autonomy. Therefore beyond the opposition of monotheism and polytheism that Hornung rejects as a way of thinking about Egyptian religion, one might infer a deeper polytheism, while there is no corresponding deeper monotheism to be inferred from his account.

Moreover, Hornung explains that “the fact that literally any god can be the ‘greatest’ of all the gods should warn us against isolating the ‘greatest god’ as a figure separate from the other deities. The same is also true of the statement that one god created all the others and of the use of *nTr* [the Egyptian generic term for “deity”] for a god in the instruction texts. In each case we find that the specific, well-known deities of the Egyptian pantheon were meant, never a supergod behind the gods” (188). Certain functions or roles – greatest God, creator God, etc. – can be performed by any deity, but this does not mean that the multiplicity of Gods are somehow less real than the cosmic functions or roles they perform. From a basic misunderstanding about the relationship between individual identity and function it is easy then to proceed to posit a “supergod” of whom the actual Gods are but “aspects” or “expressions” or “manifestations” or “limitations.” All of this comes from

superimposing a logic of *concepts* over a logic of *individuals*. In the logic of concepts, unity always trumps multiplicity; in the logic of existence, as the Egyptians understood, the individual is irreducible and incommensurable with any other and the individual's uniqueness is the supreme value. The comparability of all of this to the henadology should already be apparent, but it will become more so over the course of this dissertation.

A religious practice, common to Egypt and other polytheistic societies, which has occasion much debate is known as "monolatry," referring to the "worship of one god at a time but not of a single god" (237). As Hornung describes it in the case of Egyptian religion, it is as if "[i]n the act of worship, whether it be in prayer, hymn of praise, or ethical attachment and obligation, the Egyptians single out one god, who for them at that moment signifies everything" (236); more succinctly, "god is a unity in worship and revelation, and multiple in nature and manifestation" (242). This principle also grounds Proclus' distinctive model of piety; for instance a passage from *IT* I, 212, explains that "it is necessary to observe a stable order in the performance of divine works," so that, preserving "segregation from every other pursuit," and thus "becoming *alone*, we may associate with *solitary deity*, and not endeavor to conjoin ourselves with multitude to the One. For he who attempts this effects the very opposite, and separates himself from the Gods." This passage illustrates nicely the way that the language of unity and multiplicity so important in Platonism generally is deployed by Proclus in a manner never conflicting with his polytheism; for here the integrity of the individual worshiper approximates them to the supra-essential individuality of the chosen deity.

Correlative to monolatry is the possibility, at least in principle, of discerning, in meditation upon a given deity, the reflections of all the other Gods, whether more or less distinctly. In the Egyptian case, this manifests in highly theologically sophisticated manifestations of syncretism, where two, three and even four deities are combined – Amun-Re, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, Harmachis-Khepri-Re-Atum. Deities are also combined who have widely divergent forms or are of opposite sex. The most important feature of this practice is that it does not mean that the deities in question have been “fused,” “equated,” or “identified,” (91) for as Hans Bonnet explains

the formula Amun-Re does not signify that Amun is subsumed in Re or Re in Amun. Nor does it establish that they are identical; Amun does not equal Re. It observes that Re is in Amun in such a way that he is not lost in Amun, but remains himself just as much as Amun does, so that both gods can again be manifest separately or in other combinations<sup>5</sup>

Notice in this passage the sublation of identity and difference, in terms reminiscent of those Proclus uses to describe the relationship of “all-in-each” among the henads. Hornung adds to Bonnet’s remarks that “one is reminded of chemical compounds; like them, syncretistic combinations can be dissolved at any time into their constituent elements, which can also form part of other combinations without sacrificing their individuality ... Amun-Re is not the synthesis of Amun and Re but a new form that exists along with the two older gods” (97).

The uniqueness of each deity in a polytheistic system has generally only

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<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Hornung (p. 91).

been understood either as a crude and unreflective diversity, or by recourse to some monotheizing hermeneutic. And yet it should not be hard by now to discern, in these distinctive characteristics of Egyptian polytheism (which are nevertheless paralleled in important ways by those Eck discerns in Hindu polytheism), the structure of the henadic *arithmos*. It is not a question here of an historical relationship, but of a common logical structure emerging from and articulating polytheistic *praxis*. Proclean theology provides a theoretical framework with which to understand the polycentricity of polytheism. The One is truly and fully manifest in each of the henads, each of which can as such serve as the center in a system which would therefore posit the others on its periphery – hence “polycentricity.” At the same time, there can be no *unique* center, for this would totalize and, as it were, *crystallize* the entire field “for another,” and the individuality of the henads transcends mediated unity or unity “for another.” This “crystallization,” as I have referred to it, can occur only, for Proclus, at the level of the Intellect, where it represents a kind of embedded structure within polytheism, as I shall discuss in detail later. The placement of the henads prior to this mode of unity with a fixed center provides the space for a pluralism founded on the understanding – whether implicit or explicit – that the deity who is now at the center can be, from another perspective, at the periphery and vice versa.

The opposing perspective has been to see such phenomena within polytheism either as indicating an evolution toward monotheism, or as presupposing – even logically entailing – an underlying or implicit monotheism. More recently, however, scholars such as Eck and Hornung are beginning to understand the way monolatry functions within polytheistic



systems where it represents neither a tension, nor an evolutionary tendency toward monotheism. The problem that Hornung diagnoses among those who have attempted to understand Egyptian theology on the basis of a crypto-monotheism is immediately understandable on the logical basis of the distinction I drawn between ontic manifolds and the henadic manifold. Commentators have been unable to grasp the monolatrous and syncretic practices within polytheism without assuming that there must be some Absolute before which or into which the Many evaporate into mere names or aspects – a whole, in essence, of which they are parts. Indeed, the problem is one that seems to arise where any notion of *pluralism* is concerned, and stems from opposing an atomized and fragmented multiplicity, with its attendant aporetic relativism, and a totalizing and homogenizing unity. The genius of the henadology lies in having disaggregated issues of individuality and autonomy from the logic of part and whole, in terms of which it is fundamentally impossible to constitute a radical *and systematic* pluralism.

## Chapter 2:

### The Gods and Being

To the opposition between the supra-essential or “existential” dimension, that is, the domain of *hyparxis*, and the realm of Being corresponds a clear distinction between two ways of speaking of the Gods, as we read at *IT* I, 303, where, in commenting on the passage from *Tim.* 28c which states that “[i]t is difficult to discover the maker and father of this universe, and when found, it is impossible to speak of him to all men,” Proclus remarks that “someone may say, do we not assert many things about the demiurge, and about the other Gods, and even of the One Itself? To which we reply, we speak indeed *about* them [*peri autôn*], but we do not speak *of each of them itself* [*auto de hekaston*]. And we are able indeed to speak *scientifically* [*epistêmonikôs*] of them, but not *intellectually* [*noerôs*].” The distinction here is between, on the one hand, the familiar concept of *epistêmê*, which is always of the species,

and on the other hand a novel *noêsis* of *proper names* which would deal with *particular* henads. Indeed, one finds that Proclus, when speaking “philosophically” refers to classes of Gods, *taxeis* united by common powers or functions, leaving to “theologians” the discourse about particular, named henads.

The possibility of treating of the Gods by *taxeis* rather than individually allows the Gods to fit into ontology, that is, allows them to be treated “scientifically.” This “ontological” or “epistemic” treatment extends all the way to classifying the Gods *qua* Gods, a classification expressed by the monad of the One or the Good. We read at *PT* II 5 that “in each order of beings, through likeness to it [the first cause] there is a monad analogous to the Good, which has the same relation to the whole series conjoined with it that the Good has to all the orders of the Gods.” Note that the One/Good is a monad in relation to the *orders* of the Gods, not the individual Gods. Such is the proper correspondence of all ontic terms to supra-essentials. This correspondence also echoes in the remark at *IP* 74K that “positive propositions apply rather to the monads of kinds of being, for the power of generating things is in these. The first principle is before every power and before assertions,” in which note the juxtaposition of *kinds* of being with *powers*, in which the connection of the Gods to ontology lies. To say that the first principle is prior to power is the same as to say that the individuality of each deity comes before their powers, the powers of the Gods being those characteristics which, since they are susceptible to abstraction, tend toward the unification of the Gods into a whole “for another.”

The twofold distinction between *hyparxis* and *dunamis* is not enough,

however. We must distinguish also between the *dunameis* of the Gods and their activities, *energeiai*. Not all Gods, for example, are intellectual Gods, but that does not mean that all Gods do not possess a divine Intellect. It is intellectual Gods that are treated in *ET* prop. 163 – “All those henads are intellectual whereof the unparticipated Intellect enjoys participation.” The nature of “unparticipated” entities will be discussed further below, but we may understand it here to refer simply to the hypostasis of Intellect. The participation of the hypostasis of Intellect in the members of a particular class of deities corresponds to those deities’ *activity*. Prop. 160, on the other hand, refers to the nature of the divine Intellect possessed *by each deity* and which constitutes the henadic dimension of Intellect: “All divine intellect is perfect and uniform [*henoeidês*]; it is the primal Intellect, and produces the others from itself.” Proclus here even refers to this divine Intellect as “filled with divine henads.” This is the *power of intellect* in each deity. To understand this distinction, we must go deeper into the nature of the relationship between the henads and Being.

The heart of the contrast expressed in the passage from *IP* 1048 with which I began chapter 1 is a contrast between supra-essential and ontic *modes of unity*, or for that matter, *modes of multiplicity*, for to different modes of unity must necessarily correspond different modes of multiplicity. Or at any rate, this is the point which Proclus seems to be making: that the absolute opposition between unity and multiplicity is relative to the opposition between modes of unity and modes of multiplicity. We witnessed over the course of the last chapter the convergence of two characteristics of the henads, that is, their “all in all” and their consummate individuality. These are

indeed simply two sides of the same coin. What makes the individual being an individual, albeit to a far lesser degree, is that it possesses only abstract parts. The supreme individuality, then, that possessed by henads, must be one in which not just the other henads, but *all of Being* is indivisibly present in each one. Thus at *IT* I, 308 Proclus says that “each of the Gods is the universe, but after a different manner,” and again at I, 312 that “each of the Gods is denominated from his peculiarity, though each is comprehensive of all things.” Followed through to its limits, this has profound implications for the activity of the henads in relation to Being. At *IP* 1069, we read that “each participated One is a principle of unification [*henôtikon*] for all Being ... and each of the Gods is nothing else than the participated One.” He goes further at *IT* I, 209, explaining that “all beings are the progeny of the Gods, by whom they are produced without a medium, and in whom they are firmly established ... As all things however proceed, so likewise, they are not separated from the Gods, but radically abide in them, as the causes and sustainers of their existence ... all beings are contained by the Gods and reside in their natures.”

On the other hand, we read at *IP* 690 that “among the Gods the Intellect in each is directly filled with a divine Life by which it is unified with the intelligible principle itself and with its own foundation in Being.” The foundation would seem to be up-ended here, insofar as the henads are prior to Being, and cannot be declined from the monads of Being, Life, and Intellect in the way that particular beings, living things, and intellects are. Being cannot, except in an inferior sense, “contain” the henads. It must rather be the case that Being, Life, and Intellect are in fact *contained* by each henad, just as

beings themselves are: “the Gods do not subsist in, but prior to these [Being, Life and Intellect], and they produce and contain these in themselves, but are not defined in them” (PT I 26). Being, Life and Intellect are, in this way, multiplied as many times as there are henads, but for Being, et al. to be so multiplied does not pluralize these monads *essentially*, because just as the multiplicity of participants beneath them (posterior to their essence) does not affect their *specific* unity, neither do the many henads prior to them – and prior to essence altogether. By specific or essential unity I mean, not that which would be subject to a definition, for forms like Being have no definitions. The universal characteristic of essentiality is rather *diacritical being*, where entities are “defined” not by a set of abstract characteristics, but by their position in a dialectical system. It is this mediation which the henads transcend; moreover, I will discuss at length in subsequent chapters how diacritical being emerges, stage by stage, from henadic *hyparxis*.

The many henads in which Being is “contained” also do not pluralize it because the henads are not cognizable as a multiplicity in the ontological sense, that is, a multiplicity that opposes unity only insofar as it immediately implies it, a multiplicity, in short, which *unifies* its members and subordinates their diversity to unity, until the intelligible-and-intellectual level, which corresponds to the hypostasis of Life. Prior to this stage in divine emanation, we are only concerned with each individual henad, not with relationships among them – for with *relationship* comes *mediation*, and with mediation, unification of the related terms on the basis of the relation. If more than one henad corresponds to a single monad – using monad here as a generic term for any ontic unity – that neither renders the henads identical,

since they only share in the monad something on the order of a power or function, nor does it multiply Being in a manner relevant to ontology. The henads themselves, conversely, only come to be “contained” within Being as a unified set through the medium of their powers, which represent potential relations among them. One might say, to construct a typical Neoplatonic triad, that there is a sense in which the Gods *contain* the intelligible, both *contain* and *are contained* in the intelligible-and-intellectual, and *are contained* in the intellectual, as we shall see in chapters 5-7.

In order to go more deeply into the relationship between the henads and Being, it is necessary to investigate a term which Proclus uses to refer to specifically ontic, rather than supra-essential, unity. Supra-essential unity is referred to by the term *heniaios*, “unitary,” while ontic unity is referred to as the “unified,” *hênômenos*. (Note in this respect the comment of S-W in vol. 5 of their *Théologie Platonicienne* (p. 179, note 1 to p. 61) that in Proclus “‘unifié’ est une synonyme d’ ‘intelligible’.”) The meaning of “unified” is demonstrated by its operation in the early propositions of the *Elements of Theology*. In prop. 4, for instance, we read that “all that is unified is other [*heteron*] than the One Itself.” The use of *heteros* here is no accident, inasmuch as the unified possesses a relationship to the One which is one of the four ontic relationships, namely that of difference. To this difference corresponds the status of the unified as a participant, something which “has unity as an affect, and has undergone a process of becoming one” (prop. 2).

But that there is not just the One and the unified emerges in prop. 6. Here, Proclus elaborates on the equivocation manifest in prop. 1, which said

that “every manifold *in some way* [*pê*] participates unity.” For prop. 6 explains that “every manifold is composed either of unified groups or of henads.” Only perhaps Dodds’ translation presumes too much here; better perhaps simply to translate literally that “Every manifold [or ‘all multiplicity’] is either from *hênômena* or from henads.” For Dodds assumes the argument to be a matter of rejecting infinite divisibility. This, however, was already accomplished by prop. 1. Instead, we should read prop. 6 as reprising the argument about infinite divisibility only in order to proceed to follow up on the implications of the *pê* in the former proposition, that is, to introduce the different ways of participating unity. The problem is that Proclus’ language is ambiguous with respect to composition and causation. We shall have occasion later to see another instance where the causes of a composite are treated like its constituents. So we must be sensitive to the transition. A manifold cannot simply be constituted of manifolds to infinity, Proclus explains; we must finally arrive at ultimate constituents. These are either *hênômena* or henads; and Proclus explains the difference between these as lying in the fact that “if it participates unity [or, ‘participates the One’] it is an *hênômenon*, while if it is one of those from which is the first *hênômenon*, a henad [*ei de ex’hôn to prôtôs hênômenon, henas*].” It matters vitally how one takes “first unified” here. If it is simply a matter of saying that the henads are members of the first unified group, as Dodds translates, then we have moved no further beyond the infinite divisibility argument than to give a name to the ultimate units. But Proclus is not making such a banal point. The henads are those things from which *come* the first *hênômenon*, namely *Being Itself*. The infinite progress which is to be avoided is one of *causes of unity*, not of



*units*. As such, the argument closely resembles the “Third Man” problem from the *Parmenides*, only applied to unity. Where there is something *unified*, that is, participating unity, or possessing unity as an affect or attribute, there must be a cause of that unity. That cause cannot, in the last analysis, be something itself unified; it must be a *henad*. The proposition continues: “For if the One Itself is, there is a first participant of it and a first *hênômenon*. And this is from the henads [*touto de ex henadôn*]; for if from *hênômena*, the *hênômena* in turn <will be> from some things [*ek tinôn*], and thus to infinity. There must be then a first *hênômenon* from henads.”

Why should we *not* simply take the proposition as referring to the constituents of a “first unified group” as Dodds takes it? First of all, prop. 115 explicitly contrasts the henads to Being, Life and Intellect inasmuch as the latter are not henads but *hênômena*. Interestingly, Proclus goes on in this proposition to explain that Being, Life and Intellect cannot be pure unities insofar as they, “though mutually distinct, are each implicit in the other two.” That is, each of the three major ontic hypostases is *mediated* by the other two, once again underscoring the holism of Being. But to return to the point at hand, that Being is the first *hênômenon*, and not a unified set of henads sacrificing their autonomy to an hypostatized One Itself, we may turn next to prop. 128, which explains that “beings of an order relatively near” to the Gods, “can participate the divine henads without mediation; whereas the rest, because of their declension and their extension into multiplicity, require the mediation of principles more unified than themselves if they are to participate what are not *hênômena*, but pure henads.” This refers to the necessity of beings participating the Gods through reversion [*epistrophê*] of

the ontic principles to which they owe their immediate existence as whatever sorts of beings they are. Such principles are the specific forms constitutive of beings, as well as ontic hypostases such as Being, Life and Intellect. As it happens, beings are not limited exclusively to reverting upon their formal causes, but can also revert as members of divine series which have the possibility, at least, of determining them, not merely as a certain type of being, but as *this* individual. But this is not our concern here.

The reference to *hênômena* which participate the henads directly (*amesôs*) is echoed in prop. 135, which seems at first to imply a strict limitation upon the total number of henads, by linking them one-to-one with the "genera of beings." The proposition posits that for each henad there is some being that participates it immediately, and the role of this latter with respect to a class of indirect participants is such that "the participant genera of beings are identical in number with the participated henads." It would thus seem as though there are only as many henads as there are genera of beings. But as Dodds points out (p. 272), it is unclear what *genê* these might be. Furthermore, after stressing in the body of the proposition that "there cannot be two or more henads participated by one <being>," nor "one henad independently [*diêrêmenôs*] participated by several <beings>," Proclus appears to flatly contradict himself (as noted by Dodds, p. 282) when he says, in props. 162-5 that it is a *class* of henads which is participated by *to ontôs on*, another which is participated by unparticipated Intellect, and so forth. This at any rate seems to rule out what we might call a restrictive interpretation of 135. That after the strictures of 135 Proclus feels no compunction whatsoever at saying that *to ontôs on* is "attached to the first Gods," indicates that there is

something we are missing about what he intends by the argument in 135.

To begin with, if open contradiction is to be avoided, the participation of the hypostases of 162-5 in their respective classes of deities must not constitute the participation in the first place or immediately of two or more henads by a single being that is rejected in 135. How could the multiplicity in question in the latter propositions not be of the kind that is ruled out in the former? One possibility is that, e.g., *to ontôs on* participates, not in a multiplicity of deities of the intelligible class, but rather in *any single deity of that class*. What is the sense of such a stipulation, and what would be its point? The stipulation, so interpreted, would mean that there is a multiplicity of deities available for participation at each level that is not controlled ontologically. For "as the distinctive characters [*idiotêtôn*] of the henads vary, so the beings whose nature is identified with theirs [*sumphuomenon*] cannot but vary also" (prop. 135). The multiplicity in question, were it not a genuinely supra-essential multiplicity, could not be participated immediately by one and the same being, for reasons that are tautological to state: were it a multiplicity *structured* within Being, it would be a multiplicity *structuring* Being. Such a multiplicity structured *in* and *structuring* Being is the hierarchy of *classes* of Gods to which corresponds the hierarchy of ontic hypostases. But the multiplicity *within* such classes is not an ontically structured one, for the simple reason that each is a class of *Gods*, that is, of supra-essentials, not of beings. The difference between a structured and an unstructured multiplicity, in the sense I am using the terms, is simple: a structured multiplicity is hierarchically organized, even if the hierarchy in question is only that between a monad and a class of beings participating equally in it, as in prop.

19. Prop. 135 rules out that the classes of deities referred to in props. 162-5 could be structured in such a manner, which is only natural, inasmuch as the latter classes are *not* classifications of henads with reference to something which they would participate, which is the principle of organization for all ontic sets, but classifications of henads with respect to that which participates *them*, that is, the ontic hypostases constituted by the activity of the Gods.

One exigency which could be making itself felt in such a doctrine is the existence of diverse pantheons belonging to different cultures. The Gods in these pantheons, while they bear a complex and organic relationship to the fellow members of their own pantheons, bear no relationship to the Gods of other pantheons *other than* functional analogy, which is reflected in common classifications with respect to participating principles. The existence of deities from diverse cultures which share functional analogies is not a manifestation of any common participation *by* the deities in question, but rather a common participation of, say, Intellect *in them*. But the multiplicity of Gods in such a class is not an affair for ontology, for it falls at once above and below the sphere of Being. On the one hand, it refers to the ineffable plurality of Gods which lies beyond any formal unification, the sheer factual multiplicity of Gods; on the other, it refers to that same plurality as manifested in the accidental juxtaposition of diverse pantheons which are seen as it were from the outside like artifacts. This is in accord with the well-known Proclean principle that what is prior to Being is the cause of that which lies posterior to Being. Were it a question, in such a multiplicity, of the multiplicity of intellectual Gods, say, within a single pantheon, there would be no justification for the idea of a multiplicity participated by a *single* ontic

principle, for as we shall see in chapters 5-7, when a given pantheon is subjected to philosophical interpretation, there is always a specific monad expressing the position of each deity within the integrated system, the *hena logon*, of the pantheon. The multiplicity of Gods spoken of as participated by, e.g., Being or Intellect is, rather, the same type of undetermined multiplicity as mentioned in prop. 149, which demonstrates that the total number of Gods must be finite. There can be, however, no absolute determination of how many Gods there are, because this is simply not a question upon which ontology can have any purchase. For Syrianus, similarly, there can be no knowledge of the actual number of Gods: "One must say therefore that while *ta theia* are infinite in power, in number they are subject to limitation; but to how great a number they are limited, the partial soul cannot say, save that there is so great a number as the principles of these send forth inasmuch as they wish to introduce another corresponding to another class of beings," (*In Metaph.* 914b3-6). That is, there cannot be *fewer* Gods than there are classes of beings (and we must read here not just any beings, but *ontôs onta*), for the real articulation in Being is furnished by divine activity and the differences within a given pantheon; but the determination is not reciprocal, and neither the total number of deities nor the total number of pantheons is delimitable any further than to finitude. Similarly, at *IT* III, 12 we read that the number and nature of the Gods is known to the Gods themselves "divinely" while the *Parmenides* "teaches us in a human manner, and philosophically," and philosophical knowledge remains for Proclus, as Aristotle stressed, knowledge of the universal and of the particular as an instantiation of the universal.

Similarly, when Proclus posits, in introducing the third intelligible triad at *PT* III 14. 49, that “there are not more beings than henads, nor more henads than beings, but rather each procession of Being participates the One. Since this universe also, according to each part of itself, is governed by soul and intellect, the intelligible must *a fortiori* in its first, middle and last hypostases participate the intelligible Gods,” we will understand this, in accord with the previous discussion, not as determining the total number of henads, but as determining that no procession of Being is to be posited as arising from no divine illumination *unique to it*. Ontology must mirror theology. This means that for each hypostasis there must be at least one henad whose activity is specific to that hypostasis. Soul, for instance, as a novel hypostasis relative to Intellect, cannot merely be the product of the manifestation of intellectual Gods on a lower level, but must possess its own class of deity who guarantee it a direct deification; Dionysus would be a henad of this class. Where the number of Gods is more numerous than the processions of Being, we have failed to pursue to the fullest the philosophical hermeneutic of myth in order to discern the special contribution of each God in the system to our ontology. This would not be a mere problem in accounting, but would most likely reflect an impoverishment in our ontology. That the ontology be richer than the theology would imply an imposition of scarcity upon the field of revelation, as Proclus would have diagnosed in dogmatic monotheisms such as Christianity – hence the charge of “impiety” frequently levelled by pagans against Christians – unless there were otiose elements in the ontology, a condition to be diagnosed dialectically.

The difference between the participation of Being in but one henad, as per

135, and in a class of henads, as per 162, is that 135 serves to divinize Being – or, indeed, whatever ontic hypostasis is in question – immediately (*amesôs*) and to divinize beings *qua* beings indirectly through their participation in Being Itself, or whatever other formal principle, while 162 serves to classify a group of deities which are assembled, as it were, empirically, according to a functional similarity. Membership in such a class will be determined with reference to iconography, mythology, and other characteristics of the God in question. In this sense, Dodds is correct when he says that Proclus, in including the classifications of 162-5 “is trying to dovetail into his system categories which were older,” although the stress here should not lie upon the supposed antiquity of such classifications, which simply correspond to the ontic hypostases, and thus require no anterior origin, but rather upon their empirical application. They are used to classify Gods empirically, which is not to say that they do not thus represent a kind of participation. But the participation that they *ultimately* express is a participation which can only occur *from one deity to one hypostasis*. For just as an individual must encounter one deity at a time in order to encounter that deity as profoundly as they are capable (on which see below) so too a principle is divinized in its immediate relationship to a deity. This means that Intellect is divinized in the manifestation of, e.g., Zeus as an intellectual God. The realm of principles extends itself (*anateinetai*) to single Gods, individual deities, to be divinized because the transition from ontic existence to supra-essential existence is a transition from formal unity to ineffable individuality. The threshold that is crossed from the realm of form to the realm of existence is a gateway into the factual and the unique.

A single henad could not be “dividedly” (*diêrêmenôs*) participated by more than one being because the “division” between these two beings would have to be itself an ontic relationship; and ontic relationships are exhausted by whole and part, identity and difference (prop. 66). A relationship of whole and part manifestly establishes a disposition of one term over the other; while identity and difference subordinate both terms to a form in respect of which they are the same or different. That two terms cannot be on the same level, so to speak, as participants of a henad, but rather must assume a hierarchical disposition, is an argument against deities from different cultures simply being different names for some single God. For Proclus explicitly rejects a hierarchy of languages which would make one more divine than another, a thesis Iamblichus, for one, accepts. But this is an issue which I shall take up later in detail. It is important to mention it here, however, to emphasize the intimate relationship between philosophical and theological problematics in the henadology, lest we should make the mistake, as many commentators have, of thinking that these two dimensions of the doctrine are merely externally related. In this way, the cardinal doctrine of Neoplatonism, the pre-eminence of *unity* and its identity with the Good, is identified by Proclus with the primordial nature of *individuality* in relation to all other determinations. And one could scarcely claim that the profundity of the combined theological and philosophical reflection embodied here is reducible to the simple exigencies of either religion or philosophy.

To summarize the discussion so far, I am proposing that the first *hênômenon* of prop. 6 is to be identified with the immediate participant of each henad in prop. 135. According to prop. 138, Being is the “first and highest



of all the participants of the divine character [*tês theias idiotêtos*] which are thereby divinized [*ektheoumenôn*].” Let us try to get more specific about what this *hênômenon* is. It is not unparticipated Being, which participates in the class of intelligible Gods, for as discussed above this latter does not participate one-to-one. Rather, it seems to make the most sense to identify it with the Being *possessed by each God*. For the Gods, although in themselves supra-essential, possess each of them Being, Life and Intellect after a fashion, or else they would not be able to generate these latter through their activity. These are the qualities referred to in prop. 121, which states that “all that is divine [*pan to theion*] has an *hyparxis* which is goodness, a power which is unitary, and an understanding [*gnôsin*] that is secret and incomprehensible [*kruphion kai alêpton*] to all secondary entities alike.” These three traits correspond exactly to the three intelligible triads, which shall be discussed in full detail in chapter 5. Each one of these triads is the nucleus, so to speak, around which is generated the corresponding hypostasis, Being Itself corresponding to the *hyparxis* or “existence” of the God, Life corresponding to the power, and Intellect to the *gnôsis* of the God. The first *hênômenon* and the highest participant is therefore, for Proclus just as it is for Damascius, the Mixed of the *Philebus* as radical Being (for Being as the “first *hênômenon*” in Damascius, see DP II, 56ff). Therefore, when we read that “[e]very God begins his characteristic activity [*tês oikeias energeias*] with himself [*aph’eautou*],” and “has established first in its own nature the character [*idiotêta*] distinctive of its bestowals,” (ET prop. 131) we should understand that this distinction, at first paradoxical, between a God and that God’s *idiotês* – for if the *idiotês* is the distinction of the God, as we have seen from, e.g., IP 1048, then how can the

“establishment” (*idruthai*) of that very *idiotês* be seen at the same time as an *activity* of the God, who is obviously *already* a distinct individual and agent – we should understand this distinction to refer to the very first site at which emerges the distinction between the supra-essential and the ontic realm. Here each God produces him/herself. For *this* is Being in the highest sense, the Being of *each* God. Each God is at once in their supra-essentiality the agent of the mixture, and as *primal* Being the Mixture itself, a kind of ontic double of the God’s supra-essential individuality.

The unified, therefore, is in the first place the ontic manifestation of each God. The *telos* of the unified, however, lies *not* in the sort of unity possessed by each henad, but in the unity of *forms*. Formal unity is mediated and holistic. Therefore the transition from supra-essential unity to ontic unity is not fully accomplished until the transition from absolute individuality to diacritical determination or specific unity is complete. Therefore, although radical Being emerges in the third moment of the first intelligible triad, this has no concrete meaning until the full complement of intellectual determinations has arisen. The status of the two principles of Limit and Infinity and their product, the Mixed, with respect to the henads has vexed commentators. The natural context of such a discussion is the account of the first intelligible triad in chapter 5. In essence, however, once we understand that the intelligible order itself represents a transition from one mode of unity to another, and that the determinations that unfold within it are as yet determinations, not of a multiplicity of henads determined *in common*, but of each henad considered in its absolute individuality, containing all the other Gods and the whole of Being as well, then it becomes simple to see

Limit and Infinity as nothing more and nothing less than the two primary aspects of each deity from which emerges, so to speak, dialectically, the whole of Being. We might characterize these two aspects as particularity and universality; what is most important is not to confuse them with the individuality and plurality of the Gods, as if it were because of the Unlimited/Infinity, for instance, that there are many Gods, or because of Limit that that number is finite. This would be the ultimate category mistake. Limit and Infinity are principles of *Being*. Limit is a principle of Being derived from the *hyparxis* of the God which imparts to beings particularity. Infinity is a principle of Being derived from the power(s) of the God. This “power” or potentiality is the multiplicity within each God and imparts universality to beings, the first classification being that classification of deities with reference to their powers which forms the hierarchy of ontic principles according to the interpretation of the *Parmenides* pioneered by Syrianus.

The key text with respect to Limit and Infinity is *ET* prop. 159: “Every class [*taxis*] of Gods is from the two initial principles [*ek tôn prôtôn archôn*], Limit and Infinity; but some manifest predominantly the causality of Limit, others that of Infinity.” Crucial here is that it is every *taxis*, that is, every class or better yet, every *classification* of Gods that is derived from Limit and Infinity. Limit and Infinity are the most generic principles by which the Gods are *classified*. This is especially, although not exclusively, classification by *gender*. Those deities in whom Limit predominates are masculine, those in whom Infinity predominates, feminine. Hence at *IT* I, 220, we read that “the division of male and female comprehends in itself all the plenitudes [*plêrômata*] of the divine orders [*diakosmôn*].” Again, “Timaeus, elevating himself to all the

Gods, very properly comprehends the whole orders of them [*tas holas autôn taxeis*] in a division into these genera," that is, Gods and Goddesses, at *Tim.* 27c. Limit and Infinity are not absolutely identified with gender, however. They are, rather, qualities giving rise to gender as well as other functional characteristics. Hence Rhea, for example, is female, but at the same time a member of an order of "paternal" deities.

The designation of Limit and Infinity as *archai* is also significant. Whenever the term "principle" arises, we must remember that *archai* are a particular class of beings, and while the term may occasionally be used in a looser sense (as in the passage from *IP* 1048 about how other philosophers discourse in general about "principles"), its technical sense is never altogether absent. In this fashion, it is similar to the ontological determinations which arise sequentially in the *Parmenides*. Notwithstanding the fact that the One, in particular, is frequently referred to as the First Principle, and the henads sometimes as first principles, the whole category of "principle" is subordinated to that of "fountain" or "source" (*pêgê*), the latter emerging first in and through the third intelligible triad, with further instances of the class in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, while the former emerges in the intellectual order. I shall, naturally, have more to say about this in the relevant chapters. Proclus even subordinates *archai* to *pêgai* at *PT* VI 1, while citing the *Phaedrus* (245d) to the effect that "the first principle is unbegotten," a term which, to a casual reading, would imply supremacy. This is because Proclus subordinates the principles' condition of being unbegotten or ungenerated to the fountains' condition of being *self-generating* or *self-generated* – *autogenes*. The fountains are thus clearly more akin to the "self-

constituting" nature of the henads. To be ungenerated is still inferior to the capacity of the henads to fabricate a generation for themselves, a place, that is, within Being. This is essentially because, to put it in terms more blunt than Proclus would prefer, the "ungenerated," like the unparticipated, of which I shall speak later, is an abstraction or *hypostatization* from the conditions of generation and participation. Affirmations emerge immediately from corresponding negations, which is the basic insight of the Syrianic interpretation of the negations in the *Parmenides*. As such, the ungenerated or unparticipated refers *immediately* to the generated and the participated: in effect, the term "ungenerated" refers to the immediate cause of that which is generated as its negation. The "self-generated" *pégai*, on the other hand, are analogous to the henads as *authupostata*, and to that extent prior even to the *negation* of generation, prior, that is, to the opposition of the generated and the ungenerated, while the "ungenerated" *archai*, by contrast, are the immediate causes of generation. Thus, when in prop. 99 Proclus refers to "the first principle of each series" as *agenêtos*, it is not the same as saying they are *authupostata*, as Dodds may claim, depending upon how one takes his ambiguous phrasing, viz. "showing in what sense they [the principles] are *authupostata*" (p. 252). One should say, rather, that in their "unbegottenness" *archai* are analogous to *authupostata*, just as *archai* and *pégai* are said by Proclus to bear the relationship of part to whole (see below).

The doctrine concerning *pégai* and *archai* has been little remarked upon by commentators, despite the consistency with which Proclus repeats it throughout his work, with the exception of the *ET*. Commentators likely assume that the normal philosophical usage of the term *archê* cannot be

affected by the more technical doctrine, just as the explicit emergence of unity and multiplicity, whole and part, and finitude and infinity in the intelligible-and-intellectual order cannot have an impact on the deployment of these concepts throughout the whole of the system (see chapter 5). In fact, the deployment of *pêgai* prior to *archai* plays an important role in the system, for *pêgai* are a class of entities transitional between the members of divine series and the forms and their participants. Note in this regard *IT* I, 319, “the highest summit of every series [*seiras*] is fontal.” *Pêgê*, appropriated by Proclus from the *Chaldean Oracles*, refers to the intelligible forms, that is, the forms prior to intellect; see for example *IT* I, 451, where the third intelligible triad, or “Animal Itself” is called “the fountain of fountains.” Note also in this regard *PT* II 6. 40. 5-6 where the Good is called “the fountain of truth that unifies intellect and the intelligibles.” The One is called a fountain again at II 7. 48. 13. This expresses nicely the ontological context in which the One emerges, as the ultimate precipitate of the conjunction of the noetic and noeric spheres. Similarly, the One is “the fountain of the Good” at *PT* II 8. 56. 26, very much like an intelligible form. The henads are represented by Truth in a list of negations at *ibid.* 48. 3 (see also S-W’s note 2, p. 108), showing their equivalence to the One. Majercik, in her note on frag. 49 of the *Oracles*, glosses the fountains as “the sum of the Ideas considered as a whole,” and the principles as “the particular or divided world-shaping Ideas,” in accord with *IP* 1191, where Proclus explains that “Likeness is in the secondary realms what Identity is in those prior to them, and Unlikeness similarly answers to Difference, <and what Identity is on the level of whole and fountain, that> Likeness is on the level of part and, as it were, ‘Principle’, and the first

offspring of Identity and Difference are the Like and the Unlike," where the lacuna has been filled by the editors on the basis of *PT* VI 1. The relationship between Identity and Difference on the one hand, and Likeness and Unlikeness on the other, is paralleled with that between fountains and principles a little later at *IP* 1198:

Identity is more comprehensive than Likeness, and Difference than Unlikeness, and they have the same relation to these as 'fountains,' in the terminology of the theologians, have to the principles that proceed from them, or which the most universal monads have to more particular monads, which are generated in a primary way from them but exhibit an inferior essence and power.

The parallelism between identity-and-difference and the fountains, on the one hand, and likeness-and-unlikeness and the principles, on the other, has to do with the respective roles of these forms. Identity-and-difference is being compared to the intelligible paradigm, that is, the third intelligible triad, the locus of intelligible form and the "fountain of fountains." Likeness-and-unlikeness, which regulate assimilation to the paradigm, are likened to principles inasmuch as the latter are intra-intellectual and express, as the products of the Intellect, the conjunction of the intellective sphere with that of Real Being. In actuality, the form of sameness-and-difference corresponds to the third class of the intellectual order of Gods (the sphere of the demiurge) while likeness-and-unlikeness corresponds to the hypercosmic class of infra-intellectual Gods, the "assimilative" Gods who are responsible for beings *becoming like* their forms.

To return to the theme at hand, however, namely the two *archai* Limit

and Infinity, we read in the *Platonic Theology*, at the beginning of the discussion of this dyad, “let us survey with intellect [*tô nô theôrésômen*] the bifurmed principles proceeding from [*proelthousas*] and posterior to [the One]” (III 7. 132; my emphasis), which appropriately follows after and contrasts with a consideration of the One in more “mystical” terms [*tou mustikou telous*], and precedes a discussion of Limit and Infinity as “the two principles [*archai*] of the divisions [*diakosmôn*] of the Gods” (ibid). More subtly, following the discussion cited above from *IT* I, 220, which spoke of Timaeus “elevating himself to all the Gods” and comprehending the *plêromata* of their in the division into the genera of female and male, Goddesses and Gods, we read at I, 221 that “the sublimest end of theory is to run upward to a divine intellect; and as all things are uniformly comprehended in it, to arrange the discussion of things agreeably to this causal comprehension.” It is accession to *a* divine intellect, not *the* divine intellect, per se, that terminates theoretical ascension: from there one need only carry out an analysis of that divine intellect in order to constitute the principles prior to intellect. Limit and Infinity are pivotal in this process, which is none other than the “divine method” of the *Philebus*, hence its special relationship to the intellect.

The term *diakosmos*, occurring in the passage from *PT* III 7, is an example of the impulse in Proclus to find parallel vocabulary to refer to the henads which does not carry the ontological implications of terms such as *taxis*, or that at least preserves the distinction between the supra-essential and ontic realms. We can see this in *ET* prop. 110, viz. “For not all things are of equal worth, even though they be of the same cosmic order [*diakosmêseôs*],” that is,



the same division of the cosmos. The body of the proposition refers to monads; but the use of *diakosmos* here allows Proclus to encompass divisions or arrangements more general than those covered by the strict language of the proposition, probably because he has in mind the distinctions in rank among the henads which, *qua* henads, are prior to such classifications although capable of being subsumed under more “global” divisions, as it were. Proclus seems inconsistent in the use of *diakosmos*. In prop. 145, for instance, he says at first that “[t]he distinctive character [*idiotês*] of any divine class [*taxeôs*] travels through all the derivative entities [*tôn deuterôn*] and bestows itself upon all the inferior kinds,” but then immediately follows with, “[f]or if the procession of beings extends as far as do the orders [*diakosmoi*] of Gods, the distinctive character of the divine powers, radiating downwards, is found in every kind...” Perhaps the best indication, however, of what he intends is provided by the sorts of qualities that he uses as illustrations: “I intend that if, for example, there be a purifying deity, then purgation is to be found in souls, in animals, in vegetables, and in minerals; so also if there be a protective deity, and the same if there be one charged with the conversion or the perfection or the vitalizing of things.” We can glean from this that, ideally, *diakosmoi* represent qualities of the Gods having no strict correspondence to classes of beings *qua* beings. The *taxeis* of the Gods, then, would be most properly those orders corresponding to the procession of Being, i.e. intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, intellectual et al. It should also be noted that Proclus at least once (at *IT* I, 160) explains *diakosmêsis* as applying to procession and *suntaxis* to reversion; but he does not seem to observe this order elsewhere. Nor does he state whether the two processes

would result in *diakosmoi* and *taxeis* with the same extensions. Where *diakosmos* is used more loosely, we can expect that the reason is that terms which apply to the Gods in their interactions with beings are frequently taken as more generic than terms applying to beings alone.

The *diakosmoi* or *diakosmêseis* are, in the *Elements of Theology*, however, the eight classes enumerated in props. 151-9. These classifications represent a kind of phenomenological survey of divine attributes, whose systematic function in the structural economy of the *Elements* has been most keenly discerned by Annick Charles-Saget, for which see the account in the appendix on previous literature concerning the henads. Charles-Saget has analyzed these attributes as the conditions of the possibility of any systematic reflection whatsoever. The most important thing to understand about them, however, is their distinction from the classifications corresponding to ontic hypostases. The *Elements of Theology* has at once a wider scope of inquiry and a stricter method than any of Proclus' other works. Only the commentary on the *Parmenides* has a similar breadth, but its method is free-form and we only possess part of it. In more free-form texts, Proclus is free to simply allude to the existing corpus of religious texts which supply the empirical data with respect to the identity and activities of the Gods which is the object of the philosopher's hermeneutic and the worshiper's devotion alike. The classification of divine attributes in props. 151-9, however, is a determination of the supra-essential realm with no recourse to religious texts. As Charles-Saget correctly discerns, it is a matter of a kind of transcendental inquiry, in which Proclus seeks to determine *a priori* and without any recourse to empirical data the global characteristics of the divine from the starting point

of the conditions of the possibility of philosophical speculation at all. But this is not a matter of determining the Gods as “things in themselves,” as it were, or constructively, but analytically from the premise of the existence of the cognizing subject. This is different from the dialectical inquiry into the ontic hypostases as carried out in the *Parmenides*. The latter is also an analytic of the divine, but carried out on a different basis, that is, upon the premise of the *object*, Being, rather than the cognizing *subject*.

The specialized nature of the inquiry in the *Elements* explains why we do not see much of the *diakosmoi* enumerated here elsewhere in Proclus’ work. The terms occasionally recur, but not in the systematic organization they have in this work, which means essentially that they are not to be taken as the same. This is not because they are an abortive experiment abandoned by Proclus, but because outside of the rigorous structure of a transcendental inquiry, it is natural simply to refer to actual religious texts to supply the supra-essential attributes of the Gods, which are then interpreted by the philosopher as they pertain to the nature of Being, rather than as they pertain to the nature of the Gods. The eight *diakosmoi* are unconnected to the structure of the ontic hypostases because they are a qualitative division of the Gods that refers to the elements structuring our experience of the Gods rather than to the Gods as “things in themselves.” The eight *diakosmoi* are supposed to be derived, in a fashion Proclus does not specify, from the conjugation, so to speak, of the two principles of Limit and Infinity. Nor need we much concern ourselves with the method of this derivation either, for it is not a construction, a constitution of the Gods, but an analysis of the Gods according to the divine method of the *Philebus*. This method, which *comes*

from the Gods, is naturally the tool which we would apply in understanding them, but that is a far cry from positing Limit and Infinity as a pair of abstract principles from which the Gods – “the most ancient and venerable of all things” (IT I, 364) – are somehow, absurdly, to be generated. It would be no less absurd, indeed, than it would be to attempt to deploy the Kantian pure concepts of the understanding positively as if they were themselves noumena. The question whether Limit and Infinity lie “above” or “below” the henads is thus poorly posed. One might perhaps best characterize them as *parallel* with the henads, inasmuch as they form, along with the One and the Mixed, a schematic representation or analysis of the “whatness” or *essence* of each *supra-essential* henad.

Limit and Infinity are the first principles of the *diakosmoi* of the Gods, while it is the Mixed that is the “first and highest *diakosmos* of the Gods” (PT III 12. 140-1) since every deity possesses both Limit and Infinity in their nature. This is within the broader systematic context of the notion of *diakosmêsis*, rather than the specific confines of the inquiry in the *Elements*. The *diakosmos* of the Mixed thus includes all such classifications as constituted the *diakosmoi* in the *Elements*. For

of the Gods themselves, some are coordinate with Limit, but others with Infinity, both according to their whole orders [*diakosmêseis*] and according to parts: according to whole orders, because every paternal, connective, and demiurgic series is defined according to Limit; but every vivific and effective series, according to Infinity; and according to parts, because of the paternal and of the vivific series, some belong to the order of Limit, but others to that of Infinity. (IT I, 441)

In other words, the paternal *diakosmos*, although having an overall functionality more characterized by Limit, nevertheless has in it Goddesses, such as Rhea, who by virtue of their femininity, are coordinate with Infinity. The analysis of divine qualities according to Limit and Infinity encompasses all other classifications because in conceiving of a particular God as representing a perfectly distinct *mixture* of these primordial qualities, we sum up, as it were, the totality of that God's ontic commitments, his/her footprint within Being. But it does not matter, as I have said, just how far we could actually carry the ontological analysis of some given deity, once we understand that no henad is *reducible* to its ontic commitments.

We shall learn much more about these matters when we take up Limit, Infinity and the Mixed as the first intelligible triad. For now, however, I wish to take up the other side of the distinction that arose just now between the orders of the Gods constituted by qualities not corresponding to the hierarchy of ontic hypostases and those that are mirrored in the procession of Being, the goal being to understand the nature of the correlation between classes of deities and the ontic hierarchy. Proclus discusses this question at *PT* III 5, where he asks whether each henad has the same number of participants, or some more numerous participants than others, and, if the latter, whether the participants of the superior or of the inferior henads are more numerous. He draws upon the analogy of numbers, of which "some are more simple, but others more composite, exceeding in quantity, but suffering diminution in power." When he transfers the analogy to the henads, however, it is the

*participants* which are diminished in power but greater in number:

the henads which are nearer to the One are necessarily participated by the first and most simple essences; but those which are more remote are participated by more composite essences, which are less in power, but are greater in number and multitude. For, as a rule, in the intelligible domain additions are subtractions of power; and that which is nearer to the One ... is more uniform [*henoeidesteron*], and is joined with [*sunestin*] more universal causes of Being. (18. 10-7)

What does it mean for henads to be *nearer* or *further* from the One, “inferior” and “superior”? Given all that we have learned about the unique nature of the relationship between the One and the henads, it is clear that expressions of relative distance with respect to the One are potentially misleading.

On the one hand, those henads are simply “nearer” to the One *qua* first principle (that is, *qua* monad) who are participated by a more universal class of beings. In this regard, the ranking lies, strictly speaking, *among beings* rather than among the henads. But there is a sense in which deities more “distant” from the One *are* inferior in relation to those who are “closer.” For we read in *ET* prop. 126 that more universal Gods, who are nearer to the One and who cause more numerous effects, generate more specific Gods, who are the causes of fewer effects, by “generating from themselves through superfluity of potency secondary processions inferior to those prior to them.” This refers to the series of *a single deity*, by virtue of which there are two Aphrodites, three Athenas, and so forth. These series are the paradigm of

what A. C. Lloyd calls “P-series” or “quasi-genera” in the realm of Being and which seem to have evolved from Aristotelian *pros hen* equivocation. The inferior levels of such a series *are* indeed “further” from the One, inasmuch as their degree of individuality, which is the characteristic bestowed by the One, is inferior to the expressions of the same deity in a higher order. This is demonstrated by the contrary or contradictory characteristics, offices and relations that may be possessed by processions of the same deity on different levels, which render them less “uniform,” *henoeidês*. But the condition of *universality* is relative to the condition of *specificity*, and we must ask in respect to the “superfluity of potency,” what exactly it is that is “overflowed.” It is the intellectualized conception of a deity whose boundaries are too narrow to prevent the deity’s powers from “overflowing” a single form, so that a succession of emanations of the same deity appear on different levels; hence the Zeus who is the demiurge of the *Timaeus* is more universal than the Zeus who is apportioned a third of the universe along with Poseidon and Hades, who is in turn more universal than the Zeus who appears as one of the Gods in the *Phaedrus*.

At PT III 6. 131, Proclus makes an important general remark about the structure of participation of the ontic hypostases in the henads:

If it is necessary that the supra-essential henads, which are the Gods, since they derive their subsistence from the unparticipated cause of all things, should be participated, some of them by the first orders [*diakosmôn*] in beings, others by the middle, and others by the last orders, as was before demonstrated, it is evident that some of them deify [*ektheousin*] the unparticipated portion of being, but that others illuminate [*katalampan*] life,

others intellect, others soul, and others bodies. And of the last henads indeed, not only bodies participate [*metechei*], but likewise soul, intellect, life and essence.

The fact that a given henad “illuminates” body, the lowest manifestation of Being, does not affect that henad’s supra-essential status; for although “the last” among henads, it still must, in order to be participated by bodies, be participated at all the intervening levels. We can extrapolate from this that “intellectual” henads must also be participated by Life and Being, the two hypostases prior to Intellect, and so forth. This would mean that all of the henads are in some way of the intelligible class, regardless of what other levels of being receive their activity. Why are they not all of the intelligible class, then? Why do we hear nothing of, e.g., Kronos prior to the intelligible-and-intellectual order?

The key lies in the contrast between *illumination* and *participation*. Proclus uses the same term, *katalampein*, to deal with the problem of how the One “participates” Being, after a fashion, at *PT* III 4. 123-4. Furthermore, at *PT* II 4 (33f), extending Plato’s analogy of the Sun and the Good from the *Republic*, Proclus identifies the henads with the *light* of the Sun. He goes on to explain that “we must not say that the intelligible is united to the First after the same manner as the light, but the latter through its continuity [*sunecheian*] with the Good is established in it without a medium [*amesôs*]; while the former, through this light, participates of a vicinity to the Good.” Here we see expressed again the basic difference of the henadic *arithmos* from other multiplicities: its relationship to the One is not mediated by a quality



imparted through participation. The intelligible class of henads is said to “illuminate true Being” (*katalampon to ontôs on*) in prop. 162 of the *ET*. We may thus take “deification” thus as synonymous with “illumination.” A given henad may “deify” or “illuminate” Being alone, or Life, or Intellect, and so forth, but a henad that is *participated* by Soul, for instance, must also be participated by Intellect, by Life, and by Being. The relationship of participation, we might say, lies *within* Being, whereas a henad illuminates regions of Being in a *special* way as an expression of its peculiar nature (we shall see later that Proclus conceives this as expressing a God’s *will*). An intellectual henad need not “illuminate” each level of Being prior to Intellect; s/he need not, in other words, have a manifestation at the level of Life, the order of the intelligible-and-intellectual. But that does not mean that the henad in question does not possess (in a unitary and supra-essential mode (*ET* prop. 118)) Life and Being, in the example. The regions of Being “illuminated” by a certain array of deities – those which, in the passage immediately following this one, Proclus refers to as “suspended from” one order or another of henads – are determined by looking at the characteristics and relations attributed to given deities in myth, ritual, and iconography. These are interpreted philosophically to yield the relevant monadic structure, which not only provides information about the nature of the hypostasis co-constituted by this divine array, but may permit cross-cultural comparison of similar mythological structures as well.

We might break down divine characteristics into three categories, namely (1) the regions of Being enjoying participation in a given deity, which must include Being Itself, if no other – in this respect note *PT* III 28. 172-3. 26-7:

“there is for each divine apportionment [*dianomên theôn*] a corresponding [*oikeion*] intelligible multiplicity” – (2) the regions of Being specifically “illuminated” by a given deity, of which there must be at least one, although that one could be *any* of the ontic hypostases (including Being, taken in a narrower sense, as we shall see in chapter 5); and lastly, (3) the divine characteristics referred to above which occur at every level of Being and therefore do not serve to uniquely determine any one level (ET prop. 145, 151-9). These latter are important insofar as theurgists must be able to commence their ascent to any deity from the lowest levels of Being. These qualities also reflect a pre-ontological perception of the Gods and their immediate attributes, that belongs to a discourse more *iconic* than *narrative*, a distinction about which I shall have more to say.

The relationships established among the Gods through their “illuminations” of successive levels of Being and the participation of those hypostases in them results in two sorts of relationships of subordination. The first is that in which a given deity, who includes, of course, all the other deities for him/herself, in manifesting him/herself on a certain level, posits certain other deities in relationships of priority or posteriority to themselves. Such a relationship is, for example, that of Zeus to his father Kronos or to his son Dionysos or either of these to Zeus. These derive from what we might designate the “illuminative” characteristics, inasmuch as hierarchical relationships among the Gods are the paradigms of corresponding relationships among ontic hypostases, just as relationships among deities on the same level, so to speak, are paradigmatic of the articulation within a single ontic hypostasis. In the case of these, then, ontology is more or less

directly read off from mythology. All mythological action refers to the constitution of Being, for everything the Gods *do* shadows forth supra-essentially a *way of being*, inasmuch as Being is an excrecence of divine activity.

The other kind of subordination is that within the series of a single henad, e.g., that between the Zeus who belongs to the order of the intellectual Gods and the Zeus belonging to the order of the ruling Gods. The latter is a more “specific” emanation or manifestation of the former. These relationships derive primarily from the “participated” characteristics, and arise especially from the harmonization of contrary or contradictory characteristics of a given deity in the whole fabric of the mythos of a culture. Here, then, myth is juxtaposed against myth, while the transcendent individuality of the particular henad is affirmed over the activities of that henad with respect to different regions of Being. We know why, from an historical point of view, there are conflicting stories about the Gods, but what does this express about the supra-essential reality of the Gods? We need not patronize Proclus nor belittle his system by assuming that any aspect of its application is merely *ad hoc*. The historical situation reflects a supra-essential reality. For if no unified metanarrative exists incorporating all of the “sides” that a single deity has, nevertheless, shown to beings, this is because of a surplus of that deity’s manifestation beyond any single ontologizing reading. Rather, the deity in question has been a participant in several different ontologies which accidentally overlap *for us*. How can there be such accidents? First, because the unity of ontology is itself like all ontic or formal unity: a *specific* unity over varying instantiations. Second, accidents are

themselves merely the expression of causality prior to form. We, as individuals posterior to form, are receptive to such causality. And so we glimpse the unity of a given henad above and beyond the formal multiplicity of that henad's activities from a sympathetic vantage point, the individual at the bottom of the system perceiving the individual at the top.

### Chapter 3:

#### The Integrity of Pantheons

My concern until now has been predominantly with the manifold of the henads in general and the universal characteristics of their relationship to Being. However, the causality of each henad, insofar as each henad or God is the One Itself, makes itself felt not in that which is *universal* or *formal* at all, but in that which is *particular*, according to the axiom that the highest principle has the furthest reach. The identity of each God with the One is manifest, therefore, in that aspect of the God which escapes the reach of formal determination. Therefore in a discussion of *universal* characteristics we operate at a level *inferior* to that proper to the Gods. We recall that Proclus distinguishes between the different possible discourses about the Gods in just this way at *IT* I, 303, where he distinguishes a discourse "*about* the Gods," from that which would "*speak of each of them itself.*" We have seen that the

element of divine individuality is designated by the term *idiotês*, but that this term functions ambiguously, referring on the one hand to the supra-essential particularity of each God, and on the other hand to something *established* through the activity of the God, whose individuality is presupposed. The latter is the Mixed, the product of the first intelligible triad. This is a universal or ontological designation, a formula expressing the conditions of our ontological apprehension of the Gods, in which we understand the Gods as agents with respect to Being; the Mixed simply designates each God as a specific pattern of causality. But we glimpse nothing through such a formal designation of the *idiotês* of a God insofar as this refers to the really individual *hyparxis* of the God.

What most clearly expresses the *supra-essential* aspect of divine individuality, differentiates the Gods from one another other and is at the same time not reducible to form is each God's *proper name*. But this can only be the case if the proper name of the God is not understood in the same way that a word is. A word designates an essence, but there are different words in different languages that designate the same essence. Words are thus merely instantiations of that essence in diverse languages. If the names of the Gods are like words in this way, then the Gods cannot be differentiated except by the functions they perform with respect to Being and the distinction between the supra-essential and ontic domains must collapse into complete irrelevance. For the individual distinction of the henads, since it is not ontic, is either a systematic void or it has the status of a place *reserved* for something which can only be supplied by factual revelation, that is, the proper names of individual henads or Gods. The system, on this

interpretation, would *await* its application to a concrete body of religious texts. When this application takes place, as for instance in the *Platonic Theology*, it is as if the circuit connecting dialectic and revelation is complete. And yet because the system does not demand application to one body of religious texts rather than another, the perception of the necessity of this application itself has lapsed. We are accustomed to philosophy either placing itself prior to revelation, or making itself the handmaid of some particular revelation, and so are ill-prepared to recognize the sophistication of the approach embodied in the henadology.

It is necessary, before going any further, to address an issue in connection with this whole inquiry which can only arise due to the poor overall grasp of the doctrine of the henads. The terms *henades* and *theoi* have, strictly speaking, exactly the same extension in Proclus. The notion that there are Gods that are not henads has only arisen due to the inability of commentators to grasp that the fact that there are Gods manifest at every level of Being without those Gods therefore possessing *in themselves* a status inferior to the supra-essential. And yet Proclus nowhere gives any indication that this was his view and, as should be at least beginning to become clear by now, it is in no way necessitated by the substance of the doctrine. There are equivocal usages of the term "henad" in Proclus, but not of *theoi*. The equivocal usage of the term "henad" to refer to what are properly monads is discussed in the next chapter, with the exception of one type of equivocal usage of the term which shall be taken up in the latter part of this chapter because it has more to do with the concerns of the present chapter. "Henad," as a philosophical term, can be used by the philosopher equivocally, once the strict sense of the term is

grasped; but *theos*, as the *object* of philosophical analysis, cannot be used equivocally lest the entire inquiry lose its focus. The reader should accordingly bear in mind throughout this inquiry that wherever I say “henad” I mean a God and wherever I say “God” or use the name of a specific deity I am referring to a henad.

The way to approach the problem of the individual distinction of the henads in its supra-essential dimension lies in an aspect of divine manifestation which only enters obliquely into Proclus’s philosophy, that is, the diversity of cultures, each with their own Gods, for here alone can the problem of the status of the divine name be posed in the way I have outlined above. Although in his surviving works Proclus only applies his system to the philosophical explication of the Hellenic theology, Proclus does not only recognize the Gods of the Greeks. According to his biographer, his own religious practice involved the worship of deities from several cultures (*Vita Procli* 19), and Marinus reports that he felt this degree of cosmopolitanism to be incumbent upon the philosopher: “one maxim that this most Godfearing philosopher had always at hand and was always uttering was that a philosopher ought not to worship in the manner of a single city or the country of a few people [*tôn par’eniois patriôn*], but should be the common priest [*therapeutên*] of the entire world” (ibid). The crucial question is how this personal eclecticism of his own religious practice fits into his systematic perspective on the nature of divine existence. He clearly does not think that any single culture has a monopoly on the truth about the Gods, nor do I suggest, although this is more difficult to prove, that he believes all cultures



worship the same Gods under different names. As I have explained, for Proclus to have subscribed to such a doctrine would have the most dire consequences for the substance of the henadology.

Nor does Proclus, at any rate, clearly avail himself of the notion in any text we possess. Much of Proclus' doctrine about the names of the Gods comes from his commentary on the *Cratylus*. He says at IC 57 that "the names of the Gods are honorable and venerable, and worthy of the greatest respect to the wise. On this account they say it is not proper that the Greeks should use the Egyptian, Scythian, or Persian names of the Gods, but such as are Greek. For those presiding over provinces [*klimatarchai*] rejoice when they are denominated in the dialects of their proper regions." The interpretation of the passage depends in part upon what is meant by *klimatarchai*. We know from a passage in Olympiodorus (*In Alc.* p. 20.1) that it refers for the latter, and possibly Proclus as well, to a particular class of encosmic deities. Are we to understand that the question of such names is only relevant at the encosmic level, that is, as applying only to the lowest emanations of the Gods, and that the same Gods simply possess different names in different places? On the other hand, Proclus could simply be referring to the Gods in general, insofar as certain regions are consecrated to them, the term *klimatarchês* referring originally to the governor of a province. The problem is that Proclus is not concerned, in such a passage, with the type of question I have raised. He writes in an environment in which cross-cultural syncretism had been a fact of life for centuries. He does not wish to intervene overtly in religious practices, but he does see a role for the philosopher as a referee of sorts in the relationships between the religions of different cultures. This role of the

philosopher as referee emerges in particular, it would seem, when it is a question of maintaining the diversity of beliefs and practices against overreaching ideologies.

Accordingly, his concern here is with the notion, quite common in later antiquity, that the Greek divine names were simply inferior names for the deities who could be accessed more effectively through the use of Egyptian, Chaldean, or other "barbaric" names. See especially in this regard Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* VII 4. 256 and V 257ff. Proclus shares with Iamblichus his rejection of the earlier Hellenistic notion that one should routinely "translate," e.g., the names of Egyptian Gods into those of functionally corresponding Greek Gods, so that Thoth becomes Hermes, Amun becomes Zeus, and so forth. Hence Iamblichus stresses that "names do not entirely preserve the same meaning when translated into another language; rather, there are certain idioms in each nation which cannot be signified by language to another nation" (257). In fact, the reason that the divine names and prayers of the Greeks lack the efficacy of those of the barbarians is "because they are continually changed through the innovation and illegality of the Greeks," insofar as they are "naturally studious of novelty, and are carried about everywhere by their volatility," whereas "the barbarians are stable in their manners, and firmly continue to employ the same words" (259).

But Proclus rejects the claim by Iamblichus that the names and prayers of the Greeks are inefficacious, as well as the claim that any language is closer to the divine than any other, as when Iamblichus claims that "the Gods have shown that the whole dialect of sacred nations, such as those of the Egyptians and Assyrians, is adapted to sacred concerns; on this account we ought to

think it necessary that our conference with the Gods should be in a language allied to them" (256). Again: "as the Egyptians were the first of men who were allotted the participation of the Gods, the Gods when invoked rejoice in the Egyptian rites" (258). That Proclus rejects this preference of one nation over another is clear, not just from the passage cited above, but also from a passage in his commentary on *Alcibiades I*, where he says, in regard to souls, that "the stable and eternal nobility of birth in souls depends upon the Gods around whom they have been sown ... the discrimination that has regard to the city-states of our world and the places on the earth is absurd and the cause of conceit in souls" (113). But what is the appropriate value that is to be accorded to cultural diversity? And does Proclus share the view that Iamblichus seems, at least, to hold, that the same Gods are worshiped under different names by different peoples, albeit without assigning priority to any one set of names over another?

What is clear is that in the *Cratylus* commentary Proclus stresses, against those who would attribute names, not to the Gods, but to the angels, daemons and heroes, i.e. to subordinate classes of divine entities, "that names are in the Gods themselves, and in those Gods that are allotted the highest order." This is significant, since names, and the individuality they connote, are thus not simply a symptom of the declination of the divine toward beings. He posits three classes of names, which proceed from the *hyparxis*, power, and intellect, respectively, of each God. These represent, as we have seen, the three intelligible triads, which represent aspects possessed by each and every God *qua* God. The first class of "name" is described by Proclus as "characters of light," the second as exhibited in the "inarticulate evocations" of the

theurgists, while the third is the class of the proper name. Recall that Proclus made the distinction, at *IT* I, 303 between a “scientific” discourse about the Gods in general and an “intellectual” discourse about individual Gods. These “intellectual names” – i.e. corresponding, not to the hypostasis of Intellect, but to each God’s own intellect, that is, the third intelligible triad – are the cultic names of the Gods,

the divine names through which the Gods are invoked, and by which they are celebrated, being revealed by the Gods themselves and reverting to them, and producing to human knowledge as much of the Gods as is apparent. For through these we are able to signify something to each other, and to converse with ourselves about the Gods. Different nations however participate differently of these, as, for instance, the Egyptians, according to their native tongue, receiving names of this kind from the Gods; but the Chaldeans and Indians in a different manner, according to their proper tongue; and in a similar manner the Greeks, according to their dialect. Though a certain divinity therefore may be called by the Greeks Briareus, but differently by the Chaldeans, we must nevertheless admit, that each of these names is the progeny of the Gods, and that it signifies the same essence.

One might well assume that Proclus states here exactly the view I have claimed him not to endorse. But once again, if we read on to what immediately follows, one can at any rate no longer be sure: “But if some names are more and others less efficacious, it is not surprising, since of things which are known to us, such as are daimoniacal and angelic are more efficacious; and, in short, of things denominated, the names of such as are nearer are more perfect than the names of those that are more remote” (71).

Whether Proclus means us to understand that names conveyed by angels and daimons are nearer to the Gods, because they are communicated to beings superior to us and so closer to the Gods, or that such names are nearer *to us* in that they have been transmitted to us without the medium of tradition, at any rate, we read elsewhere that “some, meeting with daimons and angels, have been taught by them names better adapted to things than such as have been established” (51). Again, at IC 122 we read that

many daimons have thought fit to unfold the nature of the Gods, and have also delivered names adapted to the Gods ... by which theurgists invoking the Gods in the worship adapted to them were favorably heard by the divinities. Many daimons also, in appearing to men of a more fortunate destiny, have unfolded to them names connascent with things themselves, through which they have rendered the truth about beings more conspicuous.

If the concern in the passage from 71, as at 57, is the claim that the divine names of, e.g., the Egyptians are more efficacious *in general* than those of other cultures, then the point Proclus is making changes accordingly. No culture possesses a language whose inherent capacity to participate the divine intellect, and thus the “intellectual” names of the Gods, is greater than another’s. Accordingly, Proclus poses a hypothetical case: *even if* one and the same deity should happen to possess names in two different languages – and notice that Proclus chooses here, not a celebrated case of syncretism, such as Zeus and Amun, or Demeter and Isis, or even Plato’s famous equation of Athena and Neith in the *Timaeus*, but rather a far more marginal figure, indicating his extreme reluctance to actually embrace the counterfactual

hypothesis – it still would not be the case that the Chaldean name, in the example, would be more efficacious. Rather, “each of these names is the progeny of the Gods,” where we note that Proclus does not say, of the God in question, in this case Briareus, but of the Gods *in general*, that is, each name is equally *divine*. If, of two names for the same thing, one is more efficacious, it may be because it is of the class which are delivered by angels, daemons or heroes in a special revelation tailored to a narrow context, or it may be “nearer” to us in some other way. Proclus is, in short, seeking to explain why some people may have experienced greater efficacy in the use of foreign names: it is not because some language is altogether closer to the divine than another, but because there are many classes of names. As such, we might be inadvertently comparing the efficacy of two names whose status relative to the realm of the divine *in general* is not comparable, the efficacy in question being the strictly pragmatic efficacy of getting any divine results at all, that is, contacting the divine *in general*. It would be odd, at any rate, that Proclus would be referring to *Greek* names when he speaks of names that are more efficacious, since as we have seen from the passage in Iamblichus, it was common to accord increased efficacy to foreign names of the Gods – especially Egyptian and “Chaldean” names – and *not* to Greek ones.

If we should conclude that Proclus believed that the same Gods were worshiped under different names in different cultures, we would of course need to explain what he thought he was doing in writing hymns to foreign deities and observing their festivals, as Marinus relates – Marinus specifically mentions Cybele, Marnas of Gaza, Asclepius Leontuchos of Ascalon,<sup>6</sup>

Theandrites of “the Arabs,” and Isis of Philae, adding that “one could almost

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the Phoenician God Eshmoun (*Neoplatonic Saints*, p. 87 n. 211).

say that he observed with the proper rituals the significant holidays of every people and the ancestral rites of each" (19) – since according to the interpretation which I have criticized, these activities would simply constitute a less effective means of contacting the same Gods whom he could reach with perfect adequacy through Hellenic methods. It can only be that Proclus saw these Gods as distinct individuals, that in fact it is his understanding of the Gods as absolute individuals that allows Proclus to worship such an eclectic assortment of deities taken apart from their respective pantheons. And yet Proclus' goal is not to liquidate the pantheon as such; he operates within a single pantheon for the purposes of the *Platonic Theology*. It is significant that Proclus does not include in the *Platonic Theology* all the Gods he knows, for it shows that there are other horizons for him beyond the perspective embodied in this text. But to return to the issue of the cross-cultural *comparison* of deities, the reason I have taken such care to clear the space I have with respect to Proclus' attitude toward such comparison is for the sake of certain profound possibilities inherent in the system he created. The relationship between henads and the monads participating them makes it possible to understand those characteristics and powers that deities of different cultures have in common as reflecting participation in distinct deities by the same monads, since the unity of these monads is a unity of essence rather than an individual unity. As such, it is no longer necessary, given the concept of individuality embodied in the henadology, to identify the individual with a set of distinguishing qualities.

Of course, even given such a notion of individuality, there would always be more than enough differences in the series of qualities or associations

depending from, e.g., Dionysos, on the one hand, and Osiris, on the other, that there would be no question of indiscernibility *if*, as in the case of corporeal individuals, disposition in space represented a failsafe means of discerning individuals. But in the case of entities that are at once everywhere and nowhere, what would prevent us from simply dissolving all the qualities of both into a single conjunction, with the contrary or contradictory attributes distributed among different hypostases as Proclus does in the series he posits emanating from each divine individual? A possible counter-argument is advanced by Proclus in a defense of the existence of a multiplicity of Gods that might be called the argument from measure, occurring at *IP* 1049:

Even as we take our start from sense-perception in acquiring understanding of the differentiation of incorporeal essences, so it is on the basis of the variation in incorporeal essences that we cognize the unmixed distinctness of the primal, supra-essential henads and the particular characteristics of each ... So then, as we contemplate the extent of the whole incorporeal realm which is spread out beneath them and the measured series of variations down from the hidden level to that of distinctness, we declare our belief that there exists particularity and order even in the henads themselves, along with their unity. For it is on the basis of the differences in the participants that we discern the distinctions within the participated; for things that participated without variation in the same thing could not have exhibited such differences relative to each other.

Compare the “measured series of variations” here with the references to the “measured procession of the generation of beings” at *IP* 1090 and to the



“measures of the generation of the divine genera and the beings unified by the Gods” at *PT* II 12. 72. 21-2. That there is *measure* in the procession of Being is an epistemic presumption assuring us that we can draw conclusions about causes from their effects, hence assuring the intelligibility of the universe. Were there a gap in this chain, it would become necessary to introduce a factor void of meaning or even a principle opposed to meaning, an element of pure facticity, chance or disorder. The differences among the participants would, in the last analysis, have to be attributed to some substrate or material cause. This is an application of what Dodds characterizes as Proclus’ “principle of Continuity” (p. 216), e.g. that “the qualitative interval between any term of the procession and its immediate consequent is the minimum difference compatible with distinctness.” In the case I have been discussing, the cultural differences between Egypt and Greece, say, would on the competing interpretation, have to be attributed entirely to non-ideal factors, rather than to the participation of different Gods. There can be, perhaps, no proof that this would in itself be unpalatable to Proclus, although one would suspect as much; what is clear though is the unpalatable consequences there would be for the system. The question of *matter* I take up at the end of this chapter and then again in the chapter on the intellectual Gods; but what about the other end of the scale? For the consequence of dismissing the culturally distinct names of the Gods to mere participants of common ontic functions, rather than the ontic functions *themselves* as participants in common of primordially distinct supra-essential individuals, would be to dissolve all the Gods into the One. This would be the ultimate consequence of reducing the Gods to sets of qualities or attributes. This would

lead to irrationalism, inasmuch as a factor opaque to or even hostile to intelligibility would have to be called upon as the source of the real distinction of the Gods, not to mention what it would do to the transcendence of the One to introduce into it that sort of potentiality. Accordingly, when Proclus refers to the One as “God” – which he does not do, for that matter, as often as he appears to in certain English translations – it does not refer to one God in the monotheist sense, but refers indifferently to any God or to the generic quality of Godhood, in accord with centuries of usage of *ho theos* which rarely if ever implied, in and of itself, some shift toward monotheism. It is true, on the other hand, that prior to the doctrine of the henads there had been no thoroughgoing attempt to express in metaphysical terms the structural foundations of polytheist praxis, for there was no way to reconcile *existential* plurality with a monism with respect to *principles*, that is, intellectual monism.

The distinction Proclus offers between deities and their powers or functions, as expressed in the participation of monads in henads, has the potential to provide a vehicle of mediation between the religions of different cultures. For Proclus can speak of, e.g., the “Kronian monad” (IC 63, 104) when he means to refer to the position in the structure of hypostases or monads occupied by Kronos, so that “Zeus is said to be the son of Kronos” inasmuch as “Zeus being the demiurgic intellect, proceeds from another intellect, superior and more uniform,” et al. (104). Again, at IC 171, he explains that Persephone “is allotted triple powers” as comprehending “three monads of Gods.” One can easily see how this point of view would have helped Proclus to render the sort of aid in rectifying local cults that Marinus

reports of him. Where elements of the cult had been lost or forgotten, he would have been able, based upon his discernment of the monadic structure, which in its abstract character constitutes a sort of unit of measure applied to the Gods, to fill the gaps with appropriate, presumably indigenous, material. For instance, on a trip to Lydia, Proclus “acquired clear knowledge of their customs [viz. ‘the more ancient rites still practiced there’], and for their part, if through length of time they had neglected any of the practices, they learned from the philosopher’s directions to serve the Gods more perfectly” (15). Again, on his sojourn in Adrotta, again in Lydia, Proclus resolves a dispute among the natives as to “what God or Gods frequented the place and were honored there, since different tales prevailed among the locals” (32). Marinus portrays the solution as arriving to Proclus in a revelation, but the account displays nevertheless a sequence of hermeneutical inferences based upon the characteristics reported by the locals, by means of which the opinion of some, that the deity was Asclepius and of others that the local deities were the Dioscuri, were harmonized by Proclus by ascribing the cult to the twin sons of Asclepius, Machaon and Podilarius.

By keeping the henadic and monadic registers – that is, the identity and the functions of deities respectively – separate and distinct, one is able to acknowledge the similarities between certain deities without violating their integrity either by conflating, e.g., Dionysos and Osiris, nor, *a fortiori*, by collapsing all the Gods into an hypostatized One. The One must be, in relation to the henads, neither a whole containing them as parts nor represented by them in its aspects or adumbrations, nor a father, nor a creator. For as Proclus reminds us at *PT* III 4. 123-4, we must at once “preserve the

transcendency of the first [principle] with reference to the things posterior to it," and also "maintain unconfused the henads which proceed [*proelthousas*] from it, with respect to each other as well as to their unique principle." To conflate distinct deities could be seen as a type of disrespect of the divine name, for "as it is not holy to behave in a disorderly manner towards the statues of the Gods, so neither is it becoming to err about names" (IC 51). We are reminded of the Egyptian priest, who "[i]n the daily cult service ... must declare before the god who is being worshiped, 'I have not equated your nature with that of another god'," (Hornung 185). But there is a more profound issue here, for one would violate the integrity of the procession of Being itself by making the diversity and particularity the Gods embody in the richness of their cultural context a product of entropy, "for if the Good is multiplied through weakness, the whole of things will proceed through a diminution, rather than through a superabundance of goodness." According to this principle, the "measured series of variations" in the scale of being must include as well an account respecting the integrity of diverse cultures as something more than a weakness in the reception of the divine. For how could the very means of access to the Gods be a symptom of their decline?

We find, therefore, in the polytheism of Proclus, something transcending even what Jan Assmann has called "cosmotheism." He points out, quite correctly, that the "inevitable construction of cultural otherness ... is to a certain degree compensated by techniques of translation," and that "[a]ncient polytheisms functioned as such a technique of translation."

They belong within the emergence of the "Ancient World" as a coherent

ecumene of interconnected nations. The polytheistic religions overcame the primitive ethnocentrism of tribal religions by distinguishing several deities by name, shape, and function. The names are, of course, different in different cultures, because the languages are different. The shapes of the gods and the forms of worship may also differ significantly. But the functions are strikingly similar, especially in the case of cosmic deities; and most deities had a cosmic function. The sun god of one religion is easily equated to the sun god of another religion, and so forth. Because of their functional equivalence, deities of different religions can be equated. (*Moses the Egyptian*, 2-3)

While Assmann's analysis is adequate with regard to the historical development of polytheism through most of antiquity, in Proclus we see the *return* of the concept of individuality over and above functional equivalence. Nor does this come about as a regression to a more primitive structure, but through the sublation of the paradigm of translation. Functional equivalence, now occurring within its own register, need no longer imply identity. The intellectual accomplishment of cosmotheism is rightly praised by Assmann: "The different peoples worshipped different gods, but nobody contested the reality of foreign gods and the legitimacy of foreign forms of worship" (3); but once this insight has been established through the labor of translation, difference no longer *requires* translation in order to demand respect. This does not mean that we stop translating or trying to translate, but the goal of translation is no longer the reduction of the different to the same. Assmann seems not altogether unaware that there is more to be found in polytheism than its cosmotheistic potential; for while he speaks of a "return of the repressed" in regard to cosmotheism, manifesting itself in "cosmotheistic

movements such as Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, alchemy, cabala, Spinozism, Deism, and pantheism," he nevertheless confesses that "[n]obody taking part in this discourse ever went so far as to intone 'praise of polytheism.' This remained for postmodern philosophy to formulate" (217).

In this chapter I have tried to show how the most crucial *philosophical* issues in the henadology have no hope of proper resolution if we divorce the philosophical and religious dimensions of the doctrine. By persistently regarding one side or the other of the doctrine as inessential, commentators have foreclosed any possibility of truly understanding and appreciating the richness of Proclus' contribution. The henadology represents a genuine *negotiation* between religion and philosophy which attempts to fully respect the claims of each. We have despaired in advance of the very possibility of such a negotiation having a successful outcome if we assume from the outset that the encounter between these two domains of human thought can only result in the capitulation of one to the terms of the other. One may not, indeed, care for the terms of the settlement. On the one hand, it reserves to religious discourses and not to philosophical speculation the right to fill the class of absolute individuals, the henads, with entities the terms of whose existence is prior to ontological determinations. On the other hand, it denies to any religious discourse the right to *deny* the existence of the Gods of any other religious discourse. In either case, the attempted statement simply fails to make sense due to the register in which the two discourses operate.

A philosopher can only speak of classes and of formal entities, not of individuals, and so they can posit no actual Gods but only types of Gods

corresponding to formal designations. A theologian or mythographer can posit the existence of entities, but not their non-existence, because non-existence is an ontological determination inasmuch as it presupposes universal quantification. But universal quantification requires a mediated unity of the members of the class, whereas the existential discourse of the theologian actually applies only to a single henad or to a co-emergent set of henads. Therefore the denial of the existence of other Gods in a religious discourse only asserts that the God with which the discourse in question is concerned has no other Gods in his/her co-emergent set, i.e. that the set in question has the value of one. It is a statement, in other words, that merely reverts back upon the deity in question, as a statement about or qualification of the terms of that particular deity's manifestation in Being. It is, in short, something that deity has affirmed *about him/herself*. Correlatively, once the register in which universal quantification can operate has been reached, one has lost the power to say that any *particular* deity exists or does not exist, for at *this* level one can only determine classes of entity. Nor could one hope to establish monotheism by the simple appeal to intellectual monism, for the concepts of unity and multiplicity have revealed themselves as distinct in the supra-essential and ontic registers, and this distinction is not a matter of reducing both to species of a genus. The two modes of unity (and the two modes of multiplicity) form, instead, a "quasi-genus," such that the one mode of unity arises *from out of* the other and unity is said, appropriately enough, *pros hen*.

Three modes of unity are ultimately relevant to our inquiry. We are

basically familiar with two of them by now, namely the unity of the henadic individual and the formal or specific unity of beings. But there is a third which we are only beginning to grasp, namely the unity of the national pantheon. This unity has been inferred negatively from the argument I have pursued against the idea that the Gods of the many nations (*ta ethnē*) are merely different names for the same limited set of Gods which would, on this account, be matched one-to-one with the genera of Being and exhaust the supra-essential realm, in this way possessing no “surplus” over Being, just as the religious discourse would possess no surplus over the philosophical discourse, amounting to a mere allegorization of abstract principles, a tableau vivant illustrating the philosopher’s arguments and no more. But if there is a real unity to national pantheons, and the Gods who populate them are *not* identical with their functional counterparts in other pantheons, then what is the principle of unity in such a pantheon?

First, how is a pantheon delimited? Why do just so many Gods belong to a given pantheon? If the concept of a pantheon is to have any relevance to a philosophical inquiry, it cannot be determined merely by nationality, for such a grouping has no substantiality except for anthropology. Rather, there must be a principle of unity for a pantheon which has significance for the Gods involved, and not just for us, just as the powers of the Gods are *themselves* supra-essential, even though they are that in the Gods which *inclines* toward Being. Instead, we should regard a pantheon as delimited by the fixing of a one-to-one correspondence of Gods to ontic functions. Since each God contains, for him/herself, the whole of Being, the participation of a God in a pantheon which *itself* represents the whole of Being, must express the



actualization of only a narrow slice of that God's potential. And this existential fact is not without anthropological manifestation: the role which a given Hellenic deity, for instance, plays in relation to the set of Olympians is much narrower than the role which that deity plays at their cult center, alone or in association usually with just a small number of other deities. The different sizes of the groupings in which a God is encountered reflect different degrees of articulation of a *logos* about the role of the Gods with respect to Being. Therefore the historical development of a metanarrative incorporating a number of local deities into a national pantheon of  $n$  members, a labor of integration performed by poets and mythographers over centuries, has as its condition of possibility the existence of a *logos* about Being with a not-less-than- $n$ -fold articulation. When we are talking about a pantheon, then, in some sense more robust than the merely anthropological, we are talking about a collection of deities who, with no irrevocable sacrifice of that individual autonomy by virtue of which each contains the whole of Being, are nevertheless present to the worshiper *also* from the perspective of a *single* whole of Being, or of divine activity with respect to Being, a *pan*-theon or totality, of which each represents a *part*.

What are the limits of such a whole? Could a pantheon grow to *really* include *all* the Gods? Here we must be careful. A pantheon is not a logical set over which we may quantify; it is a supra-essential collective. The bonds between the Gods in it are forged, not by functional identity, but by mythological incident, narrative relationships, and iconic juxtaposition. While we can, with the intellect which comes to us ultimately from the Gods, turn the lens of our ontological categories upon the Gods themselves,

analyzing and comparing them, the sort of bonds which create a pantheon can only come to us through a new *story*. And, needless to say, the stories that are told about the Gods are not, for a reader such as Proclus, mere products of human fancy. A register of just how seriously Proclus takes myth is that he places it on an equal footing with mathematics as images in which we may “survey paradigms, and through the former pass to the latter” (IT II, 246). And it would be no exaggeration at all to say that for Proclus the “discovery” of a new myth would be just as difficult as the discovery of a new theorem of mathematics. As such, the grouping of Gods into a pantheon in the substantive sense must be regarded for all practical purposes as an *elective* assemblage representing the will of the Gods involved.

The passage from “hyparctic” or existential autonomy, however, into such an assemblage involves the passage into a multiplicity governed by ontic rules. And just as ontic manifolds are mediated by their monads, so do narratives have fixed centers and peripheries, with some characters playing larger roles than others. This narrative logic plays itself out in the Hellenic theology and in Proclus’ account thereof, in the special importance accorded the deity identified with the demiurgic intellect. This deity is, for the Greeks, Zeus – at least in Proclus’ judgment. It is Zeus *qua* “all-perfect unparticipated intellect” (IC 99), that is, because it is this deity, among the Gods of the Greeks, in whom the monad of the demiurgic intellect participates, à la ET prop. 163: “All those henads are intellectual whereof the unparticipated Intelligence enjoys participation.” Hence “[o]f the many demiurgi there is one demiurge, in order that all things may be consequent to each other, the One, the intelligible paradigm, the one intelligible demiurge, the one only-begotten

world (*Tim.* 92b)" (*IT* I, 310f). Proclus frequently stresses the analogy between the demiurge and the One; not only are the One and the Demiurge both "Kings" in the context of the second Epistle, but Proclus refers at *IP* 60K to a bit of Chaldean lore in which *Ad*, the word for "one" is reduplicated to name the demiurge: *Adad*. "They do not say that it comes immediately next to the One, but only that it is comparable to the One by way of proportion; for as the former is to the intelligible, so that latter is to the whole visible world." This analogy arises because the entire chain of hypostatic monads crystallizes with the fixing of any deity to a single ontic position. With this fixing, two sorts of hierarchies immediately emerge. First, all those other deities with whom the fixed deity has mythological relations are fixed in those positions, forming the nucleus of a unified system of Being. This is the "center." At the "periphery" lies all the attributes, incidents and relationships of the Gods in the nucleus that conflict with those in the nucleus. These are seen as still belonging to the system, but at its periphery, inasmuch as they represent the manifestation of the deities in the given system at different levels of Being. From a broader perspective, however, these could also be seen as the residuum within the system of the possibility of other systematic dispositions of the pantheon, one in which, for instance, Zeus might have a smaller and more peripheral role, which could have come about through any number of historical accidents. It is neither a question here of a full blown theodicy, in which things *had* to turn out as they did, nor of an abandonment of such accidents to chance; a different configuration of the metanarrative would have reflected the actualization of a different potential *logos*.

This "selection" or "fixing" of a deity to an ontological position is not a

voluntaristic act by a given worshiper; rather, it expresses an hermeneutical engagement with a religious tradition, the endeavor to distill from the religious text the philosophical truths it incorporates without reducing the mythological discourse to a mere allegorical garment for these ideas. The existing works of Greek theologians are thus used as so much empirical testimony to the ontological roles played by the Gods of different pantheons, whether it is a question in Proclus of proving that the Platonic demiurge of the *Timaeus* is Zeus, or as Damascius will later discern in the theologies of several other nations the deities participated by the intelligible triads.

The special role accorded to the demiurge in Proclus manifests his allegiance to the principle that Aristotle expressed at *Metaphysics* XII 10 by quoting Homer to the effect that “the rule of many is not good; let one the ruler be” (1076a). For indeed, “the substances of the universe” are not “a plurality of unrelated parts” in Proclus, nor does his polytheistic theology mean that things are “governed badly.” As Philip Merlan has explained, Aristotle’s statement is hardly an assertion of *monotheism*, since there is an ineliminable multiplicity of unmoved movers in his own system. Indeed, as Merlan points out in regard to 1072b 13-30, Aristotle “as a matter of fact employs, in other passages, the same tones of rapture in extolling ‘Gods’ which he here makes use of in exalting ‘God’,” viz. *De Caelo* I 9, 279a 18 and *Eth. Nic.* X 8, 1178b7 (“Aristotle’s Unmoved Movers,” *Traditio* 4, 1946 pp. 1-30). Such passages show the degree to which Aristotle speaks indifferently of “God” and “the Gods.” The primacy accorded the first unmoved mover expresses not monotheism but rather *henotheism* – what Merlan refers to as “subordinationism” – a doctrine *within* polytheism according to which the

multiplicity of Gods acknowledge a single ruler in order that relationships of center and periphery be fixed for the subsequent orders of being (the term “henotheism” is sometimes used to refer to the phenomenon I have previously referred to as “monolatry,” but this usage is to be avoided).

Merlan also calls attention to the significance for Aristotle’s doctrine of the issue of whether species ordered hierarchically – i.e. the unmoved movers deployed about their “ruler” – may form a genus. For Proclus, such “quasi-genera” have their paradigm in the form of divine series. This accounts for the extra-logical status of quasi-genera and may provide a clue as to the genesis of the concept of the henadic *arithmos* in the juxtaposition of two problematics – on the one hand, the infinite regress posed by the unity of the concept of Unity from the *Parmenides*; on the other, the Aristotelian problem of the relationship among the unmoved movers, who cannot be subsumed under a genus due to the aforementioned logical difficulty. The solution lies in the formula of a henotheism that emerges from the matrix of a polycentric polytheism as the latter’s collapse into determinacy in the constitution of Intellect.

In Proclus there is a *class* of intellectual deities known as “rulers,” i.e. the Gods of the *Phaedrus*. The common quality among these Gods is, of course, the paramount role that they play in the ascent of the particular soul, at once the critical moment in the constitution of the hypostases and the most hidden in the system itself, for it joins three unique entities in their uniqueness: a unique human being, a unique divinity, and a unique world-order, a conjunction which is the essence of theurgy. We can glimpse the significance of this moment in the system in the remark from *IP* 1048 about

the tradition among “men of old” who “termed incorporeal essence as a whole ‘One,’ and the corporeal and in general the divisible ‘Others’; so that in whatever sense you took the One, you would not deviate from the contemplation of incorporeal substances and the *ruling* henads” (my emphasis), where the contact between the particular soul and its tutelary deity *elicits*, in effect, the One Itself, and by implication all the intervening hypostases.

Guided by the metaphor of sovereignty, we must understand the demiurgic intellect as a position, a throne, as it were, that could be occupied by different deities in the Hellenic theology just as it is, naturally, occupied by different deities within the pantheons of different nations. Within the Greek religious field alone, it is clear that, for example, the onto-theology of Empedocles de-centers Zeus in favor of a demiurgic Aphrodite, although Proclus is of the opinion that “all the Greek theology” attributes this position to Zeus (*IT* I, 316). In Egyptian religion, we can see far more striking manifestations of this phenomenon. As Hornung remarks,

It is characteristic of the Egyptian conception of god that the epithet ‘greatest god’ can be given to the most varied deities, often in a single text ... The fact that literally any god can be the ‘greatest’ of all the gods should warn us against isolating the ‘greatest god’ as a figure separate from the other deities. The same is also true of the statement that one god created all the others and of the use of *ntr* [the generic term for deity in Egyptian] in the instruction texts [that is, the edifying or ethical texts sometimes known as “Wisdom Literature”]. In each case we find that the specific, well-known deities of the Egyptian pantheon were meant, never a supergod behind the gods. (187-8)

Particularly relevant to the concept of the demiurge in the Proclean system are Hornung's remarks about the epithet *nb-r-jr*, usually translated "lord of all." However, "the translation 'lord of all' ... can easily give rise to a falsification of the Egyptian conception of god. 'Lord of all' is not what is meant, but quite literally 'lord to the end' – to the spatial and temporal end of the created world" (235). In similar fashion, the demiurge is at once supreme and strictly limited in his function of constituting the whole of the cosmos *qua* whole in a system where the logic of wholes and parts is subordinated to henadic individuality – see, for instance, *IT* I, 313f: "Zeus therefore, comprehending in himself wholes, produces in conjunction with Night all things monadically and intellectually." Where supremacy is subordinated to individuality, supremacy is, as it were, no longer *itself* supreme. Hornung goes on to explain the breadth of application of the key demiurgic epithets:

By the end of the Old Kingdom at the latest, the Egyptians had developed their conception of a supreme being who is "king" and "lord" of all that is created, and is also the creator and sustainer of "everything that exists." In Egypt, however, the qualities of this supreme being do not attach to a particular deity, but may be attributed to any deity, even to relatively unimportant local gods. In our sources the qualities of a creator god and ruler are most commonly found attributed to the sun god Re and gods who are combined syncretistically with him ... [but] at any time an Egyptian believer could credit some other deity, who was for him the most important god in the cult in his home town, or who incorporated a region of the world which was significant to him at the time, with all the supreme attributes of divine power, even if the

deity was not combined syncretistically with Re or Amun. (235-6)

The logical structure Hornung so perspicuously demonstrates is none other than that which I have attempted to articulate in relation to the henadology. The order of implication is from diverse and incommensurable henotheisms to the recognition of monolatry, which in turn finds its supra-essential ground in the radical or polycentric polytheism of the henadic *arithmos*.

The demiurge is both henad and monad. Proclus makes specific reference to the dual nature of the demiurgic intellect at *IP* 763. The passage begins from a consideration of how the cosmos “is both one and many ... not only in its bodily expanse ... but also in the incorporeal lives it contains. For there are Gods in it, and daemons; men, animals, and plants,” et al. Notice that even the Gods can be said, in a certain sense, to be contained in the cosmos (even if Proclus means here strictly the class of *encosmic* Gods, these are *Gods* nonetheless – viz. *ET* prop. 165 – and all Gods are supra-essential, regardless of their class). “Whence, then, has this cosmos such a character ... as to be both one and many? Does it not come from the God who fashioned and fitted it together? But from what sources did he fashion it or whence did he provide it with its unity and multiplicity? Was it not from his own essence?” Thus “the demiurgic intellect is both one and many through the whole of itself. Its plurality is a specific unity [*henoeides*], its unity is multiple [*to hen peplêthusmenon*], and there is nothing you can take within it that is not both one and many. Each of the forms, then, is both a unity and a multiplicity,” (762) – that is, the demiurge is in a way *consubstantial* with the forms. Next Proclus takes up the question of the nature of the intellect’s unity, which is,



on the one hand, not to be understood

as the divine character [*theotêta*] of Intellect, by which Intellect is both father and maker of all things [*tôn holôn*]. For this divinity cannot partake of plurality; it is the generator of all the plurality it contains, and it is not lawful that what is generated should be participated in by its generator. But neither can we take it to be the one that is, as it were, the entirety of the forms. For again we seriously restrict its power when we speak thus; although this one and many are the full complement [*plêrôma*] of the forms, yet this character does not embrace the whole nature of the Demiurge.

Having carefully ruled out identifying the proper unity of the Intellect either with the deity it participates, nor with the mere totality of the forms, Proclus has cleared a space for the entity in question:

The one, then [*to hen*, i.e. the One in the Intellect], must be said to be that which is the wholeness of the entire demiurgic intellect, that to which the theologian is looking when he says, "One came to be," (Orph. fr. 168). For it itself contains all things on an intellectual level; it is a single intellect embracing many intellects, and an intellectual cosmos which is a monad of self-perfected [*autotelôn*] intellects. For not only does it contain the whole compass of the Ideas but also many other wholes, as the theologians have taught us. We must then call that single wholeness the henad that pervades all wholeness, if we are to preserve its character as being [*to ousiôdes autês*] (for wholeness is a real being [*ousia*]); and on the other hand by the plurality we must understand the more specific ranks [*taxeis*] of beings that are comprehended by this wholeness, and none of which appears without a share in wholeness; for anything whatever that you might take participates in the whole and in its

intellectual character, if this language be permitted. Unity and plurality are the most general of all kinds of beings whatever, and it is through them that the demiurgic Intellect himself is the cause of all forms. (763f)

There are three entities in question, then, when we speak of the Intellect: an immanent monad, which is really just the *plêrôma* of the forms; an intellectual deity; and a transcendent-monad-*cum*-henad which mediates these. This latter is a One which comes to be, hence a monad, a participant in unity – for see *ET* prop. 3: “In so far, then, as they undergo a process of becoming one, they participate unity.” It is a One, however, which contains all things intellectually, which is itself an “intellectual cosmos.” A single intellect embracing many intellects – not just many *ideas* – it is a monad in relation to the many divine intellects, each of which is for its own part *autotelês*. It contains “many other wholes,” inasmuch as all the *taxeis* of beings are present in it as well. The specific reference to theologians is inspired probably by the Orphic verse in which Zeus swallows Phanes (the intelligible intellect) and comes thus to contain the whole of things in himself (Orphic fr. 121, 123). By this act, Zeus becomes not only the monad of the other divine intellects, but also the universal henad, so to speak. For we recall that “intelligible intellect returning to the principles of the whole of things ... becomes the plenitude of forms, and is all things intellectually and at the same time intelligibly, comprehending in itself the causes of beings, and being full of the ineffable and exempt cause of all things, constitutes the monad of the Gods; whence also, Plato I think calls it the Idea of the Gods” (*PT* III 19. 152).

Throughout the *Parmenides* commentary, Proclus criticizes those – the Platonist Origen is a frequent target, but Porphyry seems also to have held this – who would attribute to the One the characteristics appropriate to the demiurge. But the impulse is natural, since the demiurge represents the greatest integration of different modes of unity in the system through being both henad and monad. The centralizing focus on the demiurge also provides the nearest approximation of monotheism in the polytheistic system of Proclus, and the most monotheistic pronouncements in pagan antiquity were generated in meditation upon the position of the demiurge; and the “argument from design” remained a perennially popular mode of monotheistic apologia into modernity. The entity which thus arises is called by Proclus “the henad that pervades all wholeness,” because it represents the philosophical core of the entire system. It is, in fact, the One-that-is, the Monad of Being; but its essentiality, as it were, its *ousiôdes*, can only be supported through and as a *henad*, for the *ousiôdes* of *ousia*, so to speak, cannot be another *ousia*, lest an infinite regress set in.

Proclus explains at *IT* I, 447 that “the Demiurge himself is a monad through his similitude and analogy to the paradigm [intelligible intellect] ... and both the Demiurge and the paradigm are analogous to the intelligible monad [Being Itself].” The *analogical* relationships constituted among monads are above all what enable us to ascend in philosophical reflection to the higher principles, the hypostases. This is the “golden chain” which Zeus girds around the whole he constitutes (*IT* I, 314); this is dialectic. At *IP* 1100f Proclus characterizes the “geometrical order” by which everything derives from the One as the “golden chain of beings.” So too at *IP* 642f and elsewhere,

Proclus will speak of “an analogous relation between the Demiurge and the contents of the cosmos, and the One and all things whatsoever.” It would not be inappropriate to say that insofar as it is never strictly correct to treat the One as an hypostasis, when we do think of it in that way, rather than as each henad, we do so by virtue of this analogical relationship with the demiurge. Note in this regard the reference at *IR* I, 98. 4-6 to “the demiurgic monad” as the first principle: “For the divisions [*diaireseis*] of the Gods, and of the genera posterior to the Gods, depend on that first principle.”

Through a deeper understanding of the interplay of henad and monad in the demiurgic intellect we become more sensitive to the nuances manifested when Proclus refers to the “demiurgic monad” as such, as when at *IP* 1193 he says that “the whole assimilative order [of the Gods] proceeds from the demiurgic monad and imitates the identity there by means of its likeness ... while it imitates the demiurgic otherness by means of its unlikeness.” These are not qualities of, e.g., Zeus that are being imitated, but rather of the demiurgic *monad*, which is underscored by the fact that it is an *order* of Gods, that is, a class of deities having in common certain functions or powers, that proceed from it. We see this also in the text at hand, where the demiurgic Intellect “himself,” that is, the deity in question, is the cause of all forms *through* unity and plurality, that is, the monads at the intelligible-and-intellectual level that determine antecedently the monad of intellect, while in turn the intellect is “father and maker of all things” through its divine character, that is, the deity it participates.

I mentioned earlier the acceptance by Proclus of the Aristotelian dictum that beings should not be “governed badly.” This is made explicit at *IT* I, 262,

where Proclus cites it with the following comment:

Let there, then, be one ruler, one cause of all things, one providence, and one chain of beings; let there be also together with the monad an appropriate multitude, many kings, various causes, a multiform providence, and a different order; yet everywhere multitude has an arrangement about the monad ... For if, as Aristotle says, all things are arranged with a view to form, it is necessary that there should be a cause of the coordination...

Proclus carefully modulates the application of Aristotle's axiom with his references to "one chain of beings," the coordination of manifolds and monads, and arrangement according to form, all of which signal that the axiom will not apply unequivocally to the supra-essential domain. The First Cause, however, as if representing the entire polycentric henadic domain, is co-positated with the demiurge. The One *qua* hypostasis lies along the analogical "chain of beings," taking the place of the henads in a context where only the order of Being, the chain of ontic hypostases, is really important. He proceeds to cite the principle which will claim priority over Aristotle's axiom:

what is said in the *Philebus* (23d, 27b) appears to be more universal than this axiom [of Aristotle's], viz. that everything which is mixed subsists from a certain cause of the mixture ... All that is said here therefore, is analogous to what is said in the *Philebus*, viz. the demiurge to the One, form to Limit, matter to Infinity, and that which is generated to that which is mixed. But the latter are more universal than the former; because the latter are beheld in all things, but the former are seen in mundane natures only.

The relationship of the demiurge to form and matter is thus understood by Proclus as a specific instance of the more universal structure manifest in the relationship between the One, the dyad of principles known as Limit and Infinity, and the product known as the Mixed. Similarly, in another passage Proclus subordinates demiurgic generation to the triad from the *Philebus* of Limit, Infinity, and the Mixed. There (*IT* I, 384f), Proclus argues that the origin of matter is prior to the demiurge inasmuch as Plato, in his description of matter, characterizes it according to the maternal and paternal qualities deriving from Limit and Infinity. In subordinating the realm of hylomorphism to the principles applying analytically, so to speak, to each individual henad, Proclus in effect finds a new place for individuality above and beyond the domain of specific unity.

The position of the demiurge is merely a special case of the relations that obtain between all deities and the monads that participate them and represent the abstract *ideality* of their powers or functions. However, the relation between these two axes is also characteristic of all things whatsoever, because everything is in some way both being and divine. The passage from *IP* 970, which I quoted in passing in the first chapter, after stating "that every form is a whole experiencing as an attribute the One within it but not being that One," asserts as well that "everything possesses some necessarily unknowable divine token, by reason of which each thing has been allotted a different rank, place and circuit in the universe according to a particular number [or 'series'] and shape (for each of these things has been allotted to them by the creative

agency in virtue of a certain secret kinship towards the Gods)." Again, at *IT* I, 210, we read that inanimate beings as well as souls have been allotted by nature "symbols [*sumbola*] ... some of which are allied to *this*, but others to *that* series of Gods." In the case of souls, this impression of symbols is to be traced to the Demiurge: prayer "attracts to itself the beneficence of the Gods, through those ineffable symbols which the father of souls has disseminated in them" (*ibid*). It bears noting that Proclus uses nearly the same words (drawn from *Or. Chald.* fr. 108) at *PT* II 8. 56. 21 to refer to the relationship between each being and the One: "Thus each being, in entering into the ineffable of its own nature, discovers the symbol of the father of the all." This demonstrates again the strong analogies between the One and the Demiurge, especially inasmuch as the latter passage comes from a discussion of the One as the first of the "Three Kings" of the second Epistle. It should be noted in this connection that when Proclus refers to the One as a "father" he is referring actually to any given deity understood in its "paternal" aspect, which is the same as to say, in its intelligible aspect. This doctrine will be discussed in the chapter on the intelligible Gods.

We can see these "symbols" as an alternate nature belonging to every being, which has, in addition to its position in an ontological discourse and by virtue of an altogether different set of coordinates, a position in a theological discourse. The union of these two registers sufficiently determines any given being not only with reference to *infima species*, that is, *qua* form or essence, but also with respect to its utmost contingency and peculiarity, *qua* divine, divine causality *prior* to substance accounting for the entity *posterior* to substance as such, namely the individual *qua* individual. Understanding

better the relationship between the Gods and the “atomic” individuals under *infima species* will open up for us far-ranging consequences of the henadology. It is appropriate, moreover, to raise these issues at this point, because they concern the status of the demiurge as well as the unity of the pantheon; for what all these have in common is reference to a single *regime of Form*. The text which is our starting point is the passage from *IP* 1219-20 which Dodds (p. 193) adduces in support of the notion that, in addition to the divine henads, there is a class of henads which are simply “indivisible units.” The point of the passage is that the One is the cause of all things insofar as it is “the cause of the henads from which all things derive,” that is, “[o]ne should not say that the causes of all things are in the One,” but that “one may consider the One the cause of all things as being the cause of henads, seeing that all things derive their existence from these.” This must be understood in relation to the doctrine, elaborated especially at *IP* 825, of the non-paradigmatic causation of the individual:

These considerations show that it is absurd to admit Ideas of individuals. But since everything that comes to be comes to be from a cause, we must also posit causes of individuals: if you want a single cause, it could be the order of the universe; or if several, you could name the motion of the heavens, the particular natures, the properties of the seasons, or the various regions, or the Gods that superintend these causes, for all of these are involved in the making of individuals. (emphasis mine)

What is confusing about the rest of the passage, however, is that Proclus observes no distinction between a manifold’s *constituents* and its *causes*. And



so he deliberately vacillates between saying that, e.g., Being, *derives* from the henads and that it *consists* of henads. In this fashion, he can refer to “henads from which as elements the unified entity derives.” But we must not think therefore that some new sense of henad is introduced here. Rather, Proclus sees the distinction between these modes of causation, namely by principles and by elements, vanishing as all the loci of causality converge in the henads.

This gives a certain elegance to his argument for the very reason that he is able to adapt arguments against infinite divisibility, such as the following:

[A]ll things are either henads or numbers [*arithmos*]; for that which is not a henad, but is unified, if it derives from some limited amount of henads, is a number, and this would be a primary number as deriving its existence from indivisibles; for each henad is indivisible; the other is a number of beings and is made up of beings and not from indivisibles. (IP 1220)

This passage reads one way if we translate *arithmos* as “number,” another way if we translate it as “series.” For indeed, from the perspective of the henads, there are only the henads and their series, that is, their processions. These series are what derive from “a limited amount of henads,” that is, from the interaction – and hence the determinacy – of henads, and are the primary series. We shall have more to say below about such divine “chains.” The second tier is that of series/numbers of *beings*, which are constituted by the interaction of *series* rather than henads directly.

Proclus continues, now using the divinized soul (i.e. soul as participating the henadic domain) as an example. The One

is the cause of the divine Soul also, inasmuch as the essence of this as of all beings is derived from henads ... for divine souls, inasmuch as they are intellectual, have intellect as their causal principle, inasmuch as they *are*, Being, and inasmuch as they are unitary, the One, deriving their substance from it, inasmuch as each of them is a multiplicity of certain henads; these henads it has as elements, but each individually also has a one as unifying its multiplicity, for which reason, indeed, each is what it is as a whole and not as a disorganized multiplicity. (1220)

Incidentally, we see here how Proclus incorporates the Iamblichean doctrine of the *hen tês psuchês*, namely as the monad of the soul, its wholeness, *qua* henad. Here it is simply “a one unifying its multiplicity” so as not to confuse it with the “henads it has as elements.” These latter are either the Gods that superintend the causes of factual individuals, as in the passage from *IP* 825, or the deity or deities of whose series individual beings may constitute parts. Proclus seems indifferent as to whether we refer to the divinized soul as “derived from henads” or having henads as its “elements.”

The key to understanding how Proclus can speak this way about the henads is that he resists recourse to an absolute dualism of form and matter to explain “the decline in the levels of being, which ... obscures the participation of lower elements in the universal and perfect essences” (*IP* 903). Instead, he explains the decreasing reception of higher principles by those inferior to them by *the composition of causes* (on this see esp. Lloyd, p. 117ff) – that is, ultimately, by the many henads. This is how the soul can be said to be *composed* of henads. The appropriate comparison in this case would not be Democritean atoms, but rather a multiplicity of axes of causality that, in their

conjunction, determine the individual beyond the furthest extent of that individual's formal determination. It is this causal multiplicity into which the monadic unity of the individual being may be analyzed. This is the "matter" which differentiates instantiations of the same form.

As I have explained, it cannot be some sort of proto-materiality that gives rise to the many Gods, nor is their multiplicity a "decline." Since the One is each henad, the decline in the levels of Being comes about, instead, through the reciprocal determination of the powers of the Gods against each other in a common field – through the unification of them, rather than their multiplicity. For the individual distinction of the henads is not a reciprocal differentiation, which would only *diminish* their individuality. The notion that power or potentiality, *dunamis*, plays a crucial role in the decline of the levels of Being is quite correct, however, once we understand the significance of the *dunamis* of the henads, namely that their *dunamis* are the aspects of the Gods which are susceptible to unification in a third or "for another" in a manner that the Gods themselves, that is, their *hyparxis*, are not. Proclus alludes to this process of coming together in his account of the principles of Limit and Infinity at *PT* III 9. 40. Here Proclus criticizes the Plotinian concept of intelligible matter. "For Infinity," he explains, "is not the matter of Limit, but the power of it, nor is Limit the form of the Infinite, but the *hyparxis* of it. But Being consists of both these, as not only standing in the One, but receiving a multitude [*plêthos*] of henads and powers which are mingled into one essence [*ousian*]" (4-8). Notice how the unity of the henads only comes about through a "mingling" posterior to their *hyparxis*. It is this mingling that produces the decline; not the existence of many Gods, but their

coalescence in and through the Intellect. For the Gods are only finally “mingled” into one essence, and Being itself completed, in the hypostasis of Intellect, that is, in a single formal regime.

Each henad possesses a divine mind or intellect, which is represented in particular by the third intelligible triad (on which see chapter 5), and this divine intelligence is the activity of each henad as such. The activity of the intellectual Gods, however, is precisely to constitute among themselves the *hypostasis* of Intellect. A special place among the intellectual Gods belongs to the demiurge, and the structure of demiurgic *sovereignty* is essential to the structure of the Intellect for Proclus. His or her exercise of sovereignty in and through the intellectual order means that in a sense it is the demiurge’s *perspective* which is actualized in the constitution of the hypostasis of Intellect, and which is at the same time the constitution of the whole of Being *intellectually*, that is, with all the characteristics (identity and difference, et al.) that are at once appropriate solely to the Intellect and yet, in the completed system, characterize the whole hierarchy. For we can scarcely speak of hypostases that are not identical to themselves or as beings and different from each other, and so forth. The unity of the hypostasis of Intellect, as represented by the enactment of demiurgic sovereignty, means a change in the status of *all* the Gods, inasmuch as all are in each. For through the concept of sovereignty we can think of the intellectual constitution of Being as in some way the coming to objectivity of a single divine mind, namely that of the demiurge, in which the potential relationships between deities, which are contained in that divine mind inasmuch as all the Gods – and thus all of their potential relations – are in each God, are actualized as well. But many of

these potential relations are contradictory – for instance, in an example I referred to earlier, Rhea is both sibling to Okeanos and Tethys as well as daughter of Okeanos and Tethys. Contradictory relationships, in their actualization, do not actualize *as* contradiction because they are segregated onto separate levels of manifestation, hence bringing about the disjunctions that characterize the ontological hierarchy, the decline in Being.

Plotinus and his followers err, according to Proclus, when they “ascribe a certain formless and indefinite nature to an intelligible essence.” There are for Proclus no vague principles or principles of vagueness. There is only the interaction of multiple principles, which results in the last participants receiving some principles to a degree that obscures others once the relations between henads have been plotted onto a single field with a fixed center and periphery. The ultimate consequence of this for beings is that some things “are assimilated to the form by virtue of one potency, others of two, and others of more than that. And hence it is that so-called ‘chains’ appear” (IP 903). The fact that beings experience greater proximity to one principle than another is because the relationship between the principles themselves has been fixed, as when, a unit of measure having been applied to a continuum, the distance between any two points on that continuum is no longer both *one* and *infinite* at the same time, but possesses a discrete number, that number also possessing a discrete position in its own order which thus *interposes* itself between the two points. The common field on which the henads come to be posited is a whole of which they are parts, its mediation granting to each a relative position. The henads are, for themselves, an acentric or, better, a polycentric set, the possibility of a unique center emerging in stages,

culminating in the constitution of the hypostasis of Intellect. We shall see how a crucial stage in the emergence of this common field is the emergence of *place, topos*, in the intelligible-and-intellectual order. Being is fully constituted at the point that it possesses the objective determinants with which to shift the center of gravity, as it were, from the Being contained in each henad to the hypostasis of Being Itself. It is only once the balance shifts in this fashion that the co-emergent fields of divine activity form distinct and disjunct "levels" of Being. The manifestations of materiality, then, while they have their ultimate cause in the multiplicity of henads, would not come to expression if the henadic manifold did not collapse into unicity at a certain point. I refer to manifestations of materiality, rather than *matter*, inasmuch as there is really no hypostasis of Matter as such. Matter, inferior to Being, derives from the One, which is superior to Being: this schematic account is correct but also potentially misleading if we do not understand that what is meant is the composition of causes represented by the manifold of henads. Strictly speaking, there is no more in Proclus a discrete something that is "the One" than there is such a thing as Matter.

Each henad, although in itself the All, has a series depending from it, which represents its reciprocal distinction or Difference from the rest – not its primordial distinction *qua* henad, which is thinkable by us as its simple existence as, e.g. Zeus rather than Rhea, but its *difference* – while its *hyparxis* and the primordial uniqueness and supra-essential individuality it bears is prior to the series depending from the henad and must always represent a surplus beyond the sum of the terms in the series. In the activation of the potential *relations* that the powers or potencies of the Gods represent, series

are formed that interfere with, that is, are determined against each other. The role of *dunamis*, of potentiality, in relation to the phenomena of materiality is that the powers, the *dunameis*, of each deity are that in respect of which they are reciprocally determined. One must, strictly speaking, distinguish here between the ontological determination of deities in relation to each other, namely as having this or that participant, and so being "intelligible Gods," "intelligible-and-intellectual Gods" and so forth, and the mythological determination of deities in relation to one another through narrative incident, e.g. Zeus being the father of Dionysus by Persephone in the Orphic myth. The latter are properly supra-essential, just as the powers of the Gods are supra-essential (PT III 24. 164-5: "the powers of the Gods are supra-essential ... and through this power the Gods are generative of beings"). Similarities and differences of iconography and attribute, the bases of classification, meanwhile, should be attributed to the former category, which extends all the way to the class represented by the universal quantification "All the Gods." The separate emergence of these modes of determination will be treated in subsequent chapters. For now, however, it is sufficient to speak in general terms of the emergence of all types of relation among the henads into concreteness rather than troubling with the different levels of relation and their orders of emergence, especially since the *final* site of emergence for all of these modes of relation is the demiurgic intellect, in which the unity of the Gods is ultimately grounded.

But although we have accounted for the decline in the levels of being, we have not stated what matter is, insofar as it is at all. Matter is complementary to form, and thus it is to the culminating moment of the emergence of form

that matter traces its subsistence as a residuum of this emergence. There will be more to say about this process in the chapter on the intellectual Gods. It will be useful, however, to provide a preview of certain aspects of this process here, especially as they relate to what I have referred to as the coming to objectivity of a particular divine Intellect. We read at *IP* 904 that “[t]he one Paternal Intellect defines for all other entities the measures of their participation and the contributions of each to the cosmos, assuming in advance the beginnings and middles and ends of each chain of forms, and decrees how far the characteristic quality descending from each must reach.” That which is begun in the paternal or intelligible intellect is completed by the demiurgic intellect, for at 817 we learn that the demiurge contains the unitary measure which is to govern the procession of particular souls – the site of the ultimate division of the forms. The fundamental level of this process, however, is only discernible indirectly in the system. It is alluded to here by the reference to the paternal intellect as *one*, in the sense of *singularity*. We shall see in the account of the third intelligible triad that it peculiarly determines each God as *monogenes*, or “only-begotten.” This represents the one-to-one fixation of Gods to hypostases embodied in prop. 135 of the *Elements of Theology*, discussed in the previous chapter.

The fixation of deities to hypostases is at the same time the fixation of the relationships between deities. There is no way to establish priority in this process, for a unified narrative concerning the emergence of the Gods and their activities in the universe comes about in ideal simultaneity with a unified hierarchy of ontic hypostases, that is, a unified narrative about Being. Narrative implies a *telos*, a goal, and every myth has its own *telos*. Over the



course of history, however, a metanarrative assigning an overarching *telos* to the disparate mythic narratives (which nevertheless continued to exist) developed. This unified metanarrative is manifest in Hellenic theology particularly in the emergence of Zeus as king of the Gods and demiurge of the cosmos. The historical process of the development of a unified mythological metanarrative is, in other words, the image of the ideal process of the emergence of Intellect. That is, inasmuch as “all the Greek theology attributes the fabrication of the whole of things to Zeus (*tô Dii tēn holēn dêmiourgian*)” (IT I, 316), it is Zeus in and around whom, as the fixed center, the relationships of the other deities are actualized or as it were crystallized “for another” – he *is*, in short, that universal Other. Hence at IT III, 200f we read that: “Homer (*Illiad* VIII 5) ... represents Zeus ... becoming himself, as it were, the center of all the divine genera in the world, and making all things obedient to his intellection.” To Zeus belongs what we might call the canonical perspective on the henadic manifold for Greek theology. This moment corresponds to the religious phenomenon of *henotheism*, which refers to the belief in one deity as supreme among the other Gods. We might refer to this as “monocentric polytheism” in contrast to the polycentric polytheism which represents with greatest fidelity the henadic *arithmos* in its *hyparxis*.

By making of the rest of the Gods a *whole* – notice that he is responsible for *tēn holēn dêmiourgian*, that is, the fabrication of a whole *qua* whole – he disposes the other Gods relative to himself. That the demiurgic “wholeness” is an *emergent* order is reinforced by the reference at IP 844f to “the different causes” prior to the intellectual “producing all these creatures, <both

immortal> and mortal, *prior to the cosmos as a whole*" (emphasis mine). The relationship of the Gods to this emergent wholeness shows forth in interesting fashion in a passage of the *Timaeus* commentary where Proclus is discussing the phrase "Gods of Gods" from *Tim.* 41a. "How those that are allotted the world by their father are called Gods of Gods, and according to what conception, cannot easily be indicated to the many; *for there is an unfolding of one divine intelligence in these names*" (III, 202; my emphasis). One might characterize this difficulty as that of seeing beyond the confines of one's particular henotheism, in which the dispositions of the Gods in relation to each other are captured from a singular perspective. The difficulty lies, in other words, in stepping outside one's world so as to perceive it as a particular world order beyond which lie the possibility of others. Thus the *henotheism* characterizing the perception of the Gods available to a being below the level of the demiurgic intellect gives way, upon deeper reflection, to *kathenotheism* or *monolatry*, which involves the implicit recognition of other possible world-orders, finally opening out onto the pure and radical *polytheism* represented by the henads in their supra-essential *hyparxis*. This ideal succession, one will note, turns on its head that order which is commonly given or presumed in evolutionist historical accounts of theological structures.

The procession of the intellectual and subsequent orders of the Gods takes place under the imprimatur of the demiurge, whichever God might, in a given world-order, occupy that position; Proclus has at any rate no doubt that for the Greeks that God is Zeus. The words uttered by the demiurge according to the *Timaeus*, "Gods of Gods," are thus "demiurgic or fabricative" such that

“this one divine intellectual conception which is the first and most simple procession from the demiurge, deifies all the recipients of it, and makes them demiurgic Gods, participated Gods, and Gods invisible and at the same time visible” (III, 205). We can read “participated” here in the sense that participation of beings in the henads is *fully* constituted only at the point that the “beginnings and middles and ends of each chain of forms, and ... how far the characteristic quality descending from each must reach” (IP 904) has been determined. The determination of the dimensions of the “chains” occurs in stages between the intelligible and the demiurgic intellects – and, indeed, continues beyond the intellectual order, just as the issue of the sovereignty of Zeus is not fully resolved until the status of Dionysos has been rendered explicit. We could also read the reference to participation in the sense that the henads now participate *in each other* like the forms do, since they are now mediated by a whole. For the infra-intellectual deities, although they are every bit as much Gods and henads as to their *hyparxis*, in their *activity* are co-emergent with other deities whose activity with respect to “higher” levels of Being determines the activity of the Gods whose illumination of Being takes place on a “lower” level. This determination or mediation by the constitution of ontic hypostases by prior orders of Gods and consequent “participation” however does not affect in any way the supra-essential status of the Gods manifesting on a “lower” level, since any infra-intellectual God is *also* a God of the intelligible order at any rate; every manifestation of a God on an order subsequent to the intelligible order is a *secondary* manifestation.

The act of the demiurge fixes the other Gods of the pantheon around his/her center, as well as also fixing the hypostatic monads, and thus allowing

them to be divinized after a fashion, for, e.g., “the One Being, in which there is the first participation [i.e. which is the first participant] is God of God” (III, 207). This can help us to understand the tendency of Proclus to refer to hypostases as Gods. Whereas the Gods proper receive a secondary deification from the demiurge as “demiurgic Gods,” the monads receive their primary deification. There is similar terminology at *IT* I, 446, where we read that as “the whole Demiurge is a creator totally and monadically,” so he “produc[es] many Gods ... monadically,” the reference being specifically to all the emanations of the Gods whose scope of activity lies in the realm below the level of the demiurgic intellect. But there is also a broader scope to the notion, for the demiurge creates *everything*, albeit monadically. For the whole chain of the hypostases is in some way constituted, or at least can only achieve its final form, through the demiurgic “fabrication.” In regard to the “second deification” of the Gods by the demiurgic utterance, one may note as well a passage at *PT* II 7. 49. 16-7, where Proclus says that “the Gods themselves enact the order which is in them [*en autois taxin diethesmothetêsan*]”, the latter term – *diethesmothetêsan* – as noted by S-W (p. 109 n. 3) is the same term applied at *Tim.* 42D4 to the Demiurge’s “legislation” of the souls.

The demiurge could not be the “God of Gods” if s/he did not express in some privileged fashion that quality of *all in each* which is the defining characteristic of Gods *qua* Gods. That is, what is inherent in each God is *actualized* in the demiurge. Each God, in possessing a divine intellect, *is* the demiurge potentially or after His or Her own fashion. One might compare the remark in the *Avyakta Upanisad* (5.1) with respect to the God Indra – like Zeus a divine sovereign – that “Indra was made of all the Gods, hence he

became the greatest." Similarly, the Goddess Durga, in the *Devi Mahatmya* (chap. 2) is said to have emerged from the combined "splendor" (*tejas*) of the other Gods in order to secure the universe against the forces of chaos, a different way of envisioning the demiurgic function. This is not to say that Indra or Durga are *reducible* to the other Gods whom they, in a sense, epitomize or of whom they are the "quintessence." No God's nature is reducible to their relations, otherwise the simple fact of Gods having familial relationships would serve to reduce any deity with parents to those parents. But this is specifically rejected by Proclus, for whom as we have seen, a son, e.g., in the supra-essential realm is *for himself* prior to his relationship to a father (IP 936). The significance of a demiurge like Zeus, Indra or Durga containing the other Gods is rather with respect to beings, for they offer up their perspective as that through which all the others may be perceived. Coburn, in his study of the *Devi Mahatmya*, compares the crystallization of Durga out of the *tejas* of the other Gods to the description in the *Laws of Manu* of the place of the king in human affairs, for the king is also described as formed of "particles" of all the Gods, such that he "surpasses all created beings in lustre (*tejas*)" (p. 25f). The comparison is fruitful especially inasmuch as it both hearkens back to the composition of the individual being out of henads, and gestures forward to the existential *telos* of the individual being as demiurge in the sphere of their own embodiment, a central element in the interpretation of theurgy in Gregory Shaw's study of Iamblichus, *Theurgy and the Soul*.

The process of fixing or crystallizing the systematic disposition of the henads and the corresponding establishment of the series of monads can be

compared to selecting a unit of measure for a continuum; for according to prop. 117 of the *ET*, “every God is the measure of beings” – hence in choosing a God, we choose a measure for all of Being. In the same text we have been considering, the “power” possessed by the phrase “Gods of Gods” is as an “invocation ... collective and convertive of multitude to its monad,” that “calls upwards the natures which have proceeded to their one fabrication, and inserts a boundary and divine measure in them” (III, 202). The transition from the henadic to the monadic register can in this way be represented as the passage from continuous to discrete quantity since “the Many ... is more general than that which is a whole and has parts; for what if the Many were infinite, while that which has parts would in all cases be composed of a finite number of parts? So that if something has parts, it will be in need of Manyness, but if it is a multiplicity it is not necessarily a whole” (*IP* 1099). It is not that the henads are infinite in number, because we know from *ET* prop. 149 that there are a finite number of them. Rather, they are measures that are not measured, prior to the demiurgic “invocation” that is, and so resemble an inexhaustible continuum in their surplus, excess or remainder relative to monadic being, which is both measure *and* measured.

The metaphor of a remainder left after the application of a unit of measure to a continuum brings us to the point where we may understand at last just what matter is, and how it, as that which is posterior to Being, derives from that which is prior to Being. At *IT* I, 384ff, Proclus is investigating “whether according to Plato, two principles of wholes are to be admitted, Matter and God.” The demiurge, at any rate, could not have given subsistence to matter, Proclus explains, for Plato says, at *Tim.* 52d, “that these

three things preceded the generation of the world: Being, Place, and Generation; and that Generation is an offspring, but Place a mother." Matter is thus divided "according to the maternal and paternal peculiarity (*idiôma*)," and therefore constitutes "an arrangement prior to the demiurge," for the qualities of masculinity and femininity derive from Limit and Infinity. These two principles are, however, co-extensive with the Gods themselves, as a generic expression of the immediate ontic "footprint" of each God, which consists, primally, of the opposition between *hyparxis* and *dunamis*, or particularity and universality. Therefore "the demiurge, according to the unity which he contains, according to which likewise he is a God, is also the cause of the last matter," inasmuch as "such things as he produces according to the One, so many he does not produce according to Being" (I, 386f). In other words, the demiurge is the cause of matter *qua* deity *simpliciter*, rather than *qua* demiurgic deity.

Matter is, as it were, caused by *all* the Gods. That is, matter, as that which lies outside all form in a privative sense, expresses that which surpasses form. The supra-essential correlate of form is the co-emergence of deities in pantheons, for it is the stages of this emergence which constitute the different levels of form or of Being. But deities are not appropriated into even the pantheon in which they are co-emergent without remainder, and there are, of course, deities belonging to different pantheons who bear no relationship to one another that is grounded supra-essentially. Such deities are merely objects for *comparison*. The inability of any regime of form to exhaustively determine or *totalize* the Gods, who remain always and ineluctably absolute individuals prior to and beyond any elective assemblage for the sake of

beings, is like the inability of any particular unit of measure to divide a continuum without remainder. Just as the One Itself is a way of expressing the absolute individuality and uniqueness of each God *positively*, so matter is a way of expressing *negatively* that uniqueness as the inability of any restricted theology or mythological metanarrative to completely control and appropriate even the Gods who enter into it, much less those Gods who have no relation to it, such as the Gods of other nations. The divine manifold prior to the demiurge is the “disorderly motion” of *Tim.* 30a, in which nature, prior to being ordered by the demiurge, “participates of forms, and possesses certain traces and representations, being moved in a confused and disorderly manner. For the phantasmal [*eidôlikai*] and indistinct presence of forms produces different motions in it, as Timaeus says farther on (40b, 43b). These, however, *all the orders of the Gods prior to the demiurge illuminate*” (IT I, 387; my emphasis). The orders of the Gods prior to the demiurge – which actually means all the Gods, *qua* intelligible – constitute that which the demiurge receives and “adorns with numbers ... insert[ing] in them order” (I, 388). The demiurge receives Being, which has already “receiv[ed] a multitude of henads and powers which are mingled into one essence” (PT III 9. 138). In this way we are able to understand how Proclus is able to cite as precedent for his doctrine the report of Iamblichus that “according to Hermes [i.e. the Egyptians] materiality [*hulotêta*] is produced from essentiality [*ek tês ousiotêtos*]” (I, 386).

The historical process by which diverse Gods are “harmonized” into the unity of a national pantheon and their myths integrated into a metanarrative with a common *telos* is thus not merely hermeneutic, but also ontological.



This harmonization is something required *by us*, insofar as our own intellects, which are constituted by the structures of identity and difference, whole and part, must, like the demiurge, organize experience into a well-ordered or governed whole in which the substances of the universe are mediated, posited relative to a fixed center. The domain of the demiurge is constituted by form and matter, however, and confronts, therefore, at its fringes or periphery, the unformed or matter itself, which manifests the principles *prior* to form in alluding to *parallel* orders of forms, organizations in which the given being would occupy a different position. One might call such a parallel order a different world, insofar as a world is simply a *kosmos*, a disposition of elements which might be otherwise disposed. The question of whether such a being would be the identical being under a different world-order or in a different world, or of the status of the elements prior to any disposition, is not clearly established. But this ambiguity is a virtue of sorts, for since it is impossible to clearly demarcate world-orders, there are no sharp borders between cultural territories, only a shading of one into another through gray areas of ambiguous determination and dual citizenship. Proclus in fact uses the metaphor of "citizenship" (*polititis*) at *IT* III, 276 to refer to the soul's membership in different orders at the same time, although the orders in that case fit into each other as more partial into more total forms of life rather than subsisting in parallel.

The notion of cultures existing in parallel, not reducible to some underlying unity, may never have quite occurred to Proclus; but it is an implication we are entitled to draw from the structural exigencies of the system he crafted. In crafting that system, Proclus was not guided by a notion

of culture such as we have today, which could only have come about through the ebb and flow of universalism and relativism. The unity of the national pantheons as such is therefore tantamount to a structural unconscious in the system. What *did* guide Proclus, and issued in the systematic structure in question, was an overriding concern with the individuality and uniqueness of each deity, which was reflected at once in the way his system casts the dominant Platonic concern with unity, and in his eclectic personal practice, which was not bound by the limits of the Hellenic national pantheon upon which he nevertheless exerts such extraordinary effort in the *Platonic Theology*, but instead by the *particular* deities, of whatever national origin, to whom he felt a peculiar affinity.

A further question arising from this account, however, is the following. How much of Proclus' philosophy must we regard, *on its very own terms*, as a peculiarly Hellenic revelation? How much of the *philosophical* content of the system is actually determined by the existential particularity of the deities that inform it, and thus relativized? The answer is that whatever in the system cannot stand on the strength of *argument*, of dialectic, must be attributed to its theophanic side; whatever, in short, is inescapably culturally specific. This may sound circular, but the only way in which to separate the culturally specific from that which transcends the unity of the discrete culture – systematically, the unity of a pantheon – is through the labor of justification. At the end of this labor, it will not be a question of having separated wheat from chaff, however, but of having distinguished one sort of divine gift from another.



## Chapter 4:

### Henads and Monads

In this chapter, I will discuss a range of factors that explain instances in which Proclus seems to treat what are properly monads as henads and vice versa, which will at the same time provide opportunities to investigate many other aspects of the doctrine of the henads.

Henads and monads are particularly to be distinguished from one another inasmuch as the two terms made their entrance into Platonic thought in the *Philebus* (15ab) seemingly as synonyms, and because among the surviving works of Proclus we find no simple statement of the distinction between henads and monads. This was probably due to the fact that the historical usage of the term “monad” located it squarely within ontology, making it largely unnecessary to distinguish it from the henads, who are supra-essential. The monad, after all, is first and foremost the number one,

and had been so for a long time before Proclus. The historical stages through which there came to be the distinctive doctrine of supra-essential henads identical with the Gods are not our concern here. Let it suffice to say that Proclus' master Syrianus seems already to have possessed a doctrine having at least its broad outlines in common with Proclus' insofar as we can discern, whereas the possession by Iamblichus of such a doctrine, or the extent and nature of the doctrine's antecedents in Plotinian thought, must remain debatable.

The possibility of referring to monads as henads causes Proclus sometimes to specify the henads proper in a variety of ways, e.g., as "divine henads" or "self-complete/self-perfect (*autotelês*) henads," as in prop. 114 of the *ET*: "Every God is a self-complete henad, and every self-complete henad is a God." But it would be a mistake to presume that the explanation for such a specification is that the term "henad" is systematically ambiguous; rather, it is a question of the possibility of *extending* the term, of equivocation. For instance, monads can be referred to as henads because they proceed from the One, albeit in a different way than the henads. Prop. 64 of the *ET* states that "[e]very principal monad [*archikê monas*] gives rise to two series [*arithmon*], one consisting of substances complete in themselves [*autotelôn hupostaseôn*], and one of irradiations which have their substantiality in something other than themselves," while its corollary explains that "from this it is apparent that of the henads some proceed [*proêlthon*] self-complete from the One, while others are irradiated states of unity [*ellampseis henôseôn*]." These irradiations are monads, while it is the henads proper that "proceed" self-complete from the One – although note that the term used here, *proêlthon*, is

not the normal term for procession in Proclus, which is rather *proödos*. Proclus uses a more generic term most likely so as to include the “procession by way of unity” of the One in the henads, which could be considered so different from ontic procession as to require a distinction of species. *The first reason for equivocation therefore is that monads are henads when considered in respect of their procession from the One.*

Why does Proclus shift from speaking of monads in the proposition to speaking of henads in the corollary? The proposition refers initially to monads because the principle it states applies *generically* to monads and henads alike. The One is, in effect, a monad in the corollary because it is being treated as a principle or hypostasis, as “the One Itself.” Monads are the natural terminological choice for generic contexts, both because the philosopher must frequently speak of the henads as if they were beings, that is, ontologically or *monadically*, and also because the term “monad” has a far weaker denotation than “henad,” insofar as it is used to refer even to beings with minimal substantiality like individual sensible composites. The need to speak of the henads *as if* of beings arises because in ontological contexts the whole domain of henadic individuality has little relevance. In ontology, as we have seen, one can speak only, at most, of *classes* of Gods, not of individual Gods. Therefore the monad, which always represents a *class* of some kind – even the atomic individual is, *qua* monad, a class of one – is the logical choice. *The second reason for equivocation therefore lies in the generic applicability of the term “monad” to henads in ontological contexts.*

We can also discern a generic intention from the use of the term *arithmos*, or “series.” This is a term applying both to the series depending

from henads, which are also called *seirai*, or “chains,” as well as to the series depending from monads, which are *taxeis*, or classes, except of course in the case of the generation of a secondary hypostasis from a monad by *proödos*, such as Soul from Intellect. We have seen that the term *arithmos* is also applicable to the totality of the henads, in preference to speaking of them as a *plêthos*, which is implicitly a whole. An exception which perhaps, as it were, proves the rule is in *ET* prop. 149, which states that “[t]he entire manifold of divine henads is finite in number.” Here the henads can be determined as a *plêthos* because they are the subject of a purely logical inference, a monadic determination. Like *pêgê*, the term *seira* is appropriated by Proclus from theology (Homer, via the Orphics: Dodds, p. 208f). Proclus uses theological or mythological terminology, sometimes quite discreetly, to signal a shift in his discourse from the ontological to the henadic register. A “chain” is ideally to be distinguished from a *taxis*, as an expression of procession, *proödos*, as opposed to declension, *hupobasis* (*IP* 746). I call the distinction between *seira* and *taxis* ideal because, as Dodds notes (p. 209) Proclus is inconsistent in its application. Inconsistency in this case results from the homonymous usage of *seira*. “Chain” can be either the genus specified by *taxis* – and *seira* will be akin to *arithmos* in this way – or it can refer specifically to the divine series depending from each deity, the *first* procession in the strict sense – that involving a change in essence – and which are in turn paradigmatic relative to the subsequent *ontic* series: the first, in other words, of A. C. Lloyd’s “quasi-genera” (*The Anatomy of Neoplatonism*, chap. 3, pp. 76ff).

In the corollary to the proposition, on the other hand, it is the term henad which has seemingly broadened to encompasses monads as well. This

is because although the term monad is more generic, the henads are *existentially* prior. The monads are thus treated in the corollary as lesser henads despite the fact that in the proposition they legislate over the henads. But since the henads have in fact nothing “over” them, they can only be legislated over by what comes *after* them and emerges *from* them. In our close reading of the *Platonic Theology*, we shall see how the abstract domain of the monad emerges from the henadic sphere in a series of stages. It must be noted that Dodds (p. 235) identifies the *ellampseis* here with the “One of the soul,” *hen tês psuchês*, an entity prominent in the thought of Iamblichus and rather less so in Proclus. I must disagree with Dodds here. Where Proclus uses the concept of the *hen tês psuchês* he does so, I think, more as a matter of honoring Iamblichus than anything else, except insofar as the monad representing the individual is also derivatively a henad, in the same manner I have been discussing. Proclus seems to prefer the term, derived from the *Oracles*, “flower” of the soul to refer to the soul’s deification; he uses the two terms synonymously at *IP* 1071. Here again we have an instance of the use of theologically tinged terminology to indicate an entity transitional between the divine and ontic spheres. It would make much more programmatic sense, however, for Proclus in this proposition to be establishing the existential pedigree of the monads than to be expatiating on an entity tangential to his thought. The “irradiated henads” here are thus in my view clearly monads, which represent, as we have seen, the attribute or character of unity in manifolds.

The equivocal usage of “henad” in such a passage is justified inasmuch as Proclus is affirming the substantial existence of monads which might



otherwise be regarded as having some sort of intentional inexistence, parasitic, as it were, upon their extensions. This way of thinking of monads is an obvious concern, especially in the early parts of the *Parmenides* commentary, since it echoes critiques of the Ideas by Peripatetics and others. It is only *qua* henad that beings are truly secured in existence, for thus they sublimate their mediation into immediacy, taking their mediation up into themselves. It is in this sense that Proclus says that the *Parmenides* is “about all things ... insofar as all things are deified” (641). The henads are like Leibniz’s monads, in that they are the ultimate simples in the universe; but whereas the corporeal atoms of Democritus possess indivisibility by fiat, as if the process of division could simply be halted, Leibnizian monads and Proclean henads alike are atomic by virtue of having nothing outside them, “windowless” indeed because each has its other, its “outside,” in itself. The Proclean *monad* can also be regarded in this fashion when we see shining through its abstract particularity the essential moment of mediation and holistic determination that gives it its meaning. The particular is mediated by the form and, as such, by the whole. But this does not affect the fundamental distinction between henads and monads. The henads are not diacritically determined with reference to a whole, while the monad achieves a “deified” status by manifesting the whole in the part, i.e. through reversion upon its causes.

Although, as I said, Proclus does not state a programmatic distinction between monads and henads, he does, at *IP* 880, address a narrower question, namely why Socrates in the *Philebus* (15ab) “sometimes calls the forms henads and sometimes monads.” In this dialogue the terms “henad” and

"monad" seem quite interchangeable. For Proclus, however, there is no question but that the subject matter of the *Philebus* is indeed the forms, and thus *monads*. The question is why, since the dialogue concerns the forms, does Socrates refer to the forms sometimes as henads? Proclus explains that "with respect to the One they are monads because each of them is a plurality and a single being and a life-principle and an intellectual form, but with respect to the things produced from them and the series which they establish, they are henads." The forms are monads, in other words, through their status as beings, *hênômena*, and so forth, while they are henads as *causes*, because the henads are the ultimate causes of all things, given that the One operates, strictly speaking, prior to causality (see, e.g., *PT* III 8. 31. 16) and is a causal agent only derivatively, through the henads which are the real first causes. The efficient causality of the forms, in particular, which Proclus is always keen to emphasize in his criticisms of Aristotle, exceeds the compass of the form *qua* form, inviting reference to the domain of the henads. The forms possess their causal efficacy derivatively from the henads, not from *individual* henads, but as the generic potencies and attributes of the divine which they represent. To be more specific, we shall see that the highest forms are *pêgai* and are in effect transitional entities between the divine and ontic domains. *Here then, we have a third reason for equivocation, namely that monads are called henads with respect to their causal efficacy, derived as is all causal efficacy, from the henads, and with respect to the henads' existential priority.*

*A fourth reason for equivocation is that forms are called henads in light of their transcendence over what comes after them.* Toward the bottom of *IP*

709, Proclus is enumerating several different ways of arguing to the priority of the One Being over plurality. The first is characterized as a “logical” procedure, based on the signification of “being,” which must be either homonymous or synonymous. The second is more “scientific,” deriving from *Sophist* 243bff, concerning the identity and difference of a multiplicity of beings. He goes on to cite “a third, more theological starting-point,” as follows:

Everything that is participated and exists in others, its participants, has its access to being from the unparticipated. What is participated becomes pluralized along with the things under it, becoming a part of each of them and sharing its own essence with the realities that participate in it. But the pure and unmixed beings that exist in themselves are fundamentally prior to particulars that exist in things other than themselves.

There are a number of other instances in the commentary where Proclus speaks of a peculiarly theological approach to a philosophical problem. What is it in particular that makes the approach here theological? It seems to be the recourse to an intuition that is for Proclus peculiarly theological; the intuition, namely, of *eminence*, which acquires programmatic importance with the introduction of the aporia of the Third Man, because the latter concerns the coordination of the monad to its manifold. The reference to theology here is almost phenomenological, in that Proclus finds in religious experience the basic intuition of the state of eminence or transcendence common to henads and to transcendent monads. Notice that it is at just after the point in the *Parmenides* where the forms themselves have been found to

be unknowable that Parmenides begins speaking of the Gods (134b-d). We should recall as well the passage from *IP* 1190 cited in the first chapter, where Proclus substituted transcendence in the supra-essential realm for the difference of superior to inferior forms, and declination for the difference of inferior to superior forms. The maieutic function of the aporia of the Third Man in the context of the dialogue is to force us to ascend from the monads immanent in the manifolds to the transcendent monads, whence we shall proceed to the henads themselves. The advent of the henads is prefigured by the breakthrough from immanent to transcendent monads; and this requires us to clarify what is meant by a transcendent monad.

From one perspective, all monads are in fact coordinate with their manifolds, as we have seen from prop. 21 of the *ET*: "Every class has its beginning in a monad and proceeds to a manifold coordinate therewith." But within the category of the "coordinate" (*sustoichon*), there is still room for degrees of relative transcendence, such as we find expressed within the logic of part and whole in the notion of a "whole-before-the-parts" (prop. 67). The limit of this relative transcendence is the category of the "unparticipated" or "imparticipable," *amethektos*. A principle which is *amethektos* is not, despite its name, necessarily without participants. Rather, for Proclus the unparticipated simply has "the relative status of a monad [or 'the formula of a monad,' *monados echon logon*] as being its own and not another's [*heautou on kai ouk allou*], and as transcending the participants" (prop. 23). In addition, participated substances (*hupostaseis*) experience an "upward tension" (*anateinontai*) toward unparticipated *hyparxeis* (ibid). The category of the unparticipated is thus broad enough to accommodate the summits of the Ideas

and the henads too. The henad is both *authupostaton*, and hence “its own,” and transcends its participants, and the reference to *hyparxeis* indicates that a reference to the henads is intended. Even if the term *hyparxeis* here is being used generically to include beings and supra-essentials alike, it would seem that we are to include the henads in this category at least in some respect. But the unparticipated is a term clearly belonging more properly to monads, since the henads are frequently contrasted with the One in that they are participated and the One is not. Indeed, the term establishes in several places a special bond between the One and monads. But then what are we to make of the implied *superiority* of the unparticipated to the participated? Does this place monads, as unparticipated, prior to henads? In a way, yes, but in another way, no.

To begin with, there is the issue of the *anataxis* that would seem to be posited between the henads and the One if it is the unparticipated monad and they are the participated. In the corollary to prop. 21 there is also reference to an *anataxis* “toward the One” (*eis to hen*). But it would seem unlikely that we are to give a metaphor such as this more weight than all that we have seen about the actual structural characteristics of the henadic multiplicity and that we know about the One from the *Parmenides*. While each henad may possess a directedness toward its own integrity, so to speak, there is not literally an entity, some one thing, toward which it is thus directed. For this would make the unity of a henad lie in something other than itself, that is, in a *relation*, which would make nonsense of the henadology. Every series of *wholes*, we read in prop. 100, is “referable” (*anateinetai*) to an unparticipated principle and cause (*aitian*). It does no violence to Proclus’ point in the former

proposition to grant it the more anodyne reading Dodds gives to *anateinesthai* in the latter. In prop. 135, we read that whatever is “divinized” (*ektheoumenon*) possesses an *anataxis* toward one divine henad; and indeed, one should say that the “tension” with respect to henads is that of the henad’s series of manifestations on different levels of Being toward the henad’s supra-essential *hyparxis*, its procession into Being, for *anataxis* is specifically associated with reversion in prop. 35, and remaining, proceeding and reverting, the famous cycle of causality, are only true of the series depending from henads, and not of henads themselves, for “all reversion seems to be the resolution of something into that from which its *being* divides it [*aph’ou diêrêtai kat’ousian*],” i.e. from which it is divided “according to being” – thus do the species of Being resolve into their genera and the atomic participants into their species. But where the division in question approaches zero, the “tension” in question is no longer strictly speaking “upward” (*ana-*) or the resolution into some other but an integrative systole and diastole like the Stoic *teinein*, the affirmation of the rootedness of that which is divinized in that which is beyond Being. Thus the explicit contrast between *hypostasis* and *hyparxis* in prop. 23, which would refer *in a being* to the relationship to divine causality and therefore something separate, refers in a henad to the relationship between the two aspects of its nature. In the *Elements*, the rule is always more important than its limiting case; while we must understand the significance of the One as “unparticipated” in relation to the henads, we need not be led astray by the implications of *anataxis* in this regard.

The unparticipated term is explained with recourse to the same general logic applying to any monad or *archê* in prop. 100, as a function of the identity

(*tautotês*) of members of a series with respect to some character. "As all beings [*onta*] are from one [*aph'enos*], so too are all the members of any series [*pasa seira aph'enos*]" (ibid), as if the notion of the beyond of Being and the negations applying to the One had no relevance. And in fact, they do not, for it is a question here of a logic, or rather an "analogic" that supersedes the divide between Being and the supra-essential. All unparticipated monads are "analogous to the One" and "insofar as they too are affected by a common character [*tauton*], namely their analogy to the One, so far we can refer them to the One ... as principles of a certain order of things they are dependent from the principle of all things. For the principle of all things is that which all participate." Are we to take the henads as covered by this *panta*? If it is a question of whether, from the perspective of beings, we can identify a common characteristic in the henads like the common characteristics uniting classes of beings, then yes. But then there is the matter of the *nature* of this characteristic. And if the characteristic is to be absolutely unique individuals, then in this respect a common characteristic uniting the class would contradict the very nature of the characteristic in question. It is a paradox; but not one for which we need by any means despair of arriving at a rational explanation. For it is a question, just as we saw with the *archai* Limit and Infinity, of a structure, a *logos*, with relevance to beings, which is superimposed upon the henads and exists so to speak *in parallel* with them.

In passages like *PT* III 2. 10f, Proclus again stresses the analogy between the One Itself and the unparticipated monads, for "in every case the first transcendent genus [*to prôtiston genos exêrêmenon*] will have a rank [*taxin*] analogous to the One ... Hence prior to the forms which are in other things,

those are established which subsist in themselves; exempt causes prior to coordinate [*suntetagmenôn*], and unparticipated monads prior to participated" (11. 5-12). The entire tenor of the passage in fact signals that the subject matter is ontology, despite the fact that the subject is the One Itself. In addition to the references to forms and *taxeis*, there is also the contrast of being "in itself" and being "in another," which belongs to the order of Intellect (see chapter 7). The term for "coordinate" here is also narrower than *sustoichon*, for entities may be *sustoichia* in some respect while not actually belonging to the same *taxis*, as implied by *suntetagmenon*. Again, at III 8. 132-3, in establishing the necessity for positing the two principles of Limit and Infinity, Proclus argues that

the procession of the divine orders originates [*archetai*], not from things coordinated [*katatetagmenôn*] and which exist in others, but from things exempt [*exêrêmenôn*], and which are established in themselves. As therefore the One is prior to things unified [*hênômenôn*], and as that which is passive relative to the One has a second rank [*taxin*] after the unparticipated unity [*henôsin*], thus also the two principles of beings, prior to being participated by and mixed with beings, are themselves by themselves the causes of the whole of things.

Note again the opposition of "in itself" and "in another," and the opposition of the One as *henôsis* to the *hênômenon*, rather than as *heniaios*, or "unitary." When the One is spoken of as *heniaios*, its identity with the individual henad is meant, whereas *henôsis* opposes the *hênômena* more directly. Notice that the *hênômena* are a secondary "rank," *taxis*, after the



unparticipated *henôsis*, whereas in the passage cited in the first chapter from *PT* III 3. 12. 23-6 we read that “in the first causes” there is no “intrusion of difference” to transfer the “things begotten” into “another class/rank [*taxis*]” from “the generator.”

When Proclus speaks of the One as a hypostasis, that is, as the One Itself or the First Principle, it frequently seems that he does so in terms that are explicitly ontological, as if, like Plato himself in the *Parmenides*, “[h]e hypothesizes Real Being and One Being, and by means of this hypothesis he ascends to the One Itself, which he himself in the *Republic* (510b) describes as ‘non-hypothesized’,” (*IP* 1033f). The One, as an hypostasis, is the product of a philosophical inference from the hypothesis of Being Itself, while its *hyperaxis*, its true existence, lies in the henads, as in the passage from *Dec. Dub.* X quoted in the first chapter. One must cultivate in this regard the capacity to switch back and forth between complementary perspectives: one ontological, in which a hierarchy of monads, each of which possesses merely *specific* unity, succeed each other up to the One Itself; the other existential (i.e. from *hyperaxis*), in which each member of the polycentric henadic *arithmos* contains the potential of revealing to its worshiper the contents of its divine intellect, in which the other henads coalesce into monocentric disposition around it and the aforementioned structure of hypostases is divinized. This movement is completed in the application of the philosophical hermeneutic to the factual sacred text, whether this be a myth or revealed text. In this hermeneutical encounter, the two dimensions of divine activity in the world are, as it were, reunited, the one which leads to revelation, the other which leads to dialectic. The “existential” perspective, meanwhile, speaks of the

mode of existence of the divine *in general*, and serves to mediate between philosophy and religion at the same time that it establishes the limits of each.

The unparticipated principle arises as a schematic or ontological depiction – for all ontology, as exhibiting formal or specific unity, is essentially *schematic* – of the relationship, ultimately, between *hypostasis* and *hyparxis*, Being and the supra-essential. This is the disjunction which the disjunctions at the level of the forms between participants and participated principles issue in, just as the inexistence of the One Itself is the ultimate issue of the method of negation which is so distinctive in the *Parmenides* according to the interpretation of Syrianus. For at every level of Being, the sign of causation is *negation*, for whatever is the cause of some predicate in the robust sense must be that which *rejects* the very predicate in question, at least in the sense that it is predicated of the participants.

At IP 706ff Proclus attempts a systematic account of the ontological status of the monad *qua* monad and its derivation from the One:

Neither is plurality anywhere uncoordinated with the One, nor is it divided from itself, nor is the One without offspring and devoid of the plurality belonging to it; the One is the leader of secondary monads, and every plurality has the unity appropriate to it. For all the pluralities, intelligible and intellectual as well as those in or above the cosmos, are attached to their own monads and ordered with respect to one another. And the monads in their turn are derived from the one monad, so that the plurality of monads is not divided from itself, nor a mere plurality devoid of unity. For it would not be right that the causes that unify other things should themselves be divided from one another.

The One is here the supreme monad, with a function akin to a *summum genus*. A plurality, *plêthos*, deprived of its monad, would be “divided from itself,” that is, unthinkable as a whole or class. The One, already the cause of the monads, since “there is nothing more divine than unity except the One Itself” (707), must also serve as the *monad of monads*. A cause first exercises upon itself the power it imparts to others; and so as monads unify classes of beings and Being Itself, so must the One (that is, the henads) unify the monads themselves into a class, of which the One Itself is the monad. In unifying the class of monads the One, so to speak, unifies itself, becoming a monad “in formula” (*logon echon*, ET prop. 23). See also, in this regard, IP 1143: “all classes whatever owe their subsistence to the One [*apo tou henos hupestêsan*],” as well as IR I, 133. 19-20, where the Good is referred to as “the one principle of wholes [*tôn holôn*]” from which “all the divine orders [*diakosmôn*]” – that is, the *classifications* of the Gods by their powers – “proceed.” There are surely cases in which *tôn holôn* should be rendered simply “of everything,” but the possibility of a more technical reference to *wholes* should never be disregarded, especially insofar as Proclus has always available to him some form of *pan* with which to express the concept of *totality*, which is at any rate logically distinct – as will become clear in the discussion of the third intelligible triad in chapter 5.

Prop. 99 of the ET states that “[e]very unparticipated term arises *qua* unparticipated from no cause other than itself, but is itself the first principle and cause of all the participated terms; thus the first principle of every series [*seiran*] is always without origin [*agenêtos*].” Unparticipated monads thus

share after a fashion in the status of henads as *autotelês* and *authupostaton*, "self-constituting." These epithets refer to the fact that each henad, with no sacrifice of its supra-essential status, furnishes for itself its own *hypostasis*, its own subsistence or Being; in addition, *autotelês* refers to the "perfection" which is a chief characteristic of the third intelligible triad, that is, the divine intellect of each God. The monad possesses derivatively a lesser form of *authupostasis* inasmuch as it does not receive "from an external source that character in respect of which it is unparticipated." There may thus be "superior terms from which it is derived," but "it proceeds from them not *qua* unparticipated but *qua* participant." However, as originating a series "it has primitively what it has imparticipably: so that *qua* unparticipated it is uncaused," another way in which it resembles a henad. However, as we have seen in the discussion of *pêgai*, it is specifically the characteristic of being "ungenerated" that relates such *agenêta* to the very realm of generation, albeit in this case ideal and not mundane generation. The dependence of monads from the One is specifically from the One as "First Principle," while the doctrine with respect to *pêgai* and *archai* provides us with further indication that the One, *qua* First Principle, is a monad, and therefore, notwithstanding its *logical* priority, would in fact, from a certain perspective, be *subordinated* to the henads were the henads and the One to be posited on a common field or synoptically. The whole point, then, is that they are *not* to be so posited, for the image of a One above and beyond the henads is precisely the kind of hypostatization that would lead us astray.

It is as if in all their characteristics except for being "unparticipated" the unparticipated monads are lesser henads. The middle term which mediates

between unparticipated monads and participated henads is the *transcendence* common to both. Every henad is participable, and they are in this fashion distinguished from the One, which is imparticipable. But just as the *agenêtos* was, in its very negativity, linked directly to generation as the cause of it, so too the *amethektos*, in its negativity, pertains directly to participation, and not the participation we would attribute to henads, either, for in prop. 23 the argument to the unparticipated is by virtue of the fact that “every participated term, becoming a property of that particular by which it is participated [*tinós genomenon huph’ou metechetai*], is secondary to that which in all is equally present and has filled them all out of itself.” The discussion seems clearly to be distinguishing *within the scene of participation*, between the immanent characteristic in the participant and the entity that is participated. These two senses of *metechomena* have been recognized by P. A. Meijer. The “unparticipated” monad is really just a placeholder; it registers a causality incommensurable with the participant entity *and says nothing more*. We make a mistake, therefore, to place “unparticipated monads” on a par with the henads as if the former possessed an existence at all comparable to the latter. Like all monads, “the unparticipated” is simply a formula, one which is both indispensable *and analytic* for every invocation of participation; the ultimate instance of it, that which is necessitated by the phenomenon of participated unity, is unparticipated unity, the One Itself. But this unparticipated unity, if we should inquire as to its existence, is simply the transcendence of each henad, for the illumination of Being, the “participation” of Being by the One, does not render the unity of each henad thereby an *ontic unity*. Although the henads are participated, they are not

participated in the sense that Proclus refers to here, i.e. “becoming a part of ... and sharing its own essence with the realities that participate in it,” for such as these are “particulars that exist in things other than themselves” – see in this respect the account in *ET* 81-2 of the *chôristôs metechomenon*, that which is “separately participated.” At least they are not participated in this way once we separate their supra-essential nature from that *essence* which is a product of their *activity* and *can* therefore be shared by its participants, at least in the broad sense that the whole scene of participation is ontic; for supra-essentials do not simply *reject* essence, they *produce* essence.

With all of this in mind, we are equipped to pick up the passage from *IP* 707 at a turning-point in the text after the passage which cites the need for the class of monads to be itself unified under some monad. Proclus, although hitherto speaking all along of monads, suddenly says

Thus all the many henads must be derived from the One, and from them the pluralities are derived, both the primary pluralities and the ones that succeed them; and always those that are further away from the One are more pluralized than those that precede them, but even so every plurality has a twofold henad, one that is immanent in it and one that transcends it.

This is one of the most notorious instances of equivocation between henads and monads. Why does Proclus switch his terminology? For one thing, the discourse has shifted from an ascent to the One from successive manifolds, to a procession *from* the One *into* successive manifolds. And we know that it makes a difference whether an object is revealed in the order of procession or the order of reversion. The First Principle, for instance, is said by Proclus to be

called the One with respect to procession, the Good with respect to reversion. And it is evident from the text that follows that the “transcendent henad” is in fact the unparticipated monad. Proclus uses as his examples the Ideas of Man, Beauty, Equality and Justice, which are each doubled, one transcendent and before the many, one participated and in the many, explaining that “as each of the kinds [*eidôn*] is double, so also every whole is double. For the kinds are parts of wholes, and the unparticipated whole is distinct from the participated.” The reference to the logic of whole and part confirms that our concern here is with monads, and that the transcendent monad-*cum*-henad is to be understood as a whole-before-the-parts. Neither the transcendent nor the immanent “henads” here are, then, really henads in the strict sense; rather, it is a question of the derivation of the two classes of monad from the One.

Emerging from the foregoing consideration of the meaning of “unparticipated” terms and the significance of negation or disjunction for thinking causality, is a final source of equivocation this time applying not so much to henads and monads as to the system as a whole: *A fifth reason for equivocation is the tendency to analogize any important disjunction to the disjunction between the ontic and supra-essential domains.* Frequently in Proclus, a disjunction relevant to the context at hand in a given discussion is allowed to determine the structure of the hypostases, especially when it is a question of ascension or reversion, and this can help to explain equivocal usages at times as well as a general fluidity in the denomination of the hypostases. This comes about because beings must participate the higher causes through their own proximate causes; as such, the view through the

immediate disjunction is the phenomenologically accurate, even *constitutive* perspective. At *IP* 700, for instance, it is explained that Intellect “looks at Life and Being as one; and attaching itself to Life, when it sees the unity of Life and Being, it attaches itself also to Being.” And in the same fashion, the individual intellect, seeing the unity of participated and unparticipated Intellect, “turns through the one to the other.” Similarly, at 720 we read that for tertiary beings, “the beings prior to themselves become for them one intelligible order,” appearing as a unity “owing to their benevolent purpose.” And we read at 1048 about “men of old” (Pythagoreans) who “decided to term incorporeal essence as a whole ‘One,’ and the corporeal and in general the divisible ‘Others’; so that in whatever sense you took the One, you would not deviate from the contemplation of incorporeal substances and the ruling henads.” The reference to “ruling” henads here may be calculated, since these are the Gods of the *Phaedrus*, through whom the particular soul is assimilated to the forms. Furthermore, Proclus explains at *PT* III 21. 74f a complicated series of equivocations by means of which “Plato himself, and his most genuine disciples, frequently call all [true] beings intellect,” and “the first intellects are essences,” so that “the henads are frequently called intelligibles, and beings intelligible intellects.” Proclus does this himself in particular in *ET* prop. 20, where he opposes the One to the Intellect, allowing this disjunction to elide the domain of Being in the strict sense. These are all factors which must be taken into account when we encounter equivocal usages of the term “henad,” lest we become confused about the doctrine concerning the henads proper. Indeed, one could see the divisions of the hypostases within Being as essentially fluid because of their monadic



homogeneity, which imparts to them a basic commensurability. The manifold of the Gods, who resist subsumption in a totalizing unity *above* them, perhaps finds an echo in the impossibility of subsuming the transcendent monad into a class with the beings that come *after* it; they remain, rather, “pure and unmixed ... in themselves.” (IP 709). This would be another sense in which the approach at IP 709 might be characterized as “theological.”

Until we have become sensitized to the connotations of the terms as I have discussed them in this chapter, it can seem at times as if Proclus uses them indifferently, for the one term is simply substituted without warning or comment. At 812, for example, he calls Man Himself an “intelligible henad” from which proceeds first a heavenly, then a fiery, airy, watery and earthy Man in accord with the intelligible tetrad of forms in the third order of intelligibles (the “Animal Itself” of the *Timaeus*). Later on we read that “the whole number of men in this world ... depends upon that intellectual henad we have called Man Himself,” extending the equivocal usage begun already, since the men *here* naturally depend immediately upon the intellectual order rather than the intelligible. But then we read a little later that “it is evident that these monads [e.g., Man Himself] are more particular than those discussed earlier,” that is, the “existence-giving forms” of 809: unity, plurality, likeness, unlikeness, rest and motion. The passage has concerned monads all along, but uses the term “henad” in order to emphasize the rootedness of the Human form in the very highest reaches of Form, namely the third intelligible triad or intelligible intellect, whose characteristic of *elementality*

we shall discuss in chapter 5.

What is intriguing about passages that seem to blur henads and monads is that they seem to arise from a reluctance on Proclus's part to place henads and monads in a common field within which they might be determined against one another. A rare exception is at *IP* 1047, where we read that "not only with them but in all other cases we can find the monads as leading the series [*arithmôn*] which belong to them, and the henads of the monads being the most basic origins of the things [*pragmatôn*],"<sup>7</sup> subordinating monads to henads. The phrase "henads of the monads" should also be compared to phrases occasionally used by Proclus such as "henads of beings" or even "henads of the Gods." Such phrases simply establish the henads as prior to beings in general – or in the case of the phrase "henads of the Gods," prior to the lesser emanations of each God within his/her own "series" – without further specifying the nature of the relationship. The impossibility of subsuming henads and monads *themselves* under a single genus is perhaps the ultimate explanation for the sometimes confusing usage of these terms. We do not find Proclus determining henads and monads against one another because the One, after all, is not a genus containing henads and monads as species. The relationship between these two types of entity might be characterized rather as *complementarity*. Up to a point, the ontological or monadological discourse and the theological or henadological discourse are both self-sufficient. But either eventually calls the other into play, the ontological discourse when confronted with certain aporiae emerging, for

<sup>7</sup> Substituting for Morrow and Dillon's translation that which appears in P. A. Meijer, "Participation in Henads and Monads in Proclus' *Theologia Platonica* III, chs. 1-6" in *On Proclus and his Influence in Medieval Philosophy* ed. E. P. Bos and P. A. Meijer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992) p. 66 n. 6.

Proclus, in the *Parmenides* itself, the strictly theological discourse when it is forced to reflection and justification, a process which began as far back as the Presocratics. The integration of theological and philosophical discourse which Proclus seeks does not consist of reducing either to the terms of the other. The henads, although existentially prior to the monads, can nevertheless from within the monadic perspective – and the perspective of philosophy is ultimately monadic – be seen as proceeding from a monad or principle of pure individuation. The monadology's reach here exceeds its grasp, however: the henadic individual eludes identification with its collection of attributes and hence belongs, so to speak, in the class of unclassifiable entities. Hence I use the term complementarity to express the essential ambivalence of the refusal to fully integrate the henadic and monadic dimensions of the system into a single perspective lest either dimension would have to surrender its autonomy as a result. This does not prevent, however, an account of the *emergence* of the monadic from the henadic perspective, which is the subject of the close reading of the *Platonic Theology* in chapters 5-7 of this dissertation.

The examination of equivocation in the use of the terms "henad" and "monad" has helped us to further clarify the relationship between the henads and the One. For the final stage in our general examination of the henadology before we embark on the close reading of books three through five of the *Platonic Theology*, which will trace the actual stages of the emergence of monadic from henadic unity, we can refine our understanding of this relationship by examining Proclus' critique of an important competing

interpretation of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, which posits a different relationship between the One and the henads. In chap. 23 of book III of the *Platonic Theology* and also at IP 1064ff Proclus explains and refutes an exegesis, perhaps to be attributed to Iamblichus, of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*:

It is not true, as some say it, that in the First Hypothesis the subject of the discourse is God and the Gods [*peri theou kai theôn*]; for it would not be lawful for Parmenides to coordinate [*suntattein*] multiplicity with the One [*to plêthos tô heni*] nor the One <God> [*ton hena*] with the multiplicity [*tô plêthei*] <of the Gods>, since the very first God [*ho prôtistos theos*] transcends wholes in every way. On the contrary, in the First Hypothesis, Parmenides denies of the First not only being but also unity itself [*auto to hen*]; but, that this does not suit the other Gods, this is evident to anyone. It is not true, furthermore, as these authors claim, that in the First Hypothesis Parmenides treats of the intelligible Gods; they maintain that it is to these Gods that are related the negations, because they are united [*sunênôntai*] with the One and that they surpass in simplicity and in unity all the genera of Gods. How, indeed, can the similar and the dissimilar, the connected and the separated, and all the other attributes denied of the One, pertain to the intelligible Gods? No, if they are right, I think, to say that the attributes denied are properties of the Gods, they are wrong to say that they are all the properties [see below] of the intelligible Gods, without taking into account that, according to this thesis, it would have to be that the subject of the intelligible Gods is treated a second time in the second hypothesis, for that which Parmenides denies in the First Hypothesis, he affirms in the second. (PT III 23. 82)

The “properties” of 82.17 represent a correction by the editors, for the text actually reads *homoiotêtes*, “likenesses” of the Gods, corrected by Saffrey & Westerink to *idiotêtes*, “properties.” But “likenesses” is defensible here, inasmuch as the ontological classifications of the Gods corresponding to the negations could be seen to be of the order of “likenesses” of the Gods, since likeness is an infra-intellectual characteristic, and classifying the Gods ontologically manifests the striving of the human soul toward the intellectual apprehension of the Gods.

What is the problem Proclus has with the interpretation of the First Hypothesis as concerning “God and the Gods”? It is first and foremost that this represents an illicit conflation of different levels of discourse. It is not a question here of a *theological* doctrine in which the many Gods are subordinated to a single God, that is, a form of henotheism, although it could easily be taken for such. Proclus explains that it would not be “lawful” (*themis*) for Parmenides to coordinate multiplicity with the One (*to hen*), and then essentially repeats the statement, only this time with a gendered One, *ton hena*. The latter statement is a specific application of the general principle; but the method of application is not in accord with a subordinationist theology, but rather in accord with the polycentric polytheism which I have explicated in Proclus. The One Itself is not *ton hena*, for that which neither *is*, nor is *one* is not masculine either. Rather – and this is something I shall discuss further in chapter 5 – *ton hena* refers to the aspect of each God corresponding to Limit; in a word, to the summit of each God “prior to wholes” (*tôn holôn*), which means in the first place prior to the whole of the series proper to that God.

A second point which concerns Proclus in the doctrines he criticizes is that they posit the other Gods as “united” with the One. The commentators in question, then, whoever they may be, are not themselves henotheists so much as a peculiar kind of monotheists, inasmuch as they imagine all the Gods differentiating themselves from One God along with Being. It is quite possible that these commentators did not wish to affirm an anti-polytheist position, but simply could not find their way to a formulation in which the logic of monism could be satisfied alongside an existential pluralism. Instead, they were forced to conflate the supra-essential and ontic domains. An important account could well be given of the history of the attempts by philosophers to formulate a metaphysics adequate to polytheistic *praxis*. We find Damascius complaining at one point (*DP* III 64/R. I, 257-8) that

nearly all the philosophers prior to Iamblichus conceive the plurality of the Gods in this way, <namely that> there is <but> one supra-essential God, while the others are substantial [*ousiôdeis*], being made Gods by illuminations from the One, and that the plurality of supra-essential henads are not self-perfect [*autotelôn*] hypostases, but divinizations [*theôseôn*] which are illuminated from the One God [*tou monou theou*] and which are communicated to substances.

As such, we should perhaps see Iamblichus, if indeed it is to him that the “God and the Gods” interpretation of the First Hypothesis belongs, not as representing a truly different point of view from Proclus, but as lacking the proper conceptual apparatus to make the point he wishes to make without misleading and undesirable consequences for the point of view which he and

Proclus substantially share.

Even Plotinus, who would generally be understood as having far less interest in the issues surrounding polytheism than Iamblichus, and who is generally thought of as possessing at most a benign indifference to polytheism, if not an active disaffection, can be seen struggling with the issue of the individuality of the Gods in a passage from *Ennead* V. 8. 9, where we find a number of formulations anticipatory of Proclus' solution, albeit which are not seemingly systematically applied by Plotinus in his own thought. We read that

each God is all the Gods coming together into one [*sunontes eis hen*]; they are different [*alloi*] in their powers, but in that one-many they are all one [*tê de mia ekeinê tē pollē pantes heis*], or rather the one <God> is all [*ho heis pantes*]; for he does not fall short [*epileipei*] if all those come to be [*pantes ekeinoi genôntai*]. They are all together [*homou*] and each one again apart in a position without separation [*en stasei adiatatô*], possessing no perceptible shape – for if they did, one would be in one place and one in another, and each would no longer be all in himself – nor does each God have parts different [*alla*] from himself belonging to other [*allois*] Gods than himself, nor is each whole [*holon*] like a power cut up [*kermatistheisa*] which is as large as the measure of its parts.

Notice in this passage that the unity which Plotinus accords to the Gods seems not to be a unity in some third, but rather the presence of all the Gods in each God, as we can see from the masculine *heis* which is used twice. Plotinus is also clearly concerned here that the Gods not be differentiated

*reciprocally* from one another, in which case the “coming to be” of others would diminish each. It seems that Plotinus does not wish the relations between the Gods to constitute a mediation of them which would diminish their reality as individuals. This is already, as it will be for Proclus, a matter of the unification of the Gods by virtue of the abstraction of their common “parts” – that is, powers – into monadic unities. Nor does Plotinus wish for a God to be reducible to its parts, that is, its characteristics “measured” within Being.

The strategy of the unnamed commentators with respect to the First Hypothesis not only has the consequence of dissolving the individual distinction of the Gods into an abstract unity, but also, as Proclus points out, eliminates what he sees as the structuring function of the negations of the First Hypothesis as indicating the divine orders, and damages the elegance of the dialogue’s structure for Proclus inasmuch as the transition from negation to affirmation is no longer identical to the transition from the supra-essential to Being, with the negations themselves – which are in fact the powers constitutive on the one hand of the several divine orders, and thus of the ontic hypostases – as the bridge between the two.

A second passage concerning this “God and the Gods” interpretation of the First Hypothesis occurs in the context of the commentary of Proclus on the first lemma, *Parm.* 137 C 4-5, of the First Hypothesis, beginning by the following question: “It is necessary to say first what is the aim of the First Hypothesis: does it concern only God [*peri theou monon*], or God and the Gods [*peri theou kai peri theōn*], as some say?” We must be careful not to prejudice our reading with the monotheizing connotations the singular term



“God” has for us. For Proclus, the term “God” without any further specification is the name of a quality, Godhood, as it were, or a term referring indifferently to any God. Proclus begins by carefully underscoring that “the discourse is about a subject [*pragmatos*] which has *hyparxis*, and it is not the case, as some have supposed [apparently Origen the Platonist, cf. Morrow & Dillon p. 419n.] that this One in its absolute form [*touto monôs hen*] is without substance [*anhupostatos*], and that this hypothesis produces impossible conclusions” (1065). The One, Proclus argues, has indeed subsistence (*huphestôs*) although not Being (*ousiôdes*) (1066). As far as its *hyparxis* goes, we have seen in the passage from *Dec. Dub.* X that the *hyparxis* of the One is each God. This seeming dispersion of the One into the many Gods is, however, altogether different from denying the existence of the One as an hypostasis. We can see what the latter would mean from Proclus’ gloss of Origen’s position: for Origen, the point of the first hypothesis is something like a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is important to stress that this is how Proclus understands the argument that the One is *anhupostatos*, lest it should be thought that the interpretation of this dissertation renders the One “without subsistence.” He goes on to deal with the possibly Iamblichean reading that we have already encountered:

Necessarily then, if indeed only the divine is supra-essential, and all that is divine is above Being, the present argument could be either only about the primal God [*tou prôtou theou*], who is alone [*monos*] supra-essential, or else it is about all the Gods also which are after him, as some of those whom we revere would hold. So they argue that since every God, inasmuch as he is a God, is a henad (for it is this element, the One, which divinizes all being), for this

reason they think it right to join to the study of the First a discussion of all the Gods; for they are all supra-essential henads, and transcend the multiplicity of beings and are the summits of beings. But if we were to say that both the primal cause [*aitian*] and the other Gods are one [*hen*], we would have to allot one and the same hypothesis to all of them; for we would have to say that the discussion concerned the primal One in no way more than it concerned all the rest of the henads. But if this primal [*prôtiston*] One, as indeed is very much the view of these authorities, is simply and solely One [*pantôn monôs esti*], and unconnected with everything else, and unparticipated, as they say, 'snatching itself away' (*Or. Chald. fr. 3.1*) from wholes/everything, and unknowable to everything, as being transcendent, whereas each of the other henads is somehow participated, and is not only a henad but also partakes in the multiplicity proper to it, and in some substance either intelligible or intellectual or psychic or even corporeal (for participation proceeds even down this far) – why should that One which is not reckoned with [*sunarithmoumenon*] beings, nor ranked [*suntattomenon*] at all with the Many [*tois pollois*], be placed in the same hypothesis with henads which are participated in by beings, and serve to confer coherence [*sunektikais*] on the Many?

Proclus explains next that the One is just like other unparticipated principles, insofar as "we do not get the same account [*logos*] given of the unparticipated and the participated soul; for the properties of the participated would never accord with those of the unparticipated," and so with the unparticipated Intellect and the many intellects, for "the former holds the rank of monad [*monados epeiche logon*], while the latter that of number which has come into being [*huphestêkotos*] around this monad" (1067). As we have seen, it is

common for Proclus to refer in this fashion to the One, when considered as an hypostasis, that is, as the One Itself, as a *monad* and according to an analogy with all the other “unparticipated” principles, namely the ontic hypostases. What is potentially misleading in the present passage is of course the way that Proclus refers to the One as a henad alongside – or rather prior to – the “other” henads. But that he can hardly mean us to really take it in this way is clear from his statement that the “primal God” is *alone* supra-essential. It would be absurd, on the basis of this single statement, to throw aside the numerous others where Proclus refers to *all* Gods as supra-essential, or to assume on the basis of this text that all the “other” Gods are only supra-essential equivocally. Rather, “the primal God” is *each* God in his/her “primal” aspect, in which s/he is, indeed, each one *alone*; for as we shall see in chapter 5, the three intelligible triads are characteristics of each God, and it is only in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, discussed in chapter 6 of this dissertation, that we have to do with the characteristics of a group of deities *in common*.

Proclus explains that while “every God is one; yet the ‘one’ in each God is not separate in the same way, nor in the same way unknowable, nor in the same way uncircumscribable, as the primal One itself” (1068). And indeed, the point of the present interpretation is in no way to usurp the systematic, that is to say dialectical function of the One Itself, for as Proclus puts it, “even as man in the strict sense is so in virtue of his soul, so God in the strict sense is so in virtue of the One [*ho kuriôs theos kata to hen*]; for in each case there is a dominant element [*to kuriôtaton*] in all those which make up the totality of the entity [*tôn sumplêrountôn*] according to which each member of the

totality [*hekaston...tôn pantôn*] subsists [*huphestêke*]" (1069). But just as the One Itself is rarely presented by Proclus without the chain of analogy which leads up to it by the logic of the other imparticipable monads – and note again at 1068 this very rhetorical trope again – so too the analogy here, while entirely correct so far as it goes, is nevertheless a question of proportionality, a *logos*. For the *kuriotaton* of the God is its own *hyparxis*, its own absolute individuality, not, as in the case of man's soul, something which would tend to *compromise* that individuality.

It follows necessarily, then, that the First Hypothesis is about God alone, in so far as he is the generator of the plurality [*pollôn*] of Gods, he himself being transcendent over multiplicity and unconnected with those <Gods> who have proceeded forth from him. It is for this reason that everything is denied of this One, as being established as superior to all things and transcendent over all things, and producing [*paragontos*] all the characteristics [*idiotêtas*] of the Gods, while itself being undefinable and uncircumscribable in relation to all of them. For it is not a particular one [*ti hen*], but simply One [*haplôs hen*], and it is not intelligible or intellectual, but it constitutes [*hupostatikon*] both the intelligible and the intellectual henads. For in every ruling/principial [*archikôs*] order [*taxeôs*] the participated multiplicity should be presided over by the unparticipated and primal [*prôtourgon*] form, or even a causal principle superior to form [*eidous kreitton aition*]. (1069)

Proclus goes on to cite a number of examples of this basic metaphysical principle, once again constructing the chain of analogy all the way from the forms in matter, which have prior to them the immaterial forms, to end once again in the affirmation that "beyond the multiplicity [*pollôn*] of participated

henads there is [*estin*] the unparticipated One, transcendent, as has been said, over all the divine orders [*diakosmôn*]” (1070). The emphatic use of *einai* here seems ironic, after all the stress which has been laid on the supra-essential status of the One, and yet it is from the existence of the divine *diakosmoi*, the ontic classifications of the Gods, that this One Itself derives, not its *hyparxis*, which is simply each God, but its *hupostasis*, its subsistence as that one thing we call “the One Itself.” It is, rather the *hyparxis*, the real existence of the One, which is referred to as “he” in such a passage. If we make the mistake of taking this One as a God beyond the Gods, then we are making of the One a “particular” one, *ti hen*.

## Chapter 5:

### The Three Intelligible Triads

In the following chapters, I will trace the emergence of ontic or monadic unity from henadic individuality through a close reading of books three, four and five of the *Platonic Theology*, which detail this process through a complex hermeneutic into which three elements chiefly enter: first, the dialectic implicit in henadic individuality itself, which unfolds in stages each of which constitute some discrete ontological determination; second, the texts of Plato, which are the principal source of the ontological determinations linked together in the account; and third, the corpus of Hellenic mythology, insofar as it is explicitly mentioned by Plato or not. The hermeneutic exemplified in the *Platonic Theology* represents the living heart of Proclus' system, for it is in the philosophical interpretation of myth that philosophy returns to its own divine sources, for the philosophical interpretation of

myth has as its issue an account of the constitution of the cosmos which is necessarily also an account of the emergence of the conditions which make philosophy possible.

The divine orders which are treated of in these chapters, namely the intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, and intellectual orders of Gods, are those "illuminations" of Being which leave the ontic hypostases of Being, Life and Intellect respectively as their trace or after-image. The product of each intelligible triad, e.g., is Being, qualified in three different ways. There is an additional dimension to the intelligible triads, however, for these also represent the Being, Life and Intellect possessed by each and every deity; hence each triad is also a qualitative determination of the henad as such. We may briefly characterize these determinations as *individuality* in and through the first triad, *measuring the whole of Being* in and through the second triad, and *allness* or *totality*, i.e. the all-in-each of the henads, in and through the third. Since every ontic hypostasis is also a class of deities, this means that the intelligible order manifests itself on parallel planes: on the one hand, it concerns the unfolding of the inalienable possessions of each deity, while on the other, it deals with the illumination of the most primordial stratum of Being by a *particular* class of deities. This corresponds, in effect, to the distinction between Being in the broadest generic sense, in which it includes Life, Intellect, and the infra-intellectual hypostases within itself as its species, and Being Itself or Being *stricto sensu, ontôs on*.

Being in the broad sense corresponds to the presence in each deity of the whole of Being, according to which each deity possesses qualities corresponding to the three intelligible triads as summarized in *ET* prop. 121:

"All that is divine [*pan to theion*] has a substance [*huparxin*] which is goodness, a unitary [*heniaian*] potency, and a knowledge [*gnôsin*] which is secret and incomprehensible [*alêpton*] to all secondary entities alike." This trinity of qualities, as we shall see, represents the three intelligible triads themselves, which are that which is possessed by every deity irrespective of the regions of Being they illuminate and by virtue of which every deity is participable all the way down to the level of, e.g., herbs, stones, and statues. For the presence in each deity of Being, Life and Intellect in their radical forms is what secures for each deity the possibility of "illuminating" any level of Being. In this sense, every God is an intelligible God, for every God illuminates Being and is participated by Being in the broad sense. Being in the narrow sense, by contrast, corresponds the class of deities illuminating the intelligible summit, so to speak. Proclus instantiates this class through the Orphic God Phanes, while a cross-cultural selection of intelligible Gods in this sense is provided by Damascius (*DP* III 2. 159-67), whose account I shall discuss further when I take up the third intelligible triad, for it is within the intelligible intellect that this class is posited. After the intelligible order, the duality in question no longer applies, and so hereafter, we will be concerned strictly with the classes of deities illuminating particular regions of Being. But the deities in these classes remain anchored, as it were, in the intelligible by virtue of the three intelligible triads which provide the conditions of the possibility of their manifestation upon these successive levels.

The first intelligible triad consists of Limit, Infinity and the Mixed or Mixture. The third book of the *Platonic Theology* details the process of



emergence of radical Being, which is in effect a process undergone by each and every God, not literally and temporally, but in an ideal and analytical sense. There is no One from out of which Being and all the rest are produced, for the One is not a cause or a producer (*PT* II 9. 57. 21-4; 59. 14-6, 24). The various modes of causality – the “about which,” the “on account of which” and the “from which” – all subsist in the intelligible Gods (60. 26-8). But in that case, when Proclus calls the One “the henad of henads” and “the God of Gods” (II 11. 65. 11-12), how are we to understand these epithets?

Cause itself is vested in the Gods themselves. The One is the fountain of the Gods, *pêgê tôn theôn*,<sup>8</sup> the divinity of the divine, which rests in nothing other than their very individuality. It is this integral individuality that sets them apart from all other entities, for the entities which come after them are all essentially wholes or parts, and so it is this which is the “source” (*pêgê*) of divinity, it is this which is the One. The One is that principle of individuation from which the Gods derive their individuality and uniqueness. “Whence are we to suppose that these particularities [*idiotêtas*] come to the unitary [*heniaiois*] Gods other than from that which is prior to them?” (II 9. 61. 1-2), Proclus asks. But that which is “prior” to them is simply what is established unitarily (*heniaiôs*) above all the divine orders (II 10. 62. 10), and what is so established is nothing other than each “unitary” henad, prior to any of the orders to which they might belong. Proclus explains that the account in the *Parmenides* proceeds from “the monads which subsist in the divine genera” (ibid. 22), that the negations could not have begun “from the Gods that are [united to/unified by] the First [*apo tôn hênômenôn tô prôtô theôn*], for this

<sup>8</sup> We will have more to say about “fountains” when discussing the third intelligible triad, which is itself “the fountain of fountains” (IT I, 451).

genus is with difficulty distinguished [*dusdiakriton*] from the One, since being by nature of the (very) next rank it is most unitary and occult and transcendently similar to its engenderer" (26-9). That the genus of the intelligible Gods is "unitary" does not mean that they are all fused together. It is not *they* who are difficult to distinguish, but rather the One Itself is difficult to distinguish from this *class*, for the One is "concealed in the intelligible Gods" (II 11. 65. 15). The logic by which it emerges is rather with reference to the system as a *whole*, that is, literally, through the logic of whole and part: "For the last of things subsists only for the sake of something else, but the first is that only for the sake of which all other things subsist" (II 9. 58 and see also *IP* 1116). The One Itself is thus the mirror image of those dependent parts, moments or abstracta that are the last and least of things.

In order to properly grasp the significance of the One to the henadology, we must at once recognize the imperfection of conceiving of the One as an hypostasis *and also* fully avail ourselves of the monolatrous vision of each henad *as* the One. The point is not to pose a negative theology of the One Itself against a positive theology of the henads. Rather, theology *is* henadology. Grasping the One as an hypostasis, the "One Itself," is simple and comprehensive, but obviously misleading. The sheer *experience* of the One as implicit in the individual henad *qua* individual is, by contrast, absolutely secure in its ground, but fragmentary inasmuch as it must leave unspoken the radical autonomy of the other henads. We require the hypostasis of the One, properly understood, so that the class of all the Gods can have its appropriate unity, a unity that does not totalize them but rather brings out the transcendence of each. It is really a simple matter of the logic of general terms:

if *uniqueness* be a quality, how can it be shared in common among the unique entities lest by its very presence in them as a common quality it make them less unique. The principle would thus cause the opposite of the quality it is supposed to impart. The peculiar status of the One is a response to just this dilemma. When Proclus says that the One is beyond “every participated multiplicity [*plêthous*] of henads alike” (II 12. 73. 23), the significance of this statement for him is that we see the One *positively* in each henad in the priority of *that henad* to the classes of which that henad is a member and which pertain to the powers with which that henad illuminates Being.

The “exempt and unparticipated cause of all beings and the Gods that produce beings” (III 7. 29. 10-2), that is, the cause which is “beyond all causes, be they paternal or maternal” (30. 6-7), is “honored by silence and by the unity [*henôsei*] superior to silence” (7-8). That which comes after “the unity [*henôsin*] of universal divinity [*tês holês theotêtos*]” – the One being synonymous, in effect, with the universal quality of Godhood as such – is “the dyad of principles” (11-13) representing the most universal functional characteristics of the deities *after* divinity *simpliciter*. As we have seen, Limit and Infinity represent the application of the divine method of the *Philebus* to the attributes of the Gods. In the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus attempted to analyze all the attributes of the Gods from these principles. Here, however, they represent the most basic attribute of each God, namely his or her gender – hence the reference to “maternal” and “paternal” causes. The term *henôsis* here is the same term used in *ET* prop. 13 to refer to the action of that which “conserves and holds together the being of each several thing”; as such, a more appropriate translation in many contexts might be *integrity*. What is

being held together here is the quasi-class of divinities under the quality of Godhood, a quasi-universal (*holos*) through which the Gods have their “being Gods,” to *einai theoi* (30. 2), in which the reference to *being* in the Gods, who are all supra-essential and henads, is both a necessary equivocation and correct insofar as the Gods, who actually participate nothing, are only classed from the perspective of Being. But *henôsis* also signifies that integrity prior to determinacy and diremption which is prior to utterance and silence alike, and which is in itself the universal characteristic of divinity, utterance on our plane being analogous to the expressions of power by the Gods.

The illumination of Being by the Gods begins from Limit and Infinity. What is prior to this is, as Proclus puts it, “the peculiar character [*idiotêta*] of the One in all its purity” (III 8. 31. 10), the domain of the Gods in the purity of their individual uniqueness, prior to any analysis or synthesis. This *idiotês* is *not* captured in the notion of the hypostatized One Itself; for as he reminds us here, “the First is not truly one: it is superior even to the One” (31. 12-3). “The First” is neuter here, as at the beginning of chap. 8, which concerns “the two principles of the orders [*diakosmôn*] of the Gods, which come after the First” (30. 15-6). Proclus uses the neuter in this fashion to speak most strictly of the first principle. Notice, for example, the critique of Origen at *IP* 1096. 26ff:

If, then, the One Itself (neut.) and the primal entity [*prôton*] are the same, and the primal entity (neut.) is God, it is plain that the One Itself (neut.) and God are the same, and that is not some particular (neut.) God, but God himself [sic: *autotheos*]. Those, then, who say that the first (masc.) is Demiurge or Father are not correct; for the demiurge and the father is a particular (masc.) God. This is obvious, for not every God is demiurge or father, whereas the first (neut.) is

simply God [*haplôs theos*] and all Gods are Gods through it, but only some, such as are demiurges, through the demiurge, and fathers, through the primary demiurge or father. Let the One then be termed simply God, as being the cause for all Gods of their being Gods [*pasin aition tou einai theois tois theois*], but not for some particular Gods, as for instance demiurgic or paternal or any other particular type of godhead [*allo echousin eidos ti theotêtos merikon*], which is a type of qualified divinity [*ho dê poion esti theon*], not divinity in the simple sense.

I have excised from the passage any instance in which Morrow/Dillon use the term "First God" where only "First" is found in the Greek text, and have indicated the gender of the terms used in order to express the contrast between the "First" of Proclus, which is the neuter One Itself or *autotheos*, "God Itself," so to speak, and which resembles a typical Platonic universal like *autoanthrôpos*, and the "First" of Origen, which is masculine, a father and a demiurge. The phrase "First God," by contrast, refers in its overt masculinity to the aspect or element of Limit in *each* deity, as at 30. 2 where deities get to *einai theoi*, their "being Gods" from the First God (masc.). Each God, that is, gets his or her being-God from the Limit-phase of *their own* entity. Accordingly I suggest that a better translation of *h o prôtos theos* would be "primary Deity," as the state of (any) deity prior to the analysis and synthesis of potencies that attends the illumination of Being, thus avoiding the confusion stemming from a phrase which seems to imply that, e.g., all the Gods derive their being-Gods from some *particular* (masculine) deity from whom they differ.

But what is the difference between the contribution made to a deity by

*autotheos* and by *ho prôtos theos*? When Proclus explains the contributions of the three supra-essential principles to the Mixture, or radical Being, the third moment of the first intelligible triad (III 9. 37. 23-8), he explains that from God (i.e. *autotheos*) it receives participation in ineffable unity (*henôseôs arrêtou*) and the wholeness of its subsistence (*tês holês hupostaseôs*), while from Limit (i.e. *ho prôtos theos*) it receives its *hyparxis*, its *monoeides* and its stable character (*monimon idiotêta*). *Monoeides* here is largely synonymous with the more common expression in Proclus, *henoeides*, but it also bears reference to the singularity of entities whose form is instantiated only once, the Sun, for instance; such entities are “monadic” in a special sense, which I shall take up later on. Nor need the contribution of Infinity, the second moment of the first intelligible triad, to the Mixed concern us just now.

The Mixed is a kind of ontic reflection of the constitution of each henad. We recall the use of *henôsis* and *idiotês* at IP 1049, where the former was the technical term Proclus offered for the commonality, *koinônias*, of the henads, in contrast to ontic *tautotês*, while the latter was the term offered to express the distinction, *diakrisis*, of the henads, in contrast to the *heterotês* of beings. Here, *henôsis* is a quality participated in by the Mixed, deriving from *autotheos*, or universal deity, while *idiotês* is derived from the aspect of Limit or primary deity. I referred above to the relationship between *henôsis* and silence, which here arises again in the form of ineffability, which refers specifically to the impossibility of drawing *inferences* from the unity possessed by supra-essential entities; the Mixed, however, possesses this unity only derivatively, by participation. *Idiotês* referred to the “individual peculiarity” of the henads, in contrast to the “distinction of coordinates from

each other" at *IP* 1190, and it also occurs in *ET* prop. 145 to refer to the "distinctive character" that a divine order bestows upon "derivative" beings, and which is here affirmed to be stable or constant, *monimon*, over variations. It represents thus the integrity of the series of manifestations of each God as expressions of that God, but first and foremost represents that primordial distinguishing element which is in each God from nowhere else than him/herself, and which is expressed most directly in the name of the God. The Mixed is further characterized as a whole or universal (*holotês*) from *autotheos*. Similarly, at 38. 1-3, the Mixed is *one* from Limit, *not-one* from Infinity, and a *whole* from "the First," i.e. the First Principle or the One. This expresses nicely some of the aspects I have stressed in the relationship between the One Itself and the henads. What is one *as such* is the Limit-aspect, the *particularity* of each deity, his/her individuality or *idiotês* whereas the One Itself is aligned rather with the unity-*cum*-universality of the Mixed. The One Itself arises from the third moment, from Being, in the moment of separation between the supra-essential and the ontic, in which the Gods separate from that which they produce. This is the ontological moment corresponding to the dialectical moment in which Plato in the *Parmenides*, "hypothesizes Real Being and One Being, and by means of this hypothesis he ascends to the One Itself, which he himself in the *Republic* (510b) describes as 'non-hypothesized'" (*IP* 1033f).

*Ho prôtos theos* is the phase of the deity corresponding to and causative of Limit. It represents at once the masculine quality in deities – which is synonymous for Proclus with their individual integrity – and also the primary intelligible manifestation of each deity, which is expressed

specifically in the concept of the *paternal*. At III 21. 74, for example, Proclus is commenting on Plato's reference to *ho prôtos theos* in the sixth Epistle as *patera*. But "the First," Proclus explains – in the genitive, hence with gender indeterminate, but presumably the neuter First Principle – "surpasses the rank [*taxin*] of father." Rather, "what is primarily paternal is in the intelligible Gods." In fact, "*just as the intelligible Gods are henads primarily, so too are they fathers primarily*" (7-8, my emphasis); see also ET prop. 151: "All that is paternal in the Gods is of primal operation [*prôtourgon*] and stands in the position of the Good [*en tagathou taxei*] at the head of the several divine ranks [*diakosmêseis*]." One might also note that in his fragmentary commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, Proclus refers to "the paternal order" as "receiving and uniting ascending souls," thus performing the same function for the individual soul that the Limit-aspect of each God does for the multiplicity in him/her. The possession by each deity of the components of Limit and Infinity is prior to the fact that the relative proportions of these yield the masculinity and femininity of deities; hence Proclus will sometimes posit *male* and *female* as occurring later in the procession (e.g., at IT I, 130 as vested in the third intelligible triad, intelligible intellect or Animal Itself). This is because Limit and Infinity as causes rank prior to their effects, and any classification which the Gods share in common with beings, such as gender, must be posterior to the Gods' causality or agency. Being "paternal" is a functional designation among the Gods, and not a pure designation of gender, as we can see from Rhea, who belongs to a "paternal" order of intellectual Gods. That which is feminine can be paternal, apparently, but that which is *neuter* cannot.



Since the One Itself is “beyond unity and causality,” there must be “a certain One prior to Being [*ti pro tou ontos hen*] which gives subsistence to Being and is the primary cause of it” (III 8. 31). Limit is this “certain One” – we might otherwise characterize it as the “this-ness” of *this deity*. We see expressed here the one-to-one relationship essential to “divinization” in prop. 135 of the *ET* and which was discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation. Infinity, meanwhile, is “a power in it” – that is, in *ti pro tou ontos hen* – “generative of Being. For every thing which produces, produces according to its own power, which is allotted a subsistence between that which produces and the things produced, and is of the one the progression and as it were extension, but of the other is the pre-arranged generative cause” (ibid). Infinity, the second moment of the first intelligible triad, is thus the first positing of *power*, upon the mediating function of which between the Gods and Being I have frequently remarked. Of the two principles, Limit and Infinity, Socrates says in the *Philebus* (23 C 9-10) that “God [*ton theon*] has exhibited [*deixai*] the Limit and the Infinity of beings.” When Proclus appropriates this terminology later, and says that the first intellectual God “exhibits [*deiknusin*] from himself according to unity [*kat’ henôsin*] the twofold forms of conversion” (V 37. 137. 13-5), he helps us to better grasp how we are to understand this former “exhibition.” Note first that *kat’ henôsin*, which was used to characterize the productive relationship between the One and the henads, serves to characterize the relationship between *any* deity and that which they “reveal.” Limit and Infinity are exhibited or indicated by the causal activity of *ho theos*, a *given* deity. The use of *ho theos* takes us out of the realm of the abstract universality of *autotheos*, and into that of the

concrete universality of any particular deity *in his/her very particularity* – the universal *of* the particular. The Limit and Infinity *of beings* in turn serve to disclose (*ekphainei*) the unknowable and unparticipated cause (32. 13-5). We are not to understand some lower, ontic manifestation of Limit and Infinity by “the Limit and Infinity of beings.” Limit and Infinity simply *are* the aspects of limitation and infinitude of beings; in this respect note also the reference at *IP* 806 to Limit and Infinity as “principles of Being.” They disclose the One by providing ontological indices for its causal manifestation.

The Being thus produced “is not the One Itself, but uniform [*henoeides*],” possessing “its procession from the One through the power which brings it forth and reveals it from the One, but its occult unity [*kruphion henôsin*] from the *hyparxis* of the One” (31f). The distinction here between Being’s procession and its “occult unity” is between the functions of Limit and Infinity, as we can see from the contrast between power and *hyparxis*, which stand in here for the former. Being proceeds from the One, that is, achieves separation from the Gods, through power, for as we have seen, the powers of the Gods are that pertaining to them which may be abstracted from their individuality, an abstraction which is the basis for the emergence of the ontic hypostases. The *hyparxis* of the One, as we recall from the passage from *Dec. Dub.* X, is each henad, and so the “hidden” unity of Being is clearly the Being contained within each henad. Limit and Infinity express here in their activity therefore the distinction between Being as an hypostasis separate from the Gods and Being as contained wholly within each. This Being belonging to each God is “hidden” in several senses: first, inasmuch as each God remains supra-essential, and therefore the Being in each of them is really each God’s

*hyparxis*, and thus not only is it not something separate from each of the Gods, numerically one, unifying them, it is also not really Being insofar as it is rather existence, *hyparxis*. To consider this moment in each henad as a moment of Being is to posit the principle of Limit. Limit and Infinity are a schematic representation of each deity in its primary emergence into Being. The deity at once reveals and occults itself, which both preserves the deity's supra-essential status and secures the relative autonomy of the intelligible product. The deity *qua* intelligible is Mixture in the first intelligible triad, divine intellect in the third triad, the deity *thinking itself* and so *constituting* or *hypostatizing* itself (we recall the epithet *authupostatos* with reference to the henads), analyzing itself and reflecting itself. For when we speak (*hotan ... legômen*) of the remaining and proceeding of the divine orders (the phrase at 32. 23-4 is simply "that which is of the Gods," a common shorthand in Proclus for everything dependent upon the Gods themselves) – remaining and proceeding being constitutive of beings *qua* beings and hence of the classes of deities, that is, the *activities* of deities with respect to Being – this is attributable respectively to Limit and Infinity, as is the unity and multiplicity (*he n* and *plêthos*) posited in each such class (i.e. its set-theoretical characteristics), and the oppositions posited among the Gods, not merely as simple oppositions, but also as producing hierarchy, since the powers of the Gods, by virtue of which classifications of deities emerge and which come from Infinity, are subordinate to the Limit in each God, that is, its ontic particularity. By subordinating the unlimitedness of each God to its Limit, its "thisness," Proclus reaffirms in the realm of Being what is most salient about the realm of divinity, namely the individuality of deities.

The point in stressing the classifications of deities as distinct from those same deities in their absolute individuality is not to denigrate them as merely *a posteriori*; that Being has not the capacity to totalize the Gods does not render it without substance. Rather, the possibility of classifying the Gods lies in their *activities (energeiai)*. The emergence of Being lies in the expression of divine power through a nuclear triadic structure of existence, potentiality and actuality. This triad is expressed in a manifold of different ways by Proclus, the first of which is the first intelligible triad, namely the principles of Limit, Infinity, and the Mixed. The next expression of it lies at the level of the three intelligible triads, each triad also expressing this structure. Finally, the triad of hypostases, Being, Life and Intellect, express this same structure on the broadest scale, just as the triads within them do. Understanding this triad, therefore, is tantamount to understanding the whole of the system. The heart of it lies in conceiving each deity, each henad, as *first*, an absolute individual (existence); *second*, as possessing certain attributes susceptible of abstraction (potentiality); and *third*, as constituting or hypostatizing him/herself and thus informing Being (actuality). We shall learn much more about this triadic structure as we see each of its moments elaborated.

Deities “exhibit” or “indicate” Limit and Infinity, while Limit and Infinity “reveal” the One. Deities only reveal the One through Limit and Infinity because the One *as such* is a precipitate of ontology. We can see the hypostasis of the One as arising, in fact, first and foremost from an analysis of the Mixture or radical Being into its elements (*diairesis ...tôn stoicheiôn*, 34. 17) from which we derive Limit and Infinity, in which is disclosed the One as their condition of possibility. As such, the dyad of Limit and Infinity is the

intermediary allowing us to extend (*anateinetai*, 19) our reflection to the ineffable and unknowable principle. But the gap between essence and the supra-essential cannot be bridged so unproblematically as that. On the one hand, Limit and Infinity are constituents of Being. Being is the first of beings and that which *is* most of all. And yet *to be* is to be a mixture, not only of Limit and Infinity, but also and inherently, of Being and Non-Being. For Being Itself is an essence constituted by supra-essentials, “receiving a multitude of henads and powers which are mingled into one essence” (III 9. 40. 7-8), and supra-essentials, while surpassing Being in excellence, are nevertheless *non-beings*: “For if Limit and Infinity are supra-essential, essence may appear to have its subsistence from non-essences. How therefore can non-essences produce essence?” (38. 13-6). Remember that Limit and Infinity here mean the same as the henads and powers, respectively, of the previous quote, since Limit and Infinity are just a schematism of divine activity. The answer to the dilemma of non-beings (supra-essentials) constituting Being is, of course, as has been stressed throughout this dissertation, that “supra-essential natures are not themselves taken up into [*pareilêmmenôn*] the mixture of it [that which is primarily Being], but, these remaining transcendent, secondary processions from them coalesce [*sumphuomenôn*] into the subsistence [*hupostasin*] of essence” (24-7). Notice that the processions from the multiple Gods *coalesce* into the unity of Being, for as I have stressed, in a very important respect, multiplicity *precedes* unity in Proclus. Being arises from the negation of Non-Being, in that it arises from placing the powers and activities of deities, their very manifestation as the fact of manifestation itself, over their pure existence, and thus imposes a

unity upon their supra-essential or existential multiplicity. The “secondary procession” of essence from the supra-essential corresponds to the status of the Mixed as the *product* of *ho theos* as opposed to the dyad of Limit and Infinity which is *exhibited* or *indicated* by the God (*poiein...deixai*, III 9. 36. 12-6).

Negotiating the proper terms in which to describe the status of Limit and Infinity proves challenging for Proclus. On this occasion, Proclus explains somewhat clumsily that Limit and Infinity “are henads deriving their hypostasis from the One [*apo tou henos hupostasai*] and as it were [*oion*] manifestations [*ekphanseis*] from out of the unparticipated and very first unity [*apo tês amethektou kai protistês henôseôs*]” (13-5). It is clear from his equivocations that Proclus does not truly wish to regard Limit and Infinity as themselves henads, because of the confusion that would hence result. Rather, we should say that they are henads by virtue of one of the equivocations discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation. Proclus’ stated doctrine is rather that there is only *one* henad to each intelligible triad (stated unequivocally at IP 1091). This latter formulation is misleading for its own part; it refers in fact to the notion that the first intelligible triad represents an – that is, any – intelligible henad, the second represents an/any intelligible-and-intellectual henad, and the third represents an/any intellectual henad (see the discussion of III. 14. 51 below). There is always a reason in the immediate context of a passage for any equivocal use of terms by Proclus. What he wishes to convey in the present passage by calling Limit and Infinity henads is that Limit and Infinity belong on the side of the One with respect to the fundamental cleft between essence and the supra-essential, a doctrine criticized at some length

by Damascius, as I shall take up in the discussion of the third intelligible triad inasmuch as the latter corresponds to the third moment of the first triad. The One Itself is also referred to as “a henad” at III 3. 11. 24: “since the principle of the whole of things is a henad...” – which indeed it is, only none *in particular* insofar as it is *each* henad. That is to say, it is not *another* henad in addition to all the others, nor does it in some fashion incorporate them all as its parts or aspects. One can say, then, either that the One is the cause of the Mixture or, as Socrates does in the quote from the *Philebus*, that *h o theos* is the cause of the Mixture, where *h o theos* can be taken to refer to the One as already characterized by Limit – not the Limit that will be an ingredient in the Mixture, but that Limit-aspect which is indistinguishable from each deity as their *particularity*. Along the same lines, we could understand *h o theos* as encompassing the individual deity in the whole of his – or her, sexist usage notwithstanding – supra-essential nature and so including the One, Limit and Infinity alike, to the exclusion of the Mixture, which is constituted of the secondary processions of Limit and Infinity which express, taken as a whole, the One, that is, the unity of each deity prior to its “ontologization” as a Mixture of Limit and Infinity. The deity as Mixture is a particular pattern of activity, a mere index of that deity’s supra-essential individuality.

A better indication of how Proclus understands the henadic disposition of the first intelligible triad is to be derived from the following passage:

Limit is a God proceeding to the intelligible summit, from the unparticipated and first God, measuring and defining all things, and giving subsistence to every paternal, connective, and undefiled genus of Gods. But Infinity is the never-failing power of this God, revealing all the generative orders, and all infinity,

both that which is prior to essence, and that which is essential, and also that which proceeds as far as to the last matter. And that which is Mixed is the first and highest order of the Gods, comprehending all things occultly, deriving its completion indeed through the intelligible connective triad, but unitarily comprehending the cause of every being, and establishing its summit in the first intelligibles, exempt from the whole of things. (III 12. 44f)

Leaving aside for the moment some of the complicated terminology deployed here, its basic structure is simple enough: Limit is a God, Infinity is the *power* of this God, and the Mixed is an order, or *diakosmos*, under which this God is subsumed. From Limit and Infinity, furthermore, are derived certain classifications of deities, which are nevertheless posterior to the Mixed as the first and highest classification of the Gods. The distinction between Limit as “a God” and the “unparticipated and first God” is not, as I have explained, a distinction between two discrete deities. Both are simply *theos*, not *theos tis*; they are phases of the God, in the sense of any God.

Like the first, the second intelligible triad “also is a God [*theos*, not *theos tis*], possessing a prolific power, and revealing from and about itself [*aph’eautou kai peri heauton*] that which is secondarily Being” (III 12. 46). Again, we are not to think of the relationship between the “deities” represented by these two triads as representing the dispositions toward each other of a discrete set of deities, an impossible configuration prior to the intelligible intellect and not fully articulated until the intellectual order, but as moments of any God. Another way of looking at it is offered by Proclus, when he remarks that “the first triad is an intelligible God primarily, that which comes after it, an intelligible-and-intellectual God, and the third, an



intellective God" (III 14. 51). The triads represent, from this perspective, the individual deity who will be a member of these classes, prior to the constitution of the classes themselves, which is the significance of "primarily" here. This is really the *only* sense in which the three intelligible triads could refer to *three Gods*. Even in this latter sense, however, we are really dealing with three *classes* of Gods and not *three Gods*, for the sense of, e.g., "an intelligible God" is not *tis theos noêtos*, but *theos noêtos* universally.

How, then, should we understand the relationship between the first and second triads? Proclus explains that whereas the first triad subsists from and is united to the One (*hupostasan...sunênômenên*), the second triad proceeds from the first and derives completion by terms *analogous* to the triad prior to it. "For in this also it is necessary that Being should participate, and that the One should be participated, and likewise that this One which is secondarily One, should be generative of what is secondarily Being." Like the relations among the Gods, the relationship between the One and Being is not simple, but complex. The relationship between any two Gods does not constitute a third term which would lie between them and dispose them for another; instead, it exists in the first place as a *power*, in each member of the pair, of being-so-disposed toward the other. As Proclus puts it, these are powers *productive* of a relation. This relation, when actualized or produced, is none other than a discrete ontic hypostasis. Here we see the same doctrine expressed, only in abstract or monadic terminology.

We read at *IP* 1092 that the One and Being are "pluralized separately." We learn more about this process at *PT* III 27. 98f, in which "the parts contained in

the intelligible multiplicity" consist of the conjugations, as it were, of the One-that-is and Being-which-is-one. The intelligible multiplicity referred to here is *not* the multiplicity contained in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, which is a multiplicity of henads in relation to each other, which we shall be concerned with in the next chapter. Instead, this is the multiplicity through which the henads propagate themselves in the lower orders, a *vertical*, so to speak, rather than a *horizontal* multiplicity, for the One and Being generate, through their four possible combinations – that is, a single relationship taken four ways – Gods, angels, daimons and mortal animals, formed respectively by (1) the One-that-is, in relation to the One-that-is; (2) the One-that-is, in relation to Being-that-is-one; (3) Being-that-is-one, in relation to the One-that-is; and (4) Being-that-is-one, in relation to Being-that-is-one. This system is nothing other than the whole composed of the One and Being which power mediates; and the second intelligible triad is *power* and the first *whole*, the whole, that is, which is formed by the One and Being as "connected" by power just as the powers of the Gods serve to connect the henadic and ontic domains; the systematic relationship between the One and Being simply expresses the relationship between the Gods and the universe in abstract terms. The product of this conjugation is the chain connecting each God to the lowest Beings, a chain composed of, in the first place, the "illumination" by that God of whatever particular orders of Being they will, as manifested in myth and iconography, and then by angels, daimons and mortal beings depending from that God and acting as conduits for lower beings to contact them. This dissertation does not concern itself with angelology and demonology, but let it suffice to bear in mind that the

Intellect, e.g., illuminated by the intellectual Gods is itself a “real being,” *ontôson*, not an intellect in the sense that its own participants are. The further procession of such an hypostasis depends on the extension of divine activity represented by such beings as angels and daimons. To return to the abstract account, however, we should note that power will not be fully realized in its mediating function until the third intelligible triad, of which we read that the “third henad” – that is, each henad as possessing a divine intellect – constitutes “as a medium between itself and Being a power by means of which it fills Being and converts it to itself” (III 14. 49), thus fully externalizing power itself and rendering the hypostasis of Being fully separate and distinct from the Gods; but we shall have more to say about that at the appropriate time.

Proclus explains according to the following logic why there should be a second intelligible triad, an argument which at the same time shows that certain of the basic structures of participation and of ontic production are established in and by this triadic hypostasis:

In every case participated deity constitutes about itself/in relation to itself [*peri heautên*] that which participates it. Thus whole souls constitute bodies together with their causes, and partial souls generate, in conjunction with the Gods, irrational souls. Much more therefore, do the Gods produce all things in conjunction with the One. Hence, as the first of the henads generates the summit of Being, so likewise the middle henad constitutes the middle Being. But everything which generates, and everything which makes or produces, possesses a power prolific of the things produced, according to which it carries

forward [*proagei*], empowers [*dunamoi*] and connects/conserves [*sunechei*] its progeny. In turn therefore, there will be a second triad revealed analogously to the first. (III 12. 45. 18f)

The connections between the stages of Proclus' argument here are not at first clear. He begins by explaining that participated deity establishes a *relationship* between itself and its participant; note at III 14. 49 that the "third henad," that is, the henad "in" the third intelligible triad, which is not some *particular* henad but a phase of the henad as such, constitutes intelligible intellect "in relation to itself." He ends by affirming that there must be a second intelligible triad analogous to the first. The second intelligible triad represents the relationship between the Gods and the "middle Being," enabling the Gods to carry forward, empower and conserve that which they produce. And what they are carrying forward, empowering and conserving through the second intelligible triad is not only the "middle Being," but all the further processions of Being, insofar as the second intelligible triad is the first such secondary procession. The first intelligible triad represents the immediate separation of the Gods and Being, or the immediate production of Being, depending upon how one chooses to assess it. There is a second triad, and thus a further procession of the Gods, an articulation and specification, as it were, of the content of the first triad, which does not merely remain *implicit* in the first triad, but instead unfolds in subsequent hypostases. Why does the first triad explicate itself in subsequent hypostases? Here the reference to the One is significant. What could it mean for the Gods to "co-produce" (*sumparagousin*) with the One? For in considering some God and the One, there are not two entities. This is, perhaps surprisingly, the force of the *a*

*fortiori*. The presence of the One in the causal activity of each God is much *more* than the presence of subsequent principles in the causal activity of their inferiors, for the One is none other than each God, whereas in the case of subsequent principles there is difference separating them from their participants. The relationship of participation is, in fact, nothing other than this play of sameness and difference, likeness and unlikeness. This is why the henads do not participate the One. What does this “cooperation” really mean then? It means the excess of each henad, *qua* supra-essential, over that henad’s ontic expression. It is this which drives onward the explication of what is implicit in the first moment of ontic expression, that is, the first intelligible triad. Furthermore, and crucially, this explication takes the form of a reproduction of the participated term corresponding to each rank of participants. The production of subsequent terms comes about through the original principle *reproducing* itself. We see this elementally in the manifestation of individual deities at subsequent levels of Being, Zeus for instance. This has the effect that participation *implicates* the participated term, which leaves a trace of itself on the level of the participant. We can truly know something about the Gods, therefore, because they reveal aspects of their nature in the exercise of their powers, and this is the condition of the possibility of the meaning we are able to attribute to the universe by inferring from the effects the nature of the cause.

The second intelligible triad corresponds, overall, to the moment of Infinity in the first triad, for, as Proclus explains, “the three principles that come after the First organize into *diakosmoi* the intelligible genus of the Gods,” so that Limit discloses the first, Infinity the second, and the Mixed the

third triad or *diakosmos* (III 13. 47. 13-6). Again, at 20-22, he says that the *idiotês*, or particularity, of these “monads” – for there is one henad per intelligible triad, but three monads – “unfolds the intelligible order [*diakosmon*] of the Gods.” The second intelligible triad also foreshadows the intelligible-and-intellectual order on the scale of the entire procession of Being. Hence we find in the second triad many of the concepts which will be essential for the organization of deities into classes, for the moments of the second triad are (1) “one [*hen*], deity [*theotêta*] or *hyparxis*”; (2) power; and (3) “secondary Being” or “intelligible Life” (III 12. 46. 2-5). The important distinction between a deity’s *power* and his/her *hyparxis* emerges here from latency into dichotomy. The concept of the One is here for the first time as well, although the *opposition* between unity and multiplicity is not thematized until the intelligible-and-intellectual order. The synonymy of one, deity, and *hyparxis* is striking here. What is *one* in the highest sense, that is, what is most *integral*, manifests primary existence, which is prior to Being and Non-Being, namely *hyparxis*, and existing in this way is the quality of being a deity. The first moment of the second triad also combines within itself that which the Mixed received (37. 23-6) from the One, namely unity, and from Limit, namely *hyparxis*, these attributes now being essentially inseparable from each other, a being’s integrity indicating their intensity of existence.

By way of comparison, the three moments of the third intelligible triad are 1) limit, unity (*henas*), or *hyparxis*; 2) infinity or power; and 3) mixture, substance (*ousia*), life (*zoê*) or intelligible intellect (*nous noêtos*). The characterization of the first and second moments, then, would be altogether

constant from the second to the third intelligible triad, were it not for the additional characterizations of them as limit and infinity respectively and the dropping out of *theotêta* or “divinity” as a characterization of the first moment. The latter signifies, we might say, the shift in the center of gravity toward ontology from theology, while the former indicates that the principles of Limit and Infinity are firmly established *qua* principles, *archai*, in the moment of intellectual reversion expressed by the third triad, all intellection being a reversion or conversion, *epistrophê*. Another way of grasping this is to see Limit and Infinity as emerging out of the reflection upon *form* which is fundamental to the third triad, whereas what is central to the second intelligible triad is the opposition between *hyparxis* and power, between the individuality of each deity and their ontic expressions, which can be abstracted from them. As for the third moment, the moment of the product, the second and third triads have Life in common, albeit for different reasons. The second triad generates intelligible Life in the sense of Eternity, which is in some sense identical to Life Itself. Proclus cites Plotinus in this respect: “Plotinus, exhibiting in a most divinely inspired manner the peculiarity of Eternity according to the theology of Plato, defines it to be an unlimited life, at once manifesting [*prophainousan*] the entirety of itself and revealing its own Being” (18. 60. 18-22; *Enneads* III 7 (45), 5. 19-28). Especially important in this definition of Life is the description of a bringing forth of self which is at once a disclosure of positionality in relation to Being. Thus causality implicates the cause itself, which is exactly what happens in the expression of divine power, in which the Gods, affecting and indeed *effecting* Being, are also, through the very traces of this power, recuperated into ontology. The *zoê* that is the

product of the third triad, however, is the hypostasis of Life, of which it is the summit as intelligible intellect, and of which we shall have more to say at the appropriate time.

The duplication of Life in the second and third triads displays a causal pattern typical of Proclean metaphysics concisely stated in prop. 108 of the *ET*, the emergence of which can therefore be traced to the transition between the second and third intelligible triads. In every case, our goal should be to reunite the axioms of Proclean metaphysics with the moments of their systematic emergence in the processions of the Gods. The axiom is as follows:

Every particular member [*merikon*] of any class [*taxei*] can participate the monad of the rank [*diakosmêsei*] immediately supra-jacent in one of two ways: either through its own universal [*holotêtos*], or through the particular member of the higher chain [*seiran*] which is coordinate [*sustoichou*] with it in respect of its analogous relation to that chain as a whole.

This may seem merely an arcane expression of the system's infrastructure, but it can be understood in a more basic sense as expressing the relationship between efficient and formal causation. Intelligible intellect is the efficient cause of Life or the intelligible-and-intellectual order as a kind of extrusion from itself; and yet its product manifests a likeness of intelligible intellect's *own* efficient cause. There is a kind of transmutation, then, in the second generation, of efficient into formal causality. Why does the chain of efficient causation develop these paradigmatic qualities? One way of answering the question would be to point to the principle that was just highlighted in respect to intelligible life, namely that the Gods express their nature through



their powers, that is, through their expressions in the realm of Being. This is the Archimedean point, we might say, for the whole of Proclus' ontology: Being has meaning because the Gods reveal their nature in their activity, rather than veiling it. Through the "analogical" doubling of the participated principle in the participatory relationship, the Gods become measures of the whole and whole measures, doubling themselves into/as Being.

The emergence of formal from efficient causality is a hallmark of the passage from the domain of the intelligible in the strict sense to that of the intellect in the broadest sense. We read at *IP* 744 that no intelligible is a copy of another intelligible. Intelligible being is indivisible, whereas a copy is partly like and partly unlike its pattern; note the recourse to the logic of whole and part. There are, Proclus explains, *cause* and *effect* among the intelligibles, and *monads* and *series* (*arithmoi*), but no patterns and copies. Hence the One, he explains, is the *cause* of intelligibles, but not their *pattern*. We know of course that strictly speaking the One is not a cause either, but he means here by the One, each God. The point, at any rate, is to distinguish causality in a more generic sense from that specific mode of causality subsisting between pattern and copy. Then he says something quite intriguing: "Hence intelligible substance proceeds toward itself in the way in which the intelligible proceeds from the One." The intelligible proceeds from the One, we know, in the powers of the Gods, which in their exteriority permit the determination of the Gods "for another." Proclus tells us here that this is also the very way in which intelligible substance proceeds *toward itself*. That is, since the powers of the Gods also reveal their natures, and in general the nature of the cause can be inferred from the effect, intelligible substances proceed toward

themselves in reflection upon their own agency, a “practical” reflection from which arises the *formal* dimension of causality. The exteriority of the Gods is the interiority of intelligible substance (that is, of any substance *qua* substance), and it is in reflection upon their own agency that substances become most divine.

The fundamental paradigmatic relationship is that of *aiôn* to *chronos*, the pattern, one might say, of the pattern/copy relationship in general, and which is established in the second intelligible triad, for Proclus identifies the second intelligible triad with the Eternity of the *Timaeus*. As he explains it, “[j]ust as the limit of Time [i.e. the instant] is partless, so the limit of Eternity is the henad” (III 18. 60. 5-6). The comparison is most apt inasmuch as the instant or *now* is both constitutive of time and yet belongs to a different order altogether, a measure which cannot be measured (compare the description of the second intelligible triad as “an uncircumscribed measure” at IT III, 105) except through an alienation of its proper nature, so that it is no longer a *now* but a *then*. This is what makes the difference, we might say, between the third triad, which is the intelligible *paradigm*, and the second triad, which is constantly referred to as *measure*. A parallel distinction will play itself out, as we shall see, between the second triad as *wholeness* and the third as *allness*. But for now, we read that the second intelligible triad

is measured uniquely [*monoeidôs*] from the unity [*henôseôs*] prior to it, but measures the third triad by the power of itself. And it abides stably in the first triad, while establishing in itself the triad which is next in order. It binds to itself the intelligible center, and establishes one intelligible coherence; causing that which is occult and uniform in the first triad to shine forth, but collecting

the intelligible multiplicity of the third triad, and comprehending it on all sides. (PT III 13. 48)

Eternity is discussed as a “measure” in props. 52-5 of the *ET*, in which *aiôn* represents “that which measures by the whole” in contrast to *chronos*, which “measures by parts” (prop. 54). Hence “every eternity” measures by “simultaneous application of the whole measure to the thing measured.” We read further at prop. 117 that “[e]very God is a measure of beings.” That there are a multiplicity of such “eternities” indicates that *aiôn* represents the power of each henad to act as a measure of the whole of Being, for the essence of *power* lies in the occult comprehension of the whole, as I shall discuss below. Since each *aiôn* measures as a whole, and since we are not yet dealing with a set of henads disposed toward each other, it makes sense that the second intelligible triad should be itself measured “uniquely,” a concept which recurs with respect to the third intelligible triad, which is the “only-begotten” (*monogenes*) Animal Itself of the *Timaeus*.

The henad’s determination in and through the second intelligible triad as singular (*mian*) corresponds here to the intelligible’s achievement of a continuity, “coherence” or “cohesion” (*sunochên*). A continuum expresses infinity in an integral or unified form, for a continuum is that in which infinite power is invested, so to speak; a continuum is also that which offers itself up to the application of measure. The single concept thus contains an active and a passive moment, as if measure and the measured are held in suspension or flux until the moment of self-measurement represented by the intelligible intellect. Singularity first becomes concrete in the second

intelligible triad as that coherence or cohesion that is elemental unity pervading multiplicity. This is the most universal form of the integrity of the living individual, for “every animal is held together [*sunechetai*] by the life in it” (IT I, 267). Power, the determination *par excellence* of the second intelligible triad, is an “occult” or “hidden” multiplicity (*to kruphion plêthos*), which lends to Being its quality of being “all things occultly” or “in a mode of hiddenness” (*panta kruphiôs*) (39. 2-4). A dichotomy is implicit in power between this occult multiplicity and *to plêthos pantelos*, completed or accomplished multiplicity; and this dichotomy corresponds in turn to that between power in its hiddenness, *hê kruphia dunamis*, and power actualizing and revealing itself (*hê dunamis kat’energeian kai heautên ekphênasa*) (11-14). In this systole and diastole, as it were, the second intelligible triad finds its “dyadic” character. But the concept of a hidden and infinite multiplicity – for the second triad corresponds to the Infinity of the first – is also present in the idea of continuity or the continuum as the unlimited dimension of time (III 18. 59. 24-5).

The complex of ideas pertaining to continuity, *sunecheia*, is essential to the second triad, Proclus frequently referring to the triad – as well as the intelligible-and-intellectual order, which corresponds to the second triad (see chapter 6) – as “connective,” *suneptikês*, as at III 12. 45. 9; hence the Mixed “derives its completion through the intelligible connective triad,” that is, comes to fruition in the third intelligible triad through the activity of the second. The concept of the continuum also carries with it the meaning of “conserving,” *sunechei*, as at III 13. 48. 1 – the second intelligible triad “conserves <in Being>” or perhaps “consolidates” the middle (*mesotêta*) of

the intelligibles; cp. 48. 6-8, where it “binds to itself the intelligible center and establishes one intelligible coherence [*sunochên*].” The continuum *conserves* because it represents an investment of infinite power which becomes generative or prolific of form in the moment of self-measurement. That the emergence of *coherence* carries with it for Proclus the securing of a *center* is significant as well in that it provides the first concrete notion of *mediation* in the opposition and relation of center to periphery.

The second intelligible triad is the site of the “first wholeness,” for it is the whole formed by the One and Being as united by Power. The operation of the second triad can thus be discerned in the three types of whole, namely the whole prior to parts, the whole from parts, and the whole in the part (on which see also *ET* props. 67-9):

through the wholeness which is prior to parts, eternity measures those henads of the divine classes [*tas henadas metrei tôn theiôn*] which are exempt from beings; but through the wholeness which derives its subsistence from parts, it measures the henads which are coordinate with [*suntetagmenas*] beings; and through the wholeness which is in a part, it measures all beings and whole essences. For these wholenesses being parts of the divine henads, they possess partly what pre-exists unitarily in the henads. And moreover, eternity is nothing else than “perpetual Being” [*to aei on*], the connection [*sunochês*] radiated [*ellampomenês*] upon Being by the henad. As for the whole, it consists of two parts, namely the One and Being, power existing as the collector of the parts. (III 27. 94. 26f)

When the henads enter into ontology, they are seen through the lens of the

logic of whole and part. Their summits are treated as unparticipated monads, wholes prior to their parts, while as coordinate with beings, that is, as generative of the *taxeis* of beings, they belong in some sense to a common whole with the beings (an idea which will be expressed more fully in the third intelligible triad). Beings then experience divinity for themselves in the inherence of the whole in each of them as a part, by taking up the whole into themselves. Beings experience their divinity as virtual parts of the henads, not in the sense that henads have parts, but in the sense that each henad is generative of the whole of Being, that is, the *wholeness* of Being or Being's subsistence *as a whole*. Beings access the deities *through* such a whole, that is, through the *aiôn*-function of each deity through which it is a measure of and by the whole, in the sense of *ET* prop. 54. In other words, beings are the "parts" of the henads inasmuch as they are measured by them. The whole through which beings access the henads also refers to the conjugation of the One-that-is and Being-that-is-one discussed at *PT* III 27. 98, through which are generated the angels, daimons and heroes that form a conduit between the Gods and beings.

In the text just cited we also see the concept of "irradiation," *ellampsis*, come into play. Eternity is "the connection radiated upon Being by the henad" as the measure of the whole of Being, each henad in its *aiôn*-function giving dimension, as it were, to Being as a continuous whole or continuum. *Ellampsis* is a near synonym for *katalampsis* (*en-lampô* for *kata-lampô*), the "illumination" of, e.g., *ET* props. 162-3, and which explains how the One can be said to "participate" Being (as distinct from the participation of Being in the One). *Ellampsis* has a specific importance, however, in relation to the

monadic construct of the “unparticipated” principle, the One being the unparticipated principle *par excellence*. Negations in Proclus frequently designating that which is the proximate cause of the negated term, the “unparticipated” principle is precipitated out of the scene of participation itself. We see the significance of irradiation to the category of the unparticipated in prop. 23 of the *ET*, where we read that

[e]very participated term ... becoming a property of that particular by which it is participated, is secondary to that which in all is equally present and has filled them all out of itself. That which is in one is not in the others; while that which is present to all alike, that it may irradiate [*ellampê*] all, is not in any one, but is prior to them all.

Just as the doctrine of illumination preserved the One – that is, the Gods – from the consequences of participating Being, so irradiation preserves the transcendence of the principle in the scene of participation, in response to the concerns that arose out of the problems raised in the first part of the *Parmenides*. We see here as well the metaphor of *centering* or *centrality*, noted above in respect to the second intelligible triad, transformed into the abstract mediating structure of the monad in relation to its multiplicity, as we saw in prop. 21: “Since, then, in every class there is some common element, a continuity [*sunecheia*] and identity in virtue of which some things are said to be coordinate and others not, it is apparent that the identical element is derived by the whole order from a single principle.” The reference to *continuity* alerts us again to the origins of this function in the second intelligible triad.

Causality acquires depth and complexity with the emergence of the second intelligible triad. "The stable establishment of beings comes about *by* the second triad but *on account of* the first [*huph'ou ...di'ho*]" (III 18. 59), evoking the efficient and final cause, respectively; moreover, in the *Timaeus* commentary, "perpetual Being," that is, *to aei on*, the second intelligible triad, simply *is* the three causes, the *di'ho*, the *pros ho*, and the *huph'ou*. We glimpse the *pros ho* as well, perhaps, in a remark such as that of III 12. 46. 22 where the henad of the second intelligible triad discloses secondary Being "in relation to itself [*peri heauton*]." The whole structure of causality, then, is constituted from the second intelligible triad, just as *form* will be constituted from the third. The second triad is, in one sense, "the direct [*proseches*] measure of all beings and coordinate with that which it measures," (59. 16-7), just as the first triad is "the unity [*henôsis*] of all the intelligibles and in a way coordinate with them." But in another sense, as the efficient cause *par excellence*, it has transcendence and, moreover, a claim to pre-eminence in its own fashion, as do *each* of the intelligible triads. At III 16. 55. 22, Eternity is that "from which comes Being and Life to all things"; again, at 57. 1-4, Eternity is "the cause of Being, of eternal Life and of Intelligence, and measures the essences, powers and activities of all things," in reference to which S-W cite (p. 133n) a passage from the *Timaeus* commentary (IT III, 14), where we read that

Eternity is the comprehension and union of many [*pollôn*] intelligible henads. Hence it is said by the Oracles to be *father-begotten light*, because it illuminates all things with unifying light ... For being full of paternal deity, which the Oracle calls the flower of intellect, it illuminates all things with



intellect,<sup>9</sup> with cognition ever constant, and with the ability of revolving and activating [*energein*] erotically about the principle of all things.

Eternity represents the comprehension, *periochê*, of many henads – note that it is not a multiplicity, *plêthos*, of henads, but simply “many,” *pollai* – insofar as it represents generically their illuminative character. The specific characteristics of the cognition imparted through Eternity are noteworthy, inasmuch as they combine desire with motion as foundational determinations of intellection.

The possibility of highlighting in this way the peculiar eminence of the second intelligible triad may account for something noted by Dodds (p. 247 n. 2), namely the lack in the *Elements of Theology* of an account of Limit corresponding to the account of Infinity in props. 87-92, where Infinity “falls between the First and Being” as the seeming sole mediator between the supra-essential and ontic domains. Even if the functions of Limit have been taken up into the One Itself in this text, and unless there are a number of propositions missing, it is clear that Infinity receives greater emphasis here than in the *Platonic Theology* or the commentary on the *Parmenides*; for one must take into account not only the discussion of Eternity and Infinity in props. 87-92, but also the earlier discussion of Eternity in props. 52-5. This could be accounted for by the importance possessed by the cluster of concepts corresponding to the second intelligible triad – not just Infinity and Eternity, but also power and the concepts of whole and part – for the peculiar project of

<sup>9</sup> In the Oracle fragment Proclus quotes here (49), the specific phrase is “imparting a paternal intellect to all the fountains and principles,” where the fountains represent intelligible form and the principles, intellectual form. *Paternal* intellect is the intellect possessed by each God *qua* God, the fountains and principles mediating between divine intellect and the world.

the *Elements*. Since this cluster of concepts has its origin in the Infinity which is the second moment of the first intelligible triad, the role of Infinity in the *Elements* expands accordingly. We must recognize that the system possesses this kind of flexibility in what is emphasized at a particular time, in a particular text, rather than seeing in every change of emphasis a change in doctrine. A fuller discussion would be appropriate to an essay concerned peculiarly with an analysis of the structure, aims and method of the *Elements*, but in general I think it clear that the *Elements* can be characterized as a text concerned, not with the hierarchy of ontic hypostases, as are, albeit in somewhat different ways, the *Parmenides* commentary and the *Platonic Theology*, but rather with the essential nature of *causality* as such, an investigation belonging to “theology” inasmuch as the Gods epitomize causality, agency and efficacy in the universe. Infinity is important to the inquiry insofar as the primary infinity is infinite *power*; its status in an hierarchy of hypostases is merely sketched. There is no corresponding sketch of the hypostasis of Limit because the *Elements* is in general not terribly concerned with the domain of *hyparxis*. All the propositions up to 113, where the discussion of the Gods begins, are presented with little or no consideration to erecting an hierarchical chain of hypostases such as we get in its full detail in the *Platonic Theology*. The abbreviated chain of hypostases consists simply of the Gods, into whom Real Being is, as it were, resolved, followed immediately by Intellect and Soul. There is something to be said for such a presentation, which concentrates on modes of causality rather than on *products*. The streamlined and sharpened account in the *Elements* comes, however, at the cost of a flattened perspective, in which Being is constituted

through the interaction of two terms alone, *henôsis* and *dunamis*, which are simply seen to diminish in intensity. We have seen that there is a unique account of the functional attributes of the Gods as well in the *Elements* (prop. 151-9), rooted in the universal functions of the divine *as such*. By contrast, the orders of the Gods treated in the *Platonic Theology* are those corresponding to the ontic hypostases. The account of the divine *diakosmoi* unique to the *Elements* is such as would present itself to a reflection abstracting from the opposition between *hyperxis* and Being, from which the ontic hypostases are rather derived. Charles Annick-Saget has argued that the account of the divine *diakosmoi* in prop. 151-9 has the effect, rather, of providing the transcendental conditions for the inquiry into causality as such. From our present perspective, we could add that in this respect, the *Elements* is written from within the horizon of the second intelligible triad, with a corresponding emphasis on causality and the expression of power, the *Platonic Theology* from within that of the first intelligible triad, in which particularity and product, Limit and Mixture, have pride of place, and in which as well the opposition between Being and the supra-essential is present at its sharpest and hence most generative.

The first triad, Proclus explains (III 18. 59. 8), is the unity (*henôsis*) of all the intelligibles. Since it supplies to them their unity, that is, the particularity of their determinations, the intelligibles have this triad *in common*, the other sense of unity, that of an encompassing genus. By the first triad are established all things; and that which exists and is established in the first place is Eternity, through a kind of doubling of the deity in its externalized power. Proclus reminds us that the Eleatic Stranger calls Being the first power, and

defines Being as power (39. 4f; *Sophist* 247 D-E) – we have then a concretization of the Stranger’s ontology here. The triads unfold the structure already present in the first: Limit is a God, Infinity is the power or Life of this God, that by which and in which the God shows itself, shining forth as Being’s measure and, at the same time, as what *lends* itself to measure, as quality and continuum, while the Mixed is the Intellect of the God, its objectified *logos*, as it were, which is in the first triad the God’s elemental *constitution*, while in its fuller explication in the third triad it will represent the God’s thinking of him/herself or self-analysis. Already in the second triad we have the building blocks of ontology, for “Eternity establishes Limit and Infinity in common [*en tautô*], for it is henad and power; and according to its One [*kata to hen*], it is Limit, but according to power, infinite” (18. 60. 1-2). Eternity expresses the opposition, within the henad, of Limit and Infinity; hence it is “henad and power,” the dynamism of the opposition between each God’s absolute individuality and their power(s), present in this triad as their measuring function, in which there is also a moment of being-measured, and hence incipient objectification. The instability of the dyadic relationships within the second intelligible triad, that is, in each henad *as conceived through* the second intelligible triad, brings forth the third intelligible triad, to resolve the superimposition within the second intelligible triad of two opposing standards of value, the one of *being*, the other of *doing*.

In the third intelligible triad, or intelligible intellect, “every/all intelligible multiplicity is revealed [*pan to noêton ekphainetai plêthos*]” (III 14. 49. 19), and as such, it is here that all that has come before acquires

determinacy. It is in and through the intelligible intellect that there *are* three intelligible triads, for they are constituted as moments of an intelligible multiplicity in the intellectual reversion (*epistrophê*) of the third triad upon its own principles. Indeed, it is here that we can for the first time speak of remaining, proceeding and reverting, the cycle of ontic production so well-known to students of Neoplatonism. The intelligible Gods do not, however, participate in this cycle, as do the Gods who proceed to the illumination of subsequent levels of Being, which I shall discuss in future chapters. Instead, this cycle represents moments of Being Itself. A further all-important function of the third intelligible triad is as the paradigm for the fabrication of the world by the demiurgic intellect. In this function, it is identified with the “Animal Itself” of the *Timaeus*. As the paradigm, intelligible intellect displays three closely related characteristics: *totality*, *uniqueness*, and *organicity*.

Whereas the second intelligible triad was a/the *whole* and a/the *measure*, the third intelligible triad is an/the *all* and a/the *paradigm*. We might regard intelligible intellect as the form of Allness Itself: “For whence is allness derived to these mundane forms” – i.e. the forms in the world, since “the world always consists of all forms” – “except from one certain common form?” (IT I, 443). Allness is distinct from *wholeness* insofar as a whole has all of what belongs to it and is the belonging together of its parts, whereas the All has all that there is, conveys the *sufficient* determination of its elements or terms, and relates especially to notions such as perfection, accomplishment, fulfillment and teleology. As intelligible allness or totality, the third triad is “all things intelligibly, Intellect, Life and Essence, actually and evidently [*kat’energeian kai ekphanôs*],” whereas the first triad or

“primary Being” was all things “according to cause [*kat’aitian*]” and the second triad was all things inasmuch as it “manifests [*prophainon*] all things” (14. 49. 21-3). Intelligible intellect, as “all-perfect [*panteles*] and revealing in itself intelligible multiplicity and form” (50. 3-4) accordingly is “the limit [*peras*] of all intelligibles” (49. 23-4) not just in the sense of lying at the extremity of this order, but as constitutive of these terms in their full determinacy and distinction, as we can say of the intellectual generally.

The relation of the three triads to the first principle has now coalesced into the structure of remaining, proceeding and reverting, this structure itself having achieved concretion: “each of these three moments – remaining, proceeding, and reverting – are uniform [*henoeidê*] and intelligible” (50. 10-1). The triads “announce mysteriously/mystically [*mustikôs apaggellousi*]” the “perfectly unknowable causality” of the “primary and unparticipated deity.” The first triad announces the deity’s “ineffable unity,” the second his/her “surpassing all powers” and the third his/her “generation of the totality of beings” (16-20). The triads can do this insofar as they are “capable of containing [*chôrêsaî*] the unity [*henôseôs*], the powers, and the totalities [*pantôn*] of the principle surpassing beings ... and revealing intelligibly the cause prior to intelligibles” (20-5).

What is announced mysteriously or mystically, that is, what is latent or implicit in the triads, is the supra-essential individuality of each deity, for the intelligible triads express universally or generically the nature and functions of deities who are each of them really perfectly unique. The emergence of the determinations corresponding to each intelligible triad – unity, power (or hidden multiplicity), totality (manifest power/multiplicity) – as

determinations of Being would tend to assimilate the Gods to Being, their product; therefore the deity also negates these determinations at the same time that they are produced *as* ontological determinations. Hence the unity corresponding to the first triad is at the same time rejected as a ground for inference, being "ineffable"; the expression of power is rejected insofar as it would determine the deity reciprocally against the others and thus *for another*; and the totality, the world "generated" by the deity is separated from them as a totality *of beings* whose borders cannot contain it and which remains relative to the deity a limited whole posited within the "thought" of intelligible intellect, as we shall see.

Alienating the totality in this way from the God *qua* God, however, not only frees the deity from being captured, as it were, in intelligibility and the scene of participation, and hence reduced to his/her position or determinations, but also frees the totality for *full* intelligibility lest its *own* totality be conceived as somehow lacking. For it lacks nothing, i.e. *no being*; it is "all-perfect." Its unity or *uniformity*, is of a different order altogether and is pluralized neither by the many Gods nor by the many world-orders or world-versions attendant upon the many Gods who "think" the cosmos. Because its center of gravity lies with the powers, in the center or commons, so to speak, rather than with the individuality of deities, it is sublimed or distilled from them and is not prejudiced in its truth by their existence, is not diminished or degraded relative to them. Indeed, as I shall discuss later, it is something more even than "uniform" or *henoeides*, it is "unique," *monadikos* or "only-begotten/sole of its genus," *monogenes*. For now, however, we should note how the sufficiency of the intelligible intellect with respect to form is signified

in the rather odd use of the term *êdê*, “already,” in respect to the third triad. For example, primary Being is “most uniform, the second is pregnant with multiplicity and originates distinction [*diakriseôs archomenon*], and the third is *already* all-perfect and reveals in itself intelligible multiplicity and form” (50. 1-4). Again, “Being is all things according to cause and occultly; Life makes multiplicity appear [*prophainei*] and proceeds from the unity of Being to manifestation [*ekphansin*]; the third is *already* all intelligible multiplicity and the order [*diakosmos*] of intelligible forms” (III 12. 46. 7-10). Answering to this *already* of the totality of forms we shall find, in chapter 7 of this dissertation, a reciprocating use of *again* in the intellectual order. But it also expresses here the same claim to pre-eminence in a defined field that I already referred to with respect to the second intelligible triad, for the categories of the intellect can possess totality and sufficiency with respect to the system as a whole while yet failing to comprehend, in the sense of totalizing, the henads in their individual *hyparxeis*.

The triads “receive dividedly [*diêrêmenôs*] the unitary authority [*to heniaion kratos*] of the First” (50. 24-5). There are two ways of looking at this reception of the *kratos* of primary deity. On the one hand, we can see it as a division in the sense that the three triads taken together reconstitute the full patrimony, as it were. And as I have explained, the three triads represent three dimensions of each henad or God. But another way of understanding it would be that each triad receives *separately* the authority of primary deity, each embodying the first principle in its own way, so that each is in a sense the whole. This will in turn underwrite, so to speak, the illuminative manifestation of the classes of Gods corresponding to the hypostases of Being,



Life and Intellect which “unpack” the potentialities of the three intelligible triads as aspects innate in each deity. That is, it is this which makes it possible that a given deity may illuminate uniquely, say, Intellect, without having also to present a manifestation at or illuminate the prior level of Life. A little further on we read that “[t]he <intelligible> Gods, though they are allotted a simplicity equally exempt from all the divine orders [*diakosmôn*], still fall short of the unity [*henôsis*] of the Father” (50. 26f), where S-W has supplemented *oi theoi* on 51.1 to read *oi noetoi theoi*. The supplementation would seem to matter little, because either way it is clear that Proclus wishes to distinguish the status of the Gods as transcending their orders or classifications, a transcendence which manifests itself at the level of the intelligible. We recall that while the One “surpasses the rank of father,” the intelligible Gods “are *fathers* primarily [or ‘in the first place’] just as they are *henads* primarily” (III 21. 74. 7-8); and again, prop. 151 of the *ET*: “All that is paternal in the Gods is of primal operation [*prôtourgon*] and stands in the position of the Good [*en tagathou taxei*] at the head of all the divine orders [*diakosmêseis*].” Here we see the sense of the distinction drawn here between “the Father” and the Gods who transcend equally (or “alike,” *homou*) the divine orders. *Oi theoi* in *PT* III. 50. 26f refers to the primordial multiplicity of the Gods in the intelligible order, in which the Gods are taken all together, as it were, prior to the illuminations of Being that dispose them into their several orders but posterior to each deity in its concrete individuality or “paternity,” so to speak. We shall have occasion later to remark again upon this primordial collectivity of the Gods, whose possibility is granted by the second intelligible triad, foreshadowing the divine multiplicity which will

emerge in the illumination of the hypostasis of Life. The multiplicity of the many Gods transcending *alike* the divine orders is naturally *not* the multiplicity of the Gods (like Phanes) who are *specifically* intelligible, i.e. illuminate Being Itself, Being determined *against* Life, Intellect, et al. Rather, it is the “intelligible” Gods in the sense that *every* God is an “intelligible” God in the first place. Nor, therefore, is it a matter here of a *constituted* multiplicity of Gods, but simply of the *many*, neither the singularity of each God for him/herself nor yet the specific manifolds of deities proceeding to the illumination of discrete regions of Being. Finally, although it is the existential basis for the logical or quantificational set of “all the Gods,” that latter set will not be possible to constitute until the emergence of Intellect, that is, intellectual intellect.

Damascius raises an interesting problem in regard to the third moment of the first intelligible triad and, by extension, the third intelligible triad. He claims that certain of the “more recent philosophers” – and he has been taken to mean Proclus here – say that while Limit and Infinity are henads, the third moment is a “substantial and composite monad” (DP III 2. 110). Damascius criticizes this position at some length. “Why, when the theologians speak of the father or of power, do we understand these as henads, while when they speak of paternal intellect, we pass over into another genus?” Furthermore, “Intellect must commence from a henad, just like life and substance. Indeed, these philosophers themselves arrange, in the intellectual, unitary intellect prior to the substantial; *a fortiori*, they should do the same thing in the intelligibles.” Indeed, if the intellectual and subsequent henads are to emerge from a “mixed and composite” intellect, “how does our conception differ

from that which makes the soul come from the body, or the intellect from the soul? And the Iunges, the Synochês and the other Gods, are we to suppose that they are not unitary but substantial? This would place us in contradiction with ourselves and with the Gods" (111). I will not take up the way in which Damascius himself deals with the problem, but rather explore the ramifications of this problematic in Proclus.

It is difficult, at first, to square what Damascius says with Proclus' position at all, inasmuch as Proclus seems to hold, rather, that there is *one* henad to each intelligible triad – I have explained already the sense in which this is to be taken – and so only one henad in the first triad, not two. As he explains it, "the first triad is an intelligible God primarily, that which comes after it, an intelligible-and-intellectual God, and the third, an intellective God. And these three deities and triadic monads give completion to the intelligible genera. They are monads according to their deities [*kata tas theotêtas tas heautôn*], since all else depends from the Gods, powers and beings alike, but they are triads according to a separate division" (III 14. 51. 9-15). The "powers" and "beings" here refer to the second and third moments of each triad which "depend from" the first. This tends to telescope the subsequent emanations of the deity into his/her "paternal" summit. This corresponds to the independence of the *activity* of deities in relation to their fundamental constitution and is necessary so that the regions of Being "illuminated" by a given deity – or those *not* illuminated by that deity – do not alter the fact that every deity possesses being, life and intellect for itself and is participable at every level down to the corporeal level of herbs, stones and statues (to which list one might add *texts* considered in their materiality).

Thus the overall tendency, at least in the *Platonic Theology*, is to pose the Limit-element of the deity against both the moment of Infinity/power/eternity as well as that of Mixture/substance/intellect, the second and third moments of the first triad and, more broadly, the second and third triads *in toto*. Thus the problematic to which Damascius points would be in fact radicalized, because it would apply not only to radical Intellect, but to radical Life as well, both of which would lack henadic foundation. But we have seen that Proclus also poses Limit and Infinity together against the Mixed when he quotes Socrates to the effect that “God has exhibited [*deixai*] Limit and Infinity – for they are henads deriving their subsistence from the One, and manifestations, as it were, from the unparticipated and first unity – whereas he makes [*poiein*] the mixture and blends [*sunkeranunnai*] it from the first principles” (III 9. 36. 10-6). And so it is from here that Damascius derives his concept of Proclus’ position. Does this not make Being Itself (for the Mixture is radical Being) epiphenomenal at its very roots, inasmuch as we can expect only as much substantiality from Being as it can secure from its participation in the henads? But on Damascius’ interpretation of Proclus, Being is not an immediate product of the Gods; and this is true in a certain respect, as we have seen, for Being arises from the opposition between each deity’s absolute individuality and the elements into which that individuality can be analyzed. To this extent, then, Damascius is correct. But what he does not properly appreciate is that with the third intelligible triad, each God truly infuses Being with divinity, thus compensating for the position radical Being has in the first intelligible triad, and laying the groundwork for the intellectual order of Gods, which represents the final unfolding of the Mixed.

Since the third moment of the first triad unfolds in the third triad itself, we must see how Proclus deals with the “syncretic” or “blended” character of Being in his account of the intelligible intellect. We know that the hypostasis of Intellect, when fully developed, will encompass diverse henadic or unitary realities, which reserve in some way their incommensurability, into a monadic or uniform structure that can comprehend them, but only after the fashion of a universal. This is foreshadowed in the third intelligible triad:

It appears to me that intelligible intellect, returning to the principles of the whole of things, according to the conversion of itself, becomes the plenitude of forms and is all things intellectually and at the same time intelligibly, comprehending in itself the causes of beings, and, being full of the ineffable and exempt cause of all things, constitutes the monad of the Gods; whence also, I think, Plato calls it the Idea of the Gods. (PT III 19. 65f)

The intelligible intellect is the “Idea of the Gods” because it is the Idea of totality or allness, and as we know, the Gods are *all* in each. But the question confronting Proclus is what sort of legitimacy can be accorded to this Idea in itself, inasmuch as no Idea can encompass the Gods. This mixture or syncretism must then be one to which they *lend* themselves without sacrificing their autonomy. There are three stages to this movement of “syncretism.” First, the Gods constitute themselves into co-emergent sets or pantheons, which is represented first of all by the constitution of a common place, or *topos*. This takes place in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, as I shall discuss in the next chapter. Second, they engage in the cooperative actions represented in mythic narrative, paradigmatically the constitution of

cosmos out of chaos. This moment, taking place in and through the intellectual order of Gods, whom I discuss in chapter 7, and continuing into the infra-intellectual orders whom I do not discuss in this dissertation, carries within it the seeds of the final moment. For the confrontation between chaos and cosmos is that between matter and form, and it is through the constitution of the dualism of form and matter that the final emergence of intellectual being takes place. With this, the movement is completed which began in the supra-essential totality of each henad, and ends in the power of the intellect to quantify over the set of "All the Gods," the final emergence of "the Idea of the Gods."

Most of this movement still lies ahead of us; the question before us now is understanding that stage of it which is characterized by the third intelligible triad, intelligible intellect *per se*. Intelligible intellect is at once the living, indeed "animal," intelligence of each God *as well as* a sublimated or abstracted *logos* – the world's paradigm. This duality is already present in the *Timaeus*; but as is generally the case in Proclus, it is far less important to reconstruct for ourselves what Plato was trying to do, than to understand the way in which Proclus appropriates the Platonic text for his own purposes. Proclus acknowledges this duality in intelligible intellect when he remarks that Animal Itself and the paradigm, albeit both represented by the third intelligible triad, are nevertheless not the same:

But though we should posit Animal Itself, which has the forms of the elements, this also is the paradigm of the traces of the elements. So far, however, as it is animal, it is the paradigm of this universe now possessing life. Simply considered, then, Animal Itself and the intelligible paradigm are not

the same. For Eternity likewise, which always exists, is the paradigm of Time, but is not an intelligible animal.

And yet his final conclusion is that "Animal Itself is the third intelligible triad ... the fountain of all intellectual life, and *the cause of every paradigmatic hyparxis*." (IT I, 420, my emphasis). The movement in the passage, then, is from distinguishing the animality and paradigmatic function of the third triad, to a reaffirmation of their identity in the same hypostasis. The reference to Eternity as a paradigm should not lead us to conclude that the paradigmatic function is to be transferred to the second intelligible triad (Eternity). The second triad is never truly a *paradigm* for Proclus but a *measure*, to which corresponds the distinction between the third triad as totality or allness and the second as wholeness. It is a question, then, of a distinction between that within the paradigmatic function of the third triad that is *already* present in the measuring function of the second, and what is novel. As such, he distinguishes two levels of function in it: the first, in which it is "animal," and "the paradigm of *this* universe *now* possessing life," and "has the forms of the elements," and a second, in which it is "the paradigm of the *traces* of the elements." The traces of the elements represent the remainder or precipitate of interpretation in a world-order. As a surplus or excess of demiurgic activity, these traces mirror the realm of disorderly motion *prior* to the world-ordering activity of the demiurgic intellect. The distinction between animal and paradigm is thus between life, the now, and the forms of the elements, on the one hand, and elemental traces, on the other. The concept of elementality is apparently the middle term between

these two dimensions of intelligible intellect, and we shall have more to say of it later. First, however, it is necessary to further clarify the position of the intelligible intellect relative to the world-order or cosmos constituted in and by the intellectual order of Gods.

A key problem Proclus sets for himself with respect to the third intelligible triad is the status of the paradigm in relation to the demiurge, that is, to the factual world order(s). The problem as he states it is whether and how the paradigm is "in" the demiurge. Having concluded that the paradigm must be *prior* to the demiurge, Proclus asks whether it is "seen by him [the demiurge] or not seen by him." It must be seen by him, he determines,

for it is absurd that our soul should see it, and speak about it, but that it should not be seen by intellect, and by a total intellect. But if the demiurge sees the intelligible, does he see it through being converted to himself, or does he only perceive it external to himself? If, however, he only sees it external to himself, he sees the image of Being, and possesses sense instead of intelligence. But if converted to himself, the object of his intellectual perception will be in himself. So the paradigm is prior to *and* in the demiurge; intelligibly prior to him, but intellectually in him. (*IT I*, 323)

In positing that the paradigm is "seen," Proclus emphasizes both the autonomy the paradigm must possess relative to the demiurge, for visibility requires that the visible stand off from the viewer, and also that the paradigm is something *we* "see" too, and thus something we possess in common with the demiurge. But we must be careful here, inasmuch as Proclus will say unequivocally at *IT I*, 435 that whereas the *world* is "one visible animal,



comprehending in itself all animals," intelligible animal "also is one, but is *not* visible." The quality of *visibility*, then, originates in that which is prior to intelligible animal, namely the second triad, the realm of powers – and perhaps it would be appropriate to connect this "visibility" with the expression of power that characterizes the second intelligible triad and is also the means by which the Gods *illuminate* Being. The "visible" was that which possessed the "disorderly motion" of *Tim.* 30a and which "all the orders of the Gods prior to the demiurge illuminate" (*IT I*, 387). That it is visible, Proclus explains, is meant to indicate that it is not "incorporeal and without quality."

Thus they [the words 'everything that was visible'] signify neither matter, nor the second substrate [body]; rather, the visible nature is that which already participates of forms, and possesses certain traces and reflections, being moved in a confused and disorderly manner. For the phantasmal and indistinct presence of forms produces different motions in it. (*ibid*)

Visibility here stands for that surplus or *trace* exceeding the demiurgic ordering of the world that can thus be carried over and integrated into different potential world-orders, the term *eidôlikos*, "phantasmal," having some sense also of *symbolical*, the realm of the symbol representing an excess over intellectual form – though lacking the specific theurgical reference of *sumbola* or *sunthema*. What is it ultimately that is the excess or surplus of the formative activity of the demiurge? It is on the one hand, of course, matter. But matter is only a cipher. What really exceeds the demiurgic *kosmêsis* is that supra-essential totality of all the Gods in each God, *insofar as*

*this totality fails to be incorporated into the demiurgic cosmos.* That is, the excess of the demiurgic world-order is at once the residual autonomy of each God in the "pantheon" above and beyond their functional role in the division of labor implicit in the cooperative action of mythic narrative, and the divine Other, all the other Gods who *exist*, but who are not members of some given co-emergent set of deities, not members of some given "pantheon." Behind the mask of chaos or of matter, then, lie *other people's Gods*, as well as that in the members of the pantheon that ineluctably transcends their own role in the articulated pantheon structure.

The "visibility" of the intelligible only finds its visionary complement among the *intellectual* Gods: the demiurge "is said to see Animal Itself: for sight is the peculiarity of the intellectual Gods. For the theologist calls intelligible intellect *eyeless...*" (IT III, 101). In the gap between an sightless visibility and a vision which can never absolutely possess the object of its gaze, the distance being constitutive of the gaze itself, lies the space of the World, which "according to the whole of itself is the thing seen, and the eye ... The whole world therefore is sight and that which is visible, and is truly comprehensible by sense and opinion ... it is itself all things, that which is sensible, the sensorium, and sense; just as the demiurge of it is intellect, intelligence, and the intelligible" (II, 84). The demiurge encompasses intellect, intelligence and the intelligible alike, but not *qua* demiurge. The demiurge encompasses all things insofar as s/he is a God. So too, the totality or completeness of the world, if it is to be *real* totality, lies not in any world-order but also in the incommensurable remainder that escapes the demiurgic utterance in its intelligibility if not in its materiality, which alone serves to

register the causality of that which is beyond Being. This dilemma of real totality, which must somehow incorporate the very principle of itself that must, according to Neoplatonic logic, remain *outside* the totality, is central to Damascius' argument against a First Principle as such (DP I. 1ff). The supra-essential, then, in its *negative* moment, enters into the sphere of the demiurgic system *as matter*. We shall return to this in chapter 7. But here, prior to the demiurgic utterance and the precipitation of matter, the essence of the third intelligible triad as "the paradigm of *this* universe *now* possessing life," lies rather in an animal consciousness which we might characterize, indulging ourselves in an anachronism, as an intelligence corresponding to those organizations we know as "ecosystems," that embody a pre-reflective interdependence and a *lived* totality which would be the complement of the purely formal totality of Allness Itself.

We read that "the forms are called *paradigms* of beings, while Being is cause, and not paradigm, of all that comes after it; for paradigms are causes of things differentiated [*diêrêmenôn*] in their Being and which have essences characterized by difference [*diaphorous*]" (52. 2-7). The distinction between paradigm and cause thus clearly has something in common with that between the structures of ontic and henadic multiplicity discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. This is on account of the broad, generic sense of causality which allows it to apply to supra-essentials whereas the causality of paradigms is by definition ontic. The flexibility of the notion of cause is illustrated in the tendency, noted by Romano, for Proclus to use the feminine *aitia* to refer to the causality of the One rather than the neuter *aition*, most likely because the One does not exercise its causality as *some one thing*.

Paradigms are obviously the causes of beings as participants and as having their unity in mediation. Being as *pure cause*, however, must represent instead radical Being as the immediate receptacle of divine power.

Paradigmatic or *diacritical Being*, as we might better characterize it, depends upon the Allness of the third intelligible triad; and this provides the criterion for distinguishing the paradigmatic activity of the second and third triads.

The second triad is paradigmatic, as I have argued, only in the second generation. For it is properly a cause rather than a paradigm, according to the distinction stated above; and as we read at *IT I*, 239, “though Perpetual Being [the second intelligible triad] is said to proceed from a cause, yet it must not be asserted that it is *generated* according to all causes, but that it *is* according to them. For it is *di ho* (that on account of which) and *pros ho* (that with relation to which) and *huph’ou* (that by which).” But at *IT I*, 419 we read that “Perpetual Being was the paradigm of disorderly generation, since from thence *forms without distinction* were present with the disorderly nature prior to the generation of the universe.” In this fashion matter participates of “the forerunners of forms ... prior to the fabrication of the world, when according to the hypothesis, the demiurge was absent” (I, 388). *Hypothetically*, for the process in question is not itself a temporal one – indeed, how could it be, inasmuch as the relationship between Eternity and Time, which are whole- and part-measures respectively, is encompassed in the second intelligible triad – but the expression of an analysis working backward from a constituted world-order to its elements. For “Plato saw that which is formless prior to forms, though it is never separate from them. Thus too, that which is invested with form, though yet without distinction, is assumed prior to

order, though it never was prior to it, but is consubsistent with order" (I, 395). Also "hypothetical," we might say, is the status of form without distinction, paradigmatic without diacritical Being. Form without distinction can be nothing other than the multiplicity of incommensurable "measures" represented by the second intelligible triad. Another way of looking at this would be to see in the pseudo-paradigmatic aspect of Eternity the inherence of a certain independence for certain whole-and-part relationships, certain associative complexes, relative to their incorporation into a Totality. These complexes are "paradigmatic" with respect to the Totality inasmuch as Totality must translate the inchoate "hanging together" or continuity of the associative complex into structured relationships.

We learn more about the nature of this level of "form" at *IT* III, 12, where Proclus characterizes Eternity (the second triad) as "the one comprehension [*perioché*] of the intelligible henads," by which he explains that he means "the ideas of the intelligible animals and the genera of all these intelligible ideas," and that it is at once "the summit of their multiplicity and the cause of the immutable permanency of all of them." What Proclus means here is that the second triad represents the totality of the Gods in the most primordial sense. After the emergence of Intellect, this will simply be expressed as the quantificational totality of the Gods: "All the Gods." But the existential basis for this quantification is a set that, as we have seen, does not abide by the rules of ontic sets, in which the multiplicity of the members is subordinated to a totalizing unity, a one-over-the-many. As such, the totality of the Gods does not enter into the quantificational totality without remainder. As "intelligible animals" in the second triad – whose animality is really the foreshadowing of

the second hypostasis, Life – the Gods do, however, become proto- or quasi-ideas which can be classed into genera, even if these are not yet really proper ideas or genera. This is because the second triad contains the totality of the Gods as a *continuum of powers*, and the powers of the Gods are the basis for their classification. This “comprehension” is not “in the many intelligibles, nor collected from them, but present with them transcendentally and disposing them and as it were forming them by itself and making this to be a simultaneous whole.” The comprehension of the Gods as powers, intelligible animals or measures, while it does not itself belong among the intelligible multiplicity, forms and disposes the intelligibles and forms a whole with them – which is nothing other than a picture of the completed system in which a domain of Gods hovers at once atop and alongside the hypostases of Being. Again, Proclus refers to “intermediate natures, which are indeed more united [*hênômenai*] than all-perfect multiplicity [i.e. the third triad], but display the labor [*ôdina*] and representation [*emphasin*] of the generation of wholes and of their own continuity [*sunochês*]” (ibid). The number and nature of these are known “divinely” to the Gods, but are taught to us “in a human manner” by the *Parmenides*. These intermediate natures, then, are the expressed powers of the Gods in which the “continuity” or infinite potency of each God is ontically doubled as a discrete form or measure. In this way, absolute individuality gives way to the individuality of discernibility. These “intermediates” are taught to us by the *Parmenides* insofar as they are the bases for the classifications of the Gods into the *taxeis* which are laid out in systematic fashion in this dialogue. The powers of the Gods are thus the first *intermediates* in the system of Proclus, a system which is known for its

stress on the importance of discerning the intermediaries between every producer and its product. We see this particularly in, e.g., *ET* prop. 28, which Dodds (p. 216) characterizes, felicitously since we have just been speaking of the second intelligible triad, as Proclus' principle of *continuity*.

While "secondary Being ... engenders the multiplicity of beings without being itself a multiplicity, the third is itself the manifold of beings, for it is where Being is differentiated" [*PT* III 14. 51. 24-7]. Moreover, form itself is by definition *ti on*, a certain being, rather than *haplôs on*, Being *simpliciter* (21-2). Accordingly the intelligible animal is *ti on*, factically singular, unique or "only-begotten." The final constitution of factical Being takes place through the activities of the demiurge, however. The demiurge contains the paradigms of the forms of individuals: "There exists indeed in the demiurge intelligible animal," that is, a procession of Animal Itself, but "it contains not only four forms of encosmic realities [*pragmatôn*]," namely the forms of the four elements, "but also all the multiplicity of forms (in fact, the paradigms of individual [*atomôn*] forms pre-exist in the demiurge, while Animal Itself, by means of the intelligible tetrad, constitutes all living things holistically [*holikôs*]" (15. 53. 6-15). We can discern the presence of the intelligible animal in the demiurge in that the ultimate procession of the forms into factical manifestation takes place as "images of his allness" (*IT* I, 390). But intelligible animality has, in a sense, *already* produced the manifold of beings out of itself, for it represents the selection of the constitutive elements of the cosmos, in some sense a *self-constitution* of the cosmos before the demiurge's activity. This activity will essentially involve the other deities in relation to the demiurge, and so intelligible animal is both within and without the

demiurge. The intelligible animal in the demiurge is, unlike Animal Itself, not *monogenes*, only-begotten or sole of its genus but “subsists in conjunction with the vivific [*zôgonikês*] cause, together with which he constitutes the second genera of Being” (53. 16-7). Again, we read that the natures prior to the third triad “are not all-perfect/complete [*pantelê*] since they are exempt from the division into multiplicity. But the natures posterior to it [the third triad] are not only-begotten. For they proceed together with others; the male with the female, and those that are of a demiurgic together with those of a generative [*gennêtikôn*] characteristic” (54. 12-6) – that is, they express the demiurge’s *own* animality.

The point here concerns not only the emergence into concretion of the dyadic sexual relationships among the Gods, which bring about the concretion of the various kinship relations among them as well, but the emergence of an explicitly oppositional or dialectical structure among the moments of the ontic hypostases as well, as we shall see in the next chapter. The ambiguity of the term *monogenes*, meaning both sole of its genus and only-begotten, is exploited by Proclus in order to create a parallelism between the relations of gender and kinship among the Gods and the division of genera into species in the realm of Being, which simultaneously makes the point that “division” comes about through the explicit emergence “for another” of the moments dynamically opposed in the genus but suspended, so to speak, just as the second intelligible triad was “in labor with [*ôdinei*] the intelligibles, without being a multiplicity of beings” (54. 1-2). The production of individual beings in the context of the demiurgic world-order comes about through the actualization of the demiurge’s *dunamis* – not *qua* demiurge but



*qua* deity – for certain relationships (particularly sexual, in this account).

These relations, in becoming actualized or concrete, constitute the factual world-order, which is mirrored in the constitution of the philosophical system itself, inasmuch as this depends upon the deployment, in the intellectual order, of *principles (archai)*. The paradigm is “the cause ... of the production of form [*eidopoiias*], and of the order [*taxeôs*] in the forms. But the demiurge is the cause of order ... For forms, so far as they are forms, are the progeny of the paradigm; but the demiurge, receiving forms from the paradigm, arranges them by numbers/series [*arithmois diakosmei*] and inserts in them order [*taxin*]” (*IT* I, 388). It is not a question here of the distinction, within generic causality, of a specifically paradigmatic causality, but of the causality of the paradigm of paradigms, the third intelligible triad, divine intellect itself, as distinct from the causality of the demiurgic intellect, an opposition which is as much *within the demiurge* as anywhere else, for it is the contrast between that intellect which s/he has simply *qua* God and that intellectual *activity* constitutive of the hypostasis of Intellect. The distinction, considered as intra-intellectual, that is, between intelligible intellect and intellectual intellect, between the production of forms by the paradigm and their final disposition by the demiurge, expresses a proto-intellectual organization of the object of the intellect. This is the domain of the *pêgai*, “fountains” or “sources,” which stand to principles, *archai*, in the relation of wholes to parts – albeit that the system constituted by the intellect’s reversion will consist of principles all the way to the furthest limit of its conception, namely the One Itself. “Fountains” will continue to play important roles in the emergence of the system, as we shall see; they represent its *lived*

moments. But when we tick off the hypostases on the Neoplatonic ladder of Being, it is principles we enumerate.

The nature of intelligible form, that is, form as it is present in the intelligible intellect, is discussed at several points in the *Parmenides* commentary. Thus, for example, in a discussion of the contributions made by the different levels of form to the perceptible forms, after tracing the “self-motion” and “eternity” in sensible forms to the second intelligible triad, Proclus explains that

each form exists as a manifold [*plêthos huparchein*], but is constituted in accordance with its own peculiar number/series [*kat'arithmon idion huphestanai*] and filled with the numbers/series appropriate to it [*sumpeplêrêsthai tois oikeiois arithmois*], and hence the forms are variously derived, in a way unknown to us, and ineffable, from different divine ranks. This feature comes from the summit of the intelligibles-and-intellectuals, from the forms established there in a secret and ineffable manner. (IP 803)

The “summit” in question is the third intelligible triad, the “summit” of any order lying in the order above it. The conception underlying this passage seems to be that an existent manifold belonging to each form, which is “secret and ineffable” inasmuch as it belongs to no order within which it could be conceptualized, receives by virtue of intelligible form a position in relation to the divine ranks, from which the form derives a peculiar mode of subsistence, both in itself and in chains of association with others. This relationship of derivation between the forms and the divine ranks is ineffable and unknowable because it is impossible to further categorize divine causality

as such.

If we are to take seriously the whole notion of pre-intellectual form, then this subsistence and determination by way of *arithmoi* spoken of above should not be understood as the same kind of determination that applies to intellectual forms (form in the narrow sense). Because it pertains to the derivation of forms from the divine ranks, we should look, in order to characterize it, to the symbolic or associative relationships linking discrete elements into the “constellations” that lend myths their “iconic constancy” over inevitable variations.<sup>10</sup> As Proclus puts it in another passage concerning the characteristics conferred upon the lower forms from the higher, “from the primal level [i.e. the summit] of intelligible-intellectual forms each [form] bears a token, not susceptible to knowledge, of its own paradigms,” that is, the “worlds” to which it can belong, “according as each has been allotted one or other divine characteristic” (969). Intelligible forms are not accessible to *epistêmê*, science, but rather only to *gnôsis*, knowledge in the sense of insight (IP 924) and which is used to characterize divine intellect (the third intelligible triad) in *ET* prop. 121. Prior to the conceptual determination of objects lies a narrative, poetical and aesthetic constitution of the object, and this is what is grasped under the notion of intelligible form. The intelligible-and-intellectual forms, Proclus explains, “are superior to our partial [*meristês*] understanding ... for we cannot in our present state project [*proballein*] the understanding that would be adequate to them” (925), “projection” being the method by which we subsume particulars under relevant concepts. We do

<sup>10</sup> The term “iconic constancy” originates with Blumenberg (*Work on Myth* pp. 149ff), but I am indebted rather to the profound and concise discussion of the relationship between “iconicity” and “narrativity” as aspects of “a more general, non-narrative concept of myth that encompasses both” in Assmann’s *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom* pp. 38-41.

not even now, one might add, regard myths as *individual* productions. We may attribute their generation to different external agencies than Proclus does, but that does not affect the structure of the claim. Opinion assisted by rational discourse “is in general only competent to discern the bare fact of their [the intelligible forms’] existence” (IP 994f). The entities beyond “the realm of the intellectual Kings” are “objects of contemplation for souls that are divinely possessed and are being initiated into a mystical vision,” (931) for “the transcendent forms ... may be contemplated only by the divine Intellect” and “only illumination from the intellectual Gods renders us capable of joining ourselves to those intelligible-and-intellectual forms” (949). This illumination begins from mythological hermeneutics and extends itself through theurgical praxis, ending perhaps in new revelations: “as for those forms that are above Intellect ... the knowledge of them is beyond our efforts to achieve and is of automatic [*autophuês*] provenance, achievable only by God-possessed souls” (950).

It would be a mistake, then, to interpret *meristês*, in the passage from 925, so as to understand that the *gnôsis* of intelligible form is existentially denied us; it *is* incompatible, however, with “the partial [*meristôn*] conceptions of our souls” (949) – that is, as possessing partial intellects. But the transcendence of this state is *autophuês*, natural or spontaneous for the human organism as a whole, i.e. as more than intellect alone. This accords, as well, with Proclus’ understanding of the sacred text: no sacred text possesses the authority to displace others, the general interest being in the proliferation of revelations, the sheer fecundity of the divine illumination of Being, which sustains the world itself. The world is not other than the many world-

versions, the process of forming a cosmos. It is the fabrication of world-versions through demiurgic utterance – an activity belonging to us in the name of the demiurge, so to speak – that sustains the world and is the substance of the world *qua* world, or the fulfillment of the concept of the World Itself.<sup>11</sup> Nor does the Gods' transcendence of Intellect render them inaccessible; on the contrary, it ensures that they possess a free channel for exercising their providence (*pronoia* or "pre-intellect" in Proclus' interpretation, *ET* prop. 120), their activity in the world. The fact that neither they, nor we, can be subsumed under any discrete intellectual world-order without remainder is crucial to making this possible. But nor does the existence of this remainder render the intellectual world-order a mere shadow, as in some Gnostic interpretations of the status of the demiurge. As long as demiurgic hegemony is not allowed to cut off polytheism at its roots, these roots continue to feed the demiurgic fabrication, preventing it from becoming a mere husk or shell, a fate which might otherwise face it on account of its abstract universality.<sup>12</sup> So too, the irreducibility of mythic discourse to that of the intellect preserves the fecundity of myth for ever new

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<sup>11</sup> The doctrine of Proclus that the demiurge supplies the cosmos with finite "dollops" of the power of existing (the term is from Sorabji, p. 251), thus justifying the claim in *Tim.* 27D-28A that the cosmos is always coming-to-be (*IT* I, 266-8), might be mentioned here. The moment in which the soul existentially or theurgically intuits the cosmos may be properly understood as the moment in which the cosmos receives such a quantum of power. For the "demiurgy of the soul" and its significance for the cosmos, see Shaw 1995.

<sup>12</sup> The question of whether the confrontation with Gnosticism may have led, in dialectical fashion, to the emergence of a new, more intellectually sophisticated post-Iamblichean polytheism is beyond the scope of this dissertation, although deserving further reflection.

interpretations and appropriations.<sup>13</sup> We remember that Proclus, in accepting Aristotle's axiom that beings not be "governed badly," adds nevertheless a caveat: "Let there be one ruler, one cause of all things, one providence, and one chain of beings; but let there also be together with the monad an appropriate multitude, many kings, various causes, a multiform providence, and a different order" (*ITI*, 262).

Let us return, however, to the metaphor of vision as it pertained to the relationship between the demiurge and the paradigm. The paradigm must have, in relation to the demiurge, an irreducible independence without being altogether external; sufficiently independent that we can, in some sense, "see" it too, lest the order of the world be unintelligible to us, but not so external to the demiurgic intellect that contingency slips into the gap, as if the demiurge works from a plan into which s/he has only imperfect insight. Furthermore, if the paradigm is completely external to the demiurge, then the demiurge, although a deity and thus a henad, would be subordinate to what is, in one respect at least, a *formal* entity. And if the paradigm is subsumed into the demiurge, it will be impossible to distinguish the demiurge's *own* intellect, *qua* deity, from his intellectual *function* as an *intellectual God*. Since the third intelligible triad represents the divine intellect in each and every God, *every* divine intellect, that is, every God, would not only contain the whole of Being as a henad, but would also *really be* the demiurge. From a different perspective, if we cannot distinguish the deity from the function, the henad from the monad, then we will be left with nothing, ultimately, but a

<sup>13</sup> Something similar could be said in defense of the hierarchical view of the universe typical of Platonism in general: by segregating off the realm of the ideal, one not only prevents the burden of measuring up to the norm from falling squarely on the particulars, but also preserves the ideal from being exhausted in any singular appropriation.

cacophony of demiurgic utterances – that is, concrete theologies – with no possibility of philosophical mediation, a welter of sealed world-views utterly blind to each other.

The solution is for the paradigm to be *intelligibly* prior to the demiurge, but *in* the demiurge intellectually. Whereas in another context, intelligibility was what threatened the independence of the many Gods, intelligibility here creates a space for the radical autonomy of the Gods relative to each other, with the intellectual level as the site where the perspective of each deity upon the rest may emerge into objectivity as an account of the world in which they are at the center. The paradigm, in its intelligible priority, is any God, whereas *qua* Phanes, e.g., the paradigm is indeed *in* Zeus, the demiurge, according to the Orphic myth in which Zeus swallows Phanes whole and thus comes to contain the universe itself. The third intelligible triad can thus be seen as 1) the intellect of any God, including Zeus (which is in the purest sense identical to a God's *animality*); 2) the independent world-paradigm as expressed in a specific mythologem, such as the one where the paradigm is Phanes; or 3) the independence of the paradigm-function from the function of demiurgy as an abstract, universal statement of the independence of the philosophical and theological discourses.<sup>14</sup>

The Orphic mythologem about Phanes and Zeus expresses an intellectual state of affairs, as indeed would seem to be the function of mythological *narrative* as such. The *iconic* mode is, by contrast, appropriate to the

intelligible forms, from which derive the "constellations" of terms operative

<sup>14</sup> In his remarks on the intelligible forms in the *Parmenides* commentary, Proclus refers several times to the complementarity of philosophical and theological approaches to the problems raised (913. 14-5; 923. 40ff; 930. 33-7 & 931. 9-11). This is a trope throughout the commentary, of course, but has special relevance to the domain of pre-intellectual form with which we are concerned in the third intelligible triad.

within highly diverse versions of what may nevertheless be regarded as “the same” myth. I am indebted here to the remarks of Assmann, who defines an “icon” as “an expression or articulation of content that can be realized in both language and image” (*Egyptian Solar Religion*, 38). Icons are “mythical images” which “at any time can develop into stories” (41), but whereas stories “derive their specific coherence and dynamic as a result of overcoming an initial state of deficiency” in “a series of episodes which are teleologically interrelated,” icons may, e.g., “form a cycle in which the beginning and end are constantly crossing over into each other,” and “there is never a transition to a final state” (39). The two regimes of iconicity and narrativity have a corresponding effect on the Gods, who are seen through them as if through a lens. In particular, we find that in the narrative or mythical dimension “the nature of a god unfolds in constellations, in which he forms a relationship with other gods both actively and passively. These gods become such an intrinsic part of his active (and passive) character development or ‘self-realization’ that they form a quite indispensable aspect of his person in the guise of a ‘personal sphere’” (41). The harmony of this latter formulation with the basic concept of monadic being as essentially *diacritical* is especially noteworthy.

The demiurge “being converted to himself, and to the fountain of ideas which is in himself, is also conjoined to the monad of the all-various orders of forms ... For Animal Itself is also in him, yet not monadically, but according to a certain divine number/series” (*IT* III, 102). As such, “the demiurge is comprehended by intelligible animal according to the reason of cause, and is not so comprehended as a part, so as to be imperfect” (*IT* I, 433).



The relationship between the demiurge and Animal Itself is, in other words, not one in which the demiurge would be subsumed under a more universal *form*, but is instead *causal*. We can see this from the simple fact that it is the subject of a myth. This is not to say, however, that the relationship between the two *functions*, that is, the demiurgic intellect and intelligible intellect, as a matter of *ontology*, do not have just such a relationship to one another.

I have drawn a distinction between the basic possessions of every deity and the domains of Being which they “illuminate.” We must turn, then, in closing, toward a consideration of the *class* of deities corresponding, in their activity or illumination, to the third intelligible triad, which consists of deities who are experienced as the world’s paradigm – intelligible Gods in the *narrow* sense. A deity is the world’s paradigm in lending him/herself to the constitution of a world-order, that is, a world-version, either alone or in conjunction with a separate demiurge. Even if paradigm and demiurge are not separate in a given theology, however, for the philosopher a distinction between the deity as intelligible and as intellectual would be necessary. That this distinction may sooner or later take on a theological form is demonstrated by the case of Gnosticism (it does not matter here that the Platonic distinction between paradigm and demiurge was itself a catalyst for the emergence of the Gnostic mythology; what matters is that a mythology embodying these ideas emerged at all, for from a Proclean perspective, myth always transcends the historical circumstances of its emergence).

The intelligible paradigm is, in its full ideality, that structure which permits the full expression of the powers of the Gods: for if there were no

intelligible paradigm, Proclus asks, "how would the intelligible Gods be fathers of wholes?" (PT III 15. 54. 10-1). The paradigmatic function as a basic possession of each deity makes it possible for us to think the world through a given deity because that deity *already* thinks the world. The paradigm *thinks* even if it does not, for its own part, *see*. It thinks as an *animal* and is at once the animality of the Gods as well as what animates the world: "he [Plato] calls Animal Itself the paradigm of the world considered as living." The world hangs together, at bottom, organically, that is, in the way organisms hang together with each other in their environment. This is the world of the intelligible forms, or "fountains." The intelligible forms

do not have such knowledge of our realm as do the intellectual forms, that is to say a separate knowledge of human things as human, and in general of the individual forms and of the sense-realm, but they have a unitary, general and monadic knowledge of all things ranked under a single genus, I mean, for instance, the heavenly and the aerial, or the watery or the terrestrial, be it the whole class of Gods or of superior classes of being, or of mortals, it knows them as being divine and as being living things simply... and their power is too great for it to be immediately responsible for generating us; for it produces Gods, as has been said often before, and it presides over Gods, but not over souls; but it is from the intellectual classes and forms that the multitude of souls and the successions of men and of other animals have come forth. (IP 965)

In the next two chapters, we shall find different functions performed by intelligible forms, or "fountains"; their function here, within the sphere of the "fountain of fountains" that is the intelligible intellect, is *elemental*. The

intelligible forms “produce Gods” in the sense that the origins of the Gods *within Being*, not yet in the sense of their parentage, which will come later, but rather in the sense of their elemental composition, are constituted on the level of intelligible form. The notion of a composition of the Gods out of some set of elements does not differ essentially from the notion of their conceptions and births. Instead, it is a case of a more primal mode of activity appropriate to the illumination of a more primal stratum of Being. Herein lies the essence of the illumination of Being *in the narrow sense*, Being Itself: the constitution of each God. How else are the Gods to illuminate the originary stratum of Being than through fashioning for themselves origins? Hence in the theologies analyzed by Damascius according to the intelligible triads, it is generally a mix of deities and *elements* that fill out the intelligible order; and see in this respect *DP* III 2. 157. 21-2, where the summit of the “unified,” i.e. intelligible intellect, is “analogous to ‘elementality’ [*analogêsei ...tô stoicheiôtôtô*],” in the sense of “that which is formed from the mixture of elements.” In attempting to grasp this elemental thinking, we should distinguish as Damascius does, even if Proclus does not, between the notion of “elementality” in itself or as such and the factual set of four elements belonging either to the Hellenic theology, when seen in the light of their numinosity, or to a particular moment of the ever evolving *probabilistic* account of the universe offered by physicists ancient and modern (*Tim.* 29d).

## Chapter 6:

### The Order of the Intelligible-and-Intellectual Gods

The next order of Gods is the intelligible-and-intellectual, corresponding to the hypostasis of Life. As Proclus explains it, these Gods are so named because they are at once objects of intellection to the Gods posterior to them – the intellectual Gods proper – and therefore intelligible, while also intellectually perceiving the Gods prior to them, and so intellectual. In this respect we will recall that Animal Itself, the third intelligible triad, was designated in the *Timaeus* (30 D 2) “the most beautiful of the objects of intellection.” In explicating this order, we are no longer concerned with the distinction between the constitutive elements of each deity and the region(s) of Being illuminated by various deities, but solely with the latter. The intelligible and intellectual order is a product of the activity of deities already fully constituted in their *hyparxis* and who now proceed to the explication of

the Being which is founded upon them. This will involve for the Gods of this order, just as for those of each subsequent order, a taking back up into themselves or positing in relation to themselves of that Being which has come into existence through their own existence simply *qua* Gods. The universal structure of this order, which is that of a proto-intellectual organization of the intellectual field, would be instantiated differently in different cultures; but we have no examples of this sort of exegesis, as Damascius provided us in the case of the intelligible order. Proclus' own account of this class of Gods is, in accord with the project of the *Platonic Theology*, strictly Hellenic. It is our responsibility, however, in a systematic reading, to distill from the account those universal characteristics which would allow one to apply the category of intelligible-and-intellectual Gods *beyond* the Hellenic theology.

"The first intellectual Gods," – that is, the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods – "being essentialized according to Life [*kata tēn zōēn ousiōmenous*], conjoin unparticipated intellect and the intelligible genus of Gods" (PT IV 1. 7). Life is the essence of the intelligible-and-intellectual order and the second hypostasis in the triad of Being, Life, and Intellect. As Proclus explains a little earlier, in each class (*taxis*) there are three causes: the cause of remaining, the cause of proceeding, and the cause of conversion. Remaining, proceeding and conversion or reversion are characteristics of each ontic class corresponding to the three intelligible triads, that is, the *hyparxis*, power, and *gnōsis* possessed by each God (ET prop. 121), which are actually moments in the relation of each God to him/herself. This act of self-relation or ontic objectification both establishes the very ontic principles in relation to which

remaining, proceeding and conversion occur for beings – that is, it actually brings into being the ontic hypostases – *and* establishes this tripartite pattern of relationship to principle – with the difference that each God is, as it were, his/her *own* principle. The three intelligible triads thus establish a pattern of relation to principles for beings which is, in the first place, a relation-to-self for each God. Moreover, Proclus sees the ontic hypostases themselves as embodying these elemental dispositions: Intellect, he explains, is “specified” or “formalized,” *eidopoieitai*, according to conversion, Life according to procession, and Being by remaining. This process of formalization or *eidopoiesis* is how the hypostases come to be.

“Being is the intelligible [*noêton*], but Life is intelligence [*noêsis*]” (IV 1. 7. 24). This intelligence is analogous to the second intelligible triad, a continuum developing the capacity to measure itself and a primary relationality from which the members of the relation emerge into determinacy. In the case of the second intelligible triad, however, it was a matter of the diremption within the divine individual, whereas here a true relationship among Gods is forged. With respect to the second intelligible triad and the intelligible-and-intellectual order alike, relations of seriality, of priority and posteriority, are less important than the proto-spatial relationship of center to periphery. Proclus observes that “we characterize the whole progression of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods according to the middle,” that is, in relation to the second intelligible-and-intellectual triad. By the same token, the intelligible order is characterized by its first triad and the intellectual order will be characterized by its third, the demiurgic intellect. This is no mechanical succession; rather, the nature of this dominance is

*different* in each order. Indeed, it is because a different system of valuation is applied in each case that the second and third hypostases can yet be *original* in their own ways. This “originality” has its guarantee in the fact that the roots of Being, Life and Intellect lie in characteristics possessed by each God, and therefore each hypostasis is divinized *directly*. This does not dissolve the ontic hierarchy, however; for, as we shall see, the Gods in their manifestation establish among themselves hierarchical relationships as part of their activity with respect to Being, and these enter into the constitution of Being. But just as these hierarchical relationships do not diminish the autonomy of each God *qua* God, so too subsequent hypostases do not simply collapse into their priors – but it is only the fact of an immediate relationship to the divine that prevents this, and that sustains the diversity within Being.

“Being is characterized [*kharaktêrizetai*] according to divine *hyparxis*, Life according to power, and Intellect according to intelligible intellect. For as [*analogon gar estin*] Being is to *hyparxis*, so is Intellect to Being” (7. 26). This mark or “character” impressed upon Being by the Gods is alternately described as a “second henad” imparted to Being from the One Itself, which I have described as an ontic doubling of each henad: “Just as the One Itself which exists prior to [*proûparkhon*] Being gives to Being from itself a second henad, so too Life which has received subsistence [*hupostasin*] prior to Intellect, generates an intellectual life” (8. 4-7). Deities, giving themselves to Being, making ontic doubles of themselves, as it were, “characterize” or leave the seal of *hyparxis* upon Being. Intellect represents then a doubling of a double, or rather the double’s reflection into itself. The hypostasis of Life generates an *intellective* life, producing Intellect in producing itself and

produces itself in producing Intellect. So too the determination *par excellence* of the henad *qua* being is as the *authupostaton*, “self-constituted,” or *autogenes*, “self-begotten.” We need look no further for the expression of the causal efficacy of the Gods: they constitute the universe in constituting or generating themselves, albeit in their *nature* they are altogether prior to constitution and generation alike.

The intelligible-and-intellectual order is determined as *substance*, that which “truly is,” *ontôs on* (IV 6). What *truly* is participates of Being, and so is not Being Itself; a contrast is hence established between Being which participates Being – substance, true Being – and Being which participates the Gods alone, which receives the seal or impression of divine *hyparxis*. This truth of substance must, in the first place, express the truth of the relation between the Gods and Being. But this process of the generation of hypostases cannot simply be carried forward upon the initial momentum. The simple existence of the Gods is not enough to affirm the truth of Being, and substance as a determination of the intelligible-and-intellectual order is this affirmation. The Gods must constitute relations *among each other* in order to affirm their relation to Being and thus secure Being’s autonomy.

“Unparticipated Life ... is illuminated by Gods who are allotted a unity [*henôsin*] secondary to the occult subsistence of intelligibles, but preceding according to cause the separation [*diakriseôs*] of intellectual natures” (IV 1. 8). Unparticipated Life, that is, the monad or hypostasis of Life, receives its illumination from Gods who have abandoned their hiddenness (*kruphios*) so as to be “carried in the divisions of themselves as in a vehicle [*epokhoumenoi tais heautôn diairesin*]” (8. 22). These “divisions” are none



other than the classes of the Gods (in the surviving fragment of his commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, Proclus refers to “the eternal orders” as “the temples and habitations of the Gods”). That they are carried in these as in vehicles emphasizes the inability of any of their classifications – even their classification as Gods – to totalize them. The intelligible Gods (that is, each God *qua* member of the first order of Gods, not the narrower class of intelligible Gods) “are both monadic and triadic,” triadic, naturally, in their analysis into three moments corresponding to Limit, Infinity and Mixture, “but with reference to the divided essence of triads, they are monads revealing from themselves whole [or ‘universal’, *holas*] triads” (9. 14-5). Here, the opposition between monadic and triadic is manifest in the characterization of the triad as a “whole” or “universal” opposing the individuality of each henad. The intelligible Gods, “in their triadic progression, do not depart from a unitary *hyparxis*,” while the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods “exhibiting [*epideiknumenoi*] in themselves the distinction [*diakrisis*] of the monads, and through divine difference, proceed into multiplicity, and a variety of powers and essences” (18-21). The formal or universal aspects thus discernible in the Gods as the three intelligible triads achieve concretion through the further activity of those Gods who proceed to the illumination of the hypostasis of Life. They do this by constituting themselves as a multiplicity of Gods *in relation to each other*, in short, a pantheon. Since a pantheon is a whole of which each God is a part, and in which a division of labor, so to speak, is instituted among them, “the partial orders [*merikai diakosmêseis*] of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods are allotted a much greater division (than the intelligible Gods) so as to unfold to

us a multiplicity of Gods which cannot be comprehended by the numbers within the decad" (IV 1. 10). It is not a question here of a simple passage from a lesser to a greater magnitude, but rather from divine solipsism, as it were, to co-operative action, as we shall see in the further development of this order.

In the second chapter of the fourth book, Proclus provides us with a comparison of the "powers" in the intelligible and the intelligible-and-intellectual orders, which is helpful for explicating both. Indeed, the exegesis of the intelligible triads is not truly completed until the hypostases of Being, Life and Intellect have been fully unfolded. "For in intelligibles there were three primarily-effective [or 'primordial,' *prôtourgoi*] powers; one constituting the essence of wholes [*ousiopoios tôn holôn*], another measuring things which are pluralized, and another being productive of the forms of all generated natures [*eidopoios tôn apogennômenôn hapantôn*]" (IV 2. 11. 27-9). The natures of the intelligible triads with respect to beings are elegantly captured in this brief summary. The activity of the first is *ousiopoiêtês*, the second *metrêtês*, the third *eidopoiêtês*, while that toward which they orient themselves is for the first, wholes, for the third, generated totality/totalities, and for the second, the process of multiplication or pluralization according to the measure it provides. Proclus proceeds to determine the powers of the intelligible-and-intellectual in relation to these,

one by its very Being [*einai*] producing the life [*zôopoios*] of secondary natures according to a certain intelligible comprehension [*kata tina noêtên periokhên*], another being connective of everything which is divided [*sunectikê pantos tou diêrêmenou*], and imparting by illumination the intelligible measure to those

natures that relinquish the one unity [*tês henôseôs tês mias*], and another supplying all things with figure [*skhêma*], shape [*morphên*], and perfection. (2.

12. 1-6)

The intelligible-and-intellectual triads, that is, the classes of Gods within the order of the intelligible-and-intellectual, are the *collective*, *connective*, and *perfective*. The aforementioned *powers* in the intelligible-and-intellectual are thus the powers displayed by three classes of Gods, whereas the powers in the intelligible were those possessed elementally by each God as such: hence the greater “division” of the “partial orders” in the intelligible-and-intellectual, which express “a multiplicity of Gods which cannot be comprehended by the numbers within the decad.” Where there was only *one* God in the intelligible order – namely, *each* God considered as absolutely individual and unique, there is a large number of Gods in this order. But this is not the generation of multiplicity, for polytheism is not *generated*, it is the absolute and fundamental hypothesis in the thought of Proclus from which all else depends. It is the generation, rather, of *relation* amongst the Gods, the possibility of which is created by the auto-diremption of the God as individual. Each God contains all the rest; by actualizing certain potential relationships with other Gods, Gods manifest themselves in co-emergent sets. This co-emergent manifestation simultaneously permits relations to achieve autonomy, *which actualizes the virtual determinations of the intelligible triads into hypostatic form.*

The first intelligible-and-intellectual “power” is manifest, as Proclus says here, in “*a certain intelligible comprehension.*” The use of *tina* here alerts us

to a degree of factual determination. All things are in the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods *vitally* as they are in the intelligible Gods *intelligibly* (IV 3. 14). What is the difference between containing all things intelligibly and vitally? It is the latter that is *a certain* comprehension, a collective which is given, which *truly is* and which by its very being is life-productive (*zôopoiêtês*) of secondary natures. Hence the three intelligible-and-intellectual triads are *places* and represent the *first spatiality*, not, however, in the sense in which we think of space as a void, but as a life-giving space or *scene*. They are, specifically, the scene of intellection, of *noêsis*.

The intelligible-and-intellectual triads as such display a greater degree of concretion than the intelligible triads did. For, as we read,

in the intelligible order, each triad had only the third part of being, for it consisted of Limit and Infinity and their mixture, and this mixture was essence [*ousia*] in the first triad, intelligible life in the second, and intelligible intellect in the third. The natures prior to these were henads and supra-essential powers, which give completion to the whole triads [*tas holas triadas*]. But in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, each triad has essence, life, and intellect ... Hence the first triad ... was in intelligibles Limit, Infinity, and Essence; for Essence was that which was primarily mixed. But here the first triad is Essence, Life and Intellect, with appropriate henads. For Essence is suspended from the first deity, Life from the second, and Intellect from the third. And these three supra-essential monads reveal the monads of the first triad. (IV 3. 16)

Each intelligible triad had only a third part of Being because each was simply a different way of conceiving of *each* henad, the relation of henads to Being

remaining one-to-one, that is, each henad containing the whole of Being. The “whole” or “universal” triads, then, only receive “completion,” that is, concretion, from becoming identified with henads that proceed to the illumination of subsequent levels of Being. In this fashion we understood the remark of Proclus that “the first triad is an intelligible God primarily, that which comes after it, an intelligible-and-intellectual God, and the third, an intellective God” (III 14. 51). This was the sense in which there were “three henads” in the intelligible order: not that there are factually three, but that the three triads require, as the condition of the possibility of their own givenness or intelligibility, henads of these three orders. This process of articulating the moments implicit in the immediate opposition of the supra-essential to Being, the One to Being, each God to his/her ontic reflection – all of which are just different terminology for the same thing – begins in the intelligible-and-intellectual order. The intelligible-and-intellectual order is an order constituted by illumination or true Being, whereas the aspect of illumination was secondary in the intelligible order, emerging only in and through the third intelligible triad. Illumination is grounded in the third intelligible triad, the aspect of each God whereby it is a *paradigm* or totality. The third intelligible triad is, in this respect, the site from which illumination proceeds to constitute divine orders reaching backward, so to speak, as well as forward, just as the order of *principles*, once it emerges in the intellectual order, will be able to constitute principles reaching all the way back to the first principle, the One Itself. But the illuminative order constituted in and through the third intelligible triad did not yield the multiplicity we are speaking of here, that is, a multiplicity of intelligible, intelligible-and-

intellectual, and intellectual Gods; rather, it constituted a class of intelligible Gods in the narrow sense, as illustrated in the cross-cultural account of this order in Damascius. Illuminative orders of Gods are always capable of being compared across cultures, for in these orders it is a matter of the functional analysis of divine *activity*. The intelligible “order” alone has a double sense, in which we can mean by it *not* the illuminative order of intelligible Gods in the narrow sense (Phanes, for instance), but *all* the Gods. As such, the intelligible-and-intellectual order consists of triads each of which represents a *type* of deity and each moment of which is potentially a discrete divine position; hence we have for the first time in this order the possibility of complex dispositions of deities in relation to each other within a common field. Thus, where the first, second and third intelligible triads were, *qua* henads, *an* intelligible, *an* intelligible-and-intellectual, and *an* intellectual God respectively, the ranks of the intelligible-and-intellectual, e.g., are made up of *classes* of intelligible-and-intellectual Gods.

The second intelligible triad was, Proclus explains, “a supra-essential henad, power and intelligible and occult life,” while in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, “essence, life and intellect are all vital [*zôtika*], and are suspended from the Gods who contain the one bond [*sunechontôn ton hena sundesmon*] of the whole of this order. For as the first henads were allotted a power unific [*henopoion*] of the middle genera, so the second henads after them display the connective particularity [*sunectikên idiotêta*] of primarily-efficient causes” (IV 3. 16f). The second intelligible triad, like the first, consists of a henad, which is represented by the first moment of the triad (the moment corresponding to Limit), a power, and a resulting mixture or product

(the “intellectual” moment containing the opposition of the first two moments). In the intelligible-and-intellectual order, by contrast, a whole class of Gods corresponding to this order are present *together*, as shall be demonstrated quite literally by the location here of the divine banquet of the *Phaedrus*. The monads of this order are suspended from these Gods, who form a united link or bond, *desmos*, for the *whole order* (*tês holês diakosmêseôs*). Hence something that was not possible in the intelligible order, namely the synoptic grasp of the three triads together, can come to fruition. For while the intelligible order in the narrow sense had a supra-essential constitution, as we can see from the ability of Damascius to identify groups of deities in various cultures in whom it is constituted, this was a constitution with very limited internal structure; many of the parts were filled not by Gods but by elements. Indeed, in Proclus’ account of the Hellenic theology, there was only Phanes filling out this order. By contrast, only the presence of deities together in a field of joint action will really be able to underwrite the systematic relations between monads.

When Proclus says that as “the first henads were allotted a power unific of the middle genera, so the second henads after them display the connective particularity of primarily-efficient causes,” he means that the first henads, that is, the henads in their supra-essential *hyparxeis*, provide the principle of unification for the series that proceed from them. Thus is each God “grounded,” so to speak, in the intelligible order, in the broad sense, such that his/her identity is not dispersed through his/her activities at different levels of Being. The “second henads” can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, they are a new order of Gods, relative to deities whose illumination of

Being lies in the intelligible order in the narrow sense. Those deities who proceed to the illumination of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, however, are also secondary *in relation to their own foundations in the intelligible order*, since every God possesses the qualities embodied in the three intelligible triads and is in this sense an intelligible God. It is not that the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods are subordinate to the intelligible Gods as if some Gods were the causes of other Gods, for all hierarchical dispositions among the Gods are *with respect to beings*, that is, they are part of the *activity* of those Gods, and do not touch their individuality. Rather, the foundation of each God in the intelligible order broadly understood is that God's self-identity over and against their diverse activities. Where there is a relationship of subordination of one class of Gods to another class, by contrast, it will be a matter of the establishment of such a relationship of subordination between the *ontic principles* constituted by the cooperative action of the Gods in question. We shall learn more about this in the account of the intellectual order of Gods in the next chapter. It is in the sense of the Gods of the present order unfolding their own potentialities that the procession as "second" or secondary henads exposes a quality possessed in the primordial – lit. "primarily-" or "first-efficient" – causes. The particular quality exposed here is a connective or continuous aspect; namely, the capacity of the henads to occupy a common field with each other, to relate to each other and arrange themselves in the constellations that form the nuclei of mythological narrative, as we shall see. This is an unfolding of determinations present already in the second intelligible triad, in particular its moments of continuity, measurement, and power as *kruphios* or latent multiplicity. In



the second intelligible triad, the God measured the continuum of him/herself through the expression of power, whereas here the expression of power shall, as we will see, constitute a common space or continuum *between Gods*. Finally, in contrast to the third intelligible triad, which was “a henad, power and intelligible intellect,” the third intelligible-and-intellectual triad consists of “three supra-essential Gods,” who are “the suppliers of divine perfection, imitating the all-perfect intelligible triad” (IV 3. 17). But by these “three Gods” we must already understand three *types* or *species* of “perfective” deities who are, in turn, a species of intelligible-and-intellective Gods; for once we have crossed the threshold from *unitary* into *monadic* multiplicity, the individual is henceforth identifiable purely by *infima species*, every *unit* representing an appropriately determined *class*.

The interpretation of *Phaedrus* 246e4-248c2 leads Proclus to assign to the three intelligible-and-intellectual triads the designations of the supra-celestial place, the heaven, and the sub-celestial arch, respectively. The first triad, the supra-celestial place, is in addition the site of a number of other determinations drawn from this dialogue, and so rather more space will be given in the succeeding pages to the discussion of it than to the second and third triads. In addition to the determinations drawn from the *Phaedrus*, the intelligible-and-intellectual order also has its series of constitutive determinations drawn from the *Parmenides*. The nature of this order has to be discerned, therefore, by juxtaposing the parallel material so as glean that common nature which according to Proclus manifests itself alike in the two accounts.

The discussion of the intelligible-and-intellectual order should properly begin, not from the first, but from the second triad, that is, from the middle. Where each of the intelligible triads was anchored, as it were, from its first moment, which represented in each the henad itself, and the triads as a whole unfolded the schema of the first triad, the intelligible-and-intellectual order is characterized from the middle, as is illustrated by the spatial relationship of the first and third triads to the middle triad, the heaven. The formal structure of the intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, and intellectual orders respectively is such as to highlight in the first, the element of *singularity*, in the second, the element of *process*, and in the third, the element of *product*: “the intelligible Gods are especially defined according to *hyparxeis* and summits, on which account also they are called fathers, and unitary Gods, for the One and father are in them the same,” as well as “the intellectual Gods [who] are defined according to ends or extremities, and on this account all of them are denominated intellects and intellectual. The intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, however, being middles, especially present themselves to view according to the middles of the triads” (39. 112. 27f). The very concept of the intelligible-and-intellectual order is grounded in *noêsis*, that is, *intelligence*; it is the *scene* of intellection. As such, it falls to this center to posit within itself the extremes of *noêma* and *nous* alike. The intelligible-and-intellectual order is a *place* as well as a process. “Heaven is the intelligence of the first intelligibles. For sight, says he [Plato], looking to the things above, is Heaven. Hence Heaven subsists prior to the totality of divine intellect [*proûparkhei tou theiou nou pantos*] ... and it intellectually perceives [*noei*] the things above, and such as are beyond the celestial class” (5. 21. 20-5).

A certain degree of confusion naturally arises because Proclus speaks synonymously of the henad Ouranos and the heaven, *ouranos*. Proclus is explicating an henadological and ontological structure through a specifically Hellenic theology, but it is incumbent upon us to attempt to distinguish, to the degree we can, the purely systematic structure from Proclus' use of that structure in the philosophical interpretation of Hellenic myth and the mythopoetic contents in Plato. As such, we need to determine how much of the semantic range of *ouranos* is essential to the particular moment in the procession of Being with which we are concerned. This may seem at first artificial; why separate what is inextricably intertwined in Proclus? First, it is not inextricable, given that we can compare to the present text different expressions of the corresponding moments of the system (i.e. the accounts of the triads from the *Parmenides*). Not only can, but *must*, lest the differences between expressions of the system are to be allowed to fragment the system itself, an interpretive strategy for which there is no need or justification. And from this first point, it is no leap to arrive at the more profound recognition that if there is a single system with diverse expressions in different of Proclus' texts, then that system could be expressed even outside of an Hellenic context, if its basic presuppositions be sufficiently portable; and it is my argument, of course, that they are. For this reason, I engage with the specifically Hellenic material to bring forth a systematic structure which follows *wholly* from the basic presuppositions of the system, namely the emergence of monadic unity from henadic individuality.

We can, at least, avoid the confusion that would result from interpreting *ouranos*, whether we mean the God Ouranos or the ontological notion, as the

*sensible* heaven. Rather, as Proclus explains,

the circulation mentioned in the *Phaedrus* is intelligence, through which all the Gods and souls obtain the vision [*theas*] of intelligibles. But intelligence is a medium between intellect and the intelligible. It must be said therefore, that the whole of heaven is established according to this medium, and that it contains the one bond [*ton hena sundesmon*] of the divine orders [*diakosmôn*], being the Father of the intellectual genus, but being generated from the Kings prior to it, which also it is said to *see*. (5. 21f)

Heaven is the unique bond of the divine orders because it is the principles of continuity and comprehension which permeate the intelligible-and-intellectual and constitute its overall quality and systematic function. The act or process of intellection, the “heavenly circulation,” is the actuality of intelligible and intellect simultaneously or in the same ideal “locale.” But how are we to understand the vision granted to all the Gods of the intelligible? Does not this subordinate the henads to Being? This would be especially strange, inasmuch as the principal argument that Proclus advances against the identification of the *Phaedran* heaven with the sensible heaven is that under that interpretation “the leaders of whole souls,” i.e. the Gods of the *Phaedrus*, would “be converted [*epistrephousin*] to the sensible heaven, and exchange the intelligible place of survey [*tês noêtês periôpês*] for an inferior allotment” (5. 19. 17-9). But is not such an intelligible “high place,” *periôpê*, also inferior to the Gods? This raises the critical issue of the relationship between the Gods and the Ideas. Do we not see the Gods themselves, in the *Phaedrus*, raising themselves to the contemplation of the

intelligible? Whatever Plato saw in it, however, may not be altogether germane to how Proclus sees it. For what is the purpose, the function, of divine intellection, for Proclus? Since the mode of existence of the Gods transcends that of intellection, their intellection can only be on behalf of those ontologically posterior to them, their *nous a pro-noia*, a “pre-intellect” which takes the form of *pronoia*, or providence.

“The Gods know sensibles, not by a conversion to them, but by containing in themselves the causes of them. Hence cognizing themselves, they know sensibles causally, and rule over them, not by looking to them, and verging to the subjects of their government, but by converting through love inferior natures to themselves” (5. 19. 26f). Sensibles are a product of the self-cognition of the Gods, a process whose inception we discerned already at the level of the intelligible intellect. There, we saw that each God possessed an ideal capacity to operate as the world’s paradigm. Each God, as a measure of the whole, can, in applying this measure to themselves, so to speak, constitute in an act of reflection the whole according to the unit of measure *s/he* embodies. This was expressed in the determination of the *whole* represented by the second intelligible triad as a *totality* in the third. Those Gods who illuminate Intellect (that is, those in whom the unparticipated intellect participates) carry this process foreshadowed in the intelligible triads through to a further dimension, in which it shall be a totality of *divine intellect* (5. 21. 22-3), i.e. an hypostatic monad, a product in common, as it were, of the Gods, emerging from the moment parallel to the “measurement” of the second intelligible triad, namely the *noêsis* of the intelligible-and-intellectual order. This intellectual totality is the point of the constitution of

the world of sensibilia, its inferior mode of unity marked by diacritical relationships among all its parts and the consequent ontological “interference” of principles, which manifest the phenomena associated with “materiality.”

The proper place for the discussion of these issues will be in the next chapter, devoted to the intellectual order. What is needed now is to understand what happens in the intelligible-and-intellectual order which acts as the intermediary between the intelligible triads and the intellectual order, that is, between a series of determinations arising from the analytic of each God *qua* God, and a fully constituted hierarchy of autonomous ontic hypostases, autonomous in that the criteria for their existence is no longer theophanic but dialectical. In the intelligible-and-intellectual order, we see the Gods and the intelligibles proceeding together, as it were, or the intelligibles carried within the proceeding Gods, and the establishment of a field or plane, a *topos*, where the ascending souls with the assistance of their tutelary deities will have spread out before them the full system of truth. In each deity is contained all the other henads and the whole of Being. In intellectual deities, however, this implicated totality is *explicated*, and a system of relationships to a set of other deities and a common field of action posited. Above the level of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, of course, these relationships and this field vanish, for when we consider each deity in his/her *hyparxis*, there is no externality. Relationships would introduce a dialectic of *otherness* into the henads that would end in their totalization or subsumption, the revocation of their individuality. *However*, considered ontically, and hence according to a mode of unity which does not threaten their *hyparxeis*, we can consider the

Gods as active in a discrete field and possessing relationships, not only among each other but also with the intelligible objects of this domain. This is not the domain, we must note, delimited by the extension of the concept "all the Gods"; rather, it is a domain in which lies the cultural specificity that makes the Phaedran heaven an *Hellenic* heaven – there will be no question of the Greek Gods rubbing shoulders with foreign Gods at their banquet. The very notion would display a fundamental misconception. The Gods are not subordinate to any *place*, they do not lie in a place like mere objects, but rather constitute a place for themselves, and do so, furthermore, not out of some lack but because it makes possible the emergence of intellect, which must emerge in a place or scene. The *place* of the Gods, then, expresses their providence, and is not just a location in which they find themselves, as if thrown into a world.

If, as sometimes can be observed in cases of religious syncretism, for example the fusion of Greek and Egyptian religion in the Hermetica, or the fusion of Buddhism and indigenous Chinese religion in cultic Taoism, we see the deities of different cultures mixing together in relation to each other, this would show, for the Proclean thinker, the extent to which the hermeneutical fusion of horizons constituting a new intellectual cosmos, the new realm for human thought that is Hermeticism or Taoism, is causally dependent upon prior acts of divine intellection which have created a new *topos* within which this encounter can take place and in the footsteps of which, as it were, human intellects may tread. This would be a *topos* not constituted anymore of *translation*, that is, of the equivalence of powers that *we* note among deities of different cultures, for this is an effort to which human intelligence is

adequate, but of the co-positing of deities from different cultures in a common field in which they interact, an interaction which must occur through revelation, on the level of icons or mythic narratives, not the concept. It is not a question, in such a fusion, of something like the *interpretatio Graeca* of Egyptian Gods, where Thoth is called Hermes, for this is merely classification. No one who has studied the *Hermetica* can fail to distinguish it from the efforts at translation practiced by an Herodotus. Instead, it is a question of a really distinct product arising from the interpenetration of cultures. In the novelty of the latter lies, we may say, something supra-essential. In cultures that have fused very extensively over great spans of time, it may take philological detective work to determine that any fusion even took place, so natural does the interaction of the many Gods in their common *topos* seem to us. The historian of Greek religion will assure us that the Olympian pantheon is the result of such a synthesis. But to be the result of such a process of cultural integration does not make the integrity of the new cultural form epiphenomenal, since the ultimate "simples" in the process are not the original cultural units that have been integrated into the new, polyglot structure; these, rather, lie on the *same* ontological level as the new formations. The simples or "atoms" in this process are, rather, the individual deities, prior to their location in any *topos*. Where these identities become blurred by syncretism sources of contact with the divine realm may be lost to humanity; hence the concern of Proclus to maintain the integrity of local cults. The philosopher, according to Proclus, must transcend nationality in his religious life; but we must understand that transcendence in accord with the dominant concepts of his system. First, one



transcends the national pantheon in the direction of better grasping the absolute uniqueness and individuality of each God, not in the direction of dissolving the Gods of every nation into functional classifications, hence dissolving the supra-essential into Being and reducing theology to ontology. Nor can one, simply by fiat, constitute a single massive polyglot pantheon, for the bonds which hold together a pantheon are myths, not concepts. There is no indication that Proclus attempted to fashion such a super- or pseudo-pantheon; at any rate, it is clear that he knew many more Gods than he included in the *Platonic Theology*, and it is questionable that he and Syrianus alike would regard the exact number of Gods as unknowable by humans – albeit finite – if the number were as small in magnitude as the number of Gods treated in the *Platonic Theology*.

There is a difference between the places which the Gods constitute mythically, such as the “place” of the national pantheons, and the abstract conceptual space of quantification, which is also the product of divine activity, but on a different level altogether. Both have value for Proclus and both are preserved by him; in fact, the former is in some respect the condition of possibility for the emergence of the latter. Neither needs to abolish the other to guarantee its autonomy, for Olympus, e.g., is constituted mythologically, the species intellectually. This difference between the space of myth and the ontological set of “all the Gods” or “all the intellectual Gods” and so forth, will be secured when the intellectual order has fully established itself from out of the intelligible-and-intellectual to the intellectual order, as we shall see. Issues of cultural specificity will, of course, be with us equally in the intellectual order and subsequently, but in each case they will have a

different status and a relevance appropriate to the order of Being which is there constituted.

The first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order is the "supra-celestial place" (*huperouranios topos*) of the *Phaedrus*. It is distinguished from the "unparticipated and occult genus of the intelligible Gods," Proclus informs us, by the presence of "so great and distinct [*diakrimenon*] a divine multiplicity there, viz. truth, science, justice, temperance, the meadow, and Adrastia ... For neither do the fountains of the virtues, nor the distinction and variety of forms, pertain to the intelligible Gods" (6. 22. 10-7). First, we must note that the *plêthos* in question here is not a *plêthos* of Gods, but divine in a different sense: these are the "fountains of the virtues," *pêgai* being intelligible forms, "divine" relative to the Intellect. In this way, those virtues indispensable to the emergence of Intellect are rooted nearer to the Gods. It is important to take seriously the distinction between intelligible and intellectual form. *Pêgai* are like intellectual forms, apparently, in that they too are "distinct," *diakrimenos*. That is, they form a diacritically organized set. "Distinction" always has this sense of mediation for Proclus, and therefore it conveys as much *unification* as *differentiation*, and so the virtues, for instance, are not autonomous individuals like the Gods, but are each essentially mediated by the unity or wholeness of the set of which it is a part. What is different between the intelligible and intellectual forms is not specified here, and yet one thing we can note immediately is that concepts such as truth and science are *infrastructural* in relation to the forms we shall encounter in the intellectual order, such as identity and difference, and in the

infra-intellectual orders, such as likeness and unlikeness. In the latter we may note an interesting paradox. Why do likeness and unlikeness, which are indispensable to the Proclean conception of procession (cf. *ET* prop. 28), arise in the infra-intellectual orders, while truth and *epistêmê* arise *prior* to Intellect? There is no point here in stepping outside the system and attributing to mere textual exigencies choices that, given the flexibility of Neoplatonic interpretive schemata, could always have been different. Likeness and unlikeness, referring as they do to that which approximates a form, are appropriately applied to processions in the higher orders of Being insofar as those processions are understood *by us* through the lens of the fully constituted hypostasis of Intellect. The labor of constituting that Intellect, however, is borne by those forces which are *really* prior – and such is the role of the *pêgai* and, *a fortiori*, the Gods. In this way we can begin to appreciate the special nature of the genetic account put forward in the *Platonic Theology* as juxtaposed against the static account of the *Elements of Theology*. We cannot expect, therefore, the multiplicity of the virtues in the intelligible-and-intellectual order (which is indeed in some respects still a “virtual” multiplicity) to possess the same structure as the multiplicity of intellectual concepts.

A further question raised by the above text is why Proclus refers to the intelligible genus of the Gods as “unparticipated.” Is not the participability of Gods inherent in their being Gods? In the position here of monads at the head of a series, however, the Gods in their intelligible summit are being distinguished from their extensions into Being. Just so has Being *in the strict sense* been sealed off, so to speak, preparatory to the process by which Intellect

is brought forth. This corresponds to the emergence of Being as an *object* suitable for intellection. In the Parmenidean attribution of the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad, we find Difference posed between the One and Being: "For here the many subsist through Difference [*heterotês*] which distinguishes [*diakrinei*] Being and the One" (27. 79. 25f). From this interposition *number* comes to be; and this is the "many" which is denied of the One in the first negation of the *Parmenides*, that is, a multiplicity in which each member is subordinated to the unity of the whole. Did numbers not possess such a unity, the units in the number seven would never form a sum. Here we can see the old generic notion of *henades* as mere "units" coalescing with the Proclean strict sense of henads as Gods. For in the intelligible-and-intellectual order the Gods form the unity of a pantheon. The Gods are absolute individuals, and the ultimate entities in the universe; and so when they form a cooperative unity, it is the *first* such unity over difference and the paradigm for all the rest. This is why Proclus stresses the multiplicity of Gods in this order. It is not as if there have only now come to be many Gods. Rather, what is new in this order are dispositions of Gods in relation to each other; and these dispositions will increase in complexity in the intellectual order. We grasp number by virtue of an analogy between the units in the sum and objects disposed meaningfully in relation to one another. This meaningful relation cannot, however, draw its origin from idly scattered beings; instead, the first such meaningful relation are the figural dispositions formed by co-emergent sets of Gods in the cooperative action displayed in myth and iconography. Proclus thus formulates his own unique response to a longstanding Platonic problem concerning the unity of the units

in a sum.

The negations of the *Parmenides* begin from the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, taking up the intelligible order only at the end, where we read that the One neither is, nor is one. This order of presentation is not merely a matter of convenience according to Proclus' interpretation, although he acknowledges a rhetorical necessity for Parmenides not to begin with the highly paradoxical denial of the One's being and unity. But even rhetorical necessity is not without its intelligible foundations. With the beginning of the intelligible-and-intellectual order begins the emergence of diacritical difference which, once it reaches its culmination in the intellectual order – where the *opposition* of Identity and Difference arises – will be capable of constituting the system to its furthest limits, while nevertheless subordinated *in its own being* to a discrete position in the ontic hierarchy.

Given the systematic importance of the Parmenidean moves at this point, it will be best to place aside for the moment the Phaedran “supra-celestial place” in order to examine the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad as Number, after which we will be in a much better position to understand this “place” as the site of the “fountains of the virtues.” For we do not yet understand, for one thing, what is the difference between difference as it appears here and the difference to which identity is opposed in the intellectual order. The first intelligible-and-intellectual triad is

analogous to the One Being. For the One Being is there [in the first intelligible triad] occultly, intelligibly, and paternally; but here, in conjunction with

Difference, it generates number, which constitutes the distinction of forms and reasons. For Difference itself first shines forth [*prophainetai*] in this order, being power and the dyad in intelligibles, while here it is a maternal and prolific [*gonimos*] fountain. For there power was collective of the One and the One Being; on which account also it was ineffable, as existing occultly in the One and in *hyparxis*. But here Difference separates Being and the One. After this it multiplies [*pollaplasiazei*] the One, proceeding generatively [*gennētikōs proiōusa*], and calls forth Being into second and third processions; breaking [*thruptousa*] Being into many beings and fractioning [*kermatizousa*] the One into more partial henads while, completing the declension according to each of these, the wholes remain. (27. 79. 16f)

Difference in the intelligible-and-intellectual order is thus a development of the dyadic nature of power into a fountain, that is, an intelligible form. The *dyadic* nature of power was not remarked upon by Proclus in the account of the second intelligible triad. It would be within the connotations of the concept for the Platonic reader, to be sure, given the long history of the Pythagorean opposition between the One and the Indefinite (*aoristos*) Dyad. This way of expressing the fundamentally dual nature of beings has largely given way, however, in Proclus, to the more strictly Platonic pair of Limit and Infinity. He characterizes power as essentially dyadic here largely because this aspect of it is relevant at just this point. However, dyadic structures were everywhere in the account of the second intelligible triad, beginning of course from the opposition between the deity as individual and his/her powers, which are abstractible. This was the rift generative of Being Itself; and all the other dyads flow from that one. And yet here we read that power's function

there was fundamentally to hold together the One and Being, while here it separates them. And this is immediately understandable, for Being is not created in a moment of repulsion of the Gods from that which arises as an expression of their own potencies. But in its function of holding together the One and Being, that is, each God and that which s/he produces, the moment of difference between the God and Being remains latent, "ineffable" or "occult." Emerging for its own sake, difference in the intelligible-and-intellectual order now allows the distinction between the Gods and that which they produce to be spoken. The first result of this distinction is, however, as we have seen, a space of cooperative action and unity. This space for cooperative action between Gods comes from the prior diremption of each God who cooperates with another, a letting-be-different of the relation existing between the two Gods, a relation which would otherwise remain "ineffable" within the *hyparxis* of each, but never emerge for itself as a moment of *linkage* between two Gods. This is the difference, then, which allows us to speak of Gods beside each other and in relation to each other.

The supra-celestial place is analogous to the first intelligible triad, but Proclus explains that whereas the first intelligible triad was paternal, subsisting according to "divine unity and Limit," the supra-celestial place is maternal, "subsisting according to Infinity, and the power of Infinity; for this order is feminine and prolific, and produces all things by intelligible powers. Hence Plato calls it a place, as being the receptacle of the paternal causes, bringing forth and producing the generative powers of the Gods into the hypostases of secondary natures" (10. 33. 12-22). That it should produce by *intelligible powers* points to the new status accorded that power which was

the very indiscernibility of the One and Being – deities and their divine products – in the intelligible order. The intelligibility of powers *as such* points to the increasing independence of product from producer, in which that which was simply the union of the two is now a nascent third term between them: a place or scene of and for ontic production. This place or scene is also, we read, “really existing essence (*ousian tēn ontōs ousan*)” (10. 33). The class [*taxis*] of Gods proceeding to the illumination of the intelligible-and-intellectual constitute *essence* in opposition to the monad of Being, *to hen on*, or that which is “simply intelligible (*haplōs noêtē*),” for this class “falls short of the unity of that triad [i.e. the first intelligible triad], and participates of Being, but is not simply Being. Hence Plato calls it essence [*ousian*], and really existing [*ontōs ousan*], as receiving this intelligible and essential [*ousiôdes*] <character> according to the essence of that which is primarily Being.” Again, the characteristics of this class of Gods are constitutive of this phase of Being, and not of these Gods in themselves. It is a question, rather, of the *activity* of the Gods in this class. In constituting a space or context in which Being can become an object, that is, express *its own essence*, it is necessary for these Gods to become receptacles, as it were, for something which is ultimately *their own product*, namely “that which is primarily Being.” We recall from III 21. 74 as well as *ET* prop. 151 that “as the intelligible Gods are henads primarily, so too are they fathers primarily,” and that “all that is paternal in the Gods is of primal operation [*prôtourgon*] and stands in the position of the Good [*en tagathou taxei*] at the head of the several divine ranks [*diakosmêseis*].” So then in their diremption or receptivity *to self*, which is the precondition to objective relations and cooperative action



amongst each other, the Gods of this class, the first rank in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, are “maternal” – and of course, just as there can be henads that are feminine and also “fathers,” so there can be those who are both masculine and “maternal.” The supra-celestial place, we read, receives the paternal causes, the generative powers of the Gods, and brings forth from them something novel, namely secondary hypostases, secondary and tertiary “declensions” of Being. These come about through a kind of reflex upon originary Being which constitutes a double of Being that is *ousia*, the first participant *in Being*, whereas Being participates the Gods alone. This movement of reflexivity and divine self-diremption will reach its culmination in the complex activity of Gods *upon each other* which we see in the intellectual order.

Difference was power in the intelligibles, while here it is a fountain, that is, an intelligible form. As power, it had not truly come forth as itself, as Difference, inasmuch as the standpoint of diacritical Being had not been established. In the second intelligible triad, the powers of each God did not yet constitute a mediating space *between* Gods, but rather, preparatory to this, the site of the diremption of the individual God, the site of an otherness within him/herself, on the one hand, while on the other hand it represented a plane of anonymous powers abstracted from any divine individual. Power was ineffable there since discourse requires a diacritical standpoint, and power as it existed in the intelligible order did not provide a medium for the Gods to act with each other or upon each other. Diacritical Being has the form of Number. Is *arithmos* to be translated without further ado as number here, or does it retain the sense of series or set which we have previously

encountered? While it is clear from the *Parmenides* that what emerges at this point is indeed number, it would be a mistake to dispense with an awareness of the other connotations of the term in Proclus, especially since Proclus resists the identification, prevalent in Pythagoreanizing strains of Platonism, of each God with a *particular* number. Rather, "number" retains a generality with respect to the Gods that forecloses any one-to-one correspondence. The number emerging in the intelligible-and-intellectual order is rather the form of ontological multiplicity as such, which emerges from the diremption of each God in two ways: first, as the coming together of Gods into the unity of a set; and second, as the beginning of the process of Gods manifesting themselves on successive levels of Being, creating their own series or *arithmoi*. Difference "multiplies the One, proceeding generatively, and calls forth Being into second and third processions; breaking Being into many beings and fractioning the One into more partial henads while, completing the declension according to each of these, the wholes remain" (27. 80. 1-6). The generativity of Difference corresponds to the maternity of the supra-celestial place; power is no longer, as it were, without issue or at least without legitimate issue, for now the relationship between principle and product is reciprocal. In producing successive ontic hypostases, the Gods manifest themselves as corresponding "partial henads," just as Gods offer themselves up to the unity of a co-emergent set or pantheon as a part of a whole in which they claim only their share, *timê*. The "fractioning" of the One into "more partial henads" has equally these two senses.

"We denominate the Gods that subsist according to Life intelligible and intellectual, not as giving completion to intellect, nor as being established

according to intellectual intelligence, and imparting to intellect intelligence [*to noein*] and to the intelligible the being-cognized [*to noeisthai*], but we give them this appellation as deriving their subsistence [*hupostantas*] from the intelligible monads and generating all the intellectual hebdomads" (8. 27f) (we shall leave aside for the moment the precise significance of the "intellectual hebdomads"). Just as in the *Parmenides* negations signify causation, so here one suspects that the care with which Proclus indicates what the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods are *not*, indicates something about what the *beings* of this order *are*. The Gods of this order, in an activity of reflection, become "hypostatized," so to speak, taking hypostasis from the monadic or essential components of the intelligible order, in a gesture that is for Proclus "feminine" or "maternal." The diremption which was implicit in the intelligible order thus becomes concrete as the Gods of this order take up into themselves the intelligible product (indeed, in the form of literal "nourishment," *trophê*, at the "banquet") and hence generate the divine underpinnings of the Intellect. But if this is the first encounter of the Gods with Being *qua* Being, it is for that reason the second procession of Being Itself, its first having been the trace or vestige of the divine *hyparxis*, or "existence." Hence we read that in the intelligible, "the One was of Being, and Being of the One, through the inexpressible and occult unity [*henôsin*] of them, and their subsistence in each other" (28. 82. 23-5). The integrity of the Gods in the intelligible order – that is, in their "summits" – was such that no ontological difference, that is, no distinction between themselves and their nature or quality, could gain purchase. Now, with the emergence of real difference between Being and the One, that is, between Being and the Gods,

the Gods react to the Being in their presence and constitute, as their first *joint* act, that very presence, the scene of intellection which is also the “banquet.” This scene is, on the one hand, the locus of the virtues, on the other hand, number – both of which define the possibility of intellection in different ways.

First intelligible number reveals itself to us, which is connected to [*sunechês*] multiplicity. For every number is multiplicity. But with respect to multiplicity, one kind subsists as unified [*hênômenôs*], and another kind with distinction [*diakekrimenôs*]. Number, however, is distinct multiplicity, for there is difference in it. For in the intelligible, there was power, and not difference, and this power generated multiplicity, and conjoined [*sunaptousa*] it to the monads. Number therefore is in continuity with intelligible multiplicity. (28. 81. 3-10)

The sense of the “continuity” here is that number is continuous with or develops out of the multiplicity implicit within each God. The henads became units of measure through the second intelligible triad; now these units are comparable with each other. The multiplicities which were conjoined to the monads are the powers and activities which were inseparable from the Gods, the products from their producers, but are no longer so united to them. These multiplicities are of several kinds: the multiplicity represented by the participability of each God down to the lowest levels of Being, and which leads to the generation of sub-divine members of the God’s series such as angels and daimons, not to mention herbs, stones and so forth; the multiplicity represented by the illumination of different regions

of Being, which leads to the distinction between, say, intelligible and intellectual manifestations of the same deity; the multiplicity of the divine company, as it were; and the multiplicity of the discrete monads and triads with which ontology concerns itself. All of this unfolds itself from an original position in which there are only the Gods and their powers, the latter pregnant with the capacity to emerge into determinacy as qualities, activities, and events.

Number is diacritical Being, the model of “distinct multiplicity” as such, because each number is constituted of units, that is, participates unity; as such, all numbers possess a common measure in one sense, although relations of incommensurability emerge in a different context. Diacritical Being is *feminine*, within Proclus’ conceptual set, because masculinity represents for him singularity, autonomy and individuality, whereas femininity represents all that which problematizes the integrity of the individual. Beyond insight into the gender concepts animating Neoplatonic metaphor, the formulation enables us to discern once again the contrast between the modes of unity represented by the henad and the monad. Hence, when Proclus explains that divine number is feminine (chap. 30), he has in mind on the one hand the generativity of *series* in general, such that each God expresses a femininity of sorts in bringing forth a dependent series of manifestations from themselves, and *also* the dissolution of henadic individuality into classification and the attendant *unification*. Hence we read that Difference “distinguishes the One from Being and fractions [*katakermatizousa*] the One into many henads and Being into many beings” (89. 10-12). There is a difference, however, Proclus explains, which is prior to that difference (*to heteron*) which is a genus of

Being; for this latter is *ousiôdes* and "in no way pertains to supra-essentials." The primary difference "is primarily present with the henads themselves, and distinguishes and produces many henads from one [*apo tês mias*]" (89. 21-3). Proclus subtly guides our interpretation by the fact that it is the One, *to hen*, which is "fractioned" while it is from one *henad* (*mias*, feminine, must refer to one henad) that many are produced, *apergazetai*, which has a sense of finishing. The two characterizations carry distinct connotations: the former is the abstract picture of a principle declining into multiplicity, the latter of each henad producing from the primordial diremption of him/herself the other Gods and the whole objective hierarchy of Being so as to take this objectivity back up into themselves, reflecting it and securing its availability to our reflection. The difference in the intelligible-and-intellectual order "imitates intelligible power, and is prolific of many henads and of many beings" (91. 1-3), for power is the basis of the juxtaposition of the Gods, from which relative disposition of Gods to one another arises an ontic manifold of forms, and from each implicit relation becoming concrete a host more are generated. "What else therefore is it," Proclus asks, "than the feminine nature of the Gods? ... And how could it otherwise separate number from itself and the forms of number and <its> powers, unless it was the cause of the divine processions in a feminine manner?" (90. 27f). The primordial difference of which he speaks is, of course, feminine inasmuch as it is, in the first place, the Infinity that is the second moment of the first intelligible triad. The powers of the Gods, that which problematizes their individuality, is their "femininity," here a full-blown maternity inasmuch as it separates from itself number and its forms and powers, inasmuch as all of these moments are objectified or

hypostatized now. This at once brings number in some sense to the Gods – and we have seen already a preference in Proclus to refer to the multiplicity of the Gods as an *arithmos* – while at the same time separates the Gods from number *qua* number, whose forms and powers are monadic. There is always a strict correspondence between these procedures: the becoming fully autonomous of an ontological determination, and the attendant insulation of the Gods, as supra-essential, from being determined by it. The intelligible-and-intellectual order, as the first *solely* constituted by divine illumination of a region of Being, represents at once the site of a certain divine reserve, inasmuch as not *every* deity will illuminate this region. This holding back can be seen, in keeping with the determination of this region as the scene of *noêsis*, as expressing a disjunction within divine intellection between a providential intellection manifest in illuminating the posterior processions of Being, and a purely self-directed intellection, like that of Aristotle's unmoved movers, characteristic of the intellect of each and every God.

What is the appropriate relationship between the Gods and number? At 29. 85. 22-3 we read that "divine number" is that "according to which the genera of the Gods are divided [*diêrêtai*], and ordered [*diakekosmêtai*] by appropriate numbers." Here Proclus locates the determination of the divine *diakosmoi* according to Limit and Infinity of which we are already familiar from the *Elements of Theology* props. 151-9. The greatest benefit in reading the *Elements* is to be derived from identifying the order in which the determinations discussed there arise in the genetic accounts of the *Parmenides* or the *Platonic Theology*. "Number" is in this context that which underwrites ontologically the divine method of the *Philebus*, for we read that

the “monad and dyad” – the two “*prôtourgous dunameis*” – are

the power generative of wholes and the power which collects into union all progressions. For according to the monad, it collects intellectual multiplicity and conjoins it to intelligibles; but according to the dyad it produces multiplicity and distinguishes [*diakrinei*] it according to difference. And according to the odd number it collects the many orders [*diakosmous*] into indivisible [*adiaireton*] union; but according to the even numbers, it prolifically manifests [*ekphainei*] all the genera of the Gods. Being established as the medium [*mesos*] between the intelligible Gods and the intellectuals, and giving completion to the one bond of them, carried in the highest intellectuals [*akrois tois noerois*] but united to intelligibles, it unfolds the intelligible multiplicity, calls forth its occult and unitary [*heniaion*] nature into distinction [*diakrisin*] and prolific generation, while it also collects that which is intellectual into union and impartible communion. (29. 84. 5-18)

The monad and dyad seem here to be principles of the expansion and contraction, so to speak, of preexisting qualia, rather than of their generation – in short, like a means for ordering a manifold. The “intellectuals” here are seemingly not the intellectual Gods, but intellectual hypostases, inasmuch as Proclus is discussing here divine number, which arises through the activity of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, and not the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods themselves. It is a question, here, of that which is a medium between the unitary nature of the Gods and the effort of intellect to grasp them. For “the intelligible number of the intellectual genera possesses particularities [*idiotêtas*] which cannot be grasped [*aperilêptous*] by human reasoning [*logismois*],” albeit “it is divided into two *prôtourgous dunameis*” (29. 84. 1-5).



The phrase “intelligible number of the intellectual genera” means that which is intelligible relative to the intellectual Gods, i.e. the Gods prior to them. This status of relative intelligibility has been remarked upon earlier by Proclus in chap. 10, where the supra-celestial place is intelligible relative to heaven, the second intelligible-and-intellectual triad. Kronos, similarly, though an intellectual God, is said to be intelligible relative to the demiurge because he, Kronos, is the summit of the intellectual order. But one must perhaps also maintain the ambiguity of the term *arithmos* here, and recognize that the intelligible *ordering*, that is, the divine structure underlying the intellectual genera, is accessible to *logismos* only so far as the identification of it with the two *prôtourgos dunameis* and the method deriving from them. The intelligible-and-intellectual order thus becomes the site of the confrontation, so to speak, between the divine, which is here “intelligible” in an eminent sense, as at *PT* III 21. 75. 22-3 we read that “the henads are frequently called intelligibles, and beings intelligible intellects,” and that which is finally truly separate from them, namely intellect and its resources.

The placement of divine number in the intelligible-and-intellectual order posits arithmetic as infrastructural relative to every other intellectual achievement, lying closer to the Gods than the concepts of the intellect. Indeed, number has about it a mystery and an impenetrability which resembles the ineffable individuality of the Gods, and yet it exhibits already many of the characteristics of rational and discursive thought. As such it constitutes an appropriate medium for the expressions of divine power. The side of number which truly belongs to the Gods is obviously the *qualitative*

dimension, that exploited by the Pythagoreans in their own mathematico-theological speculation.<sup>15</sup> Number lies at the heart of the classifications of the Gods, as the purest expression of the nature of their activities with respect to Being. But number is not supra-essential; it is not, for instance, on account of number that there are many Gods. The two aspects of number, the qualitative and the quantitative, are rather both established by divine activity, the former individual, the latter cooperative. Numbers belong to the domain of expressions of divine power, that is, they are formal, and so if for a certain Pythagoreanism Athena corresponds to the number seven, this is to be seen as a way of characterizing the activity of this Goddess with respect to Being, no different than saying she is a Goddess of justice. Such formal determinations do not touch her supra-essential individuality; any number of deities from different pantheons manifest the same qualities but the possession of such common powers in no way determines two deities as the same or as participating in something common – rather, it is something common which participates *them*. The same thing, naturally, goes for the quantitative dimension, a certain configuration of deities in relation to one another being common to any number of different myths – this insight indeed provides the possibility of a “structural” analysis of myth, even if the latter never actually achieves a *reduction* of the mytheme to a matheme.

The first and most abstract determination of the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, then, is the One, Difference, and Being: “These three things therefore, have appeared to us from the beginning, according to the distinction [*diakrisin*] of the One from Being, namely the

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, the *Theology of Arithmetic* attributed to Iamblichus.

One, Difference, and Being. And these are three monads, Difference neither being the same with the One nor with Being." (31. 92. 6-9). But due to the activity of Difference, these monads break down into three dyads: the One in conjunction with Difference, Difference in conjunction with Being, and the One in conjunction with Being. These dyads, moreover, become three triads "when we begin [*arkhomenôn*] at one time from the One, at another time from Being, and at another from Difference" (31. 92. 18-9). The exact procedure here is far from clear, but we can see in it nevertheless another dimension of the emergence of number from divine activity: in releasing these analytic determinations into proper manifestation, it becomes possible for these ideal operations to generate "summations" which increase the total magnitude of the system. All of this comes about through the manifestation of relations between Gods and their powers, those powers with the powers of other Gods, and Gods with each other. "Beginning" from the One, from Difference, or from Being, engenders as well according to Proclus three *types* of number:

And thus far primary deity [*hê protistê theotês*] reveals itself, being prolific of the first numbers; according to the One, of the unitary, according to Difference, of the generative, and according to Being, of the essential. Since however from this deity which is intelligible that which is posterior to it proceeds, it is evidently necessary that the monad, dyad and triad, should have prolific power. These powers therefore, Parmenides calls once, twice, thrice (*Parm.* 143 E 1-7). For each of these is a power which is the cause of the above-mentioned essences, which produce either distinctly or in complication [*kata sumplokên*]. For there, with respect to their generations [*apogennêseis*], some of them are

entirely peculiar [*idiai pantôs*], but others are common to them and to secondary natures. (31. 93. 1-12)

This is surely not one of Proclus' clearer pronouncements on any subject, especially insofar as the result is simply a triad of classes of number modelled on Limit, Infinity and the Mixed, namely the "oddly-odd," "evenly-even" and "evenly-odd." What is clear, however, is that the secondary procession of the Gods requires that the monad, dyad and triad alike must be accorded "prolific," *gonimos*, power. That is, whereas the dyads and triads of the intelligible – that is, the second and third moments of each intelligible triad – tended to fold into their appropriate monads, the dyad and triad are here productive, which is as much as to say that they are truly present in their determinacy or denumerability. Referring to them, as Proclus now does, as the dyad and triad, already emphasizes this. The sense of "once, twice and thrice" then is that of really distinct powers rather than a static analysis of constituents, their characterization by *counting* invoking a sequentiality which is the very beginning of the narrativity that will be disclosed through the intellectual order. Whereas the powers of the three intelligible triads seemed like diverse perspectives upon the given deity, these perspectives are now conceivable as powers in their own right. The unfolding of the powers of monad, dyad and triad into corresponding unitary, generative, and essential series unfolds a complete ontological structure in which a multiplicity of supra-essential Gods, a multiplicity of their powers or measures,<sup>16</sup> and a

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps we are to understand the "generative series" as comprising the angels, daimons and mortal animals of the divine series which constituted, along with the Gods, "the parts contained in the intelligible multiplicity" from the conjugation of the One-that-is and Being-which-is-one in the second intelligible triad (PT III 27. 98f). Everything in the second intelligible triad, of course, pertains intimately to the intelligible-and-intellectual order.

multiplicity of ontic terms are disclosed. These multiplicities, existing according to a common measure now, can be spoken of as *generated*, that is, as positing their causes, with their activity determined along one axis by the opposition between distinction and complication – i.e. mutual repulsion and action in common – and the opposition between *idiotês*, particularity or individuality, as a repulsion of that which is subsequent to them, and a community with the subsequent processions of Being which is the ground of divine providence on behalf of them. That these ideas should be expressed in the context of an esoteric theory of number is perhaps less surprising once we understand that the ambiguity of the term *arithmos*, meaning on the one hand “series” and on the other “number,” is itself constitutive for the effort of Proclus to arrive at a notion of the status of number in which are to be seen the traces of primordial powers common to and connective of Being and Intellect, without *reducing* these powers to their purely mathematical expressions. Whether or not he is altogether successful in this endeavor is less important ultimately than his originality in seeking to compose a comprehensive account of the *ideal genesis* of all the determinations of Being – as derived from the dialectic of the *Parmenides* as well as from the rest of the Platonic corpus – from the fundamental posit of the existence of the Gods, by drawing out the consequences of their nature.

The One and Being each become many (*polla gignetai*, 31. 94. 11) through the activity of Difference in the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad:

Every part [*morion*] of Being participates of the One; but every henad is carried as in a vehicle in a certain portion [*moira*] of Being. Each of these, however, is

multiplied, intellectually distinguished [*diakrinetai noerôs*], fractioned [*katakermatizetai*], and proceeds to infinity. For as in intelligibles, we attribute infinite multiplicity to the third triad, so here, in this triad we assign infinite number to the third term of the triad. (94. 12-19)

Being participates the One, and is hence a whole, each being *qua* being a part. A distinction between *part*, *meros* (dim. *meros*), and portion or share, *moira*, seems to arise here, however, as if there is a distinction to be made between the divisions of Being and the apportionment, so to speak, of the One in each henad. Indeed, were there not, the distinction between theology and ontology would collapse. But it is not the same thing to discern the esoteric sympathies of beings, their membership in one or another divine series, and to explicate their ontological classification. What is the formal basis of the distinction between the two types of portion? We read a little further on, "How can the portions of the One be equal to the fractions [*kermasin*] of Being? For in infinities there is not the equal" (95. 3-4). The *portions* of the One, that is, the henads, do not correspond to the fractions or intellectual divisions of Being. The latter can be equalized with each other, whereas henads are fundamentally *incomparable*. It is for this reason that the henads must, in their illumination of Being, *constitute* a ground for their own comparability. This incommensurability between the henadic and ontic multiplicities manifests itself in a feature of number. There is an infinite *succession* of numbers, but not an infinite *number*: "how can there be an infinite number, since infinity is hostile to the nature of number?" (95. 1-3). Proclus contrasts this to the infinity embodied in the third intelligible triad: "For as in

intelligibles, we attribute infinite multiplicity to the third triad, so here, in this triad we assign infinite number to the third part of the triad" (94. 16-19). The third intelligible triad was the world-ordering paradigm implicit in each henad, the totality prior to the potential infinity represented by the number serie; and so the relationship between totality or "infinite multiplicity" and "infinite number" seems to prefigure the relationship of form to its instantiation in general.

The difference between henadic "portions" and ontic "fractions" and the impossibility of equating them, is thus both a schematic representation of the opposition between the Gods and Being, as well as a basic ontological structure. We have already seen in chapter 3 of this dissertation how the distinction operates in the broader sense between locating some being within the unitary world-order represented by each henad and locating that being according to the regime of monadic unity, which is the unity of *infima species*. We understand that the contexts in which we take the being are fundamentally irreducible; that is, we do not expect the portion of Being in which a given henad is carried to be mapped ontologically onto the structure of Being Itself. This secures the irreducibility of divergent divine series as well as the autonomy of ontology from theology. A bull is a mammal and a quadruped in a sense fundamentally different from that in which it is an avatar of Zeus in the myth of Europa, and this latter from the sense in which the *ba* of Osiris is immanent in the Apis bull at Memphis. The bull of Zeus and the Apis bull represent divergent divine series, comparable but irreducible for their own part to each other or to a common measure, whereas the being of the bull, its position according to ontological coordinates, is by its

very *nature* a common measure.

This distinction between the portions of the One, or the portions of Being in which the henads are carried like vehicles, on the one hand, and the parts or fractions of Being, what we might call essential units, seems to be at stake in the criticism of Plotinus in chap. 32. The immediate issue is the relationship of number to the third intelligible triad, Animal Itself. Proclus rejects the idea that number is present in Animal Itself as distinct, multiform and the product of Difference, as opposed to “intelligible and occult number as comprehended in the monad” (32. 95. 20-1). In number,

each of the parts is no longer an intelligible whole, as in Animal Itself. For that is a whole of wholes; and everywhere the One was with Being in its parts, and Animal Itself was only-begotten ... if he should call intelligible animal number, in this case, there will be distinction and difference in the Gods, whom we have asserted to be established above wholes, according to supreme unity [*akran henōsin*]. For all section [*tomē*] and division originate from the intellectual Gods; since here Difference proceeds, adorning things in conjunction [*sundiakosmoussa*] with the One and Being. How, therefore, does the fractioning of the henads, or the multiform nature of beings pertain to intelligibles? (96. 4-24)

The whole of wholes represented by Animal Itself is none other than each henad conceived as containing all the other henads – and, *a fortiori*, all of Being – and thus itself a whole of wholes. Moreover, as we have seen in the last chapter, its pertaining to each henad singularly is also its “only-begottenness.” The portions of the One were not different from the parts of



Being there, because Being there did not possess the autonomy it only really begins to achieve in the intelligible-and-intellectual order. *Distinct* number in the third intelligible triad would make the third triad no longer the world's paradigm, but rather the *world*, collapsing the domain of demiurgic execution, an unacceptable conflation of ontological registers. Only given this separation can we speak of a form of Totality or Allness represented by the third intelligible triad. The "fractioning" of the henads, in which discrete roles, so to speak, belong to each, occurs on a different stage than that in which each rests in his or her totality, for it belongs to a context interior to a particular mythos, a particular co-emergent set or pantheon of Gods.

Once we grasp something of the true ontological import of number in his system, it is easy to see why Proclus can, in passing, refer approvingly to the "Pythagorean" association of Athena with the number seven, since there is no fear, for Proclus at least, of confusing the Goddess with the number: the Goddess is prior. Nor would the discovery of another deity associated with that number require us to posit the two deities as one and the same; it is no different than discovering any other pattern of activity as common between two deities. Conversely, the domain of pure number theory rests securely on its ontological foundations without fear of interference from the theologian. In this lies the significance of the doctrine Proclus briefly elaborates in chap. 34, in which he distinguishes, among "monadic" numbers, that is, numbers as sets of monads or units, between the *form* of each number and the *unity* or *henôsis* of the form. We can only know each number according to its form, that is, as a set of so-and-so many monads, whereas the form, according to its *henôsis*, is unknowable to us (34. 101. 11-12) – qualitative as opposed to

quantitative number. This is the difference between “monadic” and unitary number: monadic number reduces to the One, while the uniqueness of each unitary number is analogous to the individuality of the Gods. Both are unknowable, not in the sense that we know nothing *of* or *about* them, but with respect to a technical definition of knowledge as knowledge of or through the cause. Nor are numbers, naturally, unknowable in the same way and in the same degree as the Gods; but they do possess within themselves a model of the distinction we recall from *IT* I, 303 between speaking indeed “about” the Gods (*peri autôn*) as opposed to speaking “of each of them as such” (*auto de hekaston*). Qualitative number, although belonging within the domain of the powers of the Gods, is eminent with respect to other powers in its mystery, which tends to outstrip discursive account. For there is something different in associating Athena with the number seven, and associating her with, say, the tutelage of heroes. The latter is explicable to a degree that the former is not. As such, the former has a more infra-structural position, closer to revelation than to *doxa*.

The anagogic function of the intelligible-and-intellectual order as a whole is especially on display in the section of the *Phaedrus* that concerns Proclus, and this function lies at the heart of further determinations of the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad coming from this dialogue. The supra-celestial place is “the plain of truth,” which is “divided according to a multiplicity of forms, and possesses a variety of powers, and the meadow which is there nourishes souls, and is visible [*horatos*] to them, the first intelligibles illuminating souls with ineffable unity [*henôsin*], but not being

known to them by intelligence" (6. 23. 8-13). This plain of truth is nothing other than the field of activity of the Gods, the principal vehicle of their illumination of the posterior hypostases. It is the common positing of the Gods which can be *seen* by souls, in which respect one might contrast it to the disorderly motion prior to the demiurgic *diakosmêsis*, or to matter itself, which insofar as it can be considered an hypostasis at all, expresses the uncircumscribed totality of the Gods as the principle of that which is liminal to any given world-order. The nourishment afforded souls in the supra-celestial place is an illuminating *henôsis*, the ultimate integration of the soul and its concentration in what Proclus refers to elsewhere as "the flower of intellect" and what Iamblicheans seem to have meant by the "One of the soul." The result of this illumination is the vision of the structure of the intelligible, and we must never forget that this "place" is the staging-ground, so to speak, for the explication of the intelligible hypostases.

The Gods themselves also "feast" upon the intelligible, as we read in the description of the third triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, the "sub-celestial arch," which represents the "perfective" class of Gods. That *this* is the site of the connection of the Gods to the intelligible "goods" rather than the supra-celestial place, which is nevertheless the place where these intelligibles – the Beautiful, the Wise, the Good – reside, indicates the reason *why* the Gods feast upon intelligibles, which are after all posterior to them ontologically; namely, in order to constitute the intellectual orders. It is not, that is, a question of *sustenance* for them *qua* Gods. Rather, it sustains the project of the constitution of Being. The intelligibles, as we have seen, essentially *reflect* the Gods; by taking this reflection back up into themselves,

and feasting upon it, the Gods extend themselves to the *direct* causation of the hypostasis of Intellect, rather than the latter merely emerging as a secondary or tertiary diminution of divine potency. That the generation of Intellect should express a moment of genuine divine intentionality was, we recall, the concern of Damascius in his own explication of the third moment of the first intelligible triad. This moment has the quality of a return to themselves and to wholeness, and in this way the community between Gods and humans in the *Phaedrus* can be preserved. Moreover, one might fruitfully compare, as homologous moments, the divine feasting in the intelligible-and-intellectual order with the demiurgic encounter with matter in the intellectual order, to be discussed in the next chapter.

The idea of a common ground for souls and the Gods is expressed in chap. 9, where we read that Plato, in this dialogue, “elevates [*anagei*] souls and the Gods themselves” first to the fountains, that is, the domain of intelligible form, through the “liberated leaders” (*apolutoi hēgemonoi*), a class of intellectual Gods, then to the “leaders of perfection,” who “illuminate us, and prior to our souls, whole souls, and prior to these, the Gods themselves,” then to “the connectors [or ‘sustainers’, *tous sunectikous*] of all the intellectual orders,” that is, the Gods who fill the middle of the intelligible-and-intellectual order. Since the triad of remaining, proceeding and reverting is constitutive of all beings, the Gods who proceed to the illumination of posterior hypostases must revert as well upon their causes, which refers ultimately to their supra-essential *hyperxeis*, but *immediately* to their co-emergent intelligible causes. That is, just as the Gods banquet upon the intelligible not for their own sustenance, but for the sake of beings, so too the

Gods constitute the structures of Being as much in their reversion as in their procession, affirming Being in the very pattern of their "return" *through* it. An intellectual deity such as Zeus, then, does not simply withdraw himself directly into his supra-essential summit, but reverts upon the prior orders of the Gods with whom he is co-emergent and which represent the paradigms of the ontic hypostases, the ascent to which is thus made available to the philosopher's dialectical reflection.

The supra-celestial place is the common ground of all things, in which all are disposed in relation to each other. Hence we read that the supra-celestial place "elevates all things at once, according to one common unity [*mian henôsin koinên*], as far as to the intelligible father, and generates and produces them as far as to matter," being "established between the unitary and the multiplied Gods [*te heniaiôn theôn kai tôn plêthuomenôn*]" (11. 38. 8-12), where the "unitary Gods" are synonymous with the "intelligible father," namely the Limit-aspect or particularity of each God, his or her summit. To this common field upon which all things may be laid out (we recall the reference to an intelligible "high place" or place of survey, *periopê*) corresponds "the genus of true Science" which "is said to be established about the supra-celestial place." This science is "truth itself" and "a deity which is the fountain of all intellectual knowledge and the first efficient cause of undefiled and immutable intelligence" (14. 44. 1-3). Indeed, Science, Temperance and Justice are here

three fountains ... intelligible deities, and the fountains of intellectual virtues, and not ... as some think they are, intellectual forms. For Plato is accustomed to

characterize these by the term 'itself', as for instance Science Itself and Justice Itself ... But here when he says Justice *herself*, Temperance *herself*, and Science *herself*, he appears to unfold to us certain self-perfect [*autoteleis*] and intelligible deities ... (44. 10-19)

Just as we have stressed before that the masculinity of *ho theos* implies particularity rather than factual gender – not, in other words, a masculinity excluding femininity – we see Proclus here distinguishing the feminine from the neuter designation of Science, Temperance and Justice not insofar as the former instantiate factual femininity, but because the feminine designation indicates particularity, that these are *certain deities, theotêtas tinas*, individuals, rather than intellectual forms, which possess an altogether different mode of unity. Nor should we understand the categories of fountain and deity to be conflated here, although, as we have seen, the proximity of these terms is constantly affirmed by Proclus. Fountains are the divine roots or “sources” of Ideas, mediating between the latter and the Gods. They are the numinous component of the Idea, and therefore are positions or functions of particular henads. They emanate from the third intelligible triad, because they represent the aspect of each deity as potential world-paradigm. For the deities who proceed to the illumination of the intelligible-and-intellectual hypostasis, however, this paradigmatic function becomes operational: they participate in the constitution of a factual world order. Thus we read that Science “illuminates the Gods with knowledge” as the first intelligible triad “imparts essence to all things,” Temperance “measures the energies of the Gods, and converts each of them to itself,” imitating the “connective and

measuring power” of the second intelligible triad, while Justice “imparts to them [the Gods] the cause of the distribution [*dianomês*] of universal Goods [*tôn holôn agathôn*] according to desert [*kat’axian*]” (44. 25-6).

And through Science each of the Gods intellectually perceives that which is prior to himself, and is filled with intelligible unity; but through Temperance he is converted to himself, and enjoys a secondary unity, and a Good coordinate to the conversion to himself; and through Justice he guides the natures posterior to himself ‘in a silent path,’ as they say, measures their desert, and supplies a distribution adapted to each. These three fountains therefore contain/sustain [*sunechousin*] all the activities [*tas energeias*] of the Gods. (44. 26f)

What is “prior to” the Gods is the fruit of the self-analyzing divine cognition; hence it is an “intelligible unity.” Temperance seems to correspond to the moment of co-emergence, in which is a conversion *to self* for the Gods out of diremption and relation; while Justice pertains especially to the relationship to beings. The fountains in the supra-celestial place operate on behalf of souls and Gods alike. As the Gods deploy themselves throughout – and so constitute – discrete regions of Being, these fountains express the implication of deities in the realm of Being, or better, that which is implicit in deities *from the standpoint of Being*. The Gods who proceed beyond the intelligible order are no longer impassive, but constitute themselves as *if* they were beings according to the same formulae that shall guarantee the integrity of souls as well, providing a bond between souls and the Gods, albeit what is the human condition is, for the Gods, a manifestation of choice and volition. The virtues thus play a role in the system no less important than the hypostases –

indeed, one could argue that they are more important, since hypostases are properly understood as *principles* whereas the virtues are fountains.

We can shed some light based on this on what can only appear as the over-elaboration of the moments contained in the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual. For the supra-celestial place represents a certain ceiling, as it were, enclosing intelligibility in *noêsis*, inasmuch as what lies beyond, insofar as it is *truly* beyond, pertains rather to the Gods *qua* Gods. We read that the supra-celestial place “is allotted an intelligible transcendency with respect to the other intellectual Gods. Hence the intelligible Good of it is rendered manifest from its being known by Intellect. This intelligible therefore, in the same manner as that which is truly Being [*to ontôs on*], arrives to it from the unitary Gods. For they are primarily and imparticipably intelligibles, and the first efficient cause of all intelligibles” (13. 43. 1-6). The unitary Gods are *all* the Gods insofar as they do not proceed to the illumination of Being and are, to that extent, *unparticipated*. The term is surprising, inasmuch as we read in prop. 116 of the *Elements* that every God is participated except the One; but this passage from the *Platonic Theology* simply confirms that the One is, in such a passage, a *façon de parler* for that which cannot be spoken in such a discourse as the *Elements*, that is, each God in his/her very uniqueness. Every God is participable, but at its limits such participation surpasses *ontological* participation and thus participation in the strict sense. Beings that belong to the series of some God, for instance, whether we mean the manifestations of that deity at successive levels of illumination (e.g., the Zeus who is demiurge versus the Zeus who shares the cosmos with Poseidon and Hades) or their privileged synecdoches (the cult



statue or the sacred beast, not as types but as *this one*) have a relationship too *particular* to that God, too expressive of that God's uniqueness, for the relationship to be characterized in the formal manner of participation. In just this way the Gods are the efficient causes of intelligibles without being paradigmatic causes, for otherwise there would be no end of forms of forms. The "imparticipability" of the Gods goes in tandem with this efficient causality, in which something is withheld in the very act of production. This withholding is not defensive; rather, it ensures the independence of the entities produced. The intelligible Good as well as *to ontôs on*, that is, Being as a being or truly-existent essence, Being as truth-of-Being, arise in the scene of intellection. That the emergence of these intelligible hypostases from the henadic domain remains for its own part only partially illuminated is indicated by the references Proclus makes to the kind of knowledge we may possess of the entities native to the site of this emergence. "This class, being the summit of the intellectual Gods, is unknown and ineffable according to its own particularity [*tên heautês idiotêta*], and is to be known through intelligible impressions [*sunthêmatôn*]" (11. 35. 17-20). Again, we read that in the supra-celestial place "the mystic impressions of intelligibles shine forth ... and also the unknown and ineffable beauty of characters [*tôn kharaktêrôn*]" (9. 30. 12-14). *Sunthêma* is generally to be translated as "symbol," in accord with its importance in theurgy, but it is more revealing, I think, of the systematic function of *sunthêmata* to render them here, as Taylor does, as "impressions," i.e. as a dependent moment of experience. Again, the ultimate intelligibles are like "characters," insofar as the latter, while indispensable to discourse, cannot themselves be captured within syntactic or semantic

categories. This is their “ineffability,” which places them prior to any given alphabet. So too, in the account of divine names in the *Cratylus* commentary, the primordial forms of the names of the Gods were as “characters of light.” The divine name in its primitive nature retains thus an element of the materiality of language, so that even if two Gods had names which translated into the same epithet in different languages, they would nevertheless still be *different names*.

To return to the Science, Temperance and Justice of the supra-celestial place or the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, we read that “these three Goddesses” have as their “defining particularities [*tas aphôrismenas idiotêtas*] ... the plain of truth, the meadow, and the nourishing cause of the Gods <that> are posited there” (16. 48. 22f). To these moments from the *Phaedrus* correspond structural moments of the co-emergence of the Gods: “one of them unites [*henoi*] the monads of all the Gods and collects [*sunagei*] them about the intelligible; another effects this about the processions of the Gods; and another about their conversions” (16. 50. 17-9). “The monads of the Gods” refers either to the Gods as the heads of their own divine series or to the Gods as subjects of ontological processes. The ontological moments of remaining, proceeding and reverting are understood here as three *unifications*, expressing the pivotal role of fountains, and especially virtues, as transitional between the mode of unity of the henads and that of beings. We shall have occasion to remark in the next chapter upon the cosmogonic function of the virtues in the intellectual order. Here it is a matter of the Gods establishing their simple *presence* within Being; but since nothing the Gods do with respect to Being is without immediate

significance for beings, the virtues in question arise as primary expressions of this elementary stage of divine activity. In the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad, the Gods are first posited as intelligible objects themselves upon a common field with the primary intelligibles, hence Science; Temperance regulates their procession, which as an emergence *in common* is also a "unification" of the henads; while their reversion (i.e. upon the intelligible opus) manifests radical Justice. More could obviously be said about the way in which the formal structure of these virtues is given by their origins in these basic structures of divine activity, but such an account would belong to a discussion of Neoplatonic ethics.

That the virtues are considered as deities here is a function of the text with which Proclus works. In a different factual theology, these "fountains" could be operated on behalf of the rest of the Gods in the pantheon by deities possessing these functions as *attributes* rather than the deified concepts with which Proclus is confronted here. The very fact that they are expressible as concepts indicates that they are not essentially deities, strictly speaking. One could perhaps just as easily say that the virtues in question arise directly from the aforementioned patterns of divine activity. A similar question could be posed in relation to the intellectual order, namely whether it is possible for the functions of the demiurge to be performed by a class of intellectual deities possessing a quite different structure, in that what is essential to the constitution of Intellect is narrativity and cosmogenesis rather than, say, the concept of sovereignty. But that is not to say that Intellect as constituted by one set of mythic determinants is indistinguishable in structure from Intellect as constituted by a very different set of such determinants. What is important

in general, however, is that we have reached the stage at which deities operate in relation to each other, with particular deities providing intelligible orientation for the illuminative opus. This “orienting” function of Gods on behalf of each other, which expresses the part/whole relationship to Being essential to the illuminative activities of the Gods, is not to be confused with whole-to-whole relationship each God possesses to Being expressed by the three intelligible triads, an “intelligibility” correlative to no particular illumination. Instead, what is established in and through the intelligible-and-intellectual order is a *reflected* intelligibility.

The “nourishing cause” referred to above is, we read, “a certain intelligible unity, comprehending in itself the whole perfection of the Gods, and filling the Gods with vigor [culmination? *akmês*] and power, in order that they may bestow a providential attention to secondary natures, and may possess an immutable intelligence of such natures as are first” (15. 46. 7-11). It is “a certain” unity by virtue of the emergence of facticity in this order. We read in *PT* II 8 that we are forced to speak of the One Itself *as if of a certain thing*; but here the unity is no longer an intellectual compromise formation, but has real givenness, as we can see from the recourse Proclus has to mythological material in this order. The two sources of divine nourishment mentioned in the *Phaedrus*, ambrosia and nectar, are “the perfections of the Gods *qua* Gods” (47. 7) and correspond to Limit and Infinity respectively. But both of these are subordinate to “the one fountain of perfection and seat [*hestia*] to all the Gods,” namely “nutriment” in general, the “banquet” of the dialogue, which is “the intelligence [*noêsis*] of the Gods *qua* Gods ... the plenitude [*plêrôma*] of intelligible goods, and the uniform [*henoeidês*]

perfection of divine self-sufficiency [*autarkeias*]" (47. 27f). The nourishment in question is thus nothing other than the appropriation to themselves of the intelligible and their disposition into a uniform "perfection," that is, ultimately, a single world-order (the term *perfection* being persistently associated with the third intelligible triad). This represents, to a degree, a sacrifice of their autarchy to "uniformity," the banquet, however, symbolizing the consensual and celebratory nature of this emergent organization.

This convocation of the Gods establishes *law* for beings, and hence a final aspect of the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, of which we have seen so many sides – arithmetical, aretological, topographic – appears, namely the "kingdom of Adrastia," in the place where "the measures of a life free from harm [*apêmonos*, in the sense of blamelessness] to souls" are "defined [*aphorizon*] ... from the vision of these intelligible goods" (17. 51. 5-7). The law of Adrastia is distinguished as *thesmos*, a sacred law, from the *nomoi*, mere laws, attributed to, e.g., Kronos and Zeus, for "the Kronian Gods are essentially exempt from the laws of Zeus [*tôn Diôn nomôn*], and the connective and perfective Gods [i.e. of the intelligible-and-intellectual order] from the Kronian laws; but all things are obedient to the sacred law of Adrastia, and all the distributions [*dianomai*] of the Gods and all measures and guardianships [*phrourai*] subsist on account of this" (52. 14-8). Gods of "higher" *taxeis* are not subject to the laws of Gods of subordinate *taxeis* because they "essentially" transcend the *dianomai* of those *taxeis*. The "kingdom of Adrastia," as the source of all these *dianomai*, supersedes all of them: it is, as it were, Distribution Itself prior to any particular distributive regime. "The inescapable guardian power of this triad, and the immutable

comprehension of order [*taxeôs*] pervading everywhere, pre-subst in this Goddess. For these three deities not only reveal and collect [*sunagousin*] all things, but they are also guardians, according to the Oracle, of the works of the father, and of the intelligible One [*tou henos tou noêtou*]" (52. 3-9). The intelligible One and the Father are one and the same, namely the Limit-aspect of each deity. And indeed, it is under the ideality of Distribution Itself that the power and works of each deity are protected, lest any particular distribution be allowed to subordinate the particularity of the individual deity, and the infinite generativity that flows from it. Distribution's ideality with respect to any factual distribution is thus like that ideality of Number, alike a determination arising in the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad, which prevented the Gods from being reduced to factual numbers. The "guardian" function which first comes to light here will be pervasive in the intellectual order, as we shall discuss in the next chapter; let it suffice to say that it pertains particularly to the determinacy or *diakrisis* that achieves its final form in that order.

The three particularities, *idiotêtas*, of the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad – and by particularities here we must understand specifically the functions performed by deities located in this class – are *disclosive* (*ekphantorikên*), *collective* (*sunagôgon*), and *defensive* (*phrouretikên*) (18. 53. 25-6). The first triad "receives in itself the plenitude [*plêrôma*] of forms from the intelligible paradigms and produces its own meadow [*leimôn*] from the fontal summit which is there. But from the one intellect it gives subsistence to the three virtues, perfects all itself by intelligible impressions, and in its ineffable bosoms receives the whole of intelligible light" (54. 3-9). The

meadow is another term from the *Phaedrus*, its imagery appropriate here, for the *plêrôma* represented by the third intelligible triad has become a *topos*, the site, in particular, of the intuition of the intelligibles, where the light of the Gods becomes concrete and hence *fertile*, a meadow “watered” so to speak, from the “fountains” that are intelligible form. Proclus remarks on the negation, in the *Phaedrus*, of *color* in this order, treating it like a negation from the *Parmenides*, expressing the causal power of this order over the concretization of illumination: “if Heaven is sight beholding the things above, the intelligible of it may very properly be called color which is conjoined with the sight” (chap. 12). Negations express the most immediate transcendence, causal transcendence, and so here, within the scene of intellection, color falls on the side of the *noêsis* as the moment of seeing, the reception of illumination, the facticity of disclosure, while the colorless light of the supra-celestial stands just beyond, preserving itself from appropriation. The juxtaposition of *light* and *place* in this order may be significant, we note, with respect to the very singular doctrine of Proclus reported by Simplicius (*In Phys.* 611-613) that *place is light*. This seems to have its higher-level analogue in the “place” of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, which is nothing other than the space created by divine illumination.

The second triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, the heavenly circulation of the *Phaedrus*, consists, according the Parmenidean structure, of three crucial pairs of opposites: One and Many, Whole and Part, Finite (*peperasmēnon*) and Infinite (*apeiron*). Proclus lays out a structure of mediation such that in the first intelligible-and-intellectual triad Difference is

the medium between the One and Being, in the second triad Whole is the medium between the One and the Finite, and in the third, the Perfect is the middle of that which has Extremes and of Figure (39. 112). Notice that Wholeness is not a medium for its own triad but for the first and third triads, that is, *for the entire order*. In just this way "the whole order of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods may be seen as having its subsistence in the middle," that is, the heaven as common place. In its most abstract form, this place is Wholeness Itself, from which is deployed the very logic of whole and part so indispensable to the philosophical system. From the point of view of the hypostases, what has occurred is that "since the distinction of henads and beings from number extends to it [the second intelligible-and-intellectual triad], the One and Being, which we have said Difference divides, become wholes, and the things proceeding from these are the parts of them" (35. 103. 9-12). This is what allows us to speak of the hypostases of the One and Being, for such monads are constituted according to the logic of parts and wholes.

The predominant characteristic of the intelligible-and-intellectual order is *sunechês*, which has the triple sense of *connecting*, *containing*, and *continuity*. In the intelligible-and-intellectual order, the Gods posit themselves upon a common *topos* – or really a host of common *topoi* of different kinds, as well as the supra-essential *topoi* of myth, be it Olympus or Kunlun – which is in turn the root of all mediation for beings. These originary spaces of mediation connect all things and contain all things. But the moment of continuity represented by the intelligible-and-intellectual also *sustains* all things – a fourth and final sense of *sunechês* – inasmuch as it represents the *investment* of infinite power. This investment is cashed out in



the application of intellectual measure to this continuum in the intellectual order. Proclus compares the celestial order to the sensible heaven especially in that

Timaeus says that this <sensible> heaven also compresses on all sides the elements that are under it, and that on this account, no place is left for a vacuum. As, therefore, the apparent heaven is connective of all things that are under it, and is the cause of their continuity and sympathy – for the intervention of a vacuum would interrupt the continuity of things, and the subversion of this continuity would destroy the sympathy of bodies – so also that intellectual heaven binds all the multiplicities of beings into an indivisible communion, illuminating each with an appropriate portion [*moiran*] of connection. (20. 59. 18f)

The “intellectual heaven” is thus the ultimate source of that principle of continuity in procession that Dodds discerns in prop. 28 of the *Elements* (pp. xxii, 216). This principle states, according to Dodds, that “the qualitative interval between any term of the procession and its immediate consequent is the minimum difference compatible with distinctness,” (216). Thus does procession occur always through a “measured series of variations” (IP 1049), vacuum being equivalent to essential irrationality. The proposition itself is posed in terms of likeness and unlikeness: “Every producer [*paragon*] constitutes [*huphistêsin*] things like to itself [*ta homoia*] before the unlike.” Likeness and unlikeness are determinations internal to the intellect, constituted by the order of hypercosmic Gods. The notion of a minimum distinction, however, which is essential to their operation in the proposition,

is the contribution of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, the scene of *noêsis*. From out of this continuum emerge such intellectual atoms as unity, wholeness and finitude in their determinate or oppositional form, as well as number. The *sunochê* is the intelligence of intelligibles, and the intelligible of intellectuals (22. 65. 18), the intelligible of intellect being an intelligence or *noêsis*, just as the true Ideas are said to be thoughts “in the sense of a thought-process of Intellect in the true sense, in fact of the Paternal Intellect, in which both true beings are thoughts and thoughts true beings” (IP 895). Thus does the intellection of a single divine mind posit the Gods as a unified multiplicity through the crystallization of its own perspective, its own totality, Totality being the operation specific to the “paternal intellect,” i.e. the third intelligible triad.

The third triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order is the “perfective” class of Gods, the “teletarchs” into whose “perfective empire” (*telesiourgon hêgemonian*) souls are initiated in their ascent, for “the first mysteries are there” (24. 73. 6). From the world-paradigm, then, which was implicit in each God as seen through the aspect of the third intelligible triad, we have arrived at the point of the institution of an actual regime, so to speak, in which initiation – the taking *as truth* of some mythic discourse – plays the role of citizenship; such is the beginning of *apodeixis*. “Through this triad everything which is perfect is self-sufficient [*autarkes*] and subsists in itself; everything which generates is perfect, and generates in its prime [*akmazon*]; and everything which aspires after its proper principle is conjoined to it through its own perfection” (25. 74. 15-9). The references to self-sufficiency

and to principles are not accidental, for in the intellectual orders – *telos* being a characteristically intellectual determination – we shall observe the emergence of principle, which will be contrasted with the fountains in respect of the latter's "self-begottenness," prefigured in the present triad's bestowal of *autarchy*, the negation of principle in that which possesses its own principle (*archê*). The basic attribute of the Gods from which this order derives is their quality of being "self-perfecting" (self-constituting and self-cognizing): "Perfection is triple, one indeed being prior to parts – such is the perfection of the Gods ... the henads of the Gods are self-perfect, and subsist prior to essences, generating multiplicities and not being generated together with them" (25. 74. 27f). The other perfections are that which consists *of* parts "such as is the perfection of the world" and the perfection which is *in* parts. "Perfection," thus "is divided after the same manner as wholeness" (75. 15-7), and this answers for the triadic division of the perfective order. To refer to the Gods as "self-perfect," then, is already to refer to them monadically, as wholes-before-the-parts; in particular, as *perfectors* of beings, granting initiatory insight into the laws of essence according to which beings are constituted *qua* beings. Hence we find Proclus pausing to criticize "those who are ignorant of this divine order, and do not maintain the whole fountain of perfection," and who "have recourse to *entelechias*," being "ignorant of the perfection which is separate from subjects" and "willingly embrace the resemblances of true perfections" (24. 71. 14-21). The problem with the Peripatetics he chastises here is that they posit a desire toward essence on the part of beings which finds no fulfillment, like the cult of a God in whom there is no initiation and of whom there is no vision. But "sight is nothing

else than light" (22. 67. 16) and thus the illumination of the Gods cannot fail to bring with it their corresponding appearances: "this triad [the third intelligible-and-intellectual triad] opens the celestial paths, being established under the celestial circulation, and exhibits the self-splendid [or 'immediate', *autophanê*] appearances [*phasmata*] of the Gods" (26. 77. 4-6). The same principle was at work in the intelligible order, by virtue of which the powers of the Gods, their causal efficacy, could not fail to disclose, at the same time, something of the truth of their natures. Indeed, it is this relation that is constitutive of *truth* itself, perhaps the most important of the many critical concepts founded in this order. Truth is the accordance of some being with its being, or essence, or of a deity's manifestations or powers with their supra-essential nature.

The determination of the third intelligible-and-intellectual triad derived from the *Parmenides* is *extremity, to eschaton*. This counts as the first or "intelligible" moment of the triad, while the second, or intelligible-and-intellectual moment is *perfection*, which is explicated as "the perfection which consists of parts," namely beginning, middle and end; and the third or intellectual moment of the triad consists of *figure*, with its three characters of circularity, rectilinearity, and the "mixed" figure consisting of both right and circular lines (37. 108f). Proclus explains that in the third moment of the connective triad, which was the opposition of the Finite and Infinite, "the One was said to be the Finite, but here it is said to have an extremity, as receiving according to participation the capacity to limit the many [*hôs kata methexin to peratôtikon tôn pollôn katadexamenon*]" (108. 11-3). What limits the many according to participation is the unity of a common field, which

achieves a new degree of determinacy here as figure. We can discern as well the imprint of the intelligible intellect (the third intelligible triad), which was Totality. Totality becomes concrete here as that which *has limits*. The repeated allusions in Book IV to the intelligible-and-intellectual order as a kind of circumference which connects, contains and sustains all things expresses this idea, the *eschata* in question being the terms at the extremes of the entire system which are posited through the “middle” represented by the scene of intellection. Still implicit at this stage is the power of *exclusion* which is an essential moment in extremity; for now, to be at the limits is a matter of the relation of periphery to center within a field of co-emergent deities. It will await the moment of *hylomorphism* in the intellectual order for the further sense of “eschatology” to emerge. Figure represents, we might say, that disposition of Gods in relation to one another which will blossom in the intellectual order into *narrative incident*.

A specific instance of the *eschata* associated with this order are the passages to infinity which each of the intelligible-and-intellectual triads involves in its third moment (39. 113. 6-10): “for the limit [*peras*] of the first triad is number, of the second, infinite multiplicity, and of the third, the rectilinear, which itself participates of the nature of the infinite.” *Peras* has here a new sense which was implicit in it from the start, namely of a limit distinguishing actuality from potentiality, an opposition which is contained in each of the infinities emerging in this order and which is characteristic of Intellect, inasmuch as the intellect at once possesses methods for proceeding to infinity, *as well as* an always unactualized reserve of “matter.” This reserve can be understood in one of two ways, as I have indicated previously. It may

be seen, on the one hand, as representing the occultation of the henad in his/her summit and that accompanies the deity's activities of illuminations like a shadow of sorts. Such is the material upon which the demiurge works when seen from within the demiurge's own perspective *qua* intellect. *Qua* deity, by contrast, the deity who is the demiurge would perceive no alterity and hence no "matter." By contrast, we may see the infinite process as *already accomplished*. Hence the demiurge's "matter" is, in fact, illuminated by all the Gods prior to him/her. This "all," the totality of *all the Gods*, is something altogether different from the discrete *topoi* generated within the intelligible-and-intellectual order: it is no Olympus, Asgard, Kailasa, Amenti or Kunlun. The absolute totality of the Gods, by contrast, can only correspond to the cacophony of disparate voices before we have selected some particular one which will be our "signal" while the rest are regarded as "noise": the moment of "initiation."

This metaphor of signal and noise finds a parallel in Leibniz, for whom sensation expresses the limit of a monad's powers of cognition and matter the limit of a given regime of form or intelligibility. Where Leibniz falls short, however, is that the multiplicity of Leibnizian "monads" vanish into a single absolute monad of which they can only be moments. The Leibnizian concept of the monad is thus equivocal, forced to encompass both Leibniz's God and his creatures, while dissolving the latter into the former. This equivocation is expressed in Leibniz's very discourse, which incorporates theological content undigested, so to speak, and without a systematic distinction between philosophical and theological discourse. The causality existing between Leibniz's God and his creatures, their "creation," would be understood by

Proclus as relationship strictly within the intellect, and hence presupposing a certain initiation. That is to say, the relationship of creature to creator has a context for Proclus whereas it is absolute for Leibniz. The immediate context or *topos* of this intellectual relationship is none other than the intelligible-and-intellectual order. This context, moreover, reaches beyond the limits of the intellect to the inscrutability of "matter," for "each of the [intelligible-and-intellectual] triads according to its limit [*peras*] is carried [*epibateuein*] in the material worlds [*tois enulois kosmois*], and comprehends according to one cause the infinity of the natures that are generated in them" (113. 10-3). The sense of *epibateuein* is of a fighter in a chariot, or a soldier or merchant aboard a ship, as opposed to the rowers and seamen, or metaphorically, the act of taking one's stand upon something (L&S 288); it is particularly apt for the situation of the henads that proceed to the illumination of the Intellect, staking their claim, as it were, within the intelligible and perfecting the world through Thought.

## Chapter 7:

### The Order of the Intellectual Gods

The intellectual order is at once an end and a new beginning. It is the end of the cycle of expressing or unfolding the elements of the first intelligible triad and the beginning of a secondary, infra-intellectual procession into the realm of soul, with which we cannot concern ourselves in this dissertation. The infra-intellectual Gods are still supra-essential henads; we do not leave off our account with the intellectual order because with it we have exhausted the orders of the Gods. But Proclus tells us that the intellectual order of Gods “terminates the whole processions [*tas holas proödous*] of the Gods” (V 1. 6. 8). That we are to understand *tas holas* here as qualifying the processions *as wholes* rather than as something like the totality of processions is evident, first, from the fact that there are subsequent orders of Gods, but furthermore, from the corresponding statement further on that the “intellectual hypostasis



of the Gods ... binds to itself all the partial processions [*tas merikas pasas proödous*] of the Gods" (6. 18). The intellectual order, then, is the end of the *whole* orders, and the beginning of *partial* ones. What is the significance of "whole" and "part" here?

The concepts of whole and part emerged in and through the second intelligible-and-intellectual triad. But the new determinations arising in the intellectual order permit these concepts to be developed with much greater complexity. The determinations of the intellectual order drawn from the *Parmenides* are: in another/in itself (138a2-b7); in motion/at rest (138b8-139b4); identity/difference (139b5-139e6). These determinations are crucial to the emergence of hypostases like Soul inasmuch as these arise no longer from the primordial analysis of the divine individual which was expressed by the three intelligible triads, but rather *within* Intellect, as a function of its internal articulation as a cosmos constituted in relation to the demiurge, whose station is represented by the all-important concepts of identity and difference. The infra-intellectual orders of Gods have an especially intimate relationship to the demiurge. The ruling or assimilative Gods are said to be "suspended from the demiurge" (VI 1. 6. 4) and "woven together in continuity with the demiurge" (VI 1. 5. 11-3), a phrase we encounter also at V 11. 37. 28, where we read of "the demiurge of wholes, and all the multiplicity of Gods which is woven together with him." This "weaving," as we shall see, has much to do with the emergence in the intellectual orders of mythic *narrative*. But the demiurge has an extraordinary position not just in respect to the infra-intellectual Gods, but all the Gods, because the formative potential of the determinations of the intellect extend to the limits of Being and thus

encompass all the Gods noetically: "What other God is it who reigns over all the Gods, except the cause of their subsistence and essence?" (V 21. 77. 25f), namely the demiurge. Demiurgic sovereignty thus becomes a figure for the power of concepts like identity and difference to extend all the way to the First Principle, the appropriation of the Gods into relationship to the demiurge as sovereign, as well as the limitations upon that sovereignty, representing the possibilities and limitations of their appropriation into philosophical discourse. Proclus is thus notably careless about whether it is all the Gods, or merely the encosmic Gods, over whom the sovereignty of the demiurge is exercised. "If he imparts to his progeny to be 'Gods of Gods' [*Tim.* 41 A 7], in a much greater degree it suits him to be celebrated as the God of all the Gods" (78. 3-6). It belongs to the demiurgic monad "to congregate all the Gods into their most honourable habitation [*oikêsin*] ... to convert all the Gods to himself, and to survey the whole world ... Who can convert all the Gods in the world [*en tō kosmō*] to himself, but the fabricator of their essence, and of their allotment in the universe [*tēs en tō panti diaklêrôseôs*]?" (78. 12-24).

The equivocation results from an analogical sense which can be accorded to the term "encosmic." The encosmic Gods are, strictly speaking, the mundane Gods. But in another sense, *all* the Gods are in some fashion taken up into the demiurgic *kosmos*. "All the orders of the Gods originate from a monad because each of the whole orders is assimilated to the whole procession of the Gods" (V 14. 45. 5). The monadic organization of the Gods is a disposition relative to the totality formed by the successive illuminations of Being. Every *taxis* of the Gods "is a whole united to itself through the whole [*holê di' holês heautê hênômenê*]" (V 28. 103. 6-7), and thus incorporated into

that cosmos that the demiurge constitutes “a whole from wholes” (V 20. 73. 14). It would make no sense to look at a single class in isolation; we must look either at the individual God, or at the co-emergent sets which are fixed, not just to the monad of their own class, but to the demiurgic monad and to the whole of the monadic hierarchy of Being. We have seen this already in the way that Gods proceeding to the illumination of particular levels of Being revert, not directly upon their supra-essential *hyparxeis*, but instead upon intervening levels of Being constituted by their co-emergent set, the fellow members of their “pantheon.” The terms used to express the relationship of the monads of this series to the rest of the Gods – constitution, subsistence, hypostasis – are ontological. Hence “the subsistence of the Gods has the cause of its generation from the imparticipable One” (V 14. 45. 7); Animal Itself “constitutes the Gods” (V 16. 55. 20); the demiurge is “the hypostatic cause of Gods” (16. 55. 26).

It is “subsistence” (*hupostasis*) and “essence” (*ousia*) that the Gods receive from their sovereign,<sup>17</sup> clearly distinguishing the extent of this suzerainty from their supra-essential *hyparxeis*. The “subsistence” and “essence” of the Gods are their *works* on behalf of Being and their position in an abstract ontic hierarchy, not, as these are for beings, that without which they would not exist. For even the assimilative Gods below the intellectual order are “according to their *hyparxeis*, beyond essence and multiplicity; but according to the participations of them which receive the illumination of a procession of this kind, they are called assimilative” (VI 16. 79. 7-10). Through the

<sup>17</sup> Note the remark at V 11. 37. 17-8 that “the causes of the subsistence of all the Gods are fontal fluxes [*rheumata pēgaia*],” that is, something on the order of intelligible forms or fountains, but less determinate, like the “vestiges of forms” that cause the “disorderly motion” of pre-cosmic or pre-demiurgic nature (that is, nature as *thinkable* without the activity of the demiurge). Note also that the One is sometimes referred to as a fountain.

demiurgic monad “the multiplicity of causes is distinguished [*diakrinetai*], and all the monads of the Gods reveal themselves [*anaphainontai*] according to the demiurgic procession” (V 39. 144. 1-3). The “first Zeus” (the demiurge), we read, “imparts to the All the determinate divine [*aphorizôn...to theion*] and from all things weaves a single polity” (V 24. 90. 22-4). The form of Allness, we recall, lay in the third intelligible triad; and this form achieves, through the recognition of the demiurge’s sovereignty, divine determinacy, for this determinacy lies in the recognition of some particular deity *as* demiurge and sovereign. We shall come to understand in much more detail what it means for all the Gods to be gathered in this way into a single “polity.”

These relationships between monads and henads are less paradoxical once we recognize the difference between what subsumption under a class (a monad) means for henads in contrast to beings: “All the vivific processions are suspended from one vivification, and the demiurgic orders are extended to one fabrication [lit. ‘demiurgy’]” (V 14. 45. 11-4). The classification of the Gods, their submission to monadic unification, is according to the nature of the unification of their *productions*. “The intelligible-and-intellectual Gods divide all things triadically; but the demiurge divides the world into five parts, and divides the circles of the soul into hebdomads, that he may generate either the celestial spheres or the seven parts of the soul. We must say, therefore, that he is entirely secondary to the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, and he is the cause of secondary goods to the world” (V 14. 49. 21-6). It is not the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods *themselves* that are divided triadically; the triad expresses rather the pattern in which they divide the All. They are divided according to what they *do*. This is the sense in which

Animal Itself “constitutes the Gods” – namely, as the paradigm of totality, of Allness. One would not, thus, say that, e.g., *Phanes* constitutes the Gods, or, rather, if some factual theology said this one would explain it philosophically according to the role of the third intelligible triad.

It is in light of this distinction between the Gods and their works that we may read the doctrine of the demiurgic *will*. “His will is the progeny of the activity of his goodness, bounding [*horizousa*] the end [*telos*] of his power” (17. 60. 17-9). His will is his goodness *actualized*, passing over from supra-essentiality into *energeia*. The goodness of the demiurge is “nothing other than demiurgic deity;” that is, “his goodness is not a certain habitus [*hexis*] of good and a power, or a form itself by itself existing prior to many goods, but an ineffable ‘participation’ [*metalêpsis*]<sup>18</sup> of Good, and the One of the demiurgic class” (V 17. 60. 8-12). In short, “through will, his power is governed and is *extended to one intelligible Good*” (60. 24, my emphasis). The supra-essential goodness which each God is becomes, in and as divine will, an intelligible good. And whereas the supra-essential good of each God is indistinguishable from that God’s identity and is expressed by that God’s proper name, the intelligible Good shall be *one thing*, namely the cosmos. A slightly different way of putting it emphasizes the distinction between “the divine particularity [*idiotêta*]” of the demiurge and “the intelligible cause which is in him, and the unified [*hênômenên*] cause of wholes which he contains” (V 17. 61. 4-6). “For because there is deity [*theotês*] in him which desires [*ephiemenê*] to adorn and arrange [*diakosmein*] all things, and an

<sup>18</sup> Note that Proclus declines to use the normal term for participation here, just as later in the same passage, he will assert that the demiurge is “filled with ‘participation’ [*metousias*] of the One” (60. 21-2). Thus does Proclus maintain the fundamental doctrine by which the Gods participate in nothing, strictly speaking.

*hyparxis* which is extended to the providence of wholes, on this account he establishes the principle of demiurgy" (60. 14-6). "Desire" here expresses that it no necessity constrains a God to illuminate just those regions of Being in which s/he reveals him/herself, but choice. This desire is a broader term, then, than that "will" which is peculiarly manifest in the demiurgic cosmogenesis as the expression of the type of desire essential to a God of the intellectual order.

Jan Assmann, in a discussion of the nature of myth in his *Egyptian Solar Religion*, remarks on the internal relationship between *action* and *narrativity* in relation to the Gods, in a way that sheds light on why divine will and narrative dispositions emerge together in the intellectual order. "In the mythical dimension," that is, the dimension of narrativity, as opposed to iconicity,

the gods appear as 'persons', i.e. role-bearers in constellations of acts. Their decisive characteristic is personality, 'active' and 'passive' ... Thus the concept of action assumes a decisive theological significance. Actions are always communicative, i.e. they have a meaning which can be realized only in relation to the participant(s). Accordingly, the concept of constellation is implied in the concept of action. It is impossible to think of the god as an actor without relating him to beings that give his actions meaning and purpose. (41)

The potential for such constellations or dispositions of the Gods in relation to each other having been established in the intelligible-and-intellectual order, *action* now follows, in the form of narrative mythical episodes and what is, in effect, the greatest narrative of all, the narrative of demiurgic world-

constitution, the concretization of the demiurgic will.

The emergence of narrativity in this order and its relation to diacritical or mediated being is rendered explicit in remarkable fashion through the seventh monad of the order, the “separative monad” or “separative divinity,” *diakritikê theotês* (V 3. 17. 15). This monad represents, not a deity, but a range of *incidents* from mythic narrative, including but not necessarily limited to the castrations of Ouranos and Kronos. Why is the seventh monad associated with a genre of incident rather than a personality? Is this simply because there is no appropriate personality available in the Hellenic pantheon? I would argue that this is not the case. For we shall see that to each of the monadic positions in this order occupied by deities correspond “guardians,” whose function I shall discuss later; but there is no guardian accorded the seventh monad. This indicates that the position is not to be occupied by a deity, but represents the common function or mediation of the order as a whole. The “diacritical” divinity, we read, “accomplishes the divisions [*diaireseis*] and segregates [*chôrizousa*] the Kronian genera from the Ouranian, and the Jovian from the Kronian, and separates [*diakrinousa*] the whole intellectual order from the natures prior to and posterior to it, disjoins the different causes in it from each other, and always imparts to secondary natures secondary measures of royalty [*basileias*]” (3. 17. 16-21). The description blends mythological and philosophical determinations. On the one hand, it is particular Hellenic deities which are mentioned here, and not monadic positions; but on the other hand, it is their “genera” that are divided, i.e. that which *belongs* to them in the realm of Being. Then again, the separation or distinction of the “whole intellectual order” (*holon ton*

*noeron diakosmon*) and the disjoining or detachment of the causes in it results in the distribution of appropriate “measures of royalty,” deploying again the bridging concept of sovereignty, which expresses in general the process of apportioning roles within the pantheon and monadic sinecures, so to speak, to particular deities. The peculiar mediating function performed by the seventh monad belongs irreducibly to mythic narrative, and therefore would be properly identified as such, and not with any particular deity, under any factual theology to which the system of Proclus were to be applied. Furthermore it seems that Proclus sees in this role not just mythic narrative in general but especially that genre which he is at such pains, in his commentary on the *Republic*, to defend from Platonic censure, the class, that is, of mythic narratives requiring an “esoteric” interpretation more urgently than others, insofar as they represent, on their face, a negation of the proper ethical disposition of souls. Does not this negation function in a way like those others I have just discussed, drawing as they do a disjunction between modes of understanding and classes of auditors, “for he [Plato] thinks that all such particulars [the ‘tragical equipment of myths’ (*tas tragikas tôn muthôn diaskeuas*)] will be condemned by the multitude, through ignorance of the arcana they contain; but that they will indicate to the wise certain marvelous inner meanings [*huponoias*]” (17. 25f)? It is in the necessity of esoteric interpretation, after all, that a distinction between levels of discourse is established which cannot but, in a system such as Proclus’, reflect a corresponding ontological distinction.

The content of the “whole orders” of the Gods is given in the moments



of the first intelligible triad. Limit predominates in the intelligible order, and so the determinations of this order manifested themselves as qualifications of each God *individually*. In the intelligible-and-intellectual order, the element of Infinity or Power predominates, and so the moments in that order were moments of *continuity* among the Gods. How, then, does the element of Mixture operate in the intellectual order?

In the first intelligible triad, the moment of mixture referred to the composition of elements in the divine individual, in particular the opposition between the *hyperaxis* and the power(s) of the God, the former expressing the irreducible individuality of each God, the latter all the factors which tend toward diremption in the integral individuality of the God. Radical intellect represents the resolution of this conflict in a *logos* of the divine individual. In the third intelligible triad, intelligible intellect, we saw each God as essentially a paradigm of the world inasmuch as all the Gods, and hence all that is or can be, are in each, but from a unique perspective. Each God is thus a unit of measure for the All; but it is through the intellectual order of Gods that the measure is applied. The completion of the movement beginning in the first intelligible triad sees the domain of the *logos* extend its borders to the First Principle itself, the *principium individuationis*, the fountain of divinity. This comes about through the emergence of the conceptual resources necessary to fully distinguish the individuality of the henads from the opposition of universality and particularity constitutive for beings. In the system of objective idealism, such an epistemological moment is no less a cosmological moment. The peculiar cosmological moment expressive of the achievement of this distinction is the emergence of a single

divine intellect to occupy the position of the demiurgic monad, in whom *individuality* and *specificity* coincide, and based upon that very coincidence, find the ground of their distinction. This deity, moreover, constitutes the factual world-order according to his/her irreducibly unique *perspective*. A case could be made that our task would not truly be complete without an account of soul, which would encompass the means by which individual human souls engage with the divine and discern the ontic hypostases; but a comprehensive account of Neoplatonic psychology is impossible in this dissertation. Therefore, instead of ending with an account of the human individual, who experiences the gap between formal and individual unity as something integral to the human condition, and who is thrown into a world, we end with an account of the demiurgic individual, who resolves the opposition between these two modes of unity in the *fabrication* of a world.

In order to understand the special position of the demiurge, we must return to the problem of the philosophical system and its concrete application. In the fifth book, as nowhere else, we find Proclus frequently stressing that he is operating, at least for the purposes of the *Platonic Theology*, within the field of a committed Hellenism, the dominant concern of this text being to establish that Plato wishes to operate within this field as well; that, for instance, Plato wishes we Hellenes to identify the demiurge of the *Timaeus* with Zeus, and so forth. Implicit, however, within this project is the understanding that for others the Gods occupying the monadic positions will be different. These monads, as I have tried to explain, do not represent the Truth with respect to which a concession has been made to limited minds that they may clothe it in native dress. Rather, they represent a specific or

formal unity in contradistinction to the uniqueness of the divine individual which is expressed by the name. Names are not like words, which express a common idea differently in different languages. We do not translate the names of human beings; *a fortiori* are the names of the Gods untranslatable. For etymology is not translation. Even where a God's name could be given a conclusive etymology – and how rarely is this possible – it would not establish that deity as being the same as a deity whose name, in another language, bore a similar etymology. The difference between languages, with respect to *words*, is contingent; with respect to names, *essential*. The Gods are prior to that distinction between form and matter which is constitutive of such comparative linguistics. Gods with a common “form” simply exercise *some* function in common *for us*, that is, with respect to Being: this is the relation of Gods to universals. Hence we find Proclus exhorting us to turn, at one point, from the “indefinite and common [*aoristou... kai koinês*] doctrine about these Gods” to the “Greek tradition [*phêmen*] concerning it, as delivered to us by Plato, and demonstrate that he as far as to the very names follows the theologians of the Greeks” (V 35. 127. 8-12).

A deity belongs to the Greek pantheon, we might say, by virtue of having some sort of relationship to Zeus. To be at the center of a pantheon in this fashion is to be the demiurgic intellect; for a pantheon to be ordered in this way, that is, for *sovereignty* or, at any rate, *cosmic organization* to emerge in it through mythic narrative, is the condition of the emergence of intellect as such. Hence we read that we must “extend the intellect that is in us to the unparticipated and divine intellect” (V 1. 6. 11), and that the “intellectual hypostasis of the Gods ... is denominated intellectual because it generates an

indivisible and divine intellect" (6. 19). The intellect to which we extend our own, upon which, that is, we revert, is the product of the intellectual Gods. As such, it is not what we speak of when we speak of the intellect of each God, that aspect of the divine person which is expressed by the third intelligible triad. Rather, it is an intellect which is the product of the entire "pantheon" of our cultural space, albeit the formalizing potency of the attributes of intellect invites the progressive sublimation, so to speak, of the philosophical system – the final representation of the joint human and divine labor of intellect – from its mythological origins. The twin epithets of unparticipated and indivisible applied to the intellect generated by the Gods affirm its causality in relation to its productions, the specific intellects, by barring them from being classed together with it in respect of the quality it uniquely imparts to them; and just as the unparticipated refers immediately to participation, of which it is the cause, so too, the indivisible properly applies to that which proximately negates, that is, *causes* division. Conversely, this disjunction between the unparticipated monad and its products, which can only result in a certain opacity, a concealment of its own origins, has the effect of *conjoining* it to the principles prior to it:

Every unparticipated intellect is said to be the intellect of the natures prior to itself, and towards them, from whom it is produced, it has an intellectual conversion, and in them as first-effective causes [or 'primordial,' *prôtourgois*] it establishes itself. Whence also the demiurgic intellect is the intellect of the natures above itself, proximately of its own father, from which likewise it proceeds, but eminently of the intelligible henads beyond. (37. 134. 13-21)

The “father” of the demiurgic intellect is the henad of the intelligible intellect, whether this be some deity other than the demiurge, as Phanes in Proclus’ Hellenic theology, or whether it be the demiurge him/herself *qua* henad, the henads all beings “fathers” in this respect. For now what is important is the status of unparticipated intellect as a product of the intelligible causes in which it is “established” and upon which it reverts. The separation-and-relation embodied in imparticipability echoes in the accompaniment of each of the intellectual monads by a “guardian” monad that is “consubstantial” with it. We shall see later on how some of the determinations arising in this order are attributed to the principal monads while others are attributed to the activity of these guardians. What are the intellectual Gods being guarded from, since “there is no fear that the Gods ... will sustain mutation, and that on this account they stand in need of the saving aid of guardian causes” (IC 110)? Nor are the natures in need of such careful separation simply the orders immediately preceding and immediately succeeding the intellectual, whose succession in the ontic hierarchy would seem to call for no special mediation. Rather, the defensive structures of this order are so elaborate on account of a separation far more profound between the intellectual order and all of the others, inasmuch as here the surfaces of irreconcilable orders of existence glide across each other, insulated from actual contact.

We can gain a better sense of this abyss of the intellect from a consideration of the position of *matter* in relation to the demiurge’s formative activity. To really understand the status of matter, we must approach it under the rubric of what we might call “terminal being.” For

"forms ... [do not] extend their activity only as far as to those beings which, without transition, are always able to enjoy them with invariable identity, but on account of the abundance of their power and their transcendent goodness ... they likewise produce by their activities the last hypostases, which are incapable of remaining immaculate and immutable," and which "rank among participants alone," i.e. having no participants of their own (DMS 36f). There are actually two definitions of the extremity of causal procession. The first is that which merely participates, but has no participants. Such a being is the least complete or perfect, *teleios*, of things, for (ET prop. 25) "[t]he more complete is the cause of more, in proportion to the degree of its completeness ... And the less complete is the cause of less, in proportion to its incompleteness ... From this it is apparent that what is most remote from the principle of all things is sterile and a cause of nothing." The second definition is the contingently participating, as in ET prop. 63: "Every unparticipated term gives rise to two orders of participated terms, the one in contingent participants [*tois pote metechousi*], the other in things which participate always and in virtue of their nature [*sumphuôs*]."

As each series ends in contingent participants, so too the whole procession of Being ends in the irredeemably incomplete, that which cannot reproduce itself, what can be *only* particular. So unavoidable is this state of affairs that if "those beings alone should exist which always receive the impressions of the forms" then "the excellent beings would be the last in the scale of beings, and eternal things would have the rank of matter. Hence they would have all the properties which we are accustomed to ascribe to generable and corruptible natures, sterility and debility ... " (DMS 37). This is

undoubtedly a curious way of formulating the problem, for it implies that the qualities, such as sterility and debility, which belong to terminal being, are thinkable independently of the status of such beings as subject to generation and corruption, whereas we might rather expect that one of these sets of attributes was the ground of the other. Instead, sterility and debility seem to derive from the basic conditions of causality explained in props. 25 and 63, and if there were no natures subject to generation and corruption, the conditions of sterility and impotency would simply apply to the last rank of eternal beings. This is as much as to say that in the counterfactual, there would be eternal beings that were themselves *utterly contingent*. One is reminded of the Cartesian doctrine that God could have posited a different set of mathematical truths for the world. For Proclus, this would represent a category mistake. But the fact that this contingency and facticity manifests itself in the realm of generation does not alter the fact that its origin lies in principles sufficiently primordial that were there to *be* no realm of generation, we could imagine the eternal elements of Being bearing the burden of such contingency, and the universe suffused with chance and accident to its core.

There are two ways in which the accession of demiurgic order to Being is conceived in Proclus. The first is the taming of the "disorderly motion" that pre-exists the cosmos; the second is the application of measure to a continuum. The disorderly motion, which is "the anterior state of the world" comes from "the first composite," which "with the representation of all the forms in itself, as it were, in confusion, in being moved, produces chaos [*inordinatum*]. For the traces of different forms, leading to diverse motions,

impart a fluctuating character to the entire motion" (DMS 73). We recall that this disorderly motion expressed the illuminations of the Gods prior to the demiurge (IT I, 387); here we have a more precise account of this state of being in itself, as a *contradictory whole*,<sup>19</sup> an ideal state transitional between the existence of each deity for itself and the ordered totality that represents the imposition of demiurgic sovereignty upon the whole. Once demiurgic sovereignty has been established, contradictions are resolved through the hierarchical organization of Being. The demiurgic cosmos expresses a single point of view, while in the contradictory whole, a multiplicity of contradictory viewpoints are held in a chaotic suspension. In the contradictory whole there is, and in a sense it is *only* here that there is, the set of *all* the Gods such that it is neither a co-emergent set like the pantheon of Hellenic deities under the sovereignty of Zeus nor the philosopher's abstract quantification. This chaotic totality was glimpsed by us before in the discussion of the second intelligible triad, which represented *wholeness* prior to the *totality* of the third triad, and *measure* prior to the third triad as *paradigm*. But the second triad was also the continuum relative to the third triad's intellect, which is the *application* of measure to this continuum. The two moments of the individual deity represented by the second and third intelligible triads thus represent, respectively, that deity as continuum with the power to impose measure upon itself, and the deployment of that potentiality in the deity's rendering itself a paradigm through its activity in the illumination of Being.

The continuum and disorderly motion are relatively synonymous as

<sup>19</sup> Compare the following formulation: "The forms and powers of evil, therefore, are not effective, but are impotence and debility, and an *incommensurable communion* among similars and in their mixture" (DMS 92, my emphasis).



expressions of the activity of the second intelligible triad. From the second to the third intelligible triads, however, it was a matter of a metamorphosis in the individual deity, whereas the analogous transition from the intelligible-and-intellectual to the intellectual order is a matter of the organization of a collectivity of deities. It is more appropriate, thus, at this stage, to speak of disorderly motion, for the hypostasis of Life has arisen in the interim. The problems arising in the intellectual order, problems of hylomorphism and terminal being, manifest an aspect of the second intelligible triad which could, however, have no place in the intelligible Gods themselves, namely a remainder *resistant* to measure. If we trace the origins of this remainder back to the transition between the second and third intelligible triads, then its roots appear to lie in the impossibility of any God representing articulately or through form, that is, *expressing* through their paradigmatic function, the real henadic uniqueness and individuality of the other Gods. The relations between the Gods are, most authentically, relations of power, while the mythological constellations that dispose them relative to each other and in relation to a narrative *telos* exist for the constitution of hypostases and the illumination of Being – ultimately, in other words, *for us*. But form is like a measure which cannot be applied to the continuum without remainder. This remainder was not at issue in the congregation of Gods upon a common field in the intelligible-and-intellectual order; but then the nature of the “supra-celestial” place remained very much on the far side of the divide between henadology and monadology, as was evident from its predominantly mythological determinations. The *topos* emerging from out of the activities of the intellectual order is of a different matter altogether; it is no Olympus,

but rather the factual world-order. It thus represents the furthest accession of form, which must formalize the Gods down to the very remainder itself.

Knowing the demiurge, it is nevertheless impossible to proclaim him to *all*, as famously remarked in the *Timaeus* (28 C 3-5). A clear reason for this state of affairs is that people experience the demiurgic function through different deities, and the point is not to subordinate the deities to their functions. The transcendent uniqueness of each God, which is expressed positively in the God's unique name, is expressed *negatively* in the aspect of incommensurability existing between and among the Gods. It is not that the Gods have nothing in common; they have in common precisely their absolute individuality, but this is something prior to form and measure, every measure being the perspective, so to speak, of some God, and so they are *incommensurable* taken in this way. With respect to form, each God is a paradigm, a form of forms, so to speak. But where there is form, there is matter. In the transition from the second to the third intelligible triad, then, and *a fortiori* in the transition from the intelligible-and-intellectual to the intellectual order of the Gods, there is a crisis of hylomorphism.

The demiurge, in his/her formative activity, confronts in matter and disorderly motion the latent presence of all the other Gods. If matter has any *power* at all to resist, even passively, the demiurgic will, it can only have received it from the illumination of all the prior orders of the Gods, as we read at *IT* I, 387. That which is, in its supra-essential nature, unitary individuality and uniqueness, is manifest in terminal being as "matter." Set off from the demiurge and shrouded in obscurity, an indeterminate mass defines the radiance of the individual. Whereas truth emerged in the

intelligible-and-intellectual order, for it lies elementally in the co-emergent constellations of the divine individuals, the possibility of radical untruth is grounded in the intellectual order. The demiurge engages with the “disorderly” motion that represents the remainder of co-emergence, the “traces” of forms which are none other than the possibility of different regimes of form. The matter upon which the demiurge works is the other Gods themselves, not as co-emergent with the demiurge, not, for example, as the other Gods in the Hellenic pantheon are in relation to Zeus, but in their radical refusal of relation. Even the deities who *are* co-emergent with, e.g., Zeus, possess nevertheless their pre-existent autonomy in respect of which they too are “matter” in relation to the demiurge’s formative activity. Indeed, even Zeus himself is matter to himself, insofar as he himself, as a henad, transcends his function as demiurge.

The other Gods, in their absolute refusal of relation to the demiurge, represent the surplus of productivity in the First Principle over any regime of forms. This surplus or excess, although manifesting only negatively in the system itself, provides the capacity to escape the system in the moment of its greatest rigidity, namely the moment at which the system is rendered no longer “indefinite and common” but determinate and particular by the fixing of all the monadic positions to the members of a single pantheon. It is easy to see how this fixity could become sterile and virulent, for any other tradition becomes immediately incomprehensible. Is not the answer, then, to refuse to acknowledge any incommensurability, in the name of the age-old and civilizing paradigm of translation, of “cosmotheism”? But then the cosmotheistic philosophy has simply displaced the disparate theologies

altogether, asserting itself as the voice of a universal reason with the authority to subordinate revelation to itself. How will this reason, though, cleanse itself of particularity? It must aspire, in its *own* act of demiurgy, to conquer its materiality altogether if it is to legitimize its claims. The disappointment attendant upon its failure may, furthermore, result in a skepticism that, ironically, takes for granted the ultimate triumph of particularism.

The ultimate source of disorder – and, indeed, of evil insofar as it exists at all – is nothing other than the One Itself. For it is not in the co-emergence of deities in pantheons that we see the ontic impression of the One, that is, in their cooperation, but above all in their incommensurability and in their foreignness to each other. Translation arrives to patch over this rift, and indeed there is no gap that the monad cannot bridge, for Being abhors a vacuum. But the beyond of Being lies in the moment of the renunciation of translation. This means that any regime of forms, despite its divine pedigree, is subject to the eruption of a foreign element inconceivable within the confines of the cosmos it fashions. The further this formative activity proceeds, the more focused is this resistance. Thus, for the demiurge, this resistance crystallizes into matter itself, the pseudo-hypostasis or *parhupostasis*, the manifestation of “necessity.” Matter, we read in the essay on evil, is “neither good nor evil” but necessary (DMS 75). “That which is necessary is all that is for the sake of good, has a reference to it, and whatever has a generation subsists on account of it,” and matter, specifically, is “produced by divinity as necessary to forms, which are incapable of being established in themselves” (76). Forms can never possess the integrity of the

supra-essential individual; hence the further a given deity seeks to extend their formal hegemony through *cognizing* the other deities – that is to say, lending more and more of their *own* nature to the activity of illumination – the more focused the resistance, the sharper the alterity that must finally emerge.

The demiurge must not only subordinate the deities co-emergent with him – a process which would have its historical limit in the reduction of originally independent deities to the status of created beings in the service of the demiurge (a process in itself never fully completed and rife with possibilities for the reconstitution of incommensurable differences within the momentarily unified field) – but must also tame the nameless chaos that is the cacophony of the Gods of the “others” – other tribes, other nations. As much as this dynamic resembles that intolerance of difference that is such an important constituent of human evil, we must not lay upon the Gods the burden of this resemblance. Rather, it would seem as if humans err in distorting the balance between Being and the divine, devoting the whole of their power to the totalizing program of world-constitution, as if there were in them no echo of an order prior to wholes. In this, ironically, they fail in their role as parts, for a part of an *infima species*, had it no reference at all to a higher order, an order, namely, of the individual *qua* individual, could only represent with respect to the form a potentially malignant aberration.

The intellectual hypostasis of the Gods “is filled ... from the intelligibles which have established in themselves unitarily all multiplicities, and occultly contain the manifestations [*ekphanseis*] of the Gods and the *hyparxeis* of

intelligibles" (PT V 1. 6. 20f); that is, the hypostasis of intellect is the disclosure of the ontic repository of divine illumination. The intelligibles in question here, which are carefully distinguished by Proclus from "those intelligibles coordinate with intellect" and "those which are only divided from intellect by the conception of the mind" are the intelligible forms or fountains, *pêgai*, which sit at the crossroads, as it were, between theological and philosophical discourse. As the *hyparxeis* of intelligibles, that is, the divine roots or sources of intelligibility, the fountains are said, like the Gods themselves, to contain the ontic multiplicities "unitarily," *heniaiôs*. The fountains contain the ontic multiplicities unitarily because each one is a source of illumination to the whole of Being. In the intellectual order principles, *archai*, shall emerge from fountains. The demiurge "is said to comprehend all the genera and have the fountain of the forms, because he generates all the partial streams [*ochetous*] and imparts to them from himself by illumination all the measures of subsistence" (30. 112. 25-9). These "streams" or "channels" are obviously the principles, which have the status of parts in relation to the holistic fountains.

What does the status of principle in relation to fountain mean for the philosopher, whose dialectical labors are toward the discernment of principles? In chap. 32 of Book Five, Proclus will speak of more fountains, which lie under the control of the second intellectual monad, e.g. Hellenic Rhea: the fountain of souls, the fountain of the virtues, the fountain of *physis*. The fountain of souls is the Crater of the *Timaeus*, which "unitarily contains the whole and perfect *arithmos* of them [the souls]" (32. 118. 4). Proclus also remarks, in his desire to ground firmly in Platonic soil the Chaldean terminology of "fountains," that Plato, in the *Laws* (VII 808 D 6)

"calls 'fountain of understanding' [*pêgên tou phronein*] the power of *phronêsis* which is essentially inherent in souls and which is productive of the virtues in us" (120. 1-4). The generativity of the fountain is what is stressed here, in relation to which the principle will appear as an abstract result. A similar impression can be gleaned from Proclus' citation of *Laws* I 636 D 6-8, where pleasure and pain are "fountains" imparted to us by nature. The primacy of fountain over principle is existential, marking the site of the unfolding of the principles in a living reality and an experiential context.

This existential primacy gives to *pêgai* their essential proximity to the divine, for the primacy of the Gods to Being is one of existence – *hyparxis* – as well. But the convergence runs in the other direction too. Deities operate as *fountains* when they are the proximate cause of an hypostasis. Hence the demiurge, like the deity of the intelligible intellect before, is *fontal*; and thus "if the Crater is coordinate with the demiurge, and equally constitutes with him the genera of souls, it is indeed necessary that this Crater should be fontal, in the same manner as the whole demiurge" (31. 115. 7-10). The demiurge is qualified as "whole" (*holon*) here because of the partial demiurgi proceeding from him, but also because the "fontal" demiurge operates within Being, and is even, *qua* fountain, indistinguishable in some respect from the hypostasis of Intellect in its imparticipable summit. Significantly, Proclus equates *fontal* with *royal*, as in the passage from the *Philebus* (30 D 1-2) where Zeus is said to possess "a royal soul and a royal intellect" (31. 115. 13-5); and indeed we have already seen that sovereignty is a crucial bridging concept between the henadic and monadic registers.

The emergence of principle from fountain is represented most distinctly

in the case of the Crater, the fountain of souls. The Crater is, on the one hand, the “royal soul” accorded to Zeus in the *Philebus*, and on the other, the “generative monad” of souls. It is this latter aspect which is expressed in the principle, “for of these two, the name of ‘principle’ is more allied [*suggenesteron*] to souls than that of ‘fountain,’ as being nearer to them according to order [*taxin*]” (31. 116. 10-2). This is illustrated, for Proclus, by the passage in the *Phaedrus* where we read that “principle is unbegotten,” inasmuch as “it is necessary that everything which is generated should be generated from a principle” (116. 16-7). The unbegottenness of principle refers, as its negation, to the condition of generation from which we raise ourselves through our dialectical labors. As such, the distinction between fountain and principle is particularly relevant to the site of the emergence of soul from intellect. But its relevance does not end there; rather, as high as we ascend the ladder of dialectic, that is, all the way to the First Principle, we do so by the method by which the unbegottenness of principle is disclosed here, that is, by negation, step by step, just as the *taxeis* are disclosed in the *Parmenides*.

And in fact, it is the demonstration from the *Phaedrus* that soul is the cause of all motion that Proclus uses in the *Parmenides* commentary (998) as the paradigmatic case of demonstrating causation from negation, for

if we only postulate that something is the case, and then find out what is the consequence of that, we will not in all cases discover what it is of which the thing postulated is the essential cause. If, however, we also demonstrate that, if it is not the case, the same result does not follow as would have followed if it had been the case, then it becomes plain that after all *this* is the case because *that* is the case; for otherwise *this* would follow, even if *that* was postulated



not to be the case, if *that* were not by its own nature the cause of *this* ... It is not, then, sufficient to examine what follows if something is the case, but one must also investigate what follows if it is *not* the case, if one is going to see and understand of what the thing postulated is a cause, or what attributes belong to it in and of itself. (emphasis mine)

The breadth of the role envisioned for this method, which allows us to rise as far as to “the prior to Being, which is the cause of all beings, transcending the multiplicity inherent in beings,” (999f) does not stop Proclus from discerning that “in general, negations are products of Difference at the intellectual level” and “it is only in the context of one thing being that another thing is said not to be. So the hypothesis is not concerned with that which in no way is, but with what to an extent is and to an extent is not, or what is *this* and is not *that*” (1000). Negation at once allows us to rise as far as to that which is prior to Being, and yet is also the product of an intellectual determination. Negation establishes about something “what attributes belong to it in and of itself” – “in itself” being, like Difference, a determination of the intellectual order, and these attributes are ontological coordinates pertaining to the relationship among parts in a whole. It is this network of relationships that are “the multiplicity inherent in beings.” Transcending this multiplicity *again* through the same power of negation, we arrive finally at *the henad, the God* generically, but this method lacks the power to conceive *this henad*, with a proper name.

In the intellectual order the complementarity of deity and dialectic is explicitly represented in the juxtaposition of fountain and principle. Prior to souls there is “a twofold divine monad ... the one indeed being fontal, but the

other principal [*archikês*]" (115. 19-21), the latter of which may be identified with the hypostasis of Soul, while the former is the Crater. The identification of this fontal monad with the Crater of the Timaeian allegory is to be regarded on the same footing as the identification of the demiurgic monad with Zeus; should we wish to speak "indefinitely" or "commonly" we would refer simply to the fountain of soul or, perhaps, the intelligible form of soul. The Crater, or fountain of souls, is succeeded by the "principal monad" (*archikê monas*) of souls, which is "more proximate to souls than the fountain, but established above them as their fecund [*gonimos*] cause" (31. 117. 1-5). We see here the full proper order of causal succession applying to the system itself as a whole: from the Gods, through the fountains, to the principles. The fountains, as we have seen, form a much looser system than the principles, which latter we may regard as synonymous with the system of hypostases. The fountains all fall under the paradigmatic function of the third intelligible triad, which was the "fountain of fountains." Originating in the paradigm or intelligible intellect prior to the world-formative activity of the demiurgic intellect, they form a kind of infrastructure serving as touchstones for the world-discerning activity of the intelligent soul.

This is especially clear in the case of the virtues, which are world-disclosing in their function, but it is equally important in the case of fontal Soul and fontal Nature, both of which ground the sense of communion among living beings that is an indispensable part of generating a cosmos. For whereas the "fountain of the virtues" in the intelligible-and-intellectual order referred to Science, Temperance and Justice, the fountain of the virtues here is explained by Proclus with specific reference to the demiurgic function

of virtue. He quotes *Tim.* 34 B 3-8 to the effect that the demiurge

“constituted heaven one [*hena*], alone [*monon*] and solitary [*erêmon*], but through *virtue* able to converse [*suggignesthai*] with itself, and being in want of no other thing, but sufficiently known and friendly itself to itself.” At one and the same time therefore the world is animated, lives through the whole of its life according to virtue, and possesses from the virtues as its highest end, friendship with itself, and an all-perfect knowledge of itself. For it is itself sufficiently known and friendly to itself through virtue. (V 32. 118. 16-23)

Since the demiurge’s activity consists in bringing order and harmony into a pre-existing, though minimally articulate, diversity and complexity, what are needed at the formative level are not sources of diversification, but sources of unification and organization. The fountains are the forerunner of the principles in this respect, though principles will belong, in some sense, to the philosopher alone, while the fountains seem to be of such a nature that they are discerned quite as adequately by the poet and the artist as by the dialectician, if not indeed more so, since they tend to have the function, within dialectic, of evident premises: Since there is – or should be – such a thing as virtue... (and so forth).

The demiurge “fabricates the soul of the universe [*tou pantos psuchên*] an image [*eikona*] of all the classes of the Gods, just as as he fabricates this sensible world an image of intelligibles” (V 4. 19. 5-7). These classes are roughly discernible in the stages of the soul’s constitution: the demiurge first “constitutes the whole essence of the soul, then divides it into numbers, binds it by harmonies, and adorns it with figures, namely the rectilinear and

the circular. Finally, he divides it into one circle and seven circles. Whence therefore are this monad and hebdomad derived, except from the intellectual Gods? For figure, number and true being are prior to them" (7-13). Figure, number and *ontôs on* are prior to the intellectual Gods not, naturally, *qua* Gods, but they are prior to this *class*, for they are determinations of the intelligible-and-intellectual order, as we saw in the last chapter. The all-soul is an image, not of the Gods immediately, but of their *classes*, itself an intellectual mode of organization based upon identity and difference. As such, we may say that these classes first *truly* come into existence through the activity of the demiurge, which means moreover that their function in the demiurge's fabrication of the soul is no merely contingent application.

The Gods of the intellectual order, we should say, reflect upon themselves and generate an *image* of the prior orders. This is responsible for the remarkable multiplication in this order beyond the primary monads. There are seven intellectual monads: three "fathers" (the second of which is, in fact, Rhea in the Hellenic theology), three "undefiled" or "immaculate" (*achrantoî*) guardian divinities (identified with the Kouretes), and the "diacritical" monad. These monads then proceed to ramify themselves such that "each monad is the leader of an intellectual hebdomad conjoined with it, and extends this hebdomad from on high, from the summit of Olympus [i.e. the intelligible-and-intellectual] as far as to the last, terrestrial orders" (2. 12. 1-3). These are the monad and hebdomad that manifest themselves in the demiurge's constitution of the all-soul. The structure of the dependent hebdomads reflects the prior orders of Being: "every hebdomad has the first monad intelligible; the second, which is triadic, intelligible-and-intellectual;

and the third triad intellectual. All these likewise subsist as in intellectuals, for they are characterized according to the peculiarity of the constitutive monad" (2. 13. 10-5). This structure with its bewildering profusion of hebdomads must be understood as the product of a reflective activity on the part of the intellectual Gods the ramifications of which create an armature, so to speak, for the nascent Soul *and by the same token for the system itself*. For this monadic recapitulation of the preceding orders of Being is a *recapitulation* only, to borrow Hegel's phrase, "for us" – within the system itself it is the first expression of the ontic hierarchy which is fully monadic, that is, fully emancipated from the theological organization.

The structure of the hebdomad is a ramified triadic structure with a monad and two triads. The geometrical expansion of the number of moments between the intelligible-and-intellectual order and this one represents increasing determinacy. But what can we say about the specificity of the hebdomad? Specifically, why not an ennead, in which we would see the triadic structure fully expanded? We could say that the remaining determinacy requires the further procession of the infra-intellectual orders of Gods. Likeness and unlikeness, for instance, emerging through the activity of the hypercosmic Gods, are indispensable determinations for the philosophical system, as we can see from the importance of likeness in *ET* prop. 28. The hebdomad therefore represents a lesser determinacy relative to the ennead. But we should note as well the abandonment, in the intellectual order, of the structure of triadic monads which has dominated the prior orders. The structure of triadic monads corresponds to a procession where each moment is a certain adumbration of the whole. The hebdomad, however, is a structure

*dominating* its moments. This expresses the “shift in the center of gravity,” as I have characterized it, toward ontology and the unification of the Gods. This view draws support from the unusual expression that Proclus uses in reference to the intellectual hebdomad, calling it an “hebdomadic *aiôn*” (V 37. 134. 5-6). We recall that an *aiôn* is defined in props. 52-5 of the *ET* as “that which measures by the whole” in contrast to *chronos*, which “measures by parts” (prop. 54). The structure of the intellectual order is one in which the parts are subordinated to the whole. Compare this to the intelligible-and-intellectual order, which maintained the structure of triadic monads which were each in some sense the whole. The mediation undergone by the Gods of that order was accordingly rather mythopoetic than conceptual: a place, a banquet, a heavenly circulation. Here the mediation is monadic, represented on the one hand, by the seventh or “diacritical” monad, which stands for the complex narrative articulation which comprehensively structures the pantheon, in principle leaving no deity unincorporated in the cosmogenetic account; and on the other hand by the new intellectual determinations, in particular in itself/in another and identity/difference, which leave no being – or God insofar as that God is considered as illuminating some region of Being – unincorporated into the cosmos of dialectic.

Let me stress again at this point something that has been with us throughout the reading of the *Platonic Theology*, namely the role of discrete number in the account of the divine orders. The transition to new orders of magnitude in the monadic structure is not a question of counting the number of Gods as one would number some collection of beings. Proclus will stress this in regard to the dodecad of the “liberated” or hypercosmic Gods, the

second order after the intellectual:

One must not consider this number as consisting of twelve monads, for number among the Gods is not of this nature, but as consisting in a particularity [*idiotêtos*] of *hyparxis*. For as the dyad among them [the Gods] presides over prolific power, and the triad, over the first perfection, thus also the dodecad [among the Gods] is a symbol [*sumbolon*] of all-perfect procession. (VI 18. 86. 20-5)

The status of such “qualitative number” was, of course, already discussed in the previous chapter, for it is in and through the intelligible-and-intellectual order that it emerges. The number represents, before quantity, a quality or power, a pattern of activity, in which respect it is no different than any other divine power, but for the intimate relationship between arithmetic and ontology itself. Secondly, number contributes the potential for the complex dispositions of Gods in relation to each other that underlie the mythic narratives characteristic of intellectual divinity, in which we find the pantheon fully articulated and the interactions among Gods that provide the poets their *topoi* and the teletarchs their esoterica. Discerning the “number” of an order of Gods, then, is not a matter for quantitative reckoning. It is, rather, synonymous with discerning the potentialities for complexity, articulation and relationship among the Gods, of themselves indefinite in number, who proceed to the illumination of that order. We should note, in this respect, that Proclus does not propose in the *Platonic Theology* (I 2. 9) to treat of all the Gods, but rather of

all those common conceptions concerning the Gods which Plato delivers ... the universal orders of the Gods, enumerating their peculiarities, defining their processions after the manner of Plato, and referring everything to the hypotheses of theologians; and, in the end, speaking concerning the Gods which are celebrated in various places in the Platonic writings, whether they are hypercosmic or encosmic, and referring the theory respecting them to the universal genera of the divine orders.

Whether indeed, as some suspect, there is reference here to a missing or never completed concluding section (viz. "in the end") of the *Platonic Theology* which would have treated comprehensively of the particular deities whose names feature in Plato's writings, there can be no question that Proclus has already, throughout the treatise, spoken of most, if not all, of the deities in question; if a planned section is missing or was never completed, it is reasonable to think that it would simply have constituted a catalogue of sorts of the deities mentioned by Plato and their classification according to the systematic theology presented in the text. But what is truly important here is the lack of any claim on Proclus' part to having presented in the text all the Gods: instead, he has given us the divine *orders* and only so many particular deities as are mentioned by Plato.

Through the subordinate hebdomads the Gods of the intellectual order express the roots in the intelligible order that they, like all Gods, possess, namely the supra-essential correlates of Being, Life and Intellect indicated by the three intelligible triads. The first monad of the hebdomad is intelligible inasmuch as "those who are wise in all divine concerns call the One and *hyparxis* intelligible" (38. 139. 24-5). That is, the One and *hyparxis* are



intelligible for the theologian, supra-essential for the philosopher. It should go without saying by now, however, that this does not mean that the theologian speaks of the One and *hyparxis per se*; rather, theologians speak of particular deities – this is *how* they speak of the One and *hyparxis*. But the intellectual Gods also recapitulate, in the hebdomadic articulation of their activity, the series of hypostases from Being to Intellect. The hypostasis of Intellect differs from the intellect of the third intelligible triad in the *reversion* upon the intelligible carried out by the intellectual Gods. A prior mode of reversion was exhibited in the previous order when the Gods took into themselves the intelligible as “nutriment,” whereas in the intellectual order it takes the form of Gods reverting upon prior co-emergent deities. Zeus, therefore, reverts upon Kronos and upon Phanes. Narrative incident being interposed between Zeus and Kronos, we see the activity of the diacritical monad; for as Proclus points out, “the myth in the *Gorgias* [523 A 3-5] separates the empire of Zeus from the kingdom of Kronos, and calls the former the second from, and more recent [*neôteran*] than the latter” (36. 132. 16-9). This proto-temporal separation at once imparts temporality to the constitution of wholes and also corresponds to the mythical narrative, which emerges fully formed at the level of the intellectual Gods, in contrast to the iconicity of myth on the higher planes. Mythic narrative *as narrative* is always, we may say, an account of the structure and organization of the Intellect, a structure which in turn manifests itself in the soul, for the demiurge, “fabricating the soul one whole, separates [*diakrinei*] it into parts and multiformed [*polueideis*] powers” (36. 133. 2-3). Mythic narrativity has thus a special reference to the emergent soul.

The following passage illustrates some of the complexity of the multiple relationships between intellect and intelligible in this order:

The first father of the Gods in this order [viz. the intellectual] at the same time is allotted a paternal transcendence with respect to those posterior to him, and is the intellect of the first intelligibles. For every unparticipated intellect is said to be the intellect of the things prior to itself, and towards them, from whom it is produced, it has an intellectual conversion, and in them as first-effective [*prôtourgois*] causes it establishes itself. Whence also the demiurgic intellect is the intellect of the natures above itself; proximately of its own father, from which it proceeds, but eminently of the intelligible henads beyond. The first king in intellectuals, therefore, is both an intellectual father and a paternal intellect. He is the intellectual father of the Gods that proceed from himself, but the paternal intellect of the intelligibles prior to himself.

(37. 134. 13-24)

The basic idea in this passage is the double sided relationship possessed by intellectual Gods in regard to the divine activity prior and posterior to them. Relationships of subject and object, if not activity and passivity, are essential to the intellectual order. The unparticipated intellect, that is, the hypostasis of Intellect, the product of the activity of the intellectual Gods, is "the intellect of the things prior to itself," namely "the first intelligibles," which is to say the totality of the Gods, the intelligible order of the Gods in the broad sense of the term, because it formalizes them. That is, it embodies the reflection upon the totality of the Gods of the intellectual Gods. Thought thinking itself is the first form and the first identity, but because it is in the first place each God thinking him/herself, it is also the thought of all the other Gods. The

hypostasis of intellect is, of course, “unparticipated” because the relation between that which is formalized and the form is not formalized, on pain of infinite regress.

Within this structure, the first intellectual monad can be seen as both subject and object, a duality arising immanently within him/herself. For s/he both cognizes the totality of the Gods and is cognized as part of that totality. This duality expresses itself in the relationship of the first intellectual monad to the demiurgic intellect, the third monad. The demiurgic intellect reflects “its father,” which, depending upon the factual theology in play could refer either to the “paternal transcendency” of the very God identified with the demiurgic intellect or to another God with whom the demiurge is co-emergent as Zeus is with Kronos. But a more articulated theology is obviously more suited to the demands of the ontological articulation and determinacy of the intellect. And so it is natural that the “paternal” should here be embodied in a mythological relationship of paternity. This relationship is the proximate intellectuality of the demiurge, expressing his/her discrete position in the pantheon. At the same time, however, the demiurgic intellect is *eminently* the intellect of the intelligible henads – meaning here all the Gods. This eminence refers to the presence of all the Gods in the God of the demiurgic intellect *qua* God. This transcendent intelligence, which is inherent in every God, reaches expression through the demiurge in that s/he speaks for all the Gods – in his/her formative utterance, for his/her co-emergent pantheon, of which s/he occupies the center; in the materiality which cannot without remainder be incorporated into the demiurgic world-order, for the Others.

The distinction between *intellectual father* and *paternal intellect* which is applied to the first intellectual monad expresses the dual nature of the Gods of the intellectual order generally. S/he is the intellectual father of the Gods that proceed from him/her as expressing the relationship of father and son, which entails a proto-temporality newly emergent at the level of intellect. We recall the passage from *IP* 936 discussed in chapter 1 of this dissertation, which specifically addressed the sense of relationships such as father and son among the Gods. We should say that what is peculiarly novel in this order and constitutive of this relationship is the attribute of being a child of some other God, of being *the younger*. Note in this regard *IP* 686f: "Zeus and Dionysus are called by the theologians 'boys' and 'young men' ... and in general the intellectual order, when compared with the intelligible and paternal, is called 'young'." Being a *paternal intellect*, by contrast, expresses the immediate relationship of the first intellectual monad to the intelligible as such, which has acquired significant complexity by this stage in the procession: on the one hand, to be a "paternal intellect" is simply to be a divine intellect "for itself" as it were; but to be a divine intellect *as well as an intellectual God* is also to embody the "paternal" character of the previous intelligible hypostases insofar as they are generative of Intellect *qua* hypostasis or dialectically. There is thus a parallel between, e.g. Kronos as the cause of Zeus and the intelligible as cause of the intellectual; and this relation of causality between the intelligible and the intellectual is encapsulated and, indeed, *established* in the relationship of father to son that exists between these two deities.

Proclus explains that Kronos (the first intellectual monad) "comprehends in himself the intelligible of the demiurgic intellect and the *plêrôma* of

beings" (5. 21. 9-10). And yet, at the same time,

Kronos is an all-perfect intellect, and the mighty Zeus is likewise an intellect. Each therefore being an intellect, each is also evidently an intelligible. For every intellect is converted to itself; but being converted to itself acts [*energei*] upon itself. Acting however towards itself, and not towards externals, it is at once intelligible and intellectual; being intellectual, so far as it cognizes [*noei*], but intelligible, so far as it is cognized [*noeitai*]. Hence also the intellect of Zeus is to itself intellect, and to itself intelligible. And in a similar manner the intellect of Kronos is to itself intelligible, and to itself intellect. But Zeus indeed is more intellect, and Kronos more intelligible. (21. 18-26)

"Intelligibility" and "intellectuality" are here obviously the excrescence of more fundamental narrative relationships of subject and object among deities, for the status of being relatively "more intelligible" or "more intellectual" can only be understood on this basis: it is a matter of being more the thinker or more that which is thought. It is no accident that such relationships among deities do not present themselves in the prior orders, for the mediation which they imply is constitutive of the determinations of the Intellect. The essential nature of intellect is such that there are two aspects to the intellect of Zeus. In regard to the self-directed activity of his intellect, he is the equal of Kronos, while with respect to the external activity of his intellect, he is more intellectual than intelligible. In this latter respect, that is, by virtue of its external activity, his intellect has a specific position in the ontic hierarchy, namely the demiurgic intellect. As the demiurgic intellect, rather than the intellect of a deity *simpliciter*, it has its intelligible (that is, the object

of its intellection) in the appropriate co-emergent deity, that is, the one whose external activity is such as to supply the proximate intelligibility for the demiurgic intellection. "The intellectual of Kronos is intelligible; but the intelligible of Zeus is intellectual" (22. 4-5). Kronos plays an intelligible role within intellectuals as a focal point for the co-emergent deities of this order; but what does it mean that the intelligible of Zeus is intellectual? In one sense, it simply means that the intelligible of Zeus is *Kronos*. But in another sense, it refers to the illumination by Zeus of Intellect, since the "intelligible" of any God is that region of Being that they illuminate. But they do not illuminate these regions without at the same time affirming the prior illuminations. Therefore Zeus, as an intellectual God, relates to those Gods he at once *contains*, as a unitary deity, yet also posits prior to himself by order of illumination, as *intelligibles*.

These relationships emerge in and through myth, representing his external activities, his works and his will. Hence Zeus "has the intelligible of his father, which he binds, as the myth says," while he "sees" Animal Itself (23. 6-8), that is, the hypostatized intelligible intellect. But Proclus is careful to explain to us that Zeus does this by *self-reflection*: "For entering into himself, he proceeds into the intelligible prior to himself, and by the intelligible which is in himself, cognizes that which is prior to himself" (22. 9f). The point is important because it applies to all intellect: "And thus the intelligible is not external to intellect. For every intellect possesses that which is in itself without differing [*adiaphoron*] with respect to itself. But again, it cognizes in itself that which is prior to itself" (ibid). So what is prior to Zeus in one way is not in another way; and it would seem that the ability of intellect – even,

*mutatis mutandis*, the intellect in us – to cognize its other in itself, without loss of integrity, is a legacy bequeathed to it in the last analysis from the unitary Gods, each of whom, containing all the others, is able to actualize any of the host of potential relationships existing amongst themselves and the others, so as to constitute the regions of Being in which *we* live and think. Although this dissertation shall not trace the path from the Gods to humans, we must not ignore the ways in which the divine condition echoes in the human condition.

Another relationship constitutive of the intellectual order, evidently, is that between the demiurge and the intelligible intellect or Animal Itself. “Animal Itself intelligibly comprehends in itself the whole Jovian series [*seiran*]; but Zeus the demiurge of the universe [*tou pantos*] intellectually pre-establishes in himself the nature [*phusin*] of Animal” (V 27. 100. 2-5). The relationship in question is not that between Zeus and *Phanes*, but between Zeus and the third intelligible triad. It is thus the relationship between a henad and a monad. The monad Animal Itself comprehends the Jovian series or “chain” *intelligibly* because the activity of that chain lies in the illumination of Being by virtue of divine intellect. As such, this series is comprehended in the *object* of the Jovian intellect, the series expressing the intentional object or objective activity of the God. The *physis* of Animal Itself, however, is “intellectually pre-established” in Zeus: *pre-established* because Zeus, as a particular deity with a proper name, represents the highest order of existence. Within *his* intellect – and now we are not, in effect, speaking of the hypostasis of Intellect but of that intellect which is in Zeus as there is a divine intellect in every God – Animal Itself is pre-established in its *nature*, as

indeed could be said of any God, for each God possesses the possibility of constituting all the ontic hypostases. In Zeus as subject, the *physis* of Animal Itself is pre-established, while in Animal Itself as object, the Jovian chain or procession is comprehended. This distinction between the “nature” and hypostasis of the the third intelligible triad is signalled subtly by the fact that at line 4 Proclus simply says “the nature of Animal,” rather than *Animal Itself*. The distinction is necessary inasmuch as the activity constitutive of the hypostasis of intelligible intellect is separate from the presence of the divine intellect which is an inseparable component of every deity. This is none other than the distinction constantly observed in this dissertation with respect to the intelligible order, by which represented at once the attributes of every God *qua* God and also a particular order of Gods. To the former sense would belong the “natures” of the three triads, while the latter, the illuminative activity of a particular type of deity, would establish them as hypostases. The latter is, as I have indicated, manifest in the account of Damascius of the diverse mythologies respecting the intelligible order.

Another aspect of the relationship between the demiurge and Animal Itself emerges in a discussion of the different manners in which the two can be regarded, which permits an interpretation of certain epithets accorded to the one or the other that might otherwise seem to undermine the hierarchical relationship between these hypostases. “All-perfect and intelligible animal is particularly considered by Timaeus according to a formal nature [*kata tēn eidetikēn phusin*] and not according to the unity [*henôsin*] which is in it and an hypostasis which is above the forms of the All [*huper ta eidē tou pantos*]” (V 29. 107. 10-4). But “both indeed, I mean the demiurge and



Animal Itself, participate of unity [*metechei tês henôseôs*] and prior to a formal essence [*eidikês ousias*] are continuous with the One [*tô heni sunechetai*]” (107. 17-9). The phrase “participate of unity” here is a harmless equivocation meaning simply that one must have regard in any case first to how matters stand with respect to the hierarchy formed by modes of unity. The phrase “continuous with the One” on the other hand is an interesting example of the terminology Proclus uses to express the extraordinary relationship between the henads and the One. He goes on to explain that “if you consider the henads which are in them,” that is, “in” the demiurge and Animal Itself, “you must admit the henad of the paradigm [Animal Itself] to be intelligible, but the demiurgic henad to be intellectual, and that an intelligible *hyparxis* is nearer to the first One ... than an intellectual *hyparxis*” (107. 19-23). That is, if we compare henad to henad, then the henad which is “in,” that is, illuminates the position of, the third intelligible triad – that would be Phanes, in the Hellenic theology – is naturally prior to the henad whose activity lies in the intellectual order (and it should no longer be necessary to point out that henads are never *literally* intelligible or intellectual). But because Timaeus compares the demiurge *qua* henad to Animal Itself *qua* monad, it is possible for the demiurge to receive epithets expressing a priority over Animal Itself. That this is indeed the case is indicated, for Proclus, by the reference to the demiurge as “the best of causes” while the paradigm or Animal Itself is “the first of forms” (108. 10-2); for “to generate, to produce, and to exercise providence are the peculiarities of Gods so far as they are Gods” (108. 3-4). In the *Republic*, for example, Socrates

does not say that the sun is the cause of generation until he has declared him to be the progeny of the supra-essential principle of all things, just as Timaeus does not begin the fabrication of the universe until he has celebrated the goodness of the demiurge of wholes. For each [the demiurge and the sun] is alike a producer [*hupostatês*] according to the Good ... and not according to the intellect which is in them, or life, or any other form of essence [*tês ousias eidos*].  
(108. 19-27)

Deity is alike goodness and causality *par excellence*. The passage serves also to further clarify the distinction between the third intelligible triad insofar as it forms an aspect of each and every deity, and insofar as it is embodied by Phanes and forms an independent hypostasis. Notice how accounts can be, to coin a phrase, more monadic or more henadic, that is, they can vary in the relative proportions of strictly philosophical and strictly theological material within them. The account in the *Timaeus* is essentially monadic: it names no Gods save Athena and the Egyptian Neith, and this in its prolegomena; its account is only "plausible," and the demiurge's divinity, his *huparxis*, is merely indicated through his epithet "the best of causes" and, *a fortiori*, the impossibility of speaking him to all people, which indicates *monadically*, that is, in universal fashion, his *particularity*. There are other places in Plato's work, however, according to Proclus, where the demiurge is identified as Zeus, and which are therefore more henadic accounts of the same matters. Most henadic of all, of course, is an account such as the Orphic theogony, where the intelligible order of Gods is *itself* illuminated and, consequently, depicted in the Egg, Phanes, et al. In the latter, which is a work of revelation rather than philosophy, all of the principles of the philosopher are figures of

myth.

The demiurge, we read, “stably [*monimôs*] fixes in himself all things [*ta panta*] and again/in turn [*palin*] produces them from himself immaculately [*achrantôs*]” (27. 102. 1-2). The term *achrantos* here alludes to the function of the “guardian” class of intellectual Gods (identified by Proclus with the Hellenic Kouretes) who are the “causes and leaders of immaculate purity,” from whom an “inflexible power” proceeds “to all the divine genera” (V 33. 121. 5-9). The characteristic of immaculate purity is inseparably linked to the characteristic of inflexibility, *to akliton*, in the descriptions of this class. They are “the inflexible guard of wholes” (121. 13) and “they preserve the whole processions of the fathers undefiled [*achrantous*] and supply them with inflexibility in their powers and immutability [*to atrepton*] in their activities” (122. 2-5). The “power of purity” that “the immaculate Gods impart ... both to the <intellectual> fathers and to the other divine orders” establishes the divine orders and, by extension, all the classes of beings, as discrete and intellectually organized. We read, for instance, that it is on account of the “immutable guard” or “defensive order” corresponding to the demiurge that “all the demiurgic powers are firmly [*monimôs*] established in themselves and all the forms are according to supreme transcendence exempt from secondary natures” (V 34. 123. 24-5). The new function continues into the subsequent orders as well, there being an “undefiled” order of the “ruling” Gods as well (PT VI 13). Their presence in the intellectual and infra-intellectual orders indicates that with intellectual organization comes the essential possibility of contamination and interference of form with form.

Were this dissertation to continue into a discussion of the sixth book of the *Platonic Theology*, there would be more to say about the functions of such guardians in relation to the overall mission of the ruling Gods, namely to establish the structures constitutive of *approximation to the form*.

In the intellectual order, however, the intellectual determinations are shared out between the guardians and the principal intellectual Gods. In itself and in another, motion and rest, and sameness and difference are the determinations of the intellectual order of the Gods according to the interpretation of the *Parmenides* in the school of Syrianus. Of these, the determinations *in itself, rest* (or "permanency," *stasis*) and *difference* are attributed to the guardian class. The determination of being "in themselves" is, of course, a cardinal determination of the transcendent forms in the *Parmenides*. The most important implication of being "in themselves" for the forms is that they cannot be classed with their participants in respect of the quality they impart, just as the guardian class preserves, e.g., for the demiurge "the transcendency of his essence ... through which he is inaccessible and unrevealed to the partible [*meristois*] genera of Gods" (123. 21-2). The opposition of *in itself* and *in another*, which is here brought into immediate proximity with essential concepts of narrativity such as agency and receptivity, and in fact the whole range of *asymmetrical orientations*, secures the disjunctions which form the skeleton, so to speak, of the ontic hierarchy. The disjunctions thus effected between Gods manifesting on supra- and infra-intellectual levels of Being constitute the privilege of narrative coherence over individual integrity which at last permits the order of the hypostases and of dialectic to separate itself from the order of mythic

revelation. For the manifestations of Zeus in successive orders, for instance, are not to be juxtaposed with each other upon a common field, lest the contradictions in the epithets and narrative incidents attributed to Zeus as demiurge and the Zeus who shares suzerainty with Poseidon and Hades, or the Zeus who is among the Gods who guide souls in the *Phaedrus*, should become vicious. Instead, the series of Zeus must organize itself according to the *pros hen* structure familiar from Aristotle, and which A. C. Lloyd has dubbed the "quasi-genera" or "P-series;" and the immaculate or guardian class of intellectual Gods is responsible for separating the head of such a series, so to speak, from its tail.

A question naturally arises as to the status of the guardian class, for the Gods of this class seem imperfectly distinguished from the Gods of the principal intellectual monads. *Both* terms of the oppositions constitutive of this order belong to the three chief monads; it is simply that the determinations attributed to the guardian class belong to the intellectual "fathers" *by virtue of* their guardians. This ambiguity is perfectly reasonable insofar as the identification of these guardian functions is with an anonymous multiplicity of Gods, and not with fully individual Gods whose autonomy would thus be inconsistently and improperly infringed. This lack of differentiation among the guardian class seems to foreshadow the sub-divine orders of angels and daimons, however, in which such multitudes are common in light of the lesser degree of individuality manifest below the henadic realm. The operations of such beings would, again, be a matter appropriate to a comprehensive discussion of Neoplatonic psychology.

The determinations of "in itself" and "in another" arise in the first

intellectual monad in accordance with matters we have already considered above. "The first king and father of the intellectual Gods ... is in himself and in another. Insofar as he is a whole intellect, his activity is directed to himself, but so far as he is in the intelligibles prior to himself, he establishes in another the all-perfect intelligence [*pantelê noêsin*] of himself" (V 37. 135. 16-21). The opposition of in himself and in another applies to this God (Kronos in the Hellenic theology) ontologically, for "in the *Parmenides*, this God appears to us as a pure intellect" (138. 12-3) notwithstanding that "this wholeness is also a deity" (20-1). As an intellectual God, that is, a God whose activity lies in the illumination of Being, specifically that level of Being which is Intellect, the "first king of the intellectual Gods" surrenders the autonomy of his "all-perfect intelligence." This latter term has clear references, first to the third intelligible triad, through the term *pantelos*, and secondly to the intelligible-and-intellectual order, through the term *noêsis*. This *noêsis* is *en allô* because through the intellectual order it emerges as an autonomous – indeed, ultimately *philosophical* – intellection. *En allô* has thus the sense of *objectivity*. This objectivity comes about through the establishment of comprehensive mediation among the Gods through the diacritical monad, which represents mythical or cosmogenetic narrative in general. This mediation is at once a unification of the Gods into an objective totality, as well as a multiplication relative to their supra-essential disposition of unitary individuality. Proclus refers elsewhere to the first intellectual monad as "the intellect that is multiplied according to intellections [*tas noêseis*]" (V 39. 146. 14), because the God of this monad *thinks another* – we could say, *thinks him/herself as another* – in order to establish the ontic

Intellect, hence multiplying his perfect simplicity in granting objectivity to his/her thoughts as formal objects. *Qua* henad, of course, there is no *other* for a God, for each is the All, an aspect represented by the third intelligible triad. The process of illumination, however, is a process of surrendering autarchy and constituting, in stages, genuine alterity from out of divine selfhood.

Through its determinations of “in another” and “in itself,” the “intelligible deity of intellectuals” – that is, the first intellectual monad, the one in the intelligible position, as it were, with respect to the rest of the order – “exhibits [*deiknusin*] from himself according to unity [*kat’ henôsin*] the twofold forms of conversion” (37. 137. 13-5), the twofold conversion being of things towards themselves and towards their causes, the reversion upon the cause expressing being “in another” while the reversion upon the self expresses the “in itself.” The “summit of intellectuals,” we read, “pours forth from itself the whole and all-perfect form of conversion” (137. 1-3). “All-perfect” is, as I have noted previously, an epithet of the third intelligible triad (which is also connoted by the reference to *form*), and its application here resonates with this monad’s “exhibiting from himself according to unity” the forms of reversion. In other words, that the form is “all-perfect” corresponds to its exhibition *kat’henôsin*. The latter was the term used for the “procession” of the henads from the One, while the term *deiknusin* recalls the terminology used with respect to Limit and Infinity in the *Philebus* (23 C 9-10): “God [*ton theon*] has exhibited [*deixai*] the Limit and the Infinity of beings.” And “when we say that each of the divine orders at once remains and proceeds, we recognize that it remains fixed according to Limit but proceeds according to Infinity” (III 8. 32. 23-6); so then the exhibition in the

intellectual order of the forms of reversion corresponds to the exhibition in the intelligible order of the radical origins of ontic procession and reversion. This exhibition amounts to the exemplary or paradigmatic presence of these qualities in the God ("all-perfect" being an epithet of the paradigm and the Gods *qua* paradigms) which does not compromise the divine integrity insofar as these qualities proceed *kat'henôsin*.

The determinations of *motion* and *rest* correspond to the second intellectual monad (Hellenic Rhea), which we have already discussed as the site of the fountains of soul, virtue and *physis*. Motion and rest in the intellectual order represent the culmination of the development of the powers of the Gods, which now take the form of the actions and reactions of Gods upon each other constitutive of mythic narrative. This narrativity, which is the intellectual product of the Gods, occurs within the noetic space, so to speak, established by the intelligible-and-intellectual order. Parmenides "demonstrates that the One in this order is moved, because it proceeds [*proêlthen*] from the causes of all Life that are placed above it [*hyperkeimenôn*]," (38. 140. 27f) but

the rest coordinate with this motion is not one certain genus [*hen ti genos*] of Being, as neither is motion, for beings indeed participate naturally of the genera of Being, but the supra-essential goods of the Gods are expanded above [*hyperêplôtai*] the class of beings. If, therefore, Parmenides here, positing the One Itself by itself, surveys in it motion and rest, he evidently does not attribute the elements of Being to the Gods, but assigns to them peculiarities that are appropriate, all-perfect and transcending wholes. And thus asserting that the One is moved and at rest, by motion, indeed, he imparts the vivific



*hyparxis* of the Gods ... (141. 18f)

This is a fine passage in which to note the way that Proclus speaks interchangeably of the One in its various determinations and the orders of the Gods. That the One is moved and at rest signifies a particular *hyparxis*, a particular mode of existence, of the Gods, a specific "good" of the Gods on behalf of Being. The One Itself "by itself," a term prominently applied earlier in the *Parmenides* to the Ideas, is that in which one discerns and from which one infers these particular modes of divine existence. But the distinction between the Gods and Being is never permitted to lapse: the Gods do not lie on the side of Being, so to speak, but remain supra-essential, and do not represent a declension of some *one* thing into multiplicity through Being, which remains ever a *product* of the Gods, and not their cause.

We arrive finally at the basic structural determinations of the demiurge. The determinations arising in the third monad of the intellectual order according to the exegesis of the *Parmenides* achieve a new order of complexity, in that "the One is no longer demonstrated to be simply *identical* or *different*, as it was *in itself* or *in another*, or *moved* and *at rest*, but is demonstrated to be *identical with itself* and *different from itself*, and *different from other things* and *identical with other things*" (143. 19-22). The identity-with-self of the demiurge is "a symbol [*sunthêma*] of his proper, that is, paternal, *hyparxis*" (144. 18-9). The use of the term *sunthêma* is significant here, insofar as it shows the relationship between a God's *hyparxis* – which is equated here with their paternal or *peras* aspect – and the forms associated with the monadic positions they occupy. The form of identity-with-self is, in

relation to the supra-essential character of the God, like the *sunthêmata*, tokens used in theurgical invocation, those items in the physical realm – incenses, stones, images – that can be used as bonds between the human and divine.<sup>20</sup> But there is more here; the demiurge is, in a way, also himself a symbol: “For being one [*heis*], and the exempt father and demiurge of wholes, he establishes his proper unity [*tên oikeian henôsin*] in himself. And in him Parmenides especially exhibits [*deiknusi*] the uniform [*monoeides*] and that which is akin [*suggenes*] to Limit” (144. 19-22). The unity which the demiurge establishes in himself (*estêsen en heautô*) comes from the demiurge positing himself in relation to the unique cosmos which is the product of his formative activity and the unique (*monogenes*) paradigm which that cosmos explicates, a relationship in which he affirms or symbolizes his unity. The demiurge is the point at which the henadic and monadic registers, registers of *internal* and *external* unity respectively, are fastened, so to speak, to one another. The *henôsis* of a God is not, to begin with, something which is either “established” or even *oikeios*, and so the deployment of such terminology is no more accidental than the use of “in himself.” Rather, it expresses the transition from the unitary to the uniform. The demiurge’s *exclusive* position in relation to the cosmos and the paradigm symbolizes within Being his supra-essential *hyperaxis*. “Establishment” is always something done by a God in regard to Being, and it involves reciprocity and mediation. The demiurgic “powers” are “firmly established in themselves” (34. 123. 25); the God of the first intellectual monad, “producing from himself whole causes ...

<sup>20</sup> See the excellent discussion of the role of *sunthêmata* in theurgy in Gregory Shaw *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Penn. State Univ. Press, 1995), in which there are also invaluable reflections on the relationship between *theurgy* and *demiurgy*.

in turn establishes them in and converts them to himself" at the same time that he "establishes himself" in analogy (*analogon*) with the first order of the intelligible-and-intellectual Gods and the first intelligible triad (37. 135. 12). What the demiurge is said to establish in himself here is *his own unity*, and in this fashion he becomes a way of exhibiting or indicating (*deiknunai*) the ineffable individuality and uniqueness of each God, that is, of the Gods in general. S/he is the exemplary God. We recall that Limit and Infinity were "exhibited" by *ho theos*, that is, paternal deity in general, and that the two forms of reversion were "exhibited" by the first intellectual monad. Here it is that which is *akin* to Limit that is "exhibited." But the demiurgic "exhibition" is the precondition for the former exhibition, that is, the exhibition of Limit by each God *qua* God. The demiurge exemplifies the formal dimension of deities as such, which, because each God is the All, is actualized in and through becoming the "unit of measure" for the cosmos. And it is through deities being posited in relation to a cosmic whole, that is, ontologically, that the elements of Limit and Infinity emerge in the first place.

The determinations of identical-with-other-things and different-from-other-things correspond to the two aspects of the demiurge's causal power, the former being that through which "the demiurge is present to all that he produces and is the same in all that he orders [*diakosmei*], pre-establishing in himself the generative essence of wholes" (144. 25-7), while "the different from other things manifests his immaculate purity," (145. 6-7) through which "he is separate [*chôristos*] from wholes, is disjoined [*diestêken*] from them, and is unparticipated by other things" (146. 1-2), maintaining a "unity separated [*ekbebêkuian*] from multiplicity" (146. 8-9). The array of terms for

separation, whose variety cannot be adequately translated, demonstrates that the hindrance that previously existed in regard to mediated relationships has been fully removed at this stage. The transcendence of the demiurge over the cosmos now implicates the demiurge himself reciprocally; it is a standing apart, a forceful repulsion.

The determination of difference-from-other-things expresses the activity of the guardian order coordinate with the demiurge, as did the subsistence *in self* of the first intellectual monad and the subsistence *at rest* of the second. That these respective deities should be primarily and as such *in another* and *in motion*, and that the demiurge should be determined with equiprimordiality as *identical with him/herself* and *identical with other things* shows that it is not a matter of proceeding from ontic determinations implying *ontic unity*, such as sameness, rest and subsistence-in-self, to their opposites, which imply *ontic multiplicity*. Rather, since the Gods are prior to ontic unity and multiplicity alike, the logic of the illumination of the Intellect, rather than a logic of the declension of the divine, drives the disposition of the conceptual moments in relation to the Gods of the order. This logic requires the Gods to be in the first place in a position of *going out from themselves*, and only returning to themselves in a secondary moment. This is essentially because, as I have stressed, procession and reversion alike are performed by deities as part of the establishment of Being, and not, as it were, to secure their own position. In this sense, even the reversion of the Gods is a kind of procession, in that in each case it establishes new ontic structures. The guardian order of the demiurge is "the cause of separate [*chôristês*] providence" (146. 11-2). This separate providence corresponds to

the imparticipability of the demiurge. Gods *qua* Gods are participated; however, as we read in *ET* prop. 161 "All the true Being [*to ontôs on*] which is attached to the Gods is a divine intelligible and unparticipated," for the monads, that is, principles or hypostases of Being arising from divine activity, are unparticipated. Separate providence may be characterized as the formal, universal or unparticipated moment of providence, that is, providence which cannot be identified with any particular providential instance.

The determination of *difference from self*, finally, expresses the activity of the seventh intellectual monad, which "distinguishes [*diakrinein*] the demiurgic monad itself from itself" (146. 23-4). We have already spoken of this "diacritical" monad in respect to the status of the narrativity constitutive of the intellectual order and the emergent soul, but the other side of this monad's activity is in respect to the system itself, a properly *philosophical* narrativity, for this monad "separates [*diistêsi*] the demiurgic intellect from the Gods prior to it, and distinguishes [*diakrinei*] the monads in it from each other" (147. 13-5). The demiurgic intellect is divided from itself, from the other Gods, and divided in itself, analyzed, as it were, into monads, insofar as the very system to which the philosopher's discourse approximates, and which extends in "a measured series of variations down from the hidden level to that of distinctness" (*IP* 1049) lies within this intellect, a God thinking the All.

### Conclusion

The procession of the henads and their constitution of Being does not end with the intellectual order. There would be much of value in treating of those infra-intellectual orders of Gods treated in the sixth book of the *Platonic Theology* and at various points in other of the works of Proclus. It would provide an account of how the individual soul, through the whole compass of its activities – ethical, aesthetic, and erotic, hermeneutic and symbolic – establishes itself as a demiurge in its own domain, constituting a meaningful cosmos out of the chaos of its embodied state. It would also help to flesh out some of my remarks through the course of this dissertation about the way in which the system constitutes itself “phenomenologically” for the subject. But for this very reason, the natural method of proceeding in such an account should be from the soul upward, so to speak, rather than from the Gods downward. Such an account would accordingly require much ancillary material on Neoplatonic psychology and theurgy. Furthermore, the truncation of the *Platonic Theology* after the sixth book would not allow an

entirely satisfying exposition, for which we would need to survey the completed cosmogenetic progress from the intellectual to the mundane orders.

Instead, I take this opportunity to draw some broader observations in conclusion. The henadology as I have presented it in this dissertation introduces themes of existentialism and pluralism into the edifice of historical Platonism. Siorvanes has already used the term “existentialism” in passing with respect to the Proclean concept of *hyparxis* (172). But the significance of thinking of Proclus as an existentialist is that he remains, nevertheless, a Platonist. Proclus does not simply oppose Existence to Being; rather, as I have tried to show in my interpretation of the *Platonic Theology*, he gives an account of the *evolution* of Being from Existence. The henads negate the determinations of ontic unity, according to which the unity of each being is a function of its unity *with* the others, that is, its subsumption into a greater whole, a mediating third term; yet the henads also *establish* these ontic structures in the first place. The henadology is therefore unlike an atomistic pluralism, for atomism leaves itself incapable of accounting for the moment of mediation. The henadology, by contrast, attempts to carry out the transmutation of the unity of the unitary individual into the unity of Being. The fundamental nature of this process is reflected in the fact that there is no higher genus of unity of which these two modes of unity would be species. Instead, their intelligibility lies only in the process of generating the one out of the other. Existence is, for Proclus, inseparable from individuality, and individuality from *plurality*. That the henads have no other *above* them does not, by any means, imply that each henad does not have others *with* it.

Proclus' polytheism, far from being contingent in relation to his philosophical system, or worse yet, inconsistent with it, is in fact essential to it. Proclus' philosophy would not function were its subject singular, insofar as no content could be given to the distinction between Existence and Being at the system's inception, nor could any account be given of the status of matter at its end. The system would begin with the abstract and end with the abstract. The henads are primordially *with* each other, but in such a fashion that, instead of undercutting their individuality, demands that the first mediation be achieved *among them* rather than beyond them.

This process amounts to the generation of intersubjectivity out of plural subjectivities, so that in the completed synthesis of the system, the irreducible uniqueness of each henad and the moment of community in the Idea are equally indispensable. Through the genetic stages of diremption, co-emergence and appropriation into a cosmos or world-order traced through the third, fourth and fifth books of the *Platonic Theology* we can trace the emergence of intellectual consciousness from pre- and proto-intellectual components. Milestones in this process are the *pêgai*, the "fountains" or intelligible forms. As the account has unfolded, we have seen the fountains play diverse roles, and they are not, it would seem, meant to be so rigidly organized as the hypostases. Proclus nowhere offers us a list of the fountains meant to be exhaustive or demonstrative. In general, however, we can characterize them as ethico-aesthetic regulative ideas. They are disclosive of philosophy itself – we recall the fountain of Science, for example – and yet it is difficult to fix them unambiguously within the confines of the philosophical system. This does not mean that they are not open to a certain



rational inspection; but as the presuppositions of rational inquiry and the inescapable existential *context* of that inquiry, they are always investigated after the fact of their emergence and at their own instigation. Having their origin in the third intelligible triad, the moment of Totality or Allness, they cannot, in particular, be grasped in an account that prescind from the relevant totalities, such as that of nature, of the soul, of the ethical community, or of existence itself – that is, the totality possessed by the individual which has its other in itself.

The conception of Existence as essentially plural individuality casts fresh light upon one of the fundamental tasks which metaphysics set for itself at its inception, namely the problem of multiplicity. The problem with which the *Parmenides* begins is Zeno's critique of multiplicity (127 D-E). Perhaps we do not need to be partisans of any particular interpretation of this dialogue to see the point of this exercise as not being, in the end, to deny the existence of multiplicity and thus to cleave one world into two, without hope of mediation, but to call attention to the lack of a way of conceiving of multiplicity which does not reduce it to unity. To create two worlds, and subordinate one to the other, already implies the inevitable reversal of valuation with no real advance in understanding.

Instead, we can see Zeno's critique as a challenge. The absolute multiplicity that rejects all unification is nevertheless, in paradox and contradiction, brought to unity under the sign of this very rejection (that is, the many are *like* each other or unified by their rejection of unity). The theory of Forms which Socrates proposes is not meant to subjugate multiplicity to unity further, for the submission of multiplicity in its most abstract form has

already been secured by Zeno. Rather, the theory of forms attempts to balance the claims of unity and multiplicity such that multiplicity can be affirmed in its being, despite the centripetal force of intelligibility first clearly discerned by the historical Parmenides. The theory of forms emerging from Parmenides' maieutic in the dialogue – accepting, along with Proclus, that it is an improved theory of forms which emerges at the end of this process, instead of a rejection of the theory – fails, however, to settle the problem of multiplicity in its radical form.

This problem manifests in two principal ways. First, there is the problem of the individuals instantiating *infima species*. At the end of the dialogue between Parmenides and Socrates, the relationship between particulars and the forms has been rendered aporetic at the same time that its dialectical necessity has been affirmed. Second, there is the aporia of unity itself as the ground of the diverse ways of *being one*, which emerges implicitly from the Third Man problematic. This aporia is the subject of the second part of the dialogue and gives birth to the distinctive Neoplatonic concept of the One Itself. Even if there had never been, within the course of historical Platonism, a thinker who conceived the doctrine of the One as a means to the *affirmation* of multiplicity, we should find ourselves led to discern this as an outcome of the dialectic of the *Parmenides* from the moment that we committed ourselves to an interpretation of this dialogue as having any positive outcome at all – even if the result was only an unfulfilled potential relative to the subsequent development of Platonism. There is a symmetry between Zeno's critique of multiplicity and the conclusion of the first hypothesis: Zeno shows that multiplicity, in its intelligibility, must reduce to

unity, while the conclusion of the first hypothesis is that the absolute unity can be neither intelligible nor singular. Absolute unity, then, properly conceived, holds out the promise of coming to the rescue of multiplicity. Proclus takes up this challenge by positing existential individuality as the absolute form of unity, to which the other modes of unity are disposed *proshen*. This absolute unity is precisely *not* singular in quantity; it is *many, polla*, without forming a *manifold, plêthos*. Ontologically speaking, it represents a power that cannot be circumscribed within the limits of ontology, a power transcending form, the power of the *proper name*.

Necessity thus takes on a new form in Proclus. Necessity, in the last analysis, is the multiplicity of the ultimate individuals and the totality of each. It is this which drives the whole movement constitutive of Being, whose *telos* is the *expression* by the Gods of the presence of all in each. It is this which drives the emergence from them of that which is one, other and object to them all. At the end of the process of ontogenesis, after the constitution of Form, lies that class of imperfect or partial recipients at the periphery of any given formal regime, which thereby expresses negatively the existence of *other centers* without those other centers being incorporated as dependencies of the regime in question. The imperfect reception of form thus stands as the negative reflection of henadic individuality and as the sign of the completion of the expression by the henads of their existence.

This allows us to answer a final question. *For whom* is the henadic *arithmos*, that is, that multiplicity of the Gods which is neither a particular pantheon of co-emergent deities, nor the ontological appropriation of the Gods as if they depended from a monad that is the One Itself, which the

philosopher's *façon de parler*, but that plurality of the Gods which is the ultimate necessity? *For whom* is the awareness of polytheism *as such* or *in itself*? We must regard it as being the special province of the individual who can take stock of their own becoming, their own flux, a function which in itself transcends intellection. We share in the nature of the demiurge, the exemplary divine individual within the Proclean system, both in our access to intellect and in our essential access to something beyond the intellectual, which corresponds in us as in the demiurge to our individuality, be it ever so different in the two instances, the one prior to form, the other posterior to form. Taking stock of the henads must fundamentally transform our image of the Platonic universe. No deity is ever constrained once and for all by the aspects of themselves they have shown to us in history as we have known it. They could always have disclosed more and may yet, if we are capable of receiving this illumination. We no longer confront a universe which can only iterate the same forms indefinitely, with no real access of novelty possible, but rather, a universe in which the formal dimension is constantly challenged and renewed by access to the pre-intelligible domain of existence or *hyparxis*.

Appendix: A Review of Selected Literature  
on the Henads

*The Neo-Platonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism* by Thomas Whittaker, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1918).

Whittaker provides a careful, insightful and sympathetic overview of the philosophy of Proclus. As for the henads, his account is drawn chiefly from the *ET*. He remarks that “[m]uch has been written upon the question, what the henads of Proclus really mean,” (173) but unfortunately does not cite any particular works. He explicitly rejects the notion that the doctrine is merely “an attempt to find a more definite place for polytheism than was marked out in the system of Plotinus,” and approves of the attempt “to find in it a more philosophical meaning” (ibid). It does not occur to Whittaker that the attempt to articulate in a philosophically rigorous fashion the presuppositions underlying polytheistic religious practice might be at least as legitimate *qua* philosophy as the medieval attempt to philosophically articulate the

principles of the monotheistic religions.

Whittaker's brief remarks on the henads nevertheless show significant insight. "Proclus seeks the cause of plurality in things at a higher stage than the intelligible world, in which Plotinus had been content to find its beginning. Before being and mind are produced, the One acts as it were *through many points of origin*," (ibid, my emphasis). Whittaker demonstrates *ab ovo* in this latter remark the essential insight which is required to grasp the significance of the doctrine. Whittaker does not attempt to answer in thoroughgoing fashion the question of how the account of the One as a causal agent is to be reconciled with its absolute negativity. But he does recognize the problem, asking "what is the meaning of 'creation' by the One? It means, for both philosophers [Plotinus and Proclus], essentially this: that without unity in and over the system of things there would be no particular existence as an actually realized thing. It does not mean that abstract unity, without the latent existence of a many as it were in its own right, calls it from nothing into being" (235f). The One indeed cannot be regarded as an "abstract unity," and he correctly discerns the holistic determination of particular beings. He is correct, furthermore, that the many must exist, somehow, "in its own right," – i.e. as "many points of origin" – but finding no ready solution he falls back on the impracticable notion of latency. Again, however, he discerns the relevant problematic when he explains Neoplatonists as striving to avoid the

bringing of chaos into order by a sort of accidental coming together of God and an independent Matter ... Hence the apparent stringency of their immaterialist

monism. For a real understanding of their position, however, we must equally avoid attributing to them the ideas of volitional creation and of 'pantheistic absorption.' The many are never finally absorbed into the One; and therefore, on Neoplatonic principles, there was never a time when they did not in some sense exist as a many. On this, Proclus is more explicit than Plotinus. (236)

Whittaker remarks again later, this time in specific reference to the *Timaeus* commentary, that "[i]n the metaphysical doctrine the element of pluralism, as already noted, becomes more evident on closer examination," referring to the "indissolubility" of the mundane Gods, who are "indissoluble (*alutoi*) by their own nature in so far as that nature is divine. They are said to be at the same time resolvable (*lutoi*) not in the sense that they are destructible, but because, not being perfectly simple, their components, as contained in universal Mind (signified by the Father and Maker), can be discriminated in thought; in other words, they are mentally analysable" (288f). Although needing far more elaboration, this is a reading perfectly consonant with the interpretation of the lower orders of the Gods in this dissertation. Again, Whittaker remarks with reference to the commentary on the *Republic*, specifically the commentary on the "nuptial number" of *Rep.* VIII. 545-6 (*IR* II. 79), that "the impossibility of complete deduction from the superior order of causes is recognised [by Proclus]. Since Proclus cannot admit the emergence anywhere of something from nothing, this means, as has been noted before, that there is an element of explicit pluralism in his doctrine" (302).

There are further instances of Whittaker's care with the doctrine. In an area of the doctrine which is prone to misunderstanding, Whittaker recognizes (175f) that henads participated in by, e.g., Intellect or Soul are no

less *henads* than those participated by Being; and as we have already seen he understands that Gods are Gods for Proclus regardless of the level of Being at which they manifest themselves. He sees the monad as “the unity of a group,” and does not conflate monads and henads, and remarks on the special status of the demiurge as “*Monas monadum*” (251). Given his profound insight into Proclean “pluralism,” Whittaker could easily have hit upon the present interpretation of the henadology had he only taken note of the distinction Proclus draws in the *Parmenides* commentary between the nature of divine multiplicity and that characteristic of the Ideas.

*The Elements of Theology*, 2nd ed., commentary by E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

Dodds supplements his translation with an extensive commentary, very useful philologically but somewhat less so philosophically. In the question of the historical roots of the concept of henads prior to Proclus this dissertation takes no interest. With respect to the substance of the doctrine, Dodds has at least more discernment than he has sympathy. He knows better than to see in the henads the “parts” or “attributes” of the One, even if he can find no better substitute than the equally unacceptable, and possibly indistinguishable, notion that they are “aspects” of the goodness of the One (259, 270-1). In place of sympathy, he makes do with open antipathy, calling the theological side of the doctrine “a singular example of the survival of an obsolete creed in mummy form – a mode of preservation which becomes possible only when the creed is already dead” (259). To the extent that he attempts to justify this



denunciation, he does so by charging that

this *epistêmonikê theologia* resulted in depriving the gods of all personality, and even of all identity ... so that Zeus, for example, appears as five different gods each of whom symbolizes the 'jovial' principle on different planes of reality ... That Homer's Olympians, the most vividly conceived anthropomorphic beings in all literature, should have ended their career on the dusty shelves of this museum of metaphysical abstractions is one of time's strangest ironies. (260)

One scarcely knows what to make of this attempt to impose one's own aesthetic preferences on a religion in which one has no spiritual interest. Proclus, by contrast, like Damascius and others of the Athenian Academy, plainly *had* such an interest, and it is rather Dodds who wishes to make a museum piece of their religion by vesting it solely in Homer's hands. But the poets are already for Plato no more and no less than *hermênês*, "interpreters," of the Gods (*Ion* 534e). Dodds thinks that to analyze the nature of the Gods is to deprive them of interest; but he does not see that the whole essence of the henadology is to safeguard the individuality and generativity of each of the Gods by prying them free from the accretions of tradition insofar as the conflict among these would tend to smother it. For Dodds, it is proof that "Proclus is far from treating his 'gods' as persons" that at *IT* III 184. 21 "he accepts *both* the statement of Hesiod that Oceanos, Tethys, Kronos and Rhea were all of them begotten by Ouranos upon Ge, *and* the statement of the *Timaeus* that Oceanos and Tethys were the parents of Kronos and Rhea" (260 n. 3). And yet the genius of the henadology from a theological perspective is

precisely that it is able both to preserve conflicting traditions like these, perceiving them each as expressing different aspects of the deities in question, while simultaneously affirming the individuality of each God transcending any relations or diacritical determinations, with the effect that no single tradition about him/her can hegemonically foreclose the possibility of others. What is, indeed, ironic is that Dodds fails to see at the heart of the henadology precisely that affirmation of individuality above and beyond merely formal determination that represents the true advance of the doctrine beyond classical Platonism, providing the possibility of a *new* bond being forged between the individuals at the top and at the bottom of the system, respectively.

Dodds fails utterly to understand the deep motives of the system and the foundation of Proclus' world-view in the existence of really individual deities. Hence he presumes to find in Proclus a "loose usage of the term *theos*" which he sees Proclus "justifying" in what he terms "an important passage" of the *Platonic Theology* (I 27. 63ff). But the passage, which he merely cites rather than quoting, says nothing of the kind. Rather, it concerns the narrow question of how "generations" or "births" of the Gods in mythological discourse – including the myths in Plato – are to be understood. It is not, here, a matter of equivocal reference to things which are generated, as Gods, but rather a matter of the "indication" through "symbols" of the "progression of the Gods" to the illumination of Being. The difference between "mythological" and "dialectical" investigation is thus attributed to the difference between "mystical" and "intellectual" experience of the divine. There is nothing here whatsoever to hint at an equivocation with respect to

the term *theos*.

A similar carelessness is evident in Dodds' citing *IT* I, 303. 18 to the effect that "the method of analogy can never exhaust the content of the divine or fully express its essence." So far as it goes, this is indeed true; but what Dodds misses entirely in the text that, once again, he merely cites rather than quoting, is the remarkable and important distinction that Proclus makes here when he says that as philosophers, we speak *about* the Gods, "but we do not speak of *each of them itself*." Where Dodds can see only a rather trite assertion of our inability to fully cognize the divine, Proclus is actually saying something much more important, distinguishing the investigation of the characteristics of *classes* of Gods, and ultimately the class of the Gods *simpliciter*, from that investigation which can only be carried out in the authentic encounter of an individual worshiper with an individual deity.

Dodds tries to blunt the impact of the statement in prop. 118 that the Gods "have no attribute by participation" by making this an instance of "characters derived transversely from the monad by its co-ordinate *metechomena*," and traces this doctrine to prop. 19 (263). But the latter proposition merely refers to two different kinds of participation, one "primitive" and one "transient," and never implies that the former might be regarded as no participation at all. Dodds wishes to preserve an account of the relation between the One and the henads which would be "exactly parallel to that which subsists between intelligences and the Intelligence or between souls and the Soul" (270), but the doctrine that the henads do not participate is consistent with the whole of Proclus' thought whereas the opposing doctrine is not even consistent within the limited parameters of the *Elements*, an inconsistency which Dodds

attributes to Proclus himself, violating the principle of hermeneutic charity.

Again, Dodds finds in the use of the expressions “more universal” and “more specific” (*holikôteros* and *merikôteros*) with respect to the henads in prop. 126 an illustration of “the reduction of the ‘gods’ to hypostatized logical counters” (267); but this utterly ignores the fact that it is the relationship between the processions of the Gods on subsequent levels, which is really a matter of different configurations of emergence, that *founds* the ontic relationships like universality and specificity. To do justice to the differences as well as the analogies between the types of relationship manifested in divine procession and those manifested among beings is not to be expected in a summary account such as the *Elements*; so the burden falls on the interpreter not to assume that the Gods are thus “reduced” to a status where merely ontic determinations can be applied to them univocally. Dodds also presumes to find in Limit and Infinity principles “transcending even the henads” (247) on the basis of nothing more than prop. 159, which merely derives every *order* (*taxis*) of Gods from Limit and Infinity. But on what basis are we supposed to assume that principles of classification precede the Gods? What manner of entity are Limit and Infinity supposed to be? Proclus does not simply posit entities out of the ether without grounding their manner of existence. He posits the Gods, and all agency in the universe is reducible to their activity, the highest schematization of which consists in the contrast between each God’s limit-aspect and their infinity-aspect. This does not impart a “radical duality” into the henad (281) for the very reason that Limit and Infinity, as the highest of forms, are instruments of the divine illumination of Being, and are relevant for us and to us. They arise from

an analysis of the nature of the Gods the ground of which is no real composition.

*Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition: A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism* by Andrew Smith (The Hague, 1974).

Smith discusses the henads with respect to their connection to theurgy and the concept of the *sunthêmata*, "tokens" of the divine in the realm of Being, shedding light on their nature and activity as such by extension. Based on a series of passages from Olympiodorus which he correlates with passages in Proclus, Smith concludes that "(1) Theurgy is concerned with uniting," and "(2) The theurgic virtues are somehow parallel with the other virtues rather than simply above them ... The parallel nature of theurgic virtue means that it is present and efficacious at all levels of reality" (117f). Theurgic virtues are distinguished by Olympiodorus as *heniaiai* or "unitary" by contrast with the ontic virtues which are "substantial" or "substantifying," *ousiôdeis*, and as possessing *hyparxis* in contrast to the *ousia* of the ontic virtues, thus embodying, in terminology familiar from this dissertation, the distinctive characteristics of the supra-essential realm, which is represented within Being by the activity of the *sunthêmata* independent of and parallel to the regime of the Forms. The independence of the two regimes of *sunthêmata* and of Forms, manifests itself in the different structure Iamblichus accords to the *epitêdeiotês*, or "suitability," for participation in forms as compared to the suitability to participate in *sunthêmata*. As Smith points out, "the continuity of Neoplatonic ontological procession seems to break down here," (127)

inasmuch as the normal order of reversion up the hierarchy of ontic hypostases “has been, as it were, bypassed and a more direct mode of contact with the divine created” (126). Smith explains that

Iamblichus’ *epitêdeiotês* for divine mantic is over and above normal *epitêdeiotês* for form. Proclus distinguishes *sunthêma* and Form. This seems to imply that the divine channel which aids in ascent is different from the ontological procession of Form. On a broader basis Proclus distinguishes henads and *ta noêta*. The henads in their manifestation at different levels are independent of the *noêta* or Forms. Thus theurgy which works through the henads leads to a divorce of the spiritual ascent from the contemplation of Forms. (127 n. 7)

Smith recognizes, further, that the activity of the supra-essential realm with respect to beings is to impart a unity which is to be understood as *idiotês*, that is, individual peculiarity. This is already implicit from the very notion of the *sunthêma*, which is often not just a particular *type* of being but a particular “divinized” individual. Even if the *sunthêma* is a type of being – say, a particular species of herb or stone – its significance to the theurgic ritual lies not in its position in the ontic hierarchy, but its relation to certain myths and the attributes of particular deities. Putting together the pieces in a manner that Smith does not, inasmuch as the metaphysics of the henads is not his chief concern, one could conclude that the unity corresponding to the One and conferred by it beyond the bounds of that unity – namely, the unity of the *infima species* – is also a generically distinct mode of unity, that is, individuality. Instead, Smith focuses on the consequences of this doctrine for

human existence: referring to the Proclean doctrine that humans make contact with Being through the “flower of the intellect” while they contact the One through the “flower of the whole soul,” he notes that “[t]his stage differs from the others in being not a further refinement involving an even loftier *part* of man but in attempting to reintegrate man as a whole. Proclus seems dissatisfied with the gradual whittling away of the individual to its ‘highest’ element and, perhaps, wanted to restore a more realistic picture of the mystical aspirant as a conscious human being,” (121). Smith even refers earlier to this “whittling away of the individual” as an “infinite regress (or rather progress)” to which the doctrine of the “flower of the whole soul” attempts to call a halt. This echoes the point made in this dissertation with respect to the infinite regress generated by formal unity and terminated by henadic unity, only seen from the viewpoint of entities near the bottom of the ontic hierarchy rather than those at the top.

H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, *Théologie Platonicienne* livre III, introduction, chapitre I, “La Doctrine des Hénades Divines chez Proclus: Origine et Signification” (1978).

The extraordinary accomplishment of Saffrey and Westerink with respect to the editing and translating of the entire six volumes of the *Platonic Theology* is in no way belittled by pointing out the shortcomings of their account of the henads in the introduction to the third volume. They announce at the outset the outlines of their interpretation of the doctrine at the same time that they propose a theory as to its historical origins: “Nous

entreprenons donc de démontrer que l'invention de la théorie des hénades comme divinités intermédiaires entre l'Un-Bien, premier dieu, et les dieux intelligibles, est due au maître de Proclus, le philosophe Syrianus" (ix). It is unfortunate that the historical and substantive issues surrounding the henadology have not here been disaggregated, since it becomes difficult to determine whether Saffrey and Westerink's presupposition as to the content of the doctrine – and I say presupposition insofar as the above interpretation is not justified in the course of the introduction – is intended as support for their historical argument, or to be supported by it. The statement above as to the status of the henads is, at any rate, incorrect, and formulated not on the basis of the texts of Proclus, but on the basis of a preconception of how they *must* be understood, which will become clearer as we go on.

They begin from the notion of a fundamental equivocation in the use of the term "henad": "Le mot 'hénade', chez Proclus, désigne à proprement parler les dieux, hénades-principes de chaque ordre de dieux. Mais il sert aussi à décrire l'Un, premier dieu, au-delà des hénades divines. Puis, il désigne les dieux de chaque ordre, intelligible, intellectif, démiurgique, etc." (xiv-xv). To begin with, this throws their original formulation into ambiguity, an ambiguity which they would foist upon Proclus. But the equivocation is misidentified; for if there is equivocation to be discerned here, it is not between the Gods *simpliciter* and the Gods of each order, for these are all just henads. The equivocation is obviously in referring to the One as a *henad*, for of course the One cannot be a henad. Nor does it seem that the concept of the One as "first God" is properly understood here, for to posit the One as a "God beyond the Gods" is in no way consonant with the structure of the henadic



multiplicity. The One is not to be understood as something “beyond” the henads, and we must ask whether we have met the minimal requirements of an engaged reader if we cannot follow Proclus’ thought even so far as to refrain from reifying the One straightaway in this fashion. A further dimension of their interpretation which shows the looseness with which they deal with Proclus’ concepts is the notion that “chaque ordre de réalités divines a son hénade propre qui gouverne cet ordre, et le premier dieu, l’Un, supérieur à tout ces hénades, en est la source unique. C’est pourquoi on peut le nommer l’Hénade des hénades” (xvii). Here the causal analogy we have seen Proclus use to argue for the One Itself from the logic of participation, namely that each instance of participation implies an unparticipated principle, is allowed to dominate the whole picture of the henadic realm, completely obscuring its unique characteristics. It is simply presupposed that Proclus would heedlessly contradict himself by hypostatizing the One in this fashion; and furthermore, there is no evidence for the structure here attributed to the divine orders. The unity which he attributes to a “governing” henad seems to be rather the *monadic* unity of the order, whereby the intellectual Gods are intellectual by virtue of the participation of the monad of intellect in them; in short, monads are here taken for henads.

With respect to the following passage from *IP* 1066, “they [possibly Iamblicheans] argue that since every God, inasmuch as he is a God, is a henad (for it is this element, the One, which divinizes all being), for this reason they think it right to join to the study of the First a discussion of all the Gods; for they are all supra-essential henads, and transcend the multiplicity of beings, and are the summits of beings,” Saffrey and Westerink remark:

[D]ans ce cas, le mot 'hénade' est employé dans un sens très général et non technique, c'est seulement le nom métaphysique de dieu ... Donc dans ce texte -- à supposer que Proclus reproduise exactement le vocabulaire de Jamblique --, 'hénade' ne désigne pas un degré dans la hiérarchie des dieux -- ce qui sera le cas dans la théologie de Proclus --, elle est seulement une désignation des dieux, qui met en valeur leur unité, c'est-à-dire ce par quoi ils sont des dieux. Autrement dit, nous croyons possible que Jamblique ait employé le mot d'hénade, mais s'il l'a fait, c'est d'une manière qui ne s'écarte pas de l'usage commun de ce terme, par lequel on désigne une unité. Par conséquent, nous sommes conduits à admettre que, lorsque Proclus parle des hénades dans le deuxième texte de *l'In Parm.* et lorsqu'il expose au début du livre III de la *Théologie platonicienne* sa théorie des hénades, il ne parle pas de la même chose. (xxxiii-xxxiv)

It is indefensible to dismember the doctrine of the henads in this fashion before even attempting to understand it as a unified theory. And what is this "common usage" of the term "henad," when at any rate we have already read above that "[o]n va voir que, en fait, l'emploi du mot *henas* est rarissime avant Proclus ... le mot ne se rencontre pratiquement que dans la langue philosophique ... Cette situation ... est en elle-même significative" (xi)? On the contrary, it is precisely as the metaphysical term for deity that "henad" *has* its systematic function for Proclus. And if this were a non-technical use of the term, why would it have the very technical modifier "supra-essential" attached to it, although Saffrey and Westerink, in their citation, truncate the text before arriving at it? We are to believe that it is on account of "l'équivoque qui plane sur le nom d'hénades, donné peut-être par Jamblique

à tous les dieux, mais restreint par Proclus à un degré des dieux, intermédiaire entre l'Un Premier Dieu et les degrés de l'être," with the note that "par 'hénades', nous entendons ici les *autoteleis henades* selon la distinction énoncée par Proclus lui-même dans *El. theol.* §§ 64 *cor.* et 114, par opposition aux illuminations d'unités que constituent les séries dépendant de ces hénades" (xxxv). I have attempted to show, however, that there is a better interpretation of the corollary to prop. 64, namely that the "illuminations" in question are monads, which furthermore accords with the account of "illumination" of Being by the henads of each class which is given in the *Platonic Theology*.

Their interpretation, by contrast, grows further and further out of touch with Proclus' texts the further one follows it. We read further on, for instance, that "[d]e cette façon [i.e. from the 14 conditional syllogisms of the Second Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*], se trouvent définies quatorze hénades qui commandent chaque degré de la hiérarchie de tous les dieux" (l). But no textual support is offered for the presumption that the number of henads is actually limited by the number of hypotheses, and that these latter do not merely denote the number of ontic *classes* of deity; and were prop. 135 offered in support of this view, one would have to account for props. 162ff, as I have already discussed in the body of this dissertation. With this one simple presupposition, the entire distinction between the ontic and the supra-essential domains is abolished by Saffrey and Westerink, making the whole doctrine of the henads an extravagant triviality.

Furthermore, when they remark, innocently enough, that "[c]e qui précède nous a permis de retrouver, croyons-nous, le chemin parcouru de

Jamblique à Syrianus, qui aboutit à l'invention des hénades divines. Ce chemin est essentiellement celui de l'exégèse de la deuxième hypothèse du *Parménide*" (lii), they circumvent acknowledging the roots of the doctrine in the exegesis of the *first* hypothesis, and the exigencies placed upon the conception of the One by the dialectic of unity. This has to do, it would seem, with the illicit hypostatization of the One which they hold. One must note the inconsistency with which Saffrey and Westerink on the one hand attribute the invention of the very doctrine of "divine henads" to Syrianus and Proclus, as opposed to Iamblichus, while at the same time wishing to argue that Iamblichus possessed a doctrine of "henads" as a metaphysical term for all deities, in order to avoid admitting that the latter is the doctrine of *Proclus*, regardless of whether it also was that of Iamblichus. Syrianus and Proclus, according to this latter argument, become the originators only of the doctrine whereby the henads are sandwiched between a supreme "First God" and a host of lesser Gods, a doctrine in fact invented by Saffrey and Westerink themselves.

"[L]'Un, par son être même, fait-il venir à l'existence d'autres unités, les hénades qui sont des 'existences unitaires' ou qui forment une 'multiplicité unitaire', étant plus de l'un que de l'être, et qui permettent le début du processus de la participation de l'unité, par lequel de proche en proche tous les êtres procéderont dans l'existence" (lvii). In a passage such as this, one must note that no effort has been made to penetrate beneath the smooth surface of the elementary formulations to try to really understand what a "unitary multiplicity" might be, or what it might mean to be "more of the One than of Being," or the nature of the process by which the participation of

unity comes about. The work of exegesis has thus in an important sense not even begun. Similarly, we read that “elles [the henads] produiront à leur tour la procession indéfinie des êtres, et même jusqu’aux non-êtres, par la participation progressive et continuellement dégradée de leur unité par les êtres” (ibid). But this is not simply a degradation; the phenomena of degradation come about because of the production by the henads themselves of relationships among them abstracted from their own supra-essential existence. Unless we understand the new spaces of manifestation that are generated in this way by divine activity, we cannot appreciate the gains and losses accompanying the procession of Being. In this way misconstruing the doctrine of the henads can lead to a corruption of the whole understanding of Proclus’ metaphysics in the direction of a dualism which Proclus in fact strives against.

In their most significant account of the role of the henadology in Proclus’ system, we read that

La théologie des hénades divines permet à Proclus de récupérer l’ontologie comme une partie dérivée de l’hénologie. En effet, la science du tout premier principe imparticipable, l’Un, est tout entière négative; sa seule méthode est bien la négation de tout. C’est la théologie négative, fondée sur le modèle de la première hypothèse du *Parménide*, et qui a été exposée par Proclus au livre II de la *Théologie platonicienne*. Mais la théologie des hénades divines est, quant à elle, une science positive, sur le modèle des conclusions affirmatives de la deuxième hypothèse du *Parménide*. Cette science-là est la science de l’être en tant qu’être, de l’être intelligible et de tous les êtres qui en dérivent, c’est l’ontologie par conséquent, exposée à la lumière de l’hénologie. Car, dans cette

conception de l'ontologie, on n'aura dit le dernier mot sur chaque ordre de réalités, que si l'on remonte jusqu'à l'hénade divine correspondante à cet ordre. C'est pourquoi, parce que les êtres sont sortis de l'Un par l'intermédiaire des hénades, l'ontologie, science des êtres et théologie des dieux, prend sa source dans l'hénologie, science de l'Un et célébration du Premier Dieu. Au surplus, on peut se demander si l'une des raisons d'être de la théorie des hénades divines n'est pas l'organisation de ce monde des hénades, conçu comme un dédoublement, à un plan supérieure, du monde de l'être, nouvel ordre rendu nécessaire pour poser le point de départ de la participation des êtres et leur lien avec l'Un imparticipable. (lviii)

There is only a very pallid notion here of what might constitute the space of the *henadology*, as distinct from *henology*, which as an utterly negative "science" should actually have no designation, constituting in effect the residue of a reaction between ontology, or *monadology*, and the *henadology*, which is theology as a positive science. The science of beings *qua* beings is monadology, not henadology; rather, the henadology is "first philosophy" in the sense that it is the science of the noblest domain of objects. Moreover, "celebration of the First God" is no more an accurate description of Proclus' project than are the henads merely a "doubling" of the world of Being, although perhaps we must reduce the henads to the latter in order to convert Proclus to the former. Saffrey and Westerink go on to argue (lviii-lix) for the absolute limitation of the number of henads to the number of ontic principles, that is, the utter reduction of the henads to an annex of ontology, against which I have argued at sufficient length in the body of this dissertation to obviate taking up the argument again here. A perfect text in

which to observe how their interpretation drifts free of Proclus' texts is the following, which concerns the same issue of collapsing the henads into ontology:

Il faut remarquer néanmoins que ces énumérations d'hénades chez Proclus restent toujours incomplètes. Jamais par exemple, il n'énumère complètement les quatorze hénades qui doivent en principe correspondre aux quatorze conclusions de la deuxième hypothèse du *Parménide*, fondant les quatorze propriétés caractéristiques. Nous rencontrons ici une des limites de l'exposé de Proclus. S'il affirme quelque part que 'ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la théologie scientifique de Platon' (*IT* III 10. 7-8) c'est le classement rigoureux des dieux, jamais, du moins dans les écrits conservés de lui, il n'a pris la peine d'en énumérer le classement complet et systématique. (lxx)

Here the basic misunderstanding is crystal clear, for there is nothing incomplete in Proclus' account. The fourteen conclusions of the second hypothesis detail fourteen *taxeis* of Gods, which constitutes in Proclus' estimation the best possible ontological classification of the Gods. There is no ideal pantheon of fourteen Gods to play the role of deified ontic principles in this allegorical *tableau vivant* imagined by this interpretation; for as Proclus, and Syrianus too, point out, the actual number of Gods that exist is not something humans can know. We can say only that they cannot be infinite in number, nor *fewer* than would be needed to account, in a "measured" fashion, for the real diversity in the universe. The refusal to go further in the direction of a positive enumeration of the Gods lies ultimately in what Proclus, in the fifth chapter of the first book of the *Platonic Theology*,

attributes to the theology of Plato as its superiority over all others: it places first *unity*. Why is unity a superior characteristic on the basis of which to understand the nature of the Gods than any of the other notions Proclus mentions in this chapter? Namely because “unity” in this context means *individuality*, and thus coincides with the determination to grasp each God as him/herself, rather than by reducing the God to an instantiation of some foreign principle. One might inquire further why it should have been the case that neither Proclus nor Syrianus felt themselves capable of counting as high as fourteen?

The distortion of the most basic aspects of Proclus’ project are especially clear in their remarks on Proclus’ mythological hermeneutic, what they call the Proclean “demythologization”:

Ainsi, dans la mesure où la théologie comme science a supplanté la théologie symbolique ou mythologique, qui était la théologie traditionnelle depuis les origines de la pensée grecque, on peut dire que cette nouvelle théologie scientifique a opéré une sorte de ‘démithologisation’. Mais il est évident que cette ‘démithologisation’ atteint son achèvement complet, lorsque les dieux du panthéon olympien sont devenus les hénades divines. Lorsque Proclus nous dit (IC 140/80. 5-6) que la propriété qui définit la déesse Hestia, c’est ‘être en soi-même’, et celle qui définit la déesse Héra, c’est ‘être en un autre’, nous sommes devant un cas de ‘démithologisation’ complète. (lxxi-lxxii)

What evidence are Saffrey and Westerink prepared to adduce that it was Proclus’ goal to replace, e.g., Hestia with a cult of “being in-itself” and so forth? Scientific theology is never intended by Proclus as a replacement for



mythological theology. Saffrey and Westerink seem to have in mind a process in which the Gods are “metabolized” into henads; but this demythologization is the effect, rather, of their *own* erasure of the distinction between the ontic and supra-essential realms, rendering the Gods perfectly vacuous and otiose conceptions and thus foisting onto Proclus an utterly foreign project of the effective elimination of the Gods. Proclus’ goal is manifestly to discover the roots of Being in the divine, not the dissolution of the divine into Being. This fundamental *méconnaissance* plays itself out further in a curiously patronizing account of Proclus’ personal religiosity:

Mais, parce que Proclus était un génie, il savait garder conjoints l’ordre de la théologie scientifique et celui de la piété populaire qui n’est autre que la dévotion du cœur. A. J. Festugière l’a bien montré (*Proclus et la religion traditionnelle*, dans *Mélanges Piganiol*, Paris 1966, p. 1581-1590, reproduced in *Études de philosophie grecque*, Paris 1971, p. 575-584, the text cited, p. 582-583): ‘Comment expliquer l’alliance, dans l’âme religieuse de Proclus, de cette piété toute simple et de la recherche du Dieu caché? C’est ici que le problème intéresse au plus haut point la psychologie religieuse. Le fait est que la recherche de Dieu est difficile, elle est longue, elle suppose de pénibles dépouillements, elle passe par ce que les mystiques nomment des ‘nuits’, la nuit des sens, la nuit de l’entendement, elle aboutit à un Dieu dont l’essence même est incompréhensible et ineffable, bref au Dieu Inconnu. Or la même âme religieuse qui aspire à ce Dieu Inconnu aspire aussi à un contact plus immédiat avec des formes du Divin plus accessibles, moins séparées. De là vient, chez beaucoup de mystiques chrétiens, la tendre dévotion à la Vierge. Et je m’explique de même, dans le cas de Proclus, sa tendre dévotion à Athéna. Il n’y a là, je le répète, rien qui m’étonne: ou plutôt cette piété me semble naturelle, et comme le complément

nécessaire de la contemplation intellectuelle. (lxii)

These are fine words, but they have nothing to do with Proclus. Proclus is not engaged in a search for a hidden or unknown God; this is sheer monotheizing projection and most anachronistic as the references to medieval Christianity underscore. The very *inaccessibility* of the divine to which Festugière points is an artifact of a theology to which Proclus does not ascribe. For him, all is still, as it was for Thales, "full of Gods." Furthermore, what necessitates the explanation of his devotion, "tender" or otherwise, to Athena on what appear to be psychoanalytic grounds? This reveals the fundamental presupposition upon which the interpretation of the henadology offered by Saffrey and Westerink is based, namely that there can be no reconciling Proclus' "gross" or "primitive" polytheism with that ethereal and intellectualized monotheism contemporary commentators would wish to fashion out of the doctrine of the One Itself, which is, nevertheless, of one piece with the dialectical procedure by which it and the other hypostases emerge in human consciousness, and not a *religious* postulate at all.

*L'Architecture du divin. Mathématique et philosophie chez Plotin et Proclus*  
by Annick Charles-Saget (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982).

Charles-Saget sees an analogy between the Plotinian theory of number as a "sketch" (*paraskeuê*) for beings (*Enn.* VI. 6. 10) and the Proclean theory of the henads. "Car toutes deux joux, à l'endroit du développement processif, le

même rôle: *fournir une règle de déploiement à la pluralisation de l'essence,*" (183), this rule being akin to a "rhythm" of procession. As such, he regards it as no accident that the word "henads" appears in Plotinus' text, and that it appears already to have a sense distinct from that of "monads," inasmuch as "il renvoie bien à cette première présence plurifiée du principe – tandis que le terme de *monas* est toujours en relation avec des considérations numériques" (ibid). By tracing deeper roots for the doctrine of the henads than most, Charles-Saget makes it seem less like a doctrine that Proclus inherited fully-constituted from its originator, either Syrianus or Iamblichus, and more like Proclus' contribution to a line of inquiry already old and having passed through a number of hands. This accords with this dissertation's strategy of looking at the doctrine of the henads exclusively as it functions in the economy of Proclean thought.

The distinction between the supra-essential and the ontic domains, as represented by henads and monads respectively, is recognized by Charles-Saget, but not greatly elaborated upon. "La suite des monades" is one of "principes simples qui sont, dans l'être, les analogues des hénades, principes d'unité" (204). The vagueness which besets this "analogy" is a chief concern of Charles-Saget's, particularly inasmuch as he surveys Proclus' system exclusively through the *Elements of Theology*. This is not to say that he makes the mistake of taking the *Elements* as a sufficient statement of the Proclean system, nor even as the integral work that we might assume it to be, given the expectations arising in us due to the geometrical form of the work. But he explains that "[n]ous avons voulu, pour notre part, jouer le jeu proposé par Proclus, celui d'une *Elementatio* où chaque proposition s'affirme

démonstrable en une *suite finie* de propositions ... C'est seulement après avoir éprouvé les limites de l'armature logique que, en raison de ces limites mêmes, nous avons changé de méthode et considéré les affinités de notions" (210 n. 1). He is quite clear, though, about the necessity of recognizing these limits. Proclus

se donne un champ latent de sens dont quelques axiomes explicités en représentent l'émergence partielle ... La question que nous posons désormais à l'*Elementatio* n'est plus celle de la stricte validité démonstrative, mais plutôt cette autre: comment Proclus ouvre-t-il un espace ontologique, comment en déploie-t-il les dimensions et subsidiairement, comment, une fois cet espace ouvert, introduit-il ou construit-il dans cet espace un nouvel objet? (223)

By not assuming – in the absence, indeed, of any explicit statement from Proclus as to the nature and goals of the *Elements* – that the text is an authoritative statement of Proclus' system which is to be understood as determining the semantic field of the rest of Proclus' work, without those other works reciprocally determining it, Charles-Saget avoids a trap that is laid for the modern reader by the appropriation of the geometrical method by authors such as Spinoza and Wittgenstein. The *Elements* comes into its proper light as a particular mode of presentation of Proclus' system and a presentation of particular aspects of that system. Charles-Saget takes no stand on the question of the position of the *Elements* in a chronology of Proclus' works and the correlative question of an evolution in Proclus' thought, and neither does this dissertation. Fundamentally, it makes little difference whether the text is seen as manifesting an ascesis of purely epistemic inquiry

that abstracts from the material needed to fill out the concept of the “mode of unity” – namely, as this dissertation argues, the fore-understanding of the *proper names* of the Gods as representing primitive sites of enunciation – or as an earlier stage of Proclus’ thought in which only the perspective from within ontology had been developed.

Charles-Saget diagnoses very shrewdly the shortcomings of the account in the *Elements* which would have motivated such an evolution in Proclus’ thought, or which simply demand of us that we distinguish the place of the *Elements* in the broader context of Proclus’ work. For “[s]’il y a une logique dans l’organisation du tout et si l’Un y joue un rôle, c’est la logique qui est principe de cette production; et le principe du système, quels que soient les raffinements de l’expression à son égard, est un élément du système” (240). Indeed, the very term “element” (*stoicheion*) is an ontic term, and we should not be surprised that the One is, in this text, completely absorbed into what Charles-Saget calls the “network of beings” (“réseau des êtres”). Completely lacking from this text is the characteristic most proper to the supra-essential domain: the absolute individuality of the proper name. Charles-Saget speaks, indeed, of a “démessure du champ théologique” with respect to “l’insertion [with the discrete discussion of the henads from prop. 113 on] de celui qui parle en un point du système ne peut plus être masquée, car le système est incapable de produire les distinctions divines: le divin ne se connaît que par ses dérives,” giving the inquiry the character of a “démarche régressive” (244).

Proclus is careful nevertheless to stay within the bounds of the inquiry as he has laid it out (rather than within the bounds we might have mistakenly assumed the inquiry to have), inasmuch as he does not introduce even here

proper names, but only two axes of purely formal determinations of the henads, the one axis being that of intelligible, intellectual, psychical and cosmic henads corresponding to (or “sketching” in the Plotinian sense) the monads of the ontic series (props. 161-5), the other axis being that of the classes of functional characteristics delivered in props. 151-8. Charles-Saget’s reading of the latter is brilliant, in that he distinguishes that these characteristics “qui ne trouvent aucune correspondance dans des êtres particuliers,” actually pertain to that by which “le divin, origin de tous les êtres et mainteneur de leur ordre, garantissait ... la possibilité du système qui le dit” (250). For “le divin n’est pas pour lui [Proclus] (seulement) une présence en chaque être, c’est aussi une qualité structurale du tout des êtres ... La distinction des hénades selon leurs dérivés ne nous dit jamais que leur fonction partielle, à l’égard de séries particulières. Or, c’est le divin comme puissance d’englobement que nous cherchons maintenant” (ibid). As such, the strictly ontological mode of inquiry represented by the *Elements* is taken there to its furthest limits. Charles-Saget explains that the classes of deities enunciated in props. 151-8 “renvoient bien à l’économie générale du système,” (251) and “présentent donc, sur le mode religieux, les axiomes du système proclien,” which are: “qu’il y ait un principe,” corresponding, we might say, to each deity prior to any classification; “qu’il y ait un engendrement à partir de ce principe,” corresponding to the classification of deities as *gennêtikon*; “que tous les engendrés s’accomplissent selon leur perfection propre, accomplissant ainsi celle de l’ensemble par eux constitué,” corresponding to the classification of deities as *telesiourgon*; and “que cette perfection se maintienne pure de toute altération,” corresponding to the

classification of deities as *phrourêtikon* (252).

Charles-Saget notes that Proclus incorporates into his system terms that “comportent une ‘couleur’, une expressivité par laquelle se disent l’admiration et le désir. Mais ce sont *aussi* des mots du système, des mots non seulement intégrés dans le système à la manière dont les mathématiques ont intégré l’incommensurable, mais des mots qui renforcent le système” (253). By the incorporation into the system of terms evoking desire and other aspects of lived experience, which is present even in the *Elements*, and to a far greater degree, of course, in a text like the *Platonic Theology*, Proclus generates what Charles-Saget refers to as “un réseau d’exigences où la démesure discursive se trouvait à la fois fondée, nourrie et justifiée” (ibid). It is one of the goals of this dissertation to explain how the “discursive excess” of theology is incorporated into the Proclean system without being reduced to philosophy, nor philosophy reduced to theology. Some incisive thoughts in this direction are provided by Charles-Saget’s remarks on Proclean “topology” (291ff). His comments concern the consequences in the *Elements* of the lack in Proclus of a “metalanguage,” which manifest on two planes, that of the “integration of principles” and that of the “interference of codes.” The former is seen in the fact that “le modèle du développement de toutes les séries est aussi la première série (les hénades), de même que le principe de chaque série (la monade) en est aussi le premier terme” (292). The henads and the monads are thus “integrated” into the series with respect to which they are supposed to be models. This problematic, which can be understood as a radicalization of the aporia of the Third Man, is cited in this dissertation as one of the prime reasons for the unique structure accorded the manifold of the henads. Within

the context of the *Elements*, however, there is only the status of (relative) “imparticipability” to elevate henads (at least in a certain respect) and monads (at least certain among them) above their derivatives. “Mais ce caractère, qui devient une simple *différence*, ne les arrache pas au système des êtres: l’imparticipable est aussi participant (les hénades, de l’Un, les monades, de leur causes). Ces quasi-êtres sont liés au système, dès lors qu’ils sont pensés selon quelque lien, fût-il de différence” (ibid). The charge is irrefutable with respect to the *Elements*, although in all fairness Proclus points the way to the solution when he states (in prop. 118) that the henads have no property by participation, which means that when they are understood, in accord with prop. 1, to participate unity “in some way,” the latter phrase is meant to imply an equivocal use of the term. The argument of this dissertation is that although the henads – and even the One Itself – are indeed “integrated” into the “system of beings” – in the *Elements*, that in the system as a whole they are not, for they do not participate in the One nor are they caused by it, *except from the perspective of ontology*. And so, when Charles-Saget discerns that “les hénades transcendent tous les ordres, mais elles constituent néanmoins le premier d’entre eux” (ibid), he would be correct but for the fact that the henads do not form a class of the sort Proclus lays out in prop. 21, which is disposed under or around a monad. That the henads constitute a class disposed under or around the One Itself as monad is a necessary fiction of philosophical discourse, true in a qualified fashion insofar as the henads, through their activity generative of Being, *allow themselves* to be “captured” in the system of their own creation.

Charles-Saget notes that “lorsque Proclus utilise le même mot, causalité,



ou participation, pour marquer le lien qui unit aussi bien le principe et sa série, que les termes de la série entre eux, il y a là une ambiguïté plus grave” than that affecting mathematics, which “a pu se constituer comme science sans que soient élucidés le rôle exact de l’unité et la nature du nombre” (292). As an example, he draws our attention to the way that “imparticipability” is ontologically mediated in prop. 181, where a divine and participated Intellect is posited as the mean term between the divine and imparticipable Intellect and the participated and non-divine Intellect. But “‘imparticipé’ n’est pas un prédicat du même ordre que ‘divin’. Ce n’est pas une simple différence de degré car ‘imparticipé’ signifie la rupture de la communauté de rang qui est une condition préalable à l’adjonction d’une différence” (293). Charles-Saget notes that in the *Platonic Theology* (II 5. 39, 9-17) Proclus “corrects” (“corrige”) this weakness, in recognizing that “même lorsque des termes sont contigus, la distance qui les sépare n’est pas toujours la même” (ibid), inasmuch as, in the latter text, he explains that the transcendence of the Good over all beings is greater than that of the Intellect over that which comes after it. But this principle is already stated in prop. 130: “In any divine order the highest terms more completely transcend those immediately subordinate to them than do these latter the subsequent terms.” Charles-Saget does not remark on the latter proposition; but it implies that the scope of the problem is somewhat missed by him. For he falls into his own trap in thinking that a genuine “rupture” could be expressed on a quantitative scale of “distances.” For what it is worth, the quantitative factor is already acknowledged by Proclus in the very text of the *Elements*; what remains unspoken in this text is the radical integration, not of the henads into Being, but of the whole system of Being

into *each* henad which is the principle topic of this dissertation.

The second of the “insuffisances de la topologie proclienne” is that, just as “le principe de ressemblance efface la discontinuité entre principe et dérivés,” so “le principe d’isomorphisme efface la distinction entre le code et le décodé, entre le code et le message” (294). The lack of a metalanguage means that “l’on ne peut dépasser le système pour en exposer l’exiématique, que l’on rest *dans le système*, que tout langage demeure le langage d’un certain niveau, même s’il semble avoir puissance pour interpréter la totalité.” This absence of a metalanguage is not considered by Charles-Saget a defect, however, since “l’on songe aux critiques modernes issues de Wittgenstein à l’égard de la pseudo-indépendance des métalangues,” but a discordance is registered within Proclus’ own thought between “cette réversibilité modèle/application et l’exigence proclienne d’un terme premier *aschetos*, au-delà de, non touché par ce qui vient après lui,” (294 n. 40). The demand that the principle be without relation or *schesis* to the whole is addressed, as this dissertation intends to show, by the exemption of the henads from the rules which apply to beings, all relations among which constitute a third term between the relata, whereas the henads possess a relation, strictly speaking, neither to each other nor toward Being, since each contains the whole of Being within it and the relations between henads are borne in each henad as a potential-for-being-so-disposed toward the other henad, which pseudo-relations only become actualized within the ambit of Being and the monadic mode of unity, for which the henads constitute a class under the One.

Charles-Saget has a provocative sense of what is possible in Proclus’ system, which would have benefited from a closer inspection of the

implications of the henadology when taken in its full richness, beyond the narrow confines of the *Elements*. He sees in Proclus, for instance,

le "sentiment" de la différence d'ordre entre structure libre et structure liée ...  
 Chez Proclus, une structure est liée quand elle devient *une certaine* structure,  
 quand, par exemple, *hê psuchê* devient *psuchê tis* ... C'était là une manière  
 originale de reprendre la différence platonicienne entre l'Idée et ses  
 manifestations sensibles. Mais le principe des ressemblances a conduit Proclus à  
 faire de toute structure libre la première des structures liées. (294)

From a broader perspective, however, it is no longer a question of merely effacing a distinction, for the henad sublates the very opposition between "free" and "bound" structure that is critical to ontology. Henadic individuality, which is expressed "ineffably" by the *proper name* of each deity, forms as its ontic precipitate the opposition between universality and particularity which is negotiated by the ambiguity of the indexical *tis* combined with a class term. As such, there is something novel here that goes well beyond simply expressing the difference between the Idea and its participants in an original manner, inasmuch as the whole edifice of Platonism is preserved while a new, fundamental level of structure is revealed encompassing it.

The nature of the effacement of the distinction between "code" and "message" of which Charles-Saget speaks is that "Proclus ne laisse jamais à un niveau épistémologique sa sémantique propre. Corrigeant la partialité du langage, il en émousse la rigueur," and in order to bring *totality* to manifestation, "il surdétermine chaque figure, chaque rapport. Il produit par

là une *diffraction du sens*, et un démembrement de la totalité partielle” – i.e., a particular code in which “le tout se dire simplement sur un mode particulier,” like mathematics – “en voulant l’égaliser à l’ensemble des totalités” (295). On the one hand, it is as if Proclus squanders the possibilities of maintaining the rigor of the original discourse in its very partiality; but seen in the broader context of an attempt to explain the conditions of possibility of *totality as such*, which this dissertation finds essential to the henadology, and freed of an unnatural anxiety that the particular codes would not be developed in their full richness were they to be situated in such a context, it no longer seems that we should necessarily prefer the project that Proclus does not, in the end, carry out, namely that of a *mathesis universalis*. For “ce serait, sans doute, accorder trop de valeur à un seul code, à un seul langage: le philosophe parle, et passe, *entre* les langages” (296). No philosopher could be said to embody more profoundly in their thought this principle than Proclus, for whom the lack of a truly universal metalanguage serves the higher purpose of indicating the difference between the supra-essential and ontic modes of unity, which are incapable of assimilation within a proper genus.

“La Théorie des Hénades et La Mystique de Proclus,” by Christian Guérard (*Dionysius* 6, 1982).

Guérard’s essay begins by contesting the tendency of scholars to dismiss the henadology as a mere attempt to “donner un fondement d’apparence métaphysique à la théologie polythéiste et mythologique grecque, ainsi

opposée au christianisme triomphant" (73). Guérard sees this attitude toward the henadology as insufficiently corrected in what he sees as having become the authoritative reading, attributed to Dodds, in which a double function is attributed to the henadology, a "theological" function basically in accord with the previous, deflationary interpretation – although it should be noted that the recognition of a justificatory theological function in medieval Christian, Jewish and Islamic philosophy has not been deflationary either in effect or in intent – side by side with a systematic function. Guérard is not satisfied with this double function concept of the henadology; rather, he aspires to recover the unity of the theological and systematic functions of the doctrine of the henads.

An initial stage of Guérard's argument seeks to pose the Proclean doctrine of the henads in direct contrast to the Iamblichean theory, as reported by Damascius, of "avant la première triade intelligible, deux premiers principes, à savoir le principe absolument ineffable et ensuite le principe non-coordonné avec la triade," as well as that of Porphyry, for whom "le Père de la triade intelligible est le Principe unique de toutes choses," (74f, quoting Damascius, *DP* II 1). Proclus continues, of course, to reject Porphyry's approach, but abandons Iamblichus' solution in favor of one in which "la multiplicité doit immédiatement procéder de l'Un redevenu Premier," (75). Guérard goes on to present an interpretation of the relationship between the One and the henads much in harmony with that of this dissertation. The first proposition of the *Elements of Theology*, he stresses, is not to be interpreted as saying that the henads participate the One; instead, in accord with the choices already made by translators Trouillard and Dodds alike, as he puts it,

“il ne faut en effet pas mettre de majuscule à cet un général [i.e. the *to hen* of the first three propositions] qui n’est pas l’Un,” (n. 21 p. 76). The importance of this point for Guérard is that

après l’Un sera nécessairement le nombre hénadique, qui, contrairement à la doctrine jambliquienne, n’est que la somme ‘unifiée’ des Uns et non pas une hypostase individuelle. De la sorte, les êtres ne participeront pas à ce qui serait un unifié, mais bel et bien à des Uns. Dans une telle optique, il ne saurait être question d’un Un participé, ni de participation à un unifié. Il faut, au contraire, que la participation à l’un soit la participation à des Uns. (76)

Since Guérard’s interest is primarily in the consequences of the henadology for *beings*, rather than in explicating the status of the henads themselves, he does little to draw out the implications of this doctrine of “Ones.” And yet he suggests he is not unaware of the possibility of just such an interpretation as this dissertation offers by his provocative remark that “[i]l convient de rappeler que, ‘stricto sensu’ chez Proclus, il n’y a pas d’hénologie, mais une hénadologie,” (n. 26 p. 76). The first proposition of the *ET*, when it “énonce que tout participe obligatoirement à l’un ... signifie évidemment que tout participe à l’Un par les Hénades, et non que l’Un soit participé *ou qu’il soit u n*,” (77, emphasis mine). As this dissertation argues, there really *is* no “One,” there are only *Ones*, that is, the henads.

Guérard’s way of looking at the situation is governed by his interest in the implications of the henadology for beings. Hence he says that the henads “ne sont donc pas des ‘participants’ à l’Un, mais de pures ‘participations’,” (ibid) and that there is, besides them, only the “irradiated states of unity” of

prop. 64. This nearly exactly the interpretation of this dissertation, namely that at the heart of Proclus' system is the opposition between henadic and monadic modes of unity. "Entre elles [the henads] et l'Un, il ne faut pas établir un rapport de *methexis*, mais de simple *proödos*," (78); as this dissertation explains, the import of this fact is that it prevents the henads from losing their autonomy to the One, and so preserves polytheism, *but also the principle of irreducible individuality itself*, from succumbing to the exigencies of ontic logic. Here we see how theological and philosophical exigencies can coincide without imposing any artificial split upon Proclus' thought or demeaning the philosophical significance of the henadology. Guérard calls the fact that "les Hénades sont autonomes et ne constituent pas un hypostase unifiée" the "horizontal" characteristic of the henads; he proceeds to analyze the significance of the "vertical" dimension of the henadology. Here again, Guérard anticipates some of the insights basic to this dissertation. One of the key points of this dissertation is that the hierarchical *manifestation* of the henads as intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, intellectual and even infra-intellectual Gods does not make them any less henads in their *hyparxis*. The tension between their acentric or polycentric existence and their hierarchical manifestation, which grants to Being its hierarchical nature, is resolved in the account offered in the *Platonic Theology* of the emergence of the latter from the former. Guérard draws from his basic, albeit undeveloped, insight into this state of affairs, its anti-hierarchical implications for beings. In common with certain other authors, such as Smith or Grondijs, Guérard is best able to discern the characteristics peculiar to henadic existence through the consequences for the soul and its possibilities for reversion.

That there are orders of the Gods proceeding to the last orders of Being means that, as Guérard puts it, “la participation à l’un est participation aux Uns et non à l’unité de l’être qui précède,” (79). That is, beings are divinized *directly* at each level, so that their opportunity for reversion does not arise exclusively from reversion upon all the hypostases lying between them and the First Principle on the ontic ladder. Guérard concludes his essay by endorsing in the strongest terms the comments of Trouillard, who opposed Bréhier’s characterization of the Proclean system as one in which “chaque réalité reste à sa place, dans une hiérarchie figée,” by arguing for a tendency in Proclus which “porte à considérer tous les ordres, même les derniers, comme des rayons immédiatement issus du centre universal. Tous deviennent des modes, non pas égaux, mais directs de l’Un,” (81). Indeed, as Guérard points out, “la primauté de l’un sur l’être prend ici tout son sens,” namely, from the polycentricity of the henads. In asserting that “[l]’idée de hiérarchie, fondamentale dans tout le platonisme, ne vaut plus ... par rapport aux dieux,” the henadology truly does represent something “révolutionnaire dans la pensée grecque classique,” (ibid).

“Procession and Division in Proclus” by A. C. Lloyd, in *Soul and the Structure of Being in Late Neoplatonism: Syrianus, Proclus and Simplicius*, ed. by H. J. Blumenthal and A. C. Lloyd (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982).

Lloyd’s concern in this essay, in accord with his seminal work in explicating the logical structures of Neoplatonic thought, is the assimilation of the two “schemes” of procession and division in Proclean thought. These



two schemata are most easily seen juxtaposed in the doctrines of “procession” and “declension” offered by Proclus at *IP* 745f. The former is illustrated by, e.g., the generation by Intellect of Soul, the latter by the generation by Intellect of intellects. The concept of these twin processes allows Proclus “to treat each monad as conventional genus or species independently of its being also cause of a Neoplatonic procession into different hypostases” (31). Lloyd recognizes that Proclus wishes to assimilate these two sorts of generativity under a more generic concept or, at any rate, some common origin. However, the question of what sort of assimilation is appropriate simply restages the original opposition between processional and divisional schemata, since assimilating procession and declension (using the former term, for now, in its technical sense, rather than the looser sense in which Proclus uses it to refer to the very assimilation which Lloyd wishes to explicate) by means of a more generic concept employs the divisional scheme, while accounting for them with respect to a common origin or cause employs the processional scheme.

Lloyd expresses skepticism about the possibility of assimilating the two schemata by generalizing the divisional scheme. As he puts it, “the division scheme represents as it were a micro-ontology [under each hypostatic monad] and if one wished, horizontal series in the general [i.e. “vertical”] scheme. But I do not think there is a place such as Dodds envisages for horizontal series in the macro-ontology” (31). Lloyd sketches out one possible account which would attempt to generalize the divisional scheme. The declining “degrees of participation” in the principles could be understood quantitatively, as “the reception of a greater or smaller number of the forms possessed by their cause.” But this device founders inasmuch as the descent from Soul to

divine, angelic and daemonic universal and particular souls respectively entails “cross-divisions” meaning that the descent “could not be reflected by a single ‘division’ or tree of Porphyry; for it would entail all solar souls being divine, while in fact divine solar souls while leading the series of all solar souls are only one sub-genus or superordinate species of solar souls,” (32). The importance of the inability to reduce these two schemata to one in this fashion goes immediately to the status of the henads, for “if in view of the dependence of all Being on supra-essential entities *and these presumably on Limit and the Unlimited*, one is to envisage either one or an extremely restricted number of genera, the consistent placing of the terms in a division would surely be impossible or alternatively so much further distort the rules that it would no longer be recognizable as a division” (ibid; my emphasis). But this is exactly the problem; the henads are not dependent upon Limit and the Unlimited. Proclus nowhere generates them from this dyad; at most, he attempts to derive the functional classifications of the Gods from this pair. But the Gods are not merely differentiated *ontically*, that is, according to *classes*, they are primordially *individuals*.

Limit and the Unlimited/Infinity are concepts expressive of what we might characterize, along with Lloyd, as the “internal” and “external” activities of *each* henad (33f). They are universals, but contrary to the case among ontic individuals, there are no universals preceding the henads, for they do not participate. Or rather, they “participate” in Being and the diverse ontic structures through their *illumination* of Being. This is how Proclus solves the problem of the One’s “participation” in Being from the *Republic*; and as always, what is said about the One concerns, *stricto sensu*, the henads.

Therefore, although Limit and Infinity, in accord with the doctrine of the *Philebus*, serve an invaluable explanatory function within ontology, there can be no question of a *reduction* of the diversity within Being nor *a fortiori* the multiplicity of individual henads or Gods to some calculus of these functions taken as ontological primitives. What is ontologically primitive is the analysis of each God as a *mixture* of two different attitudes, so to speak, in relation to the project in which each one engages of constituting the whole of Being.

Lloyd rejects the view according to which the henads “are thought of as behaving differently from the rest of reality which is forms – a kind of ‘alternative’ or ‘parallel’ system” (35). And yet his reasons for rejecting this view are not entirely clear. Of course, as can be seen from the literature reviewed in the present section, even where this point of view has been tentatively presented, it has never been developed in the detail of this dissertation. A more cogent presentation of the nature of the difference between henadic and formal reality would naturally have the effect of sharpening the criticisms accordingly. Lloyd leans heavily on the fact that Proclus speaks of the “dialectical exposition of theology” – that is, the theological interpretation of the *Parmenides* – as using dialectical names in place of the sacred names of traditional theology. Lloyd wishes the reader to think that the names in question are the names *of the Gods*. But in fact he ignores in this regard the very sense of the text which he paraphrases (35). The passage is therefore worth quoting at length:

his view [Syrianus'] is that each of these divine *orders* has been named

symbolically by Plato [in the *Parmenides*], and all have been expressed by philosophic names, neither by such names as are customarily celebrated by those who compose theogonies, nor by those which reveal their *hyparxeis*, such as are the epithets of the divine *genera* given out by the Gods, but rather, as I said, by names familiar to philosophers, such as Whole, Multiplicity, Limitlessness, Limit, which are suitable for application to them, all having their proper rank, and portraying without omission all the divine stages of procession, whether intelligible, intellectual, or supra-cosmic, and that thus all things are presented in logical order, as being symbols of divine *orders* of being. (IP 1061f)

I have emphasized here the indications that the whole discussion concerns *classes* of Gods rather than the Gods themselves. That there is a properly philosophical manner of classifying the Gods, which answers to different purposes than those classifications offered within discrete theologies<sup>21</sup> does not mean that the philosophical mode of classification is superior to the theological, nor even if it did would it be correct to infer that Proclus intends the philosophical classification to replace the theological. And above all, none of this has anything to do with the Gods themselves. Indeed, the idea, which Lloyd seems to wish to put forward, that Proclus would have his reader replace the Gods of traditional cult with some sort of philosopher's cult of ideas and hypostases, can only be regarded as bizarre, given the extraordinary interest displayed by Proclus in preserving traditional cultus.

Given this degree of misunderstanding, it is not surprising that Lloyd fails to see that the henads represent an "alternative" or "parallel" system to

<sup>21</sup> The theological classifications show the *hyparxeis* of the Gods because they are, as we would say, culturally specific, being inseparable from the symbology and mythology of a discrete complex of divine manifestation and revelation.

the forms, for he thinks they are merely “the most general attributes of reality” which are entailed by “the remaining attributes,” that is, the forms (35). But to say that the Gods are inferred from the forms does violence to the whole fabric of Proclus’ thought. We are given knowledge of the Gods directly through revelation, and nothing could be more foreign to Proclus’ attitude toward the Gods than to characterize them in such a manner as Lloyd does. Lloyd displays here the typical shortcomings of modern interpreters of Proclus in failing to grasp or even pursue the true richness of the encounter between philosophy and theology in Proclus. But he quickly becomes mired in attempting to explicate his view of the henads, and soon has to admit his uncertainty (35f). Basically, the problem is that because he confuses henads and hypostases, he imagines the procession of the henads to be such that “[b]elow the plane of Intellect (or perhaps of Soul) the aspect of henads as gods tends to eclipse their aspect of principles. So what are regarded as henads tend to be not so much wholeness, similarity and the like, as concrete entities which can be recognized as gods, such as the sun or guiding stars” (36). First of all, Proclus does not have the sort of difficulty in recognizing what is a God that Lloyd evidently does; and it is hard to see how the aspect of henads as Gods fails to be clear to Proclus at every level of Being, from the highest reaches of the intelligible right down to the physical. After all, he gives specific examples of particular deities manifesting on every such level and specifies that such deities are still henads according to their *hyparxeis*, even on the infra-intellectual level of manifestation. Second, how would Lloyd explain that the manifestations of the Gods on the “concrete” level are as likely, if not more so, to be in the form of, e.g., cult statues as stars? Would he

really have us believe that someone as pious as Proclus would have us see the cult statue of a deity as a representation of an *ontic* principle like “wholeness” or “similarity”?

But what Lloyd goes on to say is even less coherent: “This is supported by the logical segregation of a class of self-subsistent entities” – Lloyd seems to have in mind here the qualification of the Gods as “self-complete” henads in *ET* prop. 114, which according to this dissertation distinguishes the henads proper from what are, in fact, monads possessing derivative divinity from their participation in the Gods – “for since non-self-subsistent is equivalent to ‘in a subject’, the abstract properties cannot be self-subsistent in any diacosm below that of the Platonic Ideas; and this further distinction is important because only the self-complete are to be identified with Gods” (36). Lloyd should recognize that there is a lot more going on in Proclus than “the Platonic Ideas,” that with the introduction of the henads, ideas in general no longer occupy the sole pride of place that they did throughout the previous history of Platonism. But even on his own terms, if it is in the lower diacosms that “the aspect of henads as gods tends to eclipse their aspect as principles,” how then does it make sense that here it is only *qua* “principles” or “abstract properties” dependent upon a subject that the henads are self-complete and hence Gods? Lloyd’s real problem is very simple, although he seems blind to it: presupposing that the Gods represent nothing above and beyond the ontic hypostases, contrary to everything Proclus says on the subject, he deprives himself of the very conceptual resources he would need to understand the doctrine at all. As he puts it, “[c]ertainly henads are regularly described as *huperousioi*. But they generate chains of henads with

members in every diacosm below intellect down to at least the celestial" (35). In essence, Lloyd cannot understand how the Gods can be at once supra-essential and manifest themselves in the lower reaches of Being. But it is no different for a God to manifest him/herself at the level of Being Itself than, say, at the hypercosmic level. These are all posterior to the God's own mode of existence, and so no special dispensation is required, broadly speaking, for the subsequent orders. Lloyd presupposes that which he wishes to demonstrate: that in no way do the henads represent a "parallel" system to that of the forms. It is only on account of conflating the henadic and ontic domains that the term *huperousios* becomes so perplexing for him, once he has ruled out the possibility that the term signifies any real difference.

We can see this most clearly in Lloyd's misreading of an important text discussed in this dissertation, namely *IP* 1048. Here, all that Lloyd can see is that the henads are described "in effect, as having all the positive and formal properties of forms but to a greater degree" (36). But in fact Proclus lays out in this passage a series of specific characteristics with respect to which henadic existence differs fundamentally from the mode of existence of the forms. The henadic characteristics are juxtaposed with the corresponding formal characteristics to *contrast* them, not to posit a difference of degree, as is shown by the fact that Proclus seeks to develop a distinct and parallel terminology to refer to the henadic characteristics. That there is a correspondence, a parallelism, is a result of the fact that formal being is a *product*, an *effect* of henadic existence. But since Lloyd presupposes that there is no difference between the two, naturally he can see no point in the contrast beyond hyperbole. This, along with other aspects of Lloyd's reading of the

henadology, violates the principle of hermeneutic charity by imputing to Proclus in too many places what amounts to an empty verbosity and the henadology a doctrine without substance.

Lloyd actually recognizes that "[e]ach henad has also its individual character." Indeed, he says that

I mention this because the differences [between their participants] could presumably have been accounted for by the effect of the diacosm in the case of superordinate and subordinate species and of participated forms in the case of co-ordinate species. Had that been so henads would simply have been the plurality of participated unity or Limit. In many places the property of being divine which they confer (as well of course as being divine themselves) is identified by Proclus with unity, unity being also goodness. But since he did not confine himself to this it seems to follow that critics of the henads are right to suppose, even if they have not produced much argument for this supposition, that their identification with traditional gods is built into the theory. (36f)

First of all, the functional role of the henads in the theory lies precisely in that there must be something *beyond* form in order to account for the existence of that which cannot be sufficiently determined by form alone. Furthermore, the difference between participating in Limit and the unity of the henads is that the former is a unity of *characteristic*, whereas the latter is true individuality. But it is only at the extremities of Being that we can prise the two apart. Once we recognize that the henads represent a distinct mode of unity from formal unity there can be no grounds for regarding the henads as systematically otiose. And once the necessity is established, on purely systematic grounds, of



a non-infinite multiplicity of absolute individuals, each of which has the All in itself and is autonomous, with no term above it, then the identification of this set with the set of traditional Gods is no grounds for criticizing the system either, since it is simply finding empirical confirmation for entities which are posited transcendentally. For as Proclus explains in *PT I 3*, all the metaphysicians who came before him “call the first and most self-sufficient principles of things, Gods,” whatever be the status particular theories accord to these principles, e.g., corporeal, psychical or intellectual. “Plato,” as interpreted by Proclus, provides a superior theology in that the nature of these principles is *unity*, that is to say, individuality. Therefore, whereas the other theologies represent a *reduction* of religious discourse to some alien discourse, the “Platonic” theology alone is a theology of divine *individuals*. Hence the importance of maintaining the distinction between a “scientific” discourse about the Gods, which can only speak of classes of deities, as opposed to discrete theologies, which concern particular deities. The fact, then, that Proclus speaks of only so many deities in the *Platonic Theology* as are actually named in Plato’s texts or in texts of Hellenic theology that Proclus regards as belonging to one and the same tradition, is not to be construed as an affirmation that these are the only Gods who exist, or that any others must be reducible to these. Indeed, the deities who *are* mentioned by name in this text are to be thought of as *mentioned* rather than *used*, to borrow a distinction from contemporary linguistic philosophy. The *Platonic Theology* is an *application* of Proclus’ system to a specific project, namely demonstrating the harmony of Plato and the Greek theologians. To think that this single application exhausts the system itself would be to fail to grasp the

essence of commentary as a philosophical genre.

"Proclus et Damascius" by Joseph Combès, in *Proclus et Son Influence* ed. G. Boss and G. Seel (Zurich: Editions du Grand Midi, 1987).

The concern of Combès in this article is to elucidate the Damascian critique of the Proclean system, a task not without promise for stimulating fresh insights into Proclus' own thought. Damascius frequently, as Combès puts it, "réveillait ... une exigence qui sommeillait dans la pensée de Proclus," (231). Combès says, for instance, that "bien que Proclus ne voie dans l'Un qu'un nom purement fonctionnel à notre usage, pour suggérer le principe ineffable, car toute multiplicité en vient, et quoiqu'il insiste sur le caractère inconnaissable de ce principe, Damascius, quant à lui, fait preuve d'une critique plus entière," (227) but he does not probe an important question raised by the relationship between the Proclean and Damascian henologies. Do we understand the Proclean doctrine of the One so well that we can say just how much Damascius' henology is different? Is it possible that Damascius is presenting in a novel and undoubtedly provocative fashion what he considers to be the Proclean henology, *properly understood*?

Damascius undoubtedly introduces a "rupture" into the henology "entre l'Un dont il y a quelque saisie et ce dont il n'y a absolument aucune approche," and "cette rupture ... accuse la relativité du système entier des notions les plus hautes à partir de l'Un antérieur lui-même qui, par un côté, s'enracine dans l'Ineffable et, par un autre, prélude au langage-objet" (228f). And yet the source of this rupture – and corresponding relativity – lies

entirely within the ambit of Proclus' own concerns about the dangers of hypostatizing the One. But where Proclus' solution lies, as this dissertation argues, in an affirmative pluralism of absolute henads, Damascius' lies in evacuating the position of the One Itself altogether in favor of the absolutely ineffable, on the one hand, and a One corresponding to Limit in the Proclean system on the other. I would contend that this contrast has much to do with the different temperaments of the two authors.

Proclus is eclectic and conciliatory, or as Combès puts it, "Proclus révèle ... une nature de métaphysicien dont le propre est d'être spontanément créatrice, tout en intégrant et en ordonnant d'emblée divers donnés" (223). Important among Proclus' conciliatory projects is not only integrating the previous history of Platonism into his own system, but also and crucially providing a structure for mediating between philosophical and theological discourses. Proclus thus leaves a space or gap within the properly philosophical discourse to be occupied by diverse positive theologies – a relativity of sorts – with the philosophical framework serving the implicit purpose of preventing any one of these from assuming a hegemonic degree of appropriation of the entire philosophico-theological field. "Damascius, au contraire, est un philosophe de nature analytique et réflexive," (ibid). Damascius engages in the same sorts of analyses of culturally specific henads according to their universal monadic functions that Proclus did (*DP* III, part 2), and therefore endorses in general the Proclean hermeneutical strategy and its ontological implications as discussed at length in this dissertation, while for his *own* part choosing to take up, as it were, only the negative element of Proclus' project. And here perhaps is where we would find the hidden core of difference between

Proclus and Damascius, namely in Damascius' skepticism about the power of philosophy to mediate between religious discourses and to successfully think for its own part on either side of the divide between philosophical and religious discourse. He prefers, accordingly, to concentrate his efforts on drawing limits to the positivity of speculative thought.

Another aspect of Damascius' system discerned by Combès which sheds light, in turn, on corresponding features of Proclus' system lies in the unfolding of the intelligible triads. Damascius criticizes the account in Proclus of the status of the mixed, the third moment of the first intelligible triad. As Combès puts it,

A la suite de Platon, Proclus le considère comme résultant du mélange que le dieu opère entre le limitant et l'illimité, de sorte que l'être est 'fait', produit par l'Un antérieur qui est la cause du mixte. Damascius, de son côté, estime que les participations des deux principes, sous la motion de l'Un, ne suffisent pas à accomplir ce premier mixte; penser le contraire reviendrait d'ailleurs à concevoir les deux principes comme des éléments, et le premier mixte comme leur composée *posteriori*, purement passif, alors qu'il est plus composant que composé, et cela *a priori*. (230)

This is not an altogether just characterization of Proclus' position. Plato, it is true, presents us with little more than what Combès characterizes as "le schème artificialiste ... de la production du mixte premier par le dieu," (231) but Proclus has already, in advance of Damascius, introduced far more subtlety into the doctrine. this dissertation argues that the first intelligible triad is not an operation of synthesis or fabrication performed upon elements

whose pre-existence would naturally render the unity of the resulting mixture adventitious, but rather represents the self-diremption of each henad in its illumination of Being. It is, indeed, the production of Being by a God,<sup>22</sup> but the production in question is in no respect “artificial,” for it is nothing other than a representation of the activity of each God with respect to Being, which is constituted at each of its levels by the procession of successive classes of deities. The “elements” of Limit and Infinity are the elements of particularity and universality in each God, the dialectic of which produces the unfolding of Being.

Radical Being – Damascius’ “unified” (*hênômenon*) – is an “*a priori* composite” (synthetic *a priori*?) in Combès’ phrase, in which is fixed “l’indissociation originelle de l’union et de la distinction, car elles apparaissent ensemble, et pour la première fois, en lui et avec lui. Le premier mixte manifeste, en même temps que lui, ses propres éléments qui sont uns et plusieurs sans être les deux principes ni leurs simples participations” (231). this dissertation argues that in Proclus, the primary mixture is the ontic double, so to speak, of each deity, which is at once capable of decomposition into its elements in a way that deities are not, and yet has the fixity granted by its causal relationship to the deity, which does not make of Being an unintelligible *a posteriori* composite because the deities do not produce something fundamentally *other than* themselves. Each deity produces itself within and as Being in their procession. But each deity is still also and always,

<sup>22</sup> Being is actually the product of *a God* in one respect, namely the containment of the whole of Being within each henad (see the passage from the *Elements of Theology* cited by Combès below in which the multiplicity of Being is referred to as “unitary” in itself), the product of *the Gods* in another respect, namely that the properly ontic mode of existence arises from the “interference” of the Gods with each other in their manifestation. The origin of this interference does not, from a fully unitary perspective, represent an influence external to each God, for each God contains all the other Gods.

inalienably, a henad and supra-essential. Combès, unsurprisingly, fails to accord Proclus the sophistication of Damascius with respect to the emergence of the first intelligible triad because he reproduces unthinkingly a thoroughly ontic relationship between the One and the henads, in which

elles [les hénades] sont toutes, en effet, dans l'Un de façon implicite, mais les premières à se manifester sont le limitant et l'illimité qui anticipent toute procession; quant aux autres hénades (et il y en a autant que de séries et de fonctions différentes), elles ne se manifestent qu'à partir du premier ordre des intelligibles-intellectifs, lorsque la première alterité est venue scinder l'un-être dans la dualité proprement dite de l'un et de la substance. (226f)

Here an accuracy about the bare and abstract external features of the doctrine is combined with an incapacity to discern in the doctrine its inner logic and broader significance, which alone can render it coherent. First, the relationship between the henads and the One cannot be one of inherence or containment of the henads in the One, regardless of whether it is “implicit” or not, at the risk of making the negations applied to the One Itself in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* mere empty words, which they assuredly are not for Proclus. Notice that in the crucial passage at *IP* 1048, where Proclus distinguishes the mode of existence of the henads from that of the Forms, he says that the unity of the henads is a unity of *all in all*, that is, of all the henads in each henad, *not* all the henads in the One. Note that Damascius refers to the moments corresponding, in his system, to Limit and Infinity as *hen panta* and *panta hen* respectively. This clearly expresses two complementary dimensions of the “all in all” of the henads from *IP* 1048.

With respect to Limit and Infinity as “henads,” Proclus *usually* states that it is Limit alone which represents “a henad,” while Infinity is the *power* of this henad. And again, we must be cautious in how we understand the designation of Limit as a henad. It is not some particular henad over and against the others; rather, it is an element of each henad, and is, in this respect, *each* henad, just as the One neither is, nor is one, but is *each* henad. Why else is it that, as Combès notes, a multiplicity of henads posited together upon a common field is first available at the level of the intelligible-and-intellectual order? It is because prior to that point, we are only dealing with *individual deities qua individual*. In this respect, Proclus is really no different than Damascius, who, if he at first wished, “à la suite de son maître Isidore,” to regard the three moments of the first intelligible triad as three henads, nevertheless ultimately decided “parler d’unifié pur, de vie pur, et d’intellect pur [i.e., the three intelligible triads], en tant qu’ils sont antérieurs à la distinction proprement dite de l’hénadique et du substantiel, laquelle ne survient qu’avec la première alterité dans la première triad des intelligibles-intellectifs,” (232). The three intelligible triads are suspended in this fashion between henadic and ontic existence because they are the inherent characteristics of each and every deity, which make it possible for deities to manifest themselves selectively at different levels of Being without sacrificing their supra-essential existence. For in possessing the three intelligible triads in themselves, each deity possesses the whole of radical Being, radical Life and radical Intellect, which allow them to illuminate Being as intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, or intellectual deities, or to manifest on more than one of these levels. If there are deities who *only*

manifest themselves at the infra-intellectual level, then they do so in explicit correlation with one or more other deities manifesting at the Intellectual level.

According to Combès, Damascius arrives at a doctrine whereby

on peut qualifier le structuralisme des mixtes de structuralisme de l'autoconstitution unitaire et de son développement, puisque la structure triadique ne fait qu'un avec la genèse même des dieux. Cette structure se lit bien à travers la dynamique de la triade de l'être pur, d'abord comme premier *indifférencié* (*adiakriton*), ensuite comme *en train de se différencier* (*diakrinomenon*) dans la vie pure, enfin comme *complètement différencié* (*diakekrimenon*) dans l'intellect pur. (232f)

Combès acknowledges that "cette triade du développement par mode de manifestation est déjà utilisée par Proclus," but "elle devient centrale chez Damascius" (233 n. 45), but the importance in Proclus of the emergence of what this dissertation refers to as "diacritical being" is far from being properly appreciated. This dissertation argues that this emergence is the subject matter of the *Platonic Theology*. Combès is correct that what is involved is "the very genesis of the Gods," but only if we understand that the genesis of the Gods *within Being* is but a relative genesis, at least for Proclus, and probably for Damascius as well, although it is not my purpose here to determine this. The Gods come into Being, so to speak, *from* their supra-essential mode of existence which is never sacrificed in the process. The proof of this *within* ontology is that the logical distinction between henadic existence and diacritical being can be grasped in purely philosophical terms. As this



dissertation explains, the distinction lies in the *mediated* quality of all diacritical being. To emerge into diacritical being from henadic existence is to move from a domain of absolute individuality into a realm where individuals are determined by their *infima species* and their accidents, that is, their position in a diacritically organized whole. This is simultaneously to move from a realm of absolute pluralism, in which each henad is sovereign, into a progressively centralized intellectual domain. In the domain of the intellect, once it is fully constituted, there will be no place for proper names as such, and the henads will take their place as a class under a monad, just like souls under Soul or beings under Being. This latter structure is good for most, if not all, of the philosopher's purposes. Certainly there is no reason why a philosopher should ever *have* to speak of a particular deity, use a particular proper name. What is necessary, however, is to recognize that such a henadic organization exists parallel to and transcending the diacritical system of beings, and to understand how diacritical being emerges from out of the activity of henads. This is the same as to say, how the Gods proceed to the illumination of Being; and this is the task Proclus takes up in the *Platonic Theology*.

When Combès says that "[c]hez Proclus, l'être, la vie et l'intellect intelligibles étaient les principes de la classification des dieux; chez Damascius, ils ne sont cela qu'en étant d'abord les principes mêmes de leur constitution, les principes de la déification par lesquels les dieux sont faits dieux," (234) he seems again to both recognize the outlines of the doctrine and miss its underlying logic. For it is true that for Proclus, all ontic determinations originate from determinations of the Gods. But the sense of

this derivation seems somehow lost on Combès. Intelligible Being, Life and Intellect, what I frequently refer to as “radical” Being, Life and Intellect, represent, like Limit and Infinity, and even, in a certain sense, the One Itself, the products of an analytic of the divine. This analytic reveals through radical Being, Life and Intellect the potentiality for each henad, in principle, to manifest itself as an intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, or intellectual God, that is, to be participated by beings on one or more of these levels. They represent thus the reserve of possibility possessed by each God. In a sense, they do indeed represent, then, for Proclus as much as Damascius, the principles of the constitution of the Gods, especially if we understand “constitution” itself, *hypostasis*, as an inherently ontological term, and so the “constitution” of the Gods refers to their presence and activity *within* Being. Combès may be right that “chez Damascius, ‘intelligible’ (*noêton*) n’indique pas un niveau inférieur à ‘unitaire’ (*heniaion*),” as it does for Proclus. But we must understand what it would mean to collapse the henadic and intelligible domains. While on the one hand, it removes a supra-essential domain that may, for Damascius, have been, ultimately, too paradoxical to tolerate, it would do so at the price, which Damascius may have been willing to pay, of infusing the whole system of Being with the relativity Combès spoke of earlier. Damascius divinizes the whole of Being in a way that, rather than extending further than in Proclus the rights of intellect with respect to revelation, would in fact shrink its borders. The ground on which the philosopher stands becomes, in fact, perilously small. Combès remarks that “[o]n pourrait lire le *Traité des Premiers Principes* comme une phénoménologie de l’âme qui projette en arrière d’elle-même vers l’Ineffable

les nécessités d'un discours antérieur," (229) and yet the Damascian system cannot fail to take on the color of its first moment, which is frankly constituted by a "divination" (*manteuetai*) (DP I 4. 13).

Combès explains that even for Proclus, "l'intelligible tend vers l'unitaire," which is natural, inasmuch as the intelligible is the product of the activity of the Gods. But this "tendency" does not affect the profound and indeed rigorous distinction between the unitary and ontic modes of existence detailed in this dissertation. Combès adds a reference to *ET* prop. 138 that "la pluralité de l'être est 'unitaire' (*heniaion*)."<sup>1</sup> But this is not simply a matter of a tendency; the whole of Being is *contained* in each henad, unpluralized because its mode of existence is one for which specific identity alone is relevant, this being "intelligible" individuality. Maintaining this distinction protects the boundaries between reason and revelation: revelation concerns particular, named henads such as Zeus, while reason deals only with *classes* of henads. Revelation belongs to the highest truth, *if not the broadest*. Reason belongs to an inferior level, it is true; yet it is able to extend, *in the manner appropriate to it*, to the first principle itself, which as principle of individuation, expresses in the domain of reason what the simple existence of the many Gods as absolute individuals *shows*.

Combès recognizes that, after all, Intelligible Being, Life and Intellect are not merely, for Proclus, "simples principes formels de classification des dieux, mais des principes qui puisent leur pouvoir distributif dans la divinisation même à laquelle ils participent" (234) but what he seems to miss is that Proclus' whole project is to understand how, through divine activity, *classification*, the most basic ontological procedure, becomes possible. This is

the work of the intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, and intellectual orders of Gods, who through their activity make it possible for the soul of the philosopher to constitute classes all the way up to the first principle. But this project can only evade Combès when, having argued for an effacement of the distinction between the unitary and intelligible domains in Damascius, he demonstrates a lack of grasp of the distinction to begin with, inasmuch as he thinks that it is by some sort of extension of the term that Proclus “est même allé jusqu’à appeler les ‘dieux intelligibles’ des ‘hénades’,” (235) when there is no reason at all to be the least surprised at this: intelligible Gods are henads, as are intelligible-and-intellectual Gods, and intellectual Gods, and so forth even down to the infra-intellectual Gods. All Gods are henads and all henads are Gods, but for rare instances of equivocation discussed in this dissertation. The classifications of the Gods arise due to their different activities *with respect to Being*, but this differential activity does not affect their supra-essential *hyparxis*. Without recognizing this basic fact, no justice can be done to Proclus’ system.

“Participation in Henads and Monads in Proclus’ *Theologica Platonica* III, chs. 1-6” by P. A. Meijer, in *On Proclus and his Influence in Medieval Philosophy*, ed E. P. Bos & P. A. Meijer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

Meijer sets out to demonstrate that the term *metechomenos* has two senses in Proclus, the one meaning the form immanent in the participant, the other that which is participated *in*, that is, “the *entity* with which the immanent form originates,” (67); he also seeks to clarify a number of issues

pertaining to the Proclean doctrine of participation. He has relatively little to say about the henads as such; but since problems of participation must ultimately be carried back to the first participated entities, which are the henads, and since, by contrast, "imparticipable" is only ever said of monads and of the One Itself, a discussion of the problem of participation and unparticipated principles cannot fail to involve a consideration of henads and monads. And yet Meijer's account suffers from a lack of any deep consideration of the relationship *between* henads and monads. For if, as this dissertation argues, the "irradiated states of unity" referred to in the corollary to prop. 64 of the *ET* as lesser henads proceeding from the One are, in fact, monads, which result from the henads' activity of illumination (*katalampsis*), then the remarks about *metechomena* in prop. 23 which trouble Meijer, since they seem to imply that the henad, inasmuch as it is participated, would belong to its participant and require the participant as its substratum (69), must be dealt with in light of an account of the relationship between henads and monads, and furthermore, an account of the position of the kind of inquiry conducted in the *Elements* with respect to Proclus' broader system. We must not assume, because of the expectations created *in us* by the use of *more geometrico* – more an appearance at any rate than a reality in the *Elements* – that this text speaks authoritatively and in isolation for Proclus' views on every issue, rather than representing merely a particular *aspect* of his system, the purely ontological aspect. For no supra-essential is accounted for in this text with respect to its *existence*, or *hyparxis*, but only in its ontic causality, its *hypostasis*. Observe how these two terms interact in prop. 23: "all participated *hypostaseis* are linked by upward tension (*anateinontai*) to

unparticipated *hyparxeis*."

All participation implies an unparticipated; this is merely an instance of the universal ontological principle of causation through negation, a principle at the very heart of Proclus' interpretation of the *Parmenides*: "Indeed, if I may state my view in summary, I would say that even as the One is the cause of all things, so these negations [i.e. of the first hypothesis] are the causes of the corresponding assertions ... For this reason also the causal principles among those entities following upon the One have negations of what is secondary to them predicated truly of themselves," (IP 1075f). One should also note the passage immediately preceding this one, in which the mode of negation appropriate to "physical attributes," such as Motion, is discussed. Motion itself does not move, and this is an example of the principle that negation is predicated of something "which is not itself receptive of a given characteristic, but is the cause of those things in which it resides being receptive of the asserted characteristic," (1075). The latter mode of negation is only denied of the One because it "in no way comes to be in those things of which it is the cause," but the characteristics that are negated, not only of the One, but of, e.g., Soul (1076) are still negated *precisely inasmuch as these are the causes of the latter characteristics*. Notice, in this regard, the care with which Proclus addresses the problem of "how it is possible at all for anything to follow from what is not the case," which he takes to be a question of "what can arise on the basis of the non-existent" (999). What is important is to understand at once how much and how little is implied by this sort of dialectical procedure. Given participation, there must be an unparticipated. When Proclus identifies the unparticipated *tout court* with the domain of

*hyparxis* as opposed to that of *hypostasis*, he alerts us to the limits of the inquiry represented by the *Elements*. We should not imagine that the unparticipated principles posterior to the One, which are defined simply as the participants of the corresponding classes of Gods, are entities which we might place alongside the Gods themselves. For their mode of unity is distinct: indeed, *the mode of unity of a hypostasis is such as to be sufficiently determined by a dialectical procedure.*

*Amethektos*, then, does not signify an entity which happens not to be participated or that has imparticipability as a quality so much as that to which the phenomenon of participation generally, or some particular instance of participation, essentially refers as its cause; note the discussion at *IP* 1074 of the “undefined field of reference” of negations, which “tend to simplify things from distinction and definition in the direction of being uncircumscribed,” and are thus “suitable to those who are being drawn up from what is partial towards the whole and from the aligned towards the unaligned and from the sliced-up type of knowledge towards that type of activity which is uncircumscribable and unitary and simple.” There are other examples in this dissertation of this anagogic function of negation.

Unparticipated intellect, then, refers simply to the supra-essential cause of intellect, without further specification. For further specification, we would need to refer to just such an account as we find in the *Platonic Theology*, where the emergence of Intellect from its priors is explained through the logic of the Gods’ manifestation which constitutes Being. “Unparticipated” entities are thus really ontic placeholders for supra-essentials, including and most notoriously the unparticipated One, which is a placeholder on the one hand,

for the aberrant set represented by the henads, a multiplicity failing to observe the rules of ontic multiplicities, and on the other hand for the genus of unity whose two species *would be* henadic and monadic unity, but which is precisely *lacking*, for it cannot be a unity itself. But that ontic logic or ontology is superseded in this way does not mean that it loses its application altogether, for it is by taking it to its limits that the supra-essential domain is revealed. And indeed, when the supra-essential domain is revealed, it is revealed as that of which ontic logic is the *product*, and which is its reflection, even if does not, for that, apply univocally to its producer(s). Without such basic recognitions, an investigation such as Meijer's will inevitably tend to obscure almost as much as it clarifies, for the accounts in the *Elements*, the *Parmenides* commentary, and the *Platonic Theology* (the other commentaries falling easily in line with the latter two) are not to be adjusted to each other in piecemeal fashion but beginning from and never losing sight of the particular purview of each.



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