

SOME PROBLEMS IN CHAPTER 7 OF PROCLUS' THEOLOGIA PLATONICA II

Access to the *Theologia Platonica* of Proclus has been considerably facilitated by the precious recent edition of Saffrey-Westerink (abbr.: S and W)¹). This edition in the Collection Budé is the first to provide a text constitution since Aemilius Portus' edition of 1618²).

I shall here present some fruits of a new reading in the shape of problems formulated and solutions suggested. My interest will be focused on chapter II 7. My paper will be devoted mainly to problems concerning the role of the Platonic sun simile (of the *Republic*) in Proclean thought in chapter 7.

I should state at the outset that some of the problems are fairly conspicuous. In chapter 7, for example, it need hardly be said that the introduction and elaboration of the sun simile has its problems bearing on the manner in which this incorporation affects Proclean thought, incongruities and distortions emerging from it. Other problems may easily be – and, as far as I know, are – overlooked. How, for instance, are we to explain the fact that two statements of Proclus about the problem of contact between the *sensibilia* and the intelligible world are in flat contradiction to one another? On the one hand it is stated that the *sensibilia* get into direct touch with superior levels or orders (46,2,3): αἱ δὲ ἀκρότητες αὐτῶν (the *sensibilia*) ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἴδρουνται μονοειδῶς. But on the other hand we read (45,24) that, as far contact is concerned, the *sensibilia* should only be considered indirectly, through the mediation of their monas or concentration point, the sun: τὰ δὲ αἰσθητὰ διὰ τῆς ἑαυτῶν μονάδος (sc. ἀνατείνονται).

Are the two positions reconcilable? And, if not, how should this problem be solved? To take another example of a problem that

1) Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, texte établi et traduit par H. D. Saffrey et L. G. Westerink, I–IV, Paris 1968–1981, (ed. Les Belles Lettres). In quoting the Th. Pl. we use the paging of S and W's edition.

2) Aemilius Portus, *Theologica Platonica*, ed. with Latin translation, Hamburg 1618, cf. S and W, I, p. XCIII; L. J. Rosán, *The Philosophy of Proclus. The final phase of ancient thought*, New York 1949, 252.

failed to attract attention: Proclus 'sinned' against his own clear-cut terminology when employing the well-defined term *ἀτογαθόν* for the Good, while, according to his own prescriptions, he should have used the term *τἀγαθόν*. Or was this really a 'sin'?

Here, then, are the problems I will dwell on:

- 1) the introduction and elaboration of the sun simile.
- 2) the contradiction.
- 3) the odd terminological error.

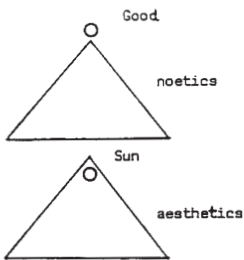
To this section a discussion about light and its ontological status is added (4). All the problems dealt with in these sections will turn out to have a certain coherence.

1) *The introduction and elaboration of the sun simile.*

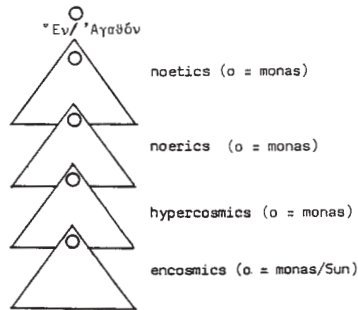
a) *Two schemes*

Scheme A is an attempt to schematize Plato's views in the *Republic*³⁾ as borrowed by Proclus⁴⁾: the well-known parallelism between the world of Being and the dominating principle of the Good above, and the world of *sensibilia* below, presided over by the sun, which is accorded a remarkable position as a type of Demiurge-King (44,1–15, 45,15–24), curiously atypical in Greek mythology.

Scheme A



Scheme B



3) Plato, *Rep.* 508 A ff.

4) Cf. Rosán, *Philosophy*, 126.

But at the same time a far more elaborate and complicated scheme (B) can be detected in the text, which is characteristic of Proclus' neo-Platonic way of thinking (44,17–45,14). This system of multiple layers is the elaboration of that principle which was the essence of Plato's sun simile – the monadic principle. Proclus applied the very same pattern to the neo-Platonic higher levels (44,17,18), and in so doing he was deliberately advancing beyond Plato, as we see from 48,22 (ἐν ἐκάστη δὲ αὖ τάξει τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀνάλογον ἐκείνῳ μονάδα συγχωρῶμεν ὑφεστάναι, μὴ μόνον ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς, ὡσπερ Πλάτων τὸν ἥλιόν φησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ὑπερκοσμοῖς καὶ τοῖς πρὸ τούτων ἐκ τὰγαθοῦ διατεταγμένοις γένεσιν τῶν θεῶν). Here he is somewhat belatedly calling attention to this fact after having derived all the advantages (and disadvantages) from the loan of the principle.

b) The sun as a model for higher levels

A chain of monads is thus created and 'a golden rule' introduced (S and W, p. 105,44, n. 4). Each level depends on its 'commander-in-chief', who is superior in rank and belongs to a level higher than that of those commanded. So the 'commander-monads' above the sun are in fact analogies of the sun at a higher level. Besides their commanding position the monads function as a junction of levels⁵). Proclus intended to exploit these very aspects. Other features of the simile are not transposed, however, for they would apparently have complicated matters beyond Proclus' intention. Plato, and consequently Proclus, calls the sun 'the Offspring' (ἐκγονος 45,19) of the Good. Why was the 'goodness' of the sun as Offspring of the Good stated, when it was not stated in the case of the other monads? The answer must be that the Platonic inspiration of the simile is still at work. The 'goodness' of the sun and its analogy to the Good is emphasised and insisted on because of the specifically creative function and force with which the sun, like the Good itself, was provided. The sun ordains (διακοσμεῖ 45,20), holds together (συνέχει 45,17), we might even say creates the world. In other words it is held responsible for the hypostasis of this world (ὑποστάσις 46,9) and fills the sensible world with goodness (πληροὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν 45,21). All these features could surely have been transposed to the monads, but what would

5) See the *Elements* of Proclus, ed. E. R. Dodds, Oxford 1933, pr. 112 (p. 98): Πάσης τάξεως τὰ πρότιστα μορφήν ἔχει τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν.

goodness in the manner of, and analogous to, the Good have meant in the case of the monads? It would have implied that one of their functions was to give hypostasis, συνέχεια and goodness (cf. 45,17,20,21; 46,9) to lower levels. But they are not supposed to do this, although they do in two cases: in the case of the noerics which provide the hypercosmics with συνέχεια and in the case of the hypercosmics which send their light into the sensible world. Being seems only to be given by the noetics and goodness is partaken of in a particular manner (cf. 45,1–13, a passage commented on again and again). So Proclus obviously had excellent reasons for not extending the full sun-pattern to each of the monads. His entire presentation of dependency in 45,1–13 reveals a different pattern. But we must now turn to the other side of the question. The fact that the sun is now connected with other monads in a chain (formed, it should be noted, after its own pattern) gives rise to new difficulties.

c) *The sun as an ordinary member of the chain of monads*

The sun – as an ‘ordinary’ member of the monadic chain – may be supposed to exert its creative functions in close connection and cooperation with the higher monads or levels, as they do themselves. So the sun should have conferred being on the *sensibilia* deriving it from the noetic monads just as other monads do (cf. 45,1–13): the noetics give being to the noerics. The procosmic gods derive their νοῦς καθαρὸς from the noerics and their being from the noetics. As a monad, then, the sun should have given being to this world in cooperation with the noetics as well, perhaps, as other qualities with other monads. The sun would also have caused the coherence of the *sensibilia*, possibly in cooperation with the noeric gods who render the hypercosmics coherent by their noeric light. Fundamental here is 44,25 where the sun is regarded as a monas and 45,9,10 where the sun is called ἀκρότης of the encosmics and where we learn that it proceeds from the aetherial depths, which characterizes the sun as being itself a hypercosmic god (see S and W, p. 105, ad 45 n.1). Thus the sun at best transmits as a monas hypercosmic light to the *sensibilia*. In this context the sun’s functions are confined to giving to the encosmics perfectness and similarity to the hypercosmics. We do not hear anything about cooperation and other functions (concerning hypostasis, συνέχεια and goodness). These possibilities are not taken into account. The sun is here regarded as an ordinary monad

in the chain without specific creative features – if we except the possible transmission of hypercosmic light. These features appear only in texts of scheme A. Proclus did not unite the functions of the sun as a monas of the monadical chain and as the son of the Good, with the exception that perfectness is common to scheme A and scheme B (see 44,11; 45,11 and 20). We have to add that the sun in ch. 7 is mainly conceived as doing its duties in the setting of the sun simile of the *Republic* and that it is viewed chiefly in the category of the Platonic Good as a son of the Good and not as a grandson or great-grandson. Proclus as far as I can make out, was either unable, or unwilling, to see the implications and distortions entailed by maintaining both schemes A and B on an equal footing.

Further complications in the monadology can be observed now that Proclus is applying the pattern of the sun simile to higher levels and relationships. We see links between levels and the Good and the sun now coming to the fore.

d) The linking of lower levels to the Good.

Proclus declares that noetics and the most divine being have an immediate connection with the Good (ἀμέσως) and that the aesthetics are only linked by means of the sun (45,21–24): Πάντα ἄν οὕτως μετέχου τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ πρὸς μίαν ταύτην ἀρχὴν ἀνατείνουτο, τὰ μὲν νοητὰ καὶ τὰ θεϊότατα τῶν ὄντων ἀμέσως, τὰ δὲ αἰσθητὰ διὰ τῆς ἑαυτῶν μονάδος. S and W regard this phrase as an application of pr. 38 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (S and W, p. 106, ad 45, n. 4), of which I shall quote some sentences in Dodds' translation (cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Elements of Theology*, Oxford 1933, p. 41). "For since both procession and reversion are accomplished through likeness, that which proceeds immediately from any principle is immediately reverted upon, the likeness being immediate. But that which requires mediation in its procession, requires it also in its reversion, since both moments must be related to the same term: so that it will revert first to the mean term, then to that superior to the mean . . ." At first sight the appeal of S and W to this paragraph of the *Elements* seems fully justifiable. They assume that the *intelligibilia* proceed immediately from the Good. If this is indeed the case their observations are apposite, but what they fail to notice is the fact that we are told that the noetic, noeric and hypercosmic levels do not proceed entirely without mediation. For in the preceding lines

1–13 a different pattern emerges. In the case of being, for example, the noetics derive it from the noetics by means of the noetic light, while even the hypercosmics seem to derive their form of being from this type of light (45,5–7). Thus, following these indications and bearing in mind the quotation from pr. 38 of the *Elements* about mediation, we see that, as far as being is concerned, the *intelligibilia* are not supposed to revert immediately (ἀμέσως) to the Good, as S and W think they do, for they do not proceed immediately from the Good but only do so by way of mediation. As for goodness and oneness (see also 49,25–27) there is no doubt that a direct relationship with the Good and the *intelligibilia* can be observed in lines 1–13. Proclus could have disposed of the ἀμέσως-problem by appealing to the fact that, where goodness and oneness are concerned, there is no mediation. Thus what was said in line 24 (cf. p. 45) was partly justified, with the exception of being and other characteristics in 1–13.

When we read the text we do not get the impression that Proclus gave serious consideration to this possibility of disposing of the ἀμέσως-problem, being prevented by his preoccupation with sticking to schemes. In 45,14–24, for example, he was thinking along the lines of scheme A (and thus in a twofold Platonic manner), while in lines 1–13 he was thinking in terms of his new multi-layered model, scheme B. The fact that Proclus stuck too obstinately to his schemes will provide us with an adequate explanation of the inconsistencies and will enable us to understand why he left these contradictory statements standing side by side. It will enable us to understand not to forgive. If we can partially excuse the incongruity on p. 45, line 24, the flat contradiction into which Proclus runs on p. 45 and pp. 33–34 cannot be excused.

e) *The contradiction of the concept of mediation on p. 45 and pp. 33–34.*

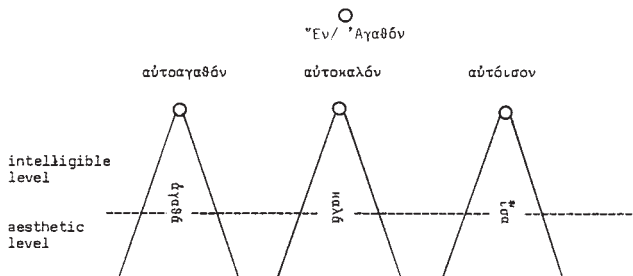
As far as goodness is concerned the situation is more confused and therefore more problematical, than in l. 24 of p. 45. On pp. 32–34 of ch. 4 of Theol. Plat. II – a chapter to which I shall be returning later in my treatment of the concept of light – Proclus provides an entirely different view of mediation and shows that he is fully aware of the problem of mediation. He emphatically insists on the fact that the entire intelligible realm is unified with the Good by means of light. It is thus not unified ἀμέσως, while light itself proceeds immediately from the Good and enjoys an

ἀμέσως-relationship with the Good. All we can say here is that in comparison with pp. 32–34 Proclus on p. 45,24 is altering his point of view and confusing his line of thought. To say on the one hand that the *intelligibilia* are unified with the Good through the mediation of light and to state on the other that the *intelligibilia* are ἀμέσως in touch with the Good (also in a context of light!) can only be understood if we bear in mind that in ch. 4, 32–34 the Leitmotiv of Proclean thought is the Good's superiority and supertranscendancy. This emerges from the statement that the Good transcends and cannot be identified with the noetic realm because of the superiority of the position of light with respect to the noetic realm (33,27–34,2). In ch. 7, p. 45, l. 24, on the other hand Proclus was principally concerned with the 'simple' twofold way of thinking of Plato, where light had not to play such role in the noetic realms (see below p. 200). Let us now turn to the other contradiction announced earlier.

2. The contradiction in the position of the aesthetics

That the aesthetics are in touch with the Good by mediation of the sun is implicitly denied and contradicted in 46,2. Here Proclus tells us: αἱ δὲ ἀκρότητες αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἴδρουνται μονοειδῶς; their (the 'aesthetics') summits are established in the noetics, μονοειδῶς i. e. as independent classes' (the translation of S and W 'uniformément' adds little or nothing to our understanding of the passage). Proclus is therefore saying that it is with their summits (i. e. the Ideas to which they are subordinate) that the aesthetics reach into the noetic world, and not, therefore, through the mediation of the sun. So here we have a very different pattern of thought.

Scheme C



Scheme C (concerning the passage 45,25–47,10) may be regarded as an exegesis of a very difficult passage in Plato, Rep. 507B 5–8, which Proclus used and interpreted in a special way in order to get the results and ideas which he, as a neo-Platonist, wanted to get⁶⁾. According to Proclus the three Ideas, αὐτοαγαθόν, αὐτοκαλόν and αὐτίοσον are νοηταὶ μονάδες which contain and entail all their subordinate beings subsumed under these monads. Above these 'commanders with their troops' stands the Good which is said to be ἐπέκεινα of these commanders and their followers. So now two 'Goods' can be clearly distinguished: the supreme *bonum*

6) The syntax of this passage is extremely difficult. We may refer to the commentary of J. Adam – D. A. Rees, *The Republic of Plato*, Cambridge²1963, Vol. II, app. VII to book VI, p. 81, 82. Adam goes so far as to 'emend' the text by replacing the difficult κατ' ἰδέαν by καὶ ἰδέαν. This rather obscure phrase is taken over by Proclus with two slight modifications, reading καλῶς for ὡς and omitting μίαν of ἰδέαν μίαν. So replacing κατὰ by καί seems scarcely justifiable, if we take the Proclean reading κατ' ἰδέαν into consideration. A great many possible interpretations have been offered. Despite all the syntactical problems I do not think Plato's meaning as obscure as Adam did. Socrates says (507 B2–7): 'You will remember, we said and determined in our argument that there are many beautiful things, many good things and that everything has its manifoldness. – Indeed, we did. – And we said there is the beautiful itself and the good itself and in regard to all things we posited a moment ago as many, we subsume them under the only Idea of each (of the πάντα) – for there is only one of each (taking ἕκαστον twice, once with ἰδέαν, once with ὡς μίας οὔσης) and (so) we call each (of πάντα) what it is'. We may perhaps paraphrase this as follows. As we may call many things beautiful and many things good and subsume them under the Idea of the beautiful and under the Idea of the good respectively and call them beautiful and good after them, so we do with all things that are many (and present in the sensible world). I think Proclus' interpretation, if this is what it can be called, is along different lines. It is all given a neoplatonic sense. He says: 'For through these words (διὰ τούτων) he is leading up from the aesthetic beautiful and good etc. to the noetic henads of being and the first beings – nothing special so far – but then (αὐτίς, 'ensuite' S and W) starting from them (ἀπὸ τούτων = the Ideas) he goes to the cause transcending all the beautiful and good' (46,25–47,3). Efforts are made to give an appearance of loyalty to Plato's text. The parallelism αὐ (Plato) / αὐτίς (Proclus) presumably suggests this loyalty of Proclus in taking that in the phrase opening with πάλιν αὐ Plato is making the transition from the Ideas to the *bonum primum* explicit. Proclus, as it were, moved everything to the next stage. What Plato really had in mind, was the subsuming of all aesthetics under their Ideas, as I made clear. So the transition from the Ideas to the transcendent Good (κατ' ἰδέαν μίαν) is not to be maintained as present in Plato's phrase. We have to bear in mind that ἕκαστον – at least in Plato's clause – cannot refer to an Idea, since it is a reference to πάντα / πολλά. Here again we come across a characteristic specimen of neoplatonic interpretation of Plato, surely interested in Plato, but in the end more fascinated by his own 'platonoid' way of thinking based on a multi-levelled system. It is interesting to observe the curious fact that – as far as I know – this Platonic phrase is one of the very few which could be used as a ground for assuming a lower Idea of Good in Plato.

primum raised above the good of a lower level as a first being among at least two other leading 'kings', αὐτοκαλόν, αὐτόισον. If we compare scheme B and scheme C we encounter what seem to be two 'armies' which, although differing in their organisation, are ultimately one and the same army. It should be observed with regard to the difference of these 'armies' in their organisation that the same words have different connotations. Beware, for example, of the double meaning of ἀκρότης. In the domain of scheme B it comes very close to monad formed after the sun pattern, but in scheme C it designates the summit of a whole structure of an Idea and means the top of all noetic, noeric, hypercosmic and aesthetic similars. In this second case it has nothing to do with the monads formed after the sun pattern. And we should also beware of the word 'noetic'.

Thus in texts based on different schemes we come across different meanings. In scheme A νοητός implies the one and only non-aesthetic level. In B texts, on the other hand, νοητός designates both the set of realms above the aesthetics in general and the first level coming after the Good in particular. We shall have occasion to detect still more connotations of νοητός in what follows (see below p. 197f.).

To return to our scheme C. We can gather not only that the aesthetic goods, but also the earthly beautiful and equal are considered to be directly connected with upper levels of being without the intervention of a mediator like the sun. Although the contradiction is at its most obvious in the case of the good, I believe that there is no less of a contradiction where the other aspects are concerned – the equal, the beautiful, in short all the aesthetics⁷). Proclus is not unaware of this difficulty, or at least he is prepared to admit that there is also another way in which Plato provides us with a solution leading up to the One (45,25). After this introductory remark scheme C is developed.

I do not believe, however, that the contradiction we observed was so clear to him that he actually recognized, let alone acknowledged it to the full. Nor do I think that the flatly contradictory statements about the relationship between the aesthetics and the superior levels as they emerge in our schemes can in any way be reconciled. No such attempt is made in the text, and one can go as

7) Rosán, *Philosophy*, 158–160: "these (the Ideas) are the ideal or pre-existent forms of *all* (the italics are mine, P.A.M.) characteristics that actually exist in the material world" (Rosán, 158).

far as to say that Proclus could not reconcile them. Ultimately the contradictions sprang from his use of Platonic philosophy which was fundamentally divided in itself, or at any rate lacked harmony. In the *Republic* Plato places the sun and the Ideas side by side, leaving their respective influences, their effect on the sensible world and their mutual relationship unexplained. It is only in the *Timaeus* that Plato shows that he is conscious of this problem. The Demiurge⁸⁾ as an heir of the sun in the *Republic*⁹⁾, takes the Ideas as models to compose the world. As long as Proclus bases himself and his thought on the disharmonious patterns of the *Republic* he imports Platonic problems and inconsistencies. When adopting scheme A and making it the ground pattern of scheme B he gets a totally different picture of the relationship between the *sensibilia* and *intelligibilia* to the one he got when adopting Plato's Ideas as such, without the pattern of the sun simile (C). In the first case, therefore, he can declare that the *sensibilia* can only be in contact with higher levels (especially with the Good) through the mediation of the sun, while in the latter case he has to assume a direct relationship of the *sensibilia* with upper levels (as being subordinate to an Idea). Indeed, Proclus even aggravates Plato's own problems, for they recur on all levels he has created.

As a last example of difficulties arising from borrowing disharmonious schemes (A and C) I should mention the relationship between the Supreme Good on the one hand and the αὐτοαγαθόν and the noetic good(s) subordinate to the αὐτοαγαθόν (together

8) Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 28 A, 51 E ff., on which see F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, London 1937 (last ed. 1977), 27 ff. and 192–194.

9) Plato stretches the functions of the sun as far as he can without making the sun a Demiurge in the proper sense. The sun is called in 509 B the cause not only of the visibility of the things but also of their genesis, growth, feeding or development (γένεσιν, αὔξησιν, τροφήν). Parallel to this message Plato tells us that the Good is responsible not only for the knowability of the *intelligibilia* but also (again a climax) for their being and essence (ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν). Measured by the function of the Good, the sun should be held responsible for the 'being' of the world of γένεσις. If any power may be called responsible for the world of γένεσις, irrespective of the question how far this responsibility reaches, its relation to the Ideas and their influence should be made clear. But this is not what we find in the *Republic*. Plato is once again on the brink of what he could justify in 516 BC when he declares that the sun is not only the cause of seasons and years and leading everything in this world, but also the cause of all things the prisoners saw (καὶ ἐκείνων ὧν σφεῖς ἐώρων τρόπον τινα πάντων αἴτιος.). Neoplatonists had no problem in stretching up the function of the sun to become a creative force. So if they take over the sun simile, their sun shows more features of the Demiurge than it did in Plato.

with the aesthetic goods) on the other. Assuming that the contact of the Good with the noetic goods operates by mediation of the αὐτοαγαθόν (scheme C) we inevitably come up against the problem as to how this representation of linking and connection can be brought in harmony with Proclus' other statement (scheme A) that the intelligible levels derive their specific forms of goodness without any intermediary (ἀμέσως 45,23,24) from the *bonum primum*. Here the same pattern and configuration of problems can be perceived: the underlying schemes, not in harmony with one another, are responsible for the difficulties. But let us now turn to the next paragraph on Proclus' odd terminological error concerning the *bonum primum* and the αὐτοαγαθόν.

3) *The terminological error.*

Proclus has very definite ideas on the subject of terminology (46, 18): 'we are in the habit of calling the supreme Good, which ranks above being (ὑπερούσιος), τὰγαθόν', the standard term ever since Plato's famous lecture Περί τὰγαθοῦ. Proclus was well aware of the conspicuous form of this deliberately created word τὰγαθόν. We call it τὰγαθόν συνενίζοντες τοῦνομα obviously referring to the creation of the word by κρᾶσις (συνενίζοντες) of τὸ and ἀγαθόν; S and W seem to have missed the process of κρᾶσις (συνενίζοντες) as we see from their translation 'd' un seul mot' and their note p. 107, ad 46 n. 1. The compound with αὐτο- (αὐτοαγαθόν) is explicitly applied to the *bonum secundum* (cf. 47,5). After so clear-cut a terminology has been defined it is surprising to find that these terms are used neither carefully nor consistently. Besides τὰγαθόν we can observe other examples of terms variously employed: τὸ πρότιστον ἀγαθόν (47,7), τὸ δὲ πρὸ τῶν εἰδῶν sc. ἀγαθόν (47,13), τὸ πρότως ἀγαθόν (51,2,3), τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθόν (51,19). But in 50,7 he speaks of αὐτοαγαθόν while the coherence of the text and the argument would require τὰγαθόν and definitely not αὐτοαγαθόν: καὶ ὁ μὴ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν ἀλλ' αὐτοαγαθόν in an argument about the all-creating power of the *bonum primum*. The antithesis ὁ μὴ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν ἀλλ' αὐτοαγαθόν and the whole of the subsequent description (ὑπερπλήρες, ἐξηρησθαι) leave no room for doubt: here αὐτοαγαθόν is nothing but the *bonum primum*. In 50,17 the curious error is repeated. Yet the required τὰγαθόν is also found frequently in the same environment (cf. 48,3,16,21,26; 51,5, i. e. after the error 51,7,15). Had Proclus fallen asleep after a long day's work, owing to the magnitude of his burden? In view of so clear a

statement three pages earlier the mishap seems rather abrupt and such a solution can only be accepted grudgingly. In order to explain a slightly incorrect usage in the case of a preposition S and W assume that such slips of the pen do occur in Proclus. I believe, however, that one of the examples they give should not be regarded as a slip, while the other is irrelevant to our purpose¹⁰).

Another solution can be suggested. Perhaps we should read αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν in 50,7, the omission of τὸ being a mistake made by the copyist (cf. τὸ ὑπερπλήρες). Expressions like αὐτοῖσον, αὐτοκαλόν, αὐτοαγαθόν were used in the text on several occasions. So a copyist may well have been tempted to read αὐτοαγαθόν, unaware of the contradiction he was introducing. He found himself obliged to do something similar in line 17 (p. 50): instead of αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθόν, he read τὸ γὰρ αὐτοαγαθόν. Just as he could easily change αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν into αὐτοαγαθόν in 50,7, so now in 17 he merely adopted an inversion to adapt the Greek words to the order which he assumed was the right one. So he changed αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθόν into τὸ γὰρ αὐτοαγαθόν or perhaps τὸ γὰρ ἀγαθόν αὐτὸ into τὸ γὰρ αὐτοαγαθόν.

This suggestion might account for the disharmony in the text, but we also see Proclus eagerly using words like αὐτοέν for the *bonum primum* (cf. II,12,66,9) fond as he was of compounds with αὐτο-. It is difficult to settle the matter. He may well have 'fallen asleep' or have been confused by his laborious efforts. A suggestion that his 'misuse' was due to the fact that in both cases the word αὐτοαγαθόν was set in antithesis (7 ὁ μὴ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' αὐτοαγαθόν; 17 τὸ γὰρ αὐτοαγαθόν καὶ ὁ μὴδὲν ἄλλο ἐστίν) might explain why he made use of the wrong terms. The varied usage of

10) In 44,10 ἐκ S and W declare (cf. p. 105 ad 44, n. 1) to be redundant in connection with μετουσίαν, explaining this as the result of confusion by Proclus between participation and illumination after the usual five hours of teaching and the completion of 700 lines a day. But was Proclus really confused? Admittedly ἐκ with μετουσίαν is unusual (cf. Th. Pl. II 33,15 and 48,19), but as I think it was written on purpose. For in Proclus participation is first of all illumination by the noetic light, which may be regarded as the conveyer of being and goodness. So it is by no means odd to express this thought by saying that things are made godlike by means of the noetic light in virtue of the participation (= illumination) originating (ἐκ) from god's own activity. That something of the kind is meant by Proclus may be concluded from the analogous presentation of the sun's influence: κατὰ τὴν ἀφ' ἡλίου τελείωσιν cf. κατὰ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ μετουσίαν. The parallelism is obvious and strengthens our assumption of purpose in Proclus' mind – a similar parallelism is not found in 33,15 and 48,19. S and W refer to another case of irregularity p. 108 ad 47, n. 4 which has no bearing on the explanation of our 'mistake'.

words to designate the Good, to which I referred above, may have propelled him in the wrong direction and made him less keen on terminology than he should have been. The employment of terms like αὐτοαγαθόν in 50,7 and 17 can be explained away along these lines, but it cannot be pardoned.

4) *The concept of light in Proclean thought*

a) *Proclus' awareness of the fact that light has no metaphysical status in Plato*

We have already observed the importance of the sun simile where Proclus' monadology is concerned and the way in which it provided him with a pattern which determined the structure of each level. But light in the simile has possibilities of its own. Light as such, as a rarefied material, may be considered very appropriate for purposes of comparison. In the *Republic* Plato himself uses the light of the sun as an image of the powers of Good 'creating', an image of their responsibility for the being of the Intelligible world. The task of the simile was not to prove but to illustrate. In his commentary on the *Republic* Proclus showed that he was well aware of the limitations of similes in general and of the sun simile in particular, and this point is stressed repeatedly¹¹). To him in his commentary the light of the sun was no more than an illustration of the full powers of the sun and only of truth (ἀλήθεια) which, according to Plato, illuminates the *intelligibilia* (508 D 5, οὗ καταλάμπει ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν). This illumination (ἔλλαμψις) causes the participation (μετουσία) of the *intelligibilia* in the first ἀρχή (the Good), unifying all that participates in the illumination. Nowhere in his direct comments on Plato's text on the Good does Proclus even suggest that light as such has a function in the intelligible world. In accordance with Plato's teaching the ultimate term is ἔλλαμψις (illumination), which, despite an original connection with light, does not explain the physical source of light. Plato would have had difficulty in defining the physical source of the ἔλλαμψις, for the intelligible world admits of no physical qualities whatsoever. The only source which Plato could – and did – men-

11) Cf. In Rem publ. I 269–287, where we find a special treatment of what Plato said about the sun and the Good and the analogy. He is fully aware of the specific treatment of an analogy, see I 276,24 ff., 277,6–9, where he says that it is the ὁμοία that matters, not the ἀνόμοια, and 279,6–23.

tion is – metaphorically – a metaphysical source: truth¹²). In Proclus' *In Rem publicam* we find an intermediate state of affairs in his treatment of the Cave¹³).

b) *Proclus on the way to a metaphysical status of light.*

In his *In Rem publ.* I 294,10 Proclus employs the term τὸ ἐκ τὰγαθοῦ φῶς, where φῶς gets a metaphysical status and is held responsible for the divinity of all the intelligibles¹⁴). Both the μετουσία from *In Rem publ.* 279,27,28 and the notion of divinisation of the *intelligibilia* by light occur in the *Theologia Platonica*, where we find the following description (II, 48,12–15): (the Good is) αἴτιον τοῦ πανταχοῦ φωτός και ὡς πηγὴν ἀπάσης τῆς νοητῆς ἢ νοεράς ἢ περικοσμίου θεότητος. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶ τὸ φῶς ἢ μετουσία τῆς θείας ὑπάρξεως. This μετουσία¹⁵) is the existence as a god and the participation in the Good by being illuminated by the light that springs from the Good. It must be stressed, however, that the Good itself does not partake in light (οὐδὲ ... ὡς μετέχον αὐτὸ

12) W. Beierwaltes, who wrote some important works on the concept of light in ancient philosophy (*Lux intelligibilis. Untersuchung zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen*, München 1957, and *Die Metaphysik des Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins*, *Zeitschr. f. Phil. Forsch.* 15, 1961, 334–362, esp. 350) is convinced that light does play an important role in Plato in the intelligible realm. I cannot discover whether he only confines this role to being a metaphor (Plotin, 350) or whether he gives light a metaphysical status going beyond a metaphor (for truth). According to p. 73 of *Lux intelligibilis* one would be inclined to say the second: “das vollkommene Sein, die Idee des Guten, ist reinstes Licht”. He quotes the expression τὸ φανότατον τοῦ ὄντος of *Rep.* 518 C and Plato's remark that the Idea of Good provides all things with light (τὸ πᾶσι φῶς παρέχον 540 A). We unquestionably do find the notion of brightness of the intelligible world and the opinion that the Good is the brightest of all Ideas in Plato. But what is problematical, is where the metaphor ends and a special metaphysical status in its own right begins. I think that neither qualification points to the acceptance of any direct status of light. Τὸ πᾶσι φῶς παρέχον is said after a remark about the light in the eye of the mind looking at and going to ‘that which gives light to all’. The same holds true of the expression τὸ φανότατον τοῦ ὄντος (cf. οἶον εἰ ὄμμα κτλ.).

13) The *In Rem publicam* is composed of pieces dating from different periods, cf. Rosán, *Philosophy*, 41, see also n. 6. Perhaps we might explain in this way the fact that several pages after Proclus' treatment of the sun simile, in which he shows himself very precise on light's impossibilities to be used in the intelligible domain, he goes on to speak of a more metaphysical type of light.

14) *In Rem publ.* I 294,8 ὡς γὰρ ταῦτα ἡλιοειδῆ διὰ τὸ ἀφ' ἡλίου φῶς, οὕτως ἐκεῖνα θεῖα πάντα διὰ τὸ ἐκ τὰγαθοῦ φῶς.

15) Μετουσία is twice used, differently. In l.15 it means participation in the divine existence; in l.19 participation in the Good. The significance of l.19 is in line with *In Rem publ.* I 294,8.

φύτῳ φανότατον ἐπωνομάζει 48,9,10). The first appearance of light is revealed immediately after the Good: τὸ γὰρ πρῶτιστον φῶς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πρόεισιν εἰς τὰ νοητὰ καὶ τὸν νοῦν 48,11. It is astonishing that so prominent a scholar as W. Beierwaltes, probably compelled by his convictions about Light in Plotinus¹⁶), should fail to notice this particular remark by Proclus. Although Proclus expressly denies that the Good partakes in light, Beierwaltes writes: "Das Gute ist daher in seinem in sich seienden Wesen reines Licht" (Proklos, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik, Frankfurt 1965, 1979², 336). Beierwaltes also thinks that Proclus could call the Good / One with Plato τὸ φανότατον τοῦ ὄντος (Rep. 518 C) in order to designate the light of the Good. Yet, this is the very idea Proclus opposes. Proclus explained illumination with the express purpose of avoiding any misunderstanding of the celebrated Platonic formula τὸ φανότατον τοῦ ὄντος. According to Proclus these words of Plato do not contain any indication that the Good partakes in light or is light: they simply mean that the Good illuminates being. To rephrase and summarize his words: τοῦ ὄντος is gen. objectivus: being is illuminated¹⁷). The Good is the cause of light everywhere – and everywhere includes the region of the sensibilia, where light, as we shall see, has a different function. The Good is the source of all divinity in the noetic, noeric and procosmic realms.

Despite of Proclus' clear insight into the nature of light in the simile and its limitations in his commentary on the *Republic*, light seems to have more metaphysical overtones, or indeed 'colouration', in the last quotation (48,9–15) resulting, one might almost

16) Beierwaltes is perhaps led astray by the concept of light in Plotinus, who did manage to say that the One and Good is light. We have just seen that Proclus could not and did not want to. This is an important difference in the 'photology' of the two writers and a very interesting modification of Proclus (see Beierwaltes, Plotin, 349).

17) What Proclus really said is now explained by Beierwaltes and used as an argument in favour of what Proclus actually attacked, or in favour of the reverse of what Proclus had in mind (Beierwaltes, Proklos, 336, see also note 44). So τὸ γὰρ πρῶτιστον φῶς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πρόεισιν. Beierwaltes uses this to prove that the Good is pure light; but in fact it was meant as a proof of the reverse, as we demonstrated in our text. Beierwaltes (Proklos 336, cf. note 43) thinks Proclus' statement about ἠνώσθαι (33,28) to mean that 'Licht und das Gute sind untrennbar geeint' so as to prove the lightness of the Good. In fact we see that a quite different meaning is to be found in these words. Beierwaltes adheres to the opinion that ἀμέσως ἐνιδρῶσθαι (34,1) was meant by Proclus as a proof for accepting the thesis that the Good is light. Both what Proclus in fact attempted to show is how near light is to the Good and not that the Good consequently should be identified with light (see p. 198).

say, in a metaphysical status of light of its own. The bestowal of light, or the being bestowed with light, resulting in the dispersion of divinity, seems to be more than an image borrowed from a simile. Indeed, such will prove to be the case, although Proclus confesses and confirms that light is nothing but μετουσία τῆς θείας ὑπάρξεως (48,14,15).

There are two places where Proclus expounds his theory of light, his 'photology'¹⁸), II ch. 4,32–34 and II ch. 7,45–48. S. E. Gersh assures us that the passages cover the same ground (S. E. Gersh, Κίνησις ἀκίνητος. A study of spiritual motion in the Philosophy of Proclus, Leiden 1973, 90–93). Now, although this cannot be denied, there are certain noteworthy differences as regards the ontological status and functions of light. The two of these pieces of information do not furnish us with a rounded, or even a consistent, picture of light.

c) The inconsistency of Proclus' photology in ch. 4 and ch. 7.

In ch. 4 light is held responsible for the dispensation of, or participation in, the Good suitable to the character of each level, and of the dispersion of the characteristic of divinity. Thus the νοῦς is a god because of the noeric light, and the noetic realm is regarded as divine precisely because of the noetic light (33,15). Here the context is essential for determining the meaning of 'noetic' and 'noeric' as attributes. The only meaning they can have in 33,16 is, 'belonging to the noetic and the noeric realm' respectively. Later, however, we shall encounter a meaning different from the one we find in ch. 4. In ch. 4 light is viewed, first and foremost, as the trait d'union between the Good and the levels below, essentially bestowing being. Each θεῖον is what it is through the influence of light [ἐκαστον τῶν θείων διὰ τοῦτο (light) καὶ ἔστιν ὃ λέγεται] and by this (light) each θεῖον is unified with the Good, the First Cause: καὶ τῇ πάντων αἰτία τῶν ὄντων συνήνεται 33,20,21. In ch. 4 the rather simple assembly of the functions of light is conspicuous. Light proceeding from the First Cause in every realm is directly responsible for existence, being, divinity and goodness.

In his eagerness to prove the superiority and transcendence of the First Cause over all other levels Proclus goes so far as to

18) Cf. Beierwaltes, Proklos, 287–294 and esp. 333–338 for a survey of Proclus' 'Metaphysik des Lichts'.

'humiliate' the noetic realm by proving its inferiority in comparison with light, and he attempts to enlarge the distance between the First Cause and the noetic level. This action starts with the assumption that light has a metaphysical status of its own. In as far as it originates from the One in an immediate way (προϊόντος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) even light surpasses the noetic realm, for it is directly unified with the One, whereas it is by the very same light that the noetic region is connected with the One. The connection, therefore, is indirect, and this proves both that the One is not to be identified with the noetic realm and that light has a separate position being an entity in its own right with a proper status, and no longer only an image. These incidental scraps of information tend to be overlooked, but they are most instructive. They provide us with evidence to support my statements about the function of light as an independent conveyor of being etc. and as transcending the weak status of being part of a simile.

Ch. 7 provides a picture of the functions of light which amounts to a far more complicated, differentiated and, to some degree, limited concept. As for the meaning of noetic and noeric light, we have already had opportunity to see that in ch. 4 these words signify: 'belonging to the noetic realm and belonging to the noeric realm' whereas in ch. 7 they mean: 'originating in the noetic and noeric realm respectively', as is clear from their tasks at lower levels (see ch. 7, p. 45,5 and 6). Ultimately this is not in contradiction to their meaning in ch.4, but it is nevertheless worth noting and specifying the difference. All this leads up to the conclusion that several meanings are to be attributed to the words νοητός and νοερός. As for νοητός further meanings can be distinguished now that we have seen it in operation. Apart from the meanings I have mentioned ('belonging to', and 'originating in'), it is used to cover the noetic realm in general as opposed to the sensible world. A striking instance of this broad meaning can be found just before the developments of p. 45,1–12, in line 1 ff. of p. 44 (see above p. 190).

Yet still more conspicuous and more important deviations can also be found. In ch. 7 light is deprived of several functions which it still possessed in ch. 4. Goodness and oneness are no longer said to be conveyed to lower regions by light, but we read that lower levels are directly linked with the Good as far as goodness and oneness are concerned. Compare: ch. 4 (33,5–10) Καὶ γὰρ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ὁ νοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πρώτως ὑφεστάναι λέγεται καὶ περὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὴν ὑπαρξίν ἔχειν, καὶ πληροῦσθαι τοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας

φωτὸς ἐκεῖθεν προϋόντος, καὶ τῆς ἐπιβαλλούσης αὐτοῖς μεθέξεως ἐκ τῆς ἐνώσεως¹⁹⁾ τοῦ φωτὸς τούτου τυγχάνει, ὃ δὴ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ θεϊότερον κτλ. and ch. 7 (45,2,3) τὰ δὲ νοερά τοῦ μὲν εἶναι παρὰ τῶν νοητῶν τοῦ δὲ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐνοειδοῦς ὑπάρξεως ἐκ τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας ἀπολαύοντα κτλ. (45,6) νοητὸν δὲ φῶς ἀπὸ τῶν νοητῶν, τὸ δὲ ἐνιαῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ τῶν ὄλων πατρός κτλ. This must be regarded as a considerable deviation from – if not as in contradiction to – the data in ch. 4. For these different views can in no way be reconciled. In ch. 7 Proclus' main concern is the elaboration of the sun simile, while in ch. 4 he wishes to focus his attention on the superiority of the One/Good in order to enlarge the distance between the One/Good and the noetic domain.

These differences, however, are not far-reaching enough to provide a satisfactory explanation. Thus the pictures which emerge from ch. 4 and ch. 7 are far from being coherent, and we even have the impression that they lack any common ground. This, of course, is perfectly amazing if we keep in mind how close to one another these passages are.

We can now see how dangerous it is to treat Proclus' photography as a coherent and consistent doctrine, and how misleading are the words of Beierwaltes: "Durch das Hervorleuchten des Lichtes aus dem Guten ist sowohl die Sphäre des Intelligiblen, Überkosmischen und Göttlichen ein von Grund auf gelichteter und im und durch dieses Licht des Ursprungs geeinter Bereich des Seins" (Proklos, 336). For this is only half the truth. It may be said of ch. 4,33,28–34,1,2 but it is not true of ch. 7, 45,3,4. We saw that the unification of noetics and hypercosmics, for example, was due to the direct activity of the One/Good without any interference of light (cf. 45,3 and 7). But a few words should now be added about the different functions of the light of the sun itself in the scale of light.

d) The light of the sun itself in the scale of light.

The sun may be viewed as the mediator between procosmic light and the sensible world (see p. 185). In this mediatory, monad-like function the sun, by transmitting hypercosmic light, provides

19) Perhaps better: τῆς ἐνώσεως ἐκ τῆς μεθέξεως, cf. S and W, p. 96 ad 33, n. 1, compare In Rem publ. I 279,27.

the *sensibilia* with a hypernatural (hypercosmic!) completeness and renders them as near as possible to the hypercosmics. This type of light is no longer supposed to convey divinity or any quality whatsoever other than perfection and similarity to the divine regions. Further, we must distinguish the light of the sun itself (in other words not the transmitted light) which makes things sunlike (ἡλιοειδής 33,13; 44,11) and which may be regarded as the ultimate transformation of light of the Good. There is thus a scale of quality of light: hypernoetic light (ch. 4), noetic²⁰) light, noeric light, hypercosmic light and light of the sun. I believe that both the scale and what is said about the hypernoetic light supports my assumption that light has an ontological status of its own in Proclus' mind. The different forms of light which have here been distinguished can be regarded as the kernel of Proclus' photology. But notice the difference in backgrounds in which these types of light originate.

What I called the scale of quality of light can be found in one or another form in Beierwaltes' book as "eine Hierarchie des Lichtes" (Proklos, 337). He adds the following comment in a note: "Die hierarchische Stufung des Lichtes gründet jedoch nicht in der je verschieden starken Einstrahlung des Guten oder Einen, sondern in der je verschiedenen Aufnahmefähigkeit des Seienden." I do not know what this is based on, but I think there is some truth in it. Nevertheless, the impression it gives is one of being too passive. For not only is it the receptability of the recipient that counts, but also the influence of the intermediaries. For example, the light of the hypercosmics is 'coloured' both by the noetic light providing being and by the noeric light furnishing coherence (45,4–7). The situation is consequently more complex than Beierwaltes seems to think. Besides, although Beierwaltes speaks of 'Stufen von Helligkeit', it is not clear whether he has a two-levelled or a multi-layered system in mind.

e) Gersh's attempt to use light as a means of understanding the concept of energy in Proclus.

In connection with the preceding section I should add a few words about S. E. Gersh's discussion of ch. 4 and ch. 7 (Portus 90,

20) I do not think that Rosán's translation 'immaterial light' for φῶς τὸ νοητόν (33,17) will do (Philosophy, 126, n. 45). Bearing in mind the variance of meanings of νοητός one has to select the appropriate one carefully. In this case νοητός means: belonging to the noetic region, see p. 197.

91 and 97, 98) in his study on κίνησις (pp. 90–93). His objective in studying these chapters is somewhat limited since his main concern is to use Proclus' concept of light to explain and illustrate the central notion of activity (ἐνέργεια). Gersh prefers to study light as a means of learning about ἐνέργεια. One quotation will suffice to show his ambitions: "What Proclus has to say about the platonic simile of light is very important for our understanding of his concept of activity, and in fact this illustration reveals some features of the doctrine not discussed in other texts" (p. 90). But as far as I can see all this adds up to very little, as we can see from the 'main' result sketched by Gersh on p. 93: "Proclus' use of the simile of light shows how he intends us to conceive the nature of activity in general." This seems a little trivial and contributes nothing to our knowledge or understanding. Where or what are those unrevealed features of the doctrine of activity? It is surely dangerous to interpret the two passages in question as contributions to the understanding of a notion which Gersh himself regards as totally lacking in these chapters – a statement which is anyhow incorrect since Gersh has overlooked one particular passage (50,12–51,18). Gersh, then, tries to persuade us that Proclus is speaking essentially about ἐνέργεια when he introduces the light of the simile, but what Gersh does not notice is that Proclus really regards this conception as irrelevant to his investigation (see below p. 202). Gersh believes that light is not only an illustration of downward motion but also of the reversion from the less complete to the more complete, a backward motion. He himself regards it as odd that irradiation should imply motion in both directions, but he advises against examining too closely what is only intended as an illustration: "all analogies have their limitations" (p. 91, n. 1). His assumption is based on Proclus' employment of the term 'to complete'. He thinks he can demonstrate that τελειοῦν is specifically linked with the motion backwards to a cause (pp. 68 ff.). Because of the use of προιῶν and τελειοῦν he believes that the entire process of procession and reversion is involved in ch. 4 and ch. 7. To this I object that, while his 'proof' of the hypothesis that the notion of τελειοῦν is linked primarily with reversion, motion towards a cause, none of the many occurrences of τελειοῦν in any form in our chapters convey the notion of reversion²¹). It would seem to signify primarily the most perfect form of being given by higher

21) See 44,11,27; 45,11; 46,6; 47,15; 48,19; 49,13; 50,4 and 51,3,16.

levels to lower ones, the latter form being always less perfect than higher forms of existence (51,2,3). Reversion thus fades from view and was certainly not in Proclus' mind when he used the concept of *τελειούν* in ch. 4 and ch. 7.

The whole process of proceeding and procession is not thought of in terms of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* as early as 50,12 ff. As far as *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* are concerned, Proclus states that all *ἐνέργεια* springs from power (*δύναμις*) and that neither *δύναμις* nor *ἐνέργεια* are 'powers' by means of which the *bonum primum* manifests itself as creative. He states explicitly and emphatically that the One does not create (*γεννᾶν*) by means of power and energy, for it transcends these just as the One transcends *κίνησις* – a notion, in its turn, fundamental to power. What is interesting, is the fact that Proclus is well aware that energy and power could have to do with ch. 4 and ch. 7, but that he expressly denies their having a function here. Thus Gersh's assumption that the chapters on the simile of light are in fact about power and energy lacks any foundation in the text. Indeed, Proclus expressly says that they are not involved. Consequently we do not learn "how he intends us to conceive the nature of activity in general", but we precisely learn that energy and power must be left aside. Proclus' main concern is to show then the Good transcending everything below it.

We must finally bear in mind that the overwhelming transcendency of the Good is in the foreground in ch. 4 and ch. 7, and that the incorporation of the simile of the sun (light) is connected with it, whereas power and energy remain in the background. It is therefore hardly surprising that Proclus should avoid using the term 'energy' – and this is certainly not an omission as Gersh suggests – or that reversion should have not place in our passages. For how can one have reversion without energy. Gersh says that "we are told that the Good is, strictly speaking, above power and activity in a number of passages" (unfortunately quoting Th. Pl. Portus 118 rather than the far closer S and W 50,12–51,18). And he is right.

Gersh sees a possible explanation of the so-called omission of *ἐνέργεια* in the fact that Proclus seems unwilling to apply *ἐνέργεια* at all to the region above the hypostasis intellect itself. But we are only entitled to say that the One creates by means of light, which in itself proves that light is by no means equivalent to power and still less to energy, itself being the offspring of power (*ἐκγονος*). This does not solve the question of how far Proclus should have identified light and power as more suitable to the consequences of

his system or have preferred power to light. For in the end also light is not able to bridge the gap between the Good and the lower levels. His preference for light to fill the gap may be explained by the fact that his theory that levels are in contact with the Good by means of light may be regarded as a heritage from Plato, or rather as an elaboration of this heritage, but this must be considered too easy a solution to the problem of contact, for the Good had to, as indeed it does, transcend even light as well as power or κίνησις, as to the paradoxical effect that light should come from what has essentially has no light since it is cut off from light by transcendence²²).

All that we can say here is, that although Proclus may be overplaying his hand, he is at least aware of the fact that wherever light is involved, power and energy must also come to the picture, be it only to be denied. In the case of Gersh's explanation of the simile of light we have a clear example of the difficulties and dangers involved in attempting to combine different thoughts of Proclus which originate in different treatises. I do not deny that this procedure has a justification, but one must care not to reconcile or identify what was not reconciled or identified by Proclus himself.

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22) As a matter of fact in his commentary on the *Republic* of Plato Proclus has a similar argument (I 279,22): πρόδηλον ὡς ἄρα καὶ τῆς νοητῆς οὐσίας αἴτιον ὄν τὰ γὰθὸν ὑπερούσιον ἂν εἴη διαφερόντως καὶ οὐκ ἐκείνο μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια. For there (277) he elevates truth (being in fact the origin of the ἔλλαμψις [see above p. 194] and as such a forerunner of light in the Th. Pl., rather of the more conspicuous of the two: φῶς ἀληθείας, light of truth in Th. Pl. 33,7). As Plato confirms that the truth illuminates the *intelligibilia*, it has necessarily a higher status than the *intelligibilia*. But according to Proclus' rule that what generates, is itself inaccessible to generation (οὐ δὲ γεννᾶ, τούτου παντελῶς ἄδεκτόν ἐστιν, In Rem publ. I 277,22), the Good, generating the truth, is itself not the truth. The same rule must be applicable to light in the Th. Pl., resulting in what we say in the text about the Good not being light. Indeed, this is the very line of thought – I think – which leads Proclus to interpret the formula of the Good: τὸ φανότατον τοῦ ὄντος as he actually did, compare above p. 195 f.