

Leibowitz agrees with the numerous interpreters who consider that even Plato's *Apology* implies that Socrates aimed for the death sentence with his defence. According to Leibowitz, it is evident, partly due to his old age, that Socrates was indifferent towards death. His plan was both to enrage the jurors and to present himself as god's gift to Athens. With this plan Socrates aims to get the jurors to sentence him to death – but to regret the decision later. This regret would then protect philosophy and Socrates' companions later (pp. 154–60). The textual evidence could be more direct and more robust, but there is a certain sting in Leibowitz's treatment of Plato's presentation of Socrates as a god-sent gadfly to Athens. Although many philosophers have been eager to follow suit and to see themselves as gadflies, Leibowitz points out that the gadfly is actually a parasite and horses would do better without them – sleepy or not (p. 146). "His [Socrates'] self-characterization as god's gift to Athens is not only provocative but amusing: in his great concern of the city, the god sent it ... a bug." (p. 155 n. 2).

Eero Salmenkivi

PROCLUS: *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*. Vol. III. *Book 3, Part 1: Proclus on the World's Body*. Edited and translated by DIRK BALTZLY. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-84595-3. (hb) XII, 205 pp. GBP 45.

This volume is part of Cambridge University Press's major project of making available to a scholarly audience a central work of the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus. Proclus, while less known than classical or Hellenistic philosophers or even the founder of the Neoplatonic approach, Plotinus, and hard-going and at times almost impenetrable, has nevertheless had an immense aftermath. Indirectly, he influenced both the thinking of the Western and the Eastern Middle Ages, becoming known and studied directly in the Renaissance, and continuing to influence thinkers in the Early Modern period, all the way to the 18th century. Proclus is very much in vogue: there is a new introductory volume (also by CUP), a more detailed collection of articles on each major aspect of his style and thinking being planned for Oxford University Press, and a growing number of articles and other scholarly studies. Cambridge's high-quality translation of one of his most central works, the commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, provides a crucial foundation for this development.

The volume at hand is one of the early ones – the fifth volume is still to appear – focused on Plato's view of the constitution and make-up of the world's body (*Timaeus* 31b–34b), and its Proclean interpretation (*In Tim.* III.1–102,4). Now, a reader with little acquaintance of Platonism might expect some relatively straightforward ancient physics. This, as anyone who has read the *Timaeus* knows, is far from what is offered. Already in the commented text, physics is entangled with mathematics, ethics and theology. Nature is both mathematical and divine. For Plato, elements of fire, water, air and earth, borrowed from Empedocles, consist of geometric bodies, thus rendering the whole material world geometrical. Furthermore, whatever is made of these elements is constituted of complicated proportions, resulting in an understanding of the cosmos that is deeply mathematical. As regards divinity and goodness, the *Timaeon* universe is a result of Demiurgic creation, meaning not only that the world has a maker, but that it was made for a reason, and as perfectly as possible. In this kind of universe, things have purposes, and the cosmos has a structure with both aesthetic and moral value. This means that

the commentator faces a text which opens up in a number of challenging directions, and a translator, in turn, faces a task that is far from simple.

The editor and translator of this volume, Dirk Baltzly, has done a meticulous job. The translation is trustworthy, and for the benefit of the reader, most of the technical terminology is given in Greek in parentheses. In line with this, there is a detailed English-Greek glossary and an index of Greek terms. The introduction is relatively long, 30 pages, and starts by situating the text within the overall *skopos* of Proclus' commentary, the ten gifts of the demiurge to the created "god", the visible cosmos. Although the gifts are already enumerated in an earlier book of the commentary (II.5,17–31), Baltzly shows how they guide and sometimes govern the way Proclus proceeds in his exposition later in his work, and particularly in the section considered in this volume. Having done that, Baltzly tackles, head on, some of the most difficult aspects of the commentary. These include, importantly, the ways in which Proclus understands and develops Plato's view of proportions, and the question of how the world's body contributes to the divinity of the visible cosmos.

This is, on all accounts, a very useful and well-executed volume. But it must also be said that it is rather critical in tone. As he openly admits in the acknowledgements, Baltzly has no interest in the rich ontology of Proclus, and does not fancy "a pint at a celestial pub" with the author of the commentary. This approach is both sensible and possibly problematic. Baltzly does not work from inside a Neoplatonic framework, taking for granted – as you sometimes see done – the peculiarities of its framework. On the contrary, he is ready, and even eager, to question them. This gives the reader a truly distanced and philosophical way into the text. This distance, however, cannot but guide what the editor considers as valuable in the commentary. Balancing this view will be left for Proclus researchers to come, who now have at their disposal an admirably reliable and handy tool.

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Hellenistic Collection: Philitas. Alexander of Aetolia. Hermesianax. Euphorion. Parthenius. Edited and translated by J. L. LIGHTFOOT. Loeb Classical Library 508. Harvard University Press, Cambridge – London 2010. ISBN 978-0-674-99636-6. XIX, 662 pp. EUR 22.50, GBP 15.95, USD 24.

The last few decades have witnessed an astonishing growth in interest in the poetry of the Hellenistic period. Not a very long time ago, this age was not seldom characterized as an insipid transitional phase between the towering achievements of Classical Greek and Roman literature even in textbooks of considerable prestige. Today, an impressive amount of work is being published on Callimachus and other superstars of Hellenistic literature as well as on somewhat hazier yet not lesser figures like Euphorion (for example, Acosta-Hughes – Cusset, *Euphorion. Oeuvre poétique et autres fragments*, Paris 2012). Lightfoot's excellent collection provides a chronologically and geographically diverse "selection" (p. VII) of five authors not belonging to the heavyweights of Hellenistic literature. Many of the poems in this book appear translated into English for the first time. As this *Hellenistic Collection* is published in the series of the Loeb Classical Library, one assumes that the book is intended not only for scholars familiar with the quirks of Hellenistic poetry but also for a broader audience. This, of course, raises concerns because of the erudite