

but important principle: "But reflection on Gandhi has shown me that, if one wants to have a liberator of one's country or a reformer of society, it may be necessary to have one or two people who think that few things matter. It is best if they are not in one's family" (45).

Gandhi's philosophical statesmanship penetrates all the way to ethical meta-levels. A good example is his counsel of perfection: he would rather admit being insufficiently non-violent than accept exceptions to the absolute principle of non-violence. And yet his politics was always subservient to his spirituality. The book makes perceivable how important this flexible subtlety and sensitivity to circumstance *combined* with Gandhi's doctrinal rigour was in making him a political force: an algorithmic zealot would have been just as easy prey for the British as a spineless yes-man. Another success feature was a loving attitude that enabled the targets of his harsh criticism to take notice instead of striking back. Gandhi was an Indian nationalist for whom nationalism was – very sensibly – compatible with the love of all nations.

There is a curiously popular conception of studies in ancient philosophy being "mere history of" philosophy as opposed to work citing more recent authors being the actual stuff. A less common but similarly limited misnomer is the replacement of good old "classical philology" with "study of antiquity". *Gandhi and the Stoics* could even enlighten souls shadowed by such limitations.

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RADEK CHLUP: *Proclus: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2012. ISBN 9780521761482. XVI, 328 pp. USD 110.

There is no doubt that Radek Chlup's book, appropriately published on the 1600th anniversary of Proclus' birth, will serve for a long time as a standard introduction to Proclus. It is the first comprehensive, general one-volume account of Proclus' thought in English after Rosán's somewhat uneven and now outdated work (*The Philosophy of Proclus. The Final Phase of Ancient Thought*, New York 1949), and, as far as I know, has no relatively modern and adequate counterpart in any language with the exception of the solid work of Maria Di Pasquale Barbanti (*Proclo tra filosofia e teurgia*, Catania 1983, 1993<sup>2</sup>).

One possible approach in any attempt to unfold the content of the Neoplatonic doctrines is to start from the existential condition of the human soul in order to show how it is rooted in and conditioned by hypostases of Intellect and the One, and how reality in all its levels is derived from these causes. The other alternative is to begin with the treatment of the highest hypostasis, and to descend from it to the lowest levels of reality. The first alternative is the pedagogical path used by Neoplatonists themselves, the second the way generally adopted in modern presentations.

Chlup, too, chooses the latter alternative. This alternative has often resulted in oversimplification and arid listings of metaphysical levels making Neoplatonic philosophy look even more strange than it is. Chlup, however, avoids these pitfalls and manages to explain to his readers the rational foundation upon which Neoplatonic philosophers built their theoretical constructions. In addition, the author goes beyond the domain of pure philosophical thought and succeeds in contextualising the Neoplatonic movement as a historical phenomenon. This book is thus not only a valid introduction to a particular philosophy, faithfully mirroring the

internal logic in the development of the current of thought under consideration, but also a study of intellectual history.

Chlup divides his presentation into ten chapters, dealing with the content of Proclean Neoplatonism in Chapters 2 to 8 (metaphysics, theology, epistemology, deification and "mysticism", principles of the exegesis of sacred narratives, problems of evil and theodicy, and ethics). This philosophical filling to our Proclean Prague-made burger is set between the top bun (Chapter 1) dealing with the historical background, and the bottom bun (Chapter 9), which turns out to be an ambitious attempt to relate philosophy in its narrow sense to wider views of the world. In addition we are served with a sauce of after effects (Chapter 10, Proclus' legacy). The plan is sound, and its execution almost perfect. Chlup generally avoids unnecessary jargon in his prose and illustrates the text with a rich set of clarifying diagrams, thus making the book an excellent resource for teaching.

It is fascinating to see how far the continuing re-assessment of Proclus' figure in the history of late ancient philosophy has advanced from its origins in the sixties when Werner Beierwaltes and Jean Trouillard started the work of rehabilitation triggered by Dodds' second edition of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Chlup's arguments demonstrate complete reversal in some of the crucial questions. Until the 90s it was widely held that Plotinus preserved a judicious silence about the ineffable, in contrast to the post-Plotinian Neoplatonists' and especially to Proclus' loquacity. Proclus' theory of henads in particular was regarded as extra-philosophical speculation and the henads were understood as a separate hypostasis below the One. Now, in the picture depicted by Chlup, it is Plotinus who goes embarrassingly far in an attempt to conceptualise the ineffable and to verbalise mystical experience. Instead, Proclus vindicates pure transcendence of the One and with his "postulation of the 'henads' or 'gods' as the basic 'subunits' existing within the One" makes it easy for us to "note that their introduction into the system has the crucial and beneficial effect of shifting the boundary of the apprehensible as close to the highest point as possible" (p. 61).

While previous interpretations tended to describe Proclus' relation to Plotinus by emphasising that later Neoplatonists introduced an unnecessary number of new metaphysical levels and cluttered up a clear image inherited from the founder of the school, Chlup on the contrary sees Proclus realising in a most appropriate manner the Neoplatonic maxim "All things in all, but properly". Apparent "passion for seemingly endless conceptual distinctions is never an end in itself... Proclus works with a four-storey Plotinian model whenever he finds this sufficient for dealing with whatever problem he is discussing. It is only when this simple model no longer allows him to describe all metaphysical relations precisely, that Proclus has recourse to more detailed 'zoom shots'" (p. 21). One may add that in their exegetical endeavour, Proclus and other later Neoplatonists were trying to cope with the real gaps and theoretical discontinuity between and within Plato's dialogues which Plotinus' synoptic style of philosophising made it easier to bypass.

I am impressed by Chlup's great clarity in dealing with Proclus' ethics and epistemology. One of the strongest aspects in this book is the skilful treatment of the relationship between discursive knowledge (*dianoia*) and opinion (*doxa*), and especially Chlup's emphasis on the Proclean theory of projection (*probole*) as the basic principle explaining psychic activity at every level of cognition.

As reviewers have deservedly hailed the merits of this book, I will focus in the following on some of its weaknesses. One of the cases in point concerns henadology, a crucial, if not

the most crucial aspect of Proclean metaphysics. It appears as if Chlup had followed the more or less traditional opinion based on Dodds, Saffrey and Westerink, being somewhat critical towards Van Riel, and then had come across the innovative theory of polycentric polytheism expounded by Edward Butler. Chlup subscribes to some of Butler's theses, then labels them controversial, but again returns to his formulations emphasising the nature of the henads as unique individuals. The presentation of different perspectives is naturally worthy of praise, but a more committed stand would have been desirable. One can hardly both defend the interpretation that, for Proclus, henads are the manifestation and the aspects of the primal One, and at the same time assert that they are unique individuals beyond which there is nothing real to be seen. Another ambiguity can be observed when Chlup refers to the henads in their aspect of Limit and the Unlimited, but does not take into account all statements in Proclus, when he sheds light on them not only in their aspect as henads, but being henads themselves (for example, PT III).

As to another hot topic, that of Proclus' attitude to theurgy, Chlup, quite rightly, goes beyond Sheppard's influential model from the 80s, but occasionally returns to an even older position than that from the times when theurgy was regarded as a specific Chaldean technical innovation introduced by Iamblichus into Neoplatonism.

The same kind of discrepancy can be seen in the partly overlapping discussions in chapters 1 and 9. In the earlier discussion, Chlup speaks of the violence of persecution, but in chapter 9 dealing with the socio-political framework, that violent aspect is played down.

In spite of these critical observations and the fact that the author seems to have missed some important publications (the work of Dirk Gürsgen, Christian Tournau and Michael Erler; cf. also Jean Trouillard's *La mystagogie de Proclus* [1982] and Loredana Cardullo's *Il linguaggio del simbolo in Proclo* (1985)), I must conclude by saying that this is a most welcome publication which will be used with profit by all those interested in Proclus.

Tuomo Lankila

ANNE GABRIÈLE WERSINGER: *La sphère et l'intervalle. Le schème de l'Harmonie dans la pensée des anciens Grecs d'Homère à Platon*. Editions Jérôme Millon, Grenoble 2008. ISBN 978-2-84137-230-0. 379 pp. EUR 30.

Wersinger's book deals with the concept of ἀρμονία in ancient Greek thought and its development from the archaic to the classical period. The study focuses on pre-Socratic philosophy that is mainly known from fragments quoted by later authors like, e.g., Plato and Aristotle. The book studies different manifestations of the concept of ἀρμονία as applied to, e.g., philology, music, physiology and astronomy. The author does not always base her ideas solely on Greek theories about ἀρμονία, but also searches for allegories of it in non-philosophical contexts, like Homer's epics.

The book is divided into two parts corresponding to the two main aspects of the idea of ἀρμονία: the sphere and the interval. It proceeds from the archaic to the classical age, beginning with Homer and ending with the writings of Anaxagoras. In general, each chapter is devoted to one individual author and describes a development in the evolution of the notion of ἀρμονία. However, Chapters 2 and 3 of the second part of the book are focused on Pythagorean philosophy in general and especially on the doctrines of Philolaus and Archytas.