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NICOLAUS OF METHONE'S CRITICISM ON PROCLUS' THEORY OF «PARTICIPATED» OR «UNPARTICIPATED» INTELLIGENCE (NOUS)

A. The concept of Participation

The question about the «unparticipated» and the «participated» being which appears very often in ancient philosophy can be considered as parallel to the problems of the *One* and the problems of the *Many*. In this paper I intend to explore some of the ways by which Greek philosophers, and especially Proclus, the neoplatonist, approached such problems and in particular the «unparticipated» and «participated Nous».

The theories of Proclus were widely commented on by Nicolaus, Bishop of Methone, a scholar of the twelfth century Byzantium, who attempted to resist against the penetration of doctrines, such as nominalism etc., into Christian dogmas¹. His criticism is based on the comparison of Proclus' theories with logic and conceptual consistency, and their relation to traditional Christian beliefs².

Proclus examines the nature of the relationship that enables something to possess its individual characteristics; this is for him a central problem of ontology, which is mainly focused on this relationship, existing only in actu-

1. Cf. Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*. A revised text with translation, introduction and commentary, by E. R. Dodds, Oxford U.P. 1963. Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology* (Νικολάου Μεθώνης, Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου Πλατωνικοῦ Φιλοσόφου). A critical edition with an introduction on Nicholas' life and works, by Athanasios D. Angelou, Athens - The Academy of Athens - E. J. Brill, Leiden 1984. Also see: Nicolaus Methonensis, Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου Πλατωνικοῦ Φιλοσόφου, by pages and lines of Voemel's Text, in Greuser's *Initia Philosophiae*, pars IV, Frankfurt 1825. From now on references will be made on Angelous' critical edition, as: Nicolaus of Methone.

2. Cf. A. Demetracopoulos, *Bibliothèque ecclésiastique* I, 232, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 8 (1889), pp. 263-301. Also see: B. Τατάκη, Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Φιλοσοφία, Athens 1977, pp. 209-211.

ality. The concept of «participation» had been elaborated in Plato's *Parmenides* (130a-132d) and in Plotinus' *Enneads* (VI, 9, 2)³. In Plato, participation explains the relationship between the Forms (Εἶδη) and the sensible particulars (αἰσθητά) as it is illustrated in the *Phaedo* (100d) and the *Parmenides* (130c-131a). Some element of the form in its complete purity is really contained in the entity. Such a concept is clearly much closer to Plato than to the «imitation» (μίμησις) of the Pythagoreans⁴. This exclusive relation between forms and sensibles includes causality; Plato states that it is more than a declaration that all predication about particulars includes the rational relation of particular to universal. The forms are not mere logical entities; they are real existents in such a sense that their presence in sensibles and the communication in them by sensibles, are at least conceivable terms to express the relation in question⁵. There is no doubt that the communication of forms is achieved through participation only and Aristotle himself confirms that most of the things, which are ὁμώνυμα exist through the fact of participation in them⁶. Plato, on the other hand, extended the range to include all things συνώνυμα with the forms, but Aristotle cannot accept this as it would illogically apply to things which had no forms. In the *Parmenides* (133d) Plato applies the ὁμώνυμον without distinguishing it from συνώνυμον, whereas by contrast Aristotle in his criticism of the Theory of Ideas describes the ὁμώνυμον, as denoting no real common nature with the particulars⁷. The main problem still remains, whether the forms are merely ideas or concepts; this question is actually raised in the

3. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 1-6, pp. 1-6; Idem, *In Parm.*, p. 1220.3. Also see Idem *E.T.* props. 31-34, pp. 34-36. Plato, *Republic* VII, 519b.

4. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A 6, 987b. Aristotle states that the explanation of imitation derives from the Pythagoreans, who held that things «imitate» numbers. Although imitation, as applied to sensible particulars, falls into disuse, the concept that the «intelligible world» is the example for the sensible world, remains current in later Platonism and especially in Neoplatonism, cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 8.12. Just as the sensibles are contained in some sort of organic unity that is the world, so the forms exist in some «intelligible place». See also, Plato *Republic* VI, 508c.

5. The expression «κόσμος νοητός» is located «beyond the Heavens» as it is stated in *Phaedrus* 247c. The image becomes sharper in *Timaeus* 30c-d. For Plato, the Forms do exist separately (*Timaeus* 52a-e), and the reasons may be sought in epistemological considerations as well as in the ethical ones that troubled Socrates and that were almost certainly operative upon Plato. See also, *Philebus* 33d-34a; *Timaeus* 64a-d.

6. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A 9, 990b 28-31; Z 12, 1037b 19.

7. Idem *op. cit.*, 991a 5. Aristotle uses the term «ὁμώνυμον» rather than «συνώνυμον», partly perhaps to suggest that there is no common nature shared by the Idea and the particular, and therefore the one can do nothing to explain the other. Cf. W. D. Dodds, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, vol. 1 Oxford U.P. 1970, pp. 190-191.

Platonic dialogues, only to be denied⁸. Proclus appears to be a consistent student of Plato's doctrine of communication of forms and echoes his master's voice that: «all things are in all things, but in each after its own fashion»⁹. Yet, Plotinus had adopted it in dealing with the general relationships of Intelligibles, while Porphyry and Iamblichus employed the theory as a suitable way of filling the unexplained gaps remaining from Plotinus' explanation of the world of experience, in order to maintain the unity of the system and reconcile opposing concepts¹⁰.

Proclus, by adopting the Aristotelian doctrine of matter and form, widens the definition of «participation» into a formula for the relation between higher universal (as hypostasis or Platonic form), and the lower «particular» as spiritual or material individual; it is an immanent universal which is directly participated¹¹. The transcendent universal influences the particulars ὡς ἐφετὸν, like the Aristotelian god, or possibly as ἐλλάμπων, since it is strictly unparticipated¹².

Concerning the relationship between forms and particulars Proclus states that, if the forms are linked with particulars by similarity (omoiotis), then, there would be infinity of related causes. Instead of rejecting substantive forms completely in the manner of Aristotle, he saw the relationship as representing ὁμοίωσις than ὁμοιότης as qualifying only one of the related terms. Thus the form exists in an entirely separate realm; nevertheless to secure the operational function of the form, the particulars must be in some way similar to the form in that they are caused by it¹³. It is therefore clear that through

8. Cf. Plato, *Parmenides* 132b-c; 134b.

9. Cf. Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* X (Nauck); Syrianus *In Metaph.*, p. 82.1.

10. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* I, 1, 7.12-13, III, 2, 14.9; in relation to Plato, *Enneads* V, 1, 9.9-11, in relation to Aristotle, *Enneads* V, 1, 9.15-16; Proclus, *In Remp.* II, 77 (Kroll).

11. Cf. Proclus *In Parm.* 1069.23. An «ἐνυλὸν εἶδος», a «ψυχὴ ἐν σώματι».

12. The fact that everything turns towards God in prayer, except the First, as a natural process reflected everywhere in creation, is an indication of the dependence of the many on the Supreme One. Cf. J.M. Rist, *Plotinus, The Road to Reality*, Cambridge 1977², pp. 199-212. Also see E. Peterson, 'Herkunft und Bedeutung der MONOS ΠΡΟΣ MONON - Formel bei Plotin', *Philologus* 88 (1933), pp. 30-41, and E. R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Entretiens Hardt* 5, Geneva 1960, pp. 16-17. In Plato's *Symposium* 217b the union with the Supreme Good could have had a special meaning to the Platonists. For the problems concerning the tendency of the soul to return back to its source see J.M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, Toronto 1964, p. 86.

13. Proclus, *In Parm.*, 906 sq. Idem, *E.T.* 29: 34, 3, where the «ὁμοιότης» is defined as a cosmogonic principle and it is probably inspired by the Platonic texts «νομίσας μυρίῳ κάλλιον ὅμοιον ἀνομοίου» (*Timaeus* 33b; Proclus, *In Tim.* II. 78. 12 ff.). Similarly Porphyry says that real Being «τὴν πᾶσαν ἑτερότητα διὰ τῆς ταυτότητος ὑπέστησεν» (ἀφ. XXXVI).

this participation in the one, no element of plurality is allowed to affect the status of the one. This excludes the concept of some neoplatonists, who considered the one as including the many in a seminal manner, as well as with the Stoic immanentistic approach. This doctrine was further elaborated by Dionysius the Areopagite¹⁴.

The entire meaning of the concept of «participation» is focused on the inter-relationship between the participated and the participant and it is explained by six general terms: the cause, its power, its activities, the power of its activities, their potential power, and finally the participant itself with its potential power to receive the participated. The participated, being of a certain kind by its very nature is notable for its own existence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν), while its participant exists only by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν). Thus, whatever exists is what is either as a cause by its existence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) or by participation (μέθεξιν)¹⁵. The καθ' ὑπαρξιν often happens according to essence (κατ' οὐσίαν) or essentially (οὐσιωδῶς) and by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) is often represented by irradiation (κατ' ἔλλαμψιν) or εἰκονικῶς¹⁶.

B. The Henads

Proclus, being under influence of earlier Neoplatonists adopts a class of participated forms of the one; these forms, proceeding from the one, are termed by him as henads. The doctrine of the divine henads is a special modification of the Plotinian world-scheme by later Neoplatonists. In Plato they denote merely units or examples of ones, but Proclus interprets them as: (a) forms or monads in the world of being, and (b) beings in their transcendental unity (Pythagorean influence is evident here)¹⁷. But how can a henad, being itself unique and participated, be at the same time self subsistant and also of necessity in subjects? The theory of *separable participation* on the lines of Porphyry's doctrine of deity, suggested by Proclus, could be the answer: through this solution the henad is everywhere and nowhere. Spatial intervals are not demanded for the henads, because, transcending everything

14. Cf. Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Divinis Nominibus*, 13, 2 (PG. 980a): «καὶ οὐδὲν ἔστι τῶν ὄντων, ὃ μὴ μετέχει πῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς τοῦ ἐν τῷ κατὰ πάντα ἐνικῶ ... καὶ ἄνευ μὲν τοῦ ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔσται πλῆθος, ἄνευ δὲ τοῦ πλῆθους ἔσται τὸ ἓν».

15. Cf. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 65 and 67, pp. 62-66. Idem, *In Tim.* I, 8.17 sq.

16. Idem, *E.T.*, props. 64-67, pp. 60-61. Idem, *In Crat.*, 28.23 (Pasquali). Cf. E.R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-235.

17. Cf. Plato, *Philebus* 15a.

without relation, they are present everywhere without admixture¹⁸. This follows the answer by Socrates to the question raised by Parmenides, of how a form can be present entirely in each participant: that it could be compared to the daylight, which, though one and the same light in many places simultaneously, still preserves its individual unity. Proclus insists that the unparticipated term, as transcendent form, is entirely present in the participated form. He establishes his theory of unparticipated principles by demonstrating that they are self-subsistent, in the sense that their appearance denotes a new face in the procession of individuality of the one, which serves as their *archetypon* of all unity¹⁹. This unity is the henad of the soul which ascends to it through a strict process of dialectical discipline. Thus, the henad of the soul is regarded not as an intellect but as a participated one and its unification with the unparticipated Being takes place beyond the realms of intellectual virtue²⁰.

There are, in the system of Proclus, different types of henades: the intelligible henad (=unparticipated being), intelligible and intellectual (=unparticipated life), intellectual (=unparticipated intelligence), supercosmic henad (=unparticipated soul), intercosmic henads (=representing the divine participated souls and the bodies they animate). The henads so listed do not in fact belong to the particular order of the name indicated; rather they are regarded as the transcendent source of all things. There appears a contradiction between the participation and the impartibility of the first member of the transverse henads; in the simple explanation the one stands as the first member of the first transverse henads with no attention given to distinction of the second hypostasis²¹. For Proclus the basic issue was that the same attribute, or even the same god, can exist on successive levels in an appropriate mode. Such attributes are present perfectly and unequivocally only in the realm of the henads. Thus, intelligence has self-sufficiency by participation, the soul by illumination and the sensible world by its resemblance

18. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 98, pp. 86-88. In Plato's dialogues it is clear when Parmenides asks Socrates how a form can be present in its entirety in each of the participants, Socrates suggests that it might be like the daylight, «which is one and the same daylight in many places at once, and yet keeps its undivided unity»; but his questioner ignores the suggestion of *Parmenides* 131b. See E.R. Dodds, *op. cit.* pp. 251-252.

19. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 40, p. 42; props. 113-127, pp. 100-112. Cf. R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, London 1972, pp. 146-159. C.G. Niarchos, *Language and the Transcendent Reality in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Athens 1984, 63-67 (in Greek).

20. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 140, pp. 124-125. Idem, *In Remp.* II. 232; Iamblichus, *Myst.* 115.

21. Cf. R.T. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 151-153, Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguorum liber*, PG 91, 1088c. For Maximus «deification» is the participation of the «whole man» into the «Whole God». Also see J. Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology*, Oxford 1975, pp. 163-164.

to the divine, while the gods are self-sufficient by their very nature²².

Theologically, as Zeller states, the gods represent the traditional deities of Greek mythology and, according to Proclus, the highest task of Platonic philosophy was the exact classification of all these deities, with the defect, however, of robbing them of individual personality, through the principle of vertical procession, each deity being split into a series of diminishing forces²³. In addition, these gods are bound together by a closer collective unity than any subsequent order of existence. Plotinus put all gods within Nous, whereas Proclus places them mostly in the first hypostasis; confusedly, however, he applies the term *gods* to numerous entities such as eternity, time, and even the sensible world—which was described as «intelligible», «intellectual» or «intra-mundane». The traditional ancient gods had somewhere to be included on a lower level, being participable and not belonging to the abstract unity of the First Hypostasis.

The henads are participable according to the general rule²⁴: in each order there is an intermediate class of predicable terms linking the non-predicable substantive principle with concrete subjects and the «unities» link the non-predicable substantive unity with the concrete united. Proclus does not make clear how to reconcile this participability with the *ὑπερουσιότης* of the henads, but there is no immanence in the ordinary sense. They are: (a) separately participated (*χωριστῶς μετεχόμενα*)—like all *αὐθυπόστατα*, and (b) they are transcendent in a special degree or manner²⁵. The main problem is to demonstrate that an imparticible henad could only be distinguished from the one by imputing to it falsely and to a lower degree of unity, which can always be analysed into a participable henad and the participant. Like the One, henads are without any internal differentiation; their essential predicate is their unity or goodness, other attributes being only *κατ' αἰτίαν* implicitly. Henads are also measures of ousia, principles of its articulated structure, as time and eternity are the measures of actuality²⁶.

22. Proclus, *In Plat. Theolog.* I, 19.16-17 (Portus). New edition by Saffrey-Westrink.

23. Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 10.7.

24. Idem, *E.T.*, prop. 23, p. 26. The transcendent universal must exist, in order to give unity to the many immanent universals and must be distinct from any of them.

25. Idem, *E.T.*, prop. 130, p. 116. Proclus is inconsistent here. Sometimes he refers to all henads, other than the one, but sometimes he excludes the super-cosmic gods. Cf. Idem *In Tim.* I, 226; III, 204. 16. R.T. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 151-153.

26. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 54, p. 32. The traditional Academic definition of time was «the measure of movement» (Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 220b 25; *Definitions* 411b). Plotinus' objection refers to the absence of a certain definition, for the above mentioned theory tells us

C. *Nous* (Intelligence)

In the entire system of Proclus the concept of *Nous* lies as the basis of his own philosophical speculation. Every divine intelligence is perfect and possesses the characteristic of unity; it is the primal intelligence from which all others derive their own existence²⁷. This statement is criticised by Nicolaus who reminds us that the only source and cause of the existence of every being is God, whom he calls «supra-Intelligence» (ὑπέρνοον). He bestows by his own act substantiality upon all other intelligences. In no case the perfection of God depends on the participation of others in him, for he is the expression of full divinity²⁸. All other intelligences are close to One, divine and perfect, due to the participation in the Primal Intelligence²⁹.

Proclus' approach to the divine Intelligences and their relationship to other objects is more complex than Plotinus'³⁰. We discern three levels: (a) The πρώτως νοητόν, comprising the true being (ὄντως ὄν) and life (ζωή) does not coordinate with Intelligence but perfects it, without losing its transcendence, but represents the divine νοητόν³¹. Its cognitive element is only κατ' αἰτίαν, as the source of the content for the highest Intelligence, which, as it is stated in Plato's *Parmenides*, has no prior intelligible Object³². (b) *Nous* νοητός is similar to the Plotinian *nous* with subject and object only logically distinguishable (ἐν κατ' ἀριθμόν); the lowest member of the

what time is used for (*Enneads* III, 6, 9.12-13). Proclus' theory on time is based on the Plotinian concept in order to stress its reality as something independent of and higher than its content, against the Aristotelian doctrine which made it a «πάθος κινήσεως» (*Physics* Z, 251 b 28) and a «ἀριθμητόν», something itself counted or measured (*op. cit.* Δ, 220b 8), cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 4.23 ff. Nicolaus asks Proclus: why «every eternity», when there is only one? It is known that each of the immanent eternities is the measure of its participant eternal and in turn it is measured by the transcendent Eternity. Cf. also E.R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

27. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 160, p. 140. For Plotinus Being and Intelligence had been co-ordinate and only logically distinguishable; for Proclus all Intelligence is Being, but not all Being is Intelligence (props. 101-102). The Being which itself is not Intelligence is distinguished as «τὸ ὄντως ὄν», and it is called «intelligible» not in the Plotinian sense as the content of the Intelligence, but as the transcendent source of that content. Cf. R.T. Wallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

28. Cf. St. Paul, *Colassaeis*, 1.19-20.

29. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

30. Proclus, *In Plat. Theolog.* V, 105; *In Tim.* I, 321; III, 101.1 ff.

31. Idem, *E.T.*, prop. 181, pp. 158-160. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158.

32. Proclus, *In Parm.*, 900.26.

intelligible triad is apparently identifiable with the $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ³³, and with the unparticipated intelligence³⁴. Here one traces similarity to the $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma\ \zeta\omega\omicron\nu$ of the *Timaeus*³⁵.

(c) A series of inferior intelligences know their objects by participation and by reflection. The highest of these is the demiurge of *Timaeus*³⁶.

Plato sometimes regards the demiurge as the model for the sensible world, but sometimes as something extraneous³⁷. Numenius and Amelius supported the latter view as stated in *Timaeus* (39c-e), where *nous* is separated from its objects³⁸. Proclus rejected the proposed triad of divine principles. On the other hand, Plotinus opposes Numenius' interpretation as being gnostic, by reaffirming his known maxim: «οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ νοῦ τὰ νοητά»³⁹.

To Porphyry the demiurge was a soul, possessing *nous* as his model; so he achieved a natural interpretation, keeping also the Plotinian equation between $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ and $\nu\omicron\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$ ⁴⁰. Theodore of Asine revived Amelius' concept and Proclus influenced by Syrianus, attempts to harmonize this with Ploti-

33. Idem, *E.T.*, prop. 160, p. 140. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144. Cf. H.J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, The Hague 1971, p. 4. E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, Cambridge 1965, pp. 24-26. Dodds argues that after Plotinus discussed the Gnostic view that the soul created the world out of *tolma* (*Enneads* II, 9, 11.21 f.) he dropped this way of looking at the soul's descent. J. Rist argues against Dodds in a review in *Phoenix* 20 (1966) pp. 360 f.: his objections, however, are partly based on the contention that Plotinus never «held the Gnostic view that *tolma* was the *motive* for creation», a suggestion difficult to reconcile with passages like V.1, unless the stress be put on «Gnostic» rather than «motive». Cf. *Plotinus, The Road to Reality, op. cit.* p. 257.

34. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 101, p. 90; 166, p. 144; 170, p. 148. Idem, *In Tim.* II, 202.7.

35. Idem, *In Tim.* III, 101.3 ff.

36. Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 30a-b. The demiurge is probably to be identified with the intelligent, efficient cause posited by Plato in *Philebus* 27b (cf. *Sophist* 265c). But he is not omnipotent: he makes the *kosmos* «as good as possible» (*Timaeus* 30b) and must cope with the counter-effects of necessity (idem 47e-48a). In later Platonism the demiurgic function is performed by a secondary emanation, by the *Logos* in Philo (*De cher.* 35, 136-137; Idem, *De spec. leg.* I, 81) and *Nous* in Numenius (cf. Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* XI, 17-18) and Plotinus (*Enneads* II, 3, 18).

37. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 323.32. Plato's description of the maker of the lower gods, the soul of the universe and the important part of the human soul is in *Timaeus* 29d-30c; he uses the pre-existent *eide* as his model (ibid). 30c-31a).

38. Proclus, *In Tim.* III, 103.18. Plotinus in an early essay (III, 9, 1) toys with the opinion held by Numenius that there is a higher *Nous* which is unmoved and separated from other objects, as well as a lower *Nous* which moves (cf. Eusebius, *op. cit.* XI, 18.20).

39. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 4, 2; VI, 6, 18.

40. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 306, 31; cf. E.R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology, op. cit.*, p. 286.

nus, while also clarifying Platonic contradictions; thus, the παράδειγμα is partly superior to the demiurge and partly immanent in him⁴¹.

There would be found three elements in each intelligence: its existence, in its intelligible content (νοητόν); its potency, which is its power of intellection (νοῦς); its activity, the act of intellection (νοήσις). Their combined function represents the mark of eternity. Aristotle links it to the divine nous⁴². Nicolaus observes that the «activity» differs from the potency, both of which exert no influence upon the immaterial intelligences. The potency exists only in «imperfection», thus in no case it would apply to the primal Intelligence, and the activity is therefore of no substantial use⁴³.

Proclus defines six grades between the pure unity of the One and the minimum unity of matter: (a) The henads, as transcendent sources of plurality; (b) the intelligences, each one being an actual plurality (πλήρωμα εἰδῶν), but indivisible in time or space⁴⁴; (c) souls, spatially indivisible, but their activity temporarily divisible⁴⁵; (d) inseparable potencies and immanent forms, subject to the bodies spatial divisibility⁴⁶; (e) corporeal magnitudes divisible at any point⁴⁷; (f) dispersed corporeal manifolds actually divided in space.

Plotinus and Porphyry adhered to approximately similar distinctions, but without the henads. Proclus insists that every intelligence is an indivisible existence. Its indivisibility is due to the lack of magnitude, body or movement. This statement was refuted by Nicolaus who considers the intelligence to be movable; the henads cannot comprise the first manifold upon which the intelligences are consequent⁴⁸. That every intelligence, though a manifold, accord-

41. Cf. Plato, *Rep.* VII, 514a-517c.

42. Plato connects «αἰών» with «νοητόν» (*Tim.* 38a). Cf. Aristotle *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 26; Plotinus *Enneads* V, 1, 4.

43. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 149-151.

44. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 177, p. 156. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.

45. Idem, *E.T.*, props. 191-192, pp. 166-168. Here emphasis is laid, upon the principle which participates both time and eternity, and is therefore at once a being and a coming-to-be, i.e. the «μεθεκτὴ ψυχὴ», which is thus again found to be intermediate between the two words. Plotinus in *Enneads* IV, 4, 15 states that only the passions of the soul exist in time and often reckons the soul among the rarely indivisible principles.

46. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 190, p. 166. See also Nicolaus of Methone, pp. 168-169. In Plato's *Timaeus* 35a the soul is considered as the frontier between the two worlds and this conception dominates the Neoplatonic psychology.

47. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 80, p. 74. Proclus held that magnitudes are potentially though not actually divisible to infinity, i.e. they can be divided at any point, but not at every point simultaneously. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* Γ 6, 206a 11 sq. Proclus *In Tim.* I, 453.19.

48. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 113, pp. 100-102. Nicolaus of Methone, pp. 109-110. Cf. R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

ing to Proclus, in fact is a unified manifold, seems to Nicolaus to be absurd. If every manifold participates in some way the one and remains united, then what is divisible? That, though a manifold, does not participate the one? And if participates the one, how can the one intelligence be manifold? Again, if it is manifold how can be indivisible and manifold at the same time? So, the intelligence as manifold is placed second, after the first, the group of henads. For Nicolaus it is only the nous that remains indivisible, being itself incorporeal, without magnitude, or possessing all kinds of plurality. Even its activity is single in itself but being dispersed to many things⁴⁹.

Every intelligence is intellectually identical both with its priors and with its consequents, especially the latter as their cause with the former by participation. The Neoplatonists sought a middle path between: (a) Aristotle's view of the intelligence being of its own object, and (b) the intelligence's awareness of the corporeal world. Plotinus says that intelligences can contemplate in the lower realms. To Proclus the answer is found in the expression: all things are in all things, but in each according to its proper nature («πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, οἰκείως δὲ ἐν ἐκάστῳ»)⁵⁰, which is rejected by Nicolaus, i.e. how can the prior and the great be in the posterior and the small⁵¹.

D. The functioning of the intelligence

Every intelligence has intuitive knowledge of itself; but the primal intelligence knows itself only and both, intelligence and its object, are numerically one; whereas each subsequent intelligence knows simultaneously itself and its prior, so that its object is in part itself but in part its source⁵². Nicolaus states

49. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

50. Proclus, *E.T.*, p. 92. E.R. Dodds (*op. cit.*, p. 254) observes that the statement «all things are in all things, but in each after its own fashion» is ascribed by Syrianus (in *Metaph.* 82.1 ff.) to the Pythagoreans and by Iamblichus (ap. Stob. *Ecl.* I. xlix. 31, 866 H) to Numenius. Yet, this sentence covers all gaps left by Plotinus in his derivation of the world of experience and bridged oppositions without destroying them. Proclus makes use of it not only to interpret the Platonic «κοινωνία εἰδῶν» (cf. *In Parm.* 751 sq) and to give some solutions of the difficulties concerning the theory of Parmenides about transcendent Forms, but also to link together the four material elements (cf. *In Tim.* II, 26.23 sq). This statement was taken over by Dionysius the Areopagite (e.g. *Div. Nom.* 4, 7, PG 3, 704 c: αἱ πάντων «ἐν πᾶσιν οἰκείως ἐκάστῳ κοινωνίαι»).

51. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101.

52. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 167, p. 144. The divine intelligence of prop. 161 is described as «πρώτως νοητὸν» and perfects itself without loss of transcendence. In «νοῦς νοητός», as in the Plotinian intelligence, both subject and object are one in number, i.e. logically distin-

that it is only God, that knows Himself; no one of the intelligences possesses such an attribute. Yet, its knowledge is exerted upon all other beings, whose existence has been bestowed on them by God Himself. The knowledge of its prior does not constitute also the knowledge of itself; yet the knowledge of the lower beings does not mean in any way its reversion to the lowest ones⁵³.

Knowledge of the lower beings enables the primal Intelligence to exert a kind of providence upon them, an idea not acceptable by Proclus. Nicolaus understands the intelligences as mediators between God and all other beings. They know themselves, as they are, know their prior, but not their entire substance⁵⁴. Every intelligence has simultaneous intellection of all things; but, while the unparticipated intelligence knows all unconditionally, each subsequent intelligence knows all in one special aspect. Proclus states that all knowledge in the intelligences is by simultaneous intuition, as their activity is eternal. Yet never by identical intuitions, which would make their being identical. The difference lies in the point of view to which the knowledge is related⁵⁵. For

guishable. This seems to be the «πρώτως νοῦς» of prop. 160 and the «ἀμέθεκτος νοῦς» of props. 101, 166, 170. The lower intelligences are not identical with their objects but know them through *participation*, and the highest of these is the demiurge of the *Timaeus* (cf. *In Tim.* I, 323). Elsewhere the demiurge is described as «unparticipated intelligence» (cf. *In Tim.* III, 101. Also see: Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

53. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-145.

54. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 120, p. 104. In Plato's *Laws* 899d is stated that any denial of the divine providence within the world constitutes a mere blasphemy, meriting the severest punishment. For the Stoics the immanent Logos governs all by «νοῦς» and «πρόνοια» (cf. *D.L.* VII, 138; *SVF* I, 176). In Philo (cf. *De Fuga* 101) the Logos exercises providence through the immanent «δυνάμεις» in the same way as in Plotinus (cf. *Enneads* IV, 8, 2) the World Soul possesses a general providence and the individual souls a particular providence for the bodies they inhabit. The topic of providence bulks almost as large in Neoplatonism as does that of predestination and grace in the Christian theology of the period. For Proclus the doctrine of the divine providence is the starting point of his argumentation that it serves as the intervention of god in the world (cf. *E.T.*, prop. 122, *P.T.* I, 15, pp. 74-76). Proclus justifies the association of providence with the Henads on the grounds that it involves bestowal of good and that Goodness is the distinctive characteristic of the First Hypostasis (cf. *E.T.*, props. 119-120). In addition, the Greek word «πρόνοια» means pre-intellectual and indicates, according to Proclus, the Henads' super-intellectual cognition (cf. *E.T.*, prop. 120; Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 3.10, 43). The etymology fits the Plotinian system better than that of Proclus. Nicolaus states that it would, if pressed, require us to ascribe providence to Being and Life also, since they also are «πρὸ νοῦ» (cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116). Also see R. T. Wallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-151.

55. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 170, p. 148. Proclus insists that the activity of all intelligences is eternal and therefore they know all that they know in a simultaneous way («ἅμα»). Yet, it is known that never two intelligences have identical intuitions, for in this case their being would be identical too. Proclus seems to conceive the main characteristics of the particular intelli-

Proclus the dominant aspects of particular intelligences are analogous to specific differences within a genus⁵⁶. Nicolaus underlines that not only the primal, the one God, but every intelligence has simultaneous intellection of all things, and finally in the Proclean thought, any intellection is equal to creation⁵⁷. Here, Proclus appears to accept that every intelligence is capable of creating everything. Even more, it creates itself and all prior to it, which is obviously absurd⁵⁸. In fact, as Nicolaus states, not every intelligence knows everything nor it creates everything. This is the attribute of the primal *Nous*, which, being itself unparticipated, knows and creates everything. Its intellectual act is further completed by both the *logos* and the spirit. All its acts are directed towards all beings and things in general. The bishop of Methone identifies this primal *Nous* with God, while all other intelligences are subordinate and function with their own orders⁵⁹.

The Neoplatonists posited a creation by emanation through the creative power of intuition and contemplation, which operates naturally within the temporal world at a particular level of being. Plotinus in one place traces everything back to nature and in other places to *Nous* or Soul⁶⁰. This typifies the vague approach of Plotinus with no clear delimitation or function in contrast to the more systematic formulations of Proclus. Plotinus' method led to conflicting interpretations between Porphyry and Iamblichus — for the

gences in connection with the specific differences within a genus (cf. prop. 177, and *in Tim.* II, 202.7: «τοῦ γὰρ ζώου μετέχει μὲν καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἔστιν ὅλον καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸ εἶδος, ἀλλ' οὐ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καθ' ἐν τὸ ὅλον, οἷον τὸ ἀνθρώπειον εἶδος, ὥστε μετὰ τοῦ ὅλου καὶ ἐνός τινος, ὅπερ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ μόνιον, πάρεστι τῷ μετέχοντι»). See also Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 8, 4: Porphyry, *Ἀπορρομαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ* 44, 11.

56. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 177, p. 156. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.* pp. 155-156.

57. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.* 152-153. Proclus states that emanative creation is timeless and unwilled in contrast to the Christian doctrine of deliberate creation in time. The only creative power is contemplation or intuitive thought, which, at a certain level of being, transforms itself automatically into spatio-temporal terms (cf. E.R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 290). Both nature and intelligence possess creative powers; Plotinus and Proclus express similar views on this issue (cf. *Enneads* III, 8, Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 334.15). The intelligence possesses clearly creative attributes (cf. *Enneads* V, 4.3: «νοῦν ποιητὴν ὄντως καὶ δημιουργόν»). For Proclus the creative principle is mainly the intelligence and everything derives from it (cf. prop. 34). Nicolaus argues against Proclus' theorem and states that if intellection be creation, then since each intelligence has intellection of itself and its priors, each intelligence must create itself and its priors, which in fact is absolutely absurd. E.R. Dodds (*op. cit.*, pp. 290-291) observes that usually contemplation of the higher is creation of the lower (cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153. Gregorius of Nazianzus, or. 38, PG 36, 320c).

58. Proclus *E.T.*, prop. 167, pp. 144-146. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.* pp. 147-148.

59. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.

60. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 9.3; II, 9. 4. R.T. Wallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-69, 132-133.

former the creative principle was a transcendent soul and for the latter was the intelligible world as a whole. Proclus insists that the creative principle is mainly the intelligence, as the intelligence is an object of appetite to all things, so all things proceed from the intelligence, and the whole world-order, though eternal, has its being therefrom⁶¹. Proclus here infers the creative function of the intelligence from its character as ὁρεκτόν, which results from the identification of the Aristotelian Nous with the Platonic demiurge. He emphasises that the creation of the world, like its reversion upon its cause, is beyond time⁶².

Nicolaus states that even here Proclus contradicts himself; if everything proceeds from Nous, then Nous is prior to all beings. But elsewhere Proclus places Nous after the One, and thus there are some things that neither desire nous nor proceed from it⁶³. Yet, both Plotinian and Proclean approaches see creation as an indirect effect of contemplation (παρακολούθημα)⁶⁴. God creates, and this is the result of His thinking, but He does not think in order to create⁶⁵. Nicolaus here objects that: if intellection is creation, then each intelligence would create itself and also its higher sources, because of its complete intellection of both itself and its sources. In fact Proclus accepts that every intelligence has intuitive knowledge of itself and therefore creates itself; if it knows its sequents it reverts upon its inferior, which is absurd. It is obvious that Nous does not know nor creates its sequents. It seems to us that even Nicolaus fails to realise that creation of the lower element comes from contemplation of the higher⁶⁶. Again Proclus declares that intelligence creates by existing and its existence is thought; therefore, it creates by its intellectual act. The existence of nous and its intellection are one thing, since intelligence is identical with the being which is its content. Nicolaus accepts that the primal Intelligence possesses both intellectual and creative attributes. As the primal Intellect knows its sequents and as the true Being bestows existence to all beings, thus its intellectual act is identical to its crea-

61. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 34, pp. 36-38. Proclus is careful to stress that the «creation» of the world-order, like the «reversion» of the world-order upon its cause, is timeless, and thus consistent with the infinite duration of that order in time.

62. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III, 2.1: «...νοῦν πρὸ αὐτοῦ (τοῦ κόσμου) εἶναι οὐχ ὡς χρόνῳ πρότερον ὄντα, ἀλλ' ὅτι παρὰ νοῦ ἐστι καὶ φύσει πρότερος ἐκεῖνος καὶ αἷτιος τούτου... δι' ἐκεῖνον ὄντος καὶ ὑποστάντος αἰεί».

63. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

64. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III, 8.9.

65. Proclus, *In Parm.* 791.14 sq.

66. Idem, *E.T.*, prop. 167, pp. 144-146. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

tive power. It is only the primal Intellect that knows itself, and if it knew only its prior, then it moved not be the primal Intelligence.

E. The unparticipated Intelligence

The structure of the unparticipated intelligence is much more difficult than that of the unparticipated One, because it does not hold true to Proclus' general principles. For we should expect that the existence, power and activity of the intelligence, would each have its own characteristic of power. But the actual composition of the unparticipated intelligence, that Proclus presents, appears very different. The characteristics of the unparticipated Intelligence in relation to its cause the unparticipated Being and the unparticipated power are set forth thus: the unparticipated Being has being «by its own existence», «as a cause» and activity doubly «as a cause»; the unparticipated power has being «by possession»; but has power by its own existence. The Intelligence contains potentially, within its activity, everything else in the universe that is below it; so it itself is all other things in the world, «as a cause». Nevertheless, there is no actual division within the unparticipated intelligence, for, since its activity is an eternal fact, it 'knows' *all things simultaneously*. Its entire knowledge is simply its own activity and the objects of its knowledge are not the things of the material world themselves, but their pre-existing potential forms, that are included in it. Here we note Proclus' affirmation that «every intelligence is a whole..., but the unparticipated intelligence is absolutely a whole»⁶⁷. Therefore, every intelligence knows all things at once, but the unparticipated intelligence knows absolutely all things at once⁶⁸.

In addition to being the cause of the world, by means of its activity, the unparticipated intelligence is also the goal for the return of everything below it. In particular, the soul which, as the cause of all other motion is itself able to move, moves toward the intelligence as its own cause and the goal of its own motion; but the intelligence itself is motionless. This latter statement of Proclus, as expressed in his *Elements of Theology*, was refuted by Nicolaus, who did not accept that «the cause of all things (the intelligence) must be motionless, since, if it were moved, it would be imperfect (for all motion is an

67. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 180, p. 158. Proclus in agreement with Porphyry (*ἀπορρητὰ* xxii) states that the primal intelligence is a whole-before-the-parts and each of the remaining intelligences is a whole-in-the-part. Nicolaus observes that Proclus' theorem ends to a flat contradiction (cf. prop. 171).

68. Cf. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 170, p. 148. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.



imperfect activity); and it would be subject to time, although it is the cause of time». Nicolau, simply, accepts that only the primal Intelligence (God) is the cause of all things, the intelligence itself included⁶⁹.

F. The participated Intelligence

The unparticipated Intelligence reveals the existence of a class of participated characteristics of intelligence (νόες μετεχόμενοι). We note that the unparticipated Intelligence cannot be truly described as an intelligence, since only its effects are individual intelligences, while it itself is an intelligence only to the extent that it is the cause of all intelligences⁷⁰. The power of the activity of the unparticipated Intelligence, which is immediately responsible for the production of these possessed characteristics of nous, as a whole, is called the *logos*, this is for Proclus the creating word (δημιουργικός λόγος) of the unparticipated Intelligence.

Each individual participated characteristics of intelligence is itself an individual intelligence; it is a whole, knowing all its effects by including them potentially in its activity and producing them by means of this activity or knowledge. Yet, each individual intelligence represents only one aspect of the unparticipated Intelligence. Each of the individual intelligences is a whole found in-the-parts and contains all things dividedly⁷¹. The reason that it is possible for an individual intelligence to contain all things within it is found in the principle: «all things are in all things». Therefore, «all the individual intelligences, following the unparticipated Intelligence, know all things under the aspect of a single thing»⁷². Thus, it is clear that the individual intelligences are the intermediaries between the unparticipated Intelligence and all less

69. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 169, pp. 146-147. The «νοητόν», the «νοῦς» and the «νόησις» have the character of being *a totum simul* which for the Neoplatonists is the mark of eternity: cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 1.4 and Porphyry, *Ἀπορρομαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά*, 44.15. Also see: Plato's *Timaeus* 38a and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Λ 7, 1072b 26 sq. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

70. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 65, p. 62. The triadic structure of Reality is parallel to that of prop. 23. Also see: props. 67, 103, 118, 173, 195; *In Tim.* I, 8.17 sq; Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

71. Cf. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 180, p. 158. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

72. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 170-171, pp. 148-150. Plotinus (*Enneads* IV, 2.1) and Porphyry (*Ἀπορρομαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά* V) had made substantially the same distinctions as Proclus did between the pure unity of the One and the minimal unity of Matter in six grades, with the omission of the henads. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-151.

universal things. One of the many principles, in which they are involved, is to divide up what was previously unified within the unparticipated Intelligence, and transmit all the characteristics that it contained universally and potentially to various individual and actual things.

There are several ranks of intelligences: the class of all the participated characteristics of intelligence itself; its highest members are known as divine intelligences, which are participated by a divine soul⁷³. Of special importance is the world-Intelligence (Νοῦς τοῦ κόσμου), being participated by the world-Soul (Ψυχὴ τοῦ Παντός), and thus, is the cause of the activities of the soul. In the lower rank come the ordinary or intellectual intelligences (νοεροὶ νόες), which are participated by the more divided aspects of the world-Soul. The human intelligence is considered to be a kind of «spark» of the intelligence. All intelligences contain within themselves the individual characteristics, known as «objects of knowledge» (νοητά) or forms (εἶδη); these are the ideal or pre-existed Form of all beings that actually exist in the sensible world⁷⁴.

All beings, Nicolaus states, possess their existence as derived from God, who is the only unparticipated, for unparticipated terms subsist prior to the participated⁷⁵. Everything exists due to its participation of all principles in the primal Cause, the true Being (ὄντως ὄν), maintains its own unparticipated nature and stands above all creation. This primal Cause is called by Proclus not God, but something divine, intelligible and unparticipated⁷⁶. Nicolaus observes that the participated are more of one nature (ἐνικώτερα) than the participants and therefore divine (θεῖον), while the participants are placed on a lower level. Yet the unparticipated cannot be many, for plurality is not a characteristic of the primal Cause. If the true Being is a manifold, it should not be called ὄντως ὄν, but ὄντως ὄντα⁷⁷. In proposition 20, Proclus states, that the true Being is one, as well as the unparticipated Intelligence and the unparticipated soul, but now he speaks of many participated intelligences. This Intelligence is participated by a manifold of henads, and these, in return

73. Proclus, *E.T.*, props: 111, p. 98; 129, p. 114; 179, p. 158; 181, p. 158; 182, p. 160.

74. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 177, p. 156. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.

75. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 11-12, pp. 12-14. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

76. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 181-182, pp. 158-160. There is a basic difference between the «divine» and the «intellectual» participated intelligences on one hand and the «supra-mundane» and «intra-mundane» on the other. In case we combine the two groups we get three grades of participated intelligence (a) «θεῖος ὑπερκόσμιος» (b) «θεῖος ἐγκόσμιος» (c) «νοερός ἐγκόσμιος». Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-159.

77. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 161-162, pp. 140-142. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144. E.R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

are participated by the unparticipated Being, or the unparticipated Intelligence.

Nicolaus criticises Proclus' statement that all these henads which are supra-mundane are participated by the unparticipated soul. As all soul is dependent upon intelligences⁷⁸; the intelligence is converted upon the intelligible⁷⁹, so the supra-mundane gods depend on the intellectual. But Nicolaus asks: if the unparticipated soul is one, why does Proclus use the term ἀμέθεκτος ψυχή? Here there is a contradiction with the conclusion of proposition 22, where it is stated that there is only one primal Soul.

In propositions 23 and 24 Proclus states that the unparticipated Intelligence is superior and has primal existence, while in proposition 166, he accepts both: the unparticipated and participated intelligence and the latter is participated either by supra-mundane or by intra-mundane souls.

Another inconsistency of Proclus is traced by Nicolaus. The Neoplatonic philosopher tends to show that the intelligence is either unparticipated and thus leading all that participate, or participated; therefore, intelligence is neither all unparticipated nor all participated. Then, how can the statement, «both unparticipated and participated intelligence», be in agreement with that argument? Nicolaus considers the teachings of Proclus as the main source, for the doctrine of the multi-god system and the hierarchy of the three 'grades' of the divine intelligences: a) the unparticipated Intelligence; (b) the supra-mundane intelligences, which serve as a mean term between (a) and (c), and (c) the intra-mundane (planetary) intelligences⁸⁰. Nicolaus observes that Proclus accepts a whole system of ensouled and intelligible universe with a manifold of supra-mundane and intra-mundane gods which is entirely inconsistent and absurd. The existence of intra-mundane intelligences is unacceptable, because the world-order itself is possessed of intelligence as well as of soul. Yet, the intra-mundane souls must participate in supra-mundane intelligence through the mediation of intelligences which are intra-mundane⁸¹.

Further Proclus says that every intelligence is primarily participated by principles which are intellectual at once in their existence and in their activity. For human consciousness, intuitive thought is possible only intermittently; hence Proclus depends on certain higher souls as the permanent

78. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 20, p. 22. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

79. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 161, p. 140. Cf. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

80. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 181-183, pp. 158-160. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-159.

81. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 101, p. 90. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 4.2 init. and esp. VI, 6.8; V, 4.8. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 98.

channels of νόησις. These are similar to the Plotinian «superconscious» but on the other hand they are non-human entities, nor are they aspects of the soul. They are intermediate between human souls and timeless intelligences (ἀεὶ κατὰ χρόνον νοοῦντες), analogous to the ἀεὶ γινόμενα, operating between temporal and eternal being⁸². Proclus' purpose is to strengthen the system at its weakest stage, where eternity needs the element of time. The contact of a well ordered human mind, apprehended in a single act of intuition, represents, for Proclus, a perfect system of knowledge. Each part would be involved in the existence of every other part, without blurring necessary distinctions. Plotinus sees individual truths as valuable only in relationship to the whole⁸³. With Proclus this expresses the internal unity of pure mind, rather than any relationship between universal soul and individual souls, as with Porphyry. He distinguishes also the intelligible forms (νοερά εἶδη), the content of the νόες, from the νοητὰ εἶδη, which are above the intellect and represent the true Being (ὄντως ὄν), in a strict sense, and even with greater unity. Psellos, in his work *De omni faria doctrina*, chapter 25, understands by «intellectual forms» the «ψυχὴ, νόες, ἄγγελοι, ἀρχάγγελοι, δυνάμεις, καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα», while he considers the forms as Platonic expressions, like ἀγαθότης, ὁσιότης. On the same level moves Proclus, who has in mind the clear Platonic forms⁸⁴.

In proposition 180 Proclus contradicts himself by admitting that «every intelligence is unparticipated though it is consisted of parts», despite his intention to underline the fact that «every intelligence is undivided».

Proclus separates the unparticipated Intelligence from all other participated intelligences and its excellency lies on its attribute of being unparticipated. Christian teaching accepts the supreme Intelligence as the source of all other intelligences, and the fact that it is the supreme Cause of all other intelligences, enables it to participate in them. Despite the participation of the Intelligence in lower intelligences, the excellency remains as a characteristic of the undivided intelligence, which can be participated by the other intelligences, according to their power and general attributes⁸⁵.

At the fact of participation, the lower intelligences participate the higher, only through the illumination shed out by the higher to the lower. It is clear that the lower does not possess any power itself of participation, and its achie-

82. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 167, p. 144-146. Nicolaus of Methone, pp. 147-148.

83. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* IV, 9.5.

84. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 176, p. 154. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

85. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 181-183, pp. 158-160; 293-294. Nicolaus of Methone, pp. 157-159.

vement is the result of the given illuminations (χορηγουμένας ἐλλάμψεις). The higher Being illuminates the lower and while the irradiation of the superior serve as a basis, the characters which proceed from secondary principles are found upon them; thus, there is an order of precedence in participation and successive rays strike downwards upon the same recipient⁸⁶.

Proclus was accused by Nicolaus as holding the multi-gods doctrine. When he says: «all that is unparticipated is divine», he means that even the individuals which participate the universals are closer to the one. In this case, even the universals are participated and conversely the individuals being far from the one and participated by none, can be called divine⁸⁷. Yet, every participated divine intelligence is participated by divine souls. If participation, Nicolaus states, assimilates the participant to the participated principle and causes it to have the same nature, it is easy to say that a soul, which participates and is annexed to a divine intelligence, is itself divine, participating through the mediation of the intelligence the divinity immanent therein⁸⁸. Nicolaus wonders if participation assimilates the participant to the participated and causes it to have the same nature, now it does not assimilate the intelligence, which is closer and of the same nature to the divine intelligence, but it does the soul. It is only the one and primal Intelligence that bestows existence to beings and thus, it is the only participated. The product participates the producer, which is only God, and in this case, he is participated by the first Intelligence. No doubt, the divine intelligences produce nothing from themselves, but only they transfer to all beings all divine participations. Nicolaus states that these intelligences are called intellectual in relation to their priors and intellective to their sequents⁸⁹.

Conclusion

Proposition 56 suggests that «the participants, which derives from the one, acts as a connecting point between the other participated and the unparticipated beings». The purpose here is to safeguard the active inter-relationship between the ultimate causes and the whole causal series. This view, however,

86. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 180, pp. 158, 293. Cf. also Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 15-19: «... τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ἅπαντας νόας οὐκ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ὑπερτέρους ὑπὸ τῶν καταδεεστέρων μετέχεσθαι ἀλλὰ τὰς αὐτοῖς πρωτοδότως χορηγουμένας ἐλλάμψεις εἴτουν μεθέξεις ἐκείνου εἰς τοὺς μετ' αὐτοὺς δευτεροδότως διαβιβάζειν».

87. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 181, p. 158; prop. 24, p. 28. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

88. Proclus, *E.T.*, props. 183-184, pp. 160-162. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-161.

89. Proclus, *E.T.*, prop. 182, p. 160. Nicolaus of Methone, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

tends inevitably towards a strict monism incompatible with the theory of «self-existent» (αὐθυπόστατον). On the other hand, some later scholastics found Proclus' argument a useful way of combining the emanationism of Avicenna with Christian Orthodox teaching on creation... Similarly, in the Areopagitic writings there exist the phrase ἀμεθέκτως μετεχόμενα, and Nicolaus himself does not hesitate in admitting that God is both μεθεκτὸς and ἀμέθεκτος, in the sense that a term which is directly ἀμέθεκτον can be indirectly μεθεκτὸν by means of the μετεχόμενα, which it produces. Though the primal Intelligence is unparticipated, the participant do participate in it. For Nicolaus, it is a fallacy to divide the participated intelligence into supra-mundane and intra-mundane, for it leads to the doctrine of multi-god system, which is completely unaccepted.

Η ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΚΛΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ «ΜΕΘΕΚΤΟΝ» ἢ ΤΟΝ «ΑΜΕΘΕΚΤΟΝ» ΝΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ Η ΚΡΙΤΙΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΕΘΩΝΗΣ

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Με τὴν μελέτη αὐτὴ ἐρευνᾶται ἡ κριτικὴ τοῦ Νικολάου Ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης (δωδέκατος αἰὼν) ἐπὶ τῆς θεωρίας τοῦ Πρόκλου γιὰ τὸν «μεθεκτὸν» ἢ τὸν «ἀμέθεκτον» Νουν. Εἰδικώτερα, ὁ Πρόκλος ἐξετάζει τὴν δυνατότητα ὑπάρξεως σχέσεως μεταξὺ τοῦ Ἐνὸς πρὸς τὰ Πολλὰ καὶ ἀναφέρεται στὶς σχετικὲς διδασκαλίες τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ τοῦ Πλωτίνου. Ὁ ὅρος «μέθεξις» στὸν *Παρμενίδη* τοῦ Πλάτωνος (130a-132d) ἐκφράζει τὴν κοινωνία καὶ τὴν σχέση γενικώτερα μεταξὺ τῶν Εἰδῶν καὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀντικειμένων (Πβ. *Φαῖδων* 100d καὶ *Παρμενίδης* 130c-131a). Ἐπὶ πλεον ὁ Πρόκλος, ἀπηχῶν τὶς ἀπόψεις τοῦ Πλάτωνος, ὑποστηρίζει ὅτι «ὅλα τὰ πράγματα ἐνυπάρχουν σ' ὅλα τὰ πράγματα», ἀλλὰ κάθε ἓνα ἀναλόγως πρὸς τὴν ἐνέργειά του. Στὴν διάνοηση τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους ὁ ὅρος «μέθεξις» φανερῶνει τὴν σχέση μεταξὺ τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ καθόλου καὶ τοῦ χαμηλοῦ μερικοῦ. Ἡ σημασία τῆς ἐννοίας τῆς «μεθέξεως» ἐκφράζεται μὲ τὴν ἐσωτερικὴ μετοχὴ μεταξὺ τοῦ μετεχομένου καὶ τοῦ μετέχοντος καὶ ἐρμηνεύεται μὲ ἕξ γενικοὺς ὅρους: τὴν αἰτία, τὴν δύναμή της, τὴν ἐνέργειά της, τὴν δύναμη τῶν ἐνεργειῶν της, τὴν εἰδικὴ δύναμη τῶν ἐνεργειῶν της καὶ τέλος τὸ μετέχον καθ' ἑαυτὸν μὲ τὴν δύναμή του ἱκανὴ νὰ μετάσχη στὸ μετεχόμενον.

Κατὰ τὸν Πρόκλο οἱ Ἐνάδες ἀποτελοῦν τὴν ἀπόπειρα ἐρμηνείας τοῦ πλωτινικοῦ κοσμικοῦ συστήματος, μέσῳ τῆς ὁποίας τονίζεται ὅτι ἔτσι συγ-

κροτοῦνται τὰ εἶδη τοῦ ὄντος καὶ φανερώνονται τὰ ὄντα καθ' ἑαυτὰ στὴν μεταφυσικὴ ὑπόστασή τους. Οἱ *ἐνάδες μετέχονται* συμφώνως πρὸς ἓνα γενικὸ κανόνα. Μεταξύ τους ὑπάρχει μιὰ μεσάζουσα τάξη κατηγορικῶν ὄρων. Τὸ κύριο πρόβλημα ἐν προκειμένῳ εἶναι ἡ φανέρωση τοῦ γεγονότος ὅτι μιὰ «ἀμέθεκτη ἐνάς» εἶναι διακεκριμένη ἀπὸ τὶς ἄλλες μέσω τοῦ συσχετισμοῦ τῆς μὲ κατώτερο βαθμὸ ἐνότητος, ὅπου πραγματοποιεῖται ἡ ἀνάλυση σὲ μετεχόμενη «ἐνάδα» καὶ σὲ «μετέχον» στοιχεῖο σ' αὐτήν.

Στὸ φιλοσοφικὸ σύστημα τοῦ Πρόκλου ἡ ἐννοια τοῦ *Νοῦς* κεῖται ὡς ἡ βάση τοῦ ὅλου φιλοσοφικοῦ στοχασμοῦ του. Κάθε *θεῖος Νοῦς* εἶναι τέλειος καὶ ἀποτελεῖ τὴν ἑκφραση ὅλων τῶν ἄλλων *νόων*. Ἡ διδασκαλία αὐτὴ ἐλέγχεται ἀπὸ τὸν Μεθώνης Νικόλαον καὶ κρίνεται ὡς ἀντιφατικὴ καθ' ὅσον ὁ ὑπέρνοος *Νοῦς* εἶναι ἡ μόνη αἰτία τῶν ὄντων, αἰσθητῶν καὶ ὑπεραισθητῶν. Σὲ καμιά ἀπολύτως περίπτωση, ἰσχυρίζεται ὁ Νικόλαος, ἡ τελειότης τοῦ ὑπερτάτου Θεοῦ καὶ ὑπερνόου *Νοῦ* ἐξαρτᾶται ἀπὸ τὴν μετοχὴ σ' αὐτὸν ἄλλων ὄντων, ἐντελῶς ἐξηρητημένων καὶ παραγομένων ἀπ' αὐτόν.

Εἶναι γεγονός, τονίζει ὁ Πρόκλος, πὼς κάθε *Νοῦς* ἐμπερικλείει σαφῆ ἐσωτερικὴ γνώση τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ του, ὁ δὲ πρῶτος *Νοῦς* ἔχει τὸ πλεονέκτημα νὰ γνωρίζη μόνον τὸν ἑαυτό του (*ἐαυτὸν ἄρα νοεῖ*). Μέσω τῆς γνώσεως ὁ *νοῦς* μετέχει τῶν γνωστικῶν ἀντικειμένων καὶ ἀντιστρόφως τὰ γνωστικὰ ἀντικείμενα μετέχουν τοῦ *νοῦ*. Ἐδῶ ὁ Νικόλαος διατυπώνει σοβαρὲς ἐπιφυλάξεις, καθ' ὅσον, κατ' αὐτόν, μόνον ὁ *θεὸς* δύναται νὰ γνωρίζη τὸν ἑαυτό του καὶ ἐν συνεχείᾳ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ὄντα.

Ὁ *ἀμέθεκτος* *Νοῦς* ἐμφανίζει ὀρισμένα χαρακτηριστικὰ ἐν σχέσει πρὸς τὴν αἰτίαν του, τὸ *ἀμέθεκτον ὑπέρτατον ὄν*. Ἐνῶ τὸ *ἀμέθεκτον ὑπέρτατον ὄν* ἔχει ὕπαρξη μέσω τῆς *αὐθυπαρξεώς* του καὶ τὴν ὑπερτάτην δύναμη, ὡς τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ *αὐταιτίου* του, ὁ *ἀμέθεκτος* *Νοῦς* ἐμπεριέχει *δυνάμει ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, καὶ ἐν τῇ *ἐνεργείᾳ* του· κάθε τι τὸ ὑπάρχον στὸ σύμπαν, τὸ ὅποῖον, φυσικά, εἶναι κατώτερό του. Ἐπομένως ὁ *ἀμέθεκτος* *Νοῦς* εἶναι καὶ ἡ κυρία αἰτία τῶν ὄντων, πρᾶγμα τὸ ὅποῖον ὁ Νικόλαος παντελῶς ἀρνεῖται.

Ἡ κριτικὴ τοῦ Νικολάου στρέφεται κυρίως κατὰ τῶν ἀπόψεων τοῦ Πρόκλου γιὰ τὸν *μεθεκτὸν Νοῦν*. Ὁ *ἀμέθεκτος* *Νοῦς* ἀποκαλύπτει τὴν ὕπαρξη μιᾶς τάξεως *μετεχομένων* χαρακτηριστικῶν του. Κάθε ἰδιαίτερο χαρακτηριστικὸ τοῦ *νοῦ* εἶναι καθ' ἑαυτὸ ἓνας ἀτομικὸς *νοῦς*, δηλαδὴ ἀποτελεῖ ἓνα σύνολο στοιχείων, ὅπου συνυπάρχει ἡ γνώση τῶν ἀποτελεσμάτων τῶν ἐνεργειῶν τοῦ *νοῦ* δυνάμει. Ἐπὶ πλέον κάθε ἀτομικὸς *νοῦς* ἀντιπροσωπεύει μόνον ἓνα στοιχεῖον τοῦ *ἀμεθέκτου νοῦ*. Ὁ *ἀμέθεκτος νοῦς*, κατὰ τὸν Πρόκλο, εἶναι χωριστὸς ἀπὸ ὅλους τοὺς *μεθεκτοὺς νόες*. Κατὰ τὴν μέθεξιν ὁ κατώτερος *Νοῦς* μετέχει τοῦ ἀνωτέρου *Νοῦ* μόνον μέσω τῆς *ἐλλάμψεως*, ἡ ὁποία ἐκπορεύεται ἀπὸ τὸν ἀνώτερον *Νοῦν* στὸν κατώτερον. Ἐδῶ ὁ Πρόκλος

ἐλέγχεται ἀπὸ τὸν Νικόλαον ὡς ἀποδεχόμενος τὴν θεωρία τοῦ συστήματος τῶν πολλαπλῶν θεοτήτων.

Ἡ διδασκαλία τοῦ Πρόκλου γιὰ τὸν *μεθεκτὸν* καὶ τὸν *ἀμέθεκτον νοῦν* βοήθησε τοὺς στοχαστὲς τοῦ Μεσαιῶνος νὰ συνδυάσουν τὴν θεωρία τῆς ἀπορροῆς τοῦ Avicenna πρὸς τὴν χριστιανικὴ διδασκαλία τῆς δημιουργίας. Ἐπὶ πλέον ὁ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης ὁμιλεῖ γιὰ «ἀμεθέκτως μετεχόμενα» ὄντα, ὁ δὲ Νικόλαος δὲν διστάζει νὰ υἱοθετήσῃ τὴν ἄποψη ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς εἶναι ταυτόχρονα «μεθεκτὸς» καὶ «ἀμέθεκτος».

Ἀθῆναι

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