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Proclus, Edited and translated by David T. Runia, Michael Share
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PROCLUS

Commentary on Plato's Timaeus

This volume of Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* records Proclus' exegesis of *Timaeus* 27c–31b, in which Plato first discusses preliminary matters that precede his account of the creation of the universe and then moves to the account of the creation of the universe as a totality. For Proclus this text is a grand opportunity to reflect on the nature of causation as it relates to the physical reality of our cosmos. The commentary deals with many subjects that have been of central interest to philosophers from Plato's time onwards, such as the question of whether the cosmos was created in time, and the nature of evil as it relates to physical reality and its ontological imperfection.

David T. Runia is Master of Queen's College and Professorial Fellow, School of Historical Studies, Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne. He has written numerous books and articles on ancient philosophy, specializing in the thought of Philo of Alexandria and the subject of ancient doxography.

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PROCLUS

Commentary on Plato's Timaeus

VOLUME II

Book 2: Proclus on the Causes of the
Cosmos and its Creation

TRANSLATED WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

DAVID T. RUNIA

Queen's College, University of Melbourne

and

MICHAEL SHARE

University of Tasmania



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

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www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316637531

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First published 2008
 First paperback edition 2017

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Proclus, ca. 410–485.

Proclus : commentary on Plato's Timaeus / translated with an introduction and
 notes by David T. Runia and Michael Share.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 978-0-521-84871-8 (hardcover)

1. Plato. Timaeus. 2. Cosmology—Early works to 1800. I. Runia, David T.
 II. Share, Michael John. III. Title.

B387.P7613 2008

113—dc22 2008033465

ISBN 978-0-521-84871-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-316-63753-1 Paperback

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Acknowledgements

The present volume is the third in the series resulting from a project initiated by Harold Tarrant, Dirk Baltzly and David Runia in 1997 and was the recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery grant for the years 1999–2004. At the time David Runia was teaching at Leiden University in the Netherlands and the intention was that the project would be an Australian–European joint venture. In 2001 he spent a most profitable month enjoying the hospitality of Harold Tarrant's Classics Department at the University of Newcastle. But all these arrangements changed when he returned to Australia to become Master of Queen's College at the University of Melbourne in 2002. From then it became an all-Australian project. By 2003 it became clear that it was going to be difficult for him to complete the translation of the entirety of Book 2 of Proclus' commentary (pages 205–458 in volume I of Diehl's text). So it was decided to ask the Tasmanian classicist Michael Share (Hobart) to join in the project and translate that part of Book 2 that deals with *Tim.* 29d6–31b3. The present volume is the result of a very successful collaboration.

David Runia would like to thank first of all his collaborators in the project for their great support throughout the period of nearly a decade during which this translation was being produced. Harold Tarrant's unsurpassed knowledge of the Platonist tradition was a continual source of information and inspiration. He was kind enough to read through the Introduction and Translation and make valuable comments, which I was able to include in the final draft. I have greatly enjoyed the periodic breakfasts with Dirk Baltzly on the South Bank of Melbourne's Yarra River during the past six years, as we discussed various aspects of the project. It has been a delight to work together with Michael Share on this volume. Through the years of our collaboration I have developed an ever-increasing admiration for the extent and the accuracy of his knowledge of philosophical Greek. My last doctoral student at Leiden University, Marije Martijn, assisted me at various points as we tackled the difficulties of Proclus' commentary together. Tim Buckley responded to my call to help me with the arduous task of compiling the Greek–English indices and English–Greek glossary. I also extend my thanks to Queen's College, and in particular the President of its Council,

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Acknowledgements

Mr John Castles AM, for its generosity in supporting my research and allowing me time to travel and consult colleagues, both in Australia and abroad. Much of this translation was first drafted at our coastal property at Ocean Grove on the Bellarine Peninsula in Victoria. I thank my wife Gonni and my daughter and sons most warmly for putting up with me as I turned my mind to Proclus rather than spend my time with them. Without their support this task could not have been achieved.

Michael Share would like to thank the members of the project for the opportunity to join it mid-stream and for their friendly support during the years of his involvement. Both David Runia and Harold Tarrant read my contribution to the translation and made comments that greatly improved the final product. My special thanks go to David for making our collaboration so easy and so rewarding. Indeed, so pleasurable has it been that I almost regret the completion of this volume! Finally, I would like to thank my partner Wendy Pearson for her support and patience over the last four years.

Note on the translation

The text used for this translation is that of E. Diehl (1903–6, three volumes), the only critical text available for this work.¹ References to pages and lines of Diehl's text are given in the margin. We have obtained a great deal of assistance from the French translation by the great scholar of late ancient pagan and Christian thought, André-Jean Festugière (1966–8, five volumes). Festugière's notes contain many important suggestions, based on Diehl's critical apparatus, for improving the text.² We have taken these into consideration, as well as other emendations recorded by Diehl in his critical apparatus.³ Whenever we translate a text that deviates from Diehl, we record the details in our notes. On the other hand, we have not made extensive reference to the only previous English translation by Thomas Taylor (1810, two volumes). Taylor's version is based on a defective text and does not meet with modern scholarly standards.

As translators we are all too aware of the difficulty of rendering the complex yet precise structure of Proclus' Greek syntax into readable English. Our aim has been in the first place to produce an accurate translation that is faithful to the intent and content of the text, in the knowledge that many readers will not be in a position to check our translation against the Greek original. We have tried very hard to maintain terminological consistency, aiming to render crucial terms with the same English word where possible. So, for example, we consistently render *kosmos* with 'cosmos', *dēmiourgos* with 'demiurge', *paradeigma* with 'paradigm', and *eikôn* with 'image'.⁴ In the case of some terms, of course, it is impossible to achieve this consistency, because they have multiple meanings depending on the context, as is notoriously the case for the term *logos* but also applies to common terms such as *archê*, *genesis*, *dunamis*, *ousia*, *teleios*, and so on. In the notes we make comments on our choice of translation for certain terms and on difficulties faced in

¹ Book 2 is located in volume I, pp. 205–458.

² Festugière made extensive use of comments and suggestions made by Praechter in his thorough review of the edition (1905).

³ This is the source of the conjectures by Kroll, Praechter, Radermacher, Schneider and Taylor discussed in our notes.

⁴ Capital letters are used when the Demiurge and the Paradigm are meant. It is not, however, always easy to follow this practice when Plato talks theoretically about generated paradigms and multiple demiurges.

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rendering certain key Greek terms (especially those denoting being and becoming). In the translation we often add the transliterated Greek term in parentheses when it is important for understanding the meaning of the passage. The method of transliteration used follows the example of earlier volumes in the series.⁵ A fuller listing of terms is found in the indices. Where the translation contains words that are not present in the Greek but are required to render the meaning in English, we place them in square brackets.

In general the translation attempts to stay reasonably close to Proclus' syntax. In this regard our translation differs slightly from earlier volumes in the series. On many occasions, however, this proves impossible to achieve and his long sentences have to be divided up into more manageable units. The translation of the Platonic text poses particular challenges because, if possible, it should correspond to the interpretation given it by Proclus. It has sometimes proved necessary to give a more literal translation of Plato's words than will be found in modern versions such as those of Cornford and Zeyl.⁶

The original text of the commentary has no chapter headings and forms a continuous body of text punctuated by the cited lemmata of the original Platonic text. In order to make reading of the commentary easier we have included our own divisions of the text. These are in many cases similar to the divisions included by Festugière in his translation, but they may sometimes differ. In the case of the Platonic lemmata we consistently indicate in the notes differences between Proclus' text and the modern critical edition of Burnet.

The purpose of the notes is limited and varied. We use them to comment on problems in the Greek text when they affect our translation. They also give background information – both topical and philosophical – which may be required in order to understand Proclus' meaning. To a limited degree comments are made which may help the reader follow his arguments. Whenever Proclus cites or makes allusions to other authors and texts we attempt to give a reference to a modern edition or collection of fragments. For the editions used see further below. We also cite modern discussions of Proclus' text when these are known to us. What the notes cannot do, however, is replace a full commentary on the text. It is to be hoped that this will be produced by others in the future.

⁵ It is based on the practice of the *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* series. See the Note on the translation in vol. I, p. x and vol. III, p. xi. One small difference is that we have decided to uniformly render the Greek *upsilon* with *u* in English.

⁶ Cornford (1937), Zeyl (2000). As was the case for other volumes in the series, Zeyl's translation has been the starting-point, but it is often not literal enough for the purposes of understanding Proclus' commentary.

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The following abbreviations to other works of Proclus have been used:

- in Tim.* = *Procli in Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, ed. E. Diehl, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1903–6 (references to volume I are given without volume number).
in Remp. = *Procli in Platonis Rem publicam commentarii*, ed. W. Kroll, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1899–1901.
in Parm. = *Procli commentarius in Platonis Parmenidem (Procli philosophi Platonici opera inedita pt. III)*, ed. V. Cousin, Paris, 1864; repr. Hildesheim, 1961.
in Alc. = *Proclus: Sur le premier Alcibiade de Platon*, ed. A. Segonds, Collection Budé, 2 vols., Paris, 1985–6.
in Crat. = *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Cratylum commentaria*, ed. G. Pasquali, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, Leipzig, 1908.
ET = *The Elements of Theology*, ed. E. R. Dodds, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1963 (references by page and line, not by chapter numbers unless the whole chapter is cited).
PT = *Proclus: Théologie Platonicienne*, ed. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, Collection Budé, 6 vols., Paris, 1968–97 (chapter numbers are used only when citing a whole chapter).
in Eucl. = *Procli Diadochi in primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii*, ed. G. Friedlein, Bibliotheca Teubneriana, Leipzig, 1873; repr. Hildesheim, 1967.
De dec. dub. = *Proclus: Trois études sur la providence*, vol. I: *Dix problèmes concernant la providence*, ed. D. Isaac, Collection Budé, Paris, 1977.
De mal. subs. = *Proclus: Trois études sur la providence*, vol. III: *De l'existence du mal*, ed. D. Isaac, Collection Budé, Paris, 1982.

Editions and fragment collections of writings referred to by Proclus are:⁷

- Epicurus: H. Usener, *Epicurea*, Leipzig, 1887.
 Hermarchus: F. Longo Auricchio, *Ermarcho: Frammenti*, La Scuola di Epicuro 6, Naples, 1988.
 Stoa: J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 4 vols., Leipzig, 1903–24, repr. Stuttgart, 1978 (abbreviated as *SVF*).
 Numenius: E. des Places, *Numénius Fragments*, Collection Budé, Paris, 1973.
 Gaius, Albinus, Taurus, Harpocration: A. Gioè, *Filosofi medioplatonici del II secolo d.C. Testimonianze e frammenti: Gaio, Albino, Lucio, Nicosttrato, Tauro, Severo, Arpocrazione*, Elenchos 36, Naples, 2003.
 Atticus: E. des Places, *Atticus: Fragments*, Collection Budé, Paris, 1977.

⁷ For works not listed here see the bibliography.

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- Alcinous: J. Whittaker and P. Louis, *Alcinoos Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, Budé, Paris, 1990.
 Plotinus: P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer, *Plotini opera editio minor*, 3 vols., Oxford Classical Texts, Oxford, 1964–82.
 Porphyry: A. R. Sodano, *Porphyrii In Platonis Timaeum Commentariorum fragmenta*, Naples, 1964.
 Longinus: M. Patillon and L. Brisson, *Longin: Fragments, Art rhétorique*, Collection Budé, Paris, 2001.
 Iamblichus: J. M. Dillon, *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta*, Philosophia Antiqua 23, Leiden, 1973.
 Theodore of Asine: W. Deuse, *Theodorus von Asine. Sammlung der Testimonien und Kommentar*, Palingenesia 6, Wiesbaden, 1973.

As is noted in the Introduction, Proclus also refers frequently to two theological sources, the writings in the Orphic tradition and the Chaldean Oracles. The editions and translation that we use for these works are:⁸

- O. Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta* (Berlin 1922).
 E. des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques*, Collection Budé, Paris, 1971; 3rd edition 1996.
 R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles. Text, Translation and Commentary*, Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 5, Leiden, 1989 (= *Or. Chald.*, numbering the same as in Des Places).

Other abbreviations that are used in the notes are:

- DK = H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition, Berlin, 1952.
 Dörrie–Baltes, PA = H. Dörrie and M. Baltes, *Der Platonismus in der Antike*, Stuttgart, 1983–; § refers to ‘Baustein’.
 Long–Sedley = A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1987.
 LSJ = H. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*; rev. H. Jones (and others), with a rev. suppl., Oxford, 1996.
 OCT = Oxford Classical Texts.
 PW = Pauly–Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 1894–1972.
 TLG = *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.
 TrGF = B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt (eds.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 4 vols., Göttingen, 1971–85.

For the English–Greek glossary, the Greek word index and the General index we closely follow the practice established in earlier volumes of the series. See further the introductory remarks for each list.

⁸ We have not been able to use the new edition of A. Bernabé; see n. 30 in the Introduction.