

Méthexis XXIII (2010) pp. 137-157 (journal pagination in brackets)

**The Second Intelligible Triad
and the Intelligible-Intellective Gods**

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[137] ABSTRACT: Continuing the systematic henadological interpretation of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* begun in "The Intelligible Gods in the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus" (*Méthexis* 21, 2008, pp. 131-143), the present article treats of the basic characteristics of intelligible-intellective (or noetico-noeric) multiplicity and its roots in henadic individuality. Intelligible-intellective multiplicity (the hypostasis of Life) is at once a universal organization of Being in its own right, and also transitional between the polycentric henadic manifold, in which each individual is immediately productive of absolute Being, and the formal intellective organization, which is monocentrically and diacritically disposed. Intelligible-intellective multiplicity is generated from the dyadic relationship of henads to their power(s), the phase of henadic individuality expressed in the second intelligible triad, and is mediated, unlike the polycentric manifold, but not by identity and difference, like the intellective organization. Instead, the hypostasis of Life is constituted by ideal motility and spatiality, figural dispositions, and the intersubjective relations depicted in the divine symposium of Plato's *Phaedrus*.

In his *Platonic Theology* Proclus exhibits the structure of Being as a series of planes of formation constituted by the activity of successive classes of deities. In a previous article,¹ I argued that the immanent logic of this procession, or *proödos*, of Being is that it explicates the fundamental

¹ "The Intelligible Gods in the Platonic Theology of Proclus," *Méthexis* 21, 2008, pp. 131-143. See also on my general interpretation of the henadology, "Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold," *Dionysius* 23, 2005, pp. 83-103; "The Gods and Being in Proclus," *Dionysius* 26, 2008, pp. 93-114.

nature of the Gods as *unique individuals* with *universalizable powers*, and that the dialectic of individuality and commonality in the Gods is the engine of procession. I also offered an interpretation in this light of the structure of the primary plane of Being, what Proclus calls the three intelligible triads, as constituted solely by the activity of individual Gods, while the succeeding planes of Being are constituted by Gods acting, as it were, in concert.

In this reading, the first intelligible triad—schematically consisting of Limit, the Unlimited, and the Mixed, from *Philebus* 16ce—expresses the activity of every God (or Goddess) as such, and hence the so-called “intelligible order of Gods” [138] actually encompasses *all* the Gods (“Every participated divinity is intelligible inasmuch as s/he fulfills the participant,” *PT* III 21. 75. 2-3). I say “so-called” because Proclus indicates the intelligible class of Gods is structurally unlike other classes: “The intelligible genus of Gods transcends unitarily [*heniaiôs*] all the other divine orders [*diakosmôn*] ... It transcends both universal and particular intelligibles and preexists all objects of intellection as an unparticipated and divine intelligible,” (*PT* III 28. 100. 4-11). Note here that while the intelligible *Gods* are participated, their *genus*, as a singular intelligible object, is *unparticipated*, meaning that it is not, in itself, formally intelligible. The sense of *heniaiôs* here, I have argued, is essentially that the intelligible genus exhibits in a greater degree the property associated with the One, namely *individuality* or *uniqueness*, because the intelligible genus of the Gods encompasses each of them in the purity of their unique individuality, or *idiotês*. Hence Proclus states that “there is one henad to each intelligible triad; a multiplicity of henads is discernible first in the first rank of the intelligible-and-intellectual,” (*IP* 1091). Proclus establishes thus a one-to-one correspondence between henads or Gods and intelligible triads, not a head count of henads, which would add up to three, a quantity it would be most perverse to claim is not a “multiplicity”.

Within the overall structure of the intelligible quasi-class, the second and third intelligible triads express more particular patterns of activity than the first. As Proclus explains, “the first triad is an intelligible God primarily [*prôtôs*], that which comes after it an intelligible-intellective God, and the third an intellective God,” (*PT* III 14. 51. 9-11). The second intelligible triad thus expresses the pattern of activity of Gods belonging to the intelligible-intellective (or ‘intelligible-and-

intellectual’, ‘noetico-noeric’) order, which is the first true ‘multiplicity’ (*plêthos*) of Gods, that is, the most universal classification of Gods which has the structure of a proper class according to the definition Proclus supplies in the *Elements of Theology* (prop. 21). The third triad, which will be the subject of a future essay, expresses the pattern of activity of Gods belonging to the intellectual (noeric) order, as well as, by extension, the infra-intellectual orders (hypercosmic, etc.). The present essay investigates the nature of the intelligible-intellectual Gods, first as revealed in the abstract by the discussion of the second intelligible triad in the third book of the *Platonic Theology*, and then in concrete fashion through the activities of Gods of the intelligible-intellectual class in the fourth book of the *Platonic Theology*. [139]

1. The Second Intelligible Triad as a Universal Activity of the Gods

The structure of each intelligible triad consists of a first, supra-essential (*hyperousios*) moment, which expresses that each henad or God is superior to Being, a second moment, still technically supra-essential, which represents the henad’s *power*—or powers, since these are the latent multiplicity that contrasts with the singularity and individuality of the henad—and a third moment which represents a particular ontic product. In the case of the first intelligible triad, this ontic product is simply Being Itself. Every henad therefore has a unique, one-to-one correspondence to Being as whole. Hence *IT* I, 308: “each of the Gods is the universe, but after a different manner”; *ibid.*, 312 “each of the Gods is named from his individuality [*idiotês*], though each is comprehensive of all things,” and systematically, *IP* 1069: “each participated One is a principle of unification [*henôtikon*] for all Being ... and each of the Gods is nothing else than the participated One.”

The ontic product of the second intelligible triad is Life (*Zôê*). This is not the life associated with souls, but rather a universal intelligible principle which all of the various properties Proclus attributes to the second intelligible triad can be regarded as expressing. The most important properties of the second intelligible triad are *motion* (*kinêsis*), *measurement* (*metrêsis*), and

wholeness (holotês). Intelligible Life, Proclus says, is the motion within Being, that is, the motion *implicit* within Being²: “If thus Being abides transcendent in the primary mixture,” i.e., the product of the first intelligible triad, “nevertheless it already [*êdê*] proceeds and is dyadically engendered from the monad, so there is motion in relation to it [*peri auto*] and there being motion it is necessary that there be intelligible Life,” (*PT* III 12. 46. 13-16).

The motion that is intelligible Life makes explicit a procession implicit in the first intelligible triad, because Being was produced from an implicit dyad, the implicit opposition between *huparxis*, individual existence, and *dunamis*, universalizable potency, in the henad. Thus Damascius (*De Princ.* I. 118. 9-17)³ speaks of the distinction between *huparxis* and *dunamis* in “the First” as the “minimum distinction” (*hêkista prosdiorismon*). I characterize the dyad as implicit in the first intelligible triad, however, because it is not itself the ontic product of that triad. In the second intelligible triad, this minimum distinction has developed into *self-relation*: “The second triad is a God possessing prolific power [*gonimon dunamin echôn*] and revealing [*ekphainôn*] secondary Being from himself and in relation to himself [*aph'heautou kai peri heauton*],” (*PT* III 12. 46. 20-22). The [140] power that in the first intelligible triad was only implicitly distinct from the henad’s integral individuality is, as seen in the second intelligible triad, something the deity *possesses* and hence *relates* to him/herself.

The God *as such*, when seen through the lens, as it were, of the second intelligible triad, relates to him/herself, mediates him/herself; the *class* of Gods who operate according to the second intelligible triad perform a mediating and relating function for the other Gods who proceed with them and after them and for the cosmos they constitute together. An important concept Proclus uses frequently with respect to the intelligible-intellective order is *sunecheia*, ‘continuity’, which in its verbal form has both the connotation of forming a spatial connection between things and of sustaining or conserving them. The second intelligible triad, Proclus explains

² Cf. *Sophist* 254 D & sqq.

³ *Traité des Premiers Principes*. 3 vols. Ed. and trans. L. G. Westerink and J. Combès. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986-91.

sustains/connects [*sunechei*] the middle [or ‘mediation’, *mesotêta*] of the intelligibles; it is filled from the higher unity and fills what comes after it [i.e., the third triad] with intelligible powers; it is uniformly measured from there [i.e., the henadic realm] and measures the third by its power; it abides fixedly in the first [triad] while establishing its successor in itself. (48. 1-6)

These determinations sound very external, and yet the spatiality of the second triad, which comes to fulfillment through the activities of the intelligible-intellective order in forming the “supracelestial place” of the *Phaedrus*, the gathering place or *agora* of the Gods, expresses the same notion as the more ideal determinations which follow, just as the supracelestial ‘place’ is also the ‘site’ whence originate the primary virtues of Science, Temperance and Justice and the institution (*thesmos*) of Adrasteia (on all of which, see below, sec. 2.3). These faculties arise immediately from the disposition of perfect individuals (the Gods) in relation to one another, and hence to the ‘space’ itself in which that relationality is posited.

The spatiality in the intelligible-intellective order is a product of the ideal or ‘spiritual’ motion embodied in it,⁴ as is what is probably the most important ontic product of this order, namely *number* (see section 2.2 below). As the motion in the second intelligible triad can be seen as a concretization of the dyadic relation essential to it, so too the products of this motion in the intelligible-intellective order can be grasped in either continuous or discrete form. Since the intelligible-intellective order is the first real *organization* (*diakosmos*) of the Gods, the first *unified* manifold, it institutes number, as well as the corollaries of distribution and of divine intersubjectivity, from the factual disposition of the Gods in relation to one another. Number is the discrete product of this process, while the Platonic ‘heaven’ is the continuum expressing it. Proclus explains that just as the sensible heaven compresses on all sides the elements of the cosmos (*Tim.* 58 A), leaving no void, and thus is the cause of continuity, coherence and sympathy for them, [141] so too “that intellectual heaven binds all the manifolds of beings into an indivisible [*ameriston*] communion, illuminating each with an appropriate portion [*moiran*] of connection [*sunochês*],”

⁴ On the concept of “spiritual motion”, see Stephen Gersh, *Kinêsis Akinêtos: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*.

(*PT* IV 20. 59. 18-60. 1). The intelligible ‘heaven’, therefore, is not a discrete place, but rather the connecting and synthesizing continuum of intelligibility itself, the ‘medium’ in which the intelligible as such is immanent.

Relation in the second intelligible triad, however, is still essentially dyadic, and hence self-relation, the crucial systematic dimensions of which are *measurement* and *wholeness*. “The second triad,” Proclus states, “is the immediate [*proseches*] measure of all beings and is coordinate [*suntetagemnon*] with that which is measured,” (*PT* III 18. 59. 16-7). If we read this in the light of statements cited earlier to the effect that each of the Gods *is* the universe, but in a unique way (*IT* I, 308), is comprehensive of all things (*ibid.*, 312) and is a principle of unification for all Being (*IP* 1069), then it should be evident that the second triad expresses an aspect of the function of *every* God, rather than being itself some discrete deity. It is *primarily* a deity of the intelligible-intellective class (*PT* III 14. 51. 9-11), however, because it is the activities of this class of Gods—including, e.g., Ouranos and the Orphic ‘Night’ (*Nux*)—that preeminently exemplify this function.

The measuring function of the Gods is closely bound up with the concept of ‘eternity’ (*aiôn*), one of the most important attributes of the second intelligible triad. Much of what Proclus says about eternity is drawn from the *Timaeus* (37d-38b), in which the relationship between eternity and temporality is the foundation for that between the model or paradigm of the cosmos and the cosmos itself. In Proclus’ reading, the relationship between eternity and temporality constitutes in effect a prior plane of formation for the cosmos distinct from the intellective, which renders *aiôn* itself structurally homologous to the intelligible-intellective plane of Being. Propositions 52-55 of the *Elements of Theology* discuss eternity as a measure. Here *aiôn* is distinguished as “that which measures by the whole” in contrast to time (*chronos*), which “measures by parts”; “every *aiôn*,” he explains, measures by “simultaneous application of the whole measure to the thing measured,” (*prop.* 54). On the level of the second intelligible triad, we are not yet dealing with a set of henads disposed toward each other as parts of a whole, but with *each* God in his/her ultimacy, as adequate to the whole of Being. Wholeness itself will be the final function of the second intelligible triad we shall discuss, but for now, let us note rather the plurality of “eternities” mentioned here. We read

further at prop. 117 that “every God is a measure of beings.” That there are a multiplicity of such “eternities” indicates again that *aiôn*, rather than being a particular henad, is nothing other than the power of *each* henad to act as a measure of the whole of Being.

The second triad “is measured uniquely [*monoeidôs*]” from the first triad, but “measures the third triad by the power of itself,” (*PT* III 13. 48. 4-5). Each *aiôn* is at once measured by the unique, supra-essential henad it represents, [142] and measures the third intelligible triad, which is the paradigm of the intellectual cosmos and of the activities of intellectual Gods as such, and which is for its own part referred to as “sole-of-its-genus” (*monogenes*). The transition between the second and third intelligible triads, and by extension between the intelligible-intellective and the intellective planes, is the transition from the Whole, *holon*, to the All, *pan*, the latter being a principal attribute of the third triad and a key determination of the intellective plane of formation: “The All participates the Whole and is a multiplicity [*plêthos*] whole-limbed [*holomeles*]⁵ from multiple parts,” (*PT* III 20. 71. 22-23). While the third triad is thus an organic unity, a system or organization, the second triad is essentially dyadic (*PT* III 18. 58. 18-23). It is the whole consisting of the One and Being (*ibid.* 25. 87. 8-9), “the continuity/coherence [*sunochês*] illuminating [*ellampomenês*] Being from the henad,” (27. 95. 5).

‘Illumination’ (*ellampsis* or *katalampsis*), the technical term in Proclus for the direct formative power the Gods exercise upon Being, will be discussed at more length in sec. 2.3; for now, we may note that its significance lies particularly in its asymmetry. That is, a certain class of Gods ‘illuminates’ a certain region of Being; as a result, that region of Being ‘participates’ that class of deities. However, the hierarchical disposition of Being is a hierarchy of participation, not of illumination. All Gods are supra-essential, that is, prior to Being; the practical value of this is that a God ‘illuminates’ any particular region of Being immediately, i.e., not by way of those prior to it. By contrast, a region of Being necessarily participates all the prior ontic principles and, by extension, all the prior classes of Gods. This is a result of the fact that, for Proclus, what regions of

⁵ Accepting Saffrey and Westerink’s emendation.

Being a particular God illuminates is to be determined hermeneutically, whereas the structure of Being is determined dialectically.

Through the function of measurement, the second intelligible triad constitutes the ontic determination of *wholeness*. Mereology, the doctrine of wholes and parts, can be seen as the heart of Neoplatonic ontology. Prop. 66 of the *Elements of Theology* states that “every being is related to every other either as a whole or as a part or by identity or by difference.” But of these four relations that exhaustively determine beings, identity and difference are ultimately subordinated to relations of whole and part. For identity and difference are simply the positing of beings in relation to, that is, mediated by, classes of which they are or are not members. And according to prop. 74, “every specific form is a whole, as being composed of a number of individuals [*ek pleionôn huphestêken*] each of which goes to make up the Form,” while at *IP* 1105 he states that “those things that make up the definition of each form are assuredly parts of it,” and hence forms are wholes. Furthermore, “even the atomic individual is a whole as being atomic, although it is not a Form,” (i.e. it is a whole with only abstract or dependent parts) [143] from which Proclus concludes that Wholeness is the more extensive predicate than Form, and thus ontologically prior. This subordination of formal determination to mereological determination is expressed by the subordination of the third intelligible triad to the second intelligible triad. Only “Primal Being”, the radical Being that is the third moment (the product) of the first intelligible triad, is prior to Wholeness according to prop. 73, for being is predicable even of parts *qua* parts. Of course, if *prôtôs on* is prior to Wholeness, the henads must *a fortiori* be prior to Wholeness as well, for “every God is above Being, above Life, and above Intelligence” (prop. 115).

The Gods are prior to ontology, and hence to mereology, but by virtue of that fact, they generate by their very mode of existence the mereological structures that determine beings, and the second intelligible triad expresses this activity. There are three modes of wholeness: the whole-before-the-parts, the whole-of-parts, and the whole-in-the-part (*ET* prop. 67). In the first place, these three modes derive from the three primary aspects of each God’s nature that are expressed in the first intelligible triad, namely existential individuality, conceptually distinct power(s), and ontic

productivity (*PT* III 25. 88. 15-23). In the ontic functions of the three modes of wholeness, moreover, the operation of the second triad can be discerned on three distinct planes:

through the wholeness prior to parts, eternity [*aiôn*] measures the henads of the divine <classes> [*tôn theiôn*] who transcend beings; but through the whole-of-parts, it measures the henads coordinate with [*suntetagmenas*] beings; and through the whole-in-the-part, it measures all beings and whole [or “universal”] essences. For these being parts of the divine henads, they possess dividedly [*meristôs*] what pre-exists unitarily [*heniaiôs*] in those. (*PT* III 27. 94. 26–95. 4)

Through the moment of self-measurement, then, the henads organize themselves into classes, which have as their ontic product, first, so many wholes-before-the-parts or *unparticipated monads* or transcendent universals; second, so many classes equivocally containing Gods and beings (e.g., intellectual Gods and intellects) due to participation (immanent universals); and third, so many beings participating ontic principles as a result of divine activity (concrete universals). Beings experience the inherence in them of the wholes in which they take part, by taking up the whole into themselves. In addition, thus, to their participation in the ontic principles giving them substance, beings experience their own relative divinity as virtual parts of the henads, not in the sense that henads have parts, but in the sense that each henad is generative of the whole of Being, that is, the *wholeness* of Being or Being’s subsistence *as a whole*. Beings access the deities *through* such a whole, that is, through the *aiôn*-function of each deity through which it is a measure of and by the whole, in the sense of *ET* prop. 54. In other words, beings are the ‘parts’ of the henads inasmuch as the henads measure them.

The whole through which beings access the henads also refers to the declension of the powers of the Gods (cf. *ET* prop. 140). This declension, which is prior [144] to the intellectual declension according to which, for instance, universal Intellect generates particular intellects, is the work of the second intelligible triad. At *IP* 1092 Proclus remarks that the One and Being are “pluralized separately”; this process is explained at *PT* III 27. 98f, in which “the parts contained in the intelligible multiplicity” are said to consist of the conjugations, as it were, of *the One-that-is*

and *Being-which-is-one*. The intelligible multiplicity referred to here is *not* the multiplicity contained in the intelligible-intellective order, which is a multiplicity of henads in relation to each other. Instead, this is the multiplicity through which the henads propagate themselves in the lower orders, a *vertical*, so to speak, rather than a *horizontal* multiplicity, for the One and Being generate, through their four possible combinations—a single relationship taken four ways—Gods, angels, daimons and mortal animals, formed respectively by (1) the One-that-is, in relation to the One-that-is; (2) the One-that-is, in relation to Being-that-is-one; (3) Being-that-is-one, in relation to the One-that-is; and (4) Being-that-is-one, in relation to Being-that-is-one. This system is the whole composed of the One and Being, the systematic relationship between the two expressing the relationship between the Gods and the cosmos in abstract terms, while in concrete terms the product of their conjugation is the chain connecting each God to the lowest Beings, a chain composed of, in the first place, the ‘illumination’ by that God of whatever particular orders of Being (manifested in myth and iconography), and then by angels, daimons and mortal beings (e.g., heroes) depending from that God and acting as conduits for subsequent beings to contact them. One must bear in mind in this respect that the Intellect, e.g., illuminated by the intellectual Gods is itself a “real being,” *ontôs on*, not an intellect in the sense that its own participants are. The further procession of such a hypostasis depends on the extension of divine activity represented by such beings as angels and daimons.

2. The Intelligible-Intellective Order as a Specific Category of Gods

The intelligible-intellective class of Gods derives its name from being at once subject *and* object of (divine) thought, while the intelligible Gods are solely objects and the intellective Gods solely subjects (IV 1. 6. 10-12). Hence the intelligible-intellective class is not only the first discrete divine manifold, but also a mythical *topos*, as we can see from the presence in it of deities such as Night and Ouranos. In the intelligible order we see the Gods each alone, for all are in each one, and

as such they are without relation except for the *potential* relations their powers embody. Proclus speaks, for example, of Gods in the relationship of father and son, say Zeus and Apollo:

Whereas a father in this [i.e., our] realm ... is not first 'for himself', and only then father of someone else, but he is what he is solely 'for another'. But in that realm [i.e., among the Gods] any paternal cause is primarily 'for itself', completing its own essence, and only then [145] bestows an emanation from itself upon things secondary to it, and any offspring exists 'for itself', and only then derives from something else ... Such an entity There, then, is non-relational, though productive of a relation. (*IP* 936)

That Zeus is the father of Apollo, then, does not mean that Zeus pre-exists him, since each exists "for himself" *prior* to the relation. This is because the relation subsists primarily not as a single relation with two terms, but rather as a power in Zeus of being-father-to-Apollo, on the one hand, and as a power in Apollo of being-son-of-Zeus on the other. Only the intellective activation of these potencies produces a reciprocal disposition, or *diakrisis*, of Zeus and Apollo toward one another, the significance of which is to found some region of Being.

It is with the intelligible-intellective class that this activation of relations appropriately begins, inasmuch as the second intelligible triad and the intelligible-intellective order both serve to unpack the second moment of the first intelligible triad, power or potency as such. Accordingly we find at the ultimate stage of this process, in the intelligible-intellective order, the gathering place or *agora* of the Gods; the emergence of number as the most basic property possessed by collections of objects; and the emergence of the primary virtues as the properties of divine intersubjective relations.

2.1. Place and process in the intelligible-intellective order

All of the divine classifications discussed in the *Platonic Theology* share the common structure of the ontological determinations derived from the properties denied of the First Principle

in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. That is, the Gods are classified here according to the *positive* ontic products of their *negative* perfections. What they, as supra-essential entities, are *not*, is what they are *causes* of for Being. This is not the only manner in which the Gods can be classified. An alternative philosophical (i.e., formal) classification is given in the *Elements of Theology*, props. 151-8. In addition, ‘theological’ (i.e., hieratic) sources such as the *Chaldean Oracles* sometimes speak in terms of classes of Gods rather than individuals. Different classificatory schemata serve different purposes; the classification according to the negations of the *Parmenides* is uniquely suited for generating the series of ontic hypostases.⁶ Accordingly, the intelligible-intellective order corresponds to the Parmenidean negations of *multiplicity*, *whole and parts*, and *shape* or figure (*Parm.* 137c4–138a1). [146]

Proclus accords to the intelligible-intellective order, however, the unique parallel structure of a series of ‘places’ (*topoi*) or proto-spatial determinations; it is necessary to qualify them in this fashion because it is explicit that none of them are sensible. These determinations are drawn from the *Phaedrus*: the supracelestial place, the celestial circuit and the subcelestial arch. Within the supracelestial place there is in addition the “Plain of Truth” and the “meadow” that nourishes the best part of the soul (*Phaedrus* 248 B 8-10). Proclus explains the supracelestial ‘place’ in the following terms:

The supracelestial place is indeed intelligible, and thus Plato calls it <a> real being [*ousian ontôs ousan*] and object of contemplation [*theaton*] for the intellect of the soul, but it is also the one comprehension and unity [*mia periochê kai henôsis*] of the intellective Gods ... Plato calls it a ‘place’ [*topos*] inasmuch as it is the receptacle of the paternal causes and brings forth and produces the generative powers of the Gods into the hypostasis of secondary natures. For having called matter also a ‘place’, he calls it the mother and nurse of the *logoi* proceeding into it from Being and the paternal cause. (IV 10. 31. 23-6; IV. 10. 33. 19-24)

⁶ Whereas Annick Charles-Saget has, correctly I believe, analyzed the classifications from *El. Theol.* props. 151-8 as expressing the theological conditions of the possibility of the philosophical system as such (p. 250-2).

Being, Proclus explains, is that which “receives a multiplicity of henads and of powers mingled into one essence,” (III 9. 40. 7-8). This receptacle is an object of contemplation for the soul, however, in the form of the supracelestial place. The distinction here is that where the former is a product of analysis, the latter is a locus of divine illumination. That the Gods gather in such a place prior to their intellective—that is, cosmogonic—activities is revealed in myth and iconography; such is the Olympus of Hellenic theology, or any of the divine locales from other theologies. The ‘unity’ or ‘comprehension’ embodied in the supracelestial place is thus not that of a class under a concept, but rather of a *pantheon* joined by *narrative* bonds. The actions of the intellective and subsequent orders of Gods are captured for human contemplation in myth; this is myth’s function for Proclus. As the staging place for these narrative actions, the supracelestial place also expresses the unity of the pantheon itself. This unity is not the same as the unity of the set obtained by quantifying over “All the Gods”, and hence the *number* of pantheons of Gods is not ontologically (i.e., dialectically) determined. Rather, a pantheon is in effect for Proclus a co-emergent set of deities linked by narratives themselves generative of intellectual structure for the souls who participate them through contemplation and ritual (theurgic) action. In this fashion, it is no longer necessary to see Proclus’ recourse to myth as external to his philosophical project, as allegorical embellishment; rather, myth is a phenomenon basic to Being’s procession, the proto-intellectual ground of which must in itself be explicated.

In addition to these spatial determinations and the ontological determinations derived from the *Parmenides*, Proclus alludes to other ways in which the functions of the intelligible-intellective order may be conceived. He describes the celestial circuit, or *periphora* (*Phaedrus* 247c1), the central moment of the order, as a *process* of intellectual perception shared in by Gods and souls alike: “The circuit in the *Phaedrus* is intellectual perception [*noêsis*], through which [147] all the Gods and all the souls obtain the vision [*theas*] of the intelligibles,” (IV 5. 21. 27 - 22. 2). Ouranos, the central divinity in this order for the Hellenic theology, thus embodies “the intellectual perception of the primary intelligibles,” (ibid., 21. 21) and on account of this “possesses the one bond of the divine orders [*diakosmoi*].” He is the “father of the intellective class, engendered by

the kings before him, whom he is indeed said to *see*,” (22. 4-6), referring to *Crat.* 396 B 9, which interprets the name of Ouranos as *hê eis ta anô horôsa opsis*, “the sight which sees the things above”. As an intelligible-intellective deity, and hence as both *subject* and *object* of intellection, Ouranos has a viewpoint, so to speak, on the Gods of his pantheon emerging prior to him as well as being an object of the cognition of those deities who emerge after him. Before and after here have of course a purely ideal sense; they express the hierarchy existing between the different moments of *Being* produced by the activities of these Gods. Furthermore, the process of intellection in which Ouranos and other intelligible-intellective Gods are engaged is, in accord with the nature of the second intelligible triad, an eternal motion rather than a discrete event. In the same way, ‘heaven’ is for Proclus not a discrete place, but the connecting, synthesizing continuum of intelligibility (IV 20. 59. 18ff), a coherence supplied by reciprocal divine intellection. The nature of intelligible-intellective Gods is in this fashion to create an environment for mythic actions, which are divine works constitutive of discrete planes of Being for beings that participate in them either through ritual or contemplation.

2.2. Number, Mereology, and Shape

Proclus offers a different way altogether of conceiving the function of the intelligible-intellective order in characterizing the three intelligible-intellective triads (i.e., the order’s differentiated ontic product) as number (*arithmos*), whole (*to holon*) and perfection (*to teleion*) (IV 27. 78. 19-21) respectively. A principal goal of the present essay, however, is to articulate how for Proclus these more formal determinations correspond in a meaningful fashion to the more concrete ones from the *Phaedrus* and elsewhere in order to provide a unified account of the procession of Being in all its richness.

There are supra-essential numbers, Proclus explains, but no supra-essential forms (IV 29. 87. 28f. Again, Proclus contrasts number with form, stating that “number exists primarily among the Gods, while the forms participate the divine henads,” (88. 16-7). And indeed, when Proclus

wishes to express the special character of henadic multiplicity, and contrast it with ontic multiplicity, he will frequently use the term *arithmos* to refer to the henadic manifold, as in prop. 113 of the *Elements of Theology*, which states that “the entire manifold [*arithmos*] of the Gods is unitary [*heniaios*].” In contrasting number with form specifically with regard to *participation*, Proclus stipulates that the relationship between the henads and number is immediate relative to the mediation of the participatory relationship [148] constitutive of the domain of form. Number thus closely resembles *power* (*dunamis*) as an inseparable aspect of divine existence: “the powers of the Gods are supra-essential, consubsistent [*sunhuparchousai*] with the very henads of the Gods, and through them the Gods are generative of beings,” (PT III 24. 86. 7-9). Indeed, Proclus speaks of number as a kind of immediate or immanent development of power:

All number is a multiplicity [*plêthos*], but multiplicity is constituted either as unified [*hênômenôs*], or as distinct [*diakrimentôs*], and number is distinct multiplicity. For in it there is difference [*heterotês*], while in the intelligible it was power, and not difference, that engendered multiplicities [*ta plêthê*] and attached [*sunaptousa*] them to the monads. Thus number is continuous [*sunechês*] with intelligible multiplicity, and necessarily so. (IV 28. 81. 4-10)

We should be sensitized by now to the key intelligible-intellective determination of ‘continuity’. How is number different from intelligible multiplicity, that is, multiplicity as it was manifest in the intelligible quasi-class of Gods, and how is it yet ‘continuous’ with it? Intelligible multiplicity was ‘unified’—which is different than ‘unitary’—while number is ‘distinct’ or diacritical multiplicity, and this is equivalent to the distinction between *power* and *difference*.

All the henads, we recall, are in each; it is the manner of this inherence that is described by the ‘unified’ intelligible multiplicity. ‘Unified’, *hênômenos*, however, refers in Proclus to ontic products, while ‘unitary’, *heniaios*, refers to supra-essentials; thus we are speaking here about the ontic correlate of the all-in-each of the henads considered in their primordial state. In this state, all

of the other henads are not considered as ‘other than’ (i.e., different, *heteros*)⁷ each, but as ‘powers’ of each. Henadic identity, in this respect, is a matter of “predominance of individual characters [*epikrateian tôn idiotêtôn*],” as Damascius puts it, in which “the concomitants [*sunonta*] are present as elements [*stoicheia*] and affections [*pathê*],” (*In Parm.* II 8. 6-7). This is what all of the other Gods ‘are’, when seen from the perspective of any one God in his/her henadic ultimacy, namely, certain passive potencies or dependent moments of the henad’s autarchic individuality. Before the establishment of diacritical difference as mediator,

each of the parts is an intelligible whole, as in Animal Itself [*to autozôion*, the third intelligible triad], for that was a whole composed of wholes, and the One was with Being completely in the parts of it. And Animal Itself was one of a kind [*monogenes*], whereas number proceeds according to paired coordinates [*kata tas dittas sustoichias*] [149], monad and dyad, odd and even. (*PT IV* 32. 96. 4-9)

The determinations of the number series, such as odd and even, are taken by Proclus as ciphers for all of the activities of the Gods as agents acting in classes (*genê*) (IV 29. 84. 11-2; 85. 22-3; 88. 23-4) for, as Damascius puts it, “Parmenides neither plays nor mathematicizes,” (*In Parm.* II, 3. 23-4). That is, to speak of number in this context, i.e., as “supra-essential difference” (*PT IV* 30. 89. 24), is to speak in a very special sense of what we call ‘numerical difference’, only whereas we use the latter to refer to a difference *lacking* any other source of differentiation, supra-essential difference is ‘numerical’ in the sense that it is *superior* to formal (substantial, intellectual, hence conceptual) difference. And this is also why cooperative agency among henads can be theorized according to the characteristics of number, as strange as this idea might at first sound. Indeed, its strangeness is not to be diminished by allegorization; rather, we must recognize its dialectical necessity for Proclus. The only *ontic* determination appropriate to the activity of the Gods

⁷ Cf. the discussion at *In Parm.* 1190 concerning the negation of identity and difference for the One at *Parm.* 139e, where Proclus explains that the henads are ‘other’ (*alla*) in relation to the One but not ‘different’, “for what is ‘different’ [*heteron*] is different *than another*; and so ... one would not say ... that they have made a procession from it [the One] by means of Difference,” for “not every declination [*huphesis*] is the product of Difference, but only that declination which is in the realm of the forms.” The “others than the One” will be called “different *than* the One insofar as by becoming *other than each other*, they are separated from the One.” For further discussion of this passage, see Butler (2005), p. 92f.

considered as agents superior to Being and thus to *substantial* analysis is that of number and its properties; and if these are rather abstract, this simply attests to the necessity of other, hermeneutical sources of information about them—mythology, iconography—if we are to gather in more of their supra-essential fullness. Thus the recourse to pure (i.e., ‘unitary’ rather than ‘substantial’) number is the only strictly ontological resolution for Proclus to the problem of how to treat units each of whom is in a class all its own, unique (*monogenes*).

Opposition is one of the most important forms to emerge through the Gods’ activity in this order, representing the beginning of the establishment of that “reciprocal otherness” or “distinction of coordinates” that Proclus speaks of as the transition from supra-essential individuality (*idiotês*) to ontic formalization (*In Parm.* 1190) and which will be completed through the structures of mediation established through the Gods’ activity in the intellectual order. We have seen that Proclus establishes opposition schematically through the powers of odd and even in number, but the second intelligible-intellective triad takes the form of a further series of oppositions, having as its moments (1) one and many (*to hen kai ta polla*); (2) whole and parts (*to holon kai ta merê*); (3) finite and unlimited (*to peperasmenon kai to apeiron*) (IV 35. 103. 20-4). The second intelligible-intellective triad was described generally by Proclus as belonging to the development of the concept of ‘whole’. On the subject of mereology, much has already been said in the section concerning the second intelligible triad, the ground, as it were, of the divine activities in the intelligible-intellective order. In the development of this function in the intelligible-intellective order, however, in accord with the essentially dyadic nature of the second intelligible triad, we see Being as [150] held together by oppositions, with the pair of opposites functioning as the *minimal whole*. Mereology is the formal structure of mediation itself, here seen only in its pre-intellective manifestations, that is, not yet involving identity and difference, which are emergent in and through the divine activity in the intellectual order.

This minimal wholeness yields the foundation for *figure* or shape (*schêma*) in the third intelligible-intellective triad, which follows immediately from the determination of the *finite* (*peperasmenon*) in the second intelligible-intellective triad, for what is finite has extremes (*eschata*)

(IV 37. 108. 9-10). Moreover, the oppositions in the second intelligible-intellective triad are not separate moments, in the way that limit and the unlimited formed the first and second moments of the first intelligible triad, but form indivisible dyads, so “the One there [the second intelligible-intellective triad] is limit which also sustains [*suneichen*] the unlimited, while here [the third intelligible-intellective triad], possessing extremes, it will also have a middle [*meson*] and a beginning [*archên*] and will be perfect [*teleion*],” (108. 13-16). The ‘finite’, which is not ‘limit’ as such but *the limited*, has unlimited in it in the form characteristic of this plane of Being, namely the *continuum* (*sunochê*), which establishes it as figural and also, in a certain respect, as an ideal *artifact* insofar as it has a *principle* (*archê*) of which it is the completed (*teleios*) result. We shall see more concretely in the following section how this austere dialectic is embodied in the activities of henadic individuals.

2.3. The Locus of Virtue

Everything that comes about on the intelligible-intellective plane of Being, which is really the whole of Being as constituted through intelligible-intellective activity, is determined by the fundamental condition of the henadic individual. This individual—each deity—in his/her supra-essential existence contains all the other henads in him/herself, but dirempts him/herself, resulting in the emergence of Being. Because what is created in this ‘doubling’ of the henadic individual is a *formal* or *substantial* rather than an existential entity, it is *one* for all the henads; and this is none other than Being, which “receives a multiplicity of henads and of powers and mingles them into one substance” (PT III 9. 40. 6-8). For unlike the polycentric henadic manifold, ontic manifolds are all mediated, that is, monocentric. The first stage in this emergence is the creation of a place in which the Gods are *with* each other, rather than all of them immediately present in each. This place is accordingly the ultimate locus of *truth*, of *recognition*, and of *distribution*, and hence the source of the virtues of *Science* (*Epistêmê*), *Temperance* (*Sôphrosunê*), and *Justice* (*Dikaiosunê*) (PT IV 14. 44. 9-10).

These virtues, Proclus explains, are not intellective forms (*eidê noera*), but *pêgai*, ‘fountains’ or ‘sources’, and godheads (*theotêtes*); intellective forms, he notes, would be characterized with *auto-*, as Socrates states in the *Phaedo* (75d 1-2) (IV 14. 44. 10-16). [151] *Pêgê* is a term borrowed by Proclus from the Chaldean Oracles⁸ to refer to intelligible form. I have discussed the *pêgai* at some length elsewhere,⁹ and since they arise from the activity of the third intelligible triad, which is “an intellective God primarily” (*PT* III 14. 51. 9-11)—that is, any intellective God considered *prôtôs*, in his/her unitary individuality—a discussion of the *pêgai* belongs largely to a (forthcoming) discussion of the third intelligible triad and the intellective Gods. However, because the intelligible-intellective order is produced from the causality *both* of the second and also the third intelligible triads, *pêgai* play an important role in this order and, through it, in the whole of Being.

The intellective plane of Being defines itself in relation to the intelligible-intellective plane chiefly through the differentiation of intelligible and intellective form, the former being specified as *pêgai*, the latter as ‘principles’, or *archai*. Since the final state achieved in the emergence of Being is intellective, with the posterior (psychical and corporeal) planes of Being appropriately described as ‘infra-intellectual’, when we recount the terms in the Neoplatonic ‘Chain of Being’ we speak of *archai*. But *pêgai* are the *wholes* of which the *archai* are parts (*In Parm.* 1193, 1198; see also *PT* VI 1. 5-7). The constitutive significance of this relationship for the very possibility of a philosophical *doctrine of principles* has gone unappreciated because commentators have artificially separated the use of the concept of *archê* from its systematic conditions of emergence, and yet it is the whole intention of Proclus’ system to attempt to account in just this way for its own ontological conditions of possibility. *Pêgai* are ‘self-generating’, *autogenes*, while *archai* are ‘ungenerated’.

⁸ But note the citations by Proclus at *PT* V 31.115 to *Phaedrus* 245c8-9, on the self-moved as “source and principle [*pêgê kai archê*] of motion for all other things having motion,” and at *PT* V 32.120 to Plato’s use of the term *pêgê* at *Laws* VII 808d6 to characterize as “source of understanding [*pêgên tou phronein*]” that which Proclus calls “the essentially inhering power of understanding in souls,” and at *Laws* I 636d6-8, where pleasure and pain are “fountains” (i.e., of behavior) imparted to us by nature. All of these Platonic usages, it will be noted, correspond precisely to the Proclean technical usage of the term.

⁹ “The Metaphysics of Polytheism in Proclus,” Ph.D. diss. (New School for Social Research, 2003) [available for download at <http://henadology.wordpress.com/philosophy/>], pp. 79-82, 244-254, 344-350, 379-80.

To the casual eye, the latter condition would appear superior to the former, but this is not the case for Proclus (*PT VI 1. 6. 6-7.17*). This is because, in accord with the basic pattern of the Syriac interpretation of the negations in the *Parmenides*, affirmations emerge immediately from corresponding negations; and so the ‘ungenerated’ refers *immediately* to the generated: in effect, then, the term refers to the immediate cause of that which is generated as such. The ‘self-generating’ *pêgai*, on the other hand, are analogous to the henads as ‘self-constituting’, *authupostatos*, and to that extent prior even to the *negation* of generation, prior, that is, to the opposition of the generated and the ungenerated. *Pêgai* are thus transitional between the Gods and the (intellective) forms—this is why Proclus refers to them as ‘godheads’—and represent in some respects the primary ontic footprint of the Gods *in general* upon Being. (Note in this respect *IT I*, 319, “the highest summit of every series [*seiras*] is fontal [*pêgaios*].”) [152]

Pêgai have their locus in the intelligible intellect (the third intelligible triad) and embody the difference between the paradigmatic and the demiurgic functions of intellect. But there is no better place to observe what this means *concretely* than in the *pêgai* manifest on the intelligible-intellective plane, for here we can truly appreciate them as *lived* moments of the philosophical system, in the *virtues* which make the emergence of intellective form possible. *Pêgai* are those intelligibles “which have established unitarily in themselves all multiplicities, and occultly contain the manifestations [*ekphanseis*] of the Gods and the existentialia [*huparxeis*] of intelligibles,” (*PT V 1. 7. 2-4*). As the *huparxeis* of intelligibles, that is, the existential roots or sources of intelligibility, the *pêgai* are said, like the Gods themselves, to contain the ontic multiplicities ‘unitarily’, *heniaiôs*. Like the Gods, in each of whom the whole of Being pre-subsists, the *pêgai* contain the ontic multiplicities unitarily because each one is a source of illumination to the whole of Being.

Having their own source in the third intelligible triad, which is essentially Totality (as distinct from Wholeness), the *pêgai* cannot be grasped in an account that prescind from the relevant totalities. In the case of the virtues, this signifies in particular the *ethical community* which is in the first place the community of Gods, but includes souls (*PT IV 17. 51. 5-14*) insofar as their experience of theophany (26. 77. 5-8) will lead them to attempt to reproduce the divine beauty, in

the form of virtue, in human communities, as depicted in Plato's *Phaedrus*. The three prime virtues of Science, Temperance, and Justice thus all derive from the henads' being *with* one another, their presence *to* one another, and accordingly "these three *pêgai* sustain [*sunechousin*] all the activities of the Gods" (14. 45. 4-6), being literally the aspect of *continuity* in these activities. The most basic expression of this collective presence is *Truth*: "The whole supracelestial place is illuminated [*katalampetai*] by the light of Truth," (16. 49. 12-13).

'Illumination' is not merely a metaphor for Proclus, but an important technical term, for "the One participates in Being ... as illuminating [*katalampon*] really existing essence [*tên ontôs ousan ousian*]," (PT III 4. 15. 15-17). Since all causality associated with the One is really operated by the henads, it is natural that Proclus speaks in prop. 162 of the *Elements of Theology* of the intelligible henads as "illuminating real Being" (*katalampon to ontôs on*). Although all henads are participated, insofar as henads exist beyond Being they cannot be participated in the same way as forms. At PT II 4. 33, Proclus identifies the henads with the "light of truth" participation of which "renders that which is intelligible boniform [*agathoeides*] and divine," and that "every divine [i.e., divinized] nature is that which it is said to be, on account of this light." He goes on to explain that

We must not say that the intelligible is united to the First <Principle> in the same way as the light, but the latter through its continuity [*sunecheian*] with the Good [153] is established in it without intermediary [*amesôs*]; while the former, through this light, is afforded its vicinity [*tês pros ekeino geitniaseôs metalagchanein*].
(33.27-34.2)

Note again here the characteristic intelligible-intellective themes of continuum and spatiality, at the same time that Proclus underscores the basic difference of the henadic *arithmos* from other multiplicities, in that its relationship to the One is not mediated by a quality imparted through participation. The *truth* arising from illumination, and the *epistêmê* it makes possible, is inseparable from *number*, that is, from the fact of *many* being in *relation*. Thus the Plain of Truth is "splendid with illuminations [*katalampetai ... tais ellampsesin*]" (IV 15. 45. 22-3) and the 'meadow' within it (*Phaedrus* 248c1) is "the prolific power of life and of reasons of every sort [*logôn pantoion*]"

and “the cause of the diversity [*poikilias*] and production of forms” (46. 1-4). Proclus even iterates the *topoi* themselves, saying that “the very meadows in this place [*kai hoi têide leimônes*] are productive of forms and reasons of every kind [*pantodapôn*],” (4-5). Elsewhere, Proclus simply states that the intelligible-intellective ‘meadow’ “signifies the diversity [*poikilian*] of life [or, ‘of lives’],” (IV 6. 23. 23-4). This diversity is in effect the emergence of the relation of immanence characteristic of the intellect, in which new multiplicities can be constituted purely on the basis of multiplicities already existing.

The redoubling of illuminations, in which the Gods are at once sources and recipients of illumination, as when Proclus states that *epistêmê* “shines [*epilampeî*] perceptions [*gnôseis*] upon the Gods” (14. 45. 9-10), is what provides the content to make the production of forms and *logoi* on the intelligible-intellective plane meaningful, rather than a mere *fiat lux*, ensuring that the cognition arising on this plane is truly cognition *of* something. Temperance (*Sôphrosunê*) is described by Proclus in a manner emphasizing this recursive dimension of divine operation: it “measures the activities of the Gods and returns each God to himself [*epistrephousa pros heauton hekaston*]” (45. 12-3). Measurement is the mediation whose emergence is fundamental to the intelligible-intellective plane, while the conversion-to-self—an unusual occurrence of *epistrophê* in the second, rather than the third moment of a triad—expresses the Gods’ internalization of the measure that emerges from their own operations. This latter property is vividly conveyed by the nectar and ambrosia of *Phaedrus* 247e, which is treated by Proclus as symbolic of the “nourishment” (*trophê*) the Gods receive from

a certain [*tis*] intelligible union [*henôsis*], comprising in itself the whole perfection [*tên holên teleiotêta*] of the Gods and filling the Gods with vigor and power in order that they may exercise providence with respect to secondary natures and immutable cognition of primary natures. (15. 46. 7-11)

The *unity* of the henadic manifold is expressed here in a manner it could not be on the intelligible plane, for which there was only *each* God, in whom all the other henads and all of Being was immediately present. Here the Gods are present *with* each other as a *whole* or unified—i.e.,

mediated—multiplicity, [154] and the unity of this multiplicity is now itself an intelligible object. This unification is represented as food because it is, in effect, the first pure *object* relation arising from the *intersubjective* relationality of henadic individuals.

“Nectar and ambrosia,” Proclus explains, “are the perfections of the Gods *qua* Gods,” (47. 7) and “the cognition [*noêsis*] of the Gods *qua* Gods” (48.6), that is, the Gods’ cognition of *each other* as Gods, which is in itself the intellectual presence of the divine in Being. Fully developed through the divine operations on the intellectual plane, this will be a *quantificational totality* of the Gods; on the intelligible-intellectual plane, it is an ethical totality, expressing especially the Gods’ providence (*pronoia*) towards Being and beings. This intelligible unity, this unity-in-thought of the Gods “unitarily perfects the divided [*meriston*] multiplicity of the Gods and converts all things to itself through divine intelligence ... for it is ... the plenitude [*plêrôma*] of intelligible goods and the uniform [*henoeidês*] perfection of divine self-sufficiency [*autarkeias*],” (48. 1-9). That is, it perfects henadic individuality through the returning-to-self of the Gods’ cognition of being together with one another. In cognizing themselves in this way, the Gods also conceive the intelligible unity of all things, which is for them not a representation, but the primary *production* of this very *plêrôma*.

Plato’s recourse to the ancient symbol of the divine banquet (*dais*) signifies for Proclus the third and final stage of this process of proto-intellectual constitution: “The banquet signifies the divided distribution [*diêirêmenên dianomên*] to all things of the divine nourishment,” (48. 3-5). Distribution here alerts us to the operation of the third ‘fountain’ or ‘source’ of virtue, that of Justice (*dikaio sunê*), which “distributes [*dianomês*] universal goods [*tôn holôn agathôn*] according to merit [*kat’axian*],” (14. 44. 25-6). The first ‘division’ (*diairesis*) of a ‘universal’, therefore, is pre-intellectual and, indeed, ethical. The conditions for the emergence of Intellect arise from the immanent logic of a multiplicity of autarchic individuals recognizing one another and thus constituting from the existential polycentric manifold a single center, “a single hearth [*hestia*] for all the Gods” (47. 27-8). Only through such a coming-together of *really autarchic individuals*, and not through the parcelling out of a pre-existing, presupposed unity—a falsely hypostatized unity—

could a norm be forged that is truly binding upon all. Such, Proclus explains, is the “Decree [*thesmos*] of Adrasteia” (*Phaedrus* 248c2) which “is established in that [supraceutical] place and rules uniformly [*monoeidôs*] over all the divine laws [*nomôn*]” (*PT* IV 17. 51. 13-14). This henadic autarchy is shared to some degree with souls, for “not only the Gods are superior to the laws of fate [*heimarmenôn nomôn*], but also particular [*merikai*] souls who live according to intellect and give themselves over to the light of providence,” (52. 11-14). The ontological ground for this soteriological doctrine lies in the ability of souls, insofar as they are unique individuals, and not merely participants of universal forms, and thus parts of wholes and mere ‘particulars’—in other words, not *qua* souls, but as existential units—to enjoy some of the autarchy of the Gods themselves. [155]

Conclusion

The hypostasis of Life is the continuum or unified multiplicity of henadic individuals who, from their fundamental position of polycentric autarchy, proceed to engagement with one another, creating in the process monocentric structures which are the noetic infrastructure, so to speak, for the emergence of intellect. The Intelligible-Intellective is not simply a transitional state between Being and Intellect, but rather the whole of Being after its own fashion, affirming the primacy of place or situation, of number, and of relation. The Intelligible-Intellective generates the Intellective plane of Being out of its own immanent dialectic, but continues to operate within and beyond the Intellective, as is evident from the importance of intelligible-intellective determinations such as motion, place, and self-measurement or normativity for the domain of Soul and for souls themselves; psyche is a product, in large part, of Intellect’s reflection, or *epistrophê*, upon these very intelligible-intellective functions. Reflection upon the hypostasis of Life, if we can successfully distinguish it from the intellective structures which naturally dominate philosophical analysis, reveals a distinctive *Lebensphilosophie*, so to speak, at the heart of systematic Platonism.