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(with an English Translation by D. GREGORY MACISAAC)

The Final Section of Proclus' Commentary on the Parmenides. A Greek Retrospection of the Latin Translation

PREFACE

The last section of Proclus' Commentary on the Parmenides has not been preserved in the Greek manuscript tradition, presumably because in the codex on which all of the Greek manuscripts depend, the last quire was lost. Fortunately, William of Moerbeke still had the complete text in his Greek manuscript when he translated the Commentary into Latin between 1280 and 1286. Since the rediscovery of this translation by R.Klibansky in 1929, this final section of the Commentary has aroused much interest. It is, in fact, a most interesting text, one of the major expositions of negative theology, in which Proclus gives reasons why we must ultimately negate all of the negations of the One, and even reject that the One «is» and that it is one. However, the Latin text is often very obscure, and even unintelligible, for readers not used to Moerbeke's method of translation.

When R.Klibansky, together with J.Labowsky, first published the Latin translation of the lost Greek text, they also made an English translation of it. It is a polished and readable version, but often more a paraphrase than a translation, as whenever the Latin text was obscure, they paraphrased it. In their edition of the Latin text, they introduced some excellent conjectures, but other corrections were superfluous. They also provided a series of explanatory notes quoting many parallel texts in the other works of Proclus that contributed much to the understanding of the Latin section. Their translation was integrated in the complete English translation of the Commentary by Morrow and Dillon, with some corrections suggested by L.Westerink.

Since the publication of Klibansky-Labowsky, the last section of the Commentary has been intensively studied and used in publications. However, for many sections the translation remained as obscure as before. It seemed
that for a true understanding of the text, and a correct translation, it would be inevitable to first retranslate the Latin text into the lost Greek original. This was already the opinion of H.-D. Saffrey in his review article of the 1953 edition: "selbst wenn man nicht so amassend sein kann, genau das Griechische Original wiederzufinden, ist es klar, dass eine Übersetzung des Lateinischen von Moerbeke ins Griechische sehr viel präzißer und verständlicher sein würde als eine Übersetzung in eine moderne Sprache". In his opinion, a Greek retroversion would be more useful than a modern translation.

Such a retroversion would of course be a difficult task, but was not impossible, because of the peculiar character of Moerbeke's translations. Particularly in his last works, Moerbeke had as his only ambition to render the Greek as literally and accurately as possible, in an artificial Latin, without any stylistic pretention. This literal character — it is as if we read "il greco in lettere latine" (Minio-Paluello) — makes the understanding of the text so difficult, but also makes a retroversion methodically possible. However, it remained a difficult task, as one would first have had to acquire "diuturna industria et studio" the peculiaris scientia rationis artisque vertendi ipsius Guilemi — a tremendous task, from which most scholars recoiled.

However, three years ago, I received a visit from a retired classics teacher from Aachen (Germany), Dr. F. Rumbach, who presented to me a Greek retroversion of the Latin text that he had made in his free time, together with a German translation. I immediately recognized the utility of his work for the understanding of the text, and I promised him that I would correct it and publish it. However, that task has proved much harder than I had expected. It has taken me, between much other work, about three years to finish my revision. Not only was it very difficult to retrieve the original Greek, but even when the Greek text had been reconstructed, it was necessary to correct it in many places. In actuality, as Klibansky-Labowski had already noticed, the Greek text of Moerbeke's manuscript, and particularly the last quire of it, must have been in a corrupted state. Moerbeke could have repeated at the end of his last work the observation which he made in the colophon at the end of his translation of the Praedicamenta: "sciet etiam qui hoc opus inspexerit,

3 "Itaque peculiari quadam scientia rationis artisque vertendi ipsius Guilemi, quae diuturna tantum industria et studio comparati potest, opus est, prisuquam hi textus edi possint, si aliquo quidem modo multas quae in istis sunt difficiulitates superare velis" (Procli Diadochi Triou opuscula, ed. Boese, p.v).  

exemplar graecum valde fuisse corruptum et in multis locis sensum nullum ex littera potui extrahere. Feci tamen quod potui. Melius enim erat sic corruptum habere quam nihil". And I could repeat the same observation myself, after having tried in vain to emend a "locus salebrosus".

I had the pleasure of profiting from the philological finesse of my friend Jacques Noret, who suggested to me many conjectures, and kept me from many grammatical faux-pas. Last year, in March, I used the Greek translation as the basic text for a series of seminars at the École Normale Supérieure, in Paris (I express my gratitude to professor Philippe Hoffmann for his invitation). Finally, this year, I discussed the text with a group of students in my doctoral seminar at the Institute of Philosophy. One of the students, Gregory MacIsaac, who happened to be on exchange from the University of Notre Dame, became so interested in the subject that he began working on a new English translation of the text. It is his translation, corrected by me, which appears facing the Greek text. For the middle section of the text, Gregory also profited from an unpublished French translation of H.-D. Saffrey and A. Segonds. A complete French translation will come out later, and I also hope that Dr. Rumbach will publish his German translation.

The substrate of the Greek text that is published here is the work of Dr. F. Rumbach. Without his scrupulous preparation, and talented Greek translation skill, I would never have had the courage to undertake this ambitious enterprise. There have been many intermediate versions before this published text, and on some emendations Dr. Rumbach and I have divergent opinions. However, I take the final responsibility for this last version, although I know quite well that it is not "a final version": "at veram integramque formam auctori eo modo exprimi posse nemo harum rerum peritius asseveravit". But there had to be an end to this time-devouring obsession. I thank prof. Francesco Del Punta for accepting this artefact for publication in his journal, with the hope that it will help us to understand better this beautiful text of Proclus, and will generate fresh emendations and improvements.

8 A German translation was already published in 1990 (Proklos. Kommentar zu Platonis Parmenides 141B-142A). Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von R. Bartholomai, Sankt Augustin 1990). It contains innumerable errors of interpretation because no serious effort was done to first understand the translation technique of Moerbeke.
9 I wish to express my gratitude to my assistant, Gerd Van Riel, for typing all of the versions in Greek, and introducing all of the successive corrections.
10 K-L, p. xi.
Because of the limitations of a journal article, I have included in the apparatus of the edition only the minimal justification of all of the emendations which we have introduced into the text. For explanatory notes and parallel texts, the Kljansky-Labowsky edition remains authoritative. For the text of Moerbeke's translation (quoted as G in the apparatus), I have used my own edition (Leuven, 1982-1985).11

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Preface to the English Translation

In my translation, I have tried to stay as close to the Greek text as I could, translating a given Greek term by the same English word throughout. The exception is in my use of the word «being» for various Greek terms12, which are often distinguished in English by using «essence» and «existence», as well as «being». A completely uniform translation of ousia by «essence», hyparchein by «to exist», and einai and its derivatives by «being» or «is», would have obscured the argument of the text, and would have falsified the sense of the original. The translation of the einai and hyparchein presents a difficulty, as both can mean either «to be» or «to exist». On those frequent occasions when Proclus uses one of these two verbs (or derivative forms) in a technical sense, I have marked this distinction by translating einai by «to be» and hyparchein by «to exist», but since Proclus does often overlap his use of these words, I have followed throughout the sense of his argument for my translation, and have not hesitated to translate hyparchei as «it is». So, for example, when Proclus is being precise, I have translated to on by «Being», ta onia by «beings», esti by «is», and hyparxis by «existence». The distinction which Proclus makes here is most often between existence, which can even belong to the One which is beyond Being, and the determinate being which belongs to everything which participates in the hypostasis of Being and thereby possesses an essence (ousia).13 Because of this, I have not translated «oude ara esti to hen» as «So neither does the One exist». It is the type of being which is at the level of the hypostasis of Being which is here being ruled out, so I have translated this passage as «So neither is the One», the emphasis on «is» denoting the irregular use of the English verb; and likewise for similar passages. The word ousia itself is seldom used in the more restricted sense of «essence» in this text, being more often a synonym for the hypostasis of Being. Hence it is seldom translated as «essence», but more commonly as «Being», and «being», as the passage requires.

The word epistēmē occurs frequently in Proclus' commentary on the consecutive lemmas, 142A3-4 and 142A4-6, but he uses it with a slightly different connotation in each of the two passages. In his commentary on the first lemma, Proclus has in mind a threefold division of sensation, opinion and knowledge (epistēmē), where epistēmē is a general term signifying rational knowing (gnōsis). While discussing the second of these two lemmas, Proclus uses the word epistēmē not as knowledge in general, but as scientific knowledge as opposed to intellection (noēsis). Consequently, epistēmē is translated simply by «knowledge» in the commentary in 142A3-4 and by «scientific knowledge» in the commentary on 142A4-6.

Finally, words which are capitalised signify either hypostases, such as «Being», «Intelec», or «the One», or metaphysical entities, such as «Existence», or «Power».

I wish to acknowledge here the great assistance of Professor Carlos Steel, both with this translation, and in general during my year with him in Leuven. It has been wonderful to work closely with him on this project, central to the thought of Proclus. As well, I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Philosophy, the Zahm Research Travel Fund, and the Center for the Study of Contemporary Society, of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

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12 ousia, hyparchein, einai.
THE FINAL SECTION OF PROCLUS’ COMMENTARY ON THE PARMENIDES OF PLATO

Translation

Is there anything, then, which is able to participate in Being other than according to one of these ways? — No, there isn’t. — So the One participates in Being in no way whatsoever. — It seems not to. — So the One in no way is. — It appears not. (141E7-10; Cousin 1239.22-26) 14.

Since in all of the preceding arguments Plato understood ‘participation’ in the connexion to Being of what comes after Being, he understands it here as well in the same way. All things, he says, ‘which participate in Being’ participate in it ‘according to one of these ways’. He means either as ‘being a whole’, or as ‘having a shape’, or as ‘being same and different’, or according to some other of the modes which he has denied of the One. Having stated this he infers that ‘the One does not participate in Being in any way whatsoever’, that is to say it does not participate in Being according to any of these modes. But it remained possible to say that perhaps the One, although it does not participate in Being according to one of these modes, does have some share in Being which is prior to them, and is conjoined with this Being. [In order to exclude this] he added, ‘So neither is the One’, showing in the first place that it is not Being (ousia) itself. For ‘it is’ (esti) is not predicated of the First, but is by the First Being (to prōtōs on). To this he will presently add that that One ‘neither is one...’, as if it were the One with Being which participates in Being itself, as does the One of Parmenides.

Thus Plato imitates the circle of all things, which not only proceeds from the One, but also returns to the One. It goes out into procession through multiplicity (for the principle of the procession is the multiplicity there; hence also all procession comes about according to the multiplicity of that which proceeds), and it returns back to the One through the One-Being. For from there is unification for all things, and it is through their own one that each is connected to the One. From where else, then, should he have begun his account of the procession of beings from the One than with ‘many’? And whence is the reversion

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14 In the Cousin edition there are three pages between this lemma and the point where the Greek text breaks off. In order to provide a context for the main text, it did not seem necessary to include more than the lemma itself and the last fifteen lines of the Cousin text. Consequently, Cousin 1239.27 to 1242.18 are not included in this edition.
but through the One-Being? For processions make beings many, while
reversions bring them together and make them one. For all things,
insofar as they commonly participate in Being, are joined to the One-
Being. For it is the monad of beings. Through it again they are moved
mysteriously towards the One which it contains, and then through this
towards the henad which transcends beings. What can one say but that
Plato in this manner too imitates the theologians who, after speaking
of the procession and generation of the gods, also hand down to us their
voyage towards the unifying causes of each, and ultimately their
unification with the First One?

So then it is not such as to be one, for then it would already be a being
and participate in Being. On the contrary, it seems, the One neither is one
nor is, if we must believe such an argument. — I am afraid so. (141E10-13)

It had been said that the One does not participate in Being itself in
the way that « many », « whole », « part » and « shape », and all the following,
do; then, that it is not in the way that the First is. And since the
One which is after the First is said to participate in Being, as it is
connected to Being, he also adds these words, « the One neither is one... ».
For he knows that the One is double: one One is transcendent, and
the other One is coordinate with Being. The second is somehow comparable
to Being since it participates in it and is participated in by it, while the
First is incomparable and unparticipable by everything.

So he shows that the First One is not like the One that coexists with
Being. For if being-one may be truthfully predicated of it, then this One
takes along with itself the being of Being (einais tês onasias). But he says
of the transcendent One that it is not possible to say that it is one. For
anything of which we say truthfully that it is one, is something which
is with Being. So then one must not say that that One is, since being one
belongs to the One which is with Being, and the One which participates
in Being did not remain one, but became One-Being.

If this is true, how could [anyone] say that the first hypothesis is not
solely about the first God, but rather is about all the gods? For all of
the henads of the other gods coexist with Being, so that each god is,
whereas only that One may be said to be above Being and unparticipated,
lest it be some one instead of the simple One. For the one which is together with something else is some one, just as the being which is together with Life is living being, and not Being itself, and the life which is together with Intellect is intellectual life and not simply Life. And in general everything which is taken with a difference is not the same as that which is taken simply, before the difference. So it is necessary that there exist the One-itself before the One together with Being.

For this reason, one must not say that this hypothesis is also about the gods, as some have thought. Indeed, we have shown in the beginning\(^\text{15}\) that when arguing about the One he is not stringing together conclusions about something which is not real. We showed that the Eleatic Stranger declares that the truly One has no parts, and that Parmenides concludes what necessarily follows from this thesis, beginning from « the One has no parts » ; and that the conclusions which follow from possible premises by a necessary chain of reasoning are possible ; and that this hypothesis is not about something which is not real. So if we have shown from our treatment of the first part of this hypothesis that it concerns a real One, and from our treatment of the final part that it does not treat indeterminate of the gods, then it shall have been shown that it treats only of the First One throughout.

And neither is the One, in the way that [the One] which is participated by Being is, and the One-Being [is]; for that One is participable and it takes Being itself along with it. Plato denied both of these of the One, saying « it seems, the One », that is the transcendent One, « neither is one », as being that One which goes with « is », « nor is », as is Being itself and Essence (ousia). Since the One is neither of these two, it is completely transcendent above the One-Being.

Let us say by way of conclusion that :

1. If the One and Being are immanently identical, then there is no distinction between them. However, the second hypothesis in no way will allow us to say that the One and Being are indistinguishable. Therefore, they differ from one another.

\(^{6}\) ζωτικὸν coniecitum : aliud ens (πτ. ὁ) G

\(^{7}\) σαρσεῖ δὲ scrispimus : accumulare (sarcetis) G

\(^{8}\) τὸ δὲ τὸ τοῦ scrispimus : hoc autem G, fers. hoc falso ablat. pro dativo "huic" ;

cf. In Parm. VI, 1065, 22-23

\(^{9}\) ἄρχομενον corr. K-L : incipiente G

\(^{10}\) εἶναι : exspectes de

\(^{11}\) αὐτῶν scrispimus : ips G, ipsi coni. Saffrey, ipsum K-L

\(^{15}\) In the beginning of the commentary on the first hypothesis, 1065.16ff.
2. Things which differ from one another either (2.A) stand on the same level as one another, and one is not prior to the other, or (2.B) they do not stand on the same level.

2.A. Now if the One and Being stand on the same level, either:

2.A.i. neither shares in the other, and there are two principles of all things — but then what brings these two together? — or if nothing brings them together, then Being, being bereft of the One and in no way one, will be composed of an infinite multitude of entities, each of which will not be one.

2.A.ii. or, if they share in and are mixed with each other, and the One will be, and Being will be one, then there must exist before them something which mixes both, making the One-Being one. For we have learned from the Philebus that of necessity there must exist a mixer before the mixture and the mixed elements. Now this again must either be (2.A.ii.a) Being without the One, or (2.A.ii.b) the One without Being. If both, then the same regression argument applies as above.

2.A.ii.a. Now if it is Being without the One, this Being will either (2.A.ii.a.*) be not-one or (2.A.ii.a.*) it will be nothing.

2.A.ii.a.. But it is impossible to talk about Being and yet talk about nothing.

2.A.ii.a.. So then it is not-one. But if it is not-one, then necessarily each of the elements on account of which it is not-one will itself be not-one, and each thing will be composed of these «not-ones». And on this supposition the Being which is not-one will be composed of infinities, because there is no One before the One-Being.

2.A.ii.b. If it is One, but not Being, then we have discovered the One which is not participated by Being and which does not participate in Being.

2.B. Now if the Being and the One do not stand on the same level, then either (2.B.i) Being is above the One, or (2.B.ii) the One is above Being.

2.B.i. Now if Being is before the One, producing it as prior to it, then once again Being will be not-one, and the same line of argument will hold: the regression will be infinite.

2.B.ii. But if the One is prior to and cause of Being, then according to its own existence it is not Being, but establishes Being in existence, and does not participate in Being. And this is what we were seeking.

For if the First One were to be somehow a participant in Being, even if it were as a principle higher than and productive of Being, it would be some one, taking up the existence which belongs to Being. For since the One is not some one, it surely will not be the cause of Being, but of all
110 The γὰρ ἐν κρείττων τοῦ δύνατον ἦγοντον καὶ ἀφ’ οὗ τὸ δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κατ’ ἄρχὴν ἔξως αὐτῷ ἀπήλλαξαν ἐπολοθήσατο δὲ ὅτι, εἰ τὸ τὸν ἀντὶ χωρὶς καὶ μὸνον ἐπινοούμενον ἄνευ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ αὐτὴν τεθείσῃ, μηδὲν ἔτερον στοιχεῖον αὐτῇ προσθείς, οὐδὲν δὲ γένος τῶν ἄλλων, τὴν ἀδόμοστον διάδοτα τῶν δύνατων ἀρχὴν εἶσοδογογοῦν.  

"Ὅτε μαρτυρεῖ καὶ οὔκ οὕτως ταῦτά εἶναι τὴν τῶν παλαιῶν δόξαν περὶ τοῦ ἐνόσι, ὅτι ἐπεκείναι τοῦ δύνατον ἀνήρπαστα καὶ ὅτι μετὰ τὸ ἔν ἡ ἀδόμοστον δύσα. Καὶ εἰστάθη αὖν ὃν Πλάτων τοῦτο ἐνεκείκυσε τὸ ἐν ἐπεκείναι τοῦ δύνατον καὶ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνόσι καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου ἐνόσι δύνατον. Ὅλον τὸ καὶ τὸ ἔν δὲ ἔμει διὰ τῆς δευτέρας ἐποθήσεως, ἔλεγον μοι μὲν τε τοῦ ἐνόσι καὶ τοῦ δυνατοῦ, ὅτι ἐπεκείναι φαίνεται εἶναι τοῦ αὐτοῦ, οὗ γὰρ ἐν ἐν τῷ ἐν ἄμα τῶν ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τί ἐν ἐκείνῳ οὐδὲν οὐδὲν τὸν τοῦτο τεθήκης καὶ τὸν τὸν ἀδόμοστον, τὴν ἀπλοτίτητα αὐτοῦ σηκοῦν.  

"Εἰστάθη δ’ οὖν προελάθων κατενώθησαν εἰκότως ὅτι δὴ τοκεῖόν ὅτι τὸν ἐν ἄγνωστον ἐστὶ τάσεις ταῖς μερικαῖς γίνοσα καὶ ἀρρητον καὶ ἀφατον.
and ineffable as well. For what is primally nameable and knowable is the One which is in Being, and absolutely everything which is participable. Just as for grasping cognitively the encosmic gods we have the help of sense-perception, by which we observe their visible dwelling places, which reminds us of their peculiar character, but for knowing the hypercosmic gods we are not aided in any way by sense-perception, so likewise for attaining to the level of the One-Being intellecution and the knowledge of Being is of use, but for attaining unification with the One itself none of the cognitive powers of beings are of any help, except insofar as they are a sort of predisposing for the upward movement towards it. For that One is implicate in every way and by every being.

"If — Plato says — we must believe such an argument." Proceeding by means of negations, we have shown that the One transcends everything: intelligible beings, intellectual beings, hypercosmic beings, encosmic beings and divinised being. "If, then, we must believe such an argument", the One is implicate. Obviously this is a human argument, and a partial one. But neither does a divine argument say anything other than that the One is implicate. For as we have said earlier, all things, through the highest element in them, wish to imitate the One. Just as among souls the First Soul is implicate in uni-form, and further, in intellectual being, the Divine Intellect is implicate and uni-form, similarly among all the divine heavens the One-itself is implicate. Whence, then, is the implicate character among secondary realities than from the One? For the character of being transcendent belongs to a greater degree to the first realities than to the subsequent; so the One transcends beings to a greater degree than Intellect transcends souls, or Soul transcends bodies. Now if the First and Divine Intellect is implicate, it is obvious that as well the One-itself does not associate with any being.

But what is it to "believe"? For it seems that Plato casts his ballot against rational argument here, since, as he himself says, the persuasion produced by belief is weaker than knowledge. Or perhaps this belief is not of the same kind as that which is appropriate to the objects of sense-

24 en scripsumus : unum (Ex) G
25 mevethcoun correximus : implicative (demebethcoun) G
26 ovdouv condi. K-L: michil (oidev) G
27 ti condi. K-L: aliquid (ti) G
perception, as we have said elsewhere, but is the sort of belief of which the theologians speak: the « lasting and immutable » preservation of « belief in the First Realities, and of Truth and of Love », and what, as it were, collects us together and unites us to the One. So one must believe in such arguments, trusting in them firmly and unceasingly, and not adhering to them doubtfully and as a matter of opinion. On the other hand, if Plato did intend to speak doubtfully when he said « if we must believe such an argument », an argument endeavoring by means of negations to bring to light the supreme existence of the One, then that should not make us wonder; for it is not possible to enthrust the comprehension of that Reality completely to an argument, when not even the most pure forms of knowing are able to comprehend it. But the closer they come to it and the more they reach something which is akin to themselves, the more they rather discover that it is not to be comprehended by their own activities, even if they do apprehend something as it were a trace of it. But since whatever it is that they do know, they yearn for something greater than this, they cast their ballot against <all rational argument>, through the travail for the supereminenence of the One which is inborn in them and connatural to them, having rejected this [object of knowledge], since it fails to grasp the peculiar character of the One. So great a reverence for it lies in us.

Regarding that which is not, can there be anything belonging to or being of this non-being? — But how could there be? (142A1-3)

It is clear that everything which belongs to something must belong to something which already is, for how could a non-being provide being to something else? And simply saying « it is » to say that it stands in a relation to beings. So then, if it has been shown that the One is beyond Being, then nothing can belong to it, such as a name or account, nor can there be anything of it, such as knowledge of it or sense-perception of it; for if that were the case, then it would already be knowable and perceivable by the senses and nameable and speakable, and would thereby have stood in a relation to something else. But standing in a relation is proper only to what is in some way a being. For even the intelligible object stands in a certain relation to intellect, inasmuch as they are ordered towards each other, and the object of knowledge is likewise ordered towards knowledge. But that which transcends everything, as has been shown, will not admit of even the trace of any relation to anything else.
But what else is meant by the phrase "this non-being", which is very accurately added, but "non-being"? For "non-being" is used in many different senses; thus what is in no way whatsoever is non-being; becoming is non-being; Rest and Motion are non-being through the nature of difference; and the One itself is non-being. However, not all non-being is unknowable and unspokenable. For indeed Rest and Motion, and in general the non-being in the sphere of the intelligible, are not unknowable. For this is precisely said to be intelligible. But neither is becoming unknowable, for as Timaeus says, it is perceivable by the senses, and is the object of opinions. Rather, the types of non-being which are unknowable are the One and what is in no way whatsoever; the first as greater than all knowledge of beings, and the second as falling short of being intelligible in any way whatsoever. Thus also in the Republic, Socrates called that which is in no way non-being, distinguishing from it that which is both being and non-being at the same time, i.e., the object of opinion, and that which in every way is, i.e. the object of knowledge; and he posited it as unknowable. Moreover, he also posited the Good as non-being, since it is above Being, saying that it is beyond being and Being itself (epokeina tou einai kai autes tes ouias), and that it is greater than the intelligible, and that it is the light of truth, bringing the intelligible objects together with Intellect.

Non-being, then, is double and so is the unknowable, and fittingly so: for the soul is grieved by the limitless void and the indeterminate of what is in no way whatsoever, and being unable to endure the attempt to apprehend it, it is pleased at its own lack of knowledge, fearing to go out into the indeterminate and limitless. However, ascending towards the incomprehensible superiority of the One, it is brought up to the One by desire for the nature of the One, and it runs up to it from all sides and wishes to embrace it, and wishes with its supreme love to be present to it completely, and makes itself one as much as it is able and purges itself of all its multiplicity, so that somehow it might be perfected by the One. But unable to comprehend somehow its incomprehensibility, or to know the unknowable, it loves, by way of its own procession, the unspokenable apprehension of participation in the One. For what is present to one who apprehends must first be a being. But what is it to touch the intangible? So the One transcends all partial knowing, as well as all intellection and all touching. Only unification leads us to the One; and this One is also unknowable, since it is greater than all Being. And on account of this Plato says in the Letters that that learning is different from all other kinds of learning.
Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν τοιοῦτο τὸ δὲ μηδαμῶς ὄν, ὡς παντὸς ὁ ὀρισμὸς καὶ πάσης ὑποστάσεως ἀποτελεῖ, ἦν ἀγνωστὸν. Γελοῦν ἄρα λέγειν ὃτι τὸ μηδαμὸς ὤν ταῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἐν, οὕτω γνωστὸν ὄν οὕτω δοξαστὸν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μηδαμὸς ὃν ταῦτα ἐστιν ὀδὴ γὰρ τὸ τι πέμπει ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ δυνατὸν, ὡς ἀντίκειται τὸ ὀδῆν. Τὸ δὲ ἐν μηδενὶ λέγειν ἀδύνατον ἀπόφασις γὰρ πάντων πᾶσι καὶ τοῦ ἐνός ἐστι τὸ «μηδενὶ ἐν», τούτῳ ἐστὶν «μηδενὶ». Οὐκ οὖν ἀνθρώπων τὸ ἐν ἀπέφασκεν αὐτοῖς, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ὄντος ἐν ὑπὸ καὶ τὸ ὄν. Ἴ 505 l.

225 Ὅσοι' ἄρα ὄνομα ἔστων αὐτῶν ὀδηγοὶ ἡμῶν ἐπιστήμη ὄσοι ἢσθοὺς ὀδήγεται ἡ ὁδή. — Ὅ ταῦτα ἔχειν. (142A3-4)

Εἰ μὲν δὲχα τέμνειν ἐθέλοις τὸς ἀποφάσεις ταύτας, ἔρεις ὃτι τὸ ἐν καὶ ἄρρητον ἀποφαίνεται εἶναι καὶ ἀγνωστὸν· εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ ῥήτον τέμνει καὶ τὸ γνωστὸν, ἔρεις ὃτι διὸ τέμνειν ἐντός ἄρρητου, τρικώς δὲ ἀγνωστοῦ.

230 Πάντως γὰρ τὸ ῥητὸν ἢ λόγον ἢ ὀνοματικὸ τοῦτον ἐστὶν· ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα προβάτερον, ὃ δὲ λόγος φύσις τοῦ ὄνοματος δεύτερος· τὸ μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἀπόστασιν μεμεῖται τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῆς ἐκωσίας, ὃ δὲ τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὴν ποικιλίαν· διὸ καὶ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα ἐν, ὄμω τὰν δὴ ὅλου ἑν τῶν ὑποκείμενων.

235 ὃ δὲ λόγος περιτρέχει τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ὑσίαν, ἀνέλπτων αὐτῷ τὸ πλῆθος. Καὶ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα καὶ ὁ λόγος ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἀρχεῖ τοῖς ἀρχεῖν, τὰς τοῦ ὀνόματος τὰ ἐν ἀνεξαντλοῦσα τῇ ἐκκοιμηθέντι κατέχεται συγκ. μεμοιραμένα τὸ ἄρρητον καὶ τὸ ἀδέχεικόν τοῦ ἑνός; δὲ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὴν σιγήν ἐστὶ καὶ τὴν ὑψηλὰν καὶ τὴν γενεὰν τὴν σῦμφωνα ν.

240 τοῖς ὁσίων ἐπερεδρομένων. Τὸ δ’ αὖ γνωστὸν ἢ ἀἰσθητὸν ἢ δοξαστὸν

41 παντὸς coni. K-L: omnibus (πᾶσι) G
42 μήδεν scrispissimus: neque (μηδὲ) G
43 ἴππον coni. Saffrey: praeter quam (πλῆρος) G
44 φύσει: nature G (melius est esse nature)
45 post ἀρχεῖα aliqua verba deesse videntur: cf. In Crat. 32, 18-25
46 δὲ coni. Saffrey: autem (Ďę) G
47 σύμφωνον: eiusdem tribus G (male K-L «which form a triad »): cf. In Parm. VI, 1073, 35
48 ἢ αἰσθητὸν suppleverunt K-L

Such is the One. But that which is in no way whatsoever unknown was unknowable because it falls short of all determination and all existence. So it is ridiculous to say that the One is identical to what is in no way whatsoever, simply because the One is unknowable and is not an object of opinion. For what is in no way whatsoever is nothing. One cannot even apply to it the term « something », to which « nothing » is contradictory. But it is impossible to say that the One is nothing, for « nothing » (i.e., « not-one-thing ») is the negation of « one » as well as of everything else. And indeed Plato did not deny of the first the simple character of « one », rather he denied that it was the One which belongs to Being, just as [he also denied] that it was Being.

So then there is no name which belongs to it, no account, no form of knowledge, and neither sense-perception nor opinion. — There seems not to be. (142A3-4)

If you wish to divide these negations into two groups, you will say that the One is declared to be both unspeakable and unknowable. And if you would further divide the speakable and the knowable, you will say that it is unspeakable in two ways, and unknowable in three ways.

For everything which is speakable is so either through an account or through a name; but the name is prior, while the account is by nature posterior to the name. For the name imitates the simplicity and the unity of beings, while the account imitates their multiplicity and complexity. Hence the name is one, disclosing at once all that lies under it; the account, on the other hand, runs around from all sides the being of the thing, unrolling its multiplicity. However, both the name and the account start from in the reality «...» of intelligible beings, but the secret beings which are united to the One itself are held within « the god-nourished silence », and imitate the unspeakable and unutterable character of the One, which is established above silence as well as intellection and the knowing which is of the same stock as beings.

On the other hand, that which is knowable is an object either of <sense-perception>, or of opinion, or of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). For all
-knowing is either without reason or with reason; and if with reason, it has it in one of two ways: either in accordance with a cause or without a cause. Our knowing, then, is of three kinds: sense-perception, opinion and knowledge. Consequently, that which is for us completely unknowable is an object neither of knowledge, nor of opinion, nor of sense-perception. From an understanding of the types of knowledge which we possess, we must also grasp the totality of their extension, in order for us to see that all knowledge has been denied of the One. For how could that which is beyond all beings be an object of sense-perception? And how could that be an object of opinion which is not such that in some way it is, and in some way it is not? And how could that which does not have a cause be the object of knowledge? So it is stated rightly in [Plato's] Letters, as we have said, that [the One] is to be learned in a different manner: «from much attention to it a divine light is kindled» in us, through which there comes to be (in such a way as is possible for us) an apprehension of it, whereby we participate in it in accordance with the most divine part of us. But the most divine thing in us is the one, and it is that which Socrates called the illumination itself, the soul, just as he called the truth itself light (for the illumination of the soul) is a partial light, so that here as well like is known by like, if it is lawful to speak so. <For> just as the object of sense-perception [is known by sense-perception], the object of opinion by opinion, the object of knowledge by knowledge, so also is the One [apprehended] by the one, and by its bright light [is apprehended] the cause [i.e., the One] for all beings of the light through which they all participate in the One.

Consider, therefore, not only the sense-perception which is in us, but also that of the daemons themselves, and that of the enocosm gods, and that of the sun itself, and that which is in the absolute gods, and that which is in the assimilative gods, and the source itself of sense-perception (I mean the sense-perception of the Demiurge); for «he holds the intelligible within his intellect, but he introduces sensation to the worlds», according to the Oracle. Now if you consider this whole series springing from the primal source of sense-perception, you will discover that none of its members have knowledge of the One. So in Homer, Zeus is said to be
invisible to the sense-perception of the Sun, « the Sun whose light is most penetrating ». Plato, as well, says that the One is known by no sense-perception: for « no being — he says — perceives it with its senses », making clear that neither the divine sense-perception, nor that which [pre-exists] in the cause [of sense-perception]15, nor moreover that which is in the divine Intelligentsia, is a grasp of what is co-ordinate with the One. So then neither does the Demiurgic sense-perception perceive the One, for even then this Intelligentsia is directed towards beings.

Secondly, consider opinion: first, [the opinion] which is in us, next that in the daemons, then that in the angels, then that in the encosmic gods, then that of the absolute gods [for insofar as even these have a grasp of the all, they contain the rational principles of sensible beings], then that of the assimilative gods [for even in these are causes of the encosmic beings], and finally, the Demiurgic opinion. For the [Demiurgic opinion] is the source of all opinion, the primal cause of things in the world, and from it the Circle of the Different has come into existence. Now, after considering this series in its entirety, recognise that the One is not knowable by any type of opinion.

There remains knowledge. Do not regard only the knowledge which is in us (for it is partial and there is nothing honourable in it, for it does not know the One); but regard also the daemonic knowledge, through which they contemplate beings; and the angelic, through which they have intellelction of the things which precede them; and that of the encosmic gods, through which they follow upon the absolute gods, their leaders; and that of the absolute gods themselves, by which they have their activity in a detached manner about the intelligible; and higher still, that of the assimilative gods, through which they primarily assimilate themselves to the intelligible gods; and, in addition to these, regard the primal source of knowledge, which is united to the intelligible objects themselves, and which the Phaedrus called « knowledge-itself » (autoeipistēmē) ; and above all of these, regard the intelligible knowledge which remains inside the innermost sanctuary of Being, secret and unutterable. And after considering all of these types of knowing and intellelction of being, you will see that they all fail to grasp the One. For they all yield knowledge of Being, but not of the One. But the argument has shown that the One is above Being. All knowing

15 Sense-perception not existing kath’ hyparxin on its own level, but pre-existing kat’ aitia in its cause.
Πάσα οὖν γνώσις, εἶτε ἐπιστημονικὴ ἐτε δοξαστική εἶτε ἀληθητική.

295 δεητέρων τυπὸς ἐστὶν καὶ οὗ τοῦ ἔνος.

Εἶπεν δὲ δὴ καὶ κάρτης ἔστι τὸ ἐν' ποις γὰρ ἂν ἢν ὄνομα τοῦ ἔνος; πάν γὰρ ὄνομα πληθὺς ἐστὶ συνεκίμενον ἐκ τῆς γραμματῆς καὶ συλλαβῶν ὅψις ἐκείνῳ δὴ ἦλθε τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πάντος ὅσιος, ὥστε δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ μᾶλλον τὸ ἐν τῷ πολλὰ περιτρέμου ὅψις ἀναγκαστικὸς ἐστὶν. Εἶπεν οὖν ἀναγκαστικὰ ὄνομα τὸ ἐστὶ διαμεῖα ἐτε ἀναγχαλικὸ ἐτε θεία—καὶ γὰρ καὶ τοιαῦτα ἐστὶν ὄνομα, ὡσπερ φησὶν ὁ Κάρκλος, δὲ ὁ ὁ ποτὲ ἀλλὰ ἀλλοίῳ ἀλήθειας: οἴκητε, οἱ θεοὶ ὄνομας ζωῆς καὶ ὁ Ἐφράιμ Σακράτης ἐνιαίος—ἀυτὸς γὰρ ἦστιν ὁ λέγων ὁ Ζέως ἐμεῖς Γαννυμέδουσ ἐρώτης ἐμεῖς ὁ ὄνοματι καὶ ὁ Τίμων τῶν ὁμολογίων ἐπιφημίας ὁ φησὶν τὴν μὲν ταὐτόν περιφράσει, τὴν δὲ ταχεῖρεν ἄπολεος γὰρ, ὡς σαφῆ, διὰ τούτων καὶ αὐτοὶ σὺν τοῖς θεολόγοις τὸ εἶναι καὶ τῶν θειῶν ὄνοματων ὑπά τέχνη—πάντα ταύτα τῶν μετὰ τὸ ἐν ἐστι, καὶ οἷον 5081 ἄκουσα τοῦ ἔνος; οὐδὲν γὰρ προσήκει τῷ ἐν τῶν ἄλλων πάντα γὰρ αὐτὸν καταδεικτέ τέστα ἀπότελεσθαι τῆς ὑπεροχῆς αὐτοῦ ἐξηγημένης ταῖς γάρ ἂν εἰκότων γένοιτο σύμμετρον, οὐδὲν ὡς τῶν ὑπάστων, τῶν ὑμίσων ἐπεκέντα τῶν πάντων; ὅπως γὰρ ἦστι τὸ σύμμετρον, ταῦτα τοῖς μὲν ἐστὶν συνεκίμενα, τοῖς δὲ ἄνω τῶν ὑμίσων ἐξηγημένα. Ἔκειτο σύμμετρον ἄρα οὐδὲν ἦστι αὐτῷ οὐδὲ φορεῖ προσθετεῖ αὐτῷ συμβουλή τῶν μετα ταύτα. Αὐτὸς δὲ δήμοι κυρίως λεγόμενος φορεῖ προσθετεῖ τῷ ὄνοματι καὶ ἐστὶν τεκίνος λογικῆς τοῦ πράγματος.

305 ὅσον ἂρα ὄνομα ἦστι παῖ τοῦ ἔνος, ἀλλὰ ὥσπερ τοῖς, αὐτὸ μὲν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ σάματος τῶν δὲ ζήτει αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον δηλώσατε διὰ τοῦ σάματος, σὺν ὧ τὸ ἐν ἀνακαλύψαμεν, ἠρρητοὶ καὶ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχει, ὡσπερ

62 hoc loco spatium vacuum in codicibus, συλλαβῶν δὲ marginae habet A. * Plura hoc loco desiderari videntur quam 'fenestris' codicis indicatur. Nam secundum divisionem Procli (v. supra, l. 227 s.) hic incipit commentum in secundam partem sententiae platonicae, quae non solum incognoscibile, sed etiam indicibile esse 'te Unum' ostendit. In eis autem quae sequuntur iam in media de nominibus disputatione sumus » (K-L p.91, ad p. 50, 23). Lacunam supplevimus (cf. infra, l. 335 s., et Crat. 423 A - 424 C) ὅπως γὰρ ἦστι τῷ ὄνομαν πάντων κοινοῖς: palam quod nominandis omnis (δηλοὶ δὲ ὄνομαστος πάντῳ) G
63 ὅτα ἐν τῷ πολλὰ περιτρέμου λόγῳ κοινοῖς (partim iam coni. Westerlink): quod in tuis multa circumcurrens aliquid dico (τὸ ἐν τῷ πολλὰ περιτρέμου λόγῳ) G
64 ἀναγκαστικὴ ὑποθήκη G: expectes ἀρρητοῦ
65 νοτε corretissimum cum Platone (Crat. 400 D 8-9): ad (πρὸς) G
66 Verba inter < < ex textu Platonis (Phaedr. 255 C 1-2) addita a K-L: spatium reliquit G
67 ὁ τύμων coni. K-L: quod quidem (ὅτι, μῆν) G
68 ἐπισημάτισε συν. Bossier: asserens (ἐπισημάτισε) G

It has been stated that <the One is unspeakable>; for how could there be a name of the One? For each name is a multitude composed of letters and syllables of which each signifies something which is absolutely nameable; and in the same way, yet even more so, is the One unspeakable by any account which runs around a multiplicity from many sides. Now names are either human, daimonic, angelic or divine. For there are in fact divine names, as Cratylus says, by which the gods, he says, « may call each other by name »; and Socrates in the Phaedrus under divine inspiration says so as well (since it is he who says: « whom Zeus named <Himeros, when in love with Ganymede> »); and finally Timaeus says that the Demiurge named one revolution [the Revolution] « of the Same », and the other [the Revolution] « of the Other ». Through these words, I think, they make clear, together with the theologians, that there is a certain class of divine names. Now all of these names belong to things which come after the One, but not to the One itself, for none [of the names] of other things belong to the One, since they are all inferior to it and fail to grasp its transcendent superiority. For what could be commensurate with it, since it is not a being, and is equally beyond every being? For when there is some common measure between things, there are certain things to which [a given thing] is more conformable, and others to which it is less conformable, but the One, rather, transcends all things equally. So, then, nothing which comes after it is commensurate with it, or belongs to it, or is comparable with it. Every name, used most properly, belongs by nature to that which is named, and is a verbal image of the thing.

305 όσον ἂρα ὄνομα ἦστι παῖ τοῦ ἔνος, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τοῖς, αὐτὸ μὲν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ σάματος: τῶν δὲ ἦς αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον δηλώσατε διὰ τοῦ σάματος, σὺν ὥ τὸ ἐν ἀνακαλύψαμεν, ἠρρητοὶ καὶ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχει, ὡσπερ (gnōsis), then, whether it be scientific knowledge (epistēmē), opinion, or sense-perception, is of something secondary, and not of the One.

17 The text is corrupt here, but this probably restores the sense.
18 Theodore of Asine.
first is itself unspeakable, so is the breath\textsuperscript{19} silent; the second is made manifest through the speakable element coming to be together with breath, and has already become itself speakable, being at the same time both speakable and unspeakable, both silent and utterable\textsuperscript{20} (for even in this case the declaration must be through a middle term); the third is the \textquotedblleft hen\textquotedblright, which is the unspeakable breath and the speakable power of the \textquotedblleft e\textquotedblright, and with them the letter \textquotedblleft n\textquotedblright, which imitates through its return the unspeakable character of breath, according to its own order. And the whole is a triad, as what is prior to it is a dyad, and what is above this is a monad\textsuperscript{21}. But the First is beyond all things, and not only beyond this triad, the first thing which comes after it.

This, then, is the reasoning by which he\textsuperscript{22} brings forth the triad out of the First by means of names. While reasoning about the divine in this manner, he regards only the first production of names, and posits \textquotedblleft One\textquotedblright as the very first of names, discovering that even this [name] has descended from the simplicity of the One, [and] following only the thought of those who established all names, who first took two speakable letters and then thirdly added to them the breath through which its silence is a symbol of Existence.

The first problem that we should examine seems to be this: can it be that no name by which we call it is a name of the One? If names are natural, then there is no name of the First, not even this name \textquotedblleft the One\textquotedblright itself. We shall see this if we realise that necessarily every name that applies to something by nature shows that it is proper to what it names, either through an analysis into simple names, or through a resolution into its letters. But if this is true, \textquotedblleft One\textquotedblright presumably must be resolved into its letters, since it cannot be resolved into any other more simple names. So it is necessary then that the letters out of which \textquotedblleft hen\textquotedblright is composed represent some facet of the nature of the One. But then both letters would imitate something different, and in this way the First will be not-one\textsuperscript{23}. So if it had a name, the One would not be one.
Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν δὲδείκται ταῖς ἐν Κράτελῳ κειμέναις ὑμολογημένοις κανονίς περὶ τῶν ὄνομάτων. Ἐκείνῳ δὲ ὅμως ἔχθετεσσαν πάσα καλοῦμεν αὐτό, μη δὲ ὅλως ὄνομαστόν. «Ἐν» ἢ οὖν ἐκείνῳ καλοῦμεν ὄντως ὄνομαστές, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν νόημα τοῦ ἔνος: πάντα γὰρ τὰ δύτα τῆς πρωτότητας αἰτίας ἐφέστηκα τε καὶ ἐχεῖ τινά ἐμφάνων ὑόθεν περὶ αὐτῆς, καὶ τὰ νοερὰ καὶ τὰ φυσικά καὶ τὰ ἑστάσεις καὶ τὰ ἄφοσα καὶ αὐτὴ μετὰ τούτων ἡ ὅλη καθ’ ὅ καὶ ἐκείνην ἐπεδείκνυσαν δι’ οὐκ ἐστί δι’ τῆς γνώσεως ἀρετοῦ τοῦ ἐν· οὖν γὰρ ἂν ἐφέστη αὐτό καὶ τὸ τῆς γνώσεως ἁμορφον· πάντα δὲ έχει αὐτόφθονον περὶ τὸ ἐν ὑόθεν, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἡ ψυχή. Τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶ τὸ ἐν· τὸ ἐν· ἢ τῆς ὅλου ματικῆς ἐνεργείας καὶ ἐπιβολῆς; τὰύτην οὖν τὴν ἔνδοξον τοῦ ἔνος, προβολήν οὖσαν τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνός καὶ οὖσαν αὐτόφθονον, οὕτως ὄνομάζομεν «τὸ ἐν». Ὅπως ἐκείνῳ οὖν ὄνομαστόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν· ἢ τὰ διὰ τούτων ὡς οἰκείοις αὐτῷ· τὰ πρῶτα περὶ ἐκείνου λέγομεν καὶ σημαίνομεν τοῖς πλησίοις.

Καὶ γὰρ διατήρησαν ὅσαν ἐν· ἢ τῆς ἐνεργείας, τῆς μὲν ὀρέκτηκής, τῆς δὲ ἐπικεφαλής, καὶ τῆς μὲν καὶ τοιαύτης ἡμᾶς ὅσας ἐμφώτησε, τῆς δὲ ταῖς παρακολουθεῖς μοινοῦ διαμαμένοις τοῖς ἐντάξεις ἀρέσεις, ἔδει δησοῦ τὴν μὲν ὅσαν;78 Καὶ οὕτως πάντων ὁδέστε τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχής ἐκλείπειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς περὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐνεργείας πρόθεσις εἶναι, καὶ διὰ τούτο τὸν ἐμβολό αὐτοῦ ἡμᾶς ἀράξειν;79 κατεργάζεται ὅπως καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ, τῆς δὲ ἐπικεφαλής ποτὲ ἐξουσίωσε οὐκ ἐκλείπειν78 καὶ ἐκλείπειν ἀγάπης ἐπιδιόλους καὶ διὰ τούτο καὶ τὴν αὐξάνουσα νόημα εἶναι διὰ τῆς λειτουργίας [510] τῆς ἐκθέσεως πρὸς πάσης νόημας ἀνέκδοτος καὶ τοῖς νοεροῖς ἀμοιροῦς80 ἐποικομένην.

Διὰ τί οὖν, φαίνεται, τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ αὐξάνους;82 ὄνομασμένον ἐν., ἀλλ’ ὡς ἄλλο τι· διότι, ἢ ὅτι, τὸ ἐν συμφύτευσις ἐστὶ τούτου τῶν ἐν· ἡμῖν ὄνοματων83 πάντων· πάντα γὰρ διακρίνεται καὶ τεκνισμοῦ διὰ τοῦτον αὐτῶν ἀπόκλεινεται καὶ αὐξάνεται τῆς πρὸς ἀπόκλεισαι καὶ ἀφανείμαιντο τοῦ ἐνός. Οὕτω καὶ τὰ σύμφωνα διεσπαρμένα

78 μὲν ὀδασαν coniceminus: manentem (μένουσαν G); cf. n. 61
79 ἢ τῆς ὅσας ἐφέστη. Bossier: qua quidem existit (πίστες ὅψεις) G
80 ἐξουσίωσεν coniceminus: elaborare G (an melius elabori scribendum ?); cf. Plotinus, Enn. VI 9, 3, 4-6: ἐπί σοι ἤντο αὐξάνεις αὐξάνεις: ἢ ἐξουσιωθήθη... ἐξουσιώσει
81 ἀμοιροῦς: trad. latini habent notorum (γνωρίων), sed exspectes potius nominum pro ὄνοματων (cf. In Parm. VII, 1200, 16)
82 ὀδίνα addidimus: G prob. spatio vacuum reliquit, ut in allis locis ubi ἂνεσ
83 ὄνοματων: trad. latini habent notorum (γνωρίων), sed exspectes potius nominum pro ὄνοματων (cf. In Parm. VII, 1200, 16)
their parts pass away, so also souls, if they make their own powers into many, die their own death; but they come to life again if they gather themselves together and flee back up to the One, away from the division and dispersion of their powers.

Hence “the One” is the most venerable name, since it is that which perfects and preserves all things, and for this reason we call our conception of the First “the One”. Moreover, we see that not all things participate in the other terms, even if you should mention Being itself (for there is something which in-itself is not and has no share in Being; and even more so is it the case that not all things participate in Life, Intellect, Rest and Motion), but all things participate in the One. For were you to mention multiplicity itself, even this is unable to exist unless it receives some sort of unity. For a multiplicity cannot be unlimited, so that if some multiplicity should come into existence, it will be limited. But a limited multiplicity is a number, and a number is a sort of one; for “three” and “four” and each of the numbers is a sort of henad. We would not say that a number is a monad, but it is certainly a henad, for it is a Form, and a Form always participates in a henad, since the Form is what makes a unity out of the parts. Otherwise, how could we say that one number is “three” and another “four”, if they were not distinguished from each other by their own proper henads? All things, then, participate in some one, so that, for this reason as well, “the One” seems to be the most venerable name. So it is fitting that we give our conception of the First this denomination “One”. And seeing that the One is common to all things and preserves all things, we name the cause itself of all things and that which is desired by them all after them all; for we must either have given it a name taken from all things or from those immediately after it. So it must be named “the One”, after all things.

Why then, do we not say that the other names, such as “Intelllect”, “the intelligible”, and each such-like, are names of the conceptions in us and not of the things? I say that the conceptions of other things are cognitive conceptions of those things of which they are conceptions, and are awakened in us cognitively; for this reason they are only sometimes, and not always, put forward. The conception and the comprehension of the One, on the other hand, is natural and does not occur through an act of direct apprehension and knowledge. Cognitive conceptions, since they are acts of knowledge, coexist with the objects of knowledge, and are able to name them, since their objects are in some way comprehended by them, but the conception of the One, not being cognitive and not comprehending the One, is a natural activity and a natural desire
καὶ ἔφεςι τοῦ ἑνὸς. Δηλοῖ δὲ παντὸς ὁρεῖς οὐδα ὑρεκτική τοῦ ἑνὸς· εἰ δὲ ἦν γνωστόν, μόναις ἄν ἦν ἔφες τοῖς γνωστικαῖς δυνάμεις, ἂν ταῖς ἀδιάφοροι γνώσεις.

410 Ὅτα καὶ δήλων ὅτι ταῦτα ἔστα τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀγάθιον ἐκτείνον γὰρ πάσιν ἔστων ἔφες τοῖς, ἀστερί πάσιν τῷ μορίῳ ἂν ἤτοι καὶ τὸ κακόν· καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἦστε ἀλλὸ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀγάθιον, ἢ δύο ἔστων ἄρχαί, εἰ ἦστε τὸ ἐν πρὸ τοῦ ἀγάθου· πῶς οὖν μᾶλλον τοῦ ἑνὸς ἔστων ἢ ἔφες τοῦ ἀγάθου πῶς δὲ κρέατον τὸ μὲ ἀγάθου· ἢ ἦστε τὸ ἐν πρὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς, σὺν ἐν ὁμοιοίῳ ἦστε καὶ οὐκ ἀγάθον· ἢ δ’ ὤν ταῦτα ἔστα τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀγάθον, εἰκότως ἔστι πρὸ πάσης γνώσεως ἔφες τοῖς, καὶ οὐ τοιαύτην αὐτοῦ ἢ κατάληψις, οἷα τῶν γνωστῶν. Ὅτεν ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἀνάμοια τοῖς πράγμασιν ὡς γνωστικῆς ἐπάγαγον, αὐθεντικὴ ἐν τῷ ἀγάθω τοῦ ἐφεμενή καὶ περιλαμβάνον ὡς δυναμένη τίθεται ἐπώθησαν τὸν ἑνὸς τὸν ἀγάθιον —

420 πῶς γὰρ · ὅτι ἐστὶ μαρτύρειν πως τὴν ὑπάτασσαν ἔκεινοι καὶ ἄλλοι ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων, ἡτὶς ἄλλοι ἔστιν, ἀδιανοϊκτικῶς θεωρεῖν. Ῥήσοι γὰρ ἔστιν, ὡς ἐπομένη, ἐν πάσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ ζωῆς ἡμᾶς ἡ τότε ἐφεμενή καὶ ἀνεκάλεστος οὐδεὶς, ἐπειδὴ καὶ οἱ θεοὶ υἱοῖς οὐκ ἐπιληπτικῶς, ἧς έρημήν καὶ ἐπίρτην, ὡς νεορισμικῆς γιγαντιαίης τὸ ἔν, ἀλλ’ ἱλοτά μεν πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ μεθώρια τοὺς νεκταρίοις φιάζεται τις, καθὼς ἔτει, καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτοῦ κρεῖστων τις γνωσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ κοινὴ ἡ ἔφες τοῦ ἑνὸς σύγκειται τὰ πάντα καὶ ἔσται ὁ ἐστιν, καὶ οὐ ἐνεκα πάντα ὢν καθὼς τὰ ἀλλὰ πάντα ἔστιν, καθαῦτα καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ ἁγάθον.

425 Διός 1512 καὶ ἐκεῖνο γνωστὸν λέγον ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ὁ Σωκράτης, πῶς δ’ ἔστι γνωστὸν μόνης φθογγοῦς εἴπεν· ὅτι τὸ ἰδανίσκαντι τὸν αὐτοῦ αὐθὴν εἰς αὐτό, τίνα ἄλλη λέγων αὐθὴν καὶ τήν ἐν τῇ φυσιᾷ. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὸ ἂλλο τὸ ἀγάθον ἐξελεύσιν εἴπεν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἡλίου ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐνθέλθη σὲ πάλιν ἐκείλεσθαι αὐθὴν καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῷ πρὸς αὐτὸς, σαφῆς καὶ ἐκείνος ἄφθαρσις, λέγων ἄλλον ἕκας διές πάντα ἂν εἰς αὐτοῦ ἀφθαρεῖν καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ἀκεῖνο χωρίας.

for the One. This is shown by the fact that the desire of everything is a desire for the One. If the One were an object of knowledge, it would only be an object of desire for cognitive powers, and not also for those which have no share in knowledge.

From this it is clear that the One and the Good are the same. Both the One and the Good are desired by all things, just as what is not-one and evil are what all things shun. For if the One and the Good are different, either:
1. there will be two principles;
2. or, if the One is before the Good, how could desire for the One not be stronger than desire for the Good? But then how could what is not good be what is better?
3. Or, if the Good is before the One, since it is not one, it will be both good and not good.

But if the One and the Good are the same, then it is fitting that it is desired before all knowledge and that the comprehension of it is not of the same sort as of the objects of knowledge. For this reason, those other conceptions furnish names for things, as objects of knowledge, while the conception of the One, desiring the unknowable and unable to comprehend it, gives the denomination « the One », not to the unknowable (how could it do that ?), but to itself, as somehow divining the existence of the One, not only from itself but from all other things; but it is unable to contemplate what it is. For the desire for the One and the unceasing travail for it is in all things by nature, as we have said, and not by an act of direct apprehension, since even the Divine intellect does not know the One by direct apprehension, as I said earlier, nor intellectually, but is united to it « drunk with nectar », someone says, and by that in which is greater than knowledge. And just as the desire « for the One », by which all things are preserved and are what they are, and on account of which all other things are worthless, is common to all, so also is the desire for the Good.

Hence Socrates, stating at the beginning that it is knowable, and explaining how it is « scarcely knowable », said that it is knowable « to him who inclines his own ray of light towards it ». What other « light » is he speaking of than the « one of the soul » ? Since he said that the Good is analogous to the sun, he calls the seed of the Good placed in our souls « light ». And moreover, before having called it « light » he too made it quite clear that the road which proceeds by way of negations leads to it, saying that « just as in a battle » one must take everything away from it and separate it from everything.
It is right, then, that no name can be applied to it which is quite able to fit it. This then, which is beyond all things and is able to be expressed only by « the One » which who desire to utterly the unutterable, has been addressed not only by Plato, but also by the gods, in this manner. For the gods themselves have delivered oracles such as the following: « For all things, as they come from one and return to one, are divided, as though intellectually, into many bodies »; and they counsel us to put away from ourselves the multiplicity in our soul, and to lead our intellect on high and lead it round to the One; and they say, « Do not hold the Multifaceted Other within your intellect, but let the thought of your soul fly out to the One ». The gods who perceive well what concerns them, stretch towards the One by means of their own one ; and the very revelations which come from those who are truly theologians have handed down to us in a theological manner this conception about the First. They call the First « Ad » in their own language, which for them means « One », as those who know their language translate it, but by reduplicating the name they address the Intellect, the Demiurge of the world, saying he is the many-hymned « Adados ». They do not say that he is immediately after the One, but place him as analogous to the One, so that what the One is in relation to the intelligible, he is in relation to the visible. Hence the One is called by them simply « Ad », while the other is called « Adados », through a reduplication of « the One ». Orpheus as well declared which god is named first, saying that « on great Olympus », the gods give such a name first to « Phanes ». As to the gods which are before Phanes, Orpheus named them symbolically from the lowest levels of reality: « Chronos », « Either », « Chaos », and if you will, « Egg ». But Orpheus never said that the gods are named thus, for these are not their names, rather, he transferred to them these names which are given to other things.

So then, if we must apply some name to the First, even though it is beyond every name, it seems that « the One » and « the Good » are suitable for it, since they appear to be extended through all beings. Hence, also the
It is stated clearly in the *Letters* that a name is not able to comprehend accurately an intelligible object, nor can a visible image of it, nor a definition, nor any scientific knowledge (epistēmē) of it. Only the intellect is able to grasp an intelligible Form accurately and perfectly. Plato worked out this reasoning for one example: the circle.

This name « circle » itself does not comprehend the whole Form of the intelligible circle, for what do we know when we hear the name, other than the name? Neither does a sketch drawn in the dust by a geometrician comprehend it, for it is a remote image of the Form, not to be apprehended by discursive reasoning, but known by sense-perception and imagination. Nor does the definition of the circle comprehend it, for it runs around the Form from all sides, and being complex and composite, is unable to grasp the simplicity of the Form. Nor does scientific knowledge about it comprehend it, even if it should unfold a thousand times the attributes which, as such, belong to the circle (even if other people might call this scientific knowledge), for these attributes are all around the circle but are not the circle itself. But the intellect and intellectual knowledge knows the Form itself and comprehends what it knows by a simple act of apprehension. So this alone is sufficient for the knowledge of the circle, and similarly for the Equal and the Unequal and for each other Form.

If, then, we have considered names and definitions and the multiple scientific knowledge to be worthless for the apprehension of intelligible objects, what must we say about the One itself? Must we not say that every name and every definition and all scientific knowledge fail to grasp it? So the One is not nameable, speakable, accessible to scientific knowledge, or perceptible by the senses of any being. So, then, it is not to be apprehended by any sense-perception, and is not to be comprehended by any opinion, scientific knowledge, definition, or name.
'Αλλα, λέγοις ἄν, τι διαφέρει ταῦτα τῶν πρὸ ἀυτῶν; Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐν ἑκείνοις ἐπεὶ ὁ θυσία ἐκεῖ χαῖρε ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐνός. Ἡ ἐν ἑκείνοις μὲν ἐπεὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνδρας τῶν ἄλλων ἐγιγνόσκει τὸ ἐν, ἐν τούτω δὲ ὅτι δι' ἑαυτῷ ἄγνωστον. τοῦ γὰρ ἐνότατος αὐτὴ διερχόμενή τὸν μὴ διὰ τὴν ἀνάθεσιν τῶν ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἐαυτοῦ φύσιν ἄγνωστον τὸ ἐν. Καὶ δι' ἑκείνου μὲν ἄν ὅ τῶν ἄλλων ὑφεσιν ἐνδείκνυται πρὸς αὐτό, διὰ τῶν δὲ ὅτι τῶν ἐνότατον ὑπερέχει.

Προσκέκλετο δὲ καὶ ὅτι ἦν καθότι καθήκοντο συγκοινωνία τὸ ἐν, τὸ γιγνόσκειν εἶπεν αὐτῷ τοῦ ἐπίστασθαι: τρία γὰρ εἰπὼν ἐμπροσθεν — τὸ ἐπίστασθαι, τὸ δοξάζειν, τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι — διὸ δ' ἐν τούτω ταύτα λαβὼν ἑκείνος, τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὸ δοξάζειν, δήλον ὅτι τὸ γιγνόσκειν τρίτον εἶπεν αὐτῷ μόνῳ τοῦ ἐπίστασθαι, ὡστε, εἰ τις ἐστὶ μείζων τῆς ἐπιστήμης γνώσεως ἔνθεος, καὶ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐν ἑκείνῳ τῷ ἐν προσάγοισα, δῆλον δι' αὐτῶν ὅτι ἀκείλεν ὁ λόγος καὶ μαθημα γούς ἐρμηστον, ὡς φησίν ὁ Σωκράτης εἰκότως, τὸ ἐν ἐσχατι τῶν γνώσεως. Ἐσχατε δ' ὅ ὅχι ἐπίστημεν, ἄλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης.

Ἡ δύνατον οὖν περὶ τὸ ἐν ταύτα ὑποῦ ἔχειν; — Ὁδοὺν ἔμαχγε δοκεῖ.

(142A6-8)

Πάντων τούτων παράδοξον τὸ συμπέρασμα καὶ πολλῆς ἁπόριας ἔχειν ἐπεισείγει πάσας ὑπὸ τούς ἐξακολουθεῖν αποφάσεις. Πῶς γὰρ ἀδύνατον 151151

| 151 | ταῦτα περὶ τὸ ἐν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχειν; Πῶς δὲ όχι πάντες ὁι άγνωστος προερχόμενος λόγος ἀνείλθησαν διὰ τῶν τοῦ ἐνσά σωμάτων; | Τις όμοι ὅτι ὁ ἀγνωστὸς ὁ προερχόμενος λόγος ἀνείλθησαν διὰ τῶν τοῦ ἐνσά τοῦ ἀνείλθησαν λόγος, εἰς τό ἐν, αὐτῷ ὅτι ἀνείλθησαν λόγος, ὅτι ἀνείλθησαν λόγος, ἀνείλθησαν λόγος, μέσον οὐ τελευτήν, οὐκ οὔτε σχήμα ἔχουν, καὶ πάντα ἐφεξῆς, καὶ μετὰ πάντα οὐκ ἐν σχαμεῖς, οὐκ οὐσία, οὐκ ῥήματος, οὐκ ὁμοστάσιος, οὐκ ἀνακαλύπτες: ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀδύνατα ταῦτα, ὡς αὐτὸς φησίν: ἀδύνατον ἄρα τὸ 152

But, you might say, how does this differ from what came before? For he said there as well that there is no knowledge of the One. Or rather, there he said that no other thing <knows the One. Here he says that it is in itself unknowable>; by this apposition showing that it is not through the weakness of other things, but through its own nature that the One is unknowable. Through the previous argument he demonstrates the inferiority of other things with respect to the One, while here he demonstrates its superiority with respect to itself.

But we must pay attention to the fact that when he says that the One is not <known>, by <knowledge> he means <scientific knowledge>. For he mentioned three things before: scientific knowledge, opinion and sense-perception; and since here he takes up two of the same terms as before, sense-perception and opinion, it is clear that he understands the third term, <knowledge>, to mean only <scientific knowledge>. So that, if there is some divinely inspired knowledge which is greater than scientific knowledge, and which leads the one in ourselves towards One, it is obvious that the argument did not eliminate this; and this is the <final learning>, as Socrates rightly says, the learning which consists in the final form of knowing. However, this final knowledge is not scientific knowledge, but is above scientific knowledge.

Or is it possible that these things are so about the One? — It does not seem possible to me. (142A6-8)

This is a very paradoxical conclusion which he brings in on top of all the preceding negations, and it gives rise to a serious aporia. How could it be impossible that <these things are so about the One>? How are all of our preceding arguments not discredited by this one pronouncement alone?

(A) Some people²⁴, spurred on by this passage, have said that the first hypothesis draws conclusions which are impossible, and because of this have even said that the One is not a real existent. For they constitute a hypothetical syllogism:

1. If the One is, then it is not a whole, it has no beginning, middle or end, it has no shape, and all the following; and after all those things, the One does not participate in Being, it is not Being, it is not spoken, named or known.

2. Now, these things are impossible, as [Parmenides] himself says.

²⁴ This is a Middle Platonic position — perhaps Origen the Platonist?
3. Therefore the One itself is impossible.

This means, as they themselves said, that there is no such One imperticipable by Being, which is not, nor a One above the One-Being. The One exists in just as many ways as Being does, and the One Being is only a name.

In reply to those who hold this position, one must say that impossibilities arise either in the assumption or in the logical sequence of the argument. But the sequence was altogether necessary, since the secondary steps were always demonstrated through what preceded them, and the assumption was true, for it is necessary for there to be the One-itself, as we have demonstrated from what is said in the Sophist and from the necessity in things. Thus, the hypothesis does not draw impossible conclusions, nor does it contradict the teachings of Plato. What more need we say against these people, who are already refuted by what is said about dialectic in the Republic: that it investigates the cause of all of the intelligibles by “separating it from all other” beings and not recoiling from a single negation? If this is true, where does Plato argue dialectically about the One, by means of negations? It is not in the second hypothesis, where everything is argued through affirmations; nor in the third, where everything is argued through negations together with affirmations. It remains, then, that the argument about the One is in this hypothesis, or nowhere. But it would be absurd if it were nowhere, since Socrates tells us in that text that dialectic is particularly about the One.

(A iii) Others 25 admit the validity of this hypothesis, since in the Republic also it is said about the First that it is beyond Intellect, the intelligible and Being, the very things which are here negated of the One, while in the second hypothesis Being is affirmed first of all. So if this [first] hypothesis is not about what is beyond Being, what other should there be besides this one? Now, in response to the aforementioned aporia they say that Parmenides thinks that all of the preceding conclusions are true, and that he does not add this conclusion here in order to discredit them. Rather, it is to furnish the pretext and the starting point of the second hypothesis that he said that “it might seem” to someone that these things are impossible about the One. This was needed to infer that it is necessary to “return to the hypothesis once again”, lest perhaps “something different should appear to us.” Now these conclusions might seem to be impossible because of the

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25 Neoplatonist position — probably Porphyry.
ineffable nature of the One, but it is clear to anyone that in truth they are not impossible. For impossible conclusions do not follow from possible premises; and the hypothesis is possible, if indeed it is not impossible that the truly One is a real existent. The stranger in the Sophist also reminds us of this when he replies to [Theaetetus] who says that the Whole is first, showing himself that the truly One is not a whole. Further, all the conclusions follow necessarily from this antecedent:<statement> that the simply One exists</statement>, granting that the connections are necessary. So these conclusions are not impossible, and his statement [these things seem impossible] is only an introduction, made in order to provide himself with a road to the second hypothesis, and meaning that these things are impossible through the superiority of the One. For what is to follow will be in a measure more suitable to be handed down to us than what has gone before, since it is more closely akin to us. And Plato himself in the Letters responds to someone who asks about the First, «what kind of a thing is it?», by saying that this is an absurd question, and that one must add nothing to the First from things akin to us, nor at all look in it for «what kind» of a thing it is. For the second hypothesis concerns itself with this, seeking to discover what sort of thing the One-Being is, and demonstrating that it is a whole, an unlimited multiplicity and a limited multiplicity, that it is in motion and at rest, and everything which follows, whatsoever belongs to something which is of «some kind». The first hypothesis, on the other hand, taking up the simply One, [does not try] to show what «kind» of a thing it is. It takes everything away, and adds nothing to it, since one must say nothing about it taken from what is akin to us. From this consideration it is obvious that what has been said might seem to be impossible, and completely foreign to Plato’s doctrine about the First, since it is far from our nature, while actually all of these things are possible, as has been shown.

(A.iii) This, then, is the argument of these people. However, others26 after them think that this conclusion is common, and comprehensive of all of the negations already articulated. For just as there were conclusions for each proposition, so after all of them this conclusion is introduced: that all of these things are impossible about the One — «many», «whole», «shape», «in itself» and «in another», the various genera of Being, «like» and «unlike», «equal» and «unequal», being «older than itself» and «younger than itself» and «the same age as itself».

26 Probably Iamblichus.
the threefold and ninefold [structure] of the parts of Time; and after all of these things: «participating in Being», «being Being», «being participated by Being», «being speakable», and «being known». All of these things are impossible about the One, as has been demonstrated. And because of this, these people say, [Parmenides] asks at this point if it is possible to say that these things are so about the One, and Aristotle replies in the negative. For, in reality, whatever you add to the One is something other than the One; and the One, taking in addition some other thing besides what it is, becomes some one instead of the simple One, just as «living-being», taking in addition some other thing besides what it is, becomes some «living-being», and equally the simple «good», or simple «equal», or simple «like» or «whole», whenever each takes something in addition, becomes, instead of the simple, «some good», «some equal», «some like» — and this must be said in a general way about all such «simples», just as it must be said about the One. So the single negation, which is comprehensive of all of [these] additions, makes it clear that the One, not being one of all these terms, is the cause of them all. And so the common negation imitates the collective process of all things from the One, and the manifestation of each thing, both separate and together, which appears according to the appropriate ordering.

(B.i) So then, these [last two solutions] are fine; the former aims at literary consistency, but the latter does not depart from the consideration of reality. But we must also follow our master in saying that negations in the sphere of beings are particularly said to be about that thing in regard to which they are negations, in some cases in an «eidetic» manner, and in other cases only in a privative manner. For example, we say that «rest» «is not» (for it is not «motion», not «identity», not «difference»), and we call «motion» «non being» in a similar way, for it is not any other being. And in general each being is in its own distinct manner, insofar as it is itself, and is not in many different ways, insofar as it is set apart from other beings. However, even if we do negate the other beings of it, these negations about it are in some way mixed with affirmations.
Metèchei méν γάρ καί τῶν ἄλλων ἐκάστου· οὐξ' δὲ τὴν ἐαυτοῦ καθαρότητα ἔστιν ὁ ἄγνως εἰδήτικαι ἀλὰ αἱ ἀπόφασεις ἐν αὐτῷ· μὴ γάρ ἐν ἐκείνῳ, ἐκτὸς ἔσται, τοῦτο δὲ εἶδός ἐστι νοερὸν. Δὲν εἰσεῖται γάρ ἂν ἢ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως κατασκευασμένην ποιεῖ τὸ ἐν | 518 | ἑκείνους μὴ αὐτοῦ δὲ ἀπόφασις. Πάλιν ἐν τοῖς αἰσθήτοις τῶν ζωκράτην λέγομεν μὴ ἐν τοῖς εἴναι μὴ λέονται μὴ τῶν ἄλλων ζωκράτην πάντων ἄρα τῶν ἄλλων ἔχει τᾶς ἀπόφασείς· ἦν γάρ τι δὲ ἀπειρὰ ἄλλα ὧν ἦσαν, καὶ εἰσίν ἐν αὐτῷ τῶν πάντων αἱ στερηθεῖσαι, στερηθεῖσαι σύνια μόνον. Οὐ γὰρ μετέχει των τῶν ἄλλων, ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἔλεγομεν, οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν καθαρότητα τὸ μὴ μετέχειν, ἀλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀσθενείαν τῆς ἄληκτης καὶ σωματικῆς ὑποστάσεως, μὴ δυναμεῖν πάντων ὧμεν μετέχειν τῶν ἄλλων. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς αἱ ἀπόφασεις περὶ αὐτὰ ἐκέπτει, ὡσπερ ἄποφασείς καί ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς, ἐκεῖ μὲν εἰδήτικος, ἐν τοῖς δὲ ἀρητικοῖς.

Αἱ δὲ ὧν τοῦ ἐνός ἀπόφασείς οὐκ ἔσται περὶ τὸ ἐν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλας ἐκεῖνων πάρεστιν, οὔτε ὡς ἔδος οὔτε ὡς στέρησις, ἀλλὰ ὡσπερ ἔλεγομεν ὅτι τὸ ὅνωμα τοῦτο «ἐν» ἔστι τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐννοίας, ἀλλὰ οὗτος τοῦ ἐνός, οὗτος δὲ λέγομεν ὅτι καὶ ἂν ἀπόφασε περὶ ταύτα ἐστίν, περὶ ἐκείνων δὲ τὸ ἐν οὐδέν ἐστι τῶν ἐμφανῶν ἀποφασίας συμπερασμάτων· ἀλλὰ ἐκβιβάζομεν ἐστὶν διὰ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀπὸ πάσης ἀντιθέσεως καὶ πάσης ἀπόφασεως. Εἰκότως ἄρα πρὸς τὸ τέλει προσέρχετο ὅτι αἱ ἀπόφασεις αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἔσονται περὶ τὸ ἐν· ἀλλὰ γάρ ἦστι τὸ ἔνα περὶ τοῦ ἐνός καὶ ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐναι περὶ τὸ ἐν. Καὶ γάρ ὁ λόγος περὶ τὸ ἐν μὲν ἄξιος — ἀδιάφορον γὰρ ἔστιν —, περὶ τοῦ ἐνός δὲ ἀξίον, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν λεγομένων ἡμῶν τὸ ἄρρητον. Ὡστέ καὶ αἱ ἐρμηνεύει ἀπόφασεις οὐκ ἔσονται περὶ τὸ ἐν· ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ ἐνός. Ὡστέ δὲ τὰς τῶν νοητῶν οὐτε τις τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀπόφασεις οὐδὲν αὐτὰ ἀξιωτυποῦν: αἱ μὲν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὰ ἐκεῖνα ἔστιν, ἡ δὲ καὶ εἰσίν ἀπόφασεις, αἱ δὲ οὖσαμεν εἰσίν περὶ τὸ ἐν.

For [each being] also participates in each other being, while being what it is in a manner which preserves its own purity. So then the negations in its case are « eidetic »; for not being that, it will be something different, and this something else will be an intellectual Form. For it has been shown that the character of difference which is « parcelled out » constitutes non being in this sphere; that is what negation is here.

Now again, when speaking about sensible reality we say that Socrates is not a horse or a lion, or any other thing; so he possesses the negations of every other thing. Being one particular thing, there are an infinite number of others which he is not, and the privations of all these other things are in him, but only as privations. For he does not participate in the others in some way, as we said was the case in the intelligible realm, nor is his non-participation in them on account of purity, but because of the weakness of his material and corporeal existence, which is unable to participate in all beings simultaneously. So then both in intelligible reality and in sensible reality negations are about those things of which they are denied, there in an eidetic manner, here in a privative manner.

But now, the negations belonging to the One are not about the One, for in general nothing is that, neither as Form nor as privation. Rather, just as we said that this name « One » belongs to the conception in us, but not to the One itself, so likewise we say that negation also is about this conception, and none of the preceding negative conclusions are about the One itself; rather, it transcends all antithesis and all negation on account of its simplicity. So then it is fitting that he appended to the end that these negations are not « about the One ». For it is one thing to concern the One (peri tou henos), but it is another to be about the One (peri to hem)24. And so the argument is not about the One (for it is indeterminable), but it concerns the One, that is to say that what we have been saying concerns the unspeakable. Consequently, the preceding negations are not about the One, but do concern the One. So these negations do not resemble the negations of intelligible or sensible reality, for the latter are actually about those things of which they are negations, while in no way is the former about the One.

24 It is difficult to find a pair of locutions in English which expresses the distinction which Proclus is drawing between the proposition peri plus the accusative and peri plus the genitive. For lack of a better solution, I have used « about the One » for peri plus the accusative, and « concern the One » for peri plus the genitive. The Klibansky-Labowsky translation uses « express something about the One » and « refer to the One », respectively.
Ouly mēn oūn latēon prōtōn tīn āporían. Kaθ' etērān dē ēpibolēn rētōn dōn ēmprosēn mēn àpofāsēs pānta tōn énous, νομίζων àtī tās àpofāsēs mālous prospēseu kai tās kataphasēs kai σοζου τήν ὑπόθεσιν τήν λέγουσαν εἶναι τήν ἐν ἐπειδὴ δὲ προελθὼν ἀνέλαβαι ἂν αὐτὸ τά ἄλλα πάντα καὶ τό μετέχειν ὁὐσίας καὶ τό εἶναι αὐτὸ τό πολυτιμητόν ἐν καὶ κέδειν δὲν τῆς ῥήτους ἐστὶν ὡς γνώσιν, εἰκότως τελευταία ἀναμείρει 126 kai autās 127 tās àpofāsēs από τόν énous. Ei γάρ μὴ ἔστω ῥήτου, καὶ μηδὲς τόν ἐκείνον λόγον, πώς αὐτά ἂpofāsēs èleven 51911 allēgēs èp' autō; pās ἐp' προτάσει 128 suμβαίνει tò de tōde ὑπάρχειν <τό de ën tode> 129 ὑπάρχειν <πάρει> 130 ñμεις, αὖν δ' ὄλως ὄνοματον ἐστίν: δὲι δὲ ὅνωτα τί εἶναι ὑποκείμεναν ταῖς ἂpofāsēs: αὖν δ' ἅρα αὐτά ἂpofāsēs allēgēs κατά τόν énous, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον μὲν αὐτά ἂpofāsēs kai αὐτάς κατά τόν énous, αὖν δὲν ἂpofāsēs αὖν δὲν ἂpofāsēs kai αὐτάς αὐτάς

126 ὑμηκὸς: scrisipsum: utique dicet (dv αἰτεῖ = έρει) G
127 αὐτάς: scrisipsum (cf. infra, l. 721-22): ipse (aütis) G
128 πάς: γάρ proptası: scrisipsum: omnis propositio G
129 et εάν tòde: addídimus: non autem neque aliquid> add. K.-L.; ε cum spatio hab. G
130 αὖν addidimus
131 αὐτάς: correcimus: ipse (aütis) G
132 δ' ἦν: sc. post Platonem, id est Aristoteles; cf. In Parm. V, 983, 13-14 et
133 ὑπερθέντο: conicimus: superum spatio vacuo G

(B.i) This, then, is the first way to solve the aporia. According to another approach, one must say that at first he negates everything of the One, because he thinks that negotiations are more suitable to it than affirmations, but holds on to the hypothesis [itself], which says that « the One is ». However, since in proceeding he has removed everything else from it (even participating in Being and being the highly-honoured One itself) and has demonstrated that it is neither speakable nor knowable, it is fitting that at the end he removes from the One even the negotiations themselves. For if it is not speakable and there is no account of it, how could the negotiations be true of it? For every proposition has the form of « this belongs to that »; but since it is not lawful for « any » this » to belong to « the One », it is entirely unnameable. However, there must be some name serving as the subject of negative propositions. Therefore, the negotiations are not true of the One, although they are more true of it than the affirmations, but both alike fall short of the simplicity of the One. And indeed all truth lies in negations and affirmations, but the One is greater than all truth. How then would it be possible for anything to be true of it? So at the end he rightly removes the negotiations themselves from the One, saying that it is impossible for these to be about the One, since it is unspeakable and unknowable. And do not be amazed if Plato, who respects all the principles of contradiction, says here that both the affirmations and the negotiations are simultaneously false of the One. For they discriminate between the true and the false in things which can be said. But what sort of affirmation could belong to something which cannot be put into words? And it seems to me that the one who came after Plato did not accept the One above Intelect, because he relied absolutely on the principle of contradiction. Seeing that the One is clearly unspeakable and unutterable, he stopped short at the intellectual cause and <placed> the Intelect above them as cause of the whole. But in placing Intelect [first] he eliminates providence, for as we have said, it is proper to the head beyond the Intelect not to contemplate things qua intellect. And by removing providence he also takes away the creative power, for which that is unable to exercise providence over anything is sterile. Further, by rejecting the creative power, he does not admit the hypothesis of the Ideas, according to
which the creator creates. In short (lest I enumerate everything and suspend) [the commentary on] the rest of the dialogue), he encircles the inherited philosophy with new doctrines. Now in order that we not fall prey to this mistake, we must say that: in the case of the unspeakable, contradictory propositions are simultaneously false; only in the case of things spoken do they discriminate between the true and the false; and in no case are they ever simultaneously true.

(B.iii) To give, <cas> they say, the third cup to Zeus the Saviour, let us give the following explanation. As has often been said, Plato takes the negotiations in the case of the One to be generative of affirmations. But now he removes from it even the generative negations, in order that we not consider the One to possess the power to generate all things. For while denying of it a generative Existence as well as Being, we might have attributed to the One, without noticing, the Power which is between these [i.e., between Existence and Being]131. And this is what «it is not possible that these things are so about the One» means: that it does not possess the power to generate all things, a power which we said was the nature of negation. And even though it is said to generate and to bring into existence, it is just that we transfer to it from beings the most honoured of all names which signify powers, although it is greater than all these names, just as it is greater than what is signified by the names. And so, if I must state what seems to be the case, affirmations belong rather to the hexads of beings (for it is in them that the power to generate beings resides), but the First is before all power and before affirmations.

(B.iv) After these [explanations], then, let us take up the fourth way of solving the aporia. «It is not lawful» that the soul ascending to Intellect ascend with its multitude of powers, but it must let go of everything which is akin to it and whatever divides its activities. And having mounted on high and come to be there, and having come to anchor in the One-Being, it must bring itself towards the One itself, and make itself one, not being curiously busy about many things and not inquiring «what is it or what is it?», but rather closing its eyes altogether and gathering together all its activity and being satisfied with unity alone. And it is exactly this which Parmenides is imitating, when at the end he removes even the negotiations and every account, wishing to conclude the argument on the One by moving towards the unspeakable. For the anchorage must be the end of the journey towards it, the abiding the end of the ascension, the unspeakable

134 ἀναβαλλων conicusimus dubitaner: spat. vac. hab. G
135 τῷ σωτήρι ὅσι: spat. vac. hab. G, τῷ σωτηρι με. A
136 προστιθέμενοι, νἀκαρι scirepsi: appostis to G, foris. error scribali pro appositisu) eturi
137 τοι θειοίνοι addinimus: spat. vac. hab. G (cf. infra, n. 139)
138 τῶν ὀρμῶν scirepsi: imperam (ὁμίου?) G

Proclus is speaking of the first intelligible triad: Existence, Power and Being (hyparkis, dunamis, onia).
the end of all speech, and unification the end of all knowing.

It seems to me that it is for all these reasons that he removes in the end even the negations from the One. For this whole dialectical method, which proceeds by way of negations, would lead us to what is a sort of threshold of the One, removing all inferior things and through this removal destroying the impediments to the contemplation of the One, if it is possible to speak in this way. But after the passage through all things one must also put this method itself away, since it is extremely labious, and draws along with it the conception of the things negated, in the company of which it is not possible to attend to the One. For the intellect does not see purely when it brings to the forefront of its attention the things that are posterior to it, nor the soul when it is distracted by care for what is after the soul, nor in general is it possible to see something perfectly with such care-full attention. For care and attention belong to contemplation when it has encountered difficulties. Hence Nature produces what it produces and scientific knowledge says what it says without care and attention, for knowledge has such an attention only when it is in doubt and falls short of being knowledge.

Just, then, as in the case of knowledge one must purify the activity of such care and attention, even though it is perfected through the attention [to difficulties], so also here one must be purified of all dialectical reasoning. For it is a preparation for the tension towards the One, but it is not that tension. Rather, not only is dialectic a preparation, but so is the tension as well. Finally, when the soul has accomplished this, it will be lawful for it to be with the One; and having become in itself solitary, it will choose only the simple One.

It seems to be in view of this that Parmenides asks this last question, thus concluding this extended examination of the arguments concerning the One. Therefore it is fitting that Aristotle, following him towards the unspeakable itself, <denies the negation> as well; for by his denial he too removes <all> of the negations. It is in silence, then, that he brings to completion the speculation about the One.

32 Proclus uses the word *epistasis* in both of its senses, as *attention* and *difficulty*. *Epistasis* means a *stopping*, and takes on the meaning of stopping in order to observe something, or pay attention to something. From this first meaning the second meaning of *difficulty* arises, since that which gives rise to some perplexity or difficulty interrupts the flow of one's thought, and causes one to stop and give close attention to the problem which has arisen. Thus Proclus can say here that *epistasis* (*attention*) only belongs to contemplation when it encounters difficulties.