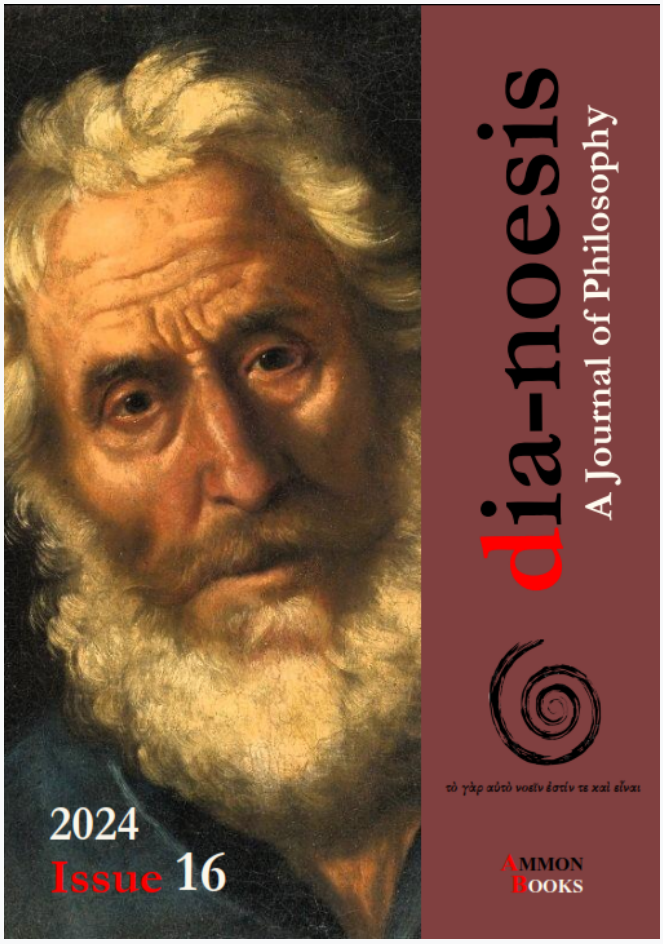
ePublishing

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΤΕΚΜΗΡΙΩΣΗΣ
EKT NATIONAL DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy

Vol 16 (2024)

Philosophy in Late Antiquity Middle Platonism, Neopythagoreanism, and Neoplatonism



The Allegory of the Divided Line in Proclus'Ontotheology

Eleni Boliaki, Vasiliki Anagnostopoulou

doi: 10.12681/dia.39538

To cite this article:

Boliaki, E., & Anagnostopoulou, V. (2024). The Allegory of the Divided Line in Proclus'Ontotheology. *Dia-Noesis: A Journal of Philosophy*, *16*, 171–188. https://doi.org/10.12681/dia.39538

https://epublishing.ekt.gr | **e-Publisher:** EKT | **Downloaded at:** 18/02/2026 01:41:16

The Allegory of the Divided Line in Proclus' Ontotheology

Eleni Boliaki,
Associate Professor,
Hellenic Open University
eboliaki@eap.gr
- Vasiliki Anagnostopoulou,
Ph.D. Cand. Hellenic Open University
vasiaanagn94@gmail.com

Abstract

The goal of this research paper is to highlight the way in which Proclus elaborates and incorporates in his ontotheological system the allegory of the divided Line in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic* (1.287.20-292.21). It focuses on the presentation of the reasoning process and the interpretive approach of the subject matter by this Neoplatonic thinker. More specifically, in this paper we will present Proclus' reasoning process regarding the unity of the Line, demonstrating those details that are explanatory additions to the already existing Platonic text. We will highlight the way Proclus employs the two-part and, later, four-part division of the Line, as well as the contents of each section, with an emphasis on the new meanings he gives to the terms and the new terms that he introduces.

Key words: Proclus, Plato, allegory, Line, intelligible, visible

Introduction

In this study, we present a specific research project from the commentary work of the Neoplatonic thinker and last scholarch of the Platonic Academy, Proclus, on Plato's *Republic*. We aim to highlight how Proclus interprets one of Plato's three allegories, the Allegory of the Line.[1]Our research ambition is to examine how Proclus manages to incorporate Plato's descriptions into his own worldview, which is shaped by his theological understanding of reality. To achieve this, we will conduct a systematic, interpretative, and synthetic analysis of the passages that concern this allegory exclusively, frequently employing intertextuality, and we will attempt a reconstruction and a re-synthetic arrangement of Proclus' argumentation so that we can follow, with the necessary precision and coherence, the stages he goes through.

Moving in this direction, it is worth observing the following: Proclus places at the center of his elaborations not merely the intention to bring Plato into the intellectual foreground as an ever-present duty, but to validate a timeless temporality, which emerges through a non-autonomous textual formation, bearing the strong character of commentary. By commentary, we do not refer to specific doxographical contexts but to a meta-synthetic reading and elaboration of prior formulations, which in any case were integrated into the later intellectual milieu. And here, the historical orientation plays the pivotal role and brings the study of Proclus' work into the domain of the History of Philosophy. Given that Proclus processes the entirety of Plato's work through his ontotheological lens, we must examine how this is validated through his reference to Plato.

1 It should be noted here that a similar study by Pieter d'Hoine titled "The Metaphysics of the 'Divided Line' in Proclus: A Sample of Pythagorean Theology" in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 56 (2018), pp. 575–599, has preceded this one. Although this study focuses on how Proclus interprets the Allegory of the Line in his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, it primarily aims, as its title suggests, to connect it with Pythagorean theology.

In order to carry out such an endeavor, we must assume the following: Proclus attempts to highlight a holistic system of Knowledge based on a conceptual 'arsenal' that is multifaceted.

A. Towards a Proof of the Unity of the Line

The first line of reasoning brings to the forefront the issue of the unity of the Line, with Proclus gradually introducing us to his familiar ontological system. More specifically, the Neoplatonic scholarch notes the following: "Since he wished to show, then, that the procession of the beings from unity is continuous and unified, he compared this continuity with a single line because subsequent things always proceed from primary ones by virtue of their similarity and coherence, since no void separates the things that are".[2] In this passage, the following position is expressed: the existence of a single Line, though divided, remains one, and serves as proof by Plato of the continuous and unified procession of beings from the supreme ontological principle, the One. From this perspective, the procession of beings occurs through descending degrees, with lower beings deriving from higher ones, based on the function of two principles: similarity, which reflects the existence of the lower within the higher in potential, and continuity, which refers both to a sequential articulation and consequent unfolding of similar ontological levels, and to a specific linear classificatory regularity in terms of cause and effect, with the former always initiating the latter.[3] To these designations, which pertain to the emanative

2 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic* I.288.7-10: «Τήν μέν οὖν ἀφ'ένός πρόοδον τῶν ὄντων συνεχῆ και ἡνωμένην οὐσαν ἐνδείξασθαι βουλόμενος γραμμῇ μιᾷ τήν συνέχειαν ταύτην ἀπείκασεν, δι'ὁμοιότητος καί ἀλληλουχίας τῶν δευτέρων ἀπό τῶν πρώτων ἀεί προϊόντων, κενοῦ δέ οὐδενός τά ὄντα διείργοντος». The translation of the citations are from *Proclus' Commentary on the Republic*, Translated, Annotated, and Introduced by Brian Duvick, ed. "Princeton University Press," 2017.

3 Regarding the concept of similarity, Christos Athan. Terezis notes the following: "... Proclus refers to two levels of similarity. Concerning the general categories, the similarity between each underlying being and its

development of beings, Proclus adds another parameter: the absence of void, which could act as an obstacle in this process. Here, the Neoplatonic scholarch, applying his specialized insights, reaches the following conclusion: "in fact, this was not permissible, for the Good creates all things and turns them back again to itself".[4] According to this passage, the existence of a void space, which might suggest the existence of a non-being, would not be permissible for one basic reason: the Good, or the One, produces everything and causes their reversion. [5] In order to ensure both the

predecessor is defined in terms of what an even higher category has formed. Within a genus, however, things that appear multiplicatively resemble their source-unit based on how that source uniquely shapes them. Indeed, various types of similarity are developed throughout his system, but none of them reach the same intensity as the previous two. In a system where everything operates in absolute mutual reciprocity, the predominance of similarities is inevitable, functioning analogically" (*The Neoplatonic School as the Culmination of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, University of Patras, p. 142). We also refer to Aik. Paraskevopoulou's doctoral dissertation: *The Concept of Similarity in the Neoplatonic Proclus*, Patras, 2018, where this issue is extensively analyzed.

4 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.288.12-13: «οὐδέ γάρ ἦν τοῦτο θεμιτόν, τἀγαθοῦ πάντα παράγοντος καί εἰς ἑαυτό πάλιν ἐπιστρέφοντος».

5 For the triadic scheme "remaining-procession-reversion," see E. R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology*, Oxford 1963, pp. 212-223; J. Trouillard, *L'Un et l'âme selon Proclos*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1972, pp. 78-106, and *La mystagogie de Proclos*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1972, pp. 53-91; W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1965, pp. 118-164; and also Christos Athan. Terezis's study, *The Neoplatonic School as the Culmination of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, pp. 102-112. This triadic scheme plays a crucial role in Proclus's ontological system. The "remaining" (*monē*) refers precisely to the self-retention of the primary highest Principle, as well as any other, within itself—a detail that signifies the absence of any participation or relationship pointing to external determination, in an atmosphere of profound secrecy (see Proclus, *Elements of Theology: Toward a Summary of Ancient Greek Metaphysics*, translated by Anna Kelesidou-Galanou, ed. "Zitros", Thessaloniki, 2017 p. 166). The "procession" (*proodos*) expresses the production of effects—the metaphysical, and later the physical world—under terms of systematic and pre-planned productive descent from the highest Principle and other secondary principles. The "reversion" (*epistrophē*) signifies the reversion of the created causes back to their respective origins, to the direct cause and ultimately to the One,

descending productive unfolding and the ascending reversion of beings, it is necessary for both of these processes to occur continuously, without intervening voids that would disrupt the flow of the process. It should be noted here that Proclus has explicitly addressed the issue of similarity elsewhere, particularly in his *Elements of Theology*, where, aiming to connect this notion with both the procession of beings and their reversion to the supreme Principle, he states: "All procession is accomplished through a similarity of the secondary to the primary." [6] and "But all things are bound together by similarity, as by dissimilarity they are distinguished and severed. If, then, reversion is a communion and conjunction, and all communion and conjunction is through similarity, it follows that all reversion must be accomplished through similarity.". [7] The first passage (29) implies that similarity is the ontological state that allows for the existence of the secondary from the primary, and the second passage develops a unique teleology, indicating that through likeness, the reversion of all effects to their immediate cause is achieved. This reversion does not occur in spatial terms but through the recognition and utilization of the gifts bestowed upon them.

The next logical premise highlights the relationship between the producer and the produced, with Proclus asserting: "In any case, the creation must be like its Creator. Therefore, since the latter is one, the creation must be continuous. For continuity is related to unity. A cause of this continuity is the similarity of the subsequent sections to the

following a hierarchical path from the lower, subordinate beings to the higher archetypes, aiming to restore absolute ontological completeness and perfection. (See *Proclus, Elements of Theology*, pp. 168-170). Here too, a distinctive teleology is developed, achieving unity.

6 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 29: «πᾶσα πρόοδος δι' ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελεῖται τῶν δευτέρων πρός τά πρῶτα»

7 Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 32: «συνδεῖ πάντα ἡ ὁμοιότης, ὥσπερ διακρίνει ἡ ἀνομοιότης καί διίστησιν. Εἰ οὖν ἡ ἐπιστροφή κοινωνία τίς ἐστι καί συναφή, πᾶσα δέ κοινωνία καί συναφή πᾶσα δι' ὁμοιότητος, πᾶσα ἄρα ἐπιστροφή δι' ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελεῖτο ἄν». The translation of the citations are from *Proclus, The Elements of Theology,* A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary by E. R. Dodds, ed. "Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1963.

principal ones.".[8] Here, Proclus argues that continuity is due to the unity of both the One and its products. Generation, or the progressive production of all ontological levels, is continuous because continuity is related to the One. The cause of continuity is similarity, which is also linked to the One, as it is a form of unity. In examining this, we can divide Proclus' statement into three key points, which we will approach through intertextual analysis and confirmation from the *Elements of Theology*: a) How are the cause and the effect connected, and what is their relationship? b) What is the relationship between continuity and kinship? c) What is the connection between similarity and unity? Proclus, as previously mentioned, argues in the *Elements of Theology* that all procession occurs under the conditions of similarity. Since the productive cause is superior to its products, these products cannot be absolutely identical in power to their cause. This necessitates that they are either distinct and unequal, or both distinct and united. In the first case, Proclus identifies the paradox: if they are completely distinct, there would be no sympathy or participation between them, in terms of the lower being harmonized with the higher or partaking in it. This hypothesis contradicts the idea that the participating entity (the produced) draws its essence from the cause through communion. If, on the other hand, there is a relationship that includes both distinction and unity, the effect (the produced) would both participate and not participate in the cause, thus deriving its essence from the cause and simultaneously not deriving it. Proclus notes that if the product is more distinct, it will be more alien to the producer than related, and thus more discordant and unsympathetic. Since the products are kindred to their causes in essence and sympathetic to them, and they naturally depend on them and desire their connection with them (as they desire the Good, which they know through their

8 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.288.14-18: «δεῖ γοῦν ὁμοιοῦσθαι τῷ γεννῶντι τήν γένεσιν· ἑνός οὖν ἐκείνου ὄντος συνεχῆ τήν γένεσιν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι· συγγενές γάρ τῷ ἑνί τό συνεχές. τούτου δέ αἴτιον τοῦ συνεχοῦς ἡ ὁμοιότης τῶν ἐπομένων τμημάτων πρός τά ἡγούμενα ... ἡ γάρ ὁμοιότης ἑνότης τίς ἐστιν»

mediation), they are more united than distinct, and thus more similar. Hence, the productive cause gives form first to the similar before the dissimilar. Moreover, the product owes its existence to similarity, as this ensures the preservation of the identity of the offspring with its parent.

B. Towards an Interpretative Approach to the Fourfold Division of the Line

At the next stage, the reasoning takes on a more synthetic perspective, bringing to the forefront the fourfold division of the Line, highlighting the relationship that develops between its parts. Specifically, Proclus argues: "Of the four sections of the one line that he reveals, he posits that the two comprising its greater section belong to the genus of what is contemplated, but that the two comprising the lesser belong to the genus of what is seen.".[9] According to this passage, the fourfold division of the Line does not arise randomly but is structured in such a way that it corresponds to the content of its segments. Based on this division, the larger and ontologically superior parts correspond to the intelligible realm (*νοητόν*), while the smaller and ontologically inferior parts correspond to the visible realm (*ὁρώμενον*). The superiority refers both to an evaluative hierarchy and to chronological precedence, as the intelligible realm is closer to the One (Ἕν), and thus its productive development precedes that of the visible realm. It is important to emphasize here that the manner in which the fourfold distinction of the Line emerges is expressed through the participle "*ἀναφανέντων*," derived from the verb "*ἀναφαίνομαι*," which refers either to the (re)appearance of these parts or to a cognitive process of ascension that progresses gradually upwards. The second interpretation, which is articulated through reasoned conjecture, seems to receive appropriate textual support.

9 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.6-10: «τεττάρων δέ τῆς μίας γραμμῆς ἀναφανέντων αὐτῷ τμημάτων τά μέν δύο τά τό μεῖζον αὐτῆς τμήμα συμπληροῦντα τοῦ νοουμένου γένους εἶναι τίθεται, τά δέ δύο τά τό ἔλασσον τοῦ ὁρωμένου γένους»

However, the simultaneous presence of both interpretations cannot be entirely ruled out.

The distinction mentioned above is entirely reasonable based on the following observation: "In fact, he must attribute the greater part to what is contemplated, since it both is superior to and contains the other, but the lesser part to what is seen, for it is causally contained in the former. But what is contained is everywhere less than what contains it, whether you should consider the containment in terms of essence, power, or energy, as one sees both in the case of all things that are continuous and in the case of all that are divided.".[10] According to this, the higher contains the lower, and therefore it is necessary for the containing entity to have a broader ontological scope than that which is causally contained, in terms of essence, power, and energy.[11] It should be emphasized that the concepts of essence (οὐσία), power (δύναμις), and energy (ἐνέργεια) are foundational pillars upon which Proclus' ontological system is built. These concepts describe the productive-procession dynamics through which the multiplicity arises from the single supreme Principle, the One (Ἕν). The cause exists in a state of actuality during its productive development, while the effect receives this energy as a potential state, a state of anticipation that, at a later level, defines its active production. Despite the fact that the cause is of a different order and ontological priority than the effect, each entity, when viewed within its own rank and level—without reference to their relational connections or their hierarchical status—constitutes a being

10 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.10-16: «Δεῖ γάρ τῷ νοουμένῳ τό μεῖζον ἀποδιδόναι, κρείττονί τε ὄντι καί περιέχοντι θάτερον, τῷ δέ ὁρωμένῳ τό ἔλάσσον· περιέχεται γάρ ἐν ἐκείνῳ κατ'αἰτίαν. Ἔλασσον δέ τοῦ περιέχοντος πανταχοῦ το περιεχόμενον, εἴτε κατ'ουσίαν εἴτε κατά δύναμιν εἴτε κατ' ἐνέργειαν λαμβάνοις τήν περιοχήν, ὥσπερ καί ἐπί τῶν συνεχῶν καί ἐπί τῶν διῃρημένων ὁρᾶται πάντων».

11 The verb "to encompass" (*periecho*) holds significant importance in Proclus's conceptual system, expressing the capacity of causes to contain their effects in a unified way as they progress. See *Proclus, Elements of Theology*, proposition 65, where the Neoplatonic thinker discusses the relationship between cause-agent and effect-product.

that "has its existence in its own order" and thus possesses its own particular essence.[12]

C. Towards the Elucidation of the Contents of Each Segment of the Line

Proclus begins his reasoning by addressing the lowest and most inferior section of the Line, the visible (*ὁρώμενον*), a movement mirrored by Plato. Proclus justifies this approach with the following explanation: "He [Socrates] says, beginning with what is first for us, the visible genus, because this is more familiar".[13] The primary reason for beginning his argumentation from the lower ontological level is that it is more familiar to human perception. Consequently, the epistemological process maintains its ascending nature. Proclus, like Plato, begins his analysis from what is most accessible to human experience and understanding, gradually working upwards toward the more abstract and higher levels of reality.

The aforementioned ontological domain, as already known from Plato, is divided into two levels: the level of *Eikasia* and the level of *Pistis*. Regarding the entities contained within each level, Proclus notes the following: "One of the two sections is comprised of images".[14] According to this passage, one of the two sections, the lower one, contains *images* (εἰκόνες), while the remaining part encompasses all the entities from which the images derive. Here, Proclus identifies

12 For further clarification on this issue, see *Elements of Theology*, the propositions 77-79 in particular, pp. 375-377, where the relationship between potentiality and actuality is accurately articulated. For a comprehensive study of this subject in Neoplatonism, see also Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, Brill, Leiden 1978, pp. 27-45.

13 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.20-22: «τούτου δέ ἑξῆς φησίν ἀπό πρός ἡμᾶς πρώτων ὡς γνωριμοτέρων ἀρξάμενος τοῦ ὁρωμένου γένους». See also Plato's *Republic*, 509e.

14 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.22-23: «τό μέν ἕτερον τοῖν πραγμάτοιν εἰκόνες, τό δέ λοιπόν πᾶν ἀφ' ὧν αἱ εἰκόνες». See Plato's *Republic*, 509e-510a.

a detail that raises questions: "all the rest is comprised of the things from which the images come. Since the images, in turn, can indicate statues and drawings and everything of the sort, [Socrates] says, defining himself what he means the images to be, that they are like those produced by luminescence in illuminated objects, and that he calls both the shadows and the reflections in water and in other mirrors *images*".[15] The issue Proclus identifies here relates to Plato's categorization of images, which includes both shadows and reflections (pantasmata).[16] Proclus argues that, since images can be considered to include statues, paintings, and anything similar, it is necessary to define the entities that belong to the lower ontological category. In other words, the specific details that distinguish these entities ontologically and evaluatively from one another must be identified. He concludes with the following categorical definition: images are those formations created by objects that illuminate those that receive the light. In contrast, shadows refer to those representations formed in water and mirrors, which he refers to as reflections or phantasms (phantasmata).

To further elaborate on the properties associated with mirrors, Proclus provides the following observations: "And when he defines what properties these mirrors must have, he says density, smoothness, and brightness. Indeed, there must be density, he says, in order that the reflection that falls on the pores not lose the quality of emerging as a single image from many effluences. There must be smoothness to prevent that roughness, because of prominences and recesses, become a cause of irregularity for the image to be constituted. There must be brightness so that the image, though it possesses an

15 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.23-28: «τῶν δέ αὖ εἰκόνων δηλοῦν δυναμένων καί ἀγάλματα καί ζῳγραφήματα καί πᾶν ὅτι τοιοῦτον, αὐτός διοριζόμενος τίνας εἶναι βούλεται τάς εἰκόνας, καί ὡς τά ἀπό τῶν φωτιζόντων ἀποτελουμένας ἐν φωτιζομένοις, τάς τε σκιάς φησιν εἰκόνας καλεῖν καί τάς ἐμφάσεις τάς τε ἐν ὕδασιν καί τάς ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐνόπτροις»

16 See Plato's *Republic*, 510a. For a broader interpretation, see Gregory Vlastos, *Platonic Studies*, translated by Ioannis Arzoglou, ed. "MIET", Athens, 1994, pp. 100-123. Vlastos adopts an interdisciplinary approach to this issue.

obscure idea of its model, may nonetheless be seen.".17 The properties of mirrors, to which both Proclus and Plato refer in the *Republic*, fall into three categories: density, smoothness, and brightness. [18] Proclus highlights here the necessary justifications that make the existence of these properties essential. Moving in this direction, he notes that density ensures the absence of pores, which could otherwise lead to the loss of unity and uniqueness in the image formed from multiple emanations. He also argues that smoothness is necessary because roughness, with its indentations and protrusions, becomes a cause of irregularities in the image being formed. Finally, he points out that brightness makes the image visible, even though it may have a faint and blurred form.

The next premise in Proclus' argumentation highlights the relationship between reflections (*emphases*) and shadows with the *eidola*, with Proclus asserting the following: "reflections are the hypostases of certain images, since they are fashioned by daemonic device, as he himself teaches in the *Sophist*.19 "In fact, the shadows with which he says the images are linked have this sort of nature. For these are images of bodies and of figures, and they have a strong sympathetic relation with the things from which they emanate". [20] In this passage, the Neoplatonist philosopher

17 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.289.28-290.6: «καί δή καί διορίζων, τίνα ποτέ δεῖ τούτοις ὑπάρχειν τοῖς ἐνόπτροις, πυκνότητά φησι καί λειότητα καί φανότητα· τῆς μέν γάρ πυκνότητος δεῖν, ἵνα μη τοῖς πόροις ἐμπίπτουσα ἡ ἔμφασις ἀπολέσῃ το ἓν ἐκ πολλῶν γενέσθαι τῶν ἀπορροιῶν εἴδωλον· τῆς δε λειότητος ἵνα μη ταῖς ἐξοχαῖς καί ἐσοχαῖς ἡ τραχύτης ἀνωμαλίας αἰτία γίνηται τῷ συστησομένῳ· τῆς δε φανότητος, ἵνα το εἴδωλον ἀμυδράν ἔχον την ἰδέαν ὅμως ὀφθῇ·». See also Plato's *Republic*, 510a.

18 See also Proclus's commentary on this Platonic passage, where he substitutes the terms "dense," "smooth," and "bright" with the abstract concepts "density," "smoothness," and "brightness." This internal modification does not result in any semantic alteration.

19 See Plato's *Sophist*, 266b.

20 *Proclus, Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.290.10-15: «αἱ ἐμφάσεις ὑποστάσεις εἰσίν εἰδώλων τινῶν δαιμονίᾳ μηχανῇ δημιουργούμεναι, καθάπερ αὐτός ἐν τῷ Σοφιστῇ διδάσκει. Καί γάρ αἱ σκιαί, αἷς τά εἴδωλα συζυγεῖν φησιν, τοιαύτην ἔχουσι φύσιν· καί γάρ

Proclus centers his analysis on *emphases*—those beings Plato refers to as phantasms (*phantasmata*), which are the reflections of *eidola* in various mirrors. Drawing on Plato's *Sophist*, Proclus argues that these *emphases* are produced by a "daemonic mechanism" to distinguish them from shadows (*skiai*).[21] According to his reasoning, *emphases* constitute the hypostases of certain *eidola*, while shadows, which are coupled with the *eidola*, are images of bodies and shapes. These shadows are distinguished by a pronounced sympathy with the entities from which they fall.[22]

The first point that deserves special attention is that Proclus attributes *hypostasis* to the *emphases*, the nature and perspective of which will be highlighted in the next passage: "For thus he says that likenesses (eikasta) are to visible things as discursive thoughts are to the intelligibles.[23] But these thoughts are probably both certain forms and beings. Therefore, the likenesses too, being images of visible objects, possess a certain nature and essence in one way or another in

αὗται σωμάτων εἰσί καί σχημάτων εἰκόνες, καί παμπόλλην ἔχουσιν πρός τά ἀφ' ὧν ἐκπίπτουσιν συμπάθειαν».

21 Furthermore, in the *Sophist*, art is distinguished into two categories: acquisitive, which is related to human productive activity aimed at obtaining something that already exists, and creative, which is related to the divine and aimed at producing something that did not previously exist. Each of these categories is further divided into two parts: the *autopoietic*, concerning the production of true things, and the *eidolopoietic*, concerning the production of their imitations.

22 The term "sympathy" plays a central role for the Neoplatonists, with the spiritualization and animation of the universe relying heavily on the mutual interaction of its parts, according to the laws of Natural Science. The term, with several variations, also appears in the Stoics, indicating the coherence of nature, governed by unity and cooperation. On a metaphysical level, "sympathy" confirms the presence of the divine and the proactive intervention of divine providence in the cosmos, with nature's teleology being a given. Marcus Aurelius discusses the concept of "sympathy" in his work *Meditations*, speaking of a "sacred bond" that connects all things, and due to this connection, there is a "mixture of the whole," which reflects divine providence in the entire universe (see Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, III.9).

23 See Plato's *Republic*, 534a.

the objects where they exist".[24] According to this passage, the objects belonging to the ontological level of Eikasia are images of the visible, which reside in the immediately superior segment of the visible realm, Pistis, which includes all living beings as well as every human creation. The way in which these objects of vision relate to the eikasta (likenesses) is analogous to how the objects of the intellect relate to the objects of thought, as they are forms and beings. Therefore, they are fundamentally aligned in nature and essence with those things that exist within them.

In the next and final stage, Proclus notes the following: "After moving on to the greater section of the line, which he posited as belonging to the intelligible genus, he defines a segment that is secondary in this section as well, but another that is prior by nature. While the secondary segment, he says, is of discursive thought ... the primary segment is purely intelligible, which intellect observes, since the intelligible is higher than discursive thoughts, and this intellect is not conducted to an end".[25] At this point in his argument, Proclus addresses the division of the intelligible segment of the Line, which is also dual in nature. Proclus attributes to one part, the second, the term *dianoetic*, thus referring to the level of *Dianoia*. As is already known, Plato divides the intelligible portion of the Line into two parts: the first corresponds to the level of *Dianoia*, and the second to the level of Science. The level of *Dianoia* is the lower ontological level of *Noesis*, in which the soul, according to Plato, makes use of images of the objects found in the level of *Pistis* (Belief), which are imitative objects. Starting from hypotheses,

24 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.290.25-29: «οὕτω γάρ ἔχειν τά εἰκαστά πρός τά ὁρατά φησιν, ὡς τά διανοητά πρός τά νοητά· ταῦτα δε εἰκότως καί εἶδη τινά καί ὄντα· καί τα εἰκαστά ἄρα τῶν ὁρατῶν εἰδώλων ὄντα φύσιν ἔχει τινά καί οὐσίαν ἀμωσγεπῶς ἐν οἷς ἐστιν».

25 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.291.14-292.2: «μεταβάς δέ ἐπί τό μεῖζον τμῆμα τῆς γραμμῆς, ὃ δή τοῦ νοουμένου γένους ἔθετο, τό μέν ὁρίζεται κἀν τούτῳ δεύτερον, τό δέ φύσει πρότερον, διανοητόν μέν τό δεύτερον ... νοητόν δέ εἰλικρινῶς τό πρότερον, ὃ δή τῶν διανοητῶν ὑπέρτερον νοῦς ἐπισκοπεῖ καί οὗτος οὐκ επί τελευτήν πορευόμενος».

the soul proceeds toward a conclusion rather than a first principle. This level pertains mainly to mathematics and the natural sciences and, by ontological extension, to mathematical Forms.

Proclus extends Plato's reasoning by noting the following: "which makes use of "the entities that were previously imitated," 26 that is, the visible things, whose objects of apprehension were imitated and images, but where the objects are imitated by those [visibles]. So when discursive thought, commencing from certain "preliminary hypotheses, 27 avails itself of these images" which are imitated in the division of the inferior section, the soul is forced to investigate by studying the consequences of these hypotheses which are accepted as conventional principles. For the visible objects are imitations of the discursive thoughts: while the drawn circle and triangle are clearly imitations of those in geometry, numbers in visible things are imitations of those that the arithmetician contemplates, and the method is the same in all the other cases as well. These visible entities, then, are imitated first by the things posterior to them-- I mean their likenesses-- and they are themselves imitations of discursive thoughts. This, then, is discursive thought, as I said".[28]

Proclus explains that the first objects of imitation are the visible things, whose copies and images are the objects of *eikasia*, and these, in turn, have been imitated by others. These visible objects are used as images, starting from certain

26 See Plato's *Republic*, 510b.

27 Plato says, "proceeding from certain hypotheses...."

28 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 1.291.17-31: «ὃ δή τοῖς τότε μιμηθεῖσιν, τοῖς ὁρατοῖς δήπουθεν, ὧν ἦν τά εἰκαστά μιμητά καί εἰκόνες, αὐτά δέ ὑπ'ἐκείνων μιμηθέντα -τούτοις οὖν τοῖς ἐν τῇ τοῦ ἐλλάσσονος τμήματος διαιρέσει μιμηθεῖσιν εἰκόσι χρώμενον ἐξ ὑποθέσεών τινων ὡρμημένων, καί τάυτας ὡς ἀρχαῖς ὁμολογούμεναις τά ἑπόμενα ζητοῦσα ἀναγκάζεται σκοπεῖν ἡ ψυχή. Τῶν γάρ διανοημάτων τά ὁρατά μιμητά, κύκλος μέν ὁ γραφόμενος δηλαδή τοῦ ἐν γεωμετρίᾳ καί τρίγωνον, ἀριθμοί δέ οἱ ἐν τοῖς ὁρατοῖς τῶν ὑπό τοῦ ἀριθμητικοῦ θεωρουμένων, καί ἐπί τῶν ἀλλων ἀπάντων ὁ αὐτός τρόπος. Ταῦτα δή τά ὁρατά μιμηθέντα πρότερον ὑπό τῶν μετά ταῦτα, τῶν εἰκαστῶν λέγω, μιμητά δέ αὐτά τῶν διανοητῶν ὄντα. Διανοητόν μέν οὖν τοῦτό ἐστιν ὡς ἔφην».

hypotheses that serve as principles, and the soul is compelled to investigate what follows from them. Proclus emphasizes an important detail here: the visible shapes are used as tools in reasoning, as likenesses of the objects that exist in the realm of the intelligible (*noeton*) and can only be apprehended by the intellect (*nous*). These shapes, mainly used in mathematical sciences, provide clarity and precision in the process of investigating corresponding Ideas in the intelligible realm. From this perspective, Proclus describes them as *dianoemata* (intellectual constructs), highlighting the significant role of *dianoia* in this process. The task of *dianoia* is to move from visible representations—through geometric and numerical constructs—toward intelligible objects. Starting from visible objects and progressing through stages, it ascends through the levels of *eikasia*, which are imitations of the objects of *dianoia*, and these, in turn, are imitations of the objects in the highest level of *noesis*, overseen by the *Nous*.

Conclusion

The discussion presented above brings to the forefront what is defined as Neoplatonic commentary, which opens up opportunities for interpretative and conceptual exploration of what has already been inherited from ancient Greek—primarily Platonic—philosophy. Proclus, who could easily be described as a profound encyclopedist of unparalleled skill, deals with inexhaustible issues, with intertextuality constantly inviting further investigation and clarification.

Proclus is far from being merely a simple analyst of Plato, as his approach to the texts is highly synthetic, aiming at a coherent articulation of arguments. Among the three allegories, the allegory of the Line, in our view, is the one that for Proclus provides the necessary premises for affirming his monistic system. This is because it possesses the specialized conceptual nuances that depict "procession" as a metaphysical version of movement—an unfolding that does not refer to changes and transitions, but rather to internal

modalities that express metaphysical diversity and reveal the dynamic of emanation.

The thematic direction of this study—the Platonic allegory of the Line—is, of course, not unfamiliar to the specialist reader. However, its originality lies in how this topic is approached by the Neoplatonist thinker Proclus, who attempts to integrate it into the intellectual atmosphere of his time, which demanded transformations and theoretical renewal. Given that during this particular historical period, new perspectives had been explored, new cosmological paths adopted, and new terminologies introduced that expanded the existing ones, special attention must be paid to those details which are embedded in a period that differs from the one in which they were first formulated.

Undoubtedly, Proclus' argumentation does not radically diverge from what Plato himself had already supported in the *Republic*. However, the major achievement of Proclus lies in the following: by transforming the cosmological formulations of the past, in this case, those of Plato, according to the intellectual and theoretical conditions of his own era, he contributes to a theoretical renewal. These theoretical reinforcements become even more effective when they respond, often in a multidimensional way, to the unfolding new conditions of reading, research, and interpretive demands of philosophy and science in the 5th century AD.

Bibliography

Beierwaltes W., *Proklos, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, ed. "Klostermann", Frankfurt 1965, σσ. 118-164.

Dodds E. R., Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. "Oxford University Press", Oxford 1963.

Duvick Brian, Proclus, *Commentary on the Republic*, ed. "Princeton University Press," 2017.

Gersh Stephen, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the prehistory and evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition,* ed. "Brill", Leiden 1978, σσ. 27-45.

Hoine d' Pieter, «*The Metaphysics of the "Divided Line" in Proclus: A Sample of Pythagorean Theology*» in: *Journal of the history of philosophy*, vol. 56, 2018.

Trouillard J., *L' Un et l' âme selon Proclos*, ed. "Les Belles Lettres", Paris 1972.

Trouillard J., *La mystagogie de Proclos*, ed. "Les Belles Lettres", Paris 1982.

Vlastos, Gregory, *Platonic Studies*, translated by Ioannis Arzoglou, ed. "MIET", Athens, 1994.

Paraskevopoulou, Aik., *The Concept of Similarity in the Neoplatonic Proclus*, Patras, 2018.

Proclus, *Elements of Theology: Toward a Summary of Ancient Greek Metaphysics*, translated by Anna Kelesidou-Galanou, ed. "Zitros", Thessaloniki, 2017.

Terezis, Christos Ath., *The Neoplatonic School as the Culmination of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, University of Patras, 2019.