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IV

JOHN M. RIST

PROHAIRESIS: PROCLUS, PLOTINUS ET ALII

If the *prohairesis* sins, how is the soul sinless? The question is asked by Proclus, who has just approved Iamblichus' rejection of the Plotinian doctrine that a part of the human soul does not descend, but remains above in perpetual contact with *nous* [1]. It is not clear whether the argument which Proclus offers here was offered also by Iamblichus. Perhaps it was, but we cannot be certain. Our interest, however, lies in the meaning of the argument itself, and it is interesting to consider why Proclus thinks that it is convincing. What is it, he asks, which sins in us whenever, under the impulse of irrationality, we eagerly run after immoral images presented to us by the senses? The answer must be that it is our *prohairesis*. *Prohairesis*, therefore, is capable of sin. Now, as we shall see, a *prohairesis* is either an action of the soul or a mode of the soul. Whichever of these Proclus is thinking of, his argument must imply that the whole soul is responsible for any *prohairesis* which is recognizably sinful. It must follow, as Proclus certainly intends, that the soul cannot be divided up in such a way that one part of it can have or display a *prohairesis* which does not affect the rest. Thus if the *prohairesis* is corrupt, the argument runs, the whole soul is corrupt. And the hidden premiss of the argument is

[1] Procl. *In Ti.*, III p. 334, 6-7 Diehl.

that whatever the *prohairesis* does is an action of the whole soul. And there is a further point. Both Iamblichus and Proclus are concerned to distinguish soul from *nous* rather more sharply than Plotinus. Thus where either or both of them associates *prohairesis* with the whole soul, it is important to notice that they are *dissociating prohairesis* from *nous*. This we know is in harmony with Proclus' general doctrine that the soul does not know the Forms directly and that we are not, as Plotinus thought, a κόσμος νοητός [1]. The point to be made is that, if *prohairesis* is to be associated with soul and not with *nous*, we should begin to wonder about its intellectual content. It might easily be assumed that *prohairesis* is associated with powers of reasoning and deliberating ; but, if this is the case for Iamblichus and Proclus, then it would follow that only certain kinds of reasoning would be appropriate to the soul, and that *prohairesis* is specifically to be dissociated from the life of *nous*. Finally it would follow that for Iamblichus and Proclus we cannot transcend our own *prohairesis* ; we can only use it properly or improperly. In other words, in some sense we *are* our *prohairesis*. The rest of this paper will be concerned with giving some context to these remarks about *prohairesis* both in terms of Proclus' Neoplatonic background and in terms of more general notions about *prohairesis* which had come into currency in his day.

As is well known, the term *prohairesis* first becomes prominent in ancient philosophy in the writings of Aristotle. In the third book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* we find it defined as a "deliberated desire for things in our power" [2]. The elements of *prohairesis*, which we have translated as "choice" or "act of choosing" are desire — but every desire is not a choice — and deliberation — but only some deliberations result in choices being made. Finally choice is concerned with options which are in

[1] *Elem. theol.* 194-5 ; *In Parm.* p. 948, 18 Cousin.

[2] *EN* 1113 a.

our power, because, Aristotle argues, we only *deliberate* about what we have some possibility of achieving, though we may *wish* for what we cannot achieve.

According to Aristotle, then, a *prohairesis*, a choice, is an act which is performed constantly by human beings. It is something they do, not something they are, though obviously they have to *be* human beings in order to be able to act as human beings. Curiously enough, although in many areas the Stoics took over and developed Aristotle's ethical ideas, the word *prohairesis* and the concept which Aristotle had worked out have almost disappeared from Stoic writings of the pre-Christian era [1]. In Epictetus, however, *prohairesis* is back with a vengeance. The word occurs time and again, but its meaning is rather wider than can be recognized in Aristotle. One example will suffice. It was not Socrates who was taken off and given the hemlock [2]. It was not Socrates' *prohairesis* but rather his body which suffered in this way. The real Socrates, Epictetus wants to tell us, is his *prohairesis*. Now it could be argued that Epictetus is saying in Aristotelian fashion that the choices make the man, but it would be equally true to say that for Epictetus the choices *make up* the man, or indeed that the *prohairesis* is the real man. In Epictetus *prohairesis* is often used as the equivalent of ἡγεμονικόν, the Stoic ruling principle, but the emphasis is that we must view human reason as both intellectual and volitional. *Prohairesis* now appears then as something more than one of the acts of a man *qua* man ; it is both the act of a man and the man himself. A man's *prohaireseis* are his character. Thus it is easy to see that Epictetus would agree that it is self-evident that, if a man's *prohairesis* is sinful, then his soul, and indeed the man himself, is sinful. Proclus' statement is beginning to acquire a context.

[1] For one use by Zeno see Stob. II 7, 11 g (II p. 99, 14 W.) (= *SVF* I 216).

[2] Epict. *Diss.* I 29, 16 ff. On *prohairesis* in Epictetus see further J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge 1969), 228-231.

We must consider another aspect of Epictetus' use of the word *prohairesis*, or indeed of the use of the word by the Stoics in general, for the same kind of philosophical difficulty will arise. As is well known, the Stoics argued among themselves as to whether the wise man can lose his wisdom, or, what is another form of the same problem, whether the virtuous man can lose his virtue. All the Stoics were of the opinion that virtue is very hard to lose, once really possessed, and many thought that it cannot be lost. What are the implications of this for our word *prohairesis*? As we have seen, the early Stoics do not use it much, but Epictetus uses it frequently. And Epictetus is sufficient of a Stoic to be of the opinion that virtue is very hard to lose. In other words one's *prohairesis* is fixed, if one is wise. But we may wonder what could be meant by a "fixed choice". When we use the word "choice", we normally think of options open to the chooser. Thus, to use the now clichéd example, we say that John chose to marry Mary when he could have acted otherwise. But, if we think of fixed choices, we are dealing with something different. For Epictetus, a man with a good *prohairesis* would not decide, after deliberation, that he ought not to steal. He simply would not steal. During the period when he was a προκόπτων he would have been making moral choices in the sense of deciding whether or not to act morally in specific cases. But when he is wise, what he has to know is the answer to the purely descriptive question of what in this particular circumstance would be the moral course, which, as a man who has already decided to act morally, he will then follow. Thus we can understand what has happened to the word *prohairesis* as it has passed from Aristotle's usage to that of Epictetus. In Aristotle a *prohairesis* is an act of choosing, while in Epictetus it is the state of having chosen in the moral area, that is, of having become moral or immoral. And for Epictetus the moral self is the real self. Again the position is beginning to look like that found in Proclus.

Prohairesis does not, however, always lose its original Aristotelian meaning, particularly in Aristotelian circles. In his treatise *On Fate* Alexander of Aphrodisias uses it constantly in this sense and adds little that need be commented on here. One point, however, should be mentioned. Alexander is concerned to rebut the Stoic account of actions "in our power" (ἐφ' ἡμῖν). The Stoics included in such actions not only those which are the result of rational assent, as Alexander would have liked, but those involving *any* assent or impulse of the human being, whether that impulse was rational or not, that is, whether it was or was not in accordance with right reason [1]. What the Stoics want to say is that *we* perform what we perform, while Alexander, following the Aristotelian tradition, is prepared to think of all such actions as voluntary (ἑκούσιον), if no compelling external force is present, but not as "ours" (ἐφ' ἡμῖν) [2]. Translating into English the difference between the Stoic and the Aristotelian uses of τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, we may suggest that the Stoics mean that ἐφ' ἡμῖν actions are in our power—that is, we do them or we do not do them — while for the Aristotelians they are in our power in the sense of being voluntary actions, but they are not "ours" in that the reason is not properly deployed. If we ask ourselves why the Aristotelians think that "our" actions must involve the reason, we have to go back to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where in several places it is suggested that "we" are to be identified with *nous* or τὸ διανοητικόν [3].

We should expect a theory of this latter type to be popular in Platonic circles, and sure enough it appears in the *Enneads*. At IV 8, 1, 25 we find Plotinus identifying the soul with the self (αὐτός), and in VI 9, 11 the doctrine that we can transcend the hypostasis of soul in union with the One is described

[1] E.g. Alex. Aphr. *Fat.* 14, p. 184, 11 Bruns (= *SVF* II 981).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 183, 26 ff. Bruns.

[3] *EN* 1166 a 17, 1168 b 35, 1178 a 2. At *Metaph.* 1037 a 7 Aristotle says that identification of Socrates with his soul is one of two possibilities.

inter alia as the attainment of a state of not being entirely oneself (οὔδ' ὅλως αὐτός). So Plotinus is to be found in this Aristotelian tradition, holding, against the Stoics, that there is a correspondance between the true self and the rational soul (whose function *par excellence* is διάνοια) [1], and indeed reinforcing the anti-Stoic view with his doctrine of the undescended part of the soul for ever engaged in contemplation of the Forms. Thus we may say that for the Stoics "we" are all our actions, both rational and irrational, both moral and immoral ; for the Aristotelians (or at least for one mode of Aristotelianism) "we" are our rational selves when we are engaged in rational behaviour. The philosophical problem in this position is obvious enough : what are we when we are not involved in rational behaviour? Does the existence of the person become discontinuous? Aristotle does not propose the Plotinian solution that we are continuous at a higher level than that of the conscious personality. Rather he moves nearer to the Stoic view and varies his theory that we are our souls with the basically incompatible alternative that we are the composite of body and soul. Of course the continuing existence of lower levels of soul below that of rational thought does not save Aristotle here. It is true that continuity is preserved at these lower levels, but it is not a specifically human continuity. Perhaps Aristotle's solution is that, although the activity of the mind is discontinuous in one sense, the fact of its possibility of being re-activated is sufficient to guarantee "our" continuity at the human level. And we do not wish to embark on the question of the Active Intellect at this point.

Plotinus' solution in terms of the undescended part of the soul is not Aristotelian. Furthermore it is a clear rejection of *simpliste* identifications in the manner of Epictetus of the self with the *prohairesis*, the formed character. Thus for Plotinus,

[1] Cf. J. Trouillard, The Logic of Attribution in Plotinus, in *IPQ* 1 (1961), 125-138.

in contrast both to Aristotle and to Epictetus, the concept of choosing and of a character formed by choices is relegated to a subordinate position. Thus when Plotinus talks about the reason for the fall of the soul or for the creation of matter the word *prohairesis*, which we might expect to be frequent, is missing. This is particularly surprising since another common word in Hellenistic and later Greek philosophy, τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, which occurs, for example, in Alexander's treatise *On Fate* and in Albinus [1] — and which often appears later on in close association with *prohairesis* — appears several times in the *Enneads*.

Let us look at some key passages. In *Ennead* V 1, 1,5 the falling souls are said to delight in their αὐτεξούσιον — their freedom to choose — but this freedom is associated not with the word *prohairesis*, but with their wishing (βουληθῆναι) to belong to themselves. Similarly αὐτεξούσιον occurs at III 2, 4, 37 and IV 8, 5, 26, while we find the notion of self-directed wishing (πρὸς αὑτὴν βουλομένη) in III 9, 3, 10 attributed to the individual soul ; and at III 7, 11, 15 the *wish* for self-government is attributed to the world soul. All these passages are connected, as we have seen, directly or indirectly, with the fall of the soul and with sin (ἁμαρτία). It is remarkable that Plotinus does *not* use the word *prohairesis* in any of them. He does not say that the soul chooses (προαιρεῖται) to sin, but rather that it wishes to sin, seduced, as in V 1, 1, by pleasure or pride. It should be noticed, however, that elsewhere Plotinus is quite prepared to use the word *prohairesis*, in contexts, it would seem, where the question of the origin of the sin and descent of the soul is not involved.

Let us look at a few examples :

II 3, 9, 38 Here we read of the *prohairesis* of stars and of their real soul which looks to the good.

[1] Alex. Aphr. *Fat.* 13, p. 182, 24 Bruns ; Albinus, *ap.* Iamblichum, *in* Stob. I 49, 37 (I p. 375, 10 W.). In Stoic fashion Albinus talks about the "mistaken judgment" of the αὐτεξούσιον.

II 3, 14, 28	Marriages are said to arise either from *prohairesis* (choice?) or from chance occurrences.
III 3, 3, 19	The question is raised whether the world has been "unequally" arranged deliberately (προαιρέσει).
III 4, 5, 3	Plotinus here talks of the *prohairesis* and disposition (διάθεσις) of our soul. *Prohairesis* (character) seems to be distinguished from *hairesis* (choice).
IV 3, 12, 23	Here it is argued that our fortunes, lives and *prohaeresis* are indicated by the arrangement of the stars. It is difficult to see the exact meaning of *prohairesis* in this passage. Perhaps "character" is the most probable equivalent.
IV 4, 31, 48	Again we are concerned, as in II 3, 9, 38, with the *prohairesis* of the stars. *Prohairesis* is associated with γνώμη and λογισμός, and therefore presumably means "decision".
IV 4, 35, 5 ff.	The question is: How do stars act? Is it by their bodies or by their *prohairesis*? Again the word seems somewhat ambiguous. But the contrast with body should be noticed. *Prohairesis* probably means will, as in Epictetus.
IV 7, 5, 4	*Prohaireseis* are accepted as part-causes of movement. The word is in specific contrast to λόγοι and therefore must mean "choices", in contrast to "reason".

From this selection of texts in which Plotinus uses the word *prohairesis* we can immediately recognize that the meanings of "choice", "character" and "will" are all available to him. The passage that comes nearest in some respects to the text of

Proclus with which we began this enquiry is IV 4, 35, 7, where the *prohairesis* is contrasted with the body. The implication might be that, if the *prohairesis* is guilty, obviously the soul must be considered guilty. But that would conflict with the notion of an undescended soul. A different picture is obvious from IV 7, 5, 4, where *prohairesis* is contrasted with *logos*. Here we seem to be back in the more normal Plotinian world where the soul is to some degree compartmentalized ; *prohairesis* is a mark of only a part of the soul, though in this case not the highest part.

As we noticed, Plotinus associates the fall and descent of the soul not with the concept of *prohairesis* but with that of wishing. The change may be significant. As we have seen, *prohairesis* tends to be used in earlier writers to denote either the choices, particularly the moral choices, made by individuals, or the mental and moral state which results from having made such choices. In particular a *prohairesis* is associated with the choice between alternatives, and a degree of rational decision is involved. If the decision is not rational, in the sense of not being in accordance with right reason, it is rational in the sense of being a rationalization of a wrong decision. But the Plotinian fall of the soul is essentially a non-rational, that is counter-rational, act. There is no rational choice made by the soul when it falls. What it does is allow itself to be seduced by pleasure, or by the wish to be self-supporting. Plotinus does not say that it deliberately chooses pleasure, or that it deliberately chooses a false idea of self-sufficiency. It is seduced into acting without the use of its rational powers and its previous decisions. The idea is paralleled by both Clement of Alexandria and Origen, when they are expounding an essentially Stoic thesis about causation. Clement gives a simple example of a "proximate cause". Beauty arouses desire in those who cannot control themselves [1]. Origen expands the idea, and,

[1] Clem. Alex. *Str.* VIII 9 (= *SVF* II 346).

most important for us, puts it into the context of a discussion of τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, freedom to originate actions [1]. If a woman displays herself before a man who has vowed himself to chastity, says Origen, she cannot be regarded as a necessitating cause of his action if he abandons his previous purpose. She is not an αὐτοτελὴς αἰτία ; rather, the implication must be, she is a proximate cause. The reason the man gives way is that he is delighted with the pleasure and therefore does not *want* (μὴ βεβουλημένος) to remain chaste. Here there is no mention of *prohairesis*, of choosing ; the question is one of being seduced from a previous choice. Thus if choice involves *rational* decision, it is not involved in the situation described by Origen. This is exactly parallel with the view of Plotinus. To understand this usage further we should notice a later passage of the *De principiis* where Origen is discussing a heretical view that God pities those whom he decides (ἐκ προαιρέσεως) to pity [2]. Here we are *not* concerned with God being seduced by pleasure, or with anything of that kind, or — obviously — with a merely arbitrary action. The *prohairesis* of God is a rational act ; and the word Origen chooses for "rational decision" is *prohairesis*.

Let us begin to draw some of the threads together. The word *prohairesis* is not used by Plotinus to describe the fall of the soul, the soul's sin or ἁμαρτία. And the reason why Plotinus does not use it in this sense is probably that it is not an appropriate word to describe behaviour which is fundamentally non-rational, not merely non-rational in the sense of involving a misuse of one's rational powers. For the descent of the soul does not involve rational activity, that is, the use of reason, at all. It is not a deliberated choice of evil, not a rationalization of instinctual desire, but a *willed* abandonment of rationality as such.

[1] Origen, *Princ.* III 1, 4-5, pp. 198-200 Koetschau.

[2] *Ibid.*, III 1, 18, p. 229 Koetschau.

Plotinus' philosophical problem concerns the reason why the soul should act in a non-rational and hence immoral way. His answer is that there is no *reason* why it should; hence it does not *decide* to, but is misled to. Thus the problem is the weakness of the will to good, not the possibility of a decision for evil. The "choice" of evil is deliberate but not deliberated. And the "will" to good is weak because the soul is the third hypostasis, two stages away from the will of the One.

It would seem then that Plotinus generally wishes to preserve the sense of deliberation that Aristotle originally put into *prohairesis*. In terms of his system it is not possible for a soul, even an individual soul, to opt for a lesser good after going through a full process of deliberation. And the reason for this is that for all his emphasis on the distinction between the upper undescended soul and the faculty of calculation (λογισμός), the connection between these two parts cannot be entirely broken, and when the deliberative function is working properly and fully, it is very closely associated with the upper soul. *Ennead* IV 8, 8 makes the position clear. *Logismos* by itself can be "deceived" by pleasure. The upper soul is unaffected by pleasure. Thus when the soul in general is not being misled and deceived by its pleasures, it will be acting rationally; and rational activity is an image and forerunner of intellectual activity, the activity of *nous*. Since this is the case, the omission of the term *prohairesis* when Plotinus discusses the fall of the soul becomes all the more understandable.

If we want to delve further into the implications of Plotinus' language on this issue, it may be helpful to look at another *Christian* author with certain Platonic predilections, but whose attitude to *prohairesis* is noticeably distinct from that found in the *Enneads*. In Gregory of Nyssa's treatise *De virginitate* we read that man was created in the image (εἰκών) and likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of God [1]. This similarity consisted primarily in his

[1] *Virg.* XII 2, 11 ff., p. 402 Aubineau.

freedom of choice (ἐν τῷ αὐτεξουσίῳ τῆς προαιρέσεως) and in his being able to choose what pleased him. It will be noticed that this passage combines the Plotinian idea that man can choose what *pleases* him with the notion not found in Plotinus that it is *prohairesis* itself which may act one way or the other, either for good or for evil. But Gregory, of course, is not committed to a scheme where a *deliberated* choice of evil is ruled out. Hence he is quite ready to imply that the *prohairesis* can and has sinned. And this can now be understood not only in the weaker Stoic sense that, if we are evil, we have an evil *prohairesis*, that is, an evil character, but in the stronger sense that an evil character may involve not only the numbing or sedating of the reason by the Siren Pleasure, but its actual corruption.

We started off with Iamblichus' or Proclus' argument that, if the *prohairesis* sins, then the soul sins, and that therefore part of it cannot remain undescended. We now find that, as an argument against what Plotinus actually says in the *Enneads*, this runs into the difficulty that the *prohairesis* is not said to sin. Sinning is to be accounted for in quite a different way, that is, by the fact of the weakness of the soul and its inability to resist certain types of pleasurable attraction. But perhaps Proclus is not beaten yet. Can he not say that if something sins, then it *must* in fact be (or involve) the *prohairesis*, whether Plotinus admits this or not? Thus Plotinus would save himself from the consequences of the argument by a merely verbal evasion; his position would in fact be undermined. The only way to approach this difficulty is to look at what Plotinus says about sin (ἁμαρτία) and the factor in the soul which is responsible for it in more detail. The following passages may be instructive:

I 1, 12 The problem is: How can we say that the soul is both sinless (ἀναμάρτητος) and in need of correction. The answer is that it is the lower phase of the soul, the part which experiences πάθη, which needs purification.

I 2, 6, 1 — In the previous chapter it has been argued that the purified soul will not act without deliberation. Desire for food, drink and sex will be controlled by deliberation. There will be no undeliberated action (τὸ ἀπροαίρετον). When this stage is reached, says Plotinus in I 2, 6, we shall have eliminated sin (ἁμαρτία), though that is far from adequate. We need to become a god.

III 2, 10 — In this chapter Plotinus is trying to explain that, although sin is committed "unwillingly" (ἄκοντες), in that if we knew what we are, we would not sin, nevertheless men are responsible for the evil they perform because they are themselves the agents. Human beings are naturally moved towards what is good. This impulse is free from external control (αὐτεξούσιος).

III 8, 7, 23 ff. — Here it is argued that all mistakes (ἁμαρτίαι) in natural generation and in action arise from the agent's being diverted from an object of contemplation.

IV 8, 5, 16 — This is the famous passage about the twofold sin involved in the soul's descent. The faults are in the motive for descending — which would seem to involve τόλμα — and the actions performed after the descent — here pleasure must be the source of the trouble.

It will be clear that none of these passages gives any support to the idea that ἁμαρτία arises by an act of *prohairesis*, which would necessarily involve *deliberated* choice. And this conclusion is very strongly reinforced by a passage from *Ennead* IV 3, 13. Souls, we read, do not descend willingly, nor are

they despatched (οὔτε ἑκοῦσαι οὔτε πεμφθεῖσαι). It is true that the descent of the soul is a voluntary action in one sense ; it is in the sense that we want to do it. But there is no rational choice, that is, no *prohairesis*. The descent, says Plotinus, is not rationally chosen (οὔτε τὸ ἑκούσιον τοιοῦτον ὡς προελέσθαι), but it is like an instinctive leap. This leap is compared to the natural impulse towards marriage, or — in a few cases — towards noble conduct. It is not motivated by *logismos* (reason). The passage is conclusive. *Logismos*, the faculty *par excellence* of the soul, is associated with *prohairesis*. Neither are involved in the fall of the soul and the act of grasping at evil. Neither is therefore *actively* involved in ἁμαρτία.

Let us now return to the passage of Proclus. The argument is that, if the *prohairesis* sins, the soul cannot be sinless. Now we have seen that one phase of the Plotinian soul is not sinless, but that no active sin involving deliberated choice or *prohairesis* takes place. Whether *prohairesis* be understood in the Aristotelian tradition as an act of choice involving deliberation, or in the Epictetean sense of a disposition resulting from past choices involving deliberation, it is not, for Plotinus, actively involved in sin. Iamblichus' and Proclus' position depends on one of two assumptions : either the *prohairesis is* the soul — which would imply a Neoplatonic adaptation of the older Stoic theme ; or, and this is more likely, whatever is an act of the soul is *a fortiori* an act of the *prohairesis*. But neither of these faces Plotinus' theory squarely. For Plotinus acts of the soul are not necessarily acts of the *prohairesis*, for the soul may act while the *prohairesis* is dormant. Iamblichus and Proclus have not taken Plotinus' doctrine of the phases of the soul and their interrelations seriously enough. And modern scholars have followed them in one respect at least. For while it is always recognized that Plotinus argues that there is a part of the soul which does not descend, it is usually assumed that this part, the so-called soul above, is only very loosely tied to the lower phase of the soul which is capable of falling, because

it is αὐτεξούσιος. We must recognize in fact that between these phases there is the *prohairesis*, the soul in so far as it is a calculating, rationally intending, and choosing reality. This *prohairesis* resembles the undescended soul in that it cannot sin, but is unlike it in that, when the lower soul falls, *prohairesis* is, as it were, put to sleep, while the upper soul, as we know, continues perpetually in contemplation of the Forms.

It must be assumed that Iamblichus and Proclus did not understand this curious doctrine of *prohairesis*. When they thought of *prohairesis*, they were using non-Plotinian concepts. These concepts, indeed, bear more relation to those used by such Christian writers as Gregory of Nyssa. We cannot know whether we should talk about Christian influence or about a new world of concepts with which both Christians and later pagan Neoplatonists were familiar; but Plotinus either knew nothing of these concepts or was not interested in them.

DISCUSSION

M. Blumenthal: You mentioned the possibility that Proclus virtually identified προαίρεσις and the soul. At *De prov.* 44, 19 he talks of the soul turning up or down διὰ τὴν ἄστατον τῆς προαιρέσεως ῥοπήν. That suggests that identification is possible only with soul in a narrow sense, and perhaps even that προαίρεσις is an unstable element in the soul.

M. Beierwaltes: Ἄστατος (*instabilis*) ῥοπή in Procl. *De prov.* 44, 19 meint die in der προαίρεσις selbst liegende Möglichkeit der Entscheidung nach « beiden Seiten ». Die προαίρεσις ist als konstitutives Element der Seele (λογικὴ ψυχή) wesentlich « Mitte » (μέσον) zwischen Aufstieg und Abstieg, Gut und Böse (vgl. *De prov.* 59, 1 ff. ; 61, 2, etc.) ; an sich « indifferent », gleichwohl dem ἀγαθόν verpflichtet. Daher in Bezug auf das Mass der Tugend in uns der paradoxe Satz : ἐθελοδουλείαν ... μεγίστην εἶναι ἐλευθερίαν (*De prov.* 24, 9-10).

M. Blumenthal: It still has the notion of οὐχ ἵσταται.

M. Rist: I'm not sure what M. Blumenthal means by " in a narrow sense", but I did say in my paper that Iamblichus and Proclus tended to distinguish soul from νοῦς more sharply than Plotinus — and that this is one of the phenomena underlying the fact that they seem not to have clearly understood his position. But even so I do not see why the *De prov.* passage should be taken to indicate that προαίρεσις is an unstable *element*.

M. Dalsgaard Larsen: Vous avez bien montré que les perspectives de Plotin d'une part, de Jamblique et de Proclus de l'autre, diffèrent. Vous rapprochez chez Plotin προαίρεσις et νοῦς, autrement dit la

rationalité dans le choix. Or il me semble que dans la perspective de Jamblique et de Proclus, nous trouvons aussi — encore que d'une autre façon — la relation entre la raison et la connaissance. Dans le premier texte que vous avez cité (*In Ti.*, III p. 334), figure en effet la subordonnée ὅταν τῆς ἀλογίας κινησάσης πρὸς ἀκόλαστον φαντασίαν ἐπιδράμωμεν. La perspective de Plotin dérive de la pensée stoïcienne, qui identifie la προαίρεσις avec l'âme (Epictète etc.). Comme vous l'avez dit, Porphyre rejette lui aussi la distinction aristotélicienne entre l'οὐσία de l'âme et ses δυνάμεις. Chez Jamblique, en revanche, cette distinction est fortement soulignée et la προαίρεσις cesse d'être l'âme elle-même : elle n'est plus qu'un acte de l'âme. Cela correspond à ce que M. Beierwaltes vient de dire sur la προαίρεσις comme un μέσον. Dans sa lettre *Sur le destin*, Jamblique insiste sur le fait que l'âme doit exercer ses forces intellectuelles et indépendantes pour pouvoir effectuer τὰ ἑαυτῆς (καθ' ὅσον ... τὴν νοερὰν ἑαυτῆς ... καὶ αὐθαίρετον ἐνέργειαν ἐνεργεῖ, κατὰ τοσοῦτον τὰ ἑαυτῆς ἑκουσίως πράττει : Iambl. *ap.* Stob. II 8, 43, II p. 173, 14-16 W.).

M. Beierwaltes : Die Opposition des Proklos gegen Plotins Satz ἑσμὲν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός (III 4, 3, 22 ff.) und die damit zusammenhängenden Probleme scheinen mir verbal stärker zu sein als der Sache nach. Proklos' Lösungsvorschlag der Frage, wie eine Verbindung zum Intelligiblen zu denken und der Aufstieg zum höchsten Prinzip leistbar sei, besteht primär in der Intensivierung des Begriffes ἓν ἐν ἡμῖν (vgl. hierzu *Thêta-Pi* 2 (1973), 145 ff.).

M. Rist : Yes, I'm grateful to you for mentioning the concept of τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἕν in Proclus. This seems to me to highlight another difference between Plotinus and Iamblichus/Proclus, namely that in his metaphysical theorizing about a return to the One, Proclus seems rather to neglect an important element in Plotinus' theory of purification, namely the question of "moral formation" or "moral development". Proclus seems to be rather more abstract in these matters than Plotinus, while Plotinus, for example in II 9, 9-10, has very practical moral issues on his hands.

M. Blumenthal: Clearly the interposition of extra entities between a demoted human soul and the One made the ascent to the One far more difficult for Iamblichus and Proclus. Everyone always says that Iamblichus rejected νοῦς ἄνω ; certainly that seems to have been his final position. But Simplicius' *In Cat.* has a report, which is generally ignored, saying that Iamblichus did hold that part of the soul was "above": εἴτε καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστίν τις τοιαύτη ἀεὶ ἄνω μένουσα, ὡς Πλωτίνῳ καὶ Ἰαμβλίχῳ δοκεῖ (p. 191, 9 f. K.). To speculate: does this text indicate that perhaps Iamblichus was well aware of the difficulties about ascent, and therefore far a time at least was prepared to consider the Plotinian view as a possible solution?

M. Rist: Yes. I suppose it is possible that at some stage Iamblichus toyed with the Plotinian view, but it seems clear that he eventually came to reject it outright.

M. Beierwaltes: Proklos ist offensichtlich mehr als Plotin daran interessiert, die Frage nach der Möglichkeit der Selbstbestimmung des Menschen (κύριοι [αἱρέσεων]: *De prov.* 35, 4. κύριοι ... τῶν πράξεων, καθ' ὅσον εἰσὶ προαιρετικαί: *ibid.*, 36, 12 f.) gegenüber Schicksal oder Naturnotwendigkeit auszuarbeiten und damit Freiheit in einem weiteren Sinne zu legitimieren. Da τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν der Ermöglichungsgrund ist, aus dem προαίρεσις überhaupt wirken kann (*De prov.* 4, 10 ; 61, 13 ff.) oder mit προαίρεσις identifiziert ist (*In R.*, II p. 261, 5 f.), ist es von einem anthropologischen Aspekt her für den Bestand von Philosophie überhaupt fundamental : τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀναιρεθὲν περιττὴν ἀποφαίνει τὴν φιλοσοφίαν. Proklos macht diesen Satz Syrians zu seinem eigenen (*De prov.* 66, 7).

M. Dörrie: Sehen Sie eine Verbindung zwischen dem Problem προαίρεσις und dem Problem μερισμός? Denn : gäbe es die Individuation = μερισμός nicht, die προαίρεσις aller Menschen müsste die gleiche sein — und die ganze Frage nach guter und nach böser προαίρεσις bestünde nicht.

M. Rist : Yes, there is certainly a connection between the two problems ; and Plotinus regularly associates them with one another, as in *Enn.* IV 8, 8. In doing so, he is only being a good Platonist, following the theory of the *Republic* that the "tyrannical" soul becomes more and more schizoid.

M. Dalsgaard Larsen : Vous avez suggéré que la position de Jamblique et Proclus quant à la προαίρεσις invite à accepter — plus que celle de Plotin — une aide « du dehors » pour atteindre l'Un. Abstraction faite de toute la problématique de la théurgie, Jamblique me semble avoir eu des intérêts correspondant à ceux que M. Beierwaltes vient d'indiquer pour Proclus. Il les manifeste dans ses lettres sur la formation morale, et nous trouvons chez lui la thèse aristotélicienne, selon laquelle l'âme doit accomplir sa propre tâche d'après son être à elle pour se placer dans l'unité de l'univers. En se réalisant elle-même, l'âme atteint le divin, le bien et l'intelligible (τὸ θεῖον, τἀγαθόν, τὸ νοητόν).

M. Rist : When I replied to M. Beierwaltes, I must admit that I was thinking more about Proclus than about Iamblichus in my comments on τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἕν ; and, of course, I should not deny that Iamblichus and Proclus would insist on "formation morale". But the point I want to make is that their more limited notion of προαίρεσις and Proclus' use of τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἕν tend to separate morality from the higher stages of purification more than Plotinus would have liked. At least that is my opinion, for it seems to me that by associating προαίρεσις less with νοῦς than with soul, Proclus (and probably Iamblichus too) tends to dissociate ascent from moral goodness. For Plotinus προαίρεσις links νοῦς and soul, while for Proclus it is a function (if that is the right word) of soul alone.

M. Whittaker : On the matter of the rational nature of virtue I should like to draw attention to Pseudo-Clement *Hom.* XII 25 ff., which, though it does not utilize the term προαίρεσις, contains a very pertinent discussion of the nature of φιλανθρωπία, in the course of

which this virtue is defined as (*Hom.* XII 25, 3) ἄνευ τοῦ φυσικῶς πείθοντος ἡ πρὸς οἱονδήποτε στοργὴ καθὸ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν (cf. *Hom.* XII 25, 7: ἡ δὲ φιλανθρωπία ἄνευ τοῦ φυσικῶς πείθοντος πάντα ἄνθρωπον καθὸ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν φιλοῦσα εὐεργετεῖ). The sentiment (but not the pejorative use of φυσικῶς) is clearly Stoic in its emphasis upon φιλανθρωπία as the product of rational choice and not of pressure upon the emotions (τὸ φυσικῶς πεῖθον). However, *Hom.* XII 26, 6 admits that φιλανθρωπία ἐστὶν ἀρρενόθηλυς, ἧς τὸ θῆλυ μέρος ἐλεημοσύνη λέγεται, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν αὐτῆς ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸν πλησίον ὠνόμασται. Here the passive (and therefore feminine) emotion of pity is clearly contrasted with the rational, outgoing, productive (and therefore masculine) ἀγάπη.

M. Rist: I'm very grateful to you for drawing my attention to this passage. As you say, the doctrine is Stoic, though the use of φυσικῶς is not. There are clearly similarities between Ps.-Clement and the passage from Origen's *De principiis* I mentioned in the paper. Curiously enough some of the same questions are raised in a recent article by C. Card, On Mercy, in the *Philosophical Review* 81 (1972), 182-207.