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RELATIONS THAT ARE GIVEN AND ESTABLISHED.
PROCLUS' USE OF ANALOGICAL REASONING
IN THEOLOGY

Introduction

The first form of reasoning human beings use, is arguably analogical reasoning¹. Apparently from the moment humans start perceiving, they start drawing conclusions on the basis of similarities. Besides this all-pervasive use, analogical reasoning, most famously the *analogia entis*, also has a more specific role in philosophy, as a tool for understanding the divine.

As Aubenque shows, although the tradition often identifies Aristotle as the source of medieval and later ideas of the *analogia entis*, this is actually the result of Platonizing Aristotle – and indeed, Plato is the primary source for the most important influence in that tradition: mathematically based analogical reasoning². One of the thinkers that play a crucial role in that tradition is Proclus. This chapter will discuss his views of analogy, to find a unified theory bringing together a colourful palet of analogies. Although it is not one of the dialectical methods, Proclus does value analogical reasoning as a crucial scientific and philosophical method, because of its contribution to reversion or *epistrophe*.

1. Holyoak *et al.* 2001, 2.

2. Pierre Aubenque published various articles on the history of what he calls the 'pseudo-Aristotelian' notion of *analogia entis*. See e.g., Aubenque 1989. Fronterotta 2016, following Aubenque, analyses the use of *analogia* and related terms in Plato's dialogues. For another history of the *analogia entis* that includes the Neoplatonic tradition, see Pannenberg 2007, 45–51.

It is therefore *a fortiori* a crucial theological method as well. At the same time, however, analogy comes in different forms, each with its limitations and challenges, that were also matters of debate in Proclus' writings, as in antiquity more generally. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the different types of analogy relevant to theology, and show that even the most problematic ones, according to Proclus either involve or are related to a proportional relation, with an ontological foundation.

In section 2, I will discuss contemporary and ancient definitions of analogy, and the main limitation of this form of reasoning. The most pressing limitation, one could say, is the problem of justification, or the problem of the unknown universal. I will also discuss the mathematical foundation of proportionality, and the justification of analogy found in the system of causality. In the subsequent sections, we will look at some passages from Proclus' writings, such as the *Platonic Theology*, the *Commentary on the Republic* and the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, to highlight the kinds of analogy he distinguishes and their uses in theology. In this context, we will also address his discussions of the limitations of analogy, and his proposed solutions.

Analogy Defined and Justified

Let me start out by distinguishing between analogy as a form of reasoning and analogy as a stylistic tool. This chapter is about both, but for the purposes of this discussion, the most relevant *contemporary* discussions on analogy are those looking at it as a form of reasoning³. Analogical reasoning is a method that does not require any prior knowledge, just a capacity for observation and subsequent identification of patterns. That is its core: «to identify recurrences of these patterns despite variation in the elements that compose them»⁴. Or in more technical terms, analogy involves two domains, or sets of objects and statements about them: a familiar *source domain*, and a less familiar *target domain*; and accepted similarities between these two domains. On

3. This is because, as we will see, stylistic analogy, or *simile*, for Proclus is nothing other than a specific use of analogical reasoning.

4. Holyoak *et al.* 2001, 2.

the basis of these similarities and our further knowledge of the source domain, we infer additional similarities between the domains, that allow us to conclude certain things about the target domain⁵. For example: if we know that (lit) candles and stars are similar in that they are bright, and in addition we know about candles that they are hot, we may infer that stars are hot as well. The first problem immediately presents itself: this is a form of induction, and therefore the certainty of the conclusion is not guaranteed⁶. In part, this problem is due to a certain vagueness in the English use of the term. This vagueness diminishes once we look at the Neoplatonic tradition⁷.

The definitions given by Holyoak et al. and Bartha are similar to the description we find in G. E. R. Lloyd's famous *Polarity and analogy*, in which he analyses the use of two modes of reasoning in early Greek (pre-)philosophy. As emphasised by the title of his book, the two modes start from polar opposites and from analogies respectively. Lloyd mentions that there has not been «general agreement on the definition of analogy»⁸. In a broader sense, when we speak of analogy as a part or a method of *reasoning*, we may say that the hallmark of any analogy (like inductive reasoning) is *similarity*. This brings Lloyd to take on board the following definition, which maps onto Bartha's:

Any mode of reasoning in which one object or complex of objects is likened or assimilated to another (of the two particular instances between which a resemblance is apprehended or suggested, one is generally unknown or incompletely known [Bartha's target domain, MM], while the other is, or is assumed to be, better known [Bartha's source domain, MM])⁹.

In the subsequent elaboration of pre-philosophical examples, Lloyd shows its pervasive use: he discusses homoeopathy, omen, simile, comparison, metaphor, imagery, and, in Greek cosmology, the anthropocentric understanding of the cosmos in political,

5. Bartha 2013, § 2.2.

6. Cf. Bartha 2013.

7. Cf. Gersh 1973, 87.

8. Lloyd 1966, 172.

9. Lloyd 1966, 175.

biological, and technological images (the cosmos as a *politeia*, as a living being, or as a product of craft).

Lloyd's definition, as that of Bartha, ultimately derive from an uncontroversial and very concrete ancient sense of the word analogy (*analogia*): the relation between two mathematical proportions, especially what is called «geometrical proportion» – a relation which is itself also proportional: e.g., $1 : 2 :: 2 : 4$, or $1 : 2 :: 4 : 8$. In both cases, the two proportions stand in a proportional relation to one another (e.g., $1:2$ and $2:4$ – which is just another form of $1:2$ –, in turn stand in a $1:2$ relation). This primary sense is also generally identified as a crucial part of the justification for the success of analogical reasoning: in ancient philosophical sources discussing the nature of analogy, we find that, by extension, just as analogy holds as a proportional relation between different kinds of mathematical entities (numbers, magnitudes)¹⁰, so too it holds as a proportional relation between non-mathematical properties or entities: as *a* is to *b*, *b* is to *c*, or as *a* is to *b*, *c* is to *d*. Excellent examples of this geometrical formula, as we may call it, are found in Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*, e.g., «as what is believed is to what is known, so the likeness is to the thing it is like»¹¹.

In the following, analogy will stand more narrowly for such applications of geometrical proportions to non-mathematical domains. Analogical reasoning will stand for argumentation relying on the two relations that are similar and themselves related.

There is a problem with the above-mentioned justification through the underlying mathematical example: that justification itself relies on an analogy. Other domains are considered similar

10. See e.g., *In Eucl.* 9.2–8. As Morrow 1970 points out, in that passage Proclus also refers to the geometrical proof of alternate proportionality in Euclid's *Elements* theorem V.16 («if four magnitudes are proportional they will also be proportional alternately»: ἐὰν τέσσαρα μεγέθη ἀνάλογον ᾦ, καὶ ἐναλλάξ ἀνάλογον ἔσται).

11. *Resp.* VI 510a9–10: ὥς τὸ δοξαστὸν πρὸς τὸ γνωστὸν, οὕτω τὸ ὁμοιωθὲν πρὸς τὸ ὅ ὁμοιώθη. And further *Resp.* VII 534a3–5: ὅτι οὐσία πρὸς γένεσιν, νόησιν πρὸς δόξαν, καὶ ὅτι νόησις πρὸς δόξαν, ἐπιστήμην πρὸς πίστιν καὶ διάνοιαν πρὸς εἰκασίαν; *Ti.* 29c3: ὅτι περ πρὸς γένεσιν οὐσία, τοῦτο πρὸς πίστιν ἀλήθεια. Another important passage for later ancient ideas about analogy is *Ti.* 31b4–32a7, where Plato describes the proportional bond between the elements.

to the mathematical domain, and because the proportional relations exist and work among mathematical entities, they are taken to exist and work among non-mathematical entities. This is one part of what I will call the ontological problem. For the other part see below (174).

In addition, analogical reasoning is essentially different from proportional relations in mathematics: whereas in mathematics the ratio of comparison is known, outside it analogical reasoning relies on an unknown universal (or an unknown ratio). This problem was addressed by Aristotle in his discussion of «arguments from similarity (*homoioiotes*)». That these «arguments from similarity» are what we call analogy is clear from Aristotle's example, which echoes the geometrical formula¹²: «as knowledge and ignorance of contraries is the same thing, so is the perception of contraries the same thing, or, conversely, since the perception of them is the same, so also is the knowledge». The problem is that such arguments compare things through an implicit universal, which makes them useful in dialectic (in the Aristotelian sense), but also unreliable. This is what we may call the epistemological problem of analogical reasoning.

Let us first sum up the well-known Neoplatonic reply to the ontological problem. One of the advantages of Neoplatonic, or

12. Arist. *Top.* Θ 1.156b10–18. See also Fronterotta 2016, 50 and Bartha 2013, § 3.2: «Although Aristotle employs the term analogy (*analogia*) and discusses analogical predication, he never talks about analogical reasoning or analogical arguments *per se*. He does, however, identify two argument forms, the *argument from example* (*paradeigma*) and the *argument from likeness* (*homoioiotes*), both closely related to what would we now recognise as an analogical argument». I would say, however, that the *argument from likeness* or similarity comes much closer to analogy in our sense. Paraphrasing his illustration of the argument from example: if we wish to prove that to fight with the Thebans is an evil for the Athenians, and we know that the fight against the Phocians was evil for the Thebans, we may assume an underlying universal that applies to both – namely that to fight against neighbours is an evil in general. The difference, of course, is that we here have an argument concerning two particulars falling under the same implicit universal, not (as in analogies) two relations between pairs of similar particulars. Cf. Aristotle's own observation at *Top.* Θ 1.156b14–18. Aristotle criticises arguments from example, not as relying on an implicit universal, but as an incomplete induction from a particular to a general principle: «it does not draw its proof from all the particular cases» (*APr.* 68b38–69a19).

in our case specifically Proclus' thought, is that it offers a clearcut universal justification for the analogy between mathematics and other domains: while the mathematical analogy itself as many other cases of analogy apparently function in a horizontal plane, i.e., between entities that are ontologically of the same level or category, for Proclus and most Neoplatonic, as well as Christian thinkers like the Areopagite and Thomas Aquinas, such analogies are dependent on primary analogies functioning in a vertical plane, i.e. between prior and posterior, or cause and effect¹³. It is salient in this respect that Proclus in the *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*, despite the fact that proportions are not introduced until book 5 of Euclid's *Elements* (as he points out at *In Eucl.* 427.13–14), does bring in the method of analogy as part of the geometrical method in the commentary on book 1: it is one of the methods grounded in the superior science of dialectic¹⁴. In addition, and even more saliently, he often refers to analogical relations in that same commentary, but most instances concern the vertical relations between the prior and posterior, and especially between causes and effects¹⁵.

The likening or assimilation of what Bartha calls the «target domain» to the «source domain» relies on and is therefore justi-

13. On horizontal vs. vertical in the context of analogy see also Fronterotta 2016. On analogy as part of Proclus' geometrical method see also Martijn 2014.

14. For Proclus' discussions of mathematical proportions and the 'common theorems' related to them, see *In Eucl.* 7.15–24. For the grounding of common principles, including those governing analogy, in dialectic, see *In Eucl.* 8.21–10.1.

15. For the use of mathematical proportions see *In Eucl.* 67.5–6, and especially in the exegesis of the first propositions, e.g., *In Eucl.* 205.24–206.2, 213.2–7, 220.17–221.6, cfr. 405–6. For the analogical relations between prior and posterior, or causes and effects (including the relation between superior and subordinate sciences), see 39.20–22, 66.5–8, 77.12–15, 97.18–100.2, 104.8–16, 117.2–17, 147.3–5, 168.13–15. An additional role of analogy is the *Timaean* 'bond' of the cosmos, see e.g., *In Eucl.* 22.17–23.11. Note that at first sight, *In Eucl.* 43.22–44.24 seems to contradict my claims, because Proclus there says that proportion is not the bond between the mathematical sciences. His point there, however, is that although proportional relations are present in all mathematical sciences, they are not what relates them to one another – that bond is instead found on higher levels (universal mathematics, dialectic, and ultimately Nous).

fied by a metaphysical assumption regarding causal relations. Or to be more precise, according to Neoplatonists, in proper analogies the objects are not *likened* or *assimilated*, they are instead *alike* and *similar* or even in part *the same* by nature due to causation – the resemblance therefore is not «suggested» (as in Lloyd's definition), but real. Moreover, for any thinker with a Neoplatonic background, the mathematical proportions remain in the background also in the vertical application of analogy: for them, the mathematical number 1 is ontologically prior to and the cause of 2 etc., and therefore even a mathematical analogy is in a sense already an expression of the connection between the horizontal with the vertical plane¹⁶.

The general underlying causal principle can be found in Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. As has been discussed elsewhere, two elements are key to causality for Proclus as elaborated there: productive «motion» and degrees of sameness¹⁷. Productive «motion» is the activity of the prior that of necessity produces the posterior; and the degrees of sameness point to the fact that the posterior either has the same essence but in a lower degree, or a different essence. It is the former kind of sameness which is especially relevant for us, as in this case the posterior consists of a *transverse* chain of products or effects with an *analogically* or proportionally increasing distinction from their cause¹⁸. For example, lower kinds of souls that are still essentially souls, but, to differing degrees, inferior to, less perfect, and more divided, etc. than their source, the monad of Soul. In other words, one of the fundamental structures of reality consists in analogical relations. This is clear, for example, in *El. Theol.* 100:

16. Moreover, as Beierwaltes 1979, 65; 153–58 in his discussion of analogy as horizontal ontological «bond of the world» («Band von Welt», 158) points out, a horizontal analogy as a structure of sameness is a kind of unity and therefore also relates lower ontological levels to higher ones with greater unity.

17. See the discussion in Martijn – Gerson 2016, but also Beierwaltes before us (see the reff. in Martijn and Gerson). On the difference between similarity, sameness, and identity, see Martijn – Gerson 2016, 53 note 43.

18. In the latter case, the posterior is an image of the former, which means that the essence is not the same, but only similar to the essence of its cause. One may here think of the soul being similar to the intellect (*El. Theol.* 195).

Again, all the unparticipated monads are referable to the One, because all are analogous to the One: in so far as they too are affected by a common character, namely their analogy to the One, so far we can refer them to the One¹⁹.

So the primary causal background of the ontological analogy between a principle and its chain is, of course, emanation, which combines a degree of sameness (remaining) with difference through proportional declension (*hyphesis/hypobasis*), i.e., gradual disappearance or inversion of attributes²⁰. Together, and on the assumption that the declension takes the same steps in every chain (i.e., follows at least partially same sequence of inverting attributes to their opposite or to privation), these two give us «analogous» members within two adjacent series: e.g. the monads to the One, the souls to different gods²¹ – there are members of the one series that are in the same respective position as members in the other series. Such analogous members, i.e., with in part the same set of attributes²², can be used in our analogic analogies²³.

In a slightly less technical context, the different elements of this ontological justification of analogies as discerned by Proclus come out beautifully: in the 12th essay of his *Commentary on the Republic*, when he interprets the Divided Line. Regarding the second cut of the line (i.e., cutting each of the two unequal parts in two), Proclus first of all points out that the geometrical proportion, i.e., that each of the line sections resulting from the first cut, is itself cut «analogous to the original line»²⁴, serves to bring out the nature of emanation as a combination of declension with

19. *πᾶσαι δὲ αὖ αἱ ἀμέθεκτοι μονάδες εἰς τὸ ἓν ἀνάγονται, διότι πᾶσαι τῷ ἐνὶ ἀνάλογον· ἢ οὖν ταῦτόν τι καὶ αὗται πεπόνθασιν, τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἓν ἀναλογίαν, ταύτη εἰς τὸ ἓν αὐταῖς ἡ ἀναγωγή γίνεται.*

20. In addition, there is a secondary sameness that is the result of reversion (§§ 97 and 99). See also below.

21. For the relation of the monads to the One see also *El. Theol.* 108–10; cf. 181, and for the souls being analogous to the gods see 185 and 201.

22. See Van Riel 2016 for a fascinating elaboration of declension among the henads.

23. See further *El. Theol.* 21, 24, 63, 97, and 125.

24. *In R.* I 288.26–27: *τούτων δὲ τῶν ἀνίσων δύο τμημάτων ἐκάτερον ἀνάλογον τέμνει τῇ ἐξ ἀρχῆς γραμμῇ.*

identity – the secondary is inferior to the primary, but through sameness²⁵. Subsequently, he states that «analogy is the identity of relation and the most beautiful bond» – which seems a general statement about analogies, but by its reference to *Timaeus* 31c brings in the horizontal and entirely immanent ontological analogy between the elements²⁶. And finally, he calls analogy the «judgement of Zeus». This is a reference to *Laws* VI 757b, where that judgment is described as consisting in genuine equality («much to the great and less to the less great»), which leads to true friendship. This addition emphasises the way horizontal analogy can teach us about vertical analogy. Or in Proclus' own explanation (*In R.* I 289.3–6):

Just as this cosmos has been crafted according to analogy, with all things obtaining an indissoluble friendship to one another, so too all things came forth, tied together by it and agreeing with one another²⁷.

So with this feat of Platonic exegesis, Proclus makes the perceptible *horizontal* analogies of the physical world and political life, an indication of the vertical analogy between the sensible and the intelligible.

Although the phenomenon of analogy built on ontological relations of prior and posterior may be more often associated with the *analogia entis* of Christian metaphysics²⁸, it is central to

25. *In R.* I 288.27–29: τῆς ἀναλογίας πάλιν ταύτης ἐναργῶς δηλούσης τὴν διὰ ταυτότητος τῶν δευτέρων ἀπὸ τῶν πρότερον ὕφεςιν.

26. *In R.* I 288.29–289.2: λόγου γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀναλογία ταυτότης καὶ δεσμῶν ὁ κάλλιστος, ὥς ἐν Τιμαίῳ [31c] μεμαθήκαμεν.

27. ὥς οὖν ὁ κόσμος οὗτος δεδημιούργηται <κατὰ> τὴν ἀναλογίαν, πάντων φιλίαν ἄλντον πρὸς ἄλληλα λαβόντων, οὕτω καὶ τὰ πάντα προήλθεν συνδεθέντα διὰ ταύτης καὶ ὁμολογήσαντα ἀλλήλοις.

28. On this topic see Ashworth 2009. We will leave aside the medieval tradition in this chapter, but it does make sense to point out here that the three medieval senses of analogy distinguished by Ashworth, analogy of proportionality (comparison of relations), analogy of attribution (cf. Aristotle's focal meaning), and analogy of imitation or participation (between god and creation), the first and last come together in Proclus. As we will see, the participation of lower levels in the higher is a proportional relation. In a sense the analogy of attribution is part of this picture as well, as there is always a highest level to which a term belongs in its truest sense, but this is semantically a bit different from the transcategorical attribution in Aristotle.

late ancient pagan Platonism as well (and even occurs in middle Platonism, see below, 177–78)²⁹. An important ancient objection to the ontological foundation is the rejection of an important assumption on which it is built: that there is a one-on-one relation between the intelligible and the sensible. In other words, according to critics the presumed universal behind analogical reasoning about the intelligible on the basis of the sensible is not just unknown, it is non-existent. This criticism, which echoes Plato's own «large largeness» and Aristotle's third man, is unjustified. It was in fact quite clear to Neoplatonic thinkers (pagan and Christian) that the use of analogical reasoning in theology, and assumptions concerning vertical analogies, are to some extent problematic. Among them, as Chiaradonna has shown, Plotinus held an extreme position, demonstrating that analogy fails to capture the differences between the sensible and the intelligible, and arguing that the two realms are not related by analogy³⁰. Proclus, instead has a more traditional view, in that he does embrace the metaphysical analogy, but he too discusses the limitations of using analogical reasoning concerning the transcendent.

In Proclus' writings, the best place to look for the role of analogical reasoning as a method based on this metaphysical relation of analogy, is found precisely in a theological work, the *Platonic Theology*. We will turn to that next, which will also allow us to address the epistemological problem mentioned above. Before turning to the exegesis of passages however, there are two important caveats to be made: first of all, it is possible that in different writings we find different notions of analogy. Although Proclus is a very systematic philosopher, his writings do not need to contain a fully coherent system. And second, one reason why we might find different notions, is that Proclus is often limited

29. One of the sources of inspiration for Proclus' view as discussed in this chapter was Iamblichus' Pythagorean approach (for which see e.g., *Simpl. In Cat.* 116.25–33).

30. Plot. *Enn.* VI 3 [44], 2. See the discussions in Chiaradonna 2002, 227–305 and Chiaradonna 2016, 201. As Chiaradonna shows, Plotinus criticised the assumption of those who attempted to harmonise Plato and Aristotle, that there was an *aph'henos-pros hen* relation between the intelligible and the sensible; he moreover criticised the use of analogy as obfuscating the irreducible differences between these two realms.

by the texts he is interpreting, such as Platonic dialogues or Orphic Hymns. I do think, however, that despite these caveats, it is still possible to find a coherent notion of analogy and analogical reasoning in Proclus' writings.

The Role of Analogy in Theology

In the *Platonic Theology*, Proclus lays out Plato's theology, which is not the topic of one specific dialogue, but spread throughout Plato's writings. In II 5 of the *Platonic Theology*, Proclus presents what he takes to be Plato's two paths human beings might take to gain some form of cognitive access to the One, namely the road by analogy (or, to use its medieval name, the *via analogiae*), which is represented in the *Republic*, and the road by negation (*via negativa*), for which the *Parmenides* is the main source³¹. We will mostly disregard the latter, and focus on the former, which is first introduced by Proclus as follows: «Well now, I say that [Plato] sometimes exhibits that [i.e., the One/Good] through analogy and the sameness of the secondary things»³².

Analogia here refers to the *method* Proclus thinks Plato chose for exhibiting (although not really describing) the One, and that the «sameness» refers to the underlying metaphysical relations justifying the use of that method³³. Just like Alcinous before him,

31. Note, however, that analogical reasoning also plays a role in the *Parmenides*. See below, 193–36. On the broader history of these two roads, and the additional third road, the *via eminentiae*, see O'Rourke 2016. As O'Rourke points out, the three roads are already discussed by Alcinous. See also below and 177–78. Plotinus also discusses different ways in which we can know the first cause, including among others analogy and negation, *Enn.* VI 7 [38], 36.6–9. See also below. On Plotinus on analogy, see above and Smith 2012.

32. *Theol. Plat.* II 5.37.12–13: λέγω τοίνυν ὅτι ποτὲ μὲν δι' ἀναλογίας αὐτὸ καὶ τῆς τῶν δευτέρων ὁμοιότητος ἐμφανίζει. On this passage see also Beierwaltes 1979, 330. Saffrey and Westerink translate: «fait voir le premier principe par le moyen de l'analogie et par la ressemblance avec lui de ce qui lui est inférieur».

33. The same pattern is used in the description of the second method of negation. There too we get the method used first, and the underlying reality second: «and sometimes displays its transcendence through negations and the excess with respect to all beings together» (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.37.13–15: ποτὲ δὲ διὰ τῶν ἀποφάσεων τὸ ἐξηρημένον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄφ' ὧν ὁμοῦ τῶν ὄντων ἐκβεβηκὸς ἐπιδείκνυσιν).

Proclus mentions as the prime example of this method the analogy of the sun from Plato's *Republic*: «For in the *Republic* he reveals the unspeakable character and existence of the Good through the analogy to the sun»³⁴. Where Alcinoüs merely mentions analogy, and elaborates the example, Proclus almost does the inverse: he summarises the example, to then elaborate extensively on the method. The summary is more informative than it might seem at first sight, however, so we will return to it below (177). First let us take a closer look at Proclus' further description of how analogy works, namely through a «representation of reversion» (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.38.2-8):

By the other method [i.e., through analogy] the return to it [i.e., the One] of the things that have proceeded from it is represented; through sameness to that [i.e., the One], there is a monad for each order of beings, that is analogous to the Good, and which is to the whole [series] conjoined with it, what the Good is to all the orders of the gods; of that sameness itself, the return of the wholes to the One is altogether the cause³⁵.

At first sight, this passage may be a bit unclear, because Proclus here describes a couple of steps, and moves between the method and its metaphysical underpinnings. First (in the order of reality, not of the text), there is the emanation of a monad (a universal, a whole) from the Good (which we may understand to be the One/Good in its emanative capacity), heading the orders of being and orders of the gods respectively. These are real, ontological relations. Second, there is a return of the monads/

34. *Theol. Plat.* II 5.37.15-17: ἐν Πολιτείᾳ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον ἀναλογίας τὴν ἄφραστον ιδιότητα καὶ ὑπαρξίν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μεμύνηκεν. Cf. Alcín. *Did.* 10.5: «The second way of conceiving it is that of analogy, as follows: the sun is to vision and to visible objects (it is not itself sight, but provides vision to sight and visibility to its objects) as the primal intellect is to the power of intellection in the soul and to its objects; for it is not the power of intellection itself, but provides intellection to it and intelligibility to its objects, illuminating the truth contained in them.» (tr. Dillon 1993, modified).

35. κατὰ δὲ αὐτὸν τὸν ἕτερον τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸ τῶν προελθόντων ἐπιστροφὴν ἀπεικονίζεται· διὰ γὰρ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο καθ' ἐκάστην τῶν ὄντων τάξιν ἀνάλογον ὑπέστη τῷ ἀγαθῷ μονάς, τοῦτο οὖσα πρὸς ὅλον τὸν σύζυγον αὐτῆς ὁ πρὸς ἀπάσας ἐστὶ τὰς τῶν θεῶν διακοσμήσεις τὰγαθόν· τῆς δὲ ὁμοιότητος ταύτης ἡ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τῶν ὄλων ἐπιστροφή πάντως αἰτία.

wholes to the One (or the One/Good in its final capacity), i.e., an ontological *epistrophe* of the «wholes» to the One, which causes an (ontologically founded) sameness – and it is this sameness, which founds the analogical relationship. This is not just a reference to the structure of reality – i.e., the repetition in functioning as a monad, or being a lower kind of One with their own chain of emanation – but also to the power which patterns at lower metaphysical levels have to help us revert. This analogy is why Plato can use an analogous, lower entity, as an *image* of the higher in a philosophical or literary representation (*apeikonizetai*), for the sake of our ascent (*anagoge*) to the One³⁶. Note that this description is not specific to the analogy of the Sun – although Proclus probably did pick that example as a very clear, or the standard, illustration of this method – but is apparently intended to function as applicable to all uses of the method of analogy³⁷.

To return to the analogy of the sun, however: the phrasing used for it, already suggests that we may run into problems when using this method in theology: Plato «reveals the unspeakable character and existence of the Good through the analogy to the sun» – «reveals» and «unspeakable» are clear indications that what we are dealing with here is not exactly the same as what we find in mathematical analogies. In fact, as we will see, the method of analogy in this context merges with the *via eminentiae* (men-

36. On the methods of negation and analogy as linked to emanation and reversion respectively, see also Baltzly *et al.* 2022, 12–13.

37. This shows, I think, from the distance between the illustration and the description (there are 8 lines between them, in which the other method is described) and the general terms used in the descriptions, e.g. the use of expressions like «all other things» (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.37.19–20). To give two further theological examples: like the relation between the demiurge and all encosmic things, the relation between the One and all beings is an analogous relation (*In Prm.* I 642.15–16); and in the *Elements of Theology* Proclus argues for the existence of the henads on the basis of analogical reasoning: in a nutshell, every plurality is analogous to its cause, and as the intellects have Intellect as their cause, the divine series has the One as its cause, therefore the divine series has to consist of unities (113, cf. 151). Admittedly, however, this is not a case of reversion, as the *Elements of Theology* is set up in descending order.

tioned as a third method by Alcinous, but not by Proclus)³⁸. This becomes clear when we look into Proclus' immediate problematization of a misconception of the method of analogy. After rejecting unjustified criticism of the *via negativa* (based in wrongly understanding the negations as privations), Proclus goes on to address and reject unjustified criticism of analogy – or perhaps a misguided use of analogies (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.38.15–18):

And let noone try to misrepresent that upward journey to the first principle by defining analogy as consisting in identity (*tautotes*) of proportions (*logoi*) and proportions as consisting in relations (*en schesisin*)³⁹.

At first sight, Proclus' picture of the «misrepresentation» seems to contradict what I said above about the method of analogy being rooted in geometry, so let's pick this passage apart. The issue addressed seems to have several layers: the first problem would be that if analogies consist in *logoi* and *logoi* consist in relations, then presenting a functional analogy would imply describing a relation of the lower to the One Good, which is impossible by definition due to the latter's complete transcendence. In addition, as a second problem Proclus brings in that analogies are said to consist in *identity* of *logoi* – not just similarity or partial sameness, but identity, which would put the One and whatever emanates from it on the same ontological level⁴⁰. As we read near the end of the chapter, Proclus refutes this criticism, in both its elements, by showing that Plato's method of

38. For the three roads in Alcinous see notes 31 and 34. Cf. O'Rourke 2016, 525 for a similar merging of analogy and eminence in Celsus, and Chiaradonna 2016, 76 for Iamblichus and Simplicius.

39. καὶ μοι μηδεὶς [...] μήτε τὴν ἀναλογίαν ἐν λόγων ταυτότητι τοὺς δὲ λόγους ἐν σχέσεσιν ἀφοριζόμενος διαβάλλειν ἐπιχειρεῖτω τὴν ἀναγωγὸν ταύτην πορείαν ἐπὶ τὴν πρωτίστην ἀρχήν. Note that Proclus here seems to disagree with Plotinus, for whom analogy is not a path to the first principle, but a teaching about it (*didaskousin*, *Enn.* VI 7 [38], 36.6–8). The path to the first principle instead is provided through certain activities and states, such as purification and virtue (VI 7 [38], 36.8–10). Moreover, Plotinus distinguishes between analogies and «negations and knowledge of things derived from it» (γνώσεις τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ), which suggests that he is thinking of merely literary analogies as opposed to Proclus' primarily ontological analogies.

40. For the difference between similarity, partial sameness and identity, see above and Martijn and Gerson 2016, 53, note 43.

analogy neither expresses identity of, nor a relation between the One and the things after it (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.39.6–9):

Analogies are only used through *indication* of the *sameness* (*homoioseos*) of secondary things to the first, and neither a proportion, nor a relation, nor a communion, of the first principle to the things after it, is displayed by them⁴¹.

Again, this might seem to undercut an important part of my thesis, namely that analogies work because of a metaphysical relation of proportionality, but if we keep on reading, we will see it does not. The main point Proclus is here making is that the analogies that help us «reach» the One rely on two kinds of relations of transcendence of cause to effect (*Theol. Plat.* II 5.39.9–15). If you recall, chapter 5 of book II of the *Platonic Theology*, as we saw above, not just contains an explanation of analogy, but also an example, on the One Good and the monads. Let us return to that example to see how it solves our problem. Importantly, in the context of the *Platonic Theology*, the example primarily serves, not so much as illustration of analogy, but as part of the argument for the transcendence of the One. The example is expressed as an analogy consisting of proportional relations, namely «the monad [...] is to the whole [series] conjoined with it, what the Good is to all the orders of the gods». Or to render this a bit more schematically:

monad : series : : Good : orders of gods.

This analogy suggests that the relation between the monad or unparticipated universal and its chain is the same as that between the Good and the orders of the gods. And it is, in some respects, but importantly not in all – the relation is itself one of analogy. As Proclus goes on to say: «But all of intellect and every god has a lower superiority to the inferior of which it is the cause, than

41. αἱ δὲ ἀναλογίαι δι' ἐνδειξιν μόνον τῆς πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τῶν δευτέρων ὁμοιώσεως παραλαμβάνονται, καὶ οὔτε λόγος οὐδεὶς οὔτε σχέσις οὔτε κοινωνία τῆς πρωτίστης ἀρχῆς πρὸς τὰ μετ' αὐτὴν ἐκ τούτων ἀναφαίνεται. As we will see, such «indication» can also be found in applying names that belong to sensible objects to intelligible entities «by mere analogy». See e.g., *In Prm.* VII 1200.32–1201.2.

the first has to each of the beings»⁴². In order to understand this addition, we have to point out that monads exist at different levels, and that Proclus here introduces what he calls the second and third levels (gods and intellects), but in the inverse order (first intellect, then gods) – perhaps because it would be easier to understand for his readers how intellect is inferior to the One than how a god would be inferior to the One. Moreover, the «orders of gods» of the second half of the analogy are in fact headed by the very monads of the first half of the analogy. To illustrate with a mathematical example, the kind of analogy we are working with here has three terms, not four: it is not similar to $4 : 8 :: 1 : 2$, but $2 : 4 :: 1 : 2$. The analogy, then, both illustrates the partial sameness between any monad and the Good, and provides the space to point out the relevant difference between them, in how they relate to their inferiors⁴³. It thereby reinforces Proclus' explanation for why analogy does not express *relations* in the case of the One.

In order to ascend to the One through analogy, we use an analogy in which some source domain figures and offers something knowable (in this case the ontological analogy or proportional relation between monad and its series), which has a sameness – in some but importantly not all respects! – to something we wish to know (but is essentially unknowable) about our target domain: the One.

42. *Theol. Plat.* II 5.39.15–17: ἀλλὰ πᾶς ὁ νοῦς καὶ πᾶς θεὸς ὑφειμένην ἔλαχεν ὑπεροχὴν πρὸς τὰ καταδεέστερα καὶ ὧν ἐστὶν αἴτιος ἢ τὸ πρῶτον πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων. It is unfortunate for the systematic rendering that Proclus in this passage moves from the contents of the analogy to a more general point regarding the transcendence of the One. I have tried to make up for this transition in the below table by including both the term from the analogy and the more general point about «all beings».

43. *Procl. Theol. Plat.* II 5.39.9–20: καὶ γὰρ τὸ ἐξηρημένον αὐτῆς οὐ τοιοῦτον ἐστὶν οἷον ἐπὶ τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τρίτων θεωρεῖται διακόσμων, ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μείζονως τάγαθόν ὑπερέχει τῶν ὅλων ἢ ὁ νοῦς τῶν μετ' αὐτόν, εἴτε ὁ δημιουργικὸς οὗτος εἴτε ὁ τοῦ παντός κόσμου νοῦς εἴτε ἄλλος τις εἴη τῶν θείων προσαγορευομένων· ἀλλὰ πᾶς ὁ νοῦς καὶ πᾶς θεὸς ὑφειμένην ἔλαχεν ὑπεροχὴν πρὸς τὰ καταδεέστερα καὶ ὧν ἐστὶν αἴτιος ἢ τὸ πρῶτον πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων, ὃ πάντων ὁμοίως ἐκβέβηκε καὶ οὐ τῶν μὲν μᾶλλον τῶν δὲ ἥττον· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν αὐτῶ σχέσιν πρὸς τὰ δευτέρα μείζω καὶ ἐλάττω προσάγοιμεν.

Schematically, we might render the analogy in the following table:

source domain			unknowable target domain		sameness	Difference
monad	2	<i>analogous to</i>	One	1	unity	metaphysical level
<i>schesis</i>		« <i>analogous to</i> »	/no <i>schesis</i>			relation vs. transcendence
series	4	<i>analogous to</i>	gods (and all beings)	2	emanated plurality of ones	metaphysical level

Table 1.

Two things are worth noting here. First of all, it seems problematic that the relation between «1» and «2» is different from the relation between «2» and «4». After all, the whole point of using an analogy is that it allows us to conclude something on the basis of patterns shared by the known and the unknown. Proclus may take this to be resolved by what we will term, modifying a distinction made by Keynes, a combination of positive and negative analogy⁴⁴: what holds in the source domain, holds in the target domain, *but not in the same manner* – the pattern is the same, but with an adverbial modification⁴⁵. Let me illustrate that with the use of the second point: the merging of the method of analogy and the method of eminence mentioned above. It comes out quite clearly in Proclus' statement, reminiscent of the «true equality» from the *Laws*, that the (One) «Good exceeds the wholes by much more» (πολλῷ μειζόνως τὰγαθὸν ὑπερέχει τῶν ὅλων, *Theol. Plat.* II 5.39.9-20, «the wholes» referring to the first level below the Good). So there is a proportional relation, but perhaps it is better to render it as 0:1 :: 1:2. Signifi-

44. Bartha 2013, § 2.2 refers to Keynes 1921 for this distinction, that highlights that analogies may refer to propositions holding for both source domain and target domain, but also to propositions holding for one domain but not for the other. See also Lloyd 1966, 175.

45. This concept is inspired by Siorvanes 1996, 126. For a similar concept in Syrianus (*In Metaph.* 115.5-9) see Opsomer 2004, who phrases it as a combination of homonymy and synonymy. For this combination see also below.

cantly, even though the mathematical relation is broken up by the adverbial distinction, it is also maintained by the use of the verb «to exceed» (*hyperechein*), which is also used in the context of mathematical analogies⁴⁶.

Proclus on the Didactics of the Analogy of the Sun

The tension we found in the use of analogies between incomparable realms could be considered a subtype of two of the main problems of analogical reasoning: the ontological and the epistemological problem of justification. As Bartha points out, it is very hard to find a general justification for the reliability of reasoning by analogy, without it justifying arguments that are actually bad arguments⁴⁷. We may also recall Plato's own eloquent and quite informative warnings against the pitfalls of analogies, which relate to the epistemological problem (Pl. *Phdr.* 262a-b and *Sph.* 231a):

Therefore, if you are to deceive someone else and to avoid deception yourself, you must know precisely the respects in which things are similar and dissimilar to one another. – Yes, you must. – And is it really possible for someone who doesn't know what each thing truly is to detect a similarity – whether large or small – between something he doesn't know and anything else⁴⁸?

and *Sph.* 231a

And a wolf [is similar to] a dog, the wildest to the gentlest. If you're going to be safe, you have to be especially careful about similarities, since the type we're talking about is very slippery⁴⁹.

46. See e.g., *In Eucl.* 122.3–5, Archyt. DK47B2 *apud* Porph. *In Harm. Ptol.* 92.

47. Bartha 2013, § 4.

48. Tr. Nehamas and Woodruff 1995. δεῖ ἄρα τὸν μέλλοντα ἀπατήσῃν μὲν ἄλλον, αὐτὸν δὲ μὴ ἀπατήσεσθαι, τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῶν ὄντων καὶ ἀνομοιότητα ἀκριβῶς διειδέναι. – Ἀνάγκη μὲν οὖν. – Ἡ οὖν οἴός τε ἔσται, ἀλήθειαν ἀγνοῶν ἐκάστου, τὴν τοῦ ἀγνοουμένου ὁμοιότητα σμικρὰν τε καὶ μεγάλην ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις διαγιγνώσκειν;

49. Tr. White 1993. καὶ γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ. τὸν δὲ ἀσφαλῇ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀεὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φυλακὴν· ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος.

The first warning, from the *Phaedrus*, is in fact a variation on Meno's paradox, as analogical reasoning is used to draw conclusions about things we do not know on the basis of things we do know, but as long as we do not know the former («know what each thing truly is»), we may not be able to discern a similarity between it and something else. The second warning, from the *Sophist*, is an example of this problem. If we do not really know what a wolf truly is (or a sophist for that matter), we may conclude that it is similar to a dog (or a philosopher) in more respects than it actually is – thereby not seeing salient differences, such as that the wolf is a wild animal (and the sophist a fraud)⁵⁰. The importance of knowing differences is also brought out by Proclus himself, in his discussion of the analogy with the sun in the *Commentary on the Republic*, and more specifically in the 11th Essay, the topic of which is the *Republic's* discussion of the Good. He introduces the analogy of the sun as Socrates «clarifying [the Good] through an image (*eikon*)»⁵¹. «Through an image» here refers not to the method of analogy⁵², but to the sun being an image of the Good in an ontologically heavy sense. This interpretation is based on similarities with a chapter early in the *Platonic Theology*, namely I 4, with its distinction of four methods of speaking about the divine. Of the two methods that are not «unveiled» but «by indication» (*di'endeixeos*), one speaks about the divine «through images» (*di'eikonon*) (*Theol. Plat.* I 4.20.1–5). This method is further elaborated as «teaching through mathematics [...] and a treatise about the gods from ethical or physical *logoi*» (*Theol. Plat.* I 4.19.6–13). Although the *Timaeus* would perhaps come to mind first, and is in fact explicitly mentioned by Proclus⁵³, the *Republic* fits this method rather well. And it is significant, I think, that in the 11th Essay, Proclus paraphrases Glaucon's request to Socrates to recount what the Good is, as a request to «give an indication» what the Good is⁵⁴.

50. Cfr. also *Euthd.* 298c5: «you are joining flax and not-flax together», also discussed in Lloyd 1966, 395.

51. *In R.* I 273.21–22: διὰ τῆς εἰκόνος ὁρμήσας ποιῆσαι σαφές.

52. Pace Baltzly *et al.* 2022, 142–44, who seem to take «image» to refer to «analogy».

53. On these methods in relation to the *Timaeus*, see Martijn 2006.

54. *In R.* I 273.16–21: μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἀγαθόν, διορισάμενος τὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ

Before Proclus provides us with his reading of the analogy, he first discusses the risk involved in using analogies as a means of teaching (*tropos didaskalias*, *In R.* I 274.21–22). Plato, he argues, is warning the reader of that risk, but fitting the methods «by indication», his warning is presented in a way that will only be understood by readers who are «not cursorily listening»: he uses word play⁵⁵. The more advanced and careful readers will understand that the main risk in using analogies for teaching purposes lies in the fact that the audience has to select the features of the source domain that are shared by the target domain. Because of course, not all features are shared, but the whole point of analogy or any *logos* is that they «are not understood according to the difference of all things, but quite the opposite, according to their sameness»⁵⁶. Analogies, that is, work because of a sameness of the things compared to one another. That sameness is never complete, however, as there is *always* also some difference between its members. In the case of the sun and the Good, Proclus emphasises, the sun's being a cause is the relevant feature, but some readers might think the sun's being *caused* is also included, and would wrongly conclude that the Good is caused as well (*In R.* I 274.24–275.2). Moreover, because of the nature of emanation, Proclus emphasises, it would in any case not be possible to compare the Good to anything in all its respects (I 275.2–5): there is nothing that is identical to it.

Proclus takes the risk of overinterpretation of analogies very seriously, and a couple of pages later, when presenting his own interpretation of the analogy of the sun, underscores it once more (*In R.* I 277.7–9):

λόγον ὡς μείζονα ὄντα τῶν προκειμένων, τοῦ Γλαῦκωνος κινήσαντος ὅπως ἂν ἐνδείξηται τί τὸ τῷ ὄντι ἀγαθόν, ὥρμησεν μὲν, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς φησιν, οὐχ ὅτι ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν τὸ ἀπλῶς ἀγαθόν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀλλὰ τί τὸ εἰκότως αὐτῷ. Cf. Glaucon's requests in the *Republic*: καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διέλθης (VI 506d5) and Ἀλλ', ἔφη, λέγε· εἰς αὐτὴς γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀποτείσσεις τὴν διήγησιν (506e6–7).

55. For the word play see *Resp.* VI 507a, Proclus' explanation at I 274.17–22, and Baltzly *et al.* 2022, 144; 154 note 29.

56. *In R.* I 275.10–12: αἱ δὲ ἀναλογίαι καὶ οἱ λόγοι οὐχὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀνόμοιον λαμβάνονται πάντων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦναντίον κατὰ τὸ ὅμοιον. It is not entirely clear how semantically specific *logos* is in this sentence, which is why I have left it untranslated, so it can refer to e.g., proportions or arguments.

As we said before, in analogies we should look at each of the things taken in the same relations (*logoi*), insofar as they are the same, not insofar as they are different and outside of the same relations of the things assumed⁵⁷.

The formulation is a bit awkward, especially due to the repeated phrase «the same *logoi*». The point is clear, however: when comparing things that display (or that we take to have) sameness in their relations – i.e., the relations within the two pairs, in our example specifically the relation between the sun and the sensible and the relation between the Good and the intelligible – we should focus on the sense in which these two relations are the same, and by no means on whatever it is that they are different in⁵⁸. What Proclus does not mean here, of course, is that the differences are irrelevant. Quite the opposite. We should see the difference as such – and hence not equate the two things in all respects. In the case of the analogy of the sun, he says, there is only one aspect in which the sun is «analogous» to the Good, namely in its being a cause of light (καθ' ἑν δὲ μόνον τὸ αἴτιον εἶναι φωτός, I 276.26–27). Proclus seems to propose that we consider all other aspects of the analogy (light being analogous to truth, their causal roles, the respective transcendence of sun and Good, the eye being analogous to the mind) as following from this one point. In addition, there are points in which the sun is not analogous to the Good, such as the fact that the sun has a body, and a physical place, and can be moved (I 276.25–26) – these are not part of the analogy. (Note that both sameness and difference are located in the lower entity, as we learn about the Good by thinking about the sun – and the analogy starts from our thinking about the right properties of the sun). In addition, of course, the analogy reveals its own limitations: it shows us that the Good is the cause of truth, and therefore transcends truth, and therefore cannot be understood by the

57. δεῖ γὰρ ὡς εἶπομεν ἐν ταῖς ἀναλογίαις ἥ ὁμοία βλέπειν ἕκαστα τῶν λαμβανομένων ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς λόγοις, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἥ ἀνόμοια καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστὶ λόγων τῶν εἰλημμένων ἐκτός.

58. Baltzly *et al.* 2022 translate «τοῖς αὐτοῖς λόγοις» and «τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων» as «the discussion itself», but I think the stronger «proportional» sense does more justice to the overall idea.

intellect. In other words, the analogy shows us that it itself cannot be the final tool for «knowing» the Good – for that we need dialectic and the negative method of *aphairesis* (I 280.8–281.8). And now we finally understand the point of Proclus’ emphasis on the risk of overinterpreting analogies. Emphasising once more that analogies should not «transgress to other particularities»⁵⁹, Proclus starts his introduction of that negative method as applied to the Good with a *difference* between the sun and the Good: the sun is both ungenerated and generated, albeit in different senses, which might lead us to believe, overinterpreting the analogy, that the Good is both not existing and existing. This, however, is not true.

If we return to the discussion from the *Platonic Theology*, we have to emphasise that for analogy to work in reversion, such *negative* «analogy» is just as important as the positive one: we have to understand, not only how the One is like a monad, or how the Good is like the sun, but also in what sense they are not. Otherwise, we can never transcend an intellectual approach⁶⁰.

Taking a step back, let us return to the bigger issue highlighted by Plato: we are still stuck with the problem that to use analogy in reasoning, and, by extension, in reversion, we must, in fact, already know precisely in which sense the things compared are similar and dissimilar, in order for it not to deceive us. The easy way out for a Platonist is, of course, the theory of recollection, and the *a priori* knowledge which lies dormant within us, and allows us to recognise correct analogies. In other words, the underlying universal is not really unknown, we just need to remember it. This is why Proclus can say, in his discussion of the proportional «bond» imposed by the demiurge between the

59. Apparently with a nod to Aristotle’s principle of *metabasis*: μήποτε οὖν ἐνταῦθα τῶν περὶ τῆς ἀναλογίας ἡμῖν προδιηρημένον μνημονεύειν καιρός, ἐν οἷς ἐλέγμεν δεῖν μὴ μεταβαίνειν ἐπ’ ἄλλας ιδιότητας τῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐχόντων, ἀλλ’ ἐμμένειν χρῆναι ταῖς ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καθ’ ἃς ἡ ἀναλογία θεωρεῖται (*In R.* I 281.12–16). The principle of *metabasis* says that demonstrations should remain within the domain of one science, and not cross over to another scientific domain (*APo.* 75a38–39).

60. Cf. Aubenque’s 1981 discussion of the Neoplatonic notion of analogy, with some references to Proclus – although Aubenque seems less confident that the Neoplatonists themselves realised analogy’s limitations for knowing the first principle.

physical elements (*Ti.* 31c) «From whence do we get the conception of such a ‘bond’ and of what is it a symbol?»⁶¹. His answer is that we get the conception from the very things of which it is a symbol: the One, the One-Being, and the Living Being. In other words, the source of our very concept of analogy is at the same time that which any analogy will «teach» us about.

Perhaps more interestingly than the reliance on recollection, however, is the fact that the use of analogies seems to be justified especially in expositions by experts. It is the teacher who selects the relevant analogies on the basis of their prior knowledge; and good students (no doubt with the help of a commentator) are capable of collecting and interpreting all relevant traits from those analogies⁶². In other words: analogical reasoning is primarily a didactic tool. This is confirmed by the use of another kind of analogies, which I will call «remotely anchored analogies».

Remotely Anchored Analogies

After the ontological and the epistemological problems, which were in part solved by the «anchor» of the metaphysical system of emanation (more specifically through declension and recollection respectively), in part by the merging of the method of analogy with the method of eminence and the addition of the method of negation, and in part by making analogy a didactic tool, an additional issue I want to put before you is that sometimes Proclus’ use or interpretation of analogy in *epistrophe* seems not so well-anchored. And not being well-anchored, i.e., not having a clear or reliable relation to that system, might render the analogies useless. There are some analogies – for now, let us

61. In *Ti.* III 22.19–20 Van Riel (II 16.13–14 Diehl): πόθεν οὖν ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐπινοεῖται δεσμός, καὶ τίνας ἐστὶ σύμβολον;

62. See for example In *R.* II 201.5–8: ἃ δὴ πάντα συλλαβὼν ἔχεις τὰς ιδιότητας τοῦ κοσμικοῦ [...] <60> [...] τὸν κόσμον [...] <16> [...] καὶ οὐ θεωρήσης τὴν [διαφορὰν, ἀλλ]ὰ καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν. There are some textual problems, but the overall point is clear: Proclus says that from the analogy in the Myth of Er, of the ray of light passing through heaven and earth like the ropes keeping together the hull of a trireme, we can understand how that cosmic light relates to (is identical to, different from, and superior to) the world.

call them superficial and or purely literary analogies – to which the universal principle of proportionality does not seem to apply. Perhaps not by chance, some of these less manifestly anchored forms of analogy show up especially in theological and theurgic contexts; this is a specific type that, as we will see, nonetheless does have a remote ontological foundation. Moreover, this type provides an alternative solution to the problem of the limitations of direct analogy as applied to the divine: instead of talking about the divine indirectly through the *via negativa*, we can also name it (and summon it) by remote analogy.

In Proclus' *Commentary on the Cratylus*, we find an example of what at first sight seems an unanchored kind of analogy. In this commentary Proclus is rather interested in analogies. This is not surprising, because he is, among others, countering the Porphyrian/Dexippean view of names adhering primarily to the sensible realm and only secondarily («by analogy and homonymously») to the intelligible. The Porphyrian/Dexippean notion of analogy here is a weak one, we could say, according to which words that originally indicate the sensible, are applied to the intelligible as well, but only metaphorically⁶³. Like Plotinus, Proclus maintains that names adhere to the intelligible primarily. Unlike him, however, as we saw, Proclus does not reject the relation of image and original between sensible and intelligible, and does want to leave room for names of the sensible that apply to the intelligible, but not directly and not metaphorically either. The main disagreement with Porphyry and Dexippus seems to lie in the meaning of «by analogy».

The most emphatic discussion of the notion of analogy in the *Commentary on the Cratylus* is found in chapter 56 (on *Cra.* 389d-390a), where Proclus rejects the two options of the debate, saying that analogy is neither a relation of image to Form, nor a matter of convention⁶⁴. At *Cra.* 389b1-7 Plato has Socrates speak of a human made shuttle and its Form, «the Shuttle itself by itself», which would suggest the existence of intelligible versions of

63. Van den Berg 2008, 72; 166, quoting Dexipp. In *Cat.* 41.25-30.

64. In *Cra.* LVI 24.28-25.1, see also below. The following builds on Van den Berg's discussion of analogy in the *Commentary on the Cratylus*, esp. Van den Berg 2008, 148-50.

human artefacts. This is a conclusion Proclus emphatically wants to avoid. Instead, he says, we should understand this as an analogy. Proclus explains what this means in four steps of increasing precision. First (LVI 24.17–20), he points out that Plato is presenting an *eikon*, an image of the «discriminative» powers of the gods, in the sense that it carries a *synthema*, a «signal», of the divine «discriminative» order⁶⁵. In the second step, Proclus further clarifies this by explaining how «image» and «signal» should *not* be understood, connecting Plato's statement in the *Cratylus* to the practices of theologians: when theologians speak of shuttles, the image they use is neither an image of a Form – there is no Form of «Shuttle» – nor a mere matter of convention or a symbol – «because it would be strange for science (*episteme*) to use names arbitrarily, especially concerning the gods»⁶⁶. Instead, they are speaking *kat'analogian*. The reference to *episteme* is not arbitrary, as we understand when looking at Proclus' subsequent elaboration with the use of the mathematically inspired formula: «what the shuttle is to the art of weaving, discrimination is to the creation of Forms»⁶⁷. The theologians, that is, are not relying on something like inspiration, but on knowledge and reasoning.

In the third step, Proclus seems to emphasise especially the intentional and real nature of Plato's analogy (*In Cra.* LVI 24.28–25.1):

Analogy is neither a relation of image to Form, nor merely by convention, for example when Plato calls such powers of the souls «horses»: this is neither by chance, nor because he is calling them Forms of perceptible horses, but using analogy⁶⁸.

The reformulation of «convention» as «chance» and the example of the *Phaedrus*' famous chariot do not really clarify what

65. On such signals see also Sheppard 1980 and Van den Berg 2001.

66. *In Cra.* LVI 24.24–25: πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ὥς ἔτυχεν, χρῆσθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασι, καὶ ταῦτα ἐπὶ θεῶν;

67. *In Cra.* LVI 24.26–28: ὁ γὰρ ἐστὶν κερκὶς ἐπὶ τῆς ὑφαντικῆς, τοῦτο ἡ διάκρισις ἐπὶ τῆς δημιουργίας τῶν εἰδῶν.

68. ἡ δ' ἀναλογία οὗτ' ἰδέας ἐστὶν πρὸς εἰδῶλον σχέσις, οὔτε θέσει μόνον, οἷον ὥς ὁ Πλάτων <ἵππους> καλεῖ τὰς τοιάσδε τῶν ψυχῶν δυνάμεις, οὔτε ὥς ἔτυχεν, οὔτε ἰδέας λέγων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἵππων ἐκείνας, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἀναλογίᾳ χρώμενος. The reference is to *Phdr.* 246a ff.

«analogy» means here. The horses, it seems, merely help make the two negative qualifications more obvious: of course (human) soul powers are not Forms of perceptible horses. And of course Plato does not use the example of horses «by chance» or even «mere» convention (θέσει μόνον). The latter emphasises, I would say, that the «horses» were Plato's choice, and that he chose them for a reason. And the former instead seems to suggest that there is a real relation between the example from the source domain and that from the target domain, but it is more complex than mere image and Form (and hence linguistically more complex than the same term applied to two levels): although «shuttle» is not an image of a Form of Shuttle, or «horse» of a Form of Horse, a shuttle does have something to do with divine powers, and a horse with soul powers. In addition, the fact that the example from the *Phaedrus* is wedged in between a discussion about the practices of theologians and those of the initiated (see below) suggests that it is on a par with them: Platonic dialogues are all to some extent theological texts, as we also know from the *Platonic Theology*.

In the fourth and probably most important step, we learn what a shuttle has to do with divine powers, and how, despite appearances, the vertical analogy Plato has in mind does in fact have an ontological anchor, and a special one at that (*In Cra.* LVI 25.1-7):

For this reason the initiated (*telestai*) make (*poiountes*) things down here sympathetic (*sumpathe*) to the gods through such a connection (*oikeiotetos*), and use these instruments as «passwords» (*hos sunthemasi*) of the divine powers, for example, the shuttle of the discriminative powers, the mixing bowl of the lifegiving power, the scepter of the leading powers, and the key of the guardian powers, and in this way call upon them and others with the use of analogy⁶⁹.

The most important elements in this addition for our purposes are first of all the connection and sympathy between the

69. ὅθεν διὰ καὶ οἱ τελεσταί, διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης οικειότητος συμπαθῇ τὰ τῆδε ποιῶντες τοῖς θεοῖς, χρῶνται τοῖς ὀργάνοις τούτοις ὡς συνθήμασι τῶν θείων δυνάμεων, οἷον κερκίδι μὲν τῶν διακριτικῶν, κρατῆρι δὲ τῶν ζωογονικῶν, σκῆπτρῳ δὲ τῶν ἡγεμονικῶν, κλειδί δὲ τῶν φρουρητικῶν, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀναλογίᾳ χρῶμενοι καλοῦσιν.

divine and things down here, i.e., instruments, and second that this sympathy is established by the initiated «through a connection».

The connections between a shuttle and divine discriminative power or a mixing bowl and lifegiving power may not be obvious right away, but there are three reasons to accept them. First, as van den Berg points out, assuming that theurgy works, the connections are evident from the fact that apparently the things down here are indeed effective in ritual contexts⁷⁰. Second, in what a shuttle *does*, we do see a similarity with the much more elevated divine powers. And third, even such analogies are not just the result of a human-made comparison, but rely on the tracing of causal lineage⁷¹. The above passage does not deny the existence of such a natural connection. The word *poiountes* suggests that it is established by the initiated, but that they do it through an *oikeiotes* adds the qualification that they establish it on the basis of an observed and real similarity. Ultimately, the very practical and material power of dividing threads comes from a divine and intellectual power of dividing intelligibles⁷², and the theurgists, art lies in using that connection.

What goes for human made tools, goes *a fortiori* for «names», i.e., for our linguistic tools, as long as they have been selected by the wise. True names are images of the intelligibles⁷³. At the same time, however, our language is a limited tool, as it belongs to the

70. Van den Berg 2008, 150.

71. *In Cra.* LIII 22.15–19: εἴ τις οὖν, ὅπερ ἔλεγον, κατὰ ταύτας τὰς ἀναλογίας ἐκπεριτρέχων τὰς μὲν τῶν θεῶν δυνάμεις αἰτίας ἐπονομάζοι τῶν τεχνῶν τούτων, τὰ δ' ἀποτελέσματα αὐτῶν ἐκλάμψει τῶν δυνάμεων τούτων δι' ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου φοιτώσας, ὁρθῶς ἂν λέγοι. Van den Berg 2008, 149 seems in two minds about this: he explains the analogies as the result of «some sort of comparison», and points to their *a posteriori* justification through their effectiveness in ritual contexts, but although he quotes this passage in note 45, he does not seem to see (or accept) its importance as revealing the real causal connection behind the analogy.

72. Cf. *In Prm.* IV 847.19–29, where we find the same combination of production and underlying paradigm.

73. *In Cra.* XLVII–XLVIII and the analogical relation between language and things at *In Crat.* LVII 1–3: ὅτι ἀναλόγως ὡς ἔχουσι τὰ πράγματα πρὸς ἄλληλα, οὕτως καὶ τὰ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ὀνόματα πρὸς ἄλληλα ἔχει κατὰ τε τιμὴν καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν. For Proclus' theory of language see further Van den Berg 2008, esp. 131–33.

level of discursive thought⁷⁴. This is why it cannot completely capture the essence of the intelligible. In addition, most of our language does not actually describe the intelligible itself, but the sensible. Since there is a causal analogy between the transcendent and the appearances, however, one may still indirectly indicate the transcendent using the names of the appearances, even if as such those names do not literally apply to the transcendent (*In Cra.* CXIII 65.20–23 and LXVI 16–19):

For [intelligible beings] are not by nature knowable through names, but the theologians indicate (*semainousi*) them from afar (*porrothen*), on the basis of the analogy of the appearances to them⁷⁵.

«Analogy» in this case has a double meaning: at the level of reality there is a causal top to bottom relation, which results in the appearances being «analogous» to the intelligible, which translates at the linguistic level into a metonymic bottom to top relation. Therefore, on the basis of an analogical argument (e.g., as shuttle is to warp and weft, Athena is to universal and particular things) we can speak of the divine shuttle, or say that Athena is weaving⁷⁶, with the connection or relation lying in «discriminative power».

Recall that Plotinus criticised philosophers who maintained that our names for sensible things apply analogically to the Forms. Although it seems that Proclus here ignores Plotinus' criticism, in fact he found a way to acknowledge it, that allows him to keep analogies while doing justice to divine transcendence: our application of words, which actually belong to the sensible, to the intelligible is a «remote indication», in which the

74. Cf. *In Cra.* LIII 23.23–25.

75. τὸ πέρας τῶν νοητῶν θεῶν μόνον ὀνόματι δηλῶσαι δεδύνηται, τὰ δ' ἐπέκεινα δι' ἀναλογίας μόνης, ἄρρητα ὄντα καὶ ἄληπτα, σημαίνουσιν. [...] οὐδὲ γὰρ δι' ὀνομάτων γνωρίζεσθαι πεφύκασιν, ἀλλὰ οἱ θεολόγοι πόρρωθεν αὐτὰ σημαίνουνσι ἐκ τῆς τῶν φαινομένων πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἀναλογίας. Duvick's 2007 translation («by analogy with the visible entities related to them») seems to be misconstruing the direction of the analogy: it is the visible entities that are analogous to the intelligible ones, not the other way around. Cf. also the way we saw Proclus describe the sun's being analogous to the Good above.

76. As in *Oph.* fr. 178, quoted at *In Cra.* LIII 21.25–26.

two are tied together by a semantic relation. Think of «shuttle» used for the discriminative power at divine and practical levels⁷⁷.

Conclusion: Analogies in the Parmenides

Finally, let me briefly turn to the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, the most theological dialogue of all, to sketch the application of different kinds of analogy, and how Proclus has them contribute to philosophical progress, starting from what is arguably the most problematic type of analogies in Proclus' writings: apparently far-fetched and ad hoc literary analogies.

The *via negativa* is the most important method in the *Parmenides* according to Proclus, but if we look at the way *analogia* and related terms are used in the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, we find a hierarchy of types of analogies, ultimately leading, as in the *Platonic Theology*, to that method of negation, and the negation of analogy⁷⁸. The first, lowest kind of analogies are the numerous cases in his exegetical writings where he uses a concept of «analogy» to explain every single detail of a Platonic text (fitting the principle of *heis skopos* according to which all details of each dialogue fit the one overall aim of that dialogue). Such far-fetched and rather *ad hoc* interpretations seem anything but anchored by an ontological relation. Think, for example, of the numerous pages of exegesis spent on the analysis of the prefatory materials of Platonic dialogues as revealing analogies between characters and ontological layers: Socrates might stand for the

77. A passage that does not fit this interpretation is found in the fourth book of the *Commentary on the Parmenides*. There Proclus says we should not name the divine «by analogy», as those do who consider names mere matters of convention (*In Prm.* IV 849.16–853.12). Instead, he maintains, we should assume that names have a primarily natural meaning, and that Plato's use of them for intelligible and sensible alike combines homonymy and synonymy. Proclus here seems to use the terminology differently, and take «by analogy» in the sense of people like Hermogenes in the *Cratylus*, but the overall point remains the same: real names apply first to the intelligible. Assuming that our names for the sensible apply to the intelligible is wrong, but there are instances where real names for the intelligible apply to the sensible derivatively and in a different sense – with adverbial modification.

78. Again, let me emphasise that in part, Proclus' understanding of analogy here is given by the Platonic text.

Intellect, Parmenides for Being, Zeno for Intellect – the whole first book of the *Commentary on the Parmenides* is littered with such analogies, and Proclus even proposes different possible interpretations⁷⁹. I will follow Sheppard and assume that even such analogy, which seems completely unanchored, «never loses its metaphysical overtones»⁸⁰. There is always an ontological foundation, based in the patterns pervading reality⁸¹. In addition, as Proclus tells us, such analogies have a propaedeutic function in theology: they are useful in a preparatory phase, before «entering on the mysteries»⁸². They «should not be taken as unimportant», because they are a form of exercise, to help the soul move «from phenomena to being» and «imagine immaterial nature»⁸³. Maybe coming up with different possible interpretations of the characters is, from this perspective, even better than finding just one interpretation.

These literary analogies are found mainly in the prefatory materials in the first book, and in the transition to the second part of the *Parmenides*, in the fifth book⁸⁴. In book 2, Proclus introduces Zeno's philosophical method, which allows us to move from any plurality (whether sensible or intelligible) to its related unity, and «seeing the analogous everywhere»⁸⁵, and fittingly, analogies identified by Proclus in books 2 and 3 are more abstract than those in book 1. For example, as likeness is analogous to limit, unlikeness is to the unlimited; and «there is a certain analogy» between the irrational souls and their causes in this world and between the immortal souls and their transcendent

79. For this specific example see *In Prm.* I 627.27–629.25. See also Luna and Segonds 2007–2021.

80. Sheppard 2002.

81. A true application of the principle that «everything is in everything, but appropriately» – not in Anaxagoras' sense, but in this sense of repeated patterns. On this principle see Martijn and Gerson 2016, 58–61. To use Asworth's 2007, 327 interpretation of the difference between metaphor (not based on causal relation) and analogy in ancient and medieval logic: for Proclus there are no metaphors, only analogies.

82. *In Prm.* I 663.35–664.3.

83. *In Prm.* I 675.30–676.2.

84. For the prefatory materials see above. For book V, see *In Prm.* 1021.7–1032.6.

85. *In Prm.* II 724.9–725.11.

causes⁸⁶. In book 4⁸⁷, in commenting upon the first mention of *to ison*, we find the emphatic identification of «Equality» as the cause of all harmony and analogy, both in the sensible world and in the intelligible⁸⁸. And finally, this concept is used to demonstrate that analogical relations exist between different divine realms and opposite properties: as similarity (a property of lower hypercosmic gods) is to sameness (of higher demiurgic gods), dissimilarity is to difference (VII 1193.6–1194.1). More importantly, the ultimate cause of all analogy is also used to demonstrate that the One exceeds all equality and inequality – and therefore also analogy (VII 1202.25–1204.31). Thanks to the preparatory analogical exercises in the first and fifth book, and to Zeno's method, students of Platonism are primed to reach a thorough understanding of the fundamental analogical structures in the intelligible, and learn to use analogical reasoning in theology, but also understand its limitations. In the end, this strengthens the role of the *via negativa* in the hypotheses of the *Parmenides*⁸⁹.

To conclude, let me collect the different kinds of analogy and analogical reasoning, and their roles in theology, as we encountered them in Proclus.

The first and fundamental kind of analogy is ontological or causal analogy in the vertical plane, going down from higher realities to lower ones, with proportional declension. These vertical causal analogies are the core of the whole Proclean system. Second, there are ontological analogies in the horizontal plane, e.g., between the elements or mathematical entities (also vertical?). This type in the horizontal plane, we saw, exists because

86. In *Prm.* II 734.15–16 plus II 749.11–15 and III 820.22–24 respectively.

87. Book 4 begins with a discussion of analogies that does not really fit the upward path I am sketching, although it does interestingly address the limitations of analogies. Proclus there analyses the different Platonic analogies for the relation of participation: reflections, imprints, copies (IV 839.16–842.11). These analogies have but limited use, he says: they are for beginners, and do not have any scientific value.

88. In *Prm.* IV 868.23–869.11; 871.9–10. Cfr. In *Ti.* III 26.10–14 Van Riel (= II 19.1–3 Diehl).

89. After all, the main method used in the *Parmenides* is the method of negation, see *Theol. Plat.* II 5.37.12–19.

there is an underlying vertical analogy: for example, a «horizontal» analogy between the elements depends on the vertical causal relation of emanation.

Third, there are what we may call directly reverting, scientific, analogies, going up from knowledge of the lower to knowledge of the higher. The first, vertical or causal analogies provide a means of *epistrophe* precisely because of the fact that human knowledge fits snugly into the web of causal relations (*anamnesis*). These analogies adopt the geometrical formula, but are risky because prior knowledge of the relations and properties involved is required to correctly assess them. They should therefore be used by knowledgeable teachers. In theology, analogical reasoning can be used to teach about the divine, if it is merged with the *via eminentiae* and, because of its limitations, ultimately gives way to the *via negativa*.

Fourth, there are different kinds of remotely anchored analogies. One kind is what we may call hieratic or indirect analogy (or signals), established by those who are initiated on the basis of their knowledge of a more remote causal relation. This type of analogy is very similar to the literary analogies that function as preparatory training for the mind entering into a scientific or dialectical study. In both cases, the initiated – a priest or an author – establishes an effective analogy from a range of options.

Overall, to solve the problem in theology that the divine is «incommensurable», so to say, analogical reasoning merges with the *via eminentiae* and prepares for the *via negativa*; or alternatively, to avoid the pitfall of naming the divine directly and therefore inappropriately, it approaches the divine through remotely anchored analogies.

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Marije Martijn: *Relations that Are Given and Established. Proclus' Use of Analogical Reasoning in Theology*

This chapter addresses the pivotal role of analogical reasoning in Proclus' understanding of theology. Analogy, defined as drawing conclusions about a less known «target domain» based on a similarity with a better known «source domain», is central to scientific reasoning in all sciences, and a fortiori in theology. The chapter will discuss Proclus' definition of analogy, its relation to mathematical analogy or proportionality, and the different kinds of analogy he distinguishes within theological contexts. A main challenge for analogical reasoning is the justification of the assumed similarity between the source and target domains. Proclus' primary justification is ontological, relying on the processes of emanation and reversion as themselves establishing necessary analogical relations. However, the author notes that Proclus' framework also contains problematic forms of analogy, specifically symbolic and literary analogies, for which the ontological justification does not seem to hold. In these cases, Proclus seems to introduce a separate category: a real relation of similarity that does not pre-exist but is established by an initiate (a philosopher or priest), underscoring a different, creative dimension of theological understanding.

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