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Henri Dominique Saffrey:
Philology and History of Neoplatonism

Concetta Luna*

Abstract
This article presents the intellectual activity of Father Henri Dominique Saffrey O.P. (1921-2021), describing the work of a great philologist and historian of Neoplatonism. In particular, it deals with the critical editions (Proclus, Marinus, Iamblichus) that Father Saffrey produced in close collaboration with L.G. Westerink and A.-Ph. Segonds, which are an essential reference for any scholar of late ancient thought.

The only person who could have actually written about Henri Dominique Saffrey, retracing his intellectual and scientific activity, was Alain Segonds. Father Saffrey and Alain Segonds worked together for over forty years. They met once a week, every week, in Father Saffrey’s cell at the Couvent d’Étiolles, then at the Couvent Saint-Jacques, 20 rue des Tanneries, in the 13th arrondissement of Paris. Finally, when Alain Segonds passed away on May 2, 2011, he left a void that will never be filled. Therefore, if here I attempt to write about Father Saffrey in Segonds’s place it is simply to honour their long and fruitful collaboration.

Describing Father Saffrey’s scientific production is not an easy task: his multifarious interests, novelty, and excellence of his achievements in a broad range of fields make him both a complex scholar and a multifaceted mind. Nevertheless, I believe that two main categories can be used to describe his work: (I) Neoplatonism, and (II) History of texts. Saffrey’s interest in Neoplatonism produced, on the one hand, editions of texts, and on the other, doctrinal studies. These two aspects are closely linked to one another in Saffrey’s production, because he always thought of philology as an instrument — the privileged one for understanding texts — for drawing the lines of conceptual developments and the history of ideas. It is therefore particularly difficult to distinguish sharply between his philological work and doctrinal studies. This is the reason why I will mention each critical edition by Saffrey together with those studies closely linked to it, and a separate paragraph will be devoted to more general studies. The exceptional breadth of Saffrey’s rich scientific output allows me to cite only a few of his articles.2

* A slightly different version of this article was originally published as C. Luna, “Henri Dominique Saffrey: Philologie et Histoire du Néoplatonisme”, Accademia 9 (2019), pp. 9-27.


2 Due to a lack of competence, I will not deal with iconographic and bibliographic studies, the most important
First of all, it is useful to recall some biographical data as the background for Father Saffrey’s intellectual activity. He was born in Paris on 10 April 1921. He entered the Dominican Order in 1944 at the Couvent d’Études du Saulchoir in Étiolles (Yvelines), made his preliminary profession in 1945 and his final profession in 1948. In 1952, Saffrey graduated in Scholastic Philosophy becoming Lecturer in Theology. In 1957 he obtained a PhD in Scholastic Philosophy (Le Saulchoir). Moreover, from 1948 to 1969, he attended the courses of Father André-Jean Festugière at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where he befriended Alain Segonds. From 1953 to 1955, following the suggestion of Father Festugière, Saffrey moved to the University of Oxford to complete his studies under the guidance of Eric Robertson Dodds. In 1961 he defended a thesis on Book II of the Platonic Theology of Proclus and received a DPhil in Philosophy at the University of Oxford. This thesis would become the foundation for the edition of Proclus’s Platonic Theology, a work carried out in collaboration with Leendert Gerrit Westerink who, with Alain Segonds, was part and parcel of Father Saffrey’s intellectual life and research activity.

I. Neoplatonism

I.1. Neoplatonism in Medieval Tradition: the Edition of Thomas Aquinas’s Super Librum de causis

Father Saffrey’s first major work was a critical edition of Saint Thomas’s Commentary on the Liber de causis. This is the thesis Saffrey wrote under the supervision of Father Hyacinthe Dondaine when he graduated as a Lecturer in Theology. His choice of taking into consideration the commentary on the Liber de causis traces back to Father Marie-Dominique Chenu’s idea of studying not only Thomas’s Aristotelianism, but also his Platonism. It was published in 1954 in Fribourg.

Published by Pierre Mandonnet in the Opuscula, Thomas’s commentary had never been studied. The introduction contains a section devoted to historical and doctrinal aspects (pp. xv-xxxix), which is divided into four parts: 1. The Liber de causis in the Middle Ages; 2. An outline of a doctrinal interpretation; 3. The commentary of Saint Thomas: literary questions; 4. Saint Thomas’s divisio textus, and a second part on the manuscript tradition (pp. xl-lxiii). Then comes a section devoted to the critical edition divided into the following parts: 1. Manuscripts (list and brief description of the fifty witnesses of the text); 2. Editions; 3. The medieval university tradition; 4. The independent tradition; 5. Exemplar or exemplaria?, 6. The apograph (i.e. the copy of the autograph which is the common source of all the manuscript tradition); 7. The method followed in (his own) edition.

of which are collected in H.D. Saffrey, Humanisme et imagerie aux XV et XVI siècles. Études iconologiques et bibliographiques, Vrin, Paris 2003 (De Pétrarque à Descartes, LXXII).


The fifth part of this section is the most important one. Here Saffrey demonstrates, for the first time in the history of the philology of medieval scholastic texts, the simultaneous existence and the simultaneous use of two exemplaria, the second of which depends upon the first. The problem is clearly stated:

Ayant collationné tous les manuscrits sur une section de texte prise au début, c’est-à-dire dans la pecia ier, et sur une autre prise tout à la fin, dans la pecia vii, j’ai observé que, comme l’on devait s’y attendre, on retrouve chaque fois le même ensemble des manuscrits se rattachant à la tradition indépendante, mais que la famille des manuscrits de tradition universitaire se divisait nettement en deux groupes [...] et que les manuscrits constituant chacun de ces deux groupes n’étaient pas les mêmes dans les deux cas. La question était alors posée de savoir si vraiment tous ces manuscrits dépendaient du même et unique exemplar parisien.

Saffrey took into consideration the hypothesis of reworked peciae, and found that it was not supported by the textual data, namely the “oscillation” of certain university manuscripts between the two groups; instead, Saffrey offered a ground-breaking solution, that became a cornerstone of the philology of university texts:


This discovery is the basis of the idea of editing pecia by pecia, which was subsequently followed in all editions of the works of Saint Thomas.

A few years after the publication of the critical edition of St. Thomas’s commentary, Saffrey in an article on the Liber de causis offered a status quaestionis of the research and traced back in time, as far as possible, the obscure history of this fundamental text which exerted such a considerable influence on medieval metaphysics.

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5 Sancti Thomae de Aquino Super Librum de causis expositio, pp. lxi-lxii.
6 Sancti Thomae de Aquino Super Librum de causis expositio, p. lxiv.
I.2. The Edition of the Theologia Platonica

The edition of the *Theologia Platonica* is rooted in the PhD thesis Saffrey defended in 1961 at Oxford, under the supervision of Eric Robertson Dodds, on Book II of the *Theologia Platonica* (critical text, translation, introduction, and commentary). The collaboration between Saffrey and Lendeert Gerrit Westerink started at that time, when working on the edition of the six books of the *Platonic Theology*. A lifelong collaboration that was interrupted only by Westerink’s death in 1990.

A masterpiece of late ancient theology and metaphysics, the *Theologia Platonica* had been published only once, in 1618, by Émile Portus: that in-folio volume of xviii + 526 pages, published simultaneously in Hamburg and Frankfurt, contained the *Platonic Theology*, the *Elements of Theology*, and the *Life of Proclus* by Marinus. While many of Proclus’s main works had already been edited by modern editors, the *Platonic Theology*, a sort of “*Summa theologiae*” of Late Antiquity, was still available in Portus’s edition only. The first volume of the Saffrey-Westerink edition appeared in the Collection des Universités de France in 1968 (with the revision by Pierre Thillet), 350 years after Portus’s edition. It is a masterpiece based on the model of the edition of Dodds’ *Elements of Theology*, in which philological and philosophical analysis are combined to create an impeccable critical edition, a modern translation accompanied by rigorous notes clarifying all the obscurities of the text. An introduction consisting of 195 pages precedes the Greek text (accompanied by a French translation): it is a foundational study for anyone interested in Neoplatonism. It includes two chapters concerning general aspects: the first one (pp. ix-lxxxix) is devoted to “L’homme et l’œuvre”, and traces Proclus’s life, the family

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of Plutarch of Athens, the School of Athens in the 4th century, the place of the Theol. Plat. within Proclus’s work, the content, the plan, and the method of the Theol. Plat., as well as the history of the exegesis of the hypotheses of Plato’s Parmenides. The second chapter (pp. xcI-CLXV), entitled “Les témoins du texte”, deals with the manuscript tradition outlining the history of the text and establishing the criteria of the edition. A “Notice”, dedicated specifically to Book I, follows these two chapters, divided into two parts: 1. “Analyse de l’argument” (pp. CLXIX-CLXXXVIII), a clear and schematic summary of Proclus’s argumentation, chapter by chapter; 2. “Nouveauté et importance du Livre I” (pp. CLXXXVIII-CXCI). This introductory scheme, in which the first chapter offers a historical and doctrinal outline, the second chapter deals with philological aspects, and the third chapter contains the analysis of Proclus’s argumentation, would be adopted in all the other five volumes.

As previously highlighted, the manuscript tradition is taken into consideration in Chapter II. In their list of fifty-two manuscripts12 (pp. xcvi-xcix), Saffrey and Westerink divide the manuscripts into two main groups: (I) manuscripts containing the full text of the Theol. Plat., and (II) manuscripts which contain only parts of it. In turn, the manuscripts in group (II) are divided into four subgroups: (A) manuscripts containing Books I and II; (B) membra disiecta of supposedly complete manuscripts; (C) individual books and manuscripts in which the books are sequenced in order I, IV, II, III, V, VI; (D) the “grand fragment”13 and isolated fragments. The analysis of the manuscript tradition is based on the complete manuscripts only.14 Analysis of the manuscripts results in a bipartite stemma codicum in which the archetype α is probably the prototype of the transliteration or a copy of this prototype. The archetype α was the model for the two main manuscripts, the MS Paris. gr. 1813 (P), dated back to the 13th century, and the MS Vat. gr. 237 (V), dated back to the 14th century, two independent copies made in Constantinople. The manuscript V is incomplete: it ends at II 9, p. 59.11. While the descendants of P are very numerous, only two secondary manuscripts descend from V: the MS Marc. gr. 193, which contains a little more text than V (it ends at II 10, p. 62.4). This means that when MS Marc. gr. 193 was copied, V contained two more folios than now; and the MS Matritensis graecus 4744, which contains the same amount of text found in his model. The latter is therefore of no use, whereas the MS Marc. gr. 193 testifies to branch V in the short passage II 9-10, pp. 59.11-62.4. This means that, from II 10, p. 62.4, we only have one main witness of the text, the manuscript P. The textual tradition, initially twofold, becomes a tradition with a single witness (codex unicus), a difficult critical situation which requires editors to use more conjectures and caution. And it is due to their conjectures, not to their stemmatic position, that Saffrey and Westerink made use of four secondary manuscripts, all dependent on P; these manuscripts belonged to scholars and provide interesting conjectures.15

12 A new manuscript, sold at auction in London by Sotheby’s on July 8, 1975, is mentioned in vol. III, p. xcv. This manuscript, copied in the second half of the 16th century in Italy by Andrea Darmarios, could not be located.
13 Saffrey and Westerink call “grand fragment” a compilation of texts from Theol. Plat. I 11-II 4 and preserved in eight manuscripts. Its critical value is discussed. On this question, cf. Luna, “Addenda et corrigenda” (above, n. 11), pp. 39-44.
14 Cf. t. I, pp. ci-cii: «Nous n’examinerons ici que les manuscrits contenant le texte complet et les copies accidentellement mutilées, c’est-à-dire les numéros 1 à 28 de la liste précédente» [= groups I, II.A, II.B].
15 Neapolitanus ex-Vindob. gr. 14 (s), direct copy of P, copied for Giles of Viterbo; Bodleianus Laud. Gr. 18 (o), belonged to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Monacensis graecus 547 (n), copy of o, belonged to Bessarion;
The other five books were published regularly: Book II in 1974 (revision by Pierre Thillet), Book III in 1978 (revision by Alain Segonds), Book IV in 1981 (revision by Alain Segonds), book V in 1987 (revision by Alain Segonds), Book VI in 1997 (revision by Alain Segonds). When Book VI came out, Westerink was no longer alive. The preface to this book, signed by Saffrey, opens with a sober and poignant description of the friendship between the two scholars:

Depuis 1961 jusqu’à sa mort subite, le 24 janvier 1990, Leendert Gerrit Westerink et moi avons entretenue une étroite collaboration dans l’étude et la publication de ce long traité de Proclus, la Théologie platonicienne. Sa famille et lui-même m’ont ouvert leur maison et leur cœur, si bien que notre collaboration était bientôt devenue une amitié profonde et durable. La mort de cet ami m’a plongé dans le chagrin et me laisse démuni.16

The edition of the Theologia Platonica is not just a masterpiece of textual criticism (even though this would suffice to ensure its fame). The six volumes provide not only the definitive critical text and a perfectly clear, elegant, and rigorous translation, but each one also contains an in-depth study of Proclus’s argumentation.

The six introductions, taken together, are a systematic study of Neoplatonic theology. As highlighted earlier, the first volume traces the life of Proclus, the history of the School of Athens, the structure of the divine hierarchy, and more importantly the history of the exegesis of Plato’s Parmenides. The last theme is of paramount importance: following in the footsteps of E.R. Dodds’ famous article, “The Parmenides of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic One”,17 Saffrey and Westerink trace the history of the exegesis of the hypotheses of the Parmenides on the basis of such a foundational text as Proclus’s commentary on the Parmenides. The introduction to Book II addresses two problems: on the one hand, the nature of the First Principle and the refutation of the opinion of Origen the Platonist who denied the transcendence of the One, on the other hand, the history of the exegesis of the pseudo-Platonic Letter II.18 The Book III of the Theol. Plat. deals with the doctrine of divine henads (chap. 1-6) as well as with intelligible gods (chap. 7-28), and the first chapter of the Introduction by Saffrey and Westerink is a treatise on the theory of the divine henads: Saffrey and Westerink found theological grounding for this doctrine in Syrianus, the master of Proclus at the School of Athens. Book IV of the Theol. Plat. is devoted to the intelligible-intellective gods. According to Proclus, these gods, who are an intermediate degree among the transcendent gods between the purely intelligible gods and the intellectual gods,19 are symbolized by the myth of the Phaedrus (246 E 4-248 C 2). Saffrey-Westerink’s introduction to Book IV is therefore devoted to the history of the exegesis of this myth: from Cicero to Proclus, via Plotinus, Theodorus of Asine,20 Iamblichus, and Syrianus.

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17 Classical Quarterly 22 (1928), pp. 129-42.
18 Cf. esp. 312 E 1-4: περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα πάντ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκείνου ἐνεκα πάντα, καὶ ἐκεῖνο αὐτίν ἄπάντων τῶν καλῶν· δεύτερον δὲ πέρι τὰ δεύτερα, καὶ τρίτον πέρι τὰ τρίτα.
19 As Saffrey and Westerink explain at p. xxxvi, the intelligible-intellective gods are an “innovation tardive pour laquelle nous n’avons aucun témoignage certain avant Proclus lui-même”.
20 Saffrey devoted two articles to Theodorus of Asine and his exegesis of the Parmenides: “Le ‘philosophe de
In Book V of the *Theol. Plat.*, the class of purely intellectual gods is discussed. Unlike intelligible gods and intelligible-intellectual gods, purely intellectual gods are said to form a hebdomad (i.e. two triads and a monad) rather than a series of three triads. Saffrey-Westerink’s introduction to Book V draws attention to the problem of the hebdomadic structure of the intellectual gods. Book VI of the *Theol. Plat.* deals with the class of hypercosmic gods (*aphomoioi*koi) and the class of hypercosmic-encosmic gods (*apolytoi*), the cosmic gods however are not mentioned. Hence, in the second chapter of their introduction to Book VI, Saffrey and Westerink raise the question: “La Théologie platonicienne est-elle complète?”. The answer is: Yes, of course. Proclus had already dealt with the encosmic and sublunary gods in his commentaries on the *Timaeus*, on the *Parmenides*, on the *Alcibiades*, and on the *Cratylus*.21

Furthermore, it is important to underline that Saffrey-Westerink’s introductions to volumes III to VI analyse respectively the doctrine of the intelligible gods (III), of intelligible-intellectual gods (IV), of the intellectual gods (V), and of the hypercosmic and hypercosmic-encosmic gods (VI) found in Damascius’s commentary on the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, where Damascius discusses a part of Proclus’s own commentary which is now lost.22 When Saffrey and Westerink were working on the edition of the *Theol. Plat.*, Damascius’s commentary on the *Parmenides* could only be read in the mediocre edition by Charles-Émile Ruelle (Paris 1889). The critical edition of this commentary by L.G. Westerink, with a French translation and notes by Joseph Combès, appeared only after Westerink’s death, thanks to Alain Segonds’s reworking of all the material; this new critical edition consists of four volumes dated 1997 (I-II), 2002 (III), and 2003 (IV). Saffrey-Westerink’s introductions to *Theol. Plat.* examine and explain Damascius’s commentary, which is one of the most difficult and abstruse texts in late ancient philosophy; actually, they were able to use Damascius’s commentary to reconstruct the lost part of Proclus’s own.

The teachings of Dodds and Festugière were of great importance in the development of Saffrey’s own scientific activity, as can be easily inferred from the mentions of the two scholars found in the prefaces of the six volumes of the *Theol. Plat.*23 E.R. Dodds died on 8 April 1979,
and the preface to Book IV pays tribute to him in a way that is at the same time eloquent and inspiring:

Malheureusement le premier instigateur et inspirateur de notre travail nous a quittés au moment même où il aurait pu commencer à croire que la première édition de cette *Théologie platonicienne*, celle qu’Émile Portus avait achevée en 1618, n’allait plus être “aujourd’hui encore, la seule édition complète”:24 E.R. Dodds est mort le 8 avril 1979. Il fut pour l’un de nous le “supervisor” d’une thèse consacrée au livre II de la *Théologie platonicienne*, et pour nous deux ensemble un maître et un modèle par tous ses écrits et singulièrement par son édition incomparable des *Éléments de théologie* de Proclus (Oxford 1933). On nous permettra de déposer sur sa tombe, en hommage à sa chère mémoire, ce livre, prémices des trois derniers de la *Théologie platonicienne*. Lorsque cette entreprise sera achevée, on pourra dire à bon droit que, ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου,25 nous avons enfin fait produire son fruit à la semence jetée en nous par E.R. Dodds, il y aura bientôt trente années.

Father Festugière passed away on 13 August 1982, three years after Dodds. The two revered masters were no longer there to see the completion of the work they had inspired and supported. Volume V of the *Theol. Plat.* (1987) is dedicated to their memory. The preface to this volume expresses precisely this tradition of studies, the uninterrupted “chain” which, in spite of the pain and notwithstanding the sorrow for the passing of masters and friends, still remains alive, luminous, and powerful:


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While working on the edition, translation, and commentary of the *Theol. Plat.*, Saffrey authored numerous articles; and only the most significant ones can be recalled here. In 1984, in his contribution “La Théologie platonicienne de Proclus, fruit de l’exégèse du Parménide”, Saffrey explains the relationship between the *Theol. Plat.* and the exegesis of the *Parmenides* examined in the preface to Book I. In 1985, within the framework of the Symposium organized in Paris to celebrate the 15th centenary of Proclus’s death (485), Saffrey retraced the history of Proclean studies reconstructing the activity of the School of Athens. The same year, at the “Colloque de Neuchâtel”, in “La Théologie platonicienne de Proclus et l’histoire du néoplatonisme”, he re-examined the exegesis of the *Parmenides* as the basis of the theology of Proclus as set out in his *Theol. Plat.* One of the most complex and important notions of Neoplatonic philosophy in general, and particularly of the Proclean one, is the notion of δύναμις; Saffrey examined it in an article, published in 1996, discussing the fundamental question of the procession of multiplicity from the One based on the *Theol. Plat.*

I.3. The Edition of Marinus’s Proclus or Concerning Happiness

After the completion of the edition of the *Platonic Theology*, Saffrey devoted himself, together with Alain Segonds, to the edition of the *Proclus or Concerning Happiness*, the funeral eulogy of Proclus by Marinus, his pupil and successor at the School of Athens, known under the false title of *Vita Procli*. As would happen later with Iamblichus’s, here, too, the original title of the work was restored. As Saffrey explains in the preface, Marinus’s text had been read, translated, and commented on by Festugière during his course at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (V section), in 1962-1963. The edition of the *Proclus or Concerning Happiness*

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28 *Apoc.* 14, 13.
Happiness, published in 2001, is an admirable complement to that of Theologia Platonica, and supersedes all previous editions. The introduction consists of three chapters, the first of which is devoted to the life and works of Marinus, the second to Marinus’ oration, that is, to the rhetorical structure and the Neoplatonic classification of virtues, which provides the framework for the whole work, the third to the witnesses of the text.

The Proclus or Concerning Happiness is transmitted by eighteen manuscripts, ten of which contain the complete text, seven are incomplete, and one is inaccessible.\(^{34}\) The manuscript tradition is bipartite, like that of the Theol. Plat.: the two primary witnesses are the MS Paris. Coisl. 249 (10\(^{th}\) cent. = C) and the Laur. Plut. 86, 3 (12\(^{th}\) cent. = L). All other manuscripts descend directly or indirectly from C or L.\(^{35}\) The text preserved by L is generally better than that preserved by C. The manuscript L had a twin brother, now lost, the Toxitanus, used in the editio princeps (Zurich 1559, by Conrad Gesner).\(^{36}\)

The Toxitanus is incomplete, therefore the princeps stops at the beginning of §22. The editio princeps allows us to reconstruct the lost model of L and of the Toxitanus and to correct sporadically (by conjecture of the editio princeps itself) the erroneous lesson of the archetype. At a variance with the Theol. Plat., Marinus’s text is also attested in indirect tradition, although it is meagre and consists of eleven passages transmitted by the Souda. While the Theol. Plat. had only been published once (by Portus in 1618) and had therefore been neglected by scholars, Marinus’s Proclus had ten editions, the best of which being that of Jean-François Boissonade (Leipzig 1814) based on C, L, and three secondary manuscripts, while the latest in chronological order, published in 1985 by Rita Masullo, is based upon all the manuscript tradition, which is however poorly utilised. In this sense, the Saflrey-Segonds edition, presenting a rich set of notes (pp. 49-183) and an appendix on the horoscope of Proclus (pp. 185-201), must be considered the definitive one.

I.4. The Edition of Porphyry’s Letter to the Egyptian Anebo, and of Iamblichus’s Reply to Porphyry’s Letter to Anebo

Having completed the dossier on the School of Athens, Father Saffrey and Alain Segonds turned to Iamblichus’s De Mysteriis (which, in the new Saffrey-Segonds edition, is entitled Reply to Porphyry). The genesis of the edition of Iamblichus’s work (2013) is explained in the “Avant-propos”, signed by Saffrey, after the sudden death of Alain Segonds. The tone is, as always, lucid and objective, yet passionate. As was the case of the edition of Marinus’s Proclus, Festugière’s teaching inspired their work:

En 1966, j’ai été prié par l’Association Guillaume Budé de faire la révision de l’édition du De mysteriis par le Père des Places. En fait, je reçus le volume entièrement composé et prêt pour l’impression. À ce moment-là, j’avais une connaissance superficielle de Jamblique en général et du De mysteriis en particulier. […] Je lus le texte grec et proposai quelques

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\(^{34}\) That is the MS Cheltenham, Thirlestaine House, Phillipps 8276, whose actual location is unknown.

\(^{35}\) See the Stemma codicum at p. cxliv.

\(^{36}\) The name “Toxitanus” comes from the poet and adventurer Michael Toxites (Schütz). He found a manuscript including Marcus Aurelius’s Meditations and Marinus’s Proclus in the library of the prince-elector Otto Henry and gave it to Conrad Gesner.
conjectures
auxquelles vinrent s’ajouter celles de mon ami Westerink qui se trouvait alors à Paris. Ensuite, au fur et à mesure qu’Alain Segonds et moi utilisions ce travail dans nos recherches sur le Néoplatonisme, nous en découvrions les imperfections, et la nécessité s’imposait à nous d’en donner une nouvelle édition. […] Alain Segonds et moi avons tiré grand profit des notes inédites composées par le Père Festugière pour deux conférences dont nous avions été les auditeurs à l’École Pratique des Hautes Études, les 16 et 30 mai 1968, ainsi que de son exemplaire de l’édition du Père des Places, dont les marges sont remplies de corrections et de conjectures.

Since Iamblichus’s treatise was the response to Porphyry’s *Letter to the Egyptian Anebo*, Saffrey and Segonds edited the *Letter to Anebo* first (2012), and then the *Reply to Porphyry* (2013). Unfortunately, Porphyry’s treatise is lost to us, and only a hundred fragments have survived. They are preserved in the following six main sources: (1) the quotations by Iamblichus in his *Reply*; (2) the literal quotations preserved in Eusebius’s *Preparation of the Gospel*; (3) the quotations preserved in Theodoret of Cyrrhus’s *Cure of the Greek Maladies* (*Graecarum affectionum curatio*), which depends on Eusebius; (4) the quotations found in Cyril of Alexandria’s *Contra Iulianum*; (5) a chapter of the *Hypomnesticon* by Joseph of Tiberiade, that Saffrey studied in 2001; (6) the important quotation preserved in Book X of Saint Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* published by Saffrey and Segonds in 2009. Unlike all previous editions, in which Porphyry’s *Letter* has been tentatively reconstructed as a continuous Greek text, the illusion of reconstructing a continuous text of Porphyry’s *Letter* was abandoned in the Saffrey-Segonds edition.

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37 See the critical apparatus of the edition by des Places *ad* 65.17 (p. 77), 66.11 (p. 77), 67.10 (p. 78), 76.15 (p. 83), 96.4 (p. 95), 107.9 (p. 102), 246.8 (p. 186), 255.3-4 (p. 192). In the Saffrey-Segonds edition, the first three conjectures are attributed to Saffrey (cf. pp. 49.17, 50.3, 50.8), while the conjectures *ad* 76.15 (p. 83), 96.4 (p. 95), 107.9 (p. 102), 246.8 (p. 186) are attributed to the editors (cf. pp. 57.20, 72.17, 80.21, 183.6) and the conjecture *ad* 255.3 (p. 192) is rightly neither taken nor mentioned in the critical apparatus.

38 See the critical apparatus of the edition by des Places *ad* 8.7 (p. 42), 109.3 (p. 103), 153.6-7 (p. 130), 158.12 (p. 133), 186.3 (p. 149), 186.9 (p. 150), 190.7 (p. 152), 218.8 (p. 169) (*bis*), 224.4 (p. 172), 264.14 (p. 197), 274.3 (p. 203), 281.9-10 (p. 207) = ed. Saffrey-Segonds *ad* pp. 6.5, 82.1, 115.4, 119.8, 139.7, 139.15, 142.15-16, 163.1 (*bis*), 167.3-4, 196.7-8, 202.21, 208.11. To Westerink’s conjectures taken by des Places, Saffrey and Segonds add four conjectures (pp. 86.8, 134.11, 151.25 and 174.19).

39 Cf. the critical apparatus of the Saffrey-Segonds edition *ad* pp. 4.16-17, 10.26, 20.13, 38.8.


43 The first to have tried such a reconstruction is Thomas Gale in his *editio princeps* of Iamblichus (Oxford 1678); his reconstruction is reproduced in the edition by Gustav Parthey, Berlin 1857, pp. xxix-xlv. On the previous editions of the *Letter to the Egyptian Anebo*, cf. ed. Saffrey-Segonds, pp. cx-cxi.

From this point of view, the Saffrey-Segonds edition is the first critical edition of Porphyry’s Letter, because it implements, in a rigorous way, one of the most important tasks of philology: to establish how far the work of reconstitution of a text can be pushed and, conversely, where one is at risk of inventing texts that never actually existed. Instead of “inventing” a continuous lost text, the Saffrey-Segonds edition brings together all the known fragments of Porphyry’s Letter (numbered from 1 to 100), each of which is accompanied by a translation and a commentary “qui essaie d’interpréter le fragment dans le mouvement continu de la pensée de Porphyre”.

The edition of the fragments of Porphyry’s Letter was the indispensable premise for editing Iamblichus’s Reply to Porphyry’s Letter. While the textual tradition of the Theol. Plat. had never been studied before and the only edition was Portus’s princeps of 1618, ever since Marsilio Ficino the textual tradition of Iamblichus’s Reply had been the subject of an uninterrupted reflection. The foundational study on the manuscript tradition was published by Martin Sicherl in 1957. Sicherl recognizes the two hyparchetypes of the tradition in the MS. Vallicellianus F 20 (= V), annotated by Ficino, and in the MS. Marc. gr. 244 (= M), annotated by Bessarion. Ficino studied the text, indeed; he annotated it extensively in the Vallicellianus F 20. He gave to Iamblichus’s Reply the title of De mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, Assyriorum, and under this title Aldus Manutius published Ficino’s paraphrase in 1497 in Venice, along with other Neoplatonic writings. The princeps edition by Thomas Gale was published in Oxford in 1678; it is based on two secondary manuscripts, the Leidensis Vossianus graecus Q 22, which belongs to the family of M, and the Basilensis Bibl. Univ. F. II. 1b, which belongs des chevilles entre les fragments au mieux du sens général. [...] Nous croyons totalement illusoire cette manière de procéder».


Ficino’s reworking of Iamblichus’s Reply (reordering of the text which was unintelligible because of the inversion of two sections and translation-paraphrase) has been analysed by Father Saffrey and Alain Segonds in the article: “Ficin sur le De mysteriis de Jamblique”, Humanistica 1-2 (2006), pp. 117-24. This study constitutes the prolegomena to the critical edition of the autograph of Ficino’s paraphrase: Marsile Ficin sur Jamblique. Édition des notes au De Mysteriis dans le ms. Vallicellianus F 20, éd. H.D. Saffrey avec la coll. de M. Stefani, Société Marsile Ficin – San Marco Litotipo, Luca 2018 (Cahiers Accademia, 10). The editors distinguish the different hands that have annotated the Vallicellianus F 20: Ficino (Roman characters), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (underlined text), Luca Fabiani, secretary of Ficino (italics), unidentified hands (in normal characters and between square brackets). Aldine variants are registered in the critical apparatus.

to the family of V. A new edition by Gustav Parthey was published in Berlin in 1857. Parthey did not have access to the two main manuscripts M and V, but used the *Laur. Plut.* 10, 32 and the *Vindob. phil. gr.* 264 (family of V) and the *Gothanus chartaceus* A 150 (family of M). In 1966, the edition by Édouard des Places was published. It is strongly criticized by Saffrey and Segonds:

Un travail hâtif et superficiel a été accompli par le Père des Places en 1966 par la collation rapide des deux manuscrits principaux sélectionnés par Sicherl et l’accumulation de tous les défauts — titre fallacieux, division scolastique en livres et chapitres, annotation insuffisante et traduction souvent obscure — de toutes les éditions qui précédéaient.

The question of the title is discussed at length by Saffrey and Segonds (pp. ix-xxi). They explain the reason for the title chosen by Ficino which prevailed to such an extent that des Places replaced it in Greek. The reason of Ficino’s title is the search for the *Platonica Mysteria*, which Ficino himself pursued his entire life. With Iamblichus, the *Platonica Mysteria* are confirmed by the mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans (i.e. the *Chaldean Oracles*) and Assyrians:

Quoi qu’il en soit, aujourd’hui le monde moderne connaît ce livre sous le titre inventé par Ficin *De mysteriis*, que nous nous proposons d’abandonner pour revenir au titre authentique de *Réponse à Porphyre*. […] Pour Ficin, l’écrit de Jamblique pouvait donc s’intituler *De mysteriis Egyptianorum, Chaldaeorum, Assyriorum*, ce qui signifie “Au sujet des divinités et de la religion des Égyptiens, des Chaldéens, des Syriens”, signification qui est outrageusement trahie lorsque l’on traduit ce titre “Les mystères d’Égypte”.

In addition to the question of the title, there is the question of the division of the text:

Malheureusement un titre nouveau n’était pas la seule innovation que l’âge moderne devait apporter au texte de Jamblique car, en 1556, le premier traducteur de notre texte, le religieux ermite de S. Augustin, Nicolas Scutelli, a cru bon de le diviser en segments et

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51 Ed. Saffrey-Segonds, p. xci.

52 Des Places (1966) recognizes that the true title of the work is Άβάμμωνος διδασκάλου πρὸς τὴν Πορφυρίου πρὸς Ἀνεβὼ ἐπιστολὴ ἀπόκρισις καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀπορημάτων λύσεις, but he adds <Περί τῶν θερμήτων μυστηρίων>. Already Gale in the *editio princeps* wrote Περί μυστηρίων λόγος.

chapitres à la manière d’un traité scolastique. Ces “segments” deviendront des “sections” dans les éditions de Gale et de Parthey et des “livres” dans l’édition du Père des Places. Cette division n’a aucune raison d’être et doit être, elle aussi, complètement abandonnée.

The Saffrey-Segonds edition is therefore, and above all, a delicate and decisive archaeological achievement which attempts to remove any subsequent encrustation and restore the work to its original splendour.

The groundwork for the edition of Iamblichus’s *Reply* was prepared through a large number of articles which all aim to understand the purpose of the work, its true nature, and its original structure beyond the division imposed by the previous editors.

I.5. Other Doctrinal Essays

The aforementioned studies are closely linked to the editorial work because they aim to clarify, analyse, and understand the edited texts. As previously mentioned, this list merely provides a selection of the vast literary production of Father Saffrey. To give an idea of the breadth of subjects he addressed I may mention a few articles which have made a mark on the field of Neoplatonic studies.

An unparalleled knowledge of Proclus’s work enabled Saffrey to draw an immense picture of Late Antiquity as a whole, one where the themes of theology as a science, of mystical

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knowledge and spirituality, of theurgy, and of the relationship with Christians are always discussed through a careful analysis of the texts. The very close link between theology and spirituality in Proclus is highlighted by Father Saffrey in two articles devoted to the hymns of Proclus, published respectively in 1981 and 1984. Particular attention is always given to Athenian Neoplatonism: before editing Marinus’s Proclus, Saffrey wrote two fundamental articles devoted to the School of Athens and, in particular, to Syrianus, the master of Proclus, who played a decisive role in the elaboration of Proclus's own metaphysics and theology.

An essential point of Proclus’s Nachleben, namely the relationship with Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite, was the subject of three studies that Saffrey published respectively in 1966, 1979, and 1998. These articles are linked by their titles and show that the similarity of doctrines and even expressions between Pseudo-Dionysius and Proclus had been detected with accuracy as early as the 6th century.


II. History of Texts

In Father Saffrey’s philological production, manuscripts are not only witnesses of variant readings. They have a history of their own, and this reflects the history of the texts and therefore the history of the ideas transmitted by these very texts. Such a view, in which a material object, i.e. the manuscript, plays an essential role in the development of major currents of thought, is the basis of all the aforementioned critical editions. As a matter of fact, the introduction to the first volume of the *Theol. Plat.* contains a section devoted to the history of the text,63 greatly enriched in the introduction to volume V, in which the third chapter studies “Un chaînon méconnu de la tradition proclienne: Georges Pachymère”.64 The two primary manuscripts of Iamblichus’s *Reply to Porphyry* belonged to Ficino and Bessarion respectively, and Ficino’s philological activity on Iamblichus’s text and his autographical notes preserved in *Vallicellianus* F 20 determined not only the transmission of the text, but also its interpretation to the present day. This interest in the history of texts is at the origin of several studies dealing with a wide range of themes, from Plato to the Renaissance.

Saffrey devoted two articles to the *Parisinus gr.* 1807, Plato’s manuscript A, in which he retraced the astonishing journey of this manuscript, from Constantinople to Petrarch’s library via Armenia.65 Bessarion’s autographical notes are discussed in four articles that clearly explain the Cardinal’s method of study and annotation.66 As for Ficino, in addition to the two studies closely related to the edition of Iamblichus’s *Reply to Porphyry*,67 we should cite an article on the *Riccardianus* 70, a manuscript of the *Theol. Plat.* annotated by Ficino.68

An article devoted to the Latin translation by Pietro Balbi deals with the history of the *Theol. Plat.*69 This article was already announced in the first volume of the *Theol. Plat.*; here Saffrey and Westerink reach the conclusion that “pour l’établissement du texte grec de

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67 Cf. supra, n. 47.
la *Théol. plat.*, la traduction de Balbi, plus littéraire que précise, et témoin d’un original grec voisin de n [= Monac. gr. 547], ne saurait être d’aucun secours”.

A crucial step in the survival of Neoplatonism was undoubtedly the publication, in 1492, of the Latin translation of Plotinus’s *Enneads* by Marsilio Ficino, which marks Plotinus’s return to the West after centuries of oblivion. This publication was analysed in a seminal article published in French in 1995 and translated into English one year later.

Even in a completely different field, i.e. alchemy, Saffrey’s article on *Marcianus gr. 299* should be mentioned; it is a true masterpiece in which, thanks to his codicological competence and knowledge of the texts, Saffrey was able to reconstruct the original structure of this manuscript, the oldest document on Greek alchemy which has come down to us, except for the two papyri of Leiden and Stockholm.

To conclude this all too brief overview of Saffrey’s studies on the history of texts, it is important to mention the volume published in 2003, edited by Saffrey with Aubrey Diller († 1985) and Leendert G. Westerink († 1990), on the Greek library of Cardinal Domenico Grimani. The edition of the documents concerning Grimani’s library (among which the most important is the catalogue of the library itself) is preceded by an introduction which traces Grimani’s intellectual biography and contains an appendix in which the editors publish about thirty prefaces addressed to Grimani. In his “Avant-propos” (p. 2), Saffrey writes:

> Ce livre doit être considéré comme un hommage à l’intrépidité et à la science immense de ces deux grands philologues, Aubrey Diller et L.G. Westerink, et ce n’est pas sans émotion que je fais revivre leur souvenir que la lecture souvent reprise de leurs travaux rend toujours vivant.

Masters and friends disappear: Dodds († 1979), Festugière († 1982), Diller († 1985), Westerink († 1990), Segonds († 2011). But their legacy and memory remain forever, just as the immense joy of having sought the truth side by side: *In dulcedine societatis quaerere veritatem* could be the motto that epitomizes the personality and the scientific work of Henri Dominique Saffrey.

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