

The ethics of physics in late antique Platonism
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Physics for the Neoplatonists – as for Aristotle – is the science that deals with things that are subject to motion, and sometimes to qualitative change as well. The stars and planets are the bodies that are subject to the least degree of change since they only undergo motion. This paper considers the extent to which the motions of the heavenly bodies provide a divine paradigm to which the soul of the philosopher is to be assimilated. In particular, it will chart Proclus' deployment of the passage from *Laws* 898a-b where the Athenian Stranger comments that the motion of a sphere on its axis is the visible counter-part of *noêsis*.

But what can it *really mean* to claim that the motions of the stars and planets are a visible counterpart to *noêsis*? This paper considers not only the content of this claim, but also examines Proclus' *Timaeus Commentary* for evidence of psychogogic strategies for assimilating the psychic motions of its author and its audience to the divine moving bodies that we see in the night sky. I argue that – as with much else in late antique Platonism – the content of the claim in physics is inseparable from the role of such claims in prompting a psychic transformation in the aspiring Platonist.