represented. Swing the right hand to the front of the body and catch it with the extended index finger of the left hand. In this way, we have scripted subject, verb, and object by way of movement. Judge for yourself.

*Prehension* is an interesting book written by an established philosopher. It is a serious attempt to identify the conditions that enabled what we take to be the distinctly human achievements. The conclusions reached, though not new, have the benefit of that steady flow of data generated by the great industry that is science. This much granted, it seems more scientific than scientific.—Daniel N. Robinson, *University of Oxford*


“...My purpose in writing this book was to express Aristotle’s political thought in clear, non-technical language and in ways that would assist the peoples of small island states, particularly in the Pacific, to think about the issues that face them, given that their political problems and solutions are different from those that face large Western countries.” So writes Andrew Murray, author of *Thinking about Political Things: An Aristotelian Approach to Pacific Life*.

He calls his essays “excursions,” and they take him to (1) Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, (2) the Fiji Islands, (3) Tonga, and (4) the Chamorro people of the Mariana Islands. Murray, it should be explained, is an Australian priest and professor with a Ph.D. in philosophy, although he has worked principally as a theologian. *Thinking about Political Things* draws on Aristotle’s *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Rhetoric*, but also heavily on Murray’s personal experience of the peoples of the islands he discusses.

Leaders of Pacific nations, he tells us, reject descriptions such as “weak states” or “failed states,” and point out that in their countries people do not for the most part go hungry or remain unhoused as they do in Sydney, London, or New York. The autonomy and individualism prized in Western nations is out of place in a land where people are understood to be members of a family or clan.

Murray is quick to point out that Aristotle did not lay down a particular form of government as necessary for all peoples in the way that modern theorists have done. Political forms for Aristotle grow out of natural communities. Thus the book is not an attempt to tell Pacific peoples how to arrange their political lives, but nevertheless Murray does employ some concrete examples from the South Pacific to show the relevance of the Aristotelian manner of thinking politically where it has been used.

In a section on forms of constitution, Murray discusses what Aristotle calls “correct forms of constitution”: (1) kingship, defined as the rule of
one monarch in which the king rules for the sake of the people; (2) aristocracy, the rule of the few who are virtuous for the sake of the people; and (3) republicanism, where the multitude rule for the sake of the whole people. Deviant forms of constitution are identified as: democracy, where the multitude rules for self-advantage; oligarchy, where the few rule for self-advantage; and tyranny, where one rules for self-advantage, which Aristotle calls the most severe failure of political rule. Other good distinctions are made, such as, for example, when under the constitution the law rules, as contrasted with those states in which those in office rule.

There is an important chapter on education and on nurturing political life where Murray cites another Aristotelian principle: “If the community and its members are to live well, they will need both to understand what living well is and to know how to do things that will bring about this kind of life.” This necessarily leads to an extended discussion of happiness and its conditions, namely, moral and intellectual virtue.

This book may have been written to show the relevance of Aristotelian principles in the forming of governments in the Pacific Islands, but it does more than that insofar as it suggests how far Western governments on both sides of the Atlantic have deviated from principled norms in the Aristotelian sense. It tells Western readers where they are, judged by timeless norms.—Jude P. Dougherty, The Catholic University of America

ONNASCH, Ernst-Otto and Ben Schomakers. Proclus: Theologische Grundlegung. Hamburg: Meiner, 2015. 124 pp.—Proclus (410–485 C.E.) brought the Athenian academy to new heights in the fifth century C.E. by reinterpreting classical Greek thought in a Neoplatonic and Christian theological environment. The book has an extensive Einleitung in four parts: first, Proclus’s life and deeds; second, his position within Neoplatonism; third, form, title, and dates of the book; and fourth, an outline of the basic thought of the work under the title “Metaphysical Modifications.” The Einleitung ends in a brief bibliography of editions and translations plus “remarks on secondary literature,” which in turn is followed by “Editorial Issues.” The extensive Anmerkungen, that is, the notes, follow the bilingual, Greek-German text, and contain notes and commentaries following the text. The book ends in a very helpful and extensive “terminological index and translation key” intended to help broaden and deepen understanding of key Greek words. There are no other indices, neither of names nor of subjects.

The dominant Greek-English text today is still that of Eric Robertson Dodds, Proclus, The Elements of Theology: A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary (Oxford University Press, 1933, 2nd ed., 1962). This volume is basic to any modern reading of Proclus’s main work, as is this new edition by Onnasch and Schomakers.